

BOOKNEWS from

ISSN 1056-5655, © The Poisoned Pen, Ltd.
Volume 33, Number 13
October Booknews 2021
sales@poisonedpen.com tel (888)560-9919
http://poisonedpen.com

4014 N. Goldwater Blvd.
Scottsdale, AZ 85251
480-947-2974



Happy Halloween Month to All...

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.

FRIDAY OCTOBER 1 6:00 PM

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

Our October SciFi Book of the Month

Check out this [fabulous review](#)

Signed copies available

SATURDAY OCTOBER 2 10:00 AM

JT Ellison and Jayne Anne Krentz interview **Barbara** on The Pen's 32nd Birthday

MONDAY OCTOBER 4 12:00 PM

Sweden's Alex Schulman in conversation with **Ivy Pochoda Schulman** discusses [The Survivors](#) (Doubleday \$25)
His US debut

MONDAY OCTOBER 4 6:00 PM Virtual Book Launch

Susanna Kearsley in conversation with **Diana Gabaldon**

This event for Kearsley has sold out.

Order her hardcover or the paperback: [The Vanished Days](#)
(Sourcebooks \$26.99/\$16.99)

TUESDAY OCTOBER 5 12:00 PM

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

Debuting **Allie Burns**, investigative journalist

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, delayed until after October 12

Everyone who preorders will be put into a drawing for our one Advance Reading Copy of [Wild Irish Rose](#), next March's **Molly Murphy**

WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 6 6:00 PM

Allison Heller discusses [The Neighbor's Secret](#) (Flatiron \$27.99)

Unnerving choice for members of any book club

THURSDAY OCTOBER 7 5:00 PM

Alice Hoffman discusses [The Book of Magic](#) (SimonSchuster \$27.99)

The conclusion to The Practical Magic series

Signed books available, delayed until the following week

Our copies come with special swag: including chocolates

SATURDAY OCTOBER 9 3:00 PM

Lisa Unger with Karin Slaughter

Unger discusses [Last Girl Ghosted](#) (Park Row \$27.99)

Signed books in stock

TUESDAY OCTOBER 12 1:00 PM

England's Peter Lovesey discusses [Diamond and the Eye](#) (Soho \$27.95)

Bath policeman **Peter Diamond**

TUESDAY OCTOBER 12 5:00 PM

Ed Tarkington in conversation with **Ashley Winstead**

Tarkington discusses [The Fortunate Ones](#) (Algonquin \$16.95)

A 2020 Notable New Fiction Book of the Month in hardcover

Signed copies of **Winstead's** [In My Dreams I Hold a Knife](#) (\$26.99) available

THURSDAY OCTOBER 14 7:00 PM Live Event

James McGrath Morris discusses [Tony Hillerman: A Life](#)

(University of Oklahoma \$29.95)

Signed books available

FRIDAY OCTOBER 15 7:00 PM

SciFi Friday discusses **Frank Herbert's** [Dune](#) (\$18)

Movie update: theaters and HBO Max on October 22. The project stars **Timothée Chalamet**, **Zendaya**, **Jason Momoa**, **Rebecca Ferguson**, **Oscar Isaac**, **Josh Brolin**, **Stellan Skarsgård**, **Dave Bautista**, **Sharon Duncan-Brewster**, **Stephen McKinley Henderson**, **Chang Chen** and **David Dastmalchian**, with **Charlotte Rampling** and **Javier Bardem**.

SATURDAY OCTOBER 16 10:30 AM

Croak & Dagger discusses **Richard Osman's** [The Thursday Murder Club](#) (\$17)

SATURDAY OCTOBER 16 10:30 AM

England's Jeffery Archer discusses [Over My Dead Body Special](#)

[Ltd Edition](#) (Harper \$28.99)

William Warwick series

MONDAY OCTOBER 18 5:00 PM

Spencer Quinn discusses his Christmas **Chet & Bernie**

[It's a Wonderful Woof](#) (Forge \$26.99)

Signed books available

TUESDAY OCTOBER 19 12:00 PM

Ireland's **John Connolly** discusses [The Nameless Ones](#) (Atria \$28)
Charlie Parker
Each copy comes with a custom book tote and Signed oversize playing cards

TUESDAY OCTOBER 19 5:00 PM

Lori Rader-Day in conversation with **Catriona McPherson**
Rader-Day discusses [Death at Greenway](#) (Morrow \$16.99)
WW2 at Agatha Christie's Devon estate
Our October British Crime Book of the Month

THURSDAY OCTOBER 21 4:00 PM

Clea Simon discusses [Hold Me Down](#) (Polis \$26.99)
Love, music, murder in Boston

THURSDAY OCTOBER 21 5:00 PM

Catherine Prendergast discusses [The Gilded Edge: Two Audacious Women and the Cyanide Love Triangle That Shook America](#) (Dutton \$28)
A true story fictionalized
Signed bookplates available

MONDAY OCTOBER 25 6:00 PM Virtual Book Launch

Andrew and Lee Child discuss [Better off Dead](#) (Bantam \$28.99)
Jack Reacher
Copies signed by both authors available

TUESDAY OCTOBER 26 1:00 PM

Colleen Cambridge discusses [Murder at Mallowan Hall](#) (Kensington \$26)
Our November Historical Fiction Book of the Month
A true *Upstairs/Downstairs* mystery, emphasis on Downstairs
Signed copies available

TUESDAY OCTOBER 26 6:00 PM National Book Launch

Scott Carson with Richard Chizmar
Carson discusses [Where They Wait](#) (Atria \$27)
Very scary stuff set in rural Maine
Our October (or November depending on delivery) of the Month
Signed copies available

WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 27 5:00 PM

Gregory Galloway discusses [Just Thieves](#) (Melville House \$26.99)
Our October First Mystery Book of the Month
Signed copies available

THURSDAY OCTOBER 28 4:00 PM

A Zoom Webinar for Gregg Hurwitz
Go [HERE for the link](#) and to purchase any [Orphan X](#) books
Come join us! Sign up to participate in the next event in Macmillan's Book + Author series: a virtual conversation with live QA&A between Gregg Hurwitz and Mark Greaney for the first book in Gregg's bestselling *Orphan X* series. [Orphan X](#) is our go-to thriller recommendation for anyone browsing at The Pen

THURSDAY OCTOBER 28 6:00 PM

Rachel Howzell Hall and Yasmin Angoe
Hall discusses [These Toxic Things](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$24.95)
Our October or November Crime Book of the Month
Signed copies available
Angoe discusses [Her Name Is Knight](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$24.95/\$15.95)
Our November International Crime Book of the Month

THURSDAY OCTOBER 28 7:30 PM

Hardboiled Crime discusses Jonathan Craig's [So Young, So Wicked](#) (\$9.99)

FRIDAY OCTOBER 29 4:30 PM

Cherie Priest discusses [Grave Reservations](#) (Atria \$26)
Psychic travel agent works with Seattle PD cop

FRIDAY OCTOBER 29 6:00 PM

Lee Goldberg and Matt Witten
Goldberg discusses [Gated Prey](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$24.95)
LA County Sheriff's Deputy Eve Ronin
Signed books available for Goldberg
Witten discusses [The Necklace](#) (Oceanview \$26.95)
Is the guy in prison guilty of her daughter's murder?
Optioned for film—with Leonardo DiCaprio attached as producer

OUR OCTOBER BOOKS OF THE MONTH

Note: delivery delays may cause us to swap a pick or two with the November Books of the Month

The Crime Book of the Month One Signed hardcover First per month
Carson, Scott. [Where They Wait](#)

British Crime Book of the Month One unsigned hardcover or paperback per month
Rader-Day, Lori. [Death at Greenway](#)

Cozy Crimes Book of the Month One unsigned hardcover or paperback per month
Reyes, Raquel V. [Mango, Mambo, and Murder](#)

First Mystery Book of the Month Club One Signed hardcover First per month
Galloway, Gregory. [Just Thieves](#)

Historical Fiction Book of the Month One Signed hardcover First per month
Robb, Candace. [The Riverwoman's Dragon](#)

International Crime Book of the Month
Schulman, Alex. [The Survivors](#)

Notable New Fiction Book of the Month One Signed hardcover First per month
Jones, Stephen Graham. [My Heart Is a Chainsaw](#)

SciFi/Fantasy Book of the Month One hardcover or paperback per month signed when possible
Turnbull, Cadwell. [No Gods, No Monsters](#) Signed copies

SIGNED BOOKS

✂ Archer, Jeffrey. [Over My Dead Body Special Ltd Edition](#) (Harper \$28.99). In London, the Metropolitan Police set up a new Unsolved Murders Unit—a cold case squad—to catch the criminals nobody else can. In Geneva, millionaire art collector Miles Faulkner—convicted of forgery and theft—was pronounced dead two months ago. So why is his unscrupulous lawyer still representing a dead client? On a luxury liner en route to New York, the battle for power at the heart of a wealthy dynasty is about to turn to murder. And at the heart of all three investigations are Detective Chief Inspector William Warwick, rising star of the department, and ex-undercover agent Ross Hogan, brought in from the cold. But can they catch the killers before it's too late?

We have a few of the Signed UK edition: [Over My Dead Body](#) (Collins \$45)

✂ Bowen, Rhys. [God Rest Ye Royal Gentlemen](#) (Berkley \$26). **Everyone who preorders will be put into a drawing for our one Advance Reading Copy of [Wild Irish Rose](#), next March's Molly Murphy.**

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.” Enjoy the quirky characters and their wit. Order the entire [Royal Spyness series](#) and binge.

This book publishes October 5 but releases after October 12 like many delayed publications. 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

✂ Cambridge, Colleen. [Murder at Mallowan Hall](#) (Kensington \$26). This is classic *Upstairs/Downstairs* stuff, emphasis on Downstairs. You will enjoy a visit with Agatha Christie but the real interest lies in the incredibly meticulous way the servants under the stern direction of the housekeeper (and Agatha's friend) Mrs. (courtesy title) Phyllida Bright. I chose this series start for our **November Historical Fiction Book of the Month** for this, not for the plot.

We're in Devon (where Christie's actual country house Greenway is located, now deeded to the National Trust), 1930. WWI has reduced the number of people employed domestically, but this household staff is kept up to the Gilded Age high standards although they slip during the investigation. Phyllida is an

unabashed fan of Hercule Poirot, and one reason she's currently unwed is “that she had yet to find a man who met the standards set by the proper Belgian detective.” Early one morning, Phyllida goes to draw the curtains in the library and finds one of the Mallowans' house-party guests lying dead on the rug, a fountain pen protruding from the side of his neck. Another murder follows. The general ineptitude of the local police offends Phyllida, who decides to use her little gray cells to solve the case. Of course it's not nearly as easy as Poirot makes it look.

Carson, Scott. [Where They Wait](#) (Atria \$27). Journalist Nick Bishop, the narrator of this uber-creepy horror thriller from Carson (aka Michael Koryta) has fallen on hard times after being laid off. So, despite experience that includes a stint embedded in Afghanistan, he considers a job that would ordinarily be beneath him—writing a puff piece for his alma mater's magazine. A classmate who runs the PR department for Maine's Hammel College offers Bishop \$5,000 to profile alum Bryce Lermond, who's developed a new app that's able to shape dreams. Lured by the payday and a chance to visit his mother, a dementia patient who was once “one of the nation's preeminent scholars in the field of memory research,” Bishop, who says he never dreams, agrees. Lermond persuades Bishop to beta test the app, Clarity, which plays an ominous song before Bishop loses consciousness. His investigative reporter senses go on even higher alert after Lermond's No. 2 at his company, an old friend of Bishop's, warns him never to use Clarity. Superior prose (“The elevator doors sealed across her like gravedigger's dirt”) enhances a craftily twisted plot, which sticks its landing to make it either our **October or November Crime Book of the Month**. Peter Straub fans will hope for more from Carson.

Child, Andrew/Lee. [Better Off Dead](#) (Bantam \$28.99). How much fun for us here at The Pen is this? Reacher, hitching a ride to the West Coast just to see the ocean, ends up walking towards a small southern Arizona town. It's a remote spot on the U.S.-Mexico border, in the opening pages, a stranger arrives. He's “a large, tall man” who has arrived for an arranged meeting. A car drives up, and four men get out. When the driver asks the stranger if he has the agreed upon money, he pats his back pocket. Then the driver orders the stranger into the car, to take him to someone named Michael. The stranger refuses, saying the deal was for him to be told where Michael is before handing over the cash. The stranger gets the best of it in the ensuing dramatic fight, until a woman shows up and guns him down. At the morgue, this stranger, identified as Reacher, is confirmed dead by the coroner, to the satisfaction of Waad Dendoncker, “the second coming of Al Capone, only with added craziness.” Don't panic!

Flashbacks explain what led up to the violent confrontation. Smart writing, vivid action scenes, and dramatic twists keep this thriller moving. As does coffee, lots of coffee, an addiction I know the two Child brothers share.

In an interview with the author brothers re the plot inspiration, Andrew says, “It was an article I read about the use of chemical weapons during the two recent wars in Iraq. It was a wide-ranging piece, but the thing that really stuck out was the fact—which is mentioned in the book—that soldiers who were injured while dealing with a cache of shells containing illegal chemicals after an engagement with the enemy was over, or while transporting suspicious munitions for analysis, etc., were denied Purple Hearts. This struck me as tremendously unfair, and the

kind of thing that could easily breed sufficient resentment to push an already desperate person onto a very bad track.” Did either of you get to interview a member of an Army Technical Escort Unit as part of your research? Lee:”We could tell you, but then we’d have to kill you....”

Please note that the UK edition publishes later and will be Signed tip-ins only: [Better Off Dead](#) (Bantam UK \$45). Thus we do not recommend ordering it but we are happy to do so Upon Request.

✠ Cornwell, Bernard. [Sharpe’s Assassin](#) (Collins \$43). Now that the marvelous storyteller Cornwell is done with the Saxons he returns to the era of Napoleon and Sharpe! Lieutenant-Colonel Sharpe is a man with a reputation. Born in the gutter, raised a foundling, he joined the army twenty-one years ago, and it’s been his home ever since. He’s loose cannon, but his unconventional methods make him a valuable weapon. So when, the dust still settling after the Battle of Waterloo, the Duke of Wellington needs a favor, he turns to Sharpe. For Wellington knows that the end of one war is only the beginning of another. Napoleon’s army may be defeated, but another enemy lies waiting in the shadows – a secretive group of fanatical revolutionaries hell-bent on revenge. Sharpe is dispatched to a new battleground: the maze of Paris streets where lines blur between friend and foe. And in search of a spy, he will have to defeat a lethal assassin determined to kill his target or die trying.... This long-running series is a much-lauded favorite of readers and we recommend it to fans of the late Patrick O’Brian.

Dean, James. [Pete the Cat’s Groovy Imagination](#) (Harper \$18.99). Pete the Cat wants to go surfing, but he looks outside and—oh no!—it’s gray and rainy. Does Pete get sad? No, he doesn’t! Instead, he finds a really big and GROOVY box. Find out in this epic adventure just where Pete’s imagination takes him. Great fun for the 4-8 reader.

Dugoni, Robert. [The World Played Chess](#) (Lake Union \$24.95). Cherish the opportunity to grow old. That’s the moving take away from this exceptional novel by Dugoni.

Our signed copies have arrived as I write this and so has this wonderful review by Jon Land for “a brilliant and poignant book... The story follows recent high school graduate Vincent Bianco coming of age while spending the summer working alongside a pair of Vietnam vets, an experience that changes his life forever. The lessons he learns will be tested forty years later as he prepares to send his own son off to college, triggering memories that reveal secrets and truths he’s long kept from even himself while he feels his son slipping from his grasp just as his own childhood did. While not a Vietnam novel per se, *The World Played Chess* resembles Tim O’Brien’s *The Things They Carried* and Philip Caputo’s *A Rumor of War* in its sheer emotional resonance. Dugoni, though, seems to be channeling the lyrical storytelling magic of the great Pat Conroy more. *The World Played Chess* is this generation’s *The Prince of Tides*, a candidate for best novel of 2021.” There is an unsigned [paperback edition](#) too (\$15.95).

Eggers, Dave. [The Every](#) (McSweeney \$28). **A special limited hardcover edition just for independent bookstores includes signed bookplates.**

When the world’s largest search engine/social media company, The Circle, merges with the planet’s dominant e-com-

merce site, it creates the richest and most dangerous—and, oddly enough, most beloved—monopoly ever known: The Every. Delaney Wells is an unlikely new hire at The Every. A former forest ranger and unwavering tech skeptic, she charms her way into an entry-level job with one goal in mind: to take down the company from within. With her compatriot, the not-at-all-ambitious Wes Makazian, they look for The Every’s weaknesses, hoping to free humanity from all-encompassing surveillance and the emoji-driven infantilization of the species. But does anyone want what Delaney is fighting to save?

Galloway, Gregory. [Just Thieves](#) (Melville House \$26.99). Surely the most famous MacGuffin in film noir appears in 1955’s *Kiss Me Deadly*, in which the action revolves around a mysterious box whose contents ultimately prove to be of little importance to the story. Likewise, in *Just Thieves*, Gregory Galloway’s spot-on throwback noir, a MacGuffin drives the action but will concern readers far less than the personal turmoil of the object’s pursuers. A down and dirty gem of a tale—a twisty and twisted crime novel that evokes the worlds of George V. Higgins, Patricia Highsmith, and David Mamet, destined to be a noir classic—and our **November First Mystery Book of the Month**.

A Starred Review; “Rick and Frank are a pair of low level crooked, recovering addicts and accomplished house thieves. They do not steal randomly—they steal according to order, hired by a mysterious handler. The jobs run routinely until they’re tasked with taking a seemingly worthless trophy: an object that generates interest and obsession out of proportion to its apparent value. Rick and Frank’s errand is temporarily derailed by the presence of a dead horse in the street outside their hotel. Behind schedule now, Rick manages to break into the target house...and Frank disappears with the trophy. As Rick tries to find Frank, he is forced to confront his past, upending both his livelihood and his sense of reality. The narrative builds steadily into a powerful and shocking climax. Reveling in its con-artistry and double-crosses, *Just Thieves* is a nail-biting, noirish exploration of the working lives of two unforgettable crooks and the hidden forces that rule and ruin their lives. As Rick’s narration teeters between the present and the past, readers will come to understand the true nature of his and Frank’s relationship, how Rick got involved in thieving, and what he stands to gain or lose from sticking with this particular line of work. Galloway is as good at characterizations as he is at tight, and surprising, plotting.” Patrick looks forward to conversing with the author.

Goldberg, Lee. [Gated Prey](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$24.95). Hollywood decadence and duplicity are at the heart of Los Angeles County sheriff’s deputy Eve Ronin’s third case. With her partner Duncan Pavone (“a fat man in his late fifties”) just weeks away from retiring, a wrongful death lawsuit hanging over her head, and an agent shopping around a TV series loosely based on her life, Eve is finding it increasingly difficult to do her job, which includes apprehending a gang responsible for a series of violent home invasions in gated communities. When posing as affluent homeowners almost gets Eve and Duncan killed, she discovers that some of her coworkers may be attempting retribution for her recent takedown of a group of corrupt cops. A woman in one of the gated communities who seemingly gave birth at home to a stillborn baby further complicates matters. “Lively descriptive prose enhances the tight plot of this episodic crime novel, which reads like a TV show in narrative form, and fun for fans of

Columbo.” Simultaneous paperback: [Gated Prey](#) (\$15.95). Enjoy [Eve’s first two cases](#) as well.

✂ Griffiths, Elly. [The Midnight Hour](#) (Quercus \$43). Brighton, 1965. When theatrical impresario Bert Billington is found dead in his retirement home, no one suspects foul play. But when the postmortem reveals that he was poisoned, suspicion falls on his wife, eccentric ex-Music Hall star Verity Malone. Frustrated by the police response to Bert’s death and determined to prove her innocence, Verity calls in private detective duo Emma Holmes and Sam Collins. This is their first real case, but as luck would have it they have a friend on the inside: Max Mephisto is filming a remake of *Dracula*, starring Seth Billington, Bert’s son. But when they question Max, they feel he isn’t telling them the whole story. Emma and Sam must vie with the police to untangle the case.

Hall, Rachel Howzell. [These Toxic Things](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$24.95). Here’s either our **October or November Crime Book of the Month**: Mickie Lambert creates “digital scrapbooks” for clients, ensuring that precious souvenirs aren’t forgotten or lost. When her latest client, Nadia Denham, a curio shop owner, dies from an apparent suicide, Mickie honors the old woman’s last wish and begins curating her peculiar objets d’art. A music box, a hair clip, a key chain—twelve mementos in all that must have meant so much to Nadia, who collected them on her flea market scavenges across the country. But these tokens mean a lot to someone else, too. Mickie has been receiving threatening messages to leave Nadia’s past alone. It’s becoming a mystery Mickie is driven to solve. 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). As I note with Lisa Unger’s new book below, it’s super to have these authors keep us updated on Social Media and modern lifestyles and vocabularies.

Heller, Peter. [The Guide](#) (Knopf \$26.99). **Lost but now found, and incoming, so I repeat this review from September.**

In a sequel to 2019’s [The River](#) (\$16), Jack, the 25-year-old title character, guilt-ridden by the death of his mother in a horse accident and the demise of his best friend in a river mishap, has 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. But there may be snakes in this Eden. 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, 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). Have you ever had a best friend that was a tree? If not, then you may not fully appreciate the level of love and devotion Norman, a porcupine, has for his best friend Mildred, a tree. If you love Higgins’ [Dragons Love Tacos](#) (a constant bestseller with our young reader set), you’ll fall in love with Norman immediately.

