

# BOOKNEWS from

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sales@poisonedpen.com tel (888)560-9919  
http://poisonedpen.com

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



## ANOTHER AMAZING APRIL

And It's National Poetry Month

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

Note: 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.

### SATURDAY APRIL 2 2:00 PM Live

**Brenda Novak with John**

Novak discusses [Summer on the Island](#) (Mira \$28.99/\$16.99)  
Signed copies available

### MONDAY APRIL 4 4:30 PM

**Jeffery Siger** discusses [One Last Chance](#) (Poisoned Pen \$28.99/\$15.99)

Murder on the Greek island of Ikaria  
Signed copies of the hardcover available

### MONDAY APRIL 4 6:00 PM

**CS Harris** discusses [When Blood Lies](#) (Berkley \$26)  
Sebastian St. Cyr  
Signed copies available

### TUESDAY APRIL 5 4:30 PM

**Jess Montgomery** discusses [The Echoes](#) (St Martins \$27.99)  
Signed copies available

### TUESDAY APRIL 5 7:00 PM Live

**Steven Havill** discusses [No Accident](#) (Poisoned Pen \$15.95)  
Posadas County Mystery  
Signed copies available

### WEDNESDAY APRIL 6 6:00 PM

**A YA Mystery/Thriller Panel with Pat King**  
**Kit Frick**, [Very Bad People](#) (McElderry \$19.99)  
**Amelia Kahaney**, [All the Best Liars](#) (Flatiron \$18.99)  
**Courtney Summers**, [The Project](#) (St Martins \$18.99)  
**Jesse Q Sutanto**, [Four Aunties and a Wedding](#) (Berkley \$16)  
**Marit Weisenberg**, [This Golden State](#) (Flatiron \$18.99)

### SATURDAY APRIL 9 2:00 PM Live

**Paige Shelton with John Charles**  
**Shelton** discusses [The Burning Pages](#) (St Martins \$26.99)  
Our April Cozy Crimes Book of the Month  
Signed copies available

### MONDAY APRIL 11 7:00 PM Live

**Anne Hillerman** discusses [The Sacred Bridge](#) (Harper \$26.99)  
Leaphorn, Chee, & Manuelito  
Signed copies available

### TUESDAY APRIL 12 7:00 PM Live

**John Sandford** discusses [The Investigator](#) (Putnam \$29)  
Letty Davenport gets her own book  
Our April Crime Book of the Month  
Signed copies available

### WEDNESDAY APRIL 13 2:00 PM Live

**Kim Fay** discusses [Love & Saffron](#) (Putnam \$24)  
Letters of friendship and food  
Signed copies available

### WEDNESDAY APRIL 13 6:00 PM

**Will Thomas with Charles Finch**  
**Thomas** discusses [Fierce Poison](#) (St Martins \$27.99)  
Brilliant Victorian sleuths Barker & Llewelyn  
Signed copies available

### THURSDAY APRIL 14 4:00 PM

**Australia's Anna Downes with Rachel Hawkins**  
**Downes** discusses [The Shadow House](#) (St Martins \$27.99)

### THURSDAY APRIL 14 6:00 PM

**Gary Phillips with Patrick**  
**Phillips** discusses [One-Shot Harry](#) (Soho \$27.95)  
Signed books available

### FRIDAY APRIL 15 5:00 PM

**Anne Perry** discusses [Three Debts Paid](#) (Ballantine \$28)  
A Daniel Pitt Mystery  
Signed books available

### FRIDAY APRIL 15 7:00 PM

**SciFi Friday** discusses Tochi Onyebuchi, [Riot Baby](#) (\$19.99)

### SATURDAY APRIL 16 10:30 AM

**Croak & Dagger** discusses SA Lelchuk's [Save Me from Dangerous Men](#) (\$17.99), a staff favorite!

### MONDAY APRIL 18 7:00 PM Live National Book Launch

**James Rollins** discusses [Kingdom of Bones](#) (Harper \$28.99)  
Sigma Force

**Our Signed copies feature an exclusive insert featuring bats from the novel with a quote from the book**

**TUESDAY APRIL 19 5:00 PM Virtual Book Launch**

**David Baldacci with Don Winslow**

**Baldacci** discusses [Dream Town](#) (Grand Central \$29)

Aloysius Archer

Signed copies available

**WEDNESDAY APRIL 20 4:30 PM**

**William Maz** discusses [The Bucharest Dossier](#) (Oceanview \$27.95)

This debut is truly timely in its location and the Russian asset

Our May Historical Fiction Book of the Month

There might be Signed copies left

**WEDNESDAY APRIL 20 6:00 PM**

**Sascha Rothchild with Stephanie Wrobel**

**Rothchild** discusses [Blood Sugar](#) (Putnam \$27)

Our April First Mystery Book of the Month

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**SATURDAY APRIL 23 4:00 PM**

**Rebecca Roanhorse with Pat King**

**Roanhorse** discusses [Fevered Star](#) (Saga Press \$27.99)

The sequel to *Black Sun*, a multi award earner

Signed copies available

**MONDAY APRIL 25 7:00 PM Live**

**Don Winslow with Patrick**

**Winslow** discusses [City on Fire](#) (Harper \$28.99)

Begins a “contemporary *Iliad*” trilogy

Signed copies available

**WEDNESDAY APRIL 27 7:00 PM**

**Hardboiled Crime** discusses Frederic Brown, [The Fabulous Clipjoint](#) (\$15.95)

**THURSDAY APRIL 28 7:00 PM Live**

**Adriana Trigiani** with Larry

**Trigiani** discusses [The Good Left Undone](#) (Dutton \$28)

Signed copies available

**FRIDAY APRIL 29 6:00 PM Live**

**Jeneva Rose with May Cobb**

**Rose** discusses [One of Us Is Dead](#) (Blackstone \$28.99)

Signed copies available

**SATURDAY APRIL 30 10 AM-6 PM**

**Independent Bookstore Day**

**Join us for special promotions and general fun**

**SATURDAY APRIL 30 10:30 AM Live**

**Allison Brennan** discusses [The Wrong Victim](#) (Mira \$26.99)

A Quinn & Costa Thriller

Signed copies available

**OUR APRIL BOOKS OF THE MONTH**

**British Crime Club** One unsigned hardcover or paperback per month  
Lloyd, Ellery. [The Club](#) (Harper \$26.99)

**Cozy Crimes Club** One unsigned hardcover or paperback per month  
Shelton, Paige. [The Burning Pages](#)

**First Mystery Club** One Signed First Printing per month  
Rothschild, Sascha. [Blood Sugar](#)

**The Crime Collectors Book of the Month Club** One Signed  
First Printing per month  
Sandford, John. [The Investigator](#)

**History/Mystery Club** One Signed First Printing per month  
Gelernter, JH. [Captain Grey's Gambit](#)

**Notable New Fiction** One Signed First Printing per month  
O’Nan, Stewart. [Ocean State](#) (sold out)

**International Crime** One Unsigned Hardcover or paperback per  
month  
Benjamin, Tom. [The Hunting Season](#)

**SIGNED BOOKS (includes tip-ins and bookplates or special inserts)**

Baldacci, David. [Dream Town](#) (Grand Central \$29). Aloysius Archer, a decorated WWII vet who works for a detective agency in Bay Town, California, heads to Los Angeles to celebrate New Year’s Eve 1952 with actress and love interest Liberty Callahan. That evening, at a restaurant frequented by such stars as Frank Sinatra and Groucho Marx, Callahan introduces Archer to her friend Eleanor Lamb, a screenwriter working on a script for Bette Davis. After Lamb learns of Archer’s profession, she seeks to hire him because she’s gotten middle-of-the-night–hang-up calls, and someone entered her Malibu home and left a bloody knife in her kitchen sink. Lamb’s fears for her life seem justified when she disappears. Right after Archer finds an unknown man shot to death in her house, someone bludgeons the gumshoe

into unconsciousness. The tension rises as his subsequent investigation places his own life in danger. “Baldacci paints a vivid picture of the not-so-distant era . . . The 1950s weren’t the fabled good old days, but they’re fodder for gritty crime stories of high ideals and lowlifes, of longing and disappointment, and all the trouble a PI can handle. Well-done crime fiction. Baldacci nails the noir.”—*Kirkus* Starred Review

Brennan, Allison. [The Wrong Victim](#) (Mira \$26.99). FBI special agent Matt Costa, head of the agency’s Mobile Response Team, and LAPD officer Kara Quinn, who’s on loan to the FBI, travel to Washington’s San Juan Island to investigate the bombing of a private charter boat piloted by retired FBI agent Neil Devereaux. Neil and his eight wealthy passengers died in the explosion, and

the FBI is in a quandary about who the intended victim might have been. The four owners of a software company who refused to sell out to the looming competition? A newly married couple harboring nasty secrets? A deckhand who called in sick or the friend who took his place? The wealthy businessman and his sparkly new wife, whose children fear for their inheritance? Or just the businessman, as the wife actually left the boat before its departure, perhaps eager to dump an aging husband? Or maybe the boat itself, scorned by a radical eco-terrorist group? The tension rises as a top FBI forensic psychiatrist questions Kara's assessments of the suspects, as well as Matt's reasons for including her on the team. There's romantic tension too as the relationship between Costa and Quinn heats up. I've really enjoyed this series and [recommend the earlier entries](#).

Cameron, Marc. [Cold Snap](#) (Kensington \$27). **Signed May 5 in conversation with fellow Alaskan Dana Stabenow.** "Bestseller Cameron's exciting fourth novel featuring quick-thinking Deputy U.S. Marshal Arliss Cutter takes Cutter once again from his home state of Florida to Alaska, where he and his colleague on the Alaska Fugitive Task Force, unflappable Deputy Lola Teariki, board a Russian freighter suspected of smuggling. The unusual cargo they uncover comes as a big surprise. In an overlapping case, the duo is informed that a woman's foot has washed up on the shore, the apparent fifth victim of the Bootleggers Cove serial killer. Meanwhile, Cutter begins to question whether his older brother Ethan's death two years earlier had been a murder and not, as had been presumed, an accident. Cameron piles on the complications in the thrilling finale, played out in a remote wilderness setting, with an icy storm on the horizon and a hungry 800-pound grizzly looking for his next meal. Well-developed characters complement the nonstop action. Cameron viscerally conveys Alaska's austere beauty as well as its unexpected dangers." Order [the earlier Cutters](#) which I recommend in part for their authenticity given Cameron's own history as a US Marshal.

Davis, Lindsey. [Desperate Undertaking](#) (Hodder \$44). Ancient Rome, the very end of December. The Field of Mars is packed with monuments, none more beautiful than Domitian's new Odeon and Stadium. But the area has been overtaken by ugly events: elaborately staged murders. Someone bears a spectacular grudge against the theatrical community, and intends to get revenge in the most spectacular way possible. The killer's method is to re-enact bloody scenes from the gruesome side of popular theatre, where characters in plays really die on stage. A figure from the past wants Flavia Albia's father to investigate, but Falco is out of Rome for the holidays. Albia seizes the commission. And begins to regret doing so almost immediately. 'The undertaker did it!' the first victim croaks before expiring. This seems to make no sense, because surely people are already dead when they go to their funeral? Though there is a serial killer at large, the authorities would prefer a cover-up but Albia is driven to discover what is going on.

Fay, Kim. [Love & Saffron](#) (Viking \$24). Joan Bergstrom, 27, sends a fan letter and some saffron to magazine columnist Imogen Fortier, 59. Joan, a nascent newspaper food writer, lives in Los Angeles and has fairly adventurous taste buds for the era. Since Imogen, who lives on an island near Seattle, often mentions clams in her column, Joan suggests that Imogen try mussels flavored with saffron and vermouth. Thus begins a years-long friendship-by-correspondence between the two women, which

will see them through the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Kennedy assassination and their own personal triumphs and tragedies. In this sweet, slender novel, Fay uses vibrant food descriptions to connect her two main characters and to assist them in coping with the dire news of an alarming era. As Imogen and Joan exchange recipes for *carne asada* and jerk chicken, they also begin to swap stories about their personal lives; and each helps the other's relationships and personal growth. Perfect for those burned out by current news cycles, *Love & Saffron* is a gentle escape to the past, and also a reminder both that others have survived "unprecedented times," and that deep connections can be made even when people are physically separated.

⌘Gelernter, JH. [Captain Grey's Gambit](#) (Norton \$25.95). Our April **Historical Fiction Book of the Month** really is a kind of *Queen's Gambit* crossed with Bernard Cornwell's Sharpe series, or better yet, Patrick O'Brian's phenomenal Aubrey & Maturin series. Some of you may find the naval stuff or the card play and chess games (modeled on real contests as explained in a nifty footnote), a bit challenging, but the writing is so wonderful just stick with it. The espionage plot is also. And I enjoyed Grey's return from India where he delivered dispatches to one Arthur Wellesley (né Wesley) who in time will become Arthur, Duke of Wellington.

This gem gets a Starred Review: "Early in Gelernter's superior sequel to 2021's [Hold Fast](#) (\$16.95), Sir Edward Banks, England's chief of naval intelligence, orders Captain Thomas Grey, recently returned home from a mission to India, to appear at 10 Downing Street on New Year's Day, 1804, with no explanation. Grey is confused when he shows up at the appointed time, only to be directed to play chess against the prime minister's private secretary, George Atwood. At first, Atwood easily defeats Grey in one game after another, but over the course of a month Grey improves and starts to win. He later learns the match was an audition that he has passed. As the best chess player in the service, he's being sent to Frankfurt to compete in an international tournament. That's a cover for his exfiltration of a highly prized defector and chess champion, Joseph Leclerc, one of Napoleon's most trusted aides, who has become disillusioned with his master. Gelernter's clever premise matches his well-rounded and plausible lead, and vivid depictions of the developments in the conflict between England and France enhance the suspenseful espionage plot. A musical interlude at the beginning will only increase the appeal for Patrick O'Brian admirers."

⌘Green, Jane. [Sister Stardust](#) (Hanover Square \$26.99). **Tip-ins.** As an English widow named Claire goes through her attic, she discovers a box of mementos from her trip to Morocco in the 1960s. Green then flashes back to 1966 Dorset, where Claire, eager to get away from her critical stepmother, flees to London and finds work at a women's clothing store. Claire begins dating John McKenna, who introduces her to people in the music industry, members of the newly popular Rolling Stones among them. As Claire becomes immersed in London's vibrant 1960s music scene, she joins her newfound friends on a trip to Morocco where she meets Talitha Getty, a beautiful fashion figure and wife of J. Paul Getty Jr. Claire enjoys her close friendship with Talitha and is drawn into Talitha's indulgent world of drugs and sex, until the glamour of that life wanes when an accident befalls a member of Claire's new circle. Green convincingly describes the appeal of

the music scene, as well as the allure of her beautiful characters, both famous and fictional. Chock-full of vibrant historical details about London and Morocco in the 1960s, Green's first foray into historical fiction ... is really about an average girl's brief brush with fame during an unprecedented time, tackling difficult questions of self-doubt, fulfillment, and individual purpose—complete with cameo appearances by Mick Jagger, John Lennon, and a host of others. And it's a loving portrait of a surprisingly happy marriage and the new widow's future. "Jet-setting, glamorous, intoxicating, and a tad bit dangerous, *Sister Stardust* transports you to the very center of the glitterati and under the spell of Talitha Getty. A wild ride." —Taylor Jenkins Reid

✦Harris, CS. [When Blood Lies](#) (Berkley \$26). This Regency-era series is one of my absolute favorites. As I refuse to rush through reading it here's a quote: "Bestseller Harris's standout 17th Sebastian St. Cyr provides an early gut-punch for her aristocratic detective. St. Cyr has wondered about his lineage since learning that the man he had thought his father, the Earl of Hendon, was not. In 1815, St. Cyr and his wife travel to Paris in the hopes of discovering the truth from his mother, Sophie, who abandoned her family 20 years earlier, faked her death, and is now the mistress of one of the exiled Napoleon's most trusted generals. To his horror, he chances upon Sophie near the Seine, having apparently fallen from a bridge, with a stab wound in her back. Sophie dies soon afterward, but the authorities are uninterested in treating the fatality as a homicide. St. Cyr presses on and learns that his mother recently visited Napoleon on Elba, a dangerous step given the French government's fears that the former emperor may be planning a return to power. Harris makes the torment of her lead palpable even to newcomers and perfectly balances the personal aspects of the case with detection. This long-running series remains as fresh as ever."

Havill, Steven F. [No Accident](#) (Poisoned Pen \$15.95). Sorry, there is no hardcover edition which breaks my heart. Posadas County Undersheriff Estelle Reyes-Guzman is at the Broken Spur Saloon, where local hothead Johnny Rabke has thrown a billiard ball at a visiting bar patron up from Mexico and knocked him unconscious. While sorting things out with the witnesses and managing the back-talking Rabke, Estelle learns that her younger son, Carlos, has been in a bicycle accident in Briones, California. Estelle and her husband rush to the scene where they discover that Carlos has been badly injured and his girlfriend, Tasha Qarshe, was thrown from the tandem bicycle they were riding together. When it's revealed that the pickup truck that hit the couple was stolen and had deliberately driven back over Carlos, Estelle realizes that the hit-and-run was intentional, and she begins to investigate with the help of a fingerprint expert from the San Francisco PD. The tension rises as Estelle investigates....

Hillerman, Anne. [The Sacred Bridge](#) (Harper \$26.99). With the longtime drought and the effect on Lake Powell so much in the news along with controversy about the creation of the lake by constructing the Glen Canyon Dam, this new novel flush with Navajo archeological sites and cultural impacts is timely and powerful. Hillerman does a masterful job describing the beauties of the area as well, and in particular the nearly magical impact of the Rainbow Bridge, one of the world's largest natural bridges. Jim Chee is at the scene, on retreat pondering what the next phase of his career should be, while his wife Bernie Manuelito is back home similarly trying to decide whether to move from being a

police officer to a detective. Chee has brought with him a map provided by his mentor, the legendary Lieutenant Joe Leaphorn, showing the location of what Leaphorn believes to be a sacred cave containing a trove of ancient sand paintings. During fruitless searching, Chee discovers the body of a young man floating face down in the icy waters of the lake. A severe head injury indicates that the victim, a Navajo, was murdered. The local police ask Chee to join their investigation. Meanwhile, Bernie, witnesses an intentional hit-and-run, a crime that leads her to take on a dangerous undercover mission. Enjoy the Native American lore, dramatic descriptions of the western terrain, and the evolution in the personal lives of Leaphorn (off vacationing in Hawaii!), Chee, and Manuelito.

Li, Grace D. [Portrait of a Thief](#) (Tiny Reparations Books \$26). Our March First Mystery Book of the Month has taken off like a rocket nationwide and already reprinted. I was able to snag more of the first prints just in time. I recommend this highly; it's always a plus to get in at the start of a career. Among its many raves is this one from Library Reads: "Li's debut novel is a fun heist book focusing on five Chinese-American college students recruited to steal artwork from Western museums and return them to China. The book looks at issues of diaspora, colonization, and the character's different relationships with culture and identity. Give to readers who liked *The Verifiers* and *Skin Deep*."

Since we did not host a formal event for Grace, here is a [link to our book chat](#) with her; and [here to the podcast](#). You can actually see a star being born.

Mandel, Emily St John. [The Sea of Tranquility Signed Special Edition](#) (Knopf \$24). In 1912, at an estate in the British countryside, 18-year-old Edwin St. Andrew makes a rude comment at dinner and is sent in disgrace to live in Canada. In 1994, a young girl makes a video in the woods near her home; in 2020, after her death, her composer brother screens it during a concert. (These last two are Vincent and Paul Smith, characters from Mandel's last book, *The Glass Hotel*.) In 2203, author Olive Llewellyn has left her husband and daughter at home on the moon's Colony Two to travel to Earth for a book tour to promote her pandemic novel, *Marienbad* (reminiscent of Mandel's own bestselling *Station Eleven*). To find out why these various people have all experienced the same weird few seconds of sound and sensation, we must go all the way to the 2400s, when there are three colonies on the moon designed to relieve overcrowding on Earth, and where we meet a character named after someone in Olive's novel—yet he is already strangely familiar. "The latest in Mandel's evolving uber novel opus once again builds an utterly singular world while remaining tethered to her previous works... Brilliantly combining imagery from science fiction and the current pandemic, Mandel grounds her rich metaphysical speculation in small, beautifully observed human moments."

MacBride, Stuart. [No Less the Devil](#) (Bantam UK \$44). Likely to be delivered in May but please order now to avoid disappointment. It's been seventeen months since the Bloodsmith butchered his first victim and Operation Maypole is still no nearer to catching him. The media is whipping up a storm, the top brass are demanding results, but the investigation is sinking fast. Now isn't the time to get distracted with other cases, but Detective Sergeant Lucy McVeigh doesn't have much choice. When Benedict Strachan was just eleven, he hunted down and killed a homeless man. No one's ever figured out why Benedict

did it, but now, after sixteen years, he's back on the streets again—battered, frightened, convinced a shadowy 'They' are out to get him, and begging Lucy for help. It sounds like paranoia, but what if he's right? What if he really is caught up in something bigger and darker than Lucy's ever dealt with before? What if the Bloodsmith isn't the only monster out there? And what's going to happen when Lucy goes after them?

Maz, William. [The Bucharest Dossier](#) (Oceanview \$27.95). We are down to 5 unsold copies of our **May Historical Fiction Book of the Month** which has sold out at the publisher in first prints. Bill Hefflin is a man apart: apart from life, apart from his homeland, apart from love. At the start of the 1989 uprising in Romania, this complicated CIA analyst — a disillusioned Romanian expat — arrives in Bucharest at the insistence of his KGB asset who is code-named Boris. As Hefflin becomes embroiled in an uprising that turns into a brutal revolution, nothing is as it seems ... including the search for his childhood love, which has taken on mythical proportions. With the bloody events unfolding at blinding speed, Hefflin realizes the revolution is manipulated by outside forces like his own CIA and the mysterious Boris — the puppeteer who seems to be pulling all the strings of Hefflin's life.

This stirring debut is set in 1989 where the uprising toppled the dictatorship and the Ceausescus were executed... so you can see why I want to discuss it with the author now in the context of the Ukraine invasion. And I've been to Bucharest where a thing I remember vividly is a film about the uprising and the sheer disbelief of the Ceausescus as they and their vicious regime were toppled from power. The author knows well his subject. One couldn't walk around 1980s Bucharest without bumping into a spy or the secret police. Lee Child calls this "an accomplished debut—a love story inside an espionage thriller inside a historical record, with all three elements working together to maximum effect. Very impressive and very recommended." And William Bernhardt adds that it "is a realistic and spellbinding portrayal of spycraft during the Romanian Revolution of 1989 reminiscent of le Carré's best work. Part Bond, part Bourne, CIA analyst Bill Hefflin searches for stolen billions, solves puzzles, and dodges assassins amidst the chaos of a bloody massacre and a changing geopolitical world."

Montgomery, Jess. [The Echoes](#) (St Martins \$27.99). This is an excellent historical series bringing Middle America again to life. As July 4, 1928 approaches, Sheriff Lily Ross and her family look forward to the opening of an amusement park in a nearby town, created by Chalmer Fitzpatrick—a veteran and lumber mill owner. When Lily is alerted to the possible drowning of a girl, she goes to investigate, and discovers schisms going back several generations, in an ongoing dispute over the land on which Fitzpatrick has built the park. Lily's family life is soon rattled, too, with the revelation that before he died, her brother had a daughter, Esme, with a woman in France, and arrangements have been made for Esme to immigrate to the U.S. to live with them. But Esme never makes it to Kinship, and soon Lily discovers that she has been kidnapped. Not only that, but a young woman is indeed found murdered in the fishing pond on Fitzpatrick's property, at the same time that a baby is left on his doorstep. As the two crimes interweave, Lily must confront the question of what makes a family.