Hoffman, Alice. [The Book of Magic](#) (SimonSchuster \$27.99). **As with many other fall titles, books are shipping to us late. So for the first 50 of you, Team Hoffman is providing swag—a special bookmark and chocolates!**

The Owens family has been cursed for centuries, denying them from their true loves. But at last, the existing Owens witches are determined to break the spell. In a frantic attempt to save one man’s life, three generations of Owens women travel from Paris to London to the English countryside, while uncovering long-held family secrets. This spellbinding and enchanting conclusion is the perfect way to end the cherished magical series. Hoffman concludes her Practical Magic series about the Owens family women, cursed by 17th-century ancestor Maria, with an illuminating story of their inherited witchcraft. In present-day Massachusetts, octogenarian Jet Owens sees the death watch beetle, a sign that she has seven days to live. She pulls *The Book of the Raven* from her library—a “dark spell-book” that had corrupted Maria’s daughter, Faith. The book contains the secret for how to end the family curse, which has caused the men they fall in love with to die, and its discovery sets off a series of cataclysmic events. Hoffman focuses primarily on Jet’s niece, Sally, who quashed her magical powers, and Sally’s daughters Kylie and Antonia, from whom Sally hid the family’s unusual heritage. After Kylie’s fiancée, Gideon, has a life-threatening car accident, she learns about the curse and travels to London where the book was made, in search of answers that could save Gideon. Meanwhile, Antonia, a lesbian, is pregnant and plans to raise the baby with a gay couple, one of whom is the father. Hoffman runs through the Owens family history over the centuries, and though the accounts of bloodlines and varied relationships can be confusing, the story brims with bewitching encounters and suspenseful conflicts revolving around good magic versus bad magic.

The Indie Next Pick adds: “A wonderful conclusion to the series with a new generation of Owens to charm us. For fans who like their books with a good dose of magic, and readers who enjoy a family saga with characters that win you over. What a treat!”

Morris, James McGrath. [Tony Hillerman: A Life](#) (University of Oklahoma \$29.95). What a treat for you Hillerman fans. Morris has done a deep dive into Tony’s Oklahoma roots and childhood, his WWII military service and wounds, his early reporting career and marriage, his eventual relocation from Oklahoma via Texas to New Mexico, his family, and his emergence as a novelist. We had many wonderful years and events with Tony, now with his daughter Anne, and yet I learned so much in this marvelous Life

to which Anne contributed along with so many, even me. It was my pleasure to do one of Tony's last public events, a conversation we had at the National Book Festival in Washington, DC, the same month that the two Washington snipers were terrorizing the city. The Festival was hosted (still is) by the Library of Congress (where once I was a young librarian). Here is [one video of our talk](#), and [here is another](#). Enjoy—but turn up your sound as much as you can. If nothing else you can love just seeing Tony in a classic pose. Remember he was very deaf by then—part of that war injuries legacy.

Nesbø, Jo. [The Jealousy Man and Other Stories](#) (Harvill \$45). The 12 tales in this impressive collection from bestseller Nesbø blend taut suspense with sharply limned characters. “Rat Island” is the highlight, a dystopian tale set in the U.S. after a devastating pandemic. The health crisis proves an opportunity for the rich, helping them “in their struggle against those who posed the greatest threat to them: hordes of the poor and the desperate.” This disturbingly plausible near-future is enhanced by detailed world-building; for example, visually impaired characters prepared in advance for doomsday by getting laser surgery, expecting that glasses and contact lenses would be hard to obtain. Nesbø also makes the most out of the conceit of the title story—a detective specializes in homicide cases where jealousy is the motive. There is plenty here for fans of Frederick Forsyth as well as of Nordic Noir. Unsigned US edition: [The Jealousy Man and Other Stories](#) (Knopf \$28.95).

Quinn, Spencer. [It's a Wonderful Woof](#) (Forge \$26.99). A Christmas story—and 12th in this always welcome series here at The Pen—Chet the Dog and Bernie Little the PI are headquartered here (if unacknowledged). Despite the dismal shape of the finances at the Little Detective Agency, Bernie refers a potential client to Victor Klovsky, a fellow private eye. It's also true that the case—promising lots of online research but little action—doesn't appeal to Bernie, while it seems perfect for Victor, who is not cut out for rough stuff. But Victor disappears in a rough-stuff way, and when he doesn't show up at his mom's to light the Hanukkah candles, she hires Chet and Bernie to find him. They soon discover that Victor's client has also vanished. The trail leads to the ruins of a mission called Nuestra Señora de los Saguaros, dating back to the earliest Spanish explorers. Some very dangerous people are interested in the old mission. Does some dusty archive hold the secret of a previously unknown art treasure, possibly buried for centuries? I love it that once again the saguaro, native only to the Sonoran Desert, plays a role in a Little Agency case. We recommend you order the entire [Chet & Bernie](#) series.

Rosenfelt, David. [Best in Snow](#) (St Martins \$25.99). The best Christmas-time dog cover ever! It wouldn't be Christmas in Paterson, New Jersey, without a dead body covered by snow in Eastside Park. On a snowy November night, “professional retired” defense attorney Andy is walking his dogs in the park when Tara, “the greatest golden retriever the world has ever known,” discovers a hand protruding through the snow. It turns out to be connected to the body of Paterson's mayor, Alex Oliva. The police are quick to arrest journalist Bobby Nash, who had written a negative story about Oliva, which turned out to be false and cost Bobby his job. Vince Sanders, the editor of the local paper and a longtime buddy of Andy's, refuses to believe his former employee capable of murder and begs Andy to defend him. Soon homicides and attempted homicides are “popping up all over.” In

the end, Andy must put his life in peril to draw out the bad guys. Rosenfelt matches crisp action scenes with wry dialogue, and he pithily conveys his characters' shared histories. Newcomers as well as established fans will enjoy this holiday treat. Last year's treat: [Silent Bite](#) (\$16.99). And order the entire [Andy Carpenter](#) series for a dog-gone good time.

Rosenfield, Kat. [No One Will Miss Her](#) (Harper \$27.99). Readers of the *Booknews* will know I am not a big fan of psychological suspense (overdosed since *Gone Girl*). But this debut by Rosenfield, who partnered with the late San Lee to author *A Trick of the Light*, clearly learned from the master. The twist in this one is terrific, and unexpected. As this Starred Review underlines for our **November First Mystery Book of the Month**:

“The murder of Lizzie Oulette, the most hated woman in rundown Copper Falls, Maine, jump-starts this clever, surprising psychological thriller from YA author Rosenfield Few people mourn Lizzie, their dislike stemming from her rough background as the only child of the local junkyard's owner. Instead, the residents of Copper Falls are more worried about her missing husband, the prime suspect in Lizzie's murder, regarded by them as ‘some kind of hometown hero whose life had been unfairly derailed.’ The investigation of Detective Ian Bird of the Maine State Police takes him to Boston to track down Adrienne and Ethan Richards, the wealthy couple who rented the lake house where Lizzie's body was found. A much-despised disgraced financier, Ethan was never prosecuted for bilking many out of their life savings. Flashbacks reveal how the lives of Lizzie and smug, arrogant Adrienne intersected.... The superb character-driven plot delivers an astonishing, believable jolt. Rosenfield shines a searing light on issues of classism, jealousy, and squandered potential.”

Strout, Elizabeth. [Oh William!](#) (Random \$27). Loneliness and betrayal, themes to which the Pulitzer Prize-winning Strout has returned throughout her career, are ever present in this illuminating character-driven saga, the third in her Amgash series. Narrated by Lucy Barton, now a successful writer, the story picks up after the death of Lucy's second husband as she navigates her relationship with her unfaithful first husband, William, the father of her two grown daughters. Lucy and William are still close friends, and though William has also remarried, he still needs Lucy, and she him.

Turnbull, Cadwell. [No Gods No Monsters](#) (Blackstone \$26.99). Our **October SciFi/Fantasy Book of the Month** is getting rave reviews like this one in the *NY Times* which says the book is “an intricate sequence of moving, intimate character portraits before and after an event called the Fracture, when a pack of werewolves deliberately reveal themselves to the public. As other so-called monsters step out of the shadows, fronts emerge in a war fought between secret societies, witnessed by a mysterious narrator who slips from place to place and life to life in his sleep. The depth and care with which Turnbull inhabits each character is riveting; despite an expansive cast spread over wide terrain, I never felt lost or confused. His attention to location detail is considered and clear: The story shifts from Massachusetts to St. Thomas to Virginia with confident ease, carried by beautiful, conversational prose that's startlingly punctuated by reminders of who's narrating the stories — and how. Finishing a book without knowing it's the first in a trilogy is a little like looking down after chasing the Roadrunner off a cliff. In retrospect, I can appreciate

how thorough a grounding Turnbull has given this sprawling first act.” And [here is another review](#) for you. We sold out of Signed copies but have sourced new ones. Yay.

Unger, Lisa. [Last Girl Ghosted](#) (Park Row \$27.99). Unger’s terrific 2020 novel *Confessions on the 7:45* was one of our Crime Books of the Month we were so impressed. She’s on a roll, and back this October, as this *PW* Starred Review shows:

Advice columnist Wren Greenwood, the protagonist of this enthralling psychological thriller, meets Adam Harper after she joins the online dating app Torch. Wren and Adam begin an emotional affair that she believes will last, but three months later Adam vanishes, ghosting Wren by deleting all his contact information, including his Torch profile, and disconnecting his cell phone. Wren is further devastated when a private investigator shows up at her Brooklyn townhouse claiming that Adam may be responsible for the disappearance of three women, who, along with all their money, have never been located. The search for Adam forces Wren to confront her turbulent childhood, which included a violent father who insisted his family live off the grid. Readers will root for the appealing, intelligent characters, even when they’re not acting in their own best interest. Believable plot twists related to questions of identity and the value of friends who become family further elevate the story.

Join Lisa and Karin Slaughter on October 9—I am glad to have Lisa keep me on my toes with Social Media vocabulary.

Williams, Beatriz. [The Wicked Widow](#) (Harper \$27.99). Williams continues her fast-paced Wicked City series with a mystery spanning several decades. In 1998, Ella Dommerich moves into her boyfriend Hector’s Greenwich Village walk-up, following her separation from Patrick, the father of her unborn child. Ella’s aunt Julie asks her to use her investigative skills as a financial analyst to dig up dirt on Senator Frank Hardcastle, a presidential candidate who was once married to another relative of Ella and Julie’s, and to whom Julie bears a grudge. In a parallel narrative set in 1924, Geneva Kelley marries Oliver Anson Marshall and they move into the townhouse later occupied by Hector and Ella. After Louis Hardcastle, the head of an East Coast bootlegging organization, is murdered, Louis’s son blames Anson, a former Prohibition enforcement special agent, and Anson decides to fake his death and go into hiding to protect Geneva. As Ella continues to delve into the background of the Hardcastle family while enduring prenatal nausea, she discovers connections to Patrick’s employer and some financial anomalies, and ropes Patrick in to an increasingly dangerous situation.

Out in October but we will do our virtual event with Beatriz in November, date to come. Order all three [Wicked City mysteries](#).

UNSIGNED EVENT BOOKS

Angoe, Yasmin. [Her Name Is Knight](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$24.95/\$15.95). Aninyeh, the captivating heroine of Angoe’s impressive debut, had an idyllic childhood as a chieftain’s daughter in a Ghanaian village. Then, when she was 14, an enemy of her father, along with a group of barbaric men, ransacked her village, slaughtered her family, and sold her into captivity. Aninyeh eventually escaped and was found by Delphine Knight, who took her to London. There, Aninyeh was adopted by Delphine and her husband, Noble, the leader of the African Tribal Council (aka the Tribe), a business group devoted to uniting the various African countries into a strong economic force. Aninyeh now lives in

Miami, Fla., and is part of an assassination team that protects the Tribe’s interests, killing its enemies when necessary. Things go awry on a mission for the Tribe when, instead of assassinating the intended target, a federal attorney with whom she has become close, Aninyeh kills another person. Meanwhile, after learning the same man who led the attack on her village has joined the Tribe, she plots her revenge. Angoe expertly builds tension by shifting between her lead’s past and present lives. Thriller fans will cheer Aninyeh every step of the way in our **November International Crime Book of the Month**.

Connolly, John. [The Nameless Ones](#) (Atria \$28). **John is in Ireland so he sends us two special treats to include in our copies: a custom tote bag and a gorgeous play card.**

“Early in bestseller Connolly’s outstanding 19th paranormal thriller featuring Maine PI Charlie Parker, two Serbian war criminals, brothers Spiridon and Radovan Vuksan, torture and murder De Jaager, a Dutch fixer, and three other members of De Jaager’s Amsterdam household. These killings are the latest bloodshed in a cycle of violence that began years earlier when a relative of De Jaager was killed by Serbian gangster Andrej Buha, a cousin of the Vuksans. De Jaager’s American assassin friend, Louis, a colleague of Parker’s, fatally shot Buha, who committed atrocities during the Balkan wars in the 1990s, on De Jaager’s behalf. Aided by a contact in American intelligence who has his own reasons for wanting the Vuksans taken down, Louis travels to Europe to avenge De Jaager’s murder. Connolly makes all his characters, even the most evil, multifaceted, while keeping his audience on the edge of their seats. Series fans won’t mind that Parker is offstage much of the time and the plot is less dependent on supernatural elements than usual. This is another intelligent and haunting nail-biter.”—*PW* Starred Review

A Louise Penny fan writes, “Want to take a step out of those cozy villages and into a fast-paced race to hunt down war criminals in Amsterdam? You’ll find that this book shares a strong sense of place—just on a larger, more urban level. And when you inevitably fall in love with the hero, Charlie Parker, as he hunts down a mysterious assassin named Louis, you’ll be pleased to know you can join Charlie on more adventures in this long-running, popular series.”

Heller, L Alison. [The Neighbor’s Secret](#) (Flatiron \$27.99). This is perfect for Liane Moriarty fans—as well as book club catnip since a neighborhood book club organized on almost military lines is the core of this novel of suspense.

Lena Meeker, a resident of upscale Cottonwood Estates, has been a virtual recluse ever since the fatal alcohol-fueled car crash that occurred shortly after one of her signature neighborhood soirées 15 years earlier. Her neighbor Annie Perley, who’s not much older than Lena’s grown daughter, Rachel (who fled home as a teen after the car crash tragedy), starts making persistent overtures of friendship, including pressing Lena to attend a meeting of the spirited monthly book club that serves as the local moms’ social lifeline. It turns out that Annie, a middle school guidance counselor hitting turbulence with her own teenage daughter, harbors a surprising hidden agenda for wanting to connect with Lena—albeit one arguably less shocking than the secrets her new friend has allowed to imprison her for so many years. “Readers will relate to these appealing women, who toss off one-liners even as they wrestle with such issues as teen substance abuse, bullying, and workaholic spouses.”

✉ Lovesey, Peter. [Diamond and the Eye](#) (Soho \$27.95). Stone the crows! It's 30 years since Peter Diamond made his debut in the award-winning [The Last Detective](#) (\$9.99). Now a detective superintendent – still luxuriating in a lovely Bath – his 20th investigation forces him into a reluctant collaboration with Johnny Getz, a private eye whose office is above a hairdressers called Shear Amazing, and who has overdosed on American private eye style and language which rubs Diamond very much the wrong way. A Bath dealer in antiques has gone missing. Unfortunately, a body is soon found dead in the shop in an Egyptian coffin, prompting the wisecracking Getz to quip: “No mummy, for sure, but I had a nasty feeling he was someone’s daddy.” As this suggests, Peter Lovesey writes feel-good crime yet he never lets the comedy vici- ate the very clever, ingenious mystery.

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, fresh from Cambridge. It's only January, and the year 1979 has already brought blizzards, strikes, power cuts, and political unrest. For Allie, 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 aspir- ing investigative journalist Danny Sullivan, who shares her desire to break big stories. They find them, 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.... McDermid does an excellent job capturing a time in Scotland's history fraught with political unrest, IRA terrorism, and labor strikes that nearly paralyze the country. This starts a new series for Diamond Dag- ger winner, Los Angeles Book Prize winner, multiple awards nominee McDermid, a true literary force of nature.

Prendergast, Catherine. [The Gilded Edge: Two Audacious Women and the Cyanide Love Triangle That Shook America](#) (Dutton \$28).

Our copies come with Signed bookplates.

A painstakingly researched, and set in the evocative loca- tions of earthquake-ravaged San Francisco and the Monterey Pen- insula, the true story of two women—a wife and a poet—who learn the high price of sexual and artistic freedom in a vivid depiction of the debauchery of the late Gilded Age. Nora May French and Carrie Sterling arrive at Carmel-by-the-Sea at the turn of the twentieth century with dramatically different ambitions. Nora, a stunning, brilliant, impulsive writer in her early twenties, seeks artistic recognition and bohemian refuge among the most celebrated counterculturalists of the era. Carrie, long-suffering wife of real estate developer George Sterling, wants the opposite: a semblance of the stability she thought her advantageous marriage would offer, now that her philandering husband has taken to writing poetry. After her second abortion, Nora finds herself in a desperate situation but is rescued by an invitation to stay with the Sterlings. To Carrie's dismay, George and the arrest- ingly beautiful poetess fall instantly into an affair. The ensuing love triangle, which ultimately ends with the deaths of all three, is more than just a wild love story and a fascinating forgotten chapter. It questions why Nora May—in her day a revered poet whose nation- ally reported suicide gruesomely inspired youths across the country to take their own lives, with her verses in their pockets no less—has been rendered obscure by literary history. It depicts America at a turning point, as the Gilded Age draws to a close.

Priest, Cherie. [Grave Reservations](#) (Atria \$26). A quirky mys- tery—a psychic travel agent, a cold case she's helping to crack for the Seattle PD, and, of course, a body count. Sprinkle in a ragtag supporting cast and some karaoke, and you've got a fun young detective romp with a supernatural twist, coming out just in time for Halloween!

✉ Rader-Day, Lori. [Death at Greenway](#) (Morrow \$16.99). “In this departure from Rader-Day's usual thrillers, two young women, hired as nurses to care for a group of children, are evacuated to Agatha Christie's country estate during World War II. Then a dead body shows up, and suddenly there's no telling what is safe and who can be trusted. For fans of Agatha Christie and Louise Penny.” Please see the longer review in Our October Large Pa- perback Picks as well. This is our **October British Crime Club Book of the Month**—in the paperback as a nod to your budget. But you can order the unsigned hardcover: [Death at Greenway](#) (\$27.99).

Schulman, Alex. [The Survivors](#) (Knopf \$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**

Simon, Clea. [Hold Me Down](#) (Polis \$26.99). “A hard-rocking riff of a novel explodes with a passion for music while also probing the intimate betrayals buried under a haze of alcohol and pills. Simon expertly explores how music seeks to embody truth, even when musicians hid their own pain behind the melodies.” —Jo- anna Schaffhausen. Musician Gal Raver was only supposed to be in Boston for a few days to attend a memorial concert honoring her friend Aimee, who has recently passed away from cancer. But Gal's plans change when someone from her past turns up dead: her band's first roadie, Thomas Kennedy, aka T.K., has been killed behind the venue for the benefit concert. Aimee's husband is soon arrested for his murder. Gal takes a walk down memory lane to learn why someone would kill T.K. and discovers that more happened during her rock and roll days than she realized.

“Lyrical, layered, and full of surprises. Simon has penned a raw and emotional thriller with a heartbeat, about lost

dreams and missing friends, regrets and buried memories, the final note reminding us that it's never too late to start again."— Lisa Unger

Tarkington, Ed. [The Fortunate Ones](#) (\$16.99). The Indie Next Pick: "A teenage boy with a single mom in a low-income area of Nashville receives a mysterious scholarship offer to attend an elite private school for boys, and the trajectory of his life is altered forever." Paula McClain adds, "Ed Tarkington's wonderful second novel feels like a fresh and remarkably sure-footed take on *The Great Gatsby*, examining the complex costs of attempting to transcend or exchange your given class for a more gilded one. Tarkington's understanding of the human heart and mind is deep, wise and uncommonly empathetic." Well said, I completely agreed when making the hardcover a 2020 Notable New Fiction Book of the Month. The setting is Nashville, the characters fabulous. There's a sharpness to Tarkington's view of the world, an exacting truthfulness of how things work, but he marries it to such an open-hearted and resonant humanity in his writing that it's hard not to place him easily in the company of Pat Conroy and Alice McDermott.

Witten, Matt. [The Necklace](#) (Oceanview \$26.95). Inspired by a true fund-raising event for a women needing to travel to the execution of a man who had raped and murdered her little girl some twenty years ago—but given a twist—this is a story with a real ticking clock. Susan Lentigo's much-loved daughter Amy has been gone for over 20 years. A waitress in a small town in upper NY, Susan gets community support for her drive to the North Dakota prison. The case had been worked by the FBI. On her journey Susan suspects, and her memories begin to resurface, that the condemned man Curt might be innocent of the crime. But the Bureau refuses to revisit the case. Attracting allies in a cynical teen and a retired cop, wracked by doubts, Susan perseveres on her drive which turns into a real crusade to.... Well read it to find out. The necklace Susan and Amy had put together after visiting a craft store is key to the whole.

CLASSICS

Berkeley, Anthony. [The Wintringham Mystery](#) (Harper \$16.99). Republished for the first time in nearly 95 years, a classic winter English country house mystery by the founder of the Detection Club, with a twist that even Agatha Christie couldn't solve! Stephen Munro, a demobbed army officer, reconciles himself to taking a job as a footman to make ends meet. Employed at Wintringham Hall, the delightful but decaying Sussex country residence of the elderly Lady Susan Carey, his first task entails welcoming her eccentric guests to a weekend house-party, at which her bombastic nephew – who recognizes Stephen from his former life – decides that an after-dinner séance would be more entertaining than bridge. Then Cicely disappears! With Lady Susan reluctant to call the police about what is presumably a childish prank, Stephen and the plucky Pauline Mainwaring take it upon themselves to investigate. But then a suspicious death turns the game into an altogether more serious affair...