Novak, Brenda. [Summer on the Island](#) (Mira \$28.99). Divorce attorney Marlow Madsen, whose father just died and whose mother, Eileen, has MS, invites her friends Claire and Aida to escape their troubles with a summer at her family's beach house—but their peace is short-lived. Marlow embarks on a romance with Walker, the oldest son of the beach house's longtime housekeeper, and Eileen's closest confidant, Rosemary. But the reading of her father's will reveals that Marlow and Walker share a half brother, jeopardizing their relationship and Rosemary's friendship with Eileen. Meanwhile, newly divorced Aida struggles to adjust to the loss of both her marriage and the privileged lifestyle that went with it, while Claire, who was Aida's husband's unwitting mistress before the pair became friends, struggles to let the affair go. Boundaries are tested, secrets unearthed, and hearts broken. Novak doesn't shy away from the messiness of her characters' emotions, making for a powerful story of forgiveness, acceptance, and redemption.

✠Perry, Anne. [Three Debts Paid](#) (Ballantine \$28). London attorney Daniel Pitt agrees to defend history professor Nicholas Wolford, with whom he studied at Cambridge, on an assault charge. Wolford attacked a fellow scholar who'd accused him of plagiarism, breaking the man's nose, jaw, and teeth. Meanwhile, a killer the newspapers call the Rainy-day Slasher has claimed the lives of three people—a journalist, a charity worker, and a banker—who have no obvious connection with one another. In addition to stabbing them repeatedly, the Slasher severed one finger from their dominant hand, suggesting that he had targeted them deliberately. Daniel's father, Sir Thomas Pitt, now the head of Special Branch, gets involved when the investigating inspector is warned off probing one of the victims.

Phillips, Gary. [One-Shot Harry](#) (Soho \$27.95). Patrick is really hot on this one and says "set in 1963 Los Angeles, this terrific novel from Phillips centers on freelance photographer and occasional process server Harry Ingram. Ingram, a Korean War vet, sells his photos to local newspapers and magazines, many serving the Black community. Ingram also listens to a police scanner, poised to capture moments of conflict and racial injustice. One day he catches a call to the scene of a fatal car accident. Ingram recognizes the car described as belonging to an old army buddy, Ben Kinslow. A well-known figure in town, Kinslow was a jazz trumpeter and had just recently reconnected with Ingram. Something about the scene doesn't feel right to Ingram. Was his friend's death really an accident, or was he being targeted? Ingram turns gumshoe and embarks on an investigation that leads to old guard lefties, rogue cops, Nation of Islam activists, and politicians on the make. The forthcoming visit of Martin Luther King Jr. adds to the drama. With close attention to period detail and precise prose, Phillips brings the era vividly to life."

Qiu, Xiaolong. [The Shadow of the Empire: A Judge Dee Investigation](#) (Severn \$28.99). The *Wall Street Journal* crime critic gives this March book a rave: "Judge Dee Renjie, based on a historical figure from 7th-century China, is the protagonist of Qiu Xiaolong's new novel. Mr. Qiu is best-known for his excellent procedural series starring Shanghai policeman Chen Cao. Like Inspector Chen—and Mr. Qiu—Judge Dee is a student and writer of verse. Poets and poetry figure throughout." When the book begins, Dee has been appointed Imperial Circuit

Supervisor of the Tang Empire—an office bestowed to remove him from the capital, where the judge’s recent pronouncement on imperial succession has sparked the empress’s ire. Dee and his assistant Yang are surprised, then, to be visited on the eve of their departure by a government messenger who asks Dee to look into a sensational murder committed 10 days ago. Is this a scheme hatched in the “cut-throat” capital to delay Dee from assuming his new post and further anger the empress? The killing took place at the home of Xuanji, a well-known poetess and courtesan who’s now accused of beating her maidservant to death. Dee, who can recite Xuanji’s work, agrees to an unofficial survey of the affair. “We’re just taking a look into it,” he tells Yang, “but not doing any real investigation.” He concocts the cover story of assembling an anthology of the suspect’s poetry. In Dee’s Confucian China, writing poetry is part of the civil-service examination. Poems become clues, even evidence, in the far-from-cursory probe he conducts. Xuanji is known to write odes to her lovers, which one of them may have been with her the night of the killing? The suspect has twice confessed after a courtroom beating—an accepted part of the trial procedure—but neither story she’s told is credible. As Dee interviews Xuanji’s associates and friends, more homicide ensues. Will Dee himself become a target?

Mr. Qiu writes in a lyrical style. One further level of tantalizing artifice: In Mr. Qiu’s most recent series novel, Inspector Chen is writing a historical fiction involving the legendary judge; this book is that fiction.” And here’s another strong recommendation from [CrimeReads](#).

Quinn, Kate. [The Diamond Eye](#) (Harper \$27.99). The author of the huge bestseller [The Rose Code](#) (\$17.99) returns with an unforgettable World War II tale of a quiet librarian who becomes history’s deadliest female sniper. And her new mesmerizing historical thriller is based on a true story about a part of WWII we rarely read about. She writes about the German invasion of Russia and how the Russian people died in masses defending their homeland and how the women of Russia were on the frontlines with the men. And once again she has taken a true story, that of the most famous female sniper in the world, and given us a character, Lyudmila Pavlichenko, who you will love and admire both for her war service, her time in America, and her personal life. It’s also remarkable timing in that the invasion dynamic herein has been reversed with Russia invading the Ukraine and encountering ferocious resistance.

We are so lucky that Quinn signed extra copies of our March Historical Fiction Book of the Month so more of you can enjoy a copy. Stephen Hunter fans will think of his brilliant thriller [Sniper’s Honor](#) (\$9.99) which I highly recommend as a companion read.

Reich, Christopher. [Once a Thief](#) (LittleBrown \$28). **This book may not arrive until May.** In Edgar finalist Reich’s heart-pounding [fourth outing for freelance London spy Simon Riske](#), Riske’s talent for restoring vintage Ferraris puts him in harm’s way. The 1963 Ferrari that his client just sold for \$102 million didn’t have the original gearbox, and the buyer’s representative, Sylvie Bettencourt, demands that Riske present her with the gearbox or be charged a \$10 million fee with the violent “or else” supplied by her thuggish assistant. A consultation with a friend at Lloyd’s of London reveals that Bettencourt has a reputation

for buying up valuable items, from art to real estate, with money that’s unlikely to be legitimate. Riske has little choice but to try to recover the gearbox. Meanwhile, a bank manager in Switzerland has been killed with a car bomb, and his daughter, Anna Bildt, sets out to find his killer. Some scenic locales, including Mediterranean islands, serve as backdrops to the linked quests of Riske and Bildt. Reich combines great action with surprises readers won’t see coming. One doesn’t have to care much about cars or high finance to enjoy this cinematic thriller.

Roanhorse, Rebecca. [Fevered Star](#) (Saga Press \$27.99). Yay, here is the sequel to [Black Sun](#) (\$16.99)—finalist for the Hugo, Nebula, Lambda, and Locus awards. The great city of Tova is shattered. The sun is held within the smothering grip of the Crow God’s eclipse, but a comet that marks the death of a ruler and heralds the rise of a new order is imminent. The Meridian: a land where magic has been codified and the worship of gods suppressed. How do you live when legends come to life, and the faith you had is rewarded? As sea captain Xiala is swept up in the chaos and currents of change, she finds an unexpected ally in the former Priest of Knives. For the Clan Matriarchs of Tova, tense alliances form as far-flung enemies gather and the war in the heavens is reflected upon the earth. And for Serapio and Naranpa, both now living avatars, the struggle for free will and personhood in the face of destiny rages. How will Serapio stay human when he is steeped in prophecy and surrounded by those who desire only his power? Is there a future for Naranpa in a transformed Tova without her total destruction?

Rollins, James. [Kingdom of Bones](#) (Harper \$28.99). **Our copies feature an exclusive insert featuring bats from the novel with a quote from the book and will feature embossing and/or foiling as well.**

Bestseller Rollins’s exhilarating 16th Sigma Force novel takes a Sigma Force team, including former Army Ranger Tucker Wayne, to a UN refugee camp in the Democratic Republic of Congo, which has been overwhelmed by a simultaneous invasion of unusually violent insects and animals and an outbreak of a mysterious and devastating sickness. Their mission, which is to identify and combat what officials fear could be another worldwide pandemic, becomes a literal rescue as the camp is attacked by corrupt Congolese forces at the behest of an industrial-mining billionaire with a sinister agenda. Wayne and the other Sigma team members must travel deep into the primeval jungle in search of the Kingdom of Bones, a fabled ancient Shangri-La that might provide the cure to the disease, if they can survive the deadly mutating flora and fauna. “Rollins, a former veterinarian, excels in description of animal taxonomy, both real and of his own invention. Fans of Clive Cussler and Michael Crichton won’t want to miss this one.” Count us among them—Rollins is one of our favorite authors.

Rose, Geneva. [One of Us Is Dead](#) (Blackstone \$28.99). Here we have a posse of viperous trophy wives vying for social status in the posh Atlanta enclave of Buckhead. Employing the exclusive Glow salon as their unofficial clubhouse, these ladies who do not lunch (preferring to use the calories on booze instead) multitask on beauty treatments and backstabbing. Among them is ruthless Olivia Petrov, who successfully strips frenemy Shannon Madison—recently dumped by her politician husband for a much younger female bartender and therefore expendable—of

her nonprofit committee chair post. From here tensions between the two Mrs. Madisons start to simmer, roiling the rest of the group; Glow gets broken into, and at least one of them winds up murdered. “As Rose sends her juiced-up take on Clare Boothe Luce’s classic play *The Women* hurtling toward a conclusion whose only clearly preordained feature is that one of them will end up killing one of the others, suspense focuses mainly on why only one of these eminently deserving ladies ends up dead. Sublimely bitchy. Olivia is a classic. What else is there to know?” Well, everyone gets their just desserts.

Rothchild, Sascha. [Blood Sugar](#) (Putnam \$27), our **April First Mystery Book of the Month**, draws readers into a suspenseful and disturbing character study of an unrepentant killer. Read this [long and fascinating interview](#) with the Emmy-nominated screenwriter, known for *GLOW* and *The Carrie Diaries* on publishing a book.

Ruby Simon wants you to know she is not a sociopath. The three people she’s killed all deserved it. The first was the school bully who mercilessly bullied Ruby’s sister. When Ruby was five, she drowned him in the ocean: “He was evil and had to go. I saw an opportunity and I took it. So that day on the beach, murder became another skill added to my toolbox. And once I saw how effective a tool it was, I kept it handy.” The second was a friend’s drunken father who attacked 16-year-old Ruby in the kitchen while her friends were upstairs at a slumber party. The third was a court-mandated patient — Ruby was a mental health professional by that time — of such surpassing obnoxiousness that Ruby figured she had to at least try to remove her rotten soul from this planet. But that was it, just those three, which is why it’s so exasperating that a Miami police detective is trying to lock her away for a death she had nothing to do with. All right, yes, it’s her husband, but he was a diabetic and he died in his sleep, and she really doesn’t think they can pin it on her, but if they decide to go digging around in her past ... She wouldn’t murder the man she loved.

“Rothchild perfectly paces the shifts between humanizing her narrator to make her tension over the investigation sympathetic and dropping bombshell reminders that Ruby is a cold-blooded killer. She also manages to create a truly worthy adversary in Jason’s mother, a narcissist whose disdain for Ruby makes readers want to forget the corpses and root for the young couple to succeed. Each time Ruby shows her true colors, she goes on to make readers slowly forget she’s a villain again, showing her as a supportive friend, loving sister and devoted pet owner. Readers trying to separate Ruby’s truths from her dissembling or even pin down her true motivations will find themselves outfoxed even as Detective Jackson draws closer to an arrest.”