Edwards, Martin, ed. [A Surprise for Christmas and Other Seasonal Stories](#) (Poisoned Pen Press \$14.99). The British Library Crime Classics collects some rare tales.... See Holiday Themed Reading for more.

James, M.R. [Ghost Stories of an Antiquary](#) (The Haunted Library \$14.99). Poisoned Pen Press brings these gems back just in

time for Halloween. First published in 1904, *Ghost Stories of an Antiquary* contains eight tales of supernatural horror by genre master M.R. James and includes "Canon Alberic's Scrap-Book," "Lost Hearts," "The Mezzotint," "The Ash-Tree." "Number 13," "Count Magnus," "Oh, Whistle and I'll Come to You, My Lad," and "The Treasure of Abbot Thomas."

Japrisot, Sebastien. [Rider on the Rain](#) (Gallic \$15.95). At the start of this outstanding noir from Japrisot (1931–2003), first published in 1992, Mélancolie "Mellie" Mau, a sheltered housewife who lives in a village on the French Riviera, spots a man in the rain who has just gotten off a bus carrying a red travel bag. The man follows Mellie, whose husband is away, to a clothing shop and then to her house, where he rapes her. She loses consciousness, but when she wakes up, she discovers her attacker is in the basement. She shoots him with her husband's shotgun and dumps his body in the sea. Later, at a wedding, Mellie is confronted by a stranger, American Harry Dobbs, who seems to know nearly everything about her encounter with the rapist. Japrisot skillfully deepens the mystery of what's real and what's imagined as Dobbs leads Mellie on a journey to recover the bag and uncover the truth behind the assault. Incisive prose is a plus ("She speaks with the assurance of someone who would never permit even obvious facts to change her mind"). Noir fans will welcome more Japrisot reissues.

Queen, Ellery. [The American Gun Mystery](#) (American Mystery Classics \$15.95). When a washed up Hollywood cowboy-turned-circus rodeo actor is shot dead in the midst of his performance at a New York sports-palace, in front of thousands of onlookers, it seems obvious that someone would have seen the perpetrator of the crime—or at the very least, recovered the gun. But when the ensuing investigation fails to turn up any evidence, even after the newsreels made in the moment are reviewed, the net of suspicion widens across the troupe of performers and the circus staff. Who among them is cunning enough to have constructed such a baffling murder scene? Unluckily for the murderer, genius sleuth Ellery Queen is among the thousands that witnessed the crime, and he won't be satisfied until he cuts through the confusion to discover the truth of the execution. Enjoy the Challenge to the Reader feature in this reissue.

NOT FOR THE FAINT OF HEART

Look for the cozier Halloween reading in the [September Booknews](#)

Collins, Bridget. [The Haunting Season: Eight Ghostly Tales](#) (Pantheon \$25.95). Harsh winter weather and vague Victoriana bind these eight terrifying new horror shorts showcasing human depravity and grisly murder. Several tales feature cruel men, including Collins's "A Study in Black and White," in which a mean-spirited chess enthusiast rents a menacing chess-themed house, and "Monster" by Elizabeth Macneal, which finds aspiring paleontologist Victor Crisp haunted by his choice to sacrifice a child in his careless quest for fame... "Bleak and brutal, these tales will appeal to historical fiction readers and horror lovers alike."

Datlow, Ellen, ed. [When Things Get Dark: Stories Inspired by Shirley Jackson](#) (Titan \$24.95). Winner of Multiple Hugo Awards, Datlow brings together 18 outstanding, atmospheric horror shorts from some of the biggest names in the genre—including Carmen Maria Machado, Stephen Graham Jones, and Joyce

Carol Oates—in tribute to the work of Shirley Jackson. A trio of women explores a house with a bizarre secret in Elizabeth Hand’s “For Sale by Owner.” Cassandra Khaw’s “Quiet Dead Things” traces the fall of the sleepy township of Cedarville following a rash of inexplicable deaths. In Karen Heuler’s “Money of the Dead,” a grief-stricken woman buys back the spirit of her son from the afterlife. Benjamin Percy’s “Hag” tells of one woman’s reckoning with a cult on an isolated island. Each of Datlow’s chilling selections successfully honors the spirit of Jackson’s writing, suffused with both the darkest of human emotions and the terror of the supernatural. Any fan of Jackson’s oeuvre will delight in this anthology.

Harper, Lana. [Payback’s a Witch](#) (Berkley \$16). “Emmy reluctantly returns to her magical hometown of Thistle Grove to serve as arbiter of a magical tournament. But the town now seemingly has much more to offer, including a gorgeous witch. Will she be enough incentive for Emmy to stay? Especially when Emmy finds Talia was also dating her BFF Linden. Romance and a well-developed magical system go into this genre which is called “queer Romcom.”

Harrison, Rachel. [Cackle](#) (Berkley \$27). “Annie is floundering after an unexpected breakup and a subsequent move to a small, quirky town. Her new friend Sophie is a little strange, but Annie is so happy to have someone who has chosen her that she ignores her concerns. This delightfully creepy fall story will work well for those who like paranormal fiction and light horror, and fans of *The Year of the Witching* and *The Deep*.”

Hunt, Laird, ed. [American Midnight: Tales of the Dark](#) (Pushkin Press \$18). Here’s a handsome small paperback with French flaps filled with scary stories by American masters like Poe, Hawthorne, Wharton, Twain, Hurston, with an Introduction by the wonderful Hunt. This little beauty would make a welcome gift to a wide range of readers.

Le Fanu, Sheridan. [Carmilla](#) (Pushkin Press \$18.95). And here is a gorgeous small trim hardcover with a dramatic red and black cover for this classic. In an isolated castle deep in the Austrian forest, Laura leads a solitary life. Then one moonlit night, a carriage crashes into view with unexpected guest Carmilla, beautiful and volatile and prone to nocturnal wanderings. Can the feverish friendship between the two women be controlled....?

Khaw, Cassandra. [Nothing But Blackened Teeth](#) (Tor Nightfire \$19.99). “This short, creepy haunted house tale, brimming with Japanese folklore, cleverly reveals the monstrousness in ordinary human callousness—we’re awful not from horrendous actions or beliefs, but because we just react and shout each other down. For fans of *My Heart Is a Chainsaw* and *The Toll*.”

Starling, Caitlin. [The Death of Jane Lawrence](#) (St. Martins \$27.99). “Jane, a sensible young woman, decides that she must get married. Her first choice is Dr. Lawrence, but she soon discovers his dark, terrifying secrets and becomes engulfed in a tangled mystery of magic, ghosts, demons, and bizarre rituals. A well-written story for fans of gothic fantasy and horror like *Gideon the Ninth* and *Mexican Gothic*.”

HOLIDAY THEMED READING

Some of these are Cozy Crimes but are not included in that section

Andrews, Donna. [The Twelve Jays of Christmas](#) (St Martins \$26.99). Meg Langslow is preparing to host her large extended family at her home in Caerphilly, Virginia, for the Christmas holidays. Unfortunately, she’s hampered by a sprained ankle, two wombats in the basement, and flocks of birds in the library. The birds were released from their cages by an unwanted houseguest, wildlife artist and “misogynistic jerk” Roderick Castlemayne, who’s in Caerphilly to illustrate the new book by Meg’s grandfather, an eminent naturalist and the owner of the zoo from which the furry and feathered guests have been brought to serve as models for the artist’s illustrations. When someone plunges a Swiss army knife into Castlemayne’s throat, the only people who are sorry to see him go seem to be the legions to whom he owes money. Ex-wives, bill collectors, and process servers are just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to suspects. This Christmas romp comes with a litter of adorable puppies.

Andrews, Mary Kay. [The Santa Suit: A Novella](#) (St Martins \$19.99). When newly-divorced Ivy Perkins buys an old farmhouse sight unseen, she is definitely looking for a change in her life. The Four Roses, as the farmhouse is called, is a labor of love—but Ivy didn’t bargain on just how much labor. The previous family left so much furniture and so much junk, that it’s a full-time job sorting through all of it. At the top of a closet, Ivy finds an old Santa suit—beautifully made and decades old. In the pocket of a suit she finds a note written in a childish hand: it’s from a little girl who has one Christmas wish, and that is for her father to return home from the war. This discovery sets Ivy off on a mission. Who wrote the note? Did the man ever come home? What mysteries did the Rose family hold? Ivy’s quest brings her into the community, at a time when all she wanted to do was be left alone and nurse her wounds. But the magic of Christmas makes miracles happen.

Blackburn, Maggie. [Once Upon a Seaside Murder](#) (Crooked Lane \$26.99). There’s no place like home for the holidays, even if home is sleepy, beachside Brigid’s Island, NC. During this season for giving, the town wakes up to a welcome throng of shoppers—and Beach Reads is no exception. But bookseller Summer Merriwether’s Christmas cheer turns to cringing fear when she uncovers a deadly secret about her late mother—a secret someone will kill to keep. When the local library hosts a cozy mystery panel discussion, Summer learns that one of the authors on the panel based her book on an actual murder that shook Brigid’s Island thirty-five years before. Worse, she soon learns that her dearly missed mother, Hildy, took a disturbingly deep interest in the case, going so far as to collect clippings and keep a journal of the dark doings. This doesn’t jibe with Summer’s memories of her usually cheery mother at all. Tidings get worse when Summer learns of her long-lost biological family’s involvement in the crime...and still worse when the life of the book’s author is threatened. With the help of Hildy’s plucky book club, Summer puts her scholarly smarts to work on protecting the cozy author and solving the decades-old murder. But this ghost from Christmas past may still be deadly in the present

Bolton, Ginger. [Deck the Donuts](#) (Kensington \$15.95). It’s Christmastime again in Fallingbrook, Wisconsin. Emily has truly

decked the halls of her donut shop and decorated her donuts with festive designs from green and red frosting to snowflake sprinkles. For the annual Ice and Lights Festival, she's commissioned a sculpture with three ice-carved donut shapes to form a holey snowman, Frosty the Donut. She has one Christmas wish this year—to spend some time under the mistletoe with a certain detective. But the holidays just aren't the same without an unexpected disaster or two. A tour bus on its way to the festival has crashed and a snowstorm has left all the shaken passengers stranded and shivering. Emily and her friends open their homes to shelter the traveling families, while the bus driver is admitted to the hospital for his injuries. But the following morning, Emily discovers his body—buried beneath Frosty the Donut....

✦ Bowen, Rhys. [God Rest Ye, Royal Gentlemen](#) (Berkley \$26). Her Royal Spyness with Christmas cheer (and crime). See Signed Books for more.

Childs, Laura. [Twisted Tea Christmas](#) (Berkley \$26). With several Christmas-themed teas booked for the month, Theodosia Browning, owner of the Indigo Tea Shop in Charleston, S.C., is looking forward to a busy December. The season gets off to an inauspicious start, however, when Theodosia discovers 85-year-old Drucilla Heyward dead at the society woman's own charity fundraiser, her diamond rings stripped off her fingers and a priceless Renoir painting missing. Miss Drucilla's personal assistant asks Theodosia for help figuring out whodunit, so between Christmas catering jobs, Theodosia and her ever-patient tea sommelier, Drayton Conneley, question witnesses and snoop for clues, do a little light breaking and entering, dodge a few bullets, and dig up an extra body the police seem to have missed. Enjoy the warm ambiance of Charleston at Christmastime which makes up for a weak plot.

✦ Edwards, Martin, ed. [A Surprise for Christmas and Other Seasonal Stories](#) (Poisoned Pen Press \$14.99). A Postman murdered while delivering cards on Christmas morning. A Christmas pine growing over a forgotten homicide. A Yuletide heist gone horribly wrong. When there's as much murder as magic in the air and the facts seem to point to the impossible, it's up to the detective's trained eye to unwrap the clues and neatly tie together an explanation (preferably with a bow on top). Here the British Library Crime Classics series presents seasonal stories collected into a stellar anthology brimming with rare tales from the likes of Julian Symons, Margery Allingham, Anthony Gilbert and Cyril Hare Fluke, Joanne. [Christmas Dessert Murder](#) (Kensington \$12.95). This holiday omnibus features two classic mysteries set in Hannah Swensen's Cookie Jar bakery in Lake Eden, Minnesota: *Christmas Caramel Murder* and *Christmas Cake Murder*.

Frost, Jacqueline. [Slashing Through the Snow](#) (Crooked Lane \$26.99). The murder of a Grinch-like reviewer spawns a few suspects too many. The Yule-centric town of Mistletoe, Maine, is in the holiday spirit as Holly White's family works to make The Hearth, the new café offshoot of their Christmas Tree Farm, a hit. What they really need is a killer review from Karen Moody of *New England Magazine*. The trouble is that Karen is, well, a real Karen who seems determined to find all sorts of things wrong with her experience. Sure, she can have a horse-drawn carriage drive her from the main hall to dinner, but it seems so inefficient: What if her dinner gets cold in the meantime? Instead of giving Karen the eye roll she so rightly deserves, Holly resolves to play

good hostess. Then someone offs Karen using a metal nutcracker that was Cookie's Christmas gift to Holly. Holly's determined to find the real killer to save Cookie from taking the heat, even if investigating puts her at odds with boyfriend and Sheriff Evan Gray.

Klavan, Andrew. [When Christmas Comes](#) (Mysterious \$21.95). As the holiday season descends on the lakeside town of Sweet Haven, public defender Victoria Grossburger recruits her old friend English professor Cameron Winter, the protagonist of this spare, heartfelt crime novel from Edgar winner Klavan, to try to clear Travis Blake, a third generation Army Ranger who's accused of murdering his girlfriend, Jennifer Dean, a beloved elementary school librarian. See New in Hardcover for more – Klavan is not a cozy crimes writer.

Maguire, Gregory. [A Wild Winter Swan](#) (\$16.99). After brilliantly reimagining the worlds of Oz, Wonderland, Dickensian London, and the *Nutcracker*, the author of *Wicked* turns his unconventional genius to Hans Christian Andersen's "The Wild Swans," transforming this classic tale into an Italian-American girl's poignant coming-of-age story, set amid the magic of Christmas in 1960s New York.

✦ Moncrieff, Ada. [Murder Most Festive](#) (Sourcebooks \$14.99). Christmas 1938. The Westbury family and assorted friends have gathered together for another legendary Christmas at their Sussex mansion. As family tensions simmer on Christmas Eve, the champagne flows, the silver sparkles and upstairs the bedrooms are made up ready for their occupants. But one bed will lie empty that night... Come Christmas morning, guest David Campbell-Scott is found lying dead in the snow, with only a hunting rifle lying beside him and one set of footprints leading to the body. But something doesn't seem right to amateur sleuth Hugh Gaveston. Campbell-Scott had just returned from the East with untold wealth—why would he kill himself? Hugh sets out to investigate... and what he finds is shocking!

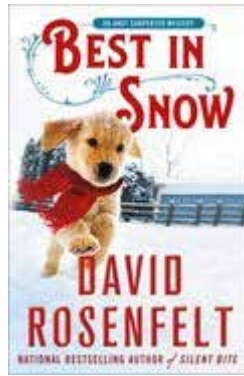
Quinn, Spencer. [It's a Wonderful Woof](#) (Forge \$26.99). Chet (the dog) and Bernie (the Arizona PI) romp through a Christmas crime. See Signed Books for more.

✦ Redmond, Heather. [A Christmas Carol Murder](#) (\$15.95). It's December, 1835, and Charles Dickens, the protagonist in this series, is a journalist. Traveling to Hertfordshire, he encounters a woman who claims that her late sister identified Charles as her baby's father, and insists he assume the infant's care. Charles returns with little Timothy to London, where he lodges the boy with friends. The next evening, Charles and his fiancée, Kate Hogarth, are caroling when an elderly man with iron chains around his neck falls to his death from a second-story window. The corpse is Jacob Harley, a moneylender who lived with his business partner, Emmanuel Screws. As Charles seeks to find Timothy's real father, he investigates Harley's illegitimate son, the owner of the company that made the chains, and the partners' mysterious American employee. This is a heavy nod to Dickens' classic work but Redmond makes a seasonal cozy for you.

Rosenfelt, David. [Best in Snow](#) (St Martins \$25.99). The best Christmas-time dog cover ever! It wouldn't be Christmas in Paterson, New Jersey, without a dead body covered by snow in Eastside Park. On a snowy November night, "professional retired" defense attorney Andy is walking his dogs in the park when Tara, "the greatest golden retriever the world has ever known,"

discovers a hand protruding through the snow. It turns out to be connected to the body of Paterson's mayor, Alex Oliva. See Signed Books for more.

Last year's Christmas caper is ready for your stocking(s): [Silent Bite](#) (\$16.99). Andy and his family return home after a Caribbean cruise, which he didn't particularly enjoy, when he gets a call from Willie Miller, his friend and partner in the Tara Foundation, a dog-rescue operation. Willie wants Andy to defend Tony Birch, who was paroled from prison three years earlier following a manslaughter conviction. Tony has since been on the straight and narrow, recently taking over the shop where he worked as a mechanic after the owner retired. Now evidence is stacking up against Tony for the murder of a former associate of his who testified against him at his manslaughter trial. The fatal shooting of another former associate of Tony's raises the ante. "Andy steps into the courtroom to defend his client with the sublime self-assurance of Perry Mason." Loads of dog lore and Andy's gripes about things that get under his skin add to the fun.



Taylor, Patrick. [An Irish Country Yuletide](#) (Forge \$17.99). December 1965. 'Tis the season once again in the cozy Irish village of Ballybucklebo, which means that Doctor Fingal Flahertie O'Reilly, his young colleague Barry Laverty, and their assorted friends, neighbors, and patients are enjoying all their favorite holiday traditions: caroling, trimming the tree, finding the perfect gifts for their near and dear ones, and anticipating a proper Yuletide feast complete with roast turkey and chestnut stuffing. There's even the promise of snow in the air, raising the prospect of a white Christmas. Not that trouble has entirely taken a holiday as the season brings its fair share of challenges as well, including a black-sheep brother hoping to reconcile with his estranged family before it's too late, a worrisome outbreak of chickenpox, and a sick little girl whose faith in Christmas is in danger of being crushed in the worst way. As roaring fireplaces combat the brisk December chill, it's up to O'Reilly to play Santa, both literally and figuratively. This novella in a colorful hardcover is a perfect stocking stuffer.

COZY CRIMES

More in Holiday Themed Crime above and Small Paperbacks below. And for you Cozy Crimes fans here is [a link to an interesting take](#) on cozies published in the Atlantic

Abbott, Bailee. [A Brush with Murder](#) (Crooked Lane \$26.99). For Chloe Abbington, the transition from fine art painter in New York City to painting-event business owner in charming Whisper Cove is more than a little jarring. But when poison-pen journalist Fiona Gimble writes a viciously negative review of the newly opened Paint with a View, Chloe learns that critics are the same everywhere. And when she finds Fiona's body behind her shop with a painting knife in her neck, Chloe realizes that this picture-perfect town offers anything but peace and quiet...

Alexander, Ellie. [The Cure for What Ales You](#) (St Martins \$26.99). Leavenworth, Washington, craft brewer Sloan Krause is shocked when Marianne DuPont—a woman from Sloan's past—confronts her with a wild claim: Sloan's life is in danger

from a man linked to the death of her biological mother. Wary of the erratic Marianne, the levelheaded Sloan consults police chief Meyers, who assigns an officer to protect Sloan and promises to check out Marianne's story. Meanwhile, the housekeeper at the Hotel Vierter Stock, where Marianne is staying, is murdered amid the busy town festival of Maifest, and Sloan speculates about Marianne's possible involvement with the crime, as she was seen arguing with the housekeeper. Sloan also learns of a poisonous atmosphere among the hotel staff as well as a string of thefts, wondering about potential connections to the housekeeper's death. The fascinating details about brewing, activities of Leavenworth's colorful residents and tourists, and steadily ratcheting suspense keep readers turning the pages.

Berry, Tamara. [Hypnosis Is for Hacks](#) (Kensington \$26). Eleanor Wilde has traded a career as a sham medium for a (relatively) respectable life in a small English town, providing the locals with herbal remedies and elixirs. But on a trip to the seaside town of Brighton, her past comes calling—and so does a killer. An ominous change in weather is accompanied by the reappearance of Ellie's former partner-in-crime, Armand Lamont. Back when Ellie earned a living as a phony medium, Armand's hypnosis skills helped the pair persuade many gullible marks to hand over their savings. Ellie assumes that Armand has resurfaced with blackmail in mind, but before she can figure out his angle, she and Liam witness a man being pushed from a boat by two shadowy figures who then vanish into midair. Phantoms? Demons? Though Ellie doesn't believe in either, the recovered body is real enough, as is a string of thefts plaguing their luxury hotel. Ellie has a theory, and it requires inviting Nicholas to join them under a fake identity. Their evolving relationship is as complex as this case, and Ellie's authentic supernatural abilities too are developing in surprising ways. But as for whether the outcome will be good or bad, not even her witchy powers can say.

Canadeo, Anne. [Strangers on a Skein](#) (Kensington \$26). Maggie Messina, the owner of the Black Sheep & Company knitting shop in Plum Harbor, Mass., and her fellow knitters are helping Phoebe, the shop's assistant manager, organize her own stall at the town's Farmers' and Crafts Market. Phoebe is nervous about her first solo venture into retail and a little creeped out that the vacancy came about because farmer Jimmy Hooper, a longtime vendor at the market, died by suicide. It also doesn't help that her former beau, Harry McSweeney (aka Harry the Potter), has set up his ceramics stall opposite her location. The market seems to be a hive of grudges and petty wranglings, and Phoebe becomes the victim of heinous pranks. When it turns out Jimmy was murdered and another vendor dies, the knitters band together to do what they do best (besides knitting, that is): investigate. A wedding is a bonus for series fans.

Crowe, Kitt. [Digging Up Trouble](#) (Crooked Lane \$26.99). Aspiring writer Lexi Jones, the 27-year-old narrator of Crowe's diverting debut and series launch, manages the Sweet Fiction Bookshop in Confection, Oregon. Lexi doesn't get along with her ornery neighbor, Gil Cloutier, who complains that Lexi's "border collie-pit mix," Cookie, digs up his garden. One night, Lexi works on a scene for her suspense novel in which she imagines a serial killer using a pipe to bludgeon to death a stand-in for Gil. The next morning, Cookie slips into Gil's yard, where Lexi finds the dog with a copper pipe in her mouth. Nearby is what looks

like a shallow grave—with Gil’s body inside. Already at the scene is Detective Chad Berg, to whom Lexi admits she quarreled with Gil the day before. The detective suggests she might need a lawyer. Fortunately, there are plenty of other suspects (including Confection Garden Club members who might have wanted to eliminate Gil because he was the shoo-in winner for the \$15,000 prize in the upcoming best garden contest), and the members of Lexi’s book club join her in some amateur sleuthing. A second murder raises the stakes, and the relationship between Lexi and Chad generates some romantic heat.

Davis, Krista. [Murder Outside the Lines](#) (Kensington \$15.95). Includes A Front and Back Cover for You to Color! With Halloween just around the corner, the fall colors in Georgetown are brilliant. As manager of the Color Me Read bookstore, coloring book creator Florrie Fox has arranged for psychic author Hilda Rattenhorst to read from Spooktacular Ghost Stories. But the celebrity medium arrives for the event in hysterics, insisting she just saw a bare foot sticking out of a rolled-up carpet in a nearby alley. Is someone trying to sweep murder under the rug? Florrie calls in her policeman beau, Sergeant Eric Jonquille, but the carpet corpse has disappeared without a trace. Then in the middle of her reading, Hilda chillingly declares that she feels the killer’s presence in the store. Is this a publicity stunt or a genuine psychic episode?

Goldenbaum, Sally. [A Crime of a Different Stripe](#) (\$15.95). While no-nonsense mother-to-be Cass Halloran tries downplaying her pregnancy and her frequent doctor’s visits as an “older” mother-to-be, a softer side of the lobsterwoman emerges as she joins the Seaside Knitters in knitting an abundance of delicate hats and booties. But in contrast to the happy news, terrifying events unfold at the town’s art series that puts a real chill in their New England fall... Izzy Perry’s husband Sam had reservations about inviting his one-time mentor Harrison Grant to speak at the opening reception, although he never imagined the famed and charismatic photographer would rudely embarrass his hosts that evening. But when a dead body turns up along the wooded shoreline the next day, startling secrets come into focus that could undo the tight-knit community of local artists.

Kingsbury, Kate. [In Hot Water](#) (Crooked Lane \$26.99). This series launch from Kingsbury, author of the Pennyfoot Hotel mysteries, opens with Detective Tony Messina gazing on the pink negligee-clad body of Dean Ramsey, a candy store maintenance worker, who fell to the rocks from the top-floor balcony of the Blue Surf Hotel in Misty Bay, Oregon. Signs of a struggle suggest Dean was pushed to his death. Dean’s former wife, Jenna Ramsey, an assistant at the Willow Pattern Tearoom, becomes the prime suspect, but her friend and employer, Vivian Wainwright, the tearoom’s proprietor, is determined to prove Jenna’s innocence. Aided and abetted by Gracie Jackson, Vivian’s other assistant, and pet shop owner Hal Douglass, and drawing on a little knowledge of criminology from Vivian’s late attorney husband, the friends follow one clue after another as they seek a killer and a motive—and the reason for the victim’s unusual dress. Despite some reckless sleuthing, Vanessa and her cohorts stumble their way to a surprising resolution. Lively characters and a simmering romance between Jenna and Tony will leave readers looking forward to the sequel.

Murray, Amita. [Arya Winters and the Tiramisu of Death](#) (Polis \$16.99). Arya has a thriving business creating “macabre cakes” in an English village where she lives in a cottage she inherited from her Auntie Meera, an herbalist who was murdered a few months earlier. Then Tobias Yards, Arya’s neighbor, dies from eating a slice of poisoned tiramisu, which was decidedly not poisoned when she left it on his doorstep. This will be our **November Cozy Crimes Book of the Month**, price friendly and fittingly imbued with food. See Our October Large Paperback Picks below for a longer review.

Reyes, Raquel V. [Mango, Mambo, And Murder](#) (Crooked Lane \$26.99). Fitting right in with Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15-October 15), here is our **October Cozy Crimes Book of the Month**. Some of you may find the sprinkling of Spanish interrupts the reading flow, but it’s easy to translate in context. Here’s a sparkling Starred Review that accords with my own take: “Cuban American Miriam Quiñones-Smith, the spunky, resilient narrator of Reyes’s refreshing debut and series launch, wants nothing more than to finally finish her PhD in food anthropology. That prospect remains remote, however, since she moved from New York to Coral Shores, ‘a 1950s time-warped village within the city of Miami,’ for her husband’s work and she decided to stay at home with her small son. Miriam is saved from the drudgery of her new life by an offer to contribute her Caribbean food expertise to a Spanish-language morning TV show. Things are starting to look up for Miriam, until a socialite drops dead at a women’s club lunch she attends. Another suspicious death follows. When Miriam’s best friend and partner-in-crime, Alma, is framed for one of what turn out to be murders, Miriam determines to find the truth. The judicious use of Spanish phrases helps bring the reader closer to these well-defined characters and their vibrant social scene. Mouthwatering recipes round out the volume.”—PW

And not cozy but feel good fiction from Britain:

Adams, Sar Nisha. [The Reading List](#) (Morrow \$27.99). “A list of recommended classics helps a widower spark a friendship with a teen librarian dealing with overwhelming family issues. An uplifting tearjerker about libraries and the books that touch our soul. For fans of *Ellie and the Harpmaker* and *Eleanor Oliphant Is Completely Fine*.”

Pearce, A.J. [Yours Cheerfully](#) (Scribner \$26). “Fans of Pearce’s first in the Emmy Lake Chronicles, [Dear Mrs. Bird](#) (\$17), surely a hit with readers of [The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society](#) (\$17) charming smash novel, will cheer Emmy Lake’s return as a young advice columnist in wartime London. A chance meeting leads to Emmy visiting a munitions factory where she learns about the struggles of the women working there. A wonderful, well-told story for fans of Lissa Evans and Jojo Moyes.” There’s an excellent film for the Guernsey story produced by bookseller Mitchell Kaplan I heartily recommend.

NEW IN HARDCOVER

Alsterdal, Tove. [We Know You Remember](#) (Harper \$28.99). A Starred Review for a Swedish debut: “Olof Hagström returns to his family’s house in Kramfors, Sweden, which he hasn’t visited since he was convicted 23 years earlier at 14 for raping and killing a girl, though no body was found. Too young to be sentenced, the learning-disabled Olof was sent to a youth home. Inside, Olof

releases a dog that's been shut in the kitchen, and finds the dead body of his reclusive father, Sven, in the shower. Olof drives away, but the dog blocks the road, where he stops long enough to be approached by Patrik Nydalen, a neighbor who soon realizes who Olof is. Olof tells Patrik his father is dead. Police detective Eira Sjödin, who was nine at the time of Olof's conviction, investigates what turns into a murder case, in which the locals suspect Olof. In her compulsive hunt for the truth, Eira must deal with pernicious changes in Swedish policing and grapple with her mother's descent into dementia. Strong local color, convincing characters, and a twisty plot make this a Nordic Noir standout."

Banville, John. [April in Spain](#) (Hанover Square \$27.99). If you watched the TV serialization of earlier Quirke novels, set in a dark, usually rainy 1950s Dublin, you know that misery and melancholia (and drink) color Quirke's world. Moving this book to Spain, the Basque region around San Sebastian, tricks you into thinking maybe it will be light and sunshine. And for awhile for a now happily married Quirke, it is. But an ER visit where he meets up with an apparently Irish doctor called April Latimer starts a chain of events linked to Dublin killer Terry Trice, who just likes killing people, and sets off a spiraling series of events that... Well, no spoilers here. I want to make it clear the title refers to the woman, April, not the month. And there is some lovely prose as we move slowly along the story line.

✎ Beaton, MC/RW Green. [Down the Hatch](#) (St Martins \$26.99). Green, who collaborated with British author Beaton (1936–2019) on [Hot to Trot](#) (\$7.99), now continues the adventures of private detective Agatha Raisin, thorn in the side of conservative Cotswold society. Agatha, out for a bracing power walk through Mircester Park, strides straight into a murder: at least she thinks so, even though ever-inept Detective Chief Inspector Wilkes believes the death to be accidental. The victim, Harold Nelson, is found dressed in the pristine whites of the Mircester Crown Green Bowling Club, lying spread-eagled on the grass, a bottle of rum at his side. His fellow bowlers loath him. Nonetheless, Agatha makes it her personal mission to find Nelson's killer, all the while juggling her paying clients' cases, which involve, among other things, exotic dancers, space aliens, and a paternity suit. You can decide if Agatha is softening her edge under Green... or not.

Brown, Rita Mae. [Claws for Alarm](#) (Bantam \$28). "Fair" Haristeen is known throughout Crozet, Virginia, as a good horse vet and a better man. So when Benjamin Wagner, a new vet in town, is found dead in his unopened clinic, local police turn to Fair for help getting to the bottom of things. Fair quickly realizes Ben's clinic has been robbed of ketamine, used by doctors as a horse tranquilizer but also a popular recreational drug. Then Fair's own ketamine goes missing from the back of his truck. Was Ben killed for his supply? Or was he mixed up in something bigger? Meanwhile, Candida Perez, one of Crozet's oldest and most beloved citizens, is found dead at her desk. Not so alarming, given her ninety years of life. But the bickering of her children, Ballard and Constance, over her will and the family's valuable collection of historical letters threatens to drive the rest of the town to madness. It's a situation that calls for Mary Minor Haristeen, Sneaky Pie the feline, and the rest of the animals to deploy their skills. Cozy fans in general will enjoy this long-running series.

Butler, Robert Olen. [Late City](#) (Grove \$27). A 115-year-old man lies on his deathbed as the 2016 election results arrive, and revisits his life in this moving story of love, fatherhood, and the American century from Pulitzer Prize winner Butler. Sam's conclusion, to his surprise, is how much he still has to learn about himself.

✎ Calkins, Susanna. [The Cry of the Hangman](#) (Severn \$28.99). Set in 1667 London, Calkins's twisty sixth Lucy Campion whodunit finds former servant Lucy thriving as a bookseller's employee. She now produces books and writes true crime accounts, albeit without being credited as their author. Her oral recitation of one of her grim stories is interrupted by a rival orator, who recounts the gory tale of a fraudulent tooth-puller, Geoffrey Knight, whose botched procedure led to a death several years earlier. The Donnetts—a soap maker and his wife—provided the damning testimony that sent Knight to the gallows. Soon after Lucy hears about the case, the Donnetts are murdered—the wife stabbed with scissors, the husband scalded by lye dumped on his head. Lucy investigates the killings and their possible link to an assault on her former master, magistrate Thomas Hargrave, by someone who stole Hargrave's private papers. Calkins makes her lead's sleuthing plausible while playing scrupulously fair with readers, few of whom will identify the murderer before Lucy does. This series keeps getting better.

✎ Callahan, Patti. [Once Upon a Wardrobe](#) (Harper \$24.99) is a story that pulls back the curtain on the early life of C. S. Lewis, the creator of Narnia. Megs Devonshire is brilliant with numbers and equations, on a scholarship at Oxford, and dreams of solving the greatest mysteries of physics. She prefers the dependability of facts—except for one: the younger brother she loves with all her heart doesn't have long to live. When George becomes captivated by a brand-new book called *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* and begs her to find out where Narnia came from, there's no way she can refuse. Despite her timidity about approaching the famous author, Megs soon finds herself taking tea with the Oxford don and his own brother, imploring them for answers. What she receives instead are more stories . . . stories of Jack Lewis's life, which she takes home to George. Why won't Mr. Lewis just tell her plainly what George wants to know? The answer will reveal to Meg many truths that science and math cannot, and the gift she thought she was giving to her brother—the story behind Narnia—turns out to be his gift to her, instead: hope.

"*Once Upon a Wardrobe* is a poignant meditation on the lengths we will go to for our loved ones as well as a fascinating glimpse into the early life of C. S. Lewis. Patti Callahan's beautiful, life-affirming novel is a reminder that literature lives inside us, and that when we read someone else's story, we understand so much more about our own. A gorgeous, compelling book." —Janet Skeslien Charles, author of *The Paris Library*

Cantrell, Christian. [Scorpion](#) (Random \$27). Quinn Mitchell is a nine-to-five spy—an intelligence analyst for the CIA during the day, and a suburban wife and mother on evenings and weekends. After her young daughter is killed in a tragic accident, sending her life into a tailspin, Quinn hopes to find a new start in her latest assignment: investigating a series of bizarre international assassinations whose victims have been found with numeric codes tattooed, burned, or carved into their flesh. As Quinn follows the

killer's trail across the globe, always one body behind, she begins uncovering disturbing connections between the murders—and herself—and one step closer to the Epoch Index, a mysterious encrypted message discovered in the archives of the Large Hadron Collider. Its origins are unknown and decrypting it is beyond even the CIA. Yet nothing else can possibly link together a slew of unsolvable murders, an enigmatic and sophisticated serial killer who always seems to be three steps ahead, a quirky young physics prodigy whose knowledge extends well beyond her years, and, underlying everything, the inescapable tragedy of Quinn's own past....

✦ Clark, Cassandra. [The Day of the Serpent](#) (Severn \$28.99). In 1400, Sir Thomas Swynford, “stepbrother to the usurper king Henry IV,” compels Brother Chandler, a perceptive and worldly London friar who serves as a reluctant spy for the House of Lancaster, to accompany him and his entourage on a mysterious journey north. Their destination turns out to be Pontefract Castle, where Richard II, the Plantagenet king deposed in 1399, is imprisoned (think Candace Robb for Richard's era). Chandler, whose job it is to care for the ailing Richard, is appalled by his treatment. When Richard dies, Swynford and company head back to London with the king's coffin. Along the way, a mysterious bowman picks off Swynford's men one by one, and Chandler is ordered to find the killer. The search for the culprit, whose victims the reader knows little about, takes a back seat to factional plots in London, to Chandler's evolving sense of morality, and the mystery of forbidden books harbored by poet Geoffrey Chaucer, employer of Matilda, the friar's love interest. “Those who enjoy medieval stories of betrayal and ruthlessness will be delighted”—and anyone who read Anya Seton's [Katherine](#) (\$17.99), possibly my favorite historical fiction of all time, and became forever immersed in Plantagenet drama.

✦ Clements, Rory. [A Prince and a Spy](#) (Pegasus \$26.95). This spy thriller unravels a plot that goes to the heart of the Third Reich—and the British Monarchy. It begins in Sweden where cousins Prince George of England and Prince Philipp von Hesse, of Germany, meet up in a remote castle. Clement writes, “The books are centered on the University of Cambridge, which, in the 1930s, was a snobby place full of the children of the upper classes. It was also infamous as the breeding ground for the so-called Cambridge Spies—young men who embraced communism and infiltrated the secret services, betraying Britain and America to the Soviet Union. I wanted my man to be an outsider, looking upon the English class system with a modern, critical eye.”

Clinton, Hillary Rodham/Louise Penny. [State of Terror](#) (SimonSchuster \$30). After four years of political turmoil and diminished American standing overseas, a new administration is sworn into office, only for the president to select Ellen Adams, a rival political figure, as secretary of state. At the president's first congressional address, a State Department employee receives a coded threat — terrorist attacks begin to escalate, and Secretary Adams must get to the bottom of the conspiracy.

✦ Edwards, Martin, ed. [Many Deadly Returns](#) (Severn \$28.99). The fourth anthology from Britain's Murder Squad showcases the group's talents for short fiction with a bite. Each current squad member has contributed three new stories, and three former members add one apiece. Highlights include Kate Ellis' “The Confessions of Edward Prime,” which presents a unique solu-

tion to the problem of a man determined to confess to a crime he didn't commit, and Ann Cleeves' “Wild Swimming,” set just as the COVID pandemic appears to be ebbing, in which DCI Vera Stanhope probes a drowning during an outing of four friends. Edwards's “Lucky Liam” features an intricate revenge plot concocted by a cuckolded spouse. Impossible crime fans will get a kick out of Kate Ellis' locked-room puzzle, “My Oleander,” and historical mystery devotees will find Cath Staincliffe's “Two Birds,” set in 1871 Blackpool, memorable.

Edwards and the other members of the Murder Squad—Ann Cleeves, Kate Ellis, Margaret Murphy, Chris Sims, Cath Staincliff—will join me for a book chat on November 10 which will post soon afterwards.

✦ Ellicott, Jessica. [Murder in an English Glade](#) (Kensington \$26). “Early in Ellicott's delightful fifth 1920s mystery featuring American Beryl Helliwell and her English friend, Edwina Davenport, the two proprietors of the Davenport and Helliwell Private Enquiry Agency are approached by Constance Maitland, of ‘an old, highly respected family’ in Walmsley Parva. Mrs. Maitland says she suspects her sister-in-law is having an affair with a guest at an artists' colony she's hosting at her estate, Maitland Park. Beryl and Edwina agree to pose as guests, even though it soon becomes clear that their client wants them to conduct a sham investigation for her own nefarious purposes. When one of the guests at Maitland Park is strangled, the duo is in place to gain the confidences of household members in an effort to identify the killer. Shifting viewpoints move the plot briskly along right up to the surprising conclusion. Along the way, Ellicott does a good job conveying the fluidity of the British social order after WWI and how the paucity of men opened many opportunities for women. *Downton Abbey* lovers should be pleased.”—*PW*. [Order the whole series](#) for some pleasant escape reading.

Fawcett, Heather. [The School between Winter and Fairyland](#) (Harper \$27.99). You know that story about a boy hero who goes off to a school for magic? The one with the slightly aloof headmaster, the magical beasts, and the prophecy that says he'll go up against a disembodied evil that might destroy him? This isn't that story. Sure, all those elements are here: There's a wunderkind, Cai Morrigan, and the Inglenook School of Magic, and there's definitely a prophecy. But this story is about his self-proclaimed sidekick, Autumn Malog, a white-haired 12-year-old beastkeeper at the school who is desperately seeking clues into the mysterious disappearance of her twin brother, Winter. Autumn and Cai make a pact to help each other—she believes Winter is trapped inside the school, and Cai knows the castle better than anyone, and he is secretly afraid of dragons while Autumn has a gift with the beasts (she counts a boggart as her friend). That's when the true magic begins. Fans of other boy wizards will be enchanted. For readers ages 9+. We have been making additions to our Young and Teen Readers shelves.

Franzen, Jonathan. [Crossroads](#) (Farrar \$30). It's December 23, 1971, and the Hildebrandt family is at a crossroads. The patriarch, Russ, the associate pastor of a suburban Chicago church, is poised to break free of a marriage he finds joyless—unless his brilliant and unstable wife, Marion, breaks free of it first. Their eldest child, Clem, is coming home from college afire with moral absolutism, having taken an action that will shatter his father. Clem's sister, Becky, long the social queen of her

high-school class, has veered into the era's counterculture, while their younger brother Perry, fed up with selling pot to support his drug habit, has firmly resolved to be a better person. Each of the Hildebrandts seeks a freedom that each of the others threatens to complicate. You can engage with them in the first of a trilogy.

Grant, Kimi Cunningham. [These Silent Woods](#) (St Martins \$27.99). For eight years, Cooper and his young daughter, Finch, have lived in isolation in a remote cabin in the northern Appalachian woods. And that's exactly the way Cooper wants it, because he's got a lot to hide. Finch has been raised on the books filling the cabin's shelves and the beautiful but brutal code of life in the wilderness. But she's starting to push back against the sheltered life Cooper has created for her—and he's still haunted by the painful truth of what it took to get them there. Then a stranger arrives and disrupts everything. After a shocking disappearance threatens to upend the only life Finch has ever known, Cooper is forced to decide whether to keep hiding or face up to his past. A book for readers of Karen Dionne, David Joy, and those who enjoyed Sharyn McCrumb.

Grisham, John. [The Judge's List](#) (Doubleday \$29.95). In [The Whistler](#), Lacy Stoltz investigated a corrupt judge who was taking millions in bribes from a crime syndicate. She put the criminals away, but only after being attacked and nearly killed. Three years later, and approaching forty, she is tired of her work for the Florida Board on Judicial Conduct and ready for a change. Then she meets a mysterious woman who is so frightened she uses a number of aliases. Jeri Crosby's father was murdered twenty years earlier in a case that remains unsolved and that has grown stone cold. But Jeri has a suspect whom she has become obsessed with and has stalked for two decades. Along the way, she has discovered other victims. Suspicions are easy enough, but proof seems impossible. But hey...this is a Grisham.