Sandford, John. [The Investigator](#) (Putnam \$29). At last, Letty Davenport gets her own book. I’ve been after John for years to do this since she first appeared in [Naked Prey](#) (\$9.99) which I highly recommend. Look for a lot of action in this new Letty, some vivid set pieces, and some searing portraits of Americans at the margins, or falling below them, who take to right wing propaganda and violence in desperation at having nothing else. In short, the kind of folks who form the truckers’ convoys or hook up for make similar protests. I think it’s important to understand this dynamic if we are to make sense of our divided country. This is Sandford back to earlier form and because it has a lot to say

along with the action is our **April Crime Book of the Month**.

The *PW* Starred Review adds, “Letty is bored by her D.C. job working for Senator Christopher Colles, until her unauthorized actions yield proof that two of his staff members stole hundreds of thousands of dollars from the politician’s campaign funds. When she resigns her job in the hope of finding something more suited to her thirst for action, Colles, impressed by her initiative, offers her an acceptable alternative. As a member of a committee overseeing the Department of Homeland Security, he’s able to hire Letty as a researcher to follow up on reports that a gang of crooks may have stolen hundreds of thousands of barrels of crude oil in West Texas. Colles fears that the money the thieves made from selling the oil could be funding a national security threat. That original premise, coupled with Sandford’s rounded portrayal of Letty as more than just a stock action hero, add up to one of his best books in years.”—*PW* Starred Review. And the woman who heads up her own militia is one tough cookie.

Scalzi, John. [The Kaiju Preservation Society](#) (Forge \$26.99). A more ethical *Jurassic Park* meets the camaraderie of *Parks and Recreation* in this wonderfully witty and refreshingly earnest adventure yarn from Hugo Award winner Scalzi (*Redshirts*). Atomic bomb tests in the 1950s revealed a parallel Earth inhabited by Godzillian kaiju, a fact Jamie Gray learns upon being hired by KPS, the eponymous secret organization, which monitors and protects the massive creatures. Jamie and several other new KPS employees are stationed at a base on this parallel Earth—and when an investor’s malfeasance threatens both Earths, the band of newbies fights back. The hyper-current story spans March 2020 through March 2021.

*Kirkus* adds this: “Sure, it bubbles with the banter and snarky humor readers expect from this author. But it’s also a blunt and savage swipe at tech-bro/billionaire culture, the Trump administration, and the chaos and tragedy that result when powerful and rich people set themselves against science and scientists in order to profit from disaster....” And Library Reads enthuses: “As the Covid-19 pandemic spreads across the U.S Scalzi has taken creatures portrayed as monsters in the movies and made us care, with plenty of his usual wit and humor. For fans of *Jurassic Park*, *Devolution*, and Jeff VanderMeer.”

Searles, John. [Her Last Affair](#) (Harper \$27.99) “is part page-turning thriller, part homage to film noir, and dazzling in its insight into the often desperate desires of the human heart.” Skyla lives alone in the shadow of the defunct drive-in movie theater that she and her husband ran for nearly fifty years. Ever since Hollis’s death in a freak accident the year before, Skyla spends her nights ruminating about the regrets and deceptions in her long marriage. That is, until she rents a cottage on the property to a charming British man, Teddy Cornwell.... A thousand miles away, Linelle is about to turn fifty. Bored by her spouse and fired from her job when a questionable photo from her youth surfaces on social media, her only source of joy is an on-line affair with her very first love, a man she’s not seen in nearly thirty years, Teddy Cornwell... And in New York City, Jeremy, a failed and bitter writer, accepts an assignment to review a new restaurant in Providence. Years ago, Providence was the site of his first great love and first great heartbreak—and maybe, just maybe, he’ll look her up when he’s back in town....

Shelton, Paige. [The Burning Pages](#) (St Martins \$26.99). Solicitor

Clarinda Creston invites American Delaney Nichols, who works at the Cracked Spine bookshop, to the annual dinner in honor of Scottish poet Robert Burns held at Edinburgh's House of Burns. When Delaney asks whether she can bring a friend, Clarinda somewhat grudgingly says she can. Wary that Clarinda has a hidden agenda, Delaney asks her coworker Hamlet, who resembles "a young Shakespeare," to accompany her to the event, where their presence seems to unsettle some attendees, one of whom leaves in anger. After dinner, a fire erupts at the House of Burns that leads to the discovery of a dead body. When Hamlet falls under suspicion of arson, Delaney determines to find the truth and clear his name in this latest entry in a bookish cozy series. Historical Burns references add spice to a complex series of intertwined mysteries in this latest Scottish Bookshop Mystery, our **April Cozy Crimes Club Book of the Month**. You can order the whole [Scottish Bookshop Mystery](#) series if you've missed reading it.

Siger, Jeffrey. [One Last Chance](#) (Poisoned Pen \$28.99). Since I edited this new book by Siger set in another fascinating and scenic Greek landscape, I am going to quote an enthusiastic *PW* review: "Athens' Chief Inspector Andreas Kaldis' personal assistant, Maggie Sikestis, kicks off this investigation when she returns to her island home of Ikaria after the death of her 104-year-old grandmother. Ikariots are famous for their longevity, but Maggie soon discovers that a rash of mysterious deaths of elderly islanders is connected to the suspicious activity of a Greek Orthodox priest, two dirty drug enforcement agents, and a Hong Kong pharmaceutical company also under investigation by Andreas's right-hand man, Detective Yianni Kouros. Siger does a good job of blending in the procedural threads pursued by Yianni and Andreas, and once again the scenery steals the show. Ikaria is the poorest of the Aegean islands and only one-tenth the size of Rhode Island, but its breathtaking beauty radiates from each page. Part travelogue, part cozy, part procedural, this entry will appeal to fans of Donna Leon and Louise Penny with its attractive characters and rich setting." This richly rewarding series begins with [Murder in Mykonos](#) (\$12.95) and continues with more [Chief Inspector Andreas Kaldis](#) mysteries diving into cultures, communities, history, and contemporary issues in this ancient country. It's perfect for armchair travelers, or even for visitors to Greece. And international intrigue widens the scope.

✚Thomas, Will. [Fierce Poison](#) (St Martins \$27.99). This may be set in 1893 but you can't beat it for an insightful, genial, enjoyable tour of London. And for the freshness of an unusual story by Shamus Award-nominated librarian Thomas for the series characters, private enquiry agents Cyrus Barker and Thomas Llewellyn. Among its other joys it riffs on both Agatha Christie and Arthur Conan Doyle. I add that there is no need to read any of the preceding Barker/Llewellyn investigations to enjoy this to the full. Truly Thomas is at the top of his game as this Starred Review with which I agree attests:

"Thomas's superb 13th whodunit centers on multiple poisonings while riffing on Agatha Christie's *And Then There Were None*. The PIs are shocked when a stranger appears at their London office, requests water, and then dies after having difficulty breathing. A business card on the body identifies the man as Roland Fitzhugh, a Liberal MP. After the death is reported to Scotland Yard, Barker and Llewellyn learn that Fitzhugh visited there half an hour before his demise to report that he suspected

someone had tried to poison him on two occasions. Barker insists on justice for Fitzhugh and gains a paying client in the form of former Prime Minister William Gladstone, who funds the search for the killer. Another poisoning follows soon after, this time claiming the lives of almost an entire East End family. The leads' friendship enriches a gripping plot that builds to a clever and satisfying resolution. Pastiche-averse Sherlockians looking for a baffling puzzle set in their favorite period will be rewarded."

Trigiani, Adriana. [The Good Left Undone](#) (Dutton \$28). Matelda, the Cabrelli family's matriarch, has always been brusque and opinionated. Now, as she faces the end of her life, she is determined to share a long-held secret with her family about her own mother's great love story: with her childhood friend, Silvio, and with dashing Scottish sea captain John Lawrie McVicars, the father Matelda never knew....

In the halcyon past, Domenica Cabrelli thrives in the coastal town of Viareggio until her beloved home becomes unsafe when Italy teeters on the brink of World War II. Her journey takes her from the rocky shores of Marseille to the mystical beauty of Scotland to the dangers of wartime Liverpool—where Italian Scots are imprisoned without cause—as Domenica experiences love, loss, and grief while she longs for home. A hundred years later, her daughter, Matelda, and her granddaughter, Anina, face the same big questions about life and their family's legacy, while Matelda contemplates what is worth fighting for. But Matelda is running out of time, and the two timelines intersect and weave together in unexpected and heartbreaking ways that lead the family to shocking revelations and, ultimately, redemption. Enjoy Trigiani's lush descriptions and trademark acute attention to family dynamics.

Library Reads add, "Following the lives of various generations of the Cabrelli family, Trigiani takes readers through the 1920s, World War II, and modern day Italy and Scotland. With descriptive language and well-drawn characters, each generation's story is woven seamlessly into the next. For fans of *Love and Ruin* and *The Guest Book*."

Vuong, Ocean. [Time Is a Mother](#) (Penguin \$24). "These poems glisten and rattle, and they deftly mine a host of diverse topics—sex, privilege, beauty, art, poverty, death—to offer us a fresh way of evaluating and understanding our world. Vuong expertly unwraps clichés and rewraps them in fresh packaging so we can perceive their meanings anew. On each page he demonstrates that untranslatable is a meaningless word. His poems say, 'We're all humans having human experiences. Let's figure this all out together.'" —Vulture, "49 Books We Can't Wait to Read in 2022"

Walker, Martin. [Bruno's Challenge](#) (Knopf \$27). **Merveilleux! Our copies are now autographed by Martin for you.** In fact he walked several cartons to a FedEx station to get them to us. Wow. Talk about going the extra mile! Plus Martin sent us a classic French recipe with a photo of the yummy dish. The recipe card is included with each of our copies. **But there are only 8 copies left.** This glorious book shows us episodically how Bruno, now Chief of Police of his whole district, not just the village of St. Denis, is doing police work of the ordinary and immensely satisfying kind. Truly a delight to read and there is zero need to have read a single Bruno full investigation to enjoy this visit to the Périgord and Dordogne regions of France. If you grab one of these however you will be hooked into reading more Bruno, our bestselling series in paperback. [Order them all](#) and imagine



traveling there. There will be a new Bruno in August.

Winslow, Don. [City on Fire](#) (Harper \$28.99). Winslow begins a trilogy fulfilling a longtime vision of a modern *Iliad*, exploring classic themes including loyalty, honor, and betrayals. We are in Providence, RI, 1986. Twenty-nine-year-old Danny Ryan is a hard-working longshoreman, loving husband, loyal friend, and occasional “muscle” for the Irish crime syndicate that oversees much of the city. And he’s much in love with his wife, and in time baby, whose father is part of the local crime scene—father and daughter pulled Danny away from the life of a fisherman that he loved. Danny yearns for something more and dreams of starting over fresh, someplace far away. But when a modern-day Helen of Troy triggers a war between rival mob factions, Danny is embroiled in a conflict he can’t escape. “This plays to all Winslow’s dazzling strengths as a novelist that we here have admired over the course of his career which we have been lucky enough to have walked with him every step of the way.

### UNSIGNED EVENT BOOKS

Downes, Anna. [The Shadow House](#) (St Martins \$27.99). Fleeing from yet another bad situation, single mother Alex heads for Pine Ridge, a new development billed as an ecovillage, with her 14-year-old son, Ollie, and her eight-month-old daughter, Kara. Though Pine Ridge is a far cry from their city life, Alex feels instantly at home in the Australian countryside. Paying in cash, Alex rents a demo house model for three months, pleased to be warmly welcomed by Jenny, her helpful new neighbor, and other residents each seeking a better way of life. Almost immediately, odd things begin to happen: a dead bird is left in a box on the family’s steps; eerie carvings appear on trees. Is there any truth to the tale of the Pine Ridge witch, or is there something more human at play threatening Alex and her children?

### SOME POETRY FOR POETRY MONTH

Angelou, Maya. [Complete Poetry](#) (\$30)  
Bingham-Risher, Remica. [Soul Culture: Black Poets, Books, And Questions That Grew Me Up](#) (\$26.95)  
Frost, Robert. [A Collection of Poems](#) (\$24.99)  
Gibson, Andrea. [You Better Be Lightning](#) (\$18)  
Giovanni, Nikki. [Make Me Rain](#) (\$19.99)  
Gorman, Amanda. [Call Us What We Carry](#) (\$24.99) and [The Hill We Climb](#) (\$15.99)  
Harjo, Joy. [Living Nations, Living Words: An Anthology of First Peoples Poetry](#) (\$15)  
Heaney, Seamus. [100 Poems](#) (\$16)  
Imhotep, Ra Malika. [Gossypiin](#) (\$16.95)  
Kaur, Rupi. [Home Body](#) (\$16.99)  
Lovelace, Amanda. [Flower Crowns and Fearsome Things](#) (\$14.99)  
Mayo, Bella. [My Greenhouse](#) (\$14.99)  
Milne, AA. [Poems from When We Were Very Young](#) (\$19)  
Mitchell, Jack. [The Odyssey of Stars Wars: An Epic Poem](#) (\$19.99)  
Neruda, Paolo. [Love Poems](#) (\$11.95)  
Poe, Edgar Allan. [Complete Tales and Poems](#) (\$19)  
Sampson, Ana. [Poems for Stillness](#) (\$14)  
Vuong, Ocean. [Time Is a Mother](#) (Penguin \$24)

### CLASSICS

Fisher, Rudolph. [The Conjure Man Dies](#) (Poisoned Pen/Library

of Congress Crime Classics \$14.99). “Library of Congress Crime Classics presents a welcome resurrection of the first non-serialized mystery novel by a Black author, featuring an all-Black cast, originally published in 1932. Bubber Brown and his friend Jinx Jenkins have come to consult N’Gana Frimbo, a Harvard-educated psychic who’s known throughout Harlem. In the middle of their session, Frimbo cries out, “Why do you not see?” and collapses, to be pronounced dead soon after by neighboring physician John Archer. Frimbo, whose friends and clients ranged from his landlord, undertaker Samuel Crouch, to drug addict Doty Hicks and Spider Webb, a numbers runner who works for Crouch’s friend Si Brandon, the king of Harlem crime, was privy to many secrets, and any number of people might have wanted him dead. But how could anyone have beaten him unconscious and suffocated him by forcing the handkerchief Archer discovers down his throat when he died in the middle of a session with Brown and Jenkins, who insists against the evidence that the fingerprint on the weapon, a club fashioned from a human bone, isn’t his? Joining forces with Detective Perry Dart, NYPD, Archer does his best to solve the riddle of Frimbo’s life and death, unaware that an even more whopping surprise will call not only their most basic assumptions about the case, but Fisher’s title into doubt. Considering its layers and layers of bafflement, the mystery is brought to a commendably logical conclusion that still leaves plenty of unresolved questions about the relations between African and American cultures for modern readers to mull. Leslie S. Klinger’s uncommonly helpful introduction and footnotes place this pioneering novel in a broader historical context. It’s about time this genuine classic was back in print.”—*Kirkus Starred Review*

Gardner, Erle Stanley. [The Case of the Shoplifter’s Shoe](#) (American Mystery Classics \$15.95). “This fine Perry Mason whodunit from Gardner (1889–1970) opens with the legendary L.A. defense attorney and his assistant, Della Street, taking refuge in a department store from a downpour and witnessing a security guard’s attempts to arrest elderly Sarah Brel for shoplifting. The lawyer successfully intervenes, noting that even had Sarah moved items from one part of the store to another, she had not yet tried to leave with them without paying. Mason’s efforts earn the gratitude of Sarah’s niece, Virginia Trent, who later confides, to Mason’s surprise, that she did believe her aunt was planning to shoplift. Furthermore, Virginia suspects Sarah of stealing valuable diamonds that were entrusted to Virginia’s uncle, George Trent, a gem expert. After Mason agrees to look into the matter, he winds up investigating multiple murders that Sarah’s accused of committing. In court, Mason displays his usual brilliant cross-examination skills as the action builds to a highly satisfying climax. Gardner’s cleverness and mastery of trial details are amply on display...”—*PW*

### COZY CRIMES

Adams, Ellery. [The Vanishing Type](#) (Kensington \$26). Miracle Springs, North Carolina, bookstore owner Nora Pennington strives to pick the perfect reading material for her customers while dispensing delicious drinks and bakery products created by her friend Hester Winthrop. Hester is soon to be engaged to Deputy Jasper Andrews, and Nora herself has fallen for Sheriff Grant McCabe. As she’s busy planning special events for Valentine’s Day, Nora is upset to discover copies of *The Scarlet Letter* with the name Hester scraped off, and Hester is puzzled to

find an odd book left in her bakeshop. When a man is found dead with a similar book in his pocket, it proves to be one of a series about successful women written in an era slow to approve of working women. The murdered man isn't identified until Hester confesses a long-buried connection. "Readers will cheer as Nora, an endearingly imperfect protagonist, and her group of dedicated literary friends, each with their own complicated backstories, search for answers. Bibliophilic cozy fans will be in heaven." *Little Women* has a tiny part here too.

Black, Juneau. [Mirror Lake](#) (Knopf \$16). Here Vera Vixen takes on her most challenging case yet: solving the murder of a [actual] rat who appears to still be alive. "Shady Hollow must be the coziest of cozy crime series. It's a whimsical woodland murder mystery like no other! I not only enjoyed reading about it—I want to live there, surrounded by enigmatic pandas, diligent mice and well-read corvids. I have to try the food, listen to the gossip and visit the tiny café—and I don't even care that there is a murderer on the loose!" —Leonie Swann, bestselling author of *Three Bags Full*

Davis, Krista. [The Diva Serves Forbidden Fruit](#) (\$15.95). The DIY Festival Domestic Diva Sophie Winston's been asked to plan for Alexandria's Old Town goes off the rails when someone starts killing off her neighbors. It would be hard to imagine a more inoffensive victim than Lark Bickford, but the widowed socialite takes a fatal tumble that looks very suspicious only a day after returning from a guided tour of Portugal. Her family members are instantly scandalized—not that she may have been murdered (her body has barely cooled when they start selling off her period furniture and pricey china), but that her will includes a spendthrift trust that will keep her grown children, Bennett and Paisley, and Paisley's husband, self-styled advice guru Frank Eames, from liquidating the rest of her assets any time soon. Even more dismaying is the news that the trustee is Humphrey Brown, the secret lover whom a neighbor spotted leaving her house shortly before her corpse was discovered. The family's outrage is soon complicated by the remarkably similar death of Dulci Chapman, art therapist-turned-food blogger, who'd taken the same guided tour as Lark. It gets worse.... Look for recipes and household tips....

✂Dennison, Hannah. [Murder in Miniature at Honeychurch Hall](#) (Little Brown UK \$15.99). This British cozy series is a longtime PP staff favorite. See Our April Large Paperback Picks below for a review and remember to order early as supply is tricky.

Duncan, Emmeline. [Double Shot Death](#) (Kensington \$15.95). Big news: Sage Caplin and Harley Yamazaki, partners in Ground Rules coffee company, are about to expand the two carts they own to a store. Plus, a last-minute cancellation has given Sage the coffee provider spot at the Campathon Music Festival on a farm outside Portland. Joining Sage for the weekend-long event is Lukas "Bax" Baxter, her video game developer boyfriend, who runs into Maya Olivera, a singer with whom Bax has worked developing music for some of his games. Maya's former band, the Changelings, is also there and playing music written or co-written by Maya and Nate Green, the Changelings' front man, which gives Maya reason to confront Nate's manager, Ian Rabe, over royalties she hasn't been paid. One of Campathon's organizers and Ian's assistant also have reasons to have it in for Ian. When Sage stumbles across Ian's dead body, clutching

a coffee mug of hers, she once again turns sleuth. Solid prose, a well-crafted plot, and plenty of coffee lore plus a clever sleuth, music trivia, and plenty of West Coast vibes add up to an enjoyable read. Start this series with [Fresh Brewed Murder](#) (\$15.95).

Esden, Trish. [The Art of the Decoy](#) (Crooked Lane \$26.99). Edie Brown comes home to Scandal Mountain, Vermont, smarting from her mother's conviction for art forgery that has tarnished her own reputation, as well as that of her family's antiques business, and seeking a road to recovery. In addition, she herself has been on probation for selling stolen property. Aided by her horticulturally gifted uncle, Tuck, and tech-savvy assistant, Kala Acosta, Edie evaluates a prized collection of folk art decoys for Nina Graves-Bouchard and her father-in-law, Claude Bouchard. When the collection disappears, Nina accuses Edie of theft and threatens to go to the police. Spurred to clear her name and recover the decoys, Edie discovers a disturbing trail that may involve malice toward the family business, a previous robbery in Canada, and potential danger for a vulnerable Claude. "An amusing purveyor of gossip, an exciting chase, a rich historical and cultural background, and a complex relationship between Edie and her former probation officer add interest and depth. Readers will look forward to further antique hunts with the stubborn, courageous Edie and her team." This might be our May Cozy Crimes Book of the Month... stay tuned.

Fluke, Joanne. [Cream Puff Murder](#) (\$12.95). A large paperback reissue of a 2010 Hannah Swensen culinary cozy mystery.

Hilliard, M E. [Shadow in the Glass](#) (Crooked Len \$26.99). Librarian Greer Hogan is on hand to celebrate her old friend Sarah Whitaker's nuptials at the Whitaker summer home on beautiful Mirror Lake, just outside the upstate New York village of Lake Placid. But Greer has an ulterior motive—to gather information that could reopen the investigation into her husband's murder, a crime for which she believes an innocent man went to prison. Her plans come to a shuddering halt when a wedding guest goes missing and turns up dead in the lake. The guest, Brittany Miles, was an employee of the Whitaker family whom Sarah had long suspected was up to no good at work. The police have no leads, but Greer—an avid reader of crime fiction who possesses an uncanny knack for deduction—begins her own investigation. And then.... Love the dialogue and the humor which are both stronger than the plot. Start his series with the excellent [An Unkindness of Ravens](#) (\$16.99).

Hollis, Lee. [Poppy Harmon and the Backstabbing Bachelor](#) (Kensington \$26). Poppy, a retired actress, reinvented herself as a detective when her husband died and left her penniless, and even though she's good at it, she had to hire an aspiring actor named Matt to play agency head Matt Flowers in order to be taken seriously. In her latest case, she disguises herself as a woman in her 90s in order to flush out a gang of grifters preying on the elderly. Since their last case landed Matt an acting gig in Europe, Poppy and her friends Iris and Violet are on their own when the boyfriend of one of the grifters starts stalking Poppy. Then she loans her car to a neighbor, who's run off the road—a sure sign that the stalker's out for blood. And then... "Plenty of quirky characters enhance this compelling display of bravery in the face of danger." John is a fan of this series.

Rothschild, Peggy. [A Deadly Bone to Pick](#) (Berkley \$26).

“A delightful beachy mystery that’s gone to the dogs! Peggy Rothschild’s debut is a tight and twisty tale featuring my favorite kind of support team: an adorable duo on four paws that give the phrase ‘a nose for crime’ new meaning.” Private eye Molly Madison, a former police officer, moved from Massachusetts to California with her beloved golden retriever, Harlow, seeking peace of mind after the murder of her cheating husband. Someone was arrested and is awaiting trial, but her husband’s family and some of her ex-colleagues remain suspicious of her. Molly doesn’t mind when an enormous slobbering Saint Berdoodle shows up at her new house, especially when she learns that he’s an escape artist owned by a doctor who’s in the midst of a divorce and has no time for Noodle. Given all the time on her hands, Molly’s more than happy to train Noodle, whose extraordinary nose leads to a hand buried on the beach and a world of trouble for Molly. The two detectives on the case are handsome Detective Vasquez and nasty, suspicious Detective Wright, whose background check of Molly convinces him that she’s a killer.