Hall, Tamrin. [As the Wicked Watch](#) (Morrow \$27.99). This debut author writes of her novel about a TV journalist investigating the death of two Black girls and what may be a serial killer terrorizing Chicago: "Someone in my department died unexpectedly. There was nothing sinister about the death, but I was mortified by how quickly everyone went back to normal after the person died. That incident stayed with me for a long time and served as the motivating idea for the theme of family that I explored in the book—specifically, who do we call family and why? It was important to me to make the office scenes as realistic as possible, so I relied on my knowledge of how in-house legal departments work, the demands on its employees, the budgetary constraints and liberties, as well as knowing where the 'bodies can be buried,' so to speak. I tried to capture snippets of life we all experience when working in corporate spaces. I want the reader to feel like they too are working long days in the office or working in cramped spaces with little opportunity to move ahead. Ellice Littlejohn's experiences are an amalgam of what many women experience in the workplace and in their everyday lives. That said, I've had my own encounters with people who underestimated me because of the color of my skin."

Hancock, Anne Mette. [The Corpse Flower](#) (Crooked Lane \$26.99). This is an intriguing debut for ScandiNoir fans taking you deep into Denmark. Copenhagen journalist Heloise Kaldan receives two letters from Anna Kiel, a wanted murderer. Anna killed a real estate tycoon's son years earlier and is on the run.

Anna claims she and Heloise are connected, and she seems to know personal things about Heloise, such as her lucky number and her favorite flower. Heloise starts looking into Anna's case by reaching out to Ulrich Andersson, the journalist who originally covered the murder. Ulrich warns Heloise to stay away from the story since her life could be in danger. When Anna posts a picture of Heloise's apartment on social media, Heloise is convinced Anna is breaking in and calls the police. She's forced to tell DS Erik Schäfer about the letters, and they start sharing information. Soon, one dark turn leads to another, and Heloise follows a lead to Paris, where she comes face-to-face with Anna and learns their connection is deeper and more disturbing than she could have imagined. Assured prose lifts plot and setting for a novel that promises more good things will come.

Harrison, Cora. [Murder in an Orchard Cemetery](#) (Severn \$28.99). Irish Reverend Mother Aquinas normally looks forward to the annual weeklong spiritual retreat for the religious superiors of all the Cork schools as a welcome break from her busy routine because of the restriction of absolute silence. But this year, with a mayoral election looming, the bishop has decided to invite all five candidates to attend, including a shoe manufacturer and a female solicitor with IRA links, and to allow people to talk about the many vital issues facing the still young Irish republic. At the retreat, the Reverend Mother is downcast by indications that the vote appears susceptible to being "stage-managed by violence on one side and corruption upon the other." The gathering turns deadly after a bomb set in a cemetery located on the retreat site detonates, killing one of the mayoral hopefuls. Though the police suspect the IRA, the Reverend Mother, a plausible and accomplished sleuth, digs deeper. "The pacing, clueing, and characterizations are all top-notch. Father Brown fans will be in heaven."

Higashino, Keigo. [Silent Parade](#) (St Martins \$27.99). Rob loves the work of the Edgar-nominated Higashino and endorses this snarky, enthusiastic review from *Kirkus*: "Physics professor Manabu Yukawa's fourth round of criminal investigation leads from a discovery of corpses old and new to a series of mind-boggling theories about their connection. Three years after gifted singer Saori Namiki disappeared from the Tokyo suburb of Kikuno, her parents, Yutaro and Machiko Namiki, must face the news that her body has been found.... Director Mamiya, the head of the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department's Homicide Division, instantly senses that he's in deeper waters because Yoshie's son, Kanichi Hasunuma, was the leading suspect in the murder of Yuna Motohashi, a schoolgirl whose dismembered remains were discovered in the nearby mountains 23 years ago. Shortly after Hasunuma...is smothered during the town's annual civic parade, and most readers will breathe a sigh of relief. Not Chief Inspector Kusanagi's old friend Detective Galileo, as Yukawa is nicknamed. In a rousing triumph of the scientific method, the super-sleuth, insisting, 'I'm just a regular physicist,' spins out a series of increasingly intricate hypotheses about this latest murder, tweaking each one when he's confronted with contrary evidence, then generating newly refined and revised theories that are even more impressive in their ability to cover the sprawling network of new data. Fans of golden age puzzles will wish this one could go on forever." [Higashino's earlier work](#) is well worth ordering too.

✦ Horowitz, Anthony. [A Line to Kill](#) (Harper \$27.99). And here's another winner for Golden Age mystery fans, as this Starred Review lauds: "Horowitz's superior third mystery features

former detective inspector Daniel Hawthorne and a fictionalized Horowitz in an effortless blend of humor and fair play. At a literary festival on the English island of Alderney, the pair plans to promote the series of books Horowitz has been writing about Hawthorne's homicide investigations. On Alderney, they become acquainted with the five other festival guests: 'an unhealthy chef, a blind psychic, a war historian, a children's author, a French performance poet.' One night, they all attend a party hosted by wealthy Charles le Mesurier, who gained his fortune from internet gambling and is the prime advocate for a controversial proposal to route a new electric power line linking the U.K. and France through the island. When a partygoer is found stabbed to death the next morning in an outbuilding near le Mesurier's main house, Hawthorne helps the sparse local police force investigate. The often prickly relationship between the Watson-like Horowitz and the Holmes-like Hawthorne complements the intricate detective work worthy of a classic golden age whodunit." Start with [The Word Is Murder and The Sentence Is Death](#) (\$16.99 each).

Jones, Steven Graham. [My Heart Is a Chainsaw](#) (Saga Press \$26.99). We are sold out of Signed copies for this our October Notable New Fiction Book of the Month, but I draw it to your attention for a striking October read. The Indie Next Pick says, "Jade's convinced her passion for slasher films is not obsession, but preparation. When strange things start occurring in town, she's sure a massacre is imminent—and she's ready to play her role to perfection. A highly stylized delight for horror movie buffs and fans of *The Final Girl Support Group*."

Klavan, Andrew. [When Christmas Comes](#) (Mysterious \$21.95). As the holiday season descends on the lakeside town of Sweet Haven, public defender Victoria Grossburger recruits her old friend English professor Cameron Winter, the protagonist of this spare, heartfelt crime novel from Edgar winner Klavan to try to clear Travis Blake, a third generation Army Ranger who's accused of murdering his girlfriend, Jennifer Dean, a beloved elementary school librarian. Victoria's biggest problem is the evidence, including a videotape of Travis lugging Jennifer's body from the murder site. Also, Travis has confessed to the crime. As Winter delves into the murder, he begins to suspect all is not what it seems in this tight-knit community of military veterans. In flashbacks, Klavan brings the victim to life, while sessions between Winter and his therapist, Margaret Whitaker, inform Winter's backstory and take on a fairy tale-like tone that adds to the darkness of the novel and the central crime. "The core of the book, though, is Winter, whose voice and strength of character drive the story, particularly in the satisfying and exciting conclusion. This terrific holiday-themed novel will leave readers unsettled and hopeful at the same time." I am a fan of Klavan's varied and always superior work and look forward to reading this.

Knausgaard, Karl Ove. [The Morning Star](#) (Penguin \$30). One long night in August, Arne and Tove are staying with their children in their summer house in southern Norway. Their friend Egil has his own place nearby. Kathrine, a priest, is flying home from a Bible seminar, questioning her marriage. Journalist Jostein is out drinking for the night, while his wife, Turid, a nurse at a psychiatric care unit, is on a night shift when one of her patients escapes. Above them all, a huge star suddenly appears blazing in the sky. It brings with it a mysterious sense of foreboding. Strange things start to happen as nine lives come together under the star as Knausgaard "goes to the utmost limits of freedom and

chaos, to what happens when forces beyond our comprehension are unleashed and the realms of the living and the dead collide.

✦ Le Carré, John. [Silverview](#) (Penguin \$29). Le Carré, who died last December, offers his many fans one final gift: a short novel begun soon after [A Delicate Truth](#) (2013) and completed years ago but unpublished till now. "First-rate prose and a fascinating plot distinguish the final novel from MWA Grand Master Le Carré (1931–2020). Two months after leaving a banking job in London, 33-year-old Julian Lawndesley gets a visit from an eccentric customer, Edward Avon, just before closing time at the bookshop Julian now runs in East Anglia. When Julian asks the man what he does, he replies, "Let us say I am a British mongrel, retired, a former academic of no merit and one of life's odd-job men." The next morning, Julian runs into Edward at the local café, where Edward claims he knew Julian's late father at Oxford. Julian later learns that Edward, a Polish emigré, was recruited into the Service years before. Julian senses something is off, as does the head of Domestic Security for the Service, who's investigating Edward's wife, an Arabist and outstanding Service intelligence analyst. While laying out the Avons' intriguing backstories and their current activities, Le Carré highlights the evils spies and governments have perpetrated on the world. Many readers will think the book is unfinished—it ends abruptly—but few will find it unsatisfying. This is a fitting coda to a remarkable career."

Why am I so often quoting reviewers, you ask? And the answer is there are still few Advance Reading Copies thanks to COVID so there's no other choice.

✦ Liss, David. [The Peculiarities](#) (Tachyon \$17.59) Thomas Thresher has enough mundane problems to worry about. His brother may be sabotaging the family bank, at which Thomas is only a junior clerk, and is also pressuring him to get married for unexplained business reasons to a woman in whom he has no interest. More absurdly, he has also started sprouting leaves. The London Fog was always dangerous, but lately it brings "Peculiarities" in the form of transformations, women giving birth to rabbits, and attackers who seem not of this world. When Thomas discovers a curious letter in the bank's records relating to the death of a childhood friend, he realizes the strange operations of the bank and the peculiarities may be related. To find out, he will have to make surprising allies and become a student in one of London's occult societies. In spite of the disturbing and at times violent threats both to the characters and the world as we know it, the tone of this supernatural mystery set in London throughout can be best described as charming and absurdist. "It is the Halloween equivalent of a beach read, leaving readers more delighted than horrified, even in the face of horrific events along the way. Any fan of both light historical adventure and weird fiction will be delighted by the combination." –Kristen Allen-Vogel

✦ Lovegrove, James. [Sherlock Holmes and the Three Winter Terrors](#) (Titan \$19.99). Lovegrove's clever third novel-length pastiche links winter-time mysteries from different years, each involving members of one family. In 1889, Timothy Wragge, a teacher at the preparatory school in Kent he and Watson attended 20 years earlier, reports that Hector Robinson, a boy who was a frequent victim of bullying, was found drowned in the school lake. Despite the headmaster's belief that Robinson's death was an accident, Wragge believes Robinson was killed by the two students who routinely tormented him. Others suspect that a witch's curse placed on a previous owner of the property the school

occupies is responsible. In 1890, industrialist Eustace Agius is haunted in his London home by an apparition possibly connected to a tragic fire at his cotton mill that claimed nearly 100 lives. In the final segment, set in 1894, the Agiuses are implicated in a horrific murder that was apparently committed by a cannibal. The solid characterizations match the imaginative plotting.

Maguire, Gregory. [The Brides of Maracoor](#) (Harper \$28.99). The author of the smash book and theater hit *Wicked*, drawing upon Frank L. Baum's wonderful world of Oz, my favorite childhood books, begins a trilogy spun off the wicked years featuring Elphaba's granddaughter, she of the green skin called Rain. Rain is washed ashore on a foreign island and rescued by a community of single women with obscure devotional practices. Then a foreign navy mounts an assault. . . . The Another Day trilogy will follow Rain from the island outpost into the unmapped badlands of Maracoor before. . . . can she? . . . turn her broom back towards Oz.

Madden, Matt. [Ex Libris](#) (\$29.95). "In a world made of one locked room, the protagonist of the story tries to find an escape through a bookshelf of graphic novels. While they search the stories for the way out, they are forced to confront the very memories they hoped to leave behind. As each book taunts the main character with their past, they also show the rich history of graphic novels and literature. Through illustration styles that span across time and geography, *Ex Libris* is not simply about telling stories, but also finding your own."

Moore, Taylor. [Down Range](#) (Morrow \$27.99). Here is a review I second by thriller writer Jon Land just in for our August First Mystery Book of the Month (Signed copies long ago sold out): "Moore seems to be channeling the triumvirate of Cormac McCarthy, C. J. Box and Rhode Island's own Don Winslow. Read on, before you roll your eyes at that. Celebrated undercover DEA agent Garrett Kohl has fought many battles in the war on drugs far from home, but what happens when a different kind of war hits him where he lives? For reasons Moore slowly reveals, the languid Texas ranching town, where he is finally able to seek solace with his family, is taken over by skullduggerous figures reminiscent of Western villains of lore. True to form, this modern-day take on that form frames Kohl as a kind of lone gunman standing up against them, a la Shane versus the Rykers or Wyatt Earp versus the Clantons. The result is a masterwork of classic storytelling, a man defending his own in the best tradition of a John Wayne or Clint Eastwood film. Think *No Country for Old Men* with Box's Joe Pickett taking over for Ed Tom Bell."

Palacio, RJ. [Pony](#) (Knopf, \$17.99) features a 12-year-old boy who sets out—with only the help of a pony and a ghost—to find his abducted father.

Parks, Brad. [Interference](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$24.95). I can't get to every book and here is one from last September 2020 I missed. So here's a review that should intrigue you: "Ever since the death of Michael Crichton, we've been waiting for his successor to emerge. Looks like that wait is over in the person of Parks whose latest high-tech thriller echoes the master in all the right ways. Matt Bronik is a quantum physicist involved in secret, cutting-edge research. The problem is whatever he's researching comes with unsettling side effects — like inexplicable seizures, which are growing worse. The book shifts into overdrive when Bronik vanishes, and it's left to his wife Brigid to sort through the muddled morass of his work to solve the mystery of his disappearance

and the role his research played in it. You won't find any dinosaurs here, but *Interference* carves out its own turf as a stunning and scintillating mix of technology and terror. Think *Stranger Things* for adults, further establishing Parks as the most likely heir to the throne of the man who gave us *Jurassic Park*."

Parry, Ambrose. [A Corruption of Blood](#) (Canongate \$26). "Parry (the pen name of husband-and-wife writing team Chris Brookmyre and Marisa Haetzman) makes excellent use of Haetzman's experience as an anesthetist and a medical historian in his stellar third whodunit set in 19th-century Edinburgh (after 2019's *The Art of Dying*). When wealthy and influential Sir Ainsley Douglas dies of arsenic poisoning in 1850, Gideon, Douglas's son, who recently fought with his father, is charged with patricide. Physician Will Raven gives in to his fiancée's entreaties that he work to exonerate her friend Gideon, despite regarding the suspect, whom he knew in medical school, as "arrogant and detestable." Raven finds Gideon's argument for his innocence—that he'd never have used a poison so easily detectable—compelling but faces an uphill battle in getting the police to agree. Meanwhile, Will's colleague, Sarah Fisher, a former servant aspiring to become a physician, searches for a missing baby on behalf of its mother. The integration of real history—Douglas's advocacy of the arrest of prostitutes to contain the spread of STDs is based on real legislation—enhances a page-turning plot."—*PW* Starred Review. I miss the sterling work of Imogen Robertson whose fans like me will enjoy Parry.

Patterson, James/Candice Fox. [2 Sisters Detective Agency](#) (Grand Central \$31). Attorney Rhonda Bird returns home after a long estrangement when she learns her father has died. There she makes two important discoveries: her father stopped being an accountant and had opened up a private detective agency, and she has a teenage half sister named Baby. Baby brings in a client to the detective agency, a young man who claims he was abducted. During the course of the investigation, Rhonda and Baby become entangled in a dangerous case involving a group of overprivileged young adults who break laws for fun, their psychopath ring-leader, and an ex-assassin victim who decides to hunt them down for revenge. Fox is a well-known Australian thriller writer who has visited us at The Pen—with Patterson.

Powers, Richard. [Bewilderment](#) (Norton \$27.95). As with his Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *The Overstory*, Powers' new book, just announced as an Oprah Pick, encourages readers to look beyond ourselves. A widowed father, Theo, is an astrobiologist researching the possibility of life throughout the galaxy, lobbying the government to erect a new telescope in space. His son, Robin, passionate about the plight of endangered animals, is struggling with outbursts at school and difficult emotions, but finds relief in an experimental neurofeedback therapy, which allows him to access his dead mother's feelings. Byrne brings his work home by describing his exoplanets to his son in bedtime stories.

Queally, James. [All These Ashes](#) (Polis \$26.99). "In Queally's outstanding sequel to 2020's [Line of Sight](#) (\$26), PI Russell Avery, a former reporter who once covered the police beat for a Newark, N.J., newspaper, agrees to look into a cold case for police lieutenant Bill Henniman. In 1996, four teens—sisters Shayna and Adriana Bell, and two male cousins of theirs—vanished on the same night in Newark. In the weeks and months that followed, Shayna and Adriana's older sister, Cynthia, was able

to stir up some press attention, but the case went nowhere. Not until 2012 did a snitch tell Henniman that Cynthia's ex-boyfriend, Abel Musa, admitted to trapping the teenagers in a building that he then torched. Shayna was threatening to tell her parents Musa was sleeping with her, and the other three were collateral damage in Musa's effort to silence Shayna. Musa was convicted of murder, but now, with Musa dying of cancer, Henniman suspects he's innocent and wants Avery to investigate. Queally gets all the details right while populating the plot with believable characters. Fans of Bruce DeSilva's Liam Mulligan will clamor for more."—PW

✦ Rader-Day, Lori. [Death at Greenway](#) (Harper \$27.99). The simultaneous paperback is our British Crime Club Book of the Month for October—see our October Large Paperback Picks. There is a small hardcover edition you can order.

✦ Redmond, Heather. [The Pickwick Murders](#) (Kensington \$26). Charles Dickens, parliamentary reporter for the liberal daily *Morning Chronicle*, is no fan of Sir Augustus Smirke, the well-named candidate for Parliament who's rumored to have seduced several younger women—including perhaps a maid who's gone missing. But he can't imagine the revenge Smirke, or someone else, will take for his less-than-flattering coverage. Receiving a letter that seems to offer him membership in the prestigious Lightning Club, Charles hastens to the club headquarters, where an initiation that requires him to escape from the 1835 version of a panic room brings him into uncomfortably close contact with Samuel Pickwick, the club's president, whose throat has been slit. Turned over to the constabulary, Charles counts down the days to the publication of *Sketches* by Boz, his first book, and dreams of how he can turn his plight into a fictional account, as he languishes in Newgate Prison. Redmond's descriptions of daily life in Newgate, based largely on the real Dickens' account of his own much briefer visit, are...arresting. The series foreshadows Dickens' career along with the mysteries. You can order all four in [A Dickens of a Crime series](#).

Riordan, Rick. [Daughter of the Deep](#) (Disney \$19.99) is inspired by Jules Verne's scientific romances, such as *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* and *The Mysterious Island*, which both featured Captain Nemo and are considered some of the earliest examples of modern science fiction. The novel explores Nemo's legacy through the experiences of his latest descendant, 14-year-old Ana Dakkar. Riordan writes, "I spent years researching submarines and underwater exploration and cutting edge 21st-century technology regarding marine warfare, and then extrapolated backwards to what Jules Verne considered cutting edge, and came up with a hybrid vision of what it would look like if Nemo had invented technology far ahead of his time, sort of like Leonardo da Vinci."

Ritter, Josh. [The Great Glorious Goddamn of It All](#) (Hanover Square \$27.99). Author and singer-songwriter Josh Ritter takes readers into treacherous forests and lawless towns to witness the last days of the era of the lumberjacks. At 99, retired lumberjack Weldon Applegate lies in a hospital bed, though not for reasons of old age. He was "in my prime, full of Rainier and vinegar, fixing to live forever" until his mortal enemy, the son of a clear-cutting sawmill tycoon, had other ideas. In what may be his last words, Weldon relates the exploits of his youth in the Prohibition-era timber town of Cordelia, Idaho, where the dream of logging a

dangerous strip called the Lost Lot lured his father to his death. Orphaned, 13-year-old Weldon has little choice but to pick up an ax and join the loggers on his father's claim. Standing in his way is Linden Laughlin, a giant of a woods boss with a reputation to rival Paul Bunyan's and the sadistic streak of a demon, who wants the Lost Lot. Laughlin leaves a trail of dead jacks in his wake, and Weldon must grow up quickly to survive. Filled with memorable characters and told by a charmingly irascible narrator, Ritter's folkloric tale raises the spirit of a lost age.

Russell, Craig. [Hyde](#) (Doubleday \$27). Perfect for October, a gothic reimagining of the Jekyll and Hyde story in which Captain Edward Hyde, chief detective of Victorian Edinburgh, investigates a gruesome murder that may unmask his own darkest secret. When Hyde finds himself at the scene of a heinous murder, with no idea of how he got there or the events leading up to the discovery, his alarm is triggered on two levels. First, the crime scene is brutal and involves the Threefold Death, an ancient Celtic rite of sacrifice entangled with dark Scottish spiritual mythology. Second, Hyde's inability to remember any detail of his arrival at the crime scene makes him immediately fret about the secret he keeps from all but his physician: He suffers from a rare form of epilepsy that causes him to lose time—amnesiac absences where he cannot account for his actions—and nocturnal seizures that manifest themselves as vivid and lucid dreams. As Hyde begins his investigation of the murder in a city on edge, he finds himself not only searching for real world clues, but trying to unravel the significance of the imagery in the otherworld of his dreaming.

✦ Spencer, Sally. [Poison](#) (Severn \$28.99). It's 1981 Lancashire where DCI Monika Paniatowski and her eclectic team are drawn into a complex web of deceit. Jordan Gough, biggest public benefactor of the town of Whitebridge, as well as owner of that city's soccer team, requests that Paniatowski come to his estate for a meeting. She's not happy with the summons since she's sure Gough, despite a lack of evidence, has been involved in criminal activities, but her superior officer forces her to comply. Gough tells her he's received anonymous threatening letters, which he refuses to show her, and fears he's being poisoned. She dismisses his worries because she believes they're fantasies—or some kind of elaborate game. When Gough dies of food poisoning, Paniatowski has a murder to investigate. "Her interactions with well-defined supporting characters, such as DS Kate Meadows, 'a part-time sado-masochist, and—in spite of her pixie haircut and elfin figure—a full-time scary person,' creates a bit of humor amid a full complement of action and suspense."