### SOME NEW HARDCOVERS FOR APRIL

Ahmad, Aamina. [The Return of Faraz Ali](#) (Riverhead \$27). The youngster Faraz is taken from his mother, who works in Lahore’s red light district, and sent to live with distant relatives in a more respectable part of the city. Years later his father, a political operative with connections throughout Lahore, asks him to return to the old neighborhood to help contain the fall out of a young girl’s murder.

Allen, Samantha Jayne. [Pay Dirt Road](#) (St Martins \$27.99). Recent college graduate Annie McIntyre, the narrator of Tony Hillerman Prize winner Allen’s debut, has felt rudderless since moving home to Garnett, Texas, and taking a job at the local café, so she’s thrilled when her grandfather, Leroy McIntyre, and his business partner, Mary-Pat Zimmerman, offer her part-time work at their PI firm. Annie starts out doing the detectives’ filing, but then fellow waitress Victoria Merritt turns up dead after attending the same drunken bonfire as Annie. Police make an arrest, but Annie has her doubts, and when the detainee’s grandmother hires Leroy and Mary-Pat to clear his name, Annie insists on joining their investigation. Viable suspects abound, from Victoria’s estranged husband to an oil exec intent on running a pipeline through Victoria’s backyard, and Annie is determined to catch the real culprit, even if doing so means imperiling herself. I did not warm to this or the writing style, but you well may.

Bannalec, Jean-Luc. [The King Arthur Case](#) (St Martins \$26.99). Dupin’s indefatigable assistant, Nolwenn, aims to immerse her irascible, coffee-swilling boss in the lure and lore of a local forest famed for its connection to King Arthur. But the departmental outing tumbles off course before it can begin, as Dupin, responding to a Parisian colleague’s request for some off-the-books help on a case, attempts to interview Fabien Cadiou, a professor attending an Arthurian conference in the area, and instead discovers his corpse. Immediately afterward, another Arthurian expert is stabbed to death, and Dupin begins grilling a circle of academics with intertwined volatile personal and professional histories. The subsequent investigation plods, even as the bodies pile up. This atmospheric series by an author clearly in love with Brittany and its legends is very popular at The Pen. We recommend you [start at the beginning](#). It’s possible this entry will tell you more about King Arthur than you want to know,

it slows things down, but then again it may hook you as much as the region’s oysters, islands, music festivals, salt flats, and general *joie de vivre*.

✠Blake, Robin. [A Hungry Death](#) (Severn \$29.99). This is an excellent historical series I’ve enjoyed as this Starred Review attests: “Set in 1747, Blake’s superior eighth mystery featuring coroner Titus Cragg and physician Luke Fidelis finds Cragg summoned to a gruesome crime scene near Warrington, England. At a farmhouse, Betty Kidd and her four small children have been murdered by someone who used different killing methods—throat-slitting, bludgeoning, and smothering. Betty’s missing husband, Billy, is suspected of the crime, possibly motivated by despair over his financial position. Cragg finds Billy’s hanged corpse in the Kidds’ barn, but he isn’t convinced the man died by suicide. There’s a witness, an eight-year-old boy, but he’s mute and unable to convey what he witnessed. Fidelis happens to be a guest of a nearby landowner, John Blackburne, and uses his forensic skills to assist Cragg. Cragg pursues a suggestion that the Kidds’ unusual religion—the rare Eatanswillians sect—may have played a part in the massacre, until the discovery of an apparently centuries-old body on Blackburne’s property offers a different possibility. The solution is both fair and satisfying.” Ordered Upon Request like all Severn House titles.

Dawson, Delilah S. [The Violence](#) (Del Rey). Most of you know Dawson’s work from her collaboration with Kevin Hearne, but here she has stepped into the (dystopian) thriller with “A gorgeously creative and surprisingly gleeful story about the way violence infects every aspect of American life.” The *PW* Starred Review: “Coming just on the heels of Covid-19, the Violence is aptly named for its main symptom: sudden acts of astonishing aggression called “storms” that always leave someone dead. Those infected have no memory of their outbursts, and the attacks have no clear trigger. The world navigates this horrible plague with quarantine protocols and hotlines, as the wealthy flock to colder environments, where the Violence hasn’t yet reached, and shell out for the \$30,000 vaccine. Meanwhile, Chelsea Martin sees in the Violence a way out from under the thumb of her abusive husband, David, for both herself and her two daughters. She reports David to a hotline for suspected Violence sufferers, but even after he’s locked away, Chelsea’s hounded by his horrible friends. Then Chelsea is separated from her girls under suspicion of being infected herself. Now, she’ll do anything to reunite with her family. Dawson doesn’t hold back but the violence never feels gratuitous, clarifying the high stakes of this smart, fast-paced thrill ride.”

✠Doherty, Paul. [The Hanging Tree](#) (Severn \$28.99). There’s no telling when copies of this new Brother Athelstan medieval mystery will arrive from the UK so my advice is to order it now or risk missing out as restocking it is unlikely. Brother Athelstan must solve a theft from the royal treasure chamber and the murders of six executioners in London, January, 1382.

Egan, Jennifer. [The Candy House](#) (Scribner \$27). Here is a Starred Review: “Egan returns to the fertile territory and characters of *A Visit from the Goon Squad* with an electrifying and shape-shifting story that one-ups its Pulitzer-winning predecessor. I’ll see your PowerPoint chapter, Egan seems to say, and raise you a chapter in tweets, and another in emails and texts. In the near future, a platform called Own Your Unconscious

allows memories to be uploaded to the cloud and accessed by anyone. “Counters” seek to ferret out “proxies” that help hide “eluders” who resist merging their “gray grabs” to the collective in order to leave their online personae behind. Not everyone sees this as panacea, and a countermovement called Mondrian arises. Appearances from music producer Bennie Salazar, his mentor Lou Kline, and their lovers and children provide sharp pleasures for Goon Squad fans, and Egan cleverly echoes the ambitious, savvy marketing schemes of real-world tech barons with *Own Your Unconscious*. It casts its spell on Bennie, whose punk rock days with the Flaming Dildos are long past: ‘Tongue-in-cheek nostalgia is merely the portal, the candy house, if you will, through which we hope to lure in a new generation and bewitch them,’ he writes in an email. Twisting through myriad points of view, narrative styles, and divergent voices, Egan proves herself as perceptive an interpreter of the necessity of human connection as ever, and her vision is as irresistible as the tech she describes. This is Egan’s best yet.” **Our Signed copies sold out to our Notable New Fiction Book of the Month Club for May.**

Ferrara, Silvia. [The Greatest Invention: A History of the World in Nine Mysterious Scripts](#) (Farrar Strauss \$29). Ferrara, professor of Aegean civilization at the University of Bologna, takes an entertaining and complex look at how written language has evolved. As she notes, readers may have “a vague, Proustian memory... from your days in elementary or middle school, something about Mesopotamia and how cuneiform was the first and only time writing was invented, the source from which all other scripts descended.” In fact, she suggests, writing, which she calls the “greatest invention in the world,” without which “we would be only voice, suspended in a continual present,” was invented at least three other times, in China, Egypt, and Central America. Her sweeping survey covers quipu, a method of documentation using thousands of strings and knots used by the Incans to “govern an empire” for two centuries in the 15th and 16th centuries; inscriptions carved into the bottom parts of turtle shells in ancient China; and the invention of the tablet in Mesopotamia. Ferrara’s survey is intricate and detailed, bolstered by photos and drawings of the various writing forms. The result is an intellectual feast that will enthrall lovers of words, language, and publishing.

Fleishman, Jeffrey. [Good Night, Forever](#) (Blackstone \$27.99). The 3<sup>rd</sup> in the LA Detective Sam Carver series brings up a past that has haunted him for years. Dylan Cross is the killer who got away. Carver knows she has murdered again, but no one believes him. She leaves him clues, writes him notes, tempts him. She wants him to betray everything he is. He is drawn to her by the damage and demons they both carry. But he is certain that when they meet again, only one will survive.

Gillham, David R. [Shadows of Berlin](#) (Sourcebooks \$26.99). Berlin-born Rachel Perlman, 29, lives in New York City in 1955 with her American husband, Aaron, having fled Europe after WWII. Gillham flashes back to the years before the war, with Rachel (born Rashka Morgenstern) living comfortably in Berlin with her widowed artist mother until the anti-Jewish laws strip them of their possessions and her mother’s livelihood. Rachel and her mother go underground and live as what are known colloquially as “U-boats,” or Jews hiding in plain sight. They’re caught in 1944, and to save themselves from being sent to a concentration camp, Rachel is pushed into helping her mother’s

former muse Angelika identify other U-boats. Now, in New York, Rachel struggles to be a conventional wife, while being terrorized by nightmares and visions of her deceased mother and others. After her uncle discovers her mother’s shocking portrait of Angelika, Rachel’s painful memories of Berlin peak into overdrive. “Gillham’s use of Berlin’s cafés and New York’s walk-ups, restaurants, and parks is superb, and the generous sprinkling of Yiddish in the text adds a layer of richness. While the story is a tribute to resilience and starting over, it doesn’t shy away from the hurt that adults can bring to children. This is heart-wrenching and memorable,” says a Starred Review.

Graham, Heather. [Crimson Summer](#) (Mira \$27.99). Special agent Amy Larson of the Florida Department of Law Enforcement and FBI special agent Hunter Forrest are called to a horrific crime scene in the middle of the Florida Everglades. Twenty young men “lay with arrows and axes protruding from their heads, guts or chests, as if they’d fought in a bloody battle.” Among the debris, Amy finds a tiny red toy horse like ones left at a series of murders attributed to apocalyptic cult leader Ethan Morrison, who’s now in prison awaiting trial. Could it be that Morrison’s not the kingpin they assumed and that an even more dangerous puppet master is now pulling the strings? When 12 people are shot to death in an alley in New York City, it looks as if the incident in the Everglades “was just a prelude” to more carnage. Fortunately, people call in with enough tips to allow Amy and Hunter, who are otherwise occupied with their blossoming romance amid harrowing brushes with death, to make progress on the case. Graham is an ace at romantic suspense laced with action.

Gainza, Maria. [Portrait of an Unknown Lady](#) (Catapult \$24). Art critic Gainza does a “deep dive into the art world through a neo-noir female detective’s quest to find a forger in Buenos Aires. An unnamed female narrator is left reeling by the death of her employer and longtime mentor, Enriqueta Macedo. Enriqueta, along with the narrator, spent decades running a business that authenticated portraits supposedly painted by famed artist Mariette Lydis, but were actually created by a mysterious figure known only as Renée. Chasing meaning after Enriqueta’s death, the narrator becomes fixated on writing a biography of Renée and attempts to piece together the scraps of her life since her disappearance years earlier. Dreamy and atmospheric, *Portrait of an Unknown Lady* is a short read, deliberate in its pacing. The unnamed narrator leads readers through a labyrinth of clues about Enriqueta, Lydis and Renée, culling information from paintings, fragmented interviews and auction catalogues. These dizzying but vivid details deliver more entanglement than solution, morphing Renée herself into the absent center that nonetheless knots the plot together.

Griffin, WEB. [The Attack](#) (Putnam \$28). In this new entry in the action series continued by Griffin’s son, Philadelphia homicide sergeant Matt Payne is sure he knows who killed the suburban high school cheerleader found floating in the Delaware...but maybe he’s wrong.

Hagberg, David. [Traitor](#) (Forge \$26.99). Series action hero Kirk McGarvey’s best friend, Otto Renke, the CIA’s chief of electronic surveillance, is arrested on charges of treason. Kirk, a former CIA director who now works as a freelance operator for the agency, and his wife, Pete, who was once the CIA’s chief of interrogations, set out to prove his innocence while Otto

undergoes lengthy interrogations led by a loathsome Homeland Security agent....

✎Halls, Stacey. [Mrs. England](#) (Mira \$27.99). If you have ever wondered what the full range of duties of the English nanny during the Victorian/Edwardian ages might be, here's your chance to find out in an atmospheric and brilliantly told story that can reasonably be compared to the work of Daphne DuMaurier and Henry James—and other authors where running estates and nurseries figure in. I like the character of Ruby May very much and the way her loyalty to her family and the secrets in her past play out. Halls depicts the West Yorkshire, 1904, country estate and village where much of the action takes place vividly. As she does Ruby's life with her first and then her new family and their young children, and with their mothers. And also with household staff who resent or ostracize her.... The excellent London training school for nannies will evoke Jacqueline Winspear's work for you. The only reason this gem is not a British Crime Club Pick is that it is more drama tinged with Gothic than it is a true mystery. But club members and indeed any of you who love British novels should dive right into this wonderful book.

Hepworth, Sally. [The Younger Wife](#) (St Martins \$28.99). Pamela Aston's two adult daughters, Tully and Rachel, are already reeling at the swiftness of the Melbourne, Australia, homemaker's deterioration with early-onset Alzheimer's when their cardiac surgeon father, Stephen, blindsides them with another bombshell—his plan to divorce Pam, who's soon moved to a nursing home, and marry interior designer Heather Wisher, who's younger than either sister. Further shocks await Rachel, a gorgeous plus-size baker who by her own account eats her feelings, as well as Tully, the always anxious mother of two little boys, as they try to figure out how seriously to take Pam's occasional utterances suggesting that life with Stephen may have had a darker side. Meanwhile, the surprisingly sympathetic Heather starts to question her wedding plans—and possibly her sanity—now that she's living with Stephen full-time. The toxic secrets each woman has been hiding, a surprise romance, and the small fortune Rachel discovers in her mother's hot water bottle nicely complicate the fast-moving plot. This is often funny and affecting, good escape reading although IMHO the basic premise is a sad one.

Holes, Paul. [Unmasked: My Life Solving America's Cold Cases](#) (Celadon \$28.99). From the detective who found The Golden State Killer, a memoir of investigating America's toughest cold cases and the rewards—and toll—of a life solving crime. Crime-solving for me is more complex than the challenge of the hunt, or the process of piecing together a scientific puzzle. The thought of good people suffering drives me, for better or worse, to the point of obsession. Holes writes, "People always ask how I am able to detach from the horrors of my work." Read this to find out.

Huchu, TL. [Our Lady of Mysterious Ailments](#) (Tor \$29.99). Huchu's second Edinburgh Nights urban fantasy returns readers to a magic-infused contemporary Scotland. Ropa Moyo, who can talk to the dead, while struggling to overcome the classist boundaries of the magical world, accepts a job investigating the curious case of Max Wu, whose odd coma mystifies healers at the private hospital Our Lady of Mysterious Ailments. Alongside a colorful cast, including a friendly fox named River, Ropa uncovers a layered conspiracy involving an ancient secret society

and one of Scotland's most prestigious magic schools, Edinburgh Ordinary School for Boys. "Huchu captures a distinctly Scottish vernacular that brings vibrancy and verve to this enthralling, fast-paced adventure. Returning readers will be thrilled to revisit familiar faces and settings, while those new to the series will have no trouble jumping into this fantastic world. Witty, suspenseful, and keenly attuned to real-life socioeconomic hierarchies," and so it might be best to start with [The Library of the Dead](#) (\$18.99).

Keneally, Thomas. [The Dickens Boy](#) (Atria \$28). The award-winning author of modern classics such as *Schindler's List* and *Napoleon's Last Island* writes of another celebrated author and his son. Edward Dickens, the tenth child of England's most famous author Charles Dickens, has consistently let his parents down. Unable to apply himself at school and adrift in life, the teenage boy is sent to Australia in the hopes that he can make something of himself—or at least fail out of the public eye. He soon finds himself in the remote Outback, surrounded by Aboriginals, colonials, ex-convicts, ex-soldiers, and very few women. Determined to prove to his parents and more importantly, himself, that he can succeed in this vast and unfamiliar wilderness, Edward works hard at his new life amidst various livestock, bushrangers, shifty stock agents, and frontier battles. By reimagining the tale of a fascinating yet little-known figure in history, this "roguishly tender coming-of-age story" (Booklist) offers penetrating insights into Colonialism and the fate of Australia's indigenous people, and a wonderfully intimate portrait of Charles Dickens, as seen through the eyes of his son.

Lawson, Mike. [Redemption](#) (Grove \$26). Here's a departure from Lawson's long-running Joe DeMarco, political fixer, series, and it has a really nifty premise. It also takes no prisoners in typical Lawson straightforward, don't miss a beat style. I wish I could discuss how things play out for Jamison Maddox who, his Wall Street career blasted by an insider trader conviction he didn't deserve, broke and jobless, accepts a position in small town Redemption, Illinois, with Drexler, Limited. What is Drexler, Limited? It's run with an iron fist by one Claud Drexler, now 80, and apparently does financial research for select clients, which Jamison is aces at doing. But it becomes apparent quite soon that motherly Mrs. White, HR, and her children form some kind of hit squad and that the few employees on the locked-down third floor are the only ones who know the names of the firm's clients. Jamison also realizes that the gorgeous and glamorous Gillian Lang, married to one of the coldest third-floor guys, is throwing out lures to him. The reader by now knows that Drexler, Limited, is up to no good, but what kind of no good and what Jamison can do about it... there's the fun.

✎Lloyd, Ellery. [The Club](#) (Harper \$26.99). "Here be Monsters" is what comes to mind with our **April British Crime Club Book of the Month**. This scorching look at celebrity and catering to the rich and celebrated strips the characters down to the bone. The Home Group is a glamorous collection of celebrity members' clubs dotted across the globe, where the rich and famous can party hard and then crash out in its five-star suites, far from the prying eyes of fans and the media. The most spectacular of all is Island Home—a closely-guarded, ultra-luxurious resort, just off the English coast—and its three-day launch party is easily the most coveted A-list invite of the decade. But behind the scenes, tensions are at breaking point: the ambitious and expensive project has pushed the Home Group's ego-driven and maniacal

really CEO and his long-suffering team to their absolute limits. All of them have something to hide—and that's before the beautiful people with their own ugly secrets even set foot on the island. As tempers fray and behavior worsens, as things get more sinister by the hour and the body count piles up, some of Island Home's members will begin to wish they'd never made the guest list. No wonder this is a Reese's Book Club Pick as well as ours. And already a bestseller.

Mack, Timothy David. [The Orchid and the Emerald](#) (Blackstone \$29.99). William Gunn wants nothing more than a quiet life. After returning home from the Napoleonic wars, he accepts a position on the Duke of Devonshire's idyllic estate. Destiny, however, intervenes when his young daughter Sarah falls prey to a mysterious sickness, and Gunn must strike out once more into the unknown and search for an unusual cure—the black orchid, a plant found only in the forbidding Amazon rainforest, where the last man who saw it went insane. Across the Atlantic, American frontiersman Nathaniel Yankee has left his country and his past behind to join a new revolution, fought by General Simón Bolívar to free South America from the Spanish. Nate, however, is no hero—he fights for land, and a chance at a fresh start. Pursued by a cruel enemy in a race against time, William and Nate must survive the battlefields of the Spanish Main, cross the snow-covered peaks of the Andes, and finally reckon with the rulers of a dying Amazonian empire. For one man, the goal is a chance to save his daughter's life; for the other, a priceless treasure beckons. If they cannot learn to work together, one of a thousand enemies will kill them (that is, if they don't kill each other first).

Macleod, Debra May. [Empire of Iron](#) (Blackstone \$28.99). There is a saying in Rome: the Tarpeian Rock is near the Capitoline—meaning that even at the height of power, one is never far from a fall. As the Vestalis Maxima, Pomponia has guided her order through the collapse of Rome's Republic and the rise of the Empire. Her wit and piety have elevated the Vestals to a position of unprecedented prestige—and her friendship with Caesar Augustus has personally afforded her a life of political influence and privilege. She has been adored and untouchable. Yet that illusion of safety has been shattered by a ruthless enemy who continues to menace her from the shadows, his vengeful nature escalating to terrifying new heights that threaten not just Pomponia, but all those she cares for—including the emperor himself. Worse, it seems that the gods are also turning against her when the Vestal order suffers an unparalleled crisis that Pomponia must answer for. Struggling to maintain her position, Pomponia looks to her slaves and a renegade charioteer for support as her complex relationship with her protégé, Quintina, brings painful secrets to light. Faced with threats from all directions, Pomponia must be willing to sacrifice everything—even her own morality—to protect her status, the Vestal order, and the lives of those around her. In *Empire of Iron*, the unflinching conclusion to the *Vesta Shadows* trilogy, Pomponia realizes that, like Rome itself, she must become even more ruthless than her enemies if she is to survive. Fans of Steven Saylor and Lindsey Davis, take note of the *Vesta Shadows* Trilogy.

✦Martinez, Guillermo. [The Oxford Brotherhood](#) (Pegasus \$26). "It's 1994 in Martinez's outstanding sequel to 2005's [The Oxford Murders](#) (\$14), and G, who's studying mathematical logic at Oxford University, is developing a computer program to analyze handwriting. Meanwhile, word of a discovery has roiled the world of Oxford scholars working on a definitive

annotated edition of Lewis Carroll's diaries. Intern Kristen Hill, who's been going through Carroll's papers, claims to have found a lost diary page with a sentence written by the author's elder grandniece that she believes "can answer the question that hangs over Lewis Carroll," whether his contacts with little girls like Alice Liddell were inappropriate, "but in a totally unexpected way." Kristen won't show G the page, which he gathers she's removed from the collection, until she's confident she'll be credited for the discovery. G's program could help authenticate the handwriting, but before Kristen can present her findings, she's seriously injured by a hit-and-run driver who apparently targeted her. G teams up again with Oxford professor Arthur Seldom to investigate. Martinez combines an inventive plot with characters readers will root for. Dan Brown fans looking for a literary thriller with depth will be compulsively turning the pages."—*PW* Starred Review

✦May, Francesca. [Wild and Wicket Things](#) (Orbit \$28). Glamorous parties and sinister secrets weave throughout a postwar prohibition on magic in this dark, lush first fantasy from British novelist May, who also writes suspense novels as Fran Dorricott (*The Lighthouse*). As May's alternate-history England recovers from the strain of a magical war, Annie Mason travels to the fabled Crow Island. Magic is illegal following the war, but rumor says that real magic is alive on the island and "wealth seeped from the place like honey." Annie's father, who left their family for the island when Annie was a baby, has died, and his final wish was that she sell his belongings. Lured by much-needed inheritance money, Annie journeys to the island, where she reunites with childhood friend Bea. She also becomes overwhelmingly drawn to Emmeline, a stunning witch who wears impeccable menswear and throws glitzy soirees with illegal magical liquor. However, Bea's fairy-tale marriage to a rich, handsome man has a dark side, and Emmeline and her magic are clearly at the center. Annie's quest for the truth will become a fight for their lives. May envisions a time similar to the Roaring Twenties in Britain with the U.S. policy of Prohibition added, with bright young things drawn to outlawed witchcraft rather than alcohol. Shades of Fitzgerald occasionally thread into the narrative in a work of Lesbian Gothic fiction.

✦Pinborough, Sarah. [Insomnia](#) (Harper \$27.99). British author Pinborough hit it big with [Behind Her Eyes](#) (\$9.99), a thriller tinged with the paranormal. She now produces a domestic thriller with paranormal elements that is also unsettling. Leeds solicitor Emma Averell sees her enviable existence start to implode days before she turns 40, the age at which her mother's psychotic breakdown shattered their family. As Emma struggles with insomnia, her mind races with obsessive thoughts—what if she really is going off the rails like her mother? Increasingly exhausted, she bungles client conferences and snaps at her stay-at-home husband, Robert, and their two children. Emma loses it when an emergency call from her estranged older sister, Phoebe, tricks her into a situation that lands her in a murder investigation. She becomes convinced she's being gaslighted by either Phoebe or Robert, who kicks her out of the house because of professed concern about the impact her deteriorating mental state is having on their kids.