Smith, Alexander McCall. [The Joy and Light Bus Company](#) (Knopf \$26.99). Mr. J.L.B. Matekoni attends a course hosted by the local chamber of commerce entitled "Where Is Your Business Going?" But rather than feeling energized, he comes back in low spirits, uncertain of the future for the already venerable and successful Tlokweng Road Speedy Motors. Then an old friend from school approaches him about a new business venture that could be just the ticket. When it turns out he will need to mortgage his property, Mma Ramotswe and Mma Makutsi wonder what this will mean for his current business—as well as their own. Meanwhile the No 1 Ladies Detective Agency has a new client, a son who is concerned about why his aging father's nurse may inherit the family home.... Amazing to think this is the 22nd in this popular Botswana mystery series, no?

Stevens, Chevy. [Dark Roads](#) (St. Martins Press \$27.99). Library Reads recommends this new thriller from Canadian Stevens: “Stevens often writes about the outdoors, but this one is really steeped in survival. Vanishing travelers and serial murders along a wilderness highway bring the sister of one victim to town for a memorial. There are the requisite fast-paced thrills, and a small town packed with secrets and fear. For fans of *The River* and *A Gathering of Secrets*.”

Tursten, Helene. [An Elderly Lady Must Not Be Crossed](#) (Soho \$14.99). Just when things have finally cooled down for 88-year-old Maud after the disturbing discovery of a dead body in her apartment in Gothenburg, a couple of detectives return to her doorstep. Though Maud dodges their questions with the skill of an Olympic gymnast a fifth of her age, she wonders if suspicion has fallen on her, little old lady that she is. The truth is, ever since Maud was a girl, death has seemed to follow her. In these six interlocking stories, memories of unfortunate incidents from Maud’s past keep bubbling to the surface. Meanwhile, certain Problems in the present require immediate attention. Our hero Maud, or shall we say “anti-hero,” is back! Did you miss her? Do you want to know more about her? Then grab the earlier stories in [An Elderly Lady Is Up to No Good](#) (\$12.99), two gems for the price of a single hardcover.

The Indie Next Pick: “What a hoot! Maud might be almost 89 years old, but she’s no shrinking violet. She knows how to take care of herself and situations that need fixing. I loved this little treasure of a book!”

Towles, Amor. [The Lincoln Highway](#) (Penguin \$30). Set over a 10-day stretch in 1954, this new novel from the author of [The Rules of Civility](#) and [A Gentleman in Moscow](#) (\$18 each) follows a teenager trying to rebuild his life. Emmett has returned to Nebraska after serving a sentence for involuntary manslaughter, with plans to collect his younger brother and start fresh in California. But when he discovers two unexpected interlopers, his path is radically redirected, leading him on a picaresque journey to New York. “Billy’s constant companion, a book titled *Professor Abacus Abernath’s Compendium of Heroes, Adventures, and Other Intrepid Travelers*, provides parallel story lines of epic events and heroic adventures. Woolly has a mind for stories, too, comparing his monotonous time in detention to that of Edmond Dantès in *The Count of Monte Cristo* and hoping eventually to experience a “one-of-a-kind kind of day.”

✧ Waugh, Daisy. [In the Crypt with a Candlestick](#) (Pegasus \$25.95). In the mood for some light satire and literary Easter eggs? Then meet the Todes of Tode Hall, one of England’s most famous stately homes and a lucrative tourist attraction because it was the site of a hit TV series, *Prance to the Music in Time*. After the death of nonagenarian Sir Egbert, his widow, Lady Tode, decides to pass off managing the estate to a younger generation. But instead of choosing any of their three oddball children, she selects her nephew Egbert, which naturally doesn’t sit well with his cousins. Egbert and his annoyingly flighty and narcissistic wife bring along Alice Liddell, whose grandmother once worked at Tode Hall, to manage it. When Lady Tode turns up dead in the family mausoleum, Alice investigates. “The mystery doesn’t amount to much, and the subtle wit may be lost on American readers, especially those unfamiliar with *The Wind in the Willows* [the play on Toad Hall], Anthony Powell’s *A Dance to the Music of Time*, the girl who inspired *Alice in Wonderland*, and much more.” Daisy’s grandfather is Evelyn Waugh.

Woods, Stuart. [Foul Play](#) (Putnam \$28). Stone Barrington welcomes a new client, Shep Troutman, whom he first rescues from an assailant near his Manhattan townhouse. Shep, who’s staying at the Carlyle Hotel and recently sold his family’s design and manufacturing business for \$260 million, needs Stone’s advice. The morning after their meeting, Shep is mugged in Central Park. While Shep is being treated for minor injuries at the hospital, someone leaves the dead body of a prostitute in his apartment at the Carlyle. Shep finally admits to Stone that he suspects the shady buyer of the family business, Gregor Kronk, has reason to be dissatisfied and is behind the mayhem. Stone puts his own life in peril as he tries to protect Shep and fend off Kronk. “Woods throws in more than one surprising twist and a tantalizing hint of future developments in Stone’s relationship with his paramour, U.S. president Holly Barker. In the end, Stone devises a clever and fitting way to take care of Kronk. This is a good entry point for newcomers to this long-running series,” of which this is the 59th chapter!

SOME ARRESTING NONFICTION

Goodall, Jane. [The Book of Hope](#) (Celadon \$28). Or, A Survival Guide for Trying Times. Jane Goodall, the world’s most famous living naturalist, and Douglas Abrams, internationally-bestselling author, explore one of the most sought after and least understood elements of human nature: hope. Karen reviews: “The interview is based on the observations she has made over her decades old career. It is an informative, but straightforward conversation, with a note of humor now and then. Abrams guides the conversation as Goodall, who considers herself a “naturalist”, shares four ideas for her outlook, with examples and a shot of Johnny Walker at the end of the day. First is her view of the “human intellect”, not to be confused with wisdom. “True wisdom requires both thinking with our head and understanding with our heart.” Second is the resilience of nature. She tells of a tree, named Survivor, decimated in the 9/11 attack and has now recovered to its previous stature. A similar incident occurred in the bombing of Nagasaki in World War II. Third is the power of youth. A group of young people in Tanzania felt there was nothing they could do to attack climate change. Believing everyone can make a difference, Goodall started a program, teaching young people soil care, planting and nurturing plants that can provide healthy food for their communities. The program, Roots and Shoots has become global. Fourth is the “indomitable human spirit”. Goodall reviews the progress man has made over the centuries and believes that can continue without an end date. By broadening her perspective of the world she is able to have hope for the future. But hope requires action which results in more hope, providing a circular pattern for change.”

And read [this interview with Goodall](#) in the *NY Times*.

Keyes, Bob. [The Isolation Artist](#) (Godine \$21.95). It’s like an art thriller—but true. When reclusive, millionaire artist Robert Indiana died in 2018, he left behind dark rumors and scandal, as well as an estate embroiled in lawsuits and facing accusations of fraud. Here, for the first time, are all the pieces to the bizarre true story of the artist’s final days, the aftermath, the deceptive world that surrounded him, and the inner workings of art as very big business. Indiana refused to copyright his iconic LOVE sculpture in 1965. An odd and tortured soul, an artist who wanted both fame and solitude, Indiana surrounded himself with people to manage his life and work. Yet, he frequently changed his mind

and often fired or belittled those who worked with him. By 2008, when Indiana created the sculpture HOPE—or did he?—the artist had signed away his work for others to exploit, creating doubt about whether he had even seen artwork sold for very high prices under his name. At the time of his death, Indiana left an estate worth millions—and unsettling suspicions. There were allegations of fraudulent artwork, of elder abuse, of caregivers who subjected him to horrendous living conditions. There were questions about the inconclusive autopsy and rumors that his final will had been signed under coercion. Then there were the suspicious freeloaders....

Orlean, Susan [On Animals](#) (Avid Reader \$27). “How we interact with animals has preoccupied philosophers, poets, and naturalists for ages,” writes Susan Orlean. Since the age of six, when Orlean wrote and illustrated a book called *Herbert the Near-Sighted Pigeon*, she’s been drawn to stories about how we live with animals, and how they abide by us. Now, in *On Animals*, she examines animal-human relationships through the compelling tales she has written over the course of her celebrated career at the *New Yorker*, etc.

Pearl, Matthew. [The Taking of Jemima Boone](#) (Harper \$27.99). Pearl’s well wrought historicals, most of them with mysteries, have been popular with you. Here is his nonfiction debut, the saga of Daniel Boone’s daughter who, while unable to either read or write, could communicate well with her father and work with him. In midsummer 1776, shortly after the signing of The Declaration of Independence, Jemima, age 13, and two friends disappear near Boonesboro, captured by a raiding party. Boone and his posse go hotfoot in pursuit, part of the increasing crime and clashes across cultural lines that grew with the colonies’ westward expansion. The roles of the Cherokee and Shawnee across the Boone family’s Southern Appalachian home are important components in the story. In a wrap called “Aftermath,” Pearl details the court martial brought against Boone by the father of the two girls rescued with Jemima and other history-altering events as the Revolutionary war raged on, including how Boonesboro survived siege and maintained its foothold in Kentucky. Plentiful notes round out this fine book.

Pinker, Steven. [Rationality](#) (Viking \$32). Can reading a book make you more rational? Can it help us understand why there is so much irrationality in the world? Humans have mapped genomes, developed lifesaving therapeutic treatments, split the atom, charted the universe — so why are conspiracy theories and other irrational beliefs still so pervasive? Pinker, a psychology professor at Harvard, worries about the power of widespread disinformation, and explains his project simply: “How can we make sense of making sense — and its opposite?”

Ricca, Brad. [True Raiders](#) (St. Martins \$29.99) is 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. This is really great stuff for any fans of adventure and historical fiction and of that breed of Englishman who went forth to explore in fabled lands. I’m inspired to rewatch *Raiders of the Lost Ark*—aren’t you?

And I love the answers Ricca gives to the What Am I Reading question: “I’m reading [When the Stars Go Dark](#) (\$28 Signed) by Paula McLain, which is beautiful and intense. Also

[The Ninth Metal](#) (\$15.99) by Benjamin Percy, which is fascinating, like if Faulkner wrote sci-fi in the Midwest... [Dracula](#) (\$17) by Bram Stoker. Because it was fantasy presented as some kind of truth across letters and facts, medicine and folklore. It was a horror story—the horror story—but we were reading it in Jon Thompson’s eighth grade G/T English class as literature.”

Roach, Mary. [Fuzz: When Nature Breaks the Law](#) (Norton \$26.95). Over the centuries, humans have had conflicts with various members of the animal kingdom: They’ve litigated caterpillars and greenish weevils, disseminated eviction orders to rats, accused a pig of murder. Roach, ever intrepid, goes the distance in her study of animals whose behaviors disrupt human life: “I taste-tested rat bait,” she writes. “I was mugged by a macaque.”

Schutt, Bill. [Pump: A Natural History of the Heart](#) (Algonquin \$26.95). Cardiac biology is the subject of this fascinating investigation from zoologist Schutt who, in three sections describes the evolution, early ideas, and discoveries around the heart. The author reveals a litany of fascinating medical history factoids—at one point the heart was thought to be, as Schutt notes, “the center of emotion;” it was a Parisian physician who brought us the stethoscope—in a book that “pairs accessible science with strong storytelling.”

Thubron, Colin. [The Amur River: Between Russia and China](#) (Harper \$27.99). For those missing adventure travel, novelist and travel writer Thubron, one of my favorites, evokes in this breathtaking account the beauty and harshness of the 1,100-mile-long Amur River that forms the highly contested border between Russia and China. Setting out on horseback from the river’s source in Mongolia, where a campfire is “the sole human light seen only by wolves or woken bears,” Thubron travels by sailboat, train, and car to the Russian town of Nikolaevsk-na-Amure, where, “thick with silt and pollution,” the Amur empties into the Pacific Ocean. He writes sensitively and cogently about the life along the river’s shores, profiling the semi-nomadic Buryats, whom Stalin and his Mongolian counterpart, Khorloogiin Choibalsam, persecuted relentlessly in the 1930s, and the Manchu, who rose up from the region in the 17th century and ruled China for nearly 300 years. In desolate villages, aged cities, crumbling monasteries, and roadside shrines, Thubron documents the interplay of politics and history, contrasting the “subdued fatalism” of Russians living in the river basin with the bustling optimism of the Chinese, whose glitzy restaurants and markets mask signs of discontent. Thubron’s powers of observation and his dogged determination to complete this arduous journey—despite numerous injuries and a police interrogations—make this a top-notch travelogue.

Wasset, Nadia. [Shelf Life: Chronicles of a Cairo Bookseller](#) (Farrar, Straus and Giroux \$27). An Egyptian British entrepreneur recounts her remarkable adventure launching the first modern bookstore in Cairo, and its transformative impact on the city’s cultural scene. Nadia Wassef’s gorgeous, entertaining memoir recounts the launching a modern bookstore, the first of its kind, in Egypt’s chaotic capital of Cairo at the turn of the 21st century. With chapters corresponding to the different sections of the bookstore and its cafe, *Shelf Life* celebrates the remarkable success of the venture while sharing with humble honesty and wry humor the personal and professional challenges it created for the author.

Named Diwan, an Arabic word for “meeting place,” the bookstore embodies Wassef and her sister Hind’s dream to establish a female-led literary hub in patriarchal Egyptian society, where culture had atrophied, illiteracy was common and book lovers had few options to satisfy their intellectual cravings. Along with their friend Nihal, the sisters envisioned Diwan as a person with a distinct personality and aspirations to bring people and ideas together. “Nadia Wassef’s writing is exuberant and indomitable, telling her life story along with everything else, in a voice so distinctly her voice that a reader can feel as though they’re overhearing her putting a book into a reader’s hands, with good stories, commentary, and gossip along the way.”

Woodward, Bob/Robert Costa. [Peril](#) (Simon & Schuster \$30). I know that to list this will invite negative comment but I do it not for any political reason but as a student of history all my life who sees that the rise of authoritarianism and splintering of democracy is scary stuff. And the transition from one president to another last January was much more than a domestic political crisis. I’m not saying that Woodward’s reporting is the best, or most insightful, but I do say it’s a wake-up call.

And a pair of contrasting books about food giants:

Woolever, Laurie. [Bourdain: The Definitive Oral Biography](#) (Harper \$29.99). When celebrity chef, author and world traveler Anthony Bourdain died by suicide in 2018, fans were shocked. But many of the 91 friends, coworkers and colleagues interviewed in the compelling share riveting tales of how his life always gravitated toward extreme highs and lows. “He became this great cultural anthropologist whom everyone so loved,” said Lydia Tenaglia, Bourdain’s TV producer for more than two decades. “But fundamentally he was like a teenage boy with his emotional development.” Woolever, who was Bourdain’s assistant for nearly a decade and co-authored *Appetites: A Cookbook* and *World Travel: An Irreverent Guide* with him, admirably pieces together Bourdain’s private and professional life with input from his mother, two ex-wives, daughter, brother, publishers, and the producers, writers and technicians on his TV shows. The main person missing from this tapestry is Asia Argento, the Italian actress Bourdain fell in love with, and for whom he left his wife and began alienating friends. His suicide followed a tabloid frenzy suggesting she was cheating on him. She’s not interviewed, but numerous friends and colleagues feel his obsession with her was his downfall.

Tucci, Stanley. [Taste: My Life Through Food](#) (Gallery \$28). Before Stanley Tucci became a household name with *The Devil Wears Prada*, *The Hunger Games*, and the perfect Negroni, he grew up in an Italian American family that spent every night around the table. He shared the magic of those meals with us in *The Tucci Cookbook* and *The Tucci Table*, and now he takes us beyond the recipes and into the stories behind them. His professional success is a key to a good life, but more importantly so is his happy marriage and family.

OUR OCTOBER LARGE PAPERBACK PICKS

Alexander, Tasha. [The Dark Heart of Florence](#) (\$17.99). Lady Emily and her intelligence agent husband, Colin Hargreaves, travel to Florence to investigate a break-in at the Palazzo di Vieri, the home of Colin’s daughter, along with Emily’s friend Cécile du Lac, an elegant Parisian with a passion for champagne and bo-

hemian sensibilities. Meanwhile, the body of an informant associated with Darius Benton-Stone, Colin’s fellow agent, has been discovered broken and bleeding in the palazzo’s courtyard. While Colin and Darius investigate, Emily and Cécile, kept out of the men’s confidence, keep themselves busy visiting the sights and doing some digging of their own into the dead man’s background. They also discover that the Palazzo di Vieri is believed to contain a secret treasure. Could the man have been searching for it? The story tick tocks from 1903 to 15th Century Florence when the Medicis reigned and Savonarola rose, linking the quests rooted in the occupants of the palazzo.

Cha, Steph, ed. [Best American Mystery and Suspense 2021](#) (Harper \$16.99). The most memorable of the 20 short stories in the strong 2021 edition of this annual anthology don’t involve traditional wrongdoing. Aya de León’s gripping “Frederick Douglass Elementary” features the machinations of a devoted Black California mother, whose seven-year-old son has been the victim of relentless bullying; she’s desperate to get her son into a better school, but she needs to create multiple forged documents to prove that they reside in the right district. Brian Silverman provides an engrossing prequel to his Len Buonfiglio series in “Land of Promise,” which gradually reveals the truth behind an apparently altruistic act. Preston Lang’s “Potato Sandwich Days” is a grim tale of obsession with a bitter ending, premised on a botched promotion by the executives of fast-food franchise Fat Lad, who seriously underestimate the demand for “a nasty mash of potatoes and gloppy white sauce inside a stale roll.” Lang integrates social commentary about American consumerism into an account of the error’s impact on a Fat Lad employee. This is a winning showcase for authors who aren’t household names.

Coben, Harlan. [Win](#) (\$16.99). What fun. Sports Agent Myron Bolitar’s wealthy blueblood sidekick, Windsor “Win” Horne Lockwood III, gets an investigation of his own. And you Bolitar fans get to see Myron, as he is and some of what he was, through Win’s eyes, a different perspective. Win has led a life cushioned by immense wealth and thus privilege so he’s used to carving his own path with few consequences. Think of him as Batman with no moral compass, a Caped Crusader who is skilled at and enjoys hand-to-hand combat. Then the FBI arrives at his door to ask this blueblood to accompany them to the Beresford, “one of the most prestigious buildings in Manhattan,” where an unidentified older man has been found in one of the Beresford’s tower rooms, dead of either strangulation or a slit throat. Win tells the agents he doesn’t know the victim, but the cluttered room includes a Vermeer that was stolen from the Lockwood family 20 years earlier and a suitcase with Win’s initials. And we’re off into Win’s orchestration of an inquiry into who the dead hoarder is, why does the Vermeer hang in his apartment, how did an unemployed recluse afford the apartment, and can it tie to Win’s cousin Patricia Lockwood’s traumatic abduction, abuse, and captivity as a teen? Win makes a deep dive into a past era’s radical history and his own family’s amazing dysfunction as viewed through the product of generations of privilege.

✦ Johnson, Maureen. [Your Guide to Not Getting Murdered in a Quaint English Village](#) (Ten Speed \$16.99). John reviews: “In the England of murder mysteries and TV detectives, no destination is deadlier than a quaint country village, and you never know you’re in a murder village until it’s too late. No attraction or local character is safe—whether in the pub for a pint, or on the manicured

grounds of the local estate for a shooting party, bodies can turn up anywhere! Danger lurks around every cobblestone corner. If you are foolish enough to make the trip, at least be prepared. Brought to life with dozens of Gorey-esque illustrations by Jay Cooper and peppered with allusions to classic crime series and unmistakably British murder lore, *Your Guide to Not Getting Murdered in a Quaint English Village* gives you the tools you need to avoid the same fate, should you find yourself in a suspiciously cozy English village (or simply dream of going). Johnson is also the author of the *NYT* bestselling *Truly Devious* YA series.

Limon, Martin. [GI Confidential](#) (\$16.95). A bank robbery, apparently by three American soldiers, kick-starts Limón's stellar 14th mystery set in 1970s South Korea. Instead of assigning U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Division agents George Sueño and Ernie Bascom to look into the case, the brass selects two brown-nosers who can be trusted not to vigorously pursue the truth, but the aptly named Sergeant Strange hooks the interest of our Slicko Boys. Proof that Americans were involved could imperil support for ongoing military and financial aid to South Korea, viewed as an essential bulwark against Communist expansion in Asia. After a second bank is hit and one of its employees killed, Sueño and Bascom investigate, but they're sidetracked when their superior gives precedence to a second sensitive inquiry. General Abner Crabtree, in charge of all army divisions stationed along the demilitarized zone, is reported to have arranged for prostitutes to be transported to the DMZ for a high-level meeting involving South Korean generals. Limón does his usual outstanding job of combining clever plotting and period detail with sympathetic, flawed leads such as aggressive American reporter Katie Byrd Worthington, who breaks the story. And as with Benn, we recommend your order all [Limón's thrillers](#) and read them in their magnificent and varied order. You will be royally entertained and challenged by the plots as you do. Limon will sign a new Slicko Boys thriller for us sometime in November: [War Women](#) (Soho \$27.95)

Neville, Stuart. [The Traveller and Other Stories](#) (\$16.95). Since his debut novel, the modern classic [The Ghosts of Belfast](#) (\$9.99), was published a decade ago, Irishman Neville, an Edgar finalist, has published eight other critically acclaimed novels. Now for the first time Neville offers readers a collection of his short fiction—chilling stories that traverse and blend the genres of noir, horror, and speculative fiction, and which bring the history and lore of Neville's native Northern Ireland to glittering life. The collection concludes with the long awaited novella *The Traveller*, the companion piece to *The Ghosts of Belfast* and *Collusion*. Gerry Fegan appears in four of the tales. Complete with a foreword from Irish crime fiction legend John Connolly, this volume is the perfect indulgence for fans of ghost stories and noir, and is a must-have for devotees of Neville's prizewinning Belfast novels

O'Connor, Joseph. [Shadowplay](#) (\$16.95). This terrific historical earned many prize nominations including the win at the 2020 *Irish Post* Book Awards. What we have is a portrait of golden age of West End theater in a London shaken by the crimes of Jack the Ripper. Henry Irving is Victorian London's most celebrated actor and theater impresario. He has introduced groundbreaking ideas to the theater, bringing to the stage performances that are spectacular, shocking, and always entertaining. When Irving decides to open his own London theater with the goal of making it the greatest playhouse on earth, he hires young, literary minded Dublin clerk Bram Stoker to manage it. As Irving's theater grows

in reputation and financial solvency, he secures beloved actress, the dazzlingly talented leading lady Ellen Terry, who nightly casts a spell not only on her audiences but also on Stoker and Irving both. Bram Stoker's extraordinary experiences at the Lyceum Theatre, his early morning walks on the streets of a London terrorized by a serial killer, his long, tempestuous relationship with Irving, and the closeness he finds with Ellen Terry, inspire him to write *Dracula*.

✂ Rader-Day, Lori. [Death at Greenway](#) (Harper \$16.99). Our **October British Crime Book of the Month** "is an immersive, expansive WWII tale of murder and revenge. Set at Agatha Christie's real-life country home, disgraced nurse-in-training, Bridey Kelly, is tasked to help care for a group of children seeking safety from war-torn London. Still, danger is everywhere and with unseen evil lurking, Bridey has to navigate a mysterious web of lies. Well-crafted and multi-layered, *Death at Greenway* is a vivid portrait of a woman trying to outrun her past in hopes of finding her place in a broken world." —Heather Gudenkauf. Susan Elia MacNeal adds, "Two strangers with secrets, ten little children evacuated from London, and a stay at Agatha Christie's country house make for a deliciously compelling mystery. With its flawed, complex heroine, haunting evocation of wartime England, and a series of plot twists and breathtaking reveals, Rader-Day's newest is a triumph."

Rankin, Ian. [A Song for the Dark Times](#) (\$16.99). A Starred Review: "Edgar winner Rankin's excellent 23rd outing for John Rebus takes the retired police inspector from Edinburgh to a remote part of northern Scotland, where his daughter Samantha's partner, Keith Grant, the father of his school-age granddaughter, has vanished. In his search for Keith, Rebus visits a local commune and—of particular interest to Keith—the ruins of a camp built during WWII that held captured German soldiers. An entitled landowner he runs across complicates his quest. Back in Edinburgh, former colleague Siobhan Clarke investigates the murder of Salman bin Mahmoud, a wealthy 23-year-old Saudi. The high-profile case draws in such familiar characters as criminal Morris Gerald Cafferty and Malcolm Fox, the smarmy, ambitious detective introduced in 2009's *The Complaints*. As the two plots converge, the various credible, complex backstories coalesce into a highly satisfying and unified whole. This fresh entry boasts the kind of storytelling that made Rankin famous." There is so much to love in this amazing book including the portrait of the wilds of northern Scotland.

Rosenfelt, David. [Silent Bite](#) (\$16.99). Lawyer Andy Carpenter can finally take a breath; he's back on dry land after a family Caribbean cruise forced on him by his wife, Laurie, to get into the Christmas spirit. Of course the family's first stop is to the Tara Foundation, the dog rescue organization that has always been Andy's true passion. But when Andy arrives, his partner, Willie Miller, needs his help. Willie's old cellmate, Glenn Anson, has been arrested for murder. Andy doesn't necessarily believe in Glenn, but Willie does. And Andy believes in Willie, which is why Andy decides to take the case. Once again David Rosenfelt puts readers in the Christmas spirit in a tale that is equal parts mystery and holiday cheer. See Signed Books for this year's Christmas Canine tail....

Selfon, Brian. [The Nightworkers](#) (\$17). This stylish noir was a 2020 First Mystery Book of the Month. "Selfon's ambitious,

character-driven debut tells the interconnected stories of ‘a perfectly wonderful, perfectly Brooklyn family of misfits’... Selfon fully fleshes out the major characters’ backstories, dreams, and disappointments, and even the minor characters get their moment in the sun. Superior prose is a plus. Fans of literary crime fiction will be enthralled.” –*PW* Starred Review. Harlan Coben chimes in with, “A gripping, big-hearted thriller about a family of criminals coming apart at the seams. Whip-smart and surprisingly funny, *The Nightworkers* is a terrific debut about loyalty and the ties that bind.” Watch [the zoom conversation](#) with Bryan and legendary editor Neil Nyren with me.

Tedrowe, Emily Gray. [The Talented Miss Farwell](#) (\$16.99). *Catch Me If You Can* meets Patricia Highsmith, as it were, in a really nifty caper where quiet, single Becky Farwell, the small town of Pierson, Illinois, treasurer and controller leads a modest life. Somehow, the citizens marvel, she always finds a way to keep the struggling town afloat. What they don’t see is Miss Farwell’s art habit. In fact, at the end of the 1990s, with the art market finally recovered from its disastrous collapse, Miss Rebecca Farwell has made a killing at Christie’s in New York City, selling a portion of her extraordinary art collection for a rumored 900 percent profit. Dressed in couture YSL, drinking the finest champagne at trendy Balthazar, Reba, as she’s known, is the picture of a wealthy art collector. To some, the elusive Miss Farwell is a shark with outstanding business acumen. To others, she’s a heartless capitalist whose only interest in art is how much she can make. So how long can Reba/Becky keep her debt to Pierson in control and continue to pull off her double life? “Watch and wonder as the talented Miss Farwell keeps all the plates spinning in this totally absorbing study of obsession and deception.”

NEW IN LARGE PAPERBACKS

✦ Benedict, Marie. [The Mystery of Mrs. Christie](#) (\$16.99). The story of Agatha Christie’s failing marriage to unfaithful Archie and her disappearance, then reappearance, continues to fascinate. Was it a psychological break at work? A fugue state sort of thing? A punishment for Archie? A publicity stunt? I’m not impressed with Benedict’s novelization.

Blacke, Olivia. [No Memes of Escape](#) (Berkley \$16). Odessa Dean has made a home of Brooklyn. She has a fun job waiting tables at Untapped Books & Café and a new friend, Lizzy, to explore the city with. When she’s invited on a girls’ day out escape room adventure, she jumps at the chance. It’s all fun and games until the lights come on and they discover one of the girls bludgeoned to death... The only possible suspects are Odessa and the four other players that were locked in the escape room with the victim. She refuses to believe that one of them is responsible for the murder, despite what the clues indicate. In between shifts at the café, Odessa splits her time interviewing the murder suspects, updating the bookstore’s social media accounts, and searching for the impossible—an affordable apartment in Brooklyn.

Brown, Rita Mae. [Out of Hounds](#) (\$17). With all the unrest roiling Charlottesville, Virginia, these days, a dive into the elite world of fox hunting may not be for every reader. I myself find this Sister Brown series fascinating, but then I’m an historian. The nefarious doings begin with the theft of a painting by Sir Alfred Munnings, a real-life English artist known for his horse paintings, from the home of a prominent member of the hunt.

Other thefts are soon followed by murders, and Sister and her sweetheart, Gray Lorillard, become the target of a killer. Meanwhile, members of the noisy anti-hunting crowd are out in force making trouble. Digressions on such topics as the ideal way to organize horse stalls and the evolution of riding habit styles through the centuries. The narrative is fattened by scenes in which talking dogs, horses, cats, foxes, and even birds put in their two cents’ worth on the actions of the humans.

Bruce, Scott G. [The Penguin Book of Dragons](#) (Penguin \$18). Here’s a wonderful gift idea for YA readers and older, and fans of the Disney dragon-training series. This belongs in non-fiction and yet dragons are the very stuff of great tales, so... Bruce gathers centuries of fascinating dragon lore culled from works both fictional and academic sources to demonstrate the influence dragons have had on human culture and storytelling, predominantly focusing on the West. He begins in ancient Greece and Rome with excerpts from Ovid, Virgil, and others detailing myths both familiar (Medusa) and obscure (the dragon of Bagrada River), then moves on to early Christian texts centered on serpents and other such “biblical beasts.” He excerpts Beowulf in the section devoted to “The Wyrms of Northern Literature,” and shares Merlin’s prophecies as relayed in Geoffrey of Monmouth’s “The History of the Kings of Britain” in the section on “Dragon Lore in Medieval Europe,” tracing evolving perspectives on both the beasts themselves and their heroic slayers. Interestingly, cuddlier views on dragons only arrive in the final section, which focuses on children’s literature and the kind, misunderstood creatures of Kenneth Grahame’s “The Reluctant Dragon” and Edith Nesbit’s “The Last of the Dragons.” A brief section on “Dragons of the East,” pulls from the Indian sacred text Rigveda and the Japanese folktale “The Fisherman and the Dragon Princess,” among others. Bruce’s expert commentary provides helpful context throughout.

Carter, Charlotte. [Coq au Vin](#) (Vintage \$16). “Nanette Hayes’s life is finally getting back to normal after her adventures in [Drumsticks](#) (\$16) when her mother calls her with some upsetting news: Nan’s beloved bohemian Aunt Vivian has gone missing. Normally this is par for the course with Viv, but this time the circumstances surrounding Vivian’s disappearance are rather troubling. Would Nan be up to brushing up on her French language skills and flying to Paris to track her down? Would she ever. Now swanning about her favorite city, Nan has a hard time keeping her attention on the task at hand...especially after she meets handsome violinist Andre, a fellow street musician from Detroit. But trouble has a way of finding Nan, and her search for Vivian lands her in the underbelly of historic Paris and in the crosshairs of some of its most dangerous denizens. “This high-spirited tour of Paris has terrific charm...with the infectious energy of eternal youth.”—*New York Times Book Review*. Note, this series is classified as Hardboiled, not cozy, although I expect it falls between.

Cooke, CJ. [The Lighthouse Witches](#) (Penguin \$17). Two sisters go missing on a remote Scottish island. Twenty years later, one is found—but she’s still the same age as when she disappeared. The secrets of witches have reached across the centuries in this chilling Gothic thriller where a cave beneath the island’s lighthouse was once a prison for women accused of witchcraft.

Crosby, Ellen. [The French Paradox](#) (\$17.95). In 1949, during her junior year abroad in Paris, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis bought several inexpensive paintings of Marie-Antoinette by a

little-known 18th century female artist. She also had a romantic relationship with Virginia vineyard owner Lucie Montgomery's French grandfather—until recently, a well-kept secret. Seventy years later, Cricket Delacroix, Lucie's neighbor and Jackie's school friend, is donating the now priceless paintings to a Washington, DC museum. And Lucie's grandfather is flying to Virginia for Cricket's 90th birthday party, hosted by her daughter Harriet. A washed-up journalist, Harriet is rewriting a manuscript Jackie left behind about Marie-Antoinette and her portraitist. She's also adding tell-all details about Jackie, sure to make the book a bestseller. Then on the eve of the party a world-famous landscape designer who also knew Jackie is found dead in Lucie's vineyard....A clever mystery and a well researched if imaginative backstory contribute to this entry in Crosby's Wine Country mysteries.

Cross, Georgina. [Nanny Needed](#) (Bantam \$17). When Sarah Larsen finds the notice, posted on creamy card stock in her building's lobby, one glance at the exclusive address tells her she's found her ticket out of a dead-end job—and life. At the interview, the job seems like a dream come true: a glamorous penthouse apartment on the Upper West Side of NYC; a salary that adds several zeroes to her current income; the beautiful, worldly mother of her charge, who feels more like a friend than a potential boss. She's overjoyed when they offer her the position and signs the NDA without a second thought. In retrospect, the notice in her lobby was less an engraved invitation than a waving red flag. For there is something very strange about the Bird family. And what happened to the nanny before her? It soon becomes clear that the Birds' odd behaviors are more than the eccentricities of the wealthy. But by then it's too late for Sarah to seek help....

Danforth, Emily M. [Plain Bad Heroines](#) (Morrow \$17.99) presents a highly imaginative and original horror-comedy centered around a cursed New England boarding school for girls—a wickedly whimsical celebration of the art of storytelling, Sapphic love, and the rebellious female spirit. “This was a roller coaster of a read. The ride through history that meets the present will keep you entertained, on your toes, and peeking between your fingers as you cover your eyes.”

DeCapite, Mike. [Jacket Weather](#) (Soft Skull \$16.95). “This book celebrates the comforts in life: nostalgia, food, art, and new love. Reading *Jacket Weather* is a beautiful, tense journey through the anxiety of losing what we think makes us complete,” says the Indie Next Pick of a 1980s New York City story that resumes in the present.

DeLillo, Don. [The Silence](#) (\$16). It is Super Bowl Sunday in the year 2022. Five people, dinner, an apartment on the east side of Manhattan. The retired physics professor and her husband and her former student waiting for the couple who will join them from what becomes a dramatic flight from Paris. The conversation ranges from a survey telescope in North-central Chile to a favorite brand of bourbon to Einstein's 1912 Manuscript on the Special Theory of Relativity. Then something happens and the digital connections that have transformed our lives are severed. What follows is a “brilliant and astonishing...masterpiece.”—*Chicago Tribune*—completed just before COVID struck.

Dryansky, Joanne/Gerry. [A Season in Queens](#) (Mira \$15.95). GI's are returning seriously wounded in the mind and emotionally, as well as physically maimed. This while the worst polio epidemic

in American history menaces to spread through a community troubled by the “communist threat” that forebodes war again—and, in particular, an outbreak of racism, when a black air ace and war hero comes “home” here, to find a place to live. This is the world that impinges on Erin Burke, 16, in her relationship with a disturbed veteran with what we now call Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, then called “shellshock”. Erin looks back to when she became a woman though a moment of his sexual abuse. Having survived a botched illegal abortion and gone forward from that moment in lost time in a soon to be changed place, she marries her memory to her imagination to tell her story, ultimately one of hope, and what moves people in their minds and hearts about what matters.” One or both Dryanskys earlier wrote a lovely novel, now out of print, called *Fatima's Good Fortune*, set in Paris. Try to find one.

Edwards, Amber/Justin Scott. [Forty Days and Forty Nights](#) (University of Louisiana at Lafayette \$20). “Wonderful . . . the river—ominous, atmospheric, somehow inevitable—is so much more than just a part of the story . . . it is the story, in all its might and majesty. Very impressive, and highly recommended.”—Lee Child. PW writes, “Clementine Price...grew up on the banks of the Mississippi and studied hydraulic engineering and river science at West Point. As a first lieutenant in the Army Corps of Engineers, she's selected by Col. Robert Garcia to be his adjutant in the Memphis District of the Corps. Ten years later, unprecedented torrential rains are forecast along the Mississippi, and the Corps has activated emergency management operations to assess and repair any damage to their system of levees and dams, which have kept the river and its tributaries in check. Clementine discovers that the looming natural disaster has played into the hands of a highly organized and technologically savvy white supremacist group that's intent on creating an independent republic within the U.S. The authors create a plausible and chilling scenario, peopling it with a large and vividly rendered cast. The romance that develops between Clementine and Robert, meanwhile, never slows the breakneck pace. Readers looking for action and adventure on a cinematic scale will be rewarded.

Eriksson, Kjell. [The Night of the Fire](#) (\$17.99). Can't get enough NordicNoir? Kjell is a master of it. And here, Ann Lindell has quit the Violent Crimes Unit in Uppsala, Sweden, and started a new career as a cheese maker in the village of Rasbo. Then an unknown man calls Lindell's former office and insists on speaking with her. He says she's “the only one who listens,” adding, “someone may die.” Before a former colleague can pass on the message to Lindell, a woman dies in a fire that burns down an old school in Rasbo being used to house political and war refugees. Though the investigators don't find conclusive proof, the consensus is that it was arson. Lindell is drawn to the case, even as she's the target of an unknown enemy, who leaves a dead badger in her bed, its belly slit open. When she finally listens to a tape of the caller, the voice sounds familiar. Eriksson adeptly teases whether there's a connection between the call and the fire, even as violence claims more lives in this artful blend of mystery and psychology.

Handler, David. [Man Who Wasn't All There](#) (\$17.95). After six glorious weeks of hard work on his long-overdue second novel, celebrity-ghostwriter Stewart “Hoagy” Hoag has hit a crossroads in his plot. He thinks a change of scenery will do him good—and he knows just the place. His ex-wife, the actress Merilee Nash,

has offered him the use of her idyllic Connecticut farmhouse, while she's away shooting a movie in Budapest with Mel Gibson. Hoagy and his beloved basset hound Lulu settle in for a few days' rest and relaxation. Hoagy expects fall splendor, long walks and crisp night air. He doesn't expect Merilee's eccentric, unwelcoming neighbor. Austin Talmadge warns Hoagy not to get on his bad side, but what harm can a country oddball like Austin do? Quite a lot, it turns out. This long-running series featuring a writer who can't get his groove back but falls into murders is not quite a cozy but is quirky laced with humor. Depending on your own sense of humor you will either warm to it, or not.

Harper, Lana. [Payback's a Witch](#) (Berkley \$16). The Indie Next Pick for a seasonal RomCom: "Queer witches plotting revenge against the rich boy that played them — need I say more? A laugh-out-loud funny story of heartbreak, nostalgia, and new beginnings wrapped up in spooky fall magic."

Johnson, Harold R. [The Borjkan Sagas](#) (Anansi \$16.99). The Indie Next Pick: "A discovered manuscript written in a Swedish dialect that is no longer used... three sagas filled with marvelous characters, fantasy journeys, aliens, travels across the universe, a plan to save the Bjorkans, dragons, sacred trees, and even Valkyries. If you like mythology, epic sagas, and indigenous tales, you will LOVE this book!" At least this gem could and can be read in comparison with the tantalizing mystery of the Voynich Manuscript.

Kearsley, Susanna. [The Vanished Days](#) (\$16.99). 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, or if his own feelings are blinding him to the truth. *The Vanished Days* is a prequel and companion novel to [The Winter Sea](#) (\$16.99) one of my very favorite Kearsley novels, with action that overlaps some of its action. The special edition hardcover has sold out along with tickets to the launch on October 4 hosted by Diana Gabaldon, like me a fond Kearsley fan.

King, Stephen. [Stephen King Short Fiction](#) (Scribner \$52). This is a boxed set of King's work, a nice gift.

Klay, Phil. [Missionaries](#) (\$18). In his debut novel, National Book Award-winning author and Iraq War veteran Phil Klay examines the globalization of violence through the interlocking stories of four characters and the conflicts that define their lives. For Mason, a U.S. Army Special Forces medic, and Lisette, a foreign correspondent, America's long post-9/11 wars in the Middle East exerted a terrible draw that neither is able to shake. Where can such a person go next? All roads lead to Colombia, where the US has partnered with local government to keep predatory narco gangs at bay. Mason, now a liaison to the Colombian military, is ready for the good war, and Lisette is more than

ready to cover it. Juan Pablo, a Colombian officer, must juggle managing the Americans' presence and navigating a viper's nest of factions bidding for power. Meanwhile, Abel, a lieutenant in a local militia, has lost almost everything in the seemingly endless carnage of his home province, where the lines between drug cartels, militias, and the state are semi-permeable. Klay has drawn upon six years of research in America and Colombia into the effects of the modern way of war on regular people to craft this piercing novel.

Molloy, Aimee. [Goodnight Beautiful](#) (\$16.99). It's no accident that more than one character is reading Stephen King's *Misery* in this crafty page-turner from bestseller Molloy. For starters, plenty of it—misery, that is—awaits newlyweds Sam Statler and Annie Potter after their move from Manhattan to Sam's upstate hometown of Chestnut Hill, N.Y., to be closer to his ailing mother. After a heady first few weeks during which Sam's therapy practice explodes with women eager for face time with the studly psychologist, he disappears—shaking Annie to the core. But, in the absence of clear indications of foul play, his disappearance is a low priority for the local police, especially once they get anonymous tips about his major debts and possible affair with a patient of his. After some accomplished misdirection, Molloy flips the story on its head. The surprising revelations compensate for the book's major weakness—readers not getting to know the most appealing character, spunky Annie, until late in the plot when she's forced to turn detective to search for the husband she still loves despite his considerable flaws. An excellent choice for readers of *The Last Mrs. Parrish* and *The Silent Patient*.

Moretti, Kate. [The Spires](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$15.95). Penelope Ritter Cox used to have it all—congenial job, successful husband, perfect children, established New Jersey home—but her yield went down to maybe 70% when Brett Cox's insurance firm went bankrupt and he lost his job. Now things are getting worse on a daily basis. The slide begins the day former roommate Willamena Blaine turns up uninvited on Penelope's doorstep, pleading to take her in because she's fled her abusive husband, Trent, and has nowhere else to go. Just for two weeks—tops. Penelope hasn't seen Willa since their gap year after graduating from the University of Pennsylvania, which they spent sharing a disused church with three friends in a king of gap year. They formed their own dysfunctional family calling themselves "the Spires." And the one night of debauchery ended in a deadly fire and death. Is Willa a perfect houseguest, or....?

Morelli, Laura. [The Stolen Lady](#) (Harper \$16.99). Yet another WWII story, this one clocking back and forth between Florence, 1479, when Master Leonardo da Vinci is commissioned to paint a portrait of Lisa Gherardini, wife of a prosperous silk merchant, and France, 1939, when a young archivist working at the Louvre is sent to the Castle of Chambord, where the Louvre's most precious artworks—including the *Mona Lisa*—are being transferred to ensure their safety. With the Germans hard on their heels, Anne frantically moves the *Mona Lisa* and other treasures again and again in an elaborate game of hide and seek. As the threat to the masterpieces and her life grows closer, Anne also begins to learn the truth about her brother and the role he plays in this dangerous game.

Mosley, Walter. [The Awkward Black Man](#) (\$17) features men who are, as Rufus Coombs, the naive and sweet-natured narrator of “Pet Fly,” would put it, “one shade or other of brown.” In “Pet Fly,” Rufus, who is stuck working in a mail room at an insurance company despite having a political science degree, is accused of sexual harassment after he leaves gifts for a female colleague. In “Between Storms,” a man’s paranoia following Hurricane Laura compels him to skip work and hole up in his Manhattan apartment; his self-isolation becomes a news story, which leads to his misbegotten valorization as “a people’s hero who was refusing to take one more step before the other side made changes.” Fifty-plus books into his career, Mosley hasn’t run out of inspired plots, and his interest in social issues remains acute.

Sterling, Erin. [The Ex Hex](#) (\$15.99). A charming romance just made for the fall season! Vivi has always been the least magical witch she’s known, she even teaches ‘regular, human history’ to the non-magical students at Penhaven University while other professors take on the magical arts. But somehow, nine years ago, drunk on vodka and egged on by her cousin Gwyn, she managed to actually curse Rhys Penhallow, scion of Graves Glen’s founding family after he broke her heart. Now Rhys is back and he and Vivi must reverse the curse to save the town, and just maybe recreate the magic they once shared. I note this is pretty sexy as well as hexy....

Storey, Stephanie. [Raphael, Painter in Rome](#) (Arcade \$16.99). An art history Renaissance thriller. Michelangelo’s Sistine Chapel ceiling is one of the most iconic masterpieces of the Renaissance. See its creation as never before: through the eyes of Michelangelo’s fiercest rival—the young, beautiful, brilliant painter of perfection, Raphael. Orphaned at age eleven, Raphael is determined to keep the deathbed promise he made to his father: become the greatest artist in history. But to be the best, he must beat the best, the legendary sculptor of the David, Michelangelo Buonarroti. When Pope Julius II calls both artists down to Rome, they are pitted against each other: Michelangelo painting the Sistine Ceiling, while Raphael decorates the pope’s private apartments. As Raphael strives toward perfection in paint, he battles internal demons: his desperate ambition, crippling fear of imperfection, and unshakable loneliness. Along the way, he conspires with cardinals, scrambles through the ruins of ancient Rome, and falls in love with a baker’s-daughter-turned-prostitute who becomes his muse. “With its gorgeous writing, rich settings, endearing characters, and riveting plot, *Raphael, Painter in Rome* brings to vivid life these two Renaissance masters going head to head in the deadly halls of the Vatican.” So, as yet unread by me but this description is an irresistible hook.

✦ Taylor, Andrew. [The Last Protector](#) (\$16.99). No one in England wants a return to the bloody days of the Civil War. But Oliver Cromwell’s son, Richard, has abandoned his exile and slipped back into England. The consequences could be catastrophic. James Marwood, a traitor’s son turned government agent, is tasked with uncovering Cromwell’s motives. But his assignment is complicated by his friend – the regicide’s daughter, Cat Lovett – who knew the Cromwells as a child, and who now seems to be hiding a secret of her own about the family. Both Marwood and Cat know they are putting themselves in great danger. And when they find themselves on a top secret mission in the Palace of Whitehall, they realize they are risking their lives...and could even be sent to the block for treason. ‘If you like C. J. Sansom, or

Hilary Mantel, you’ll love this series” by the immensely talented Taylor.

Walter, Jess. [The Cold Millions](#) (\$17). Early 20th century in the Inland Northwest was a brutal time for laborers, a life of excess for the wealthy. Walter explores this dichotomy through a group of diverse characters whose lives intersect in various ways. Two brothers trying to make a meager living, land barons, a brutal police force and sexy, sassy women who strive to outwit the men in their lives. The Indie Next Pick adds, “Jess Walter takes events from history to illuminate our present while keeping them rooted in their own time, from the labor movement to class, race, and gender equality and civil rights issues, to protests and freedom of speech.”

Williams, Beatriz. [The Wicked Widow](#) (\$16.99). June 1925. Audacious Appalachian flapper Geneva “Gin” Kelly prepares to trade her high-flying ways for respectable marriage to Oliver Anson Marshall, a steadfast Prohibition agent who happens to hail from one of New York’s most distinguished families. But just as wedding bells chime, the head of the notorious East Coast rum-running racket—and Anson’s mortal enemy—turns up murdered at a society funeral, and their short-lived honeymoon bliss goes up in a spectacular blaze that sends Anson back undercover...and into the jaws of a trap from which not even Gin can rescue him. **See Signed Books for the simultaneous hardcover release.**

SOME NEW SCIFI/FANTASY FICTION

Abercrombie, Joe. [The Wisdom of Crowds](#) (Orbit \$30). The conclusion to his Age of Madness Trilogy where the world finds itself in an unstoppable revolution, and the heroes have nothing left to lose. Burn it down, submit “to the wisdom of crowds.”

Anderson, Taylor. [Purgatory’s Shore](#) (Ace \$28). The United States, 1847. A disparate group of young American soldiers are bound to join General Winfield Scott’s campaign against Santa Anna at Veracruz during the Mexican-American War. They never arrive. Or rather...they arrive somewhere else.

Aoki, Ryka. [Light from Uncommon Stars](#) (Tor \$25.99) “mixes genres, but messily, with results that range from startlingly delightful to frustratingly incomplete. In this love letter to music, food and California’s San Gabriel Valley, Christian devils clash with extraterrestrials over the souls of a famous violin teacher and her talented student.” I like this summation too: “Intergalactic travel, Faustian bargains and the misunderstood music of Béla Bartók commingle... This novel includes a runaway teen violinist, donut-making refugee extraterrestrials, demons, classical music and great food.”

Britain, Kristen. [Winterlight](#) (Daw \$29). This seventh novel of the Green Rider series follows the adventures of messenger, magic wielder, and knight Karigan G’ladheon as she fights to save king and country from dark magic and a looming war.

Czerneda, Julie E. [In the Company of Others](#) (Daw \$18). When the terraforming crews introduced the alien Quill to worlds where they did not belong, they saw them only as a mindless form of fungal life. But the Quill multiplied and mutated until they were no longer harmless. In the ensuing chaos, many stations failed. For the survivors, their only hope rests in finding a way to wipe out the Quill.... Celebrating the 20th anniversary of its publication, an all-new trade paperback edition of Czerneda’s Aurora Award-winning sci-fi novel.

Eason, K. [How the Multiverse Got Its Revenge](#) (Daw \$17). Rory Thorne must use the fairy blessings gifted to her to change the multiverse in the second book in this space opera duology. Start with *Nightwatch on the Hinterlands*.

French, Jonathan. [The Free Bastards](#) (Dell \$28.99)

Harrow, Alix E. [A Spindle Splintered](#) (Tordotcom \$17.99). New in Harrow's Fractured Fables series, "A refreshing and humorous feminist retelling of *Sleeping Beauty*, where the villains are not who you remember and the women are stronger than ever."

Herbert, Brian/Kevin J. Anderson. [Dune: The Lady of Caladan](#) (Forge \$28.99). #2 in the Caladan Trilogy.

Kadrey, Richard. [King Bullet](#) (Harper Voyager \$28.99). Here's the 12th and final Sandman Slim, a series our Pat King loves. Tom Shippey in the *WSJ* calls this series "the flagship of the urban fantasy genre." Slim is half human, half fallen angel—a Nephilim—who polices Los Angeles and its unseen underworld of vampire, demons, demigods, groupies, and funny little people....

Kennedy, James. [Dare to Know](#) (Quirk \$22.99). Our narrator is the most talented salesperson at Dare to Know, an enigmatic company that has developed the technology to predict anyone's death down to the second. Divorced, estranged from his sons, and broke, he's driven to violate the cardinal rule of the business by forecasting his own death day. The problem: his prediction says he died twenty-three minutes ago. The only person who can confirm its accuracy is Julia, the woman he loved and lost during his rise up the ranks of Dare to Know. As he travels across the country to see her, he's forced to confront his past, the choices he's made, and the terrifying truth about the company he works for. "A razor-smart sci-fi corporate noir nightmare. *Dare to Know* is what happens when Willy Loman sees through the Matrix."—Daniel Kraus

Klune, TJ. [Under the Whispering Door](#) (Forge \$26.99). A dead man reconsiders his life in this queer fantasy from the author of [The House in the Cerulean Sea](#) (\$18.99). At 40, white bisexual Wallace Price is a ruthless lawyer with no empathy for those around him. When he dies suddenly, prickly reaper Mei arrives to escort his ghost to Charon's Crossing, a tea shop run by Hugo Freeman. Hugo, a Black gay 30-year-old, serves as a ferryman, guiding souls to whatever comes next. Hugo tells the angry, disbelieving Wallace that he can stay at Charon's Crossing until he's ready. But Wallace will never be ready, and after trying to run away and discovering that he'll become an inhuman Husk if he does, Wallace settles into life in the bustling cafe, learning to manipulate objects from Hugo's ghostly grandfather, Nelson, and slowly becoming a better person as attraction blooms between him and Hugo. But when Mei reaps Alan Flynn, the victim of a murder, his rageful spirit upends the cozy, found family dynamic at Charon's Crossing.

Kuhn, M J. [Among Thieves](#) (Saga Press \$26.99). In just over a year's time, Ryia Cautella has already earned herself a reputation as the quickest, deadliest blade in the dockside city of Carrowwick—not to mention the sharpest tongue. But Ryia Cautella is not her real name. For the past six years, a deadly secret has kept her in hiding, running from town to town, doing whatever it takes to stay one step ahead of the formidable Guildmaster—the sovereign ruler of the five kingdoms of Thamorr. No matter how far or fast she travels, his servants never fail to track her down... but even the most powerful men can be defeated. Ryia's path now

leads directly into the heart of the Guildmaster's stronghold... perfect for fans of *Six of Crows*.

Michel, Lincoln. [The Body Scout](#) (Orbit \$27). Michel's debut "blends noir, cyberpunk and sports into something at once timeless and original. In an unsettlingly near-future New York where extreme climate change has made cybernetic limbs and genetic modifications — called "upgrades" — necessary and commonplace, steep income inequality and horrifying medical debt are ever more prevalent. But the book's not really about those things. First and foremost, it's about baseball. Kobo is a scout in a world where baseball teams are owned mostly by giant pharmaceutical corporations. In addition to players, he scouts scientists, geneticists and neurosurgeons who help shape players into proof-of-concept displays of their latest genetic therapies. Kobo's adoptive brother, JJ Zunz, is the star slugger for the Monsanto Mets, who've pinned their hopes on him for the pennant. But during the playoffs, Zunz steps up to the plate and dies a gruesome, baffling, widely televised death. Kobo, devastated, believes it's murder — and gets recruited by the Mets to investigate.

Novik, Naomi. [The Last Graduate](#) (Random \$28). The Indie Next Pick calls book two in the Scholomance fantasy trilogy "Another great novel from the master world-builder. A perfect setup for the final book of the trilogy."

Paolini, Christopher. [To Sleep in a Sea of Stars](#) (\$21.99). Kira Navárez dreamed of life on new worlds. During a routine survey mission on an uncolonized planet, Kira finds an alien relic. At first she's delighted, but elation turns to terror when the ancient dust around her begins to move. As war erupts among the stars, Kira is launched into a galaxy-spanning odyssey of discovery and transformation. First contact isn't at all what she imagined, and events push her to the very limits of what it means to be human. While Kira faces her own horrors, Earth and its colonies stand upon the brink of annihilation. Paolini is the author of the amazing bestseller *Eragon*.

Rocklyn, Zin E. [Flowers for the Sea](#) (Tor \$13.99). Survivors from a flooded kingdom struggle alone on an ark. Resources are scant, and ravenous beasts circle. Their fangs are sharp. Among the refugees is Iraxi: ostracized, despised, and a commoner who refused a prince, she's pregnant with a child that might be more than human. Her fate may be darker and more powerful than she can imagine. For this LJ Editor's Pick debut, think "*Rosemary's Baby* by way of Octavia E. Butler."

Ryan, Anthony. [The Pariah](#) (Orbit \$17.99). The Covenant of Steel #1.

Spiner, Brent. [Fan Fiction](#) (St Martins \$27.99). A debut and homage. "Come, be an insider fly on the shoulder of Brent Spiner of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* fame, in the midst of the frightening yet hilarious stalking of 'Commander Data' by an obsessed fan. Who was doing it? Who would die? Did Brent really overcome his childhood trauma and fear through these dramatic events? Is any of this true? And which parts?? Well-written and a good page-turner, you don't need to be a trekkie to enjoy this romp through pop-culture fandom gone wrong." There is a bonus: Preorder. Then upload your receipt to [this landing page](#) and receive a custom book mark.

Stackpole, Michael A. [Rogue Squadron: Star Wars Legends](#) (Dell \$16).

Zahn, Timothy. [Dark Force Rising: Star Wars Legends](#) (Dell \$16) and [The Last Command: Star Wars Legends](#) (\$16).

OUR OCTOBER SMALL PAPERBACK PICKS

Atkins, Ace. [Robert B Parker's Someone to Watch Over Me](#) (\$9.99). Spenser #48. When his apprentice Mattie's childhood friend from the South Boston housing projects is murdered, Spenser traces the victim's demise to an international sex-trafficking ring that has been operating with impunity under the protection of a well-connected billionaire.

Butcher, Jim. [Battle Ground](#) (\$9.99). Dresden Files #17. When the Last Titan, a being more dangerous than anything humanity has faced in a millennium, declares war on the city of Chicago, professional wizard Harry Dresden embarks on a defense that permanently transforms the mortal world. *PW* summed this up with "This is urban fantasy at its best, combining spectacular magic and deeply explored character."

Connelly, Michael. [The Law of Innocence](#) (\$9.99). Lincoln Lawyer #6. Defense attorney Mickey Haller utilizes his legal team's resources from behind bars to organize his own defense when he is framed for murder by an unknown adversary. *Kirkus* concluded their starred review with "For sheer courtroom inventiveness and suspense, Haller has never shone brighter. A virtuoso performance even by Connelly's high standards."

Kellerman, Jonathan. [Serpentine](#) (\$9.99). Alex Delaware #36. LAPD homicide lieutenant Milo Sturgis and brilliant psychologist Alex Delaware investigate a decades-unsolved case involving a rich and spoiled client, a mysterious birth mother, and violent coincidences. "Kellerman maintains pace and suspense through the interactions of the characters – witnesses, detectives, relatives of the victims – all of whom are rendered in striking and precise detail. This entry is pure pleasure, intelligently delivered." (*Kirkus*)

Le Carré, John. [Agent Running in the Field](#) (\$9.99). Desperate to resist the political turbulence of his 2018 London home, a young man establishes connections that lead him down a dark and dangerous path. This work by the late Le Carré, is both a "tragicomic salute to both the recuperative powers of its has-been hero and the remarkable career of its nonpareil author." (*Kirkus*)

Margolin, Phillip. [A Matter of Life and Death](#) (\$9.99). Robin Lockwood #4. Rising attorney Robin Lockwood takes the death-penalty case of a homeless father who has been set up for the murder of a prominent judge's wife.

McKinlay, Jenn. [One for the Books](#) (\$7.99). Library Lovers #11. When a growing guest list upends her plans for a smaller wedding, Lindsey and her friends visit a prospective venue on Bell Island, where they stumble on the murdered body of the man who was to officiate.

O'Connor, Carlene. [Murder at an Irish Christmas](#) (\$8.99). Irish Village #6. Joining the rest of the O'Sullivan clan to spend a music-themed holiday visit with a future sister-in-law's family, Siobhán investigates the untimely demise of a famous conductor only to become snowed in with the case's chief suspects

Shelton, Paige. [Cold Wind](#) (\$7.99). In this follow-up to *Thin Ice*, Beth Rivers, who has a few secrets of her own, investigates the discovery of a trapper's secluded home in the woods near Benedict, Alaska, where a murder victim is linked to the owner of the local mercantile.

Slaughter, Karin. [The Silent Wife](#) (\$9.99). Will Trent #10. Investigating a brutal murder that eerily resembles another from years earlier, Will Trent reopens the case of a possibly wrongly convicted prisoner before teaming up with medical examiner Sara Linton to hunt down the true killer. "More slow-burning than most of Slaughter's shockers, this one will still rattle you down to your bones." (*Kirkus*)

NEW IN PAPERBACK FOR OCTOBER

Box, C J. [Badlands](#) (\$9.99). Reissue. Cody Hoyt/ Cassie Dewell #3. In the aftermath of a learning-disabled youth's discovery of a cache of drugs and money, deputy sheriff Cassie Dewell struggles to keep the peace in a North Dakota community that has been transformed by oil discoveries and gang activity.

Bruns, Catherine. [The Enemy You Gnocchi](#) (Sourcebooks \$8.99). Italian Chef #3. The owner of Anything's Pastable, Tessa Esposito, trying to keep things merry, bright and delicious for everyone, must prove her best friend Archie's innocence in the murder of his competition.

DiRico, Maria. [It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Murder](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Catering Hall #3. While dealing with a full schedule of events at the family business and her challenging personal life, amateur sleuth Mia Carina, when a body turns up in a Christmas-themed lawn display, must find out who's the guilty party.

Edvardsson, M T. [A Nearly Normal Family](#) (\$9.99). A legal thriller told in three acts follows the trial of an 18-year-old girl from an upstanding family who has been implicated in the murder of a shady businessman, testing the limits of her father's faith and mother's ethics.

Elliott, Lauren. [To the Tome of Murder](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Beyond the Page #7. When she stumbles upon the dead body of her cousin's boyfriend, bookshop owner Addie Greyborne reluctantly realizes she may be the only person to solve this grisly crime as she goes up against a dangerously well-read culprit.

Erickson, Alex. [Death by Hot Apple Cider](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Bookstore Café #9. When a patron notorious for harassing her bookstore and the library for promoting supposedly scandalous literature meets his demise in the apple-bobbing booth, Krissy Hancock and her policeman boyfriend must find a killer who's rotten to the core.

Evanovich, Janet. [Fortune and Glory: Tantalizing Twenty Six](#) (\$9.99). Plum #26. When Stephanie's beloved Grandma Mazur's new husband died on their wedding night, the only thing he left her was a beat-up old easy chair, and the keys to a life-changing fortune. But as Stephanie and Grandma Mazur search for Jimmy Rosolli's treasure, they discover that they're not the only ones on the hunt.

Fletcher, Jessica. [Murder, She Wrote: Killing in a Koi Pond](#) (\$7.99). Jessica Fletcher #53. While in Columbia, South Carolina to visit her old college friend Dolores, Jessica Fletcher is drawn into a mystery when Dolores's third husband is found face down in a koi pond and she suspects something fishy is going on.

Griffo, J D. [Murder at the Mistletoe Ball](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Ferrara Family #6. When Alberta's 21-year-old grandson, Sergio, who has been missing for six months, shows up at the Mistletoe Ball next to a dead body, she and her estranged daughter Lisa

Marie must put their past behind them and work together to clear his name before Christmas.

Hauty, Chris. [Savage Road](#) (\$9.99). This sequel to *Deep State* finds Hayley Chill investigating a series of devastating cyber attacks throughout the United States before discovering that the President may be a double agent who is trying to ignite a war.

Johansen, Roy. [Blink of an Eye](#) (\$9.99). Kendra Michaels #8. Investigator Kendra Michaels teams up with military-trained bodyguard Jessie Mercado and agent-for-hire Adam Lynch in a desperate effort to rescue a famous pop singer who has been kidnapped during a live performance.

Kelly, Diane. [Getaway with Murder](#) (Simon Schuster \$8.99). Mountain Lodge #1. When her lodge's opening weekend is marred by theft and murder, Misty Murphy, with her reputation hanging in the balance, must put her own crime-solving skills to the test before she loses everything.

Lansing, Kate. [Mulled to Death](#) (Berkley \$7.99). Colorado Wine #3. When murder gets in the way of her romantic ski trip and business plans, Parker Valentine, after a series of unfortunate mishaps befall her, realizes that whoever killed the resort owner is now after her.

Meier, Leslie. [Christmas Card Murder](#) (\$8.99). Three cozy holiday-themed novellas are set in the state of Maine and include Leslie Meier's "Christmas Card Murder," Lee Hollis's "Death of a Christmas Carol" and Peggy Ehrhart's "Death of a Christmas Card Crafter."

Pekkanen, Sarah. [The Perfect Neighbors](#) (\$9.99). Four women – Kellie (a stay-at-home mom recently returned to work), Susan (a single mom still reeling from her divorce the year prior), Gigi (whose husband is running for office), and Tessa (a reserved mother of two) – hide secrets that could prove to be deadly in the rustic suburban town of Newport Cove.

Wallace, Auralee. [In the Company of Witches](#) (Berkley \$7.99). Evanfall Witches B and B #1. When a local woman dies while staying at their B&B and her Aunt Nora is the prime suspect, Brynn Warren, a witch who can commune with ghosts, must use the gift she once thought herself ready to give up forever to prove her aunt's innocence.