Library Reads adds, "Emma has the perfect career, husband, and family. She also has a secret that is about to catch up with her. She is turning 40 and slowly spiraling out of control

as the past creeps closer. Is her insomnia touching her with insanity, or is she about to relive what she has been trying to hide all these years? For fans of *The End of Her* and *Mrs. March*.”

Rozan, SJ, ed. [Crime Hits Home: A Collection of Stories](#) (Hanover Square \$27.99). The newest anthology from Mystery Writers of America explores the theme of home and the crimes that endanger it. Authors include Naomi Hirahara, David Bart, Sara Paretsky, Gary Phillips, Walter Mosley, Tori Eldridge, Ellen Hart, Jonathan Santlofer, and Ovidia Yu, plus 9 more.

Sebastian, Laura. [Castles in Their Bones](#) (Random House \$18.99). For Teen Readers: Empress Margaraux has had plans for her daughters since the day they were born. Princesses Sophronia, Daphne, and Beatriz will be queens. And now, age sixteen, they each must leave their homeland and marry their princes. Beautiful, smart, and demure, the triplets appear to be the perfect brides—because Margaraux knows there is one common truth: everyone underestimates a girl. Which is a grave mistake. Sophronia, Daphne, and Beatriz are no innocents. They have been trained since birth in the arts of deception, seduction, and violence with a singular goal—to bring down monarchies—and their marriages are merely the first stage of their mother’s grand vision: to one day reign over the entire continent of Vesteria.

Van Rensburg, Laure. [Nobody But Us](#) (Grand Central \$28). In this debut for those devouring creepy psychological thrillers, shy if preternaturally smart NYU grad student Ellie and her rich boyfriend, Steven, who teaches at a classy Manhattan private school, are heading out of town for a romantic weekend. Alas, they are quickly snowed in at the house where they’re staying, and that’s bad news on several counts. Neither of them is what they appear to be, both are hiding dangerous secrets, and one will end up dead. “An isolated house in the snowy woods, a cat-and-mouse chase, a story packed with secrets where nobody is what they seem ... I loved the flashbacks expertly woven into the tale to reveal the dark secrets of a relationship.” —Allie Reynolds

Walsh, Rosie. [The Love of My Life](#) (Penguin \$28). Here’s *Kirkus* with one of several Starred Reviews for a book I overlooked from March: “Emma and Leo have been happily married for seven years, although they’ve weathered their share of struggles (such as infertility and Emma’s cancer diagnosis). Emma’s a marine ecologist and erstwhile TV presenter whose bubbly personality is loved by all, while Leo is an obituary writer and his wife’s No. 1 fan. Both are head over heels for their young daughter, Ruby. Although Emma’s currently doing well, Leo is given the job of prewriting her obituary, a common strategy with people who are in the public eye. In his quest to write the perfect tribute to his wife, he starts looking into her past and discovers a few inconsistencies he can’t explain. Why did Emma lie about her university degree? Why is she so cagey about her life before Leo? How is she connected to a famous actress who just went missing? And, most importantly, is her name even Emma? As Emma attempts to cover up her secrets, Leo digs through their house for clues and tracks down people from her past in an attempt to figure out why she’s lying and what she’s hiding from him.” I’ve ordered a copy—one of the COVID issues is the lack of advance reading copies—and will see if this is a book for say the May British Crime Club.

Zhang, Jenny Tinghui. [Four Treasures of the Sky](#) (Flatiron \$27.99). Narrator Daiyu, named after the fictional poet Lin Daiyu

of Chinese literature, vows she will shed the melancholy of the poet’s legacy. The book opens in the 1880s after the sudden disappearance of her parents and after her grandmother sent her from their small fishing village to Zhifu, for reasons she comes to understand later after she is kidnapped and taken to the US where she is sold into prostitution in California. She eventually escapes to Idaho where she lives like a man and has to deal with rising anti-Asian sentiment. Daiyu tantalizingly sets the stage: “When I am kidnapped, it does not happen in an alleyway. It does not happen in the middle of the night. It does not happen when I am alone.” Daiyu is just 13 years old when she is kidnapped, and her coming of age is unlike few others in literature. “Zhang pares her story down to its essence; it reads more like poetry, subtle but effective.”

## OUR MARCH LARGE PAPERBACK PICKS

Barclay, Linwood. [Find You First](#) (\$16.99). Canadian Barclay, whose [Elevator Pitch](#) (\$16.99) was a true WOW, sets two people identifying themselves as police banging on the door of 21-year-old Todd Cox, who runs phone scams targeting the elderly out of his trailer home near Springfield, Massachusetts. Eager to appear innocent, Cox lets them in, only to discover they’re frauds. The fake cops inject Cox with a lethal drug before sealing him in a body bag and sanitizing the place and the surrounding area. One of them comments, “Two down. Seven to go.” Flash back three weeks. Miles Cookson, a Connecticut software millionaire, has been diagnosed with incurable Huntington’s disease. As Huntington’s is genetic, Cookson decides to use his affluence to bribe a desperate employee of the sperm bank he donated to decades earlier to trace any possible children, both to warn them that they may carry fatal genes and to name them in his will. The list he gets contains nine names, including Cox’s, hinting at a link to the initial homicide. Barclay makes even secondary characters feel real along with the dilemmas everyone faces. This is perfect reading for fans of Peter Swanson.

Benjamin, Tom. [The Hunting Season](#) (LittleBrown \$15.99). I cannot recommend highly enough this delightful mystery set in Bologna, Italy, so perfect for fans of Michael Dibdin. It’s truffle season and in the hills around the city the hunt is on for the legendary Boscuri White, the golden nugget of Italian gastronomy. But when an American truffle ‘supertaster’ goes missing, English detective Daniel Leicester discovers not all truffles are created equal. Did the missing supertaster bite off more than he could chew? As he goes on the hunt for Ryan Lee, Daniel discovers the secrets behind ‘Food City’, from the immigrant kitchen staff to the full scale of a multi-million Euro business. After a key witness is found dead at the foot of one of Bologna’s famous towers, the stakes could not be higher.... And, there is wine! Really love Daniel as a character and sleuth, plus the foodie aspects of this should appeal to those who follow Stanley Tucci and Martin Walker’s French series so laden with local food and wine. Here is our **April International Crimes Book of the Month**—the US edition is only in large paperback.

Berry, Flynn. [Northern Spy](#) (\$17). This is a fantastic book, an emotionally rich espionage story set in present-day Ireland looking at a country divided, the invisibility of motherhood, and the bonds of family that can supersede all else. It is the story of two sisters, one a paramedic and the other Belfast BBC political news producer Tessa Daly who is struggling to juggle her job

with caring for her six-month-old son, whose custody she shares with her ex-husband. When Tessa sees a TV clip showing a gas station being robbed by a gun-wielding IRA trio, one of them is apparently her younger sister, Marian, whom Tessa believed to be vacationing on the north coast. Detective Inspector Fenton and his team, who subsequently interrogate Tessa, seem convinced that she must also be IRA or, at the very least, privy to her sister's activities. It turns out that the local authorities don't know an awful lot about the now-fugitive Marian, whose efforts to press Tessa to assist her in her current clandestine mission puts both mother and baby at risk as Tessa defends her sister's innocence. Berry is amazing at constructing plots that test loyalties.

Castillo, Linda. [Fallen](#) (\$17.99). Love this Amish, small-town Ohio police procedural series that is so much more than detection. It's a long running story of two sleuths, a romance/marriage, communities, and shocking crimes. Castillo is a master at crafting them. A small paperback comes out at the same time, see Our Small Paperback Picks below for more. Castillo will sign a new Kate Burkholder for us in July, date to come.

Child, Lee/Andrew. [Better Off Dead](#) (\$18). 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. NOTE: Buy a signed hardcover [Better Off Dead](#) for the same \$18 price.

Connelly, Michael. [The Dark Hours](#) (\$17.99). Connelly has crafted two timely and clever plots for Ballard and Bosch to pick apart as things are shifting to Ballard taking the lead role. A Starred Review adds: "In bestseller Connelly's stellar fourth novel featuring LAPD Detective Renée Ballard, Ballard leads the way on two separate cases: the shooting death of Javier Raffa, a former gang member, and the search for a pair of serial rapists dubbed the Midnight Men. A recovered bullet connects the Raffa shooting to an old case of Connelly's main series lead, Harry Bosch. Though Bosch is retired, he willingly helps out and ends up playing a key role in investigating both cases. Meticulous about actual police procedure, Connelly makes the fundamentals of detective work engrossing while providing plenty of suspense and action, including one genuinely shocking scene of violence involving Ballard. He also excels at imbuing his narratives with social commentary, a talent showcased in this entry... This truly is a brilliant book and masterful pivot that allows Bosch a new role as he ages while bringing the talents of Ballard forward.

⌘Dennison, Hannah. [Murder in Miniature at Honeychurch Hall](#) (Little Brown UK \$15.99). When a body found on the Honeychurch Hall estate proves to be that of a villager who had supposedly moved to Ireland years earlier, tongues start wagging and theories abound. Charlie Green had always been a rogue. Although Charlie's demise happened well before Kat's arrival, Kat is drawn into the mystery when she finds two rare miniature portraits hidden inside a custom-made dollhouse of Honeychurch Hall. And then Charlie's aunt suffers a mysterious fatal fall and suspicion lands on a stranger who is holidaying in the newly installed shepherd's hut in the walled garden—one of Lady Lavinia's latest hare-brained moneymaking schemes. Although there is something off about the tourist, Kat believes the culprit is fellow antique dealer. Soon Kat realizes that the miniatures harbor a vital secret that one particular person is willing to kill for. This delightful British cozy series is a longtime PP staff favorite. Order early as supply can be tricky.

Hillerman, Anne. [Stargazer](#) (\$16.99). I can't count how many times I have driven past the Very Large Array on the way from Payson to Socorro, NM. It lies 50 miles west of the city on the Plains of San Agustin, between the towns of Magdalena and Datil. And while the telescopes catch the eye, I haven't stopped to wonder what they actually do. Well the wonderful Hillerman explains the science in a most accessible way—thank you, Anne—without dragging down her suspenseful story a bit. I am so grateful. This also means that Navajo police officer Bernie Manuelito does a lot of driving as she works to find Maya, an old friend struggling for years with addiction. Tracing Maya's whereabouts, Bernie learns that her old friend had confessed to the murder of her estranged husband, a prominent astronomer. But the details don't align. Suspicious, Bernie takes a closer look at the case. Her investigation causes an unexpected rift with her husband and new acting boss, Jim Chee, who's sure Bernie's headed for trouble. While she's caught between present and past, Chee is at a crossroads of his own. Burdened with new responsibilities he didn't ask for and doesn't want, he must decide what the future holds for him and act accordingly. Bernie also wonders if she should consider a new policing role. Can their mentor Joe Leaphorn—a man also looking at the past for answers to the future—come through for all of them? And conquer his own fear of flying to further his bond with his longtime housemate?

This terrific chapter in the Hillermans' series opens up new landscapes and presents new opportunities for all the characters. As is illustrated in the new book reviewed above in Signed Books for Hillerman's April 11 live event at The Pen.

Jones, Stephen Mack. [Dead of Winter](#) (\$16.95). Ex-cop and philanthropist August Octavio Snow gets backed into a third case that shows once again that all Detroit politics is personal in good ways and bad. As he's dying of lymphoma, Ronaldo Ochoa is pressed to sell his Mexicantown corn and flour business, Authentico Foods, to a shadowy real estate speculator named Sloane, who claims he's fronting for billionaire developer Vic Bronson. Fearing that the buyer, whoever it is, will tear down the place and put up another ghost town of faceless residential buildings that will denature the neighborhood, Ochoa wants to sell the business to Snow—the son of a Mexican mother and Black father—for a third of the price Sloane has offered. It doesn't sound like a good idea to Snow even though he's sitting on the \$12 million he was awarded in the wrongful termination



suit he filed against the Detroit PD. But Snow can't turn away when Ochoa is killed and his daughter, Snow's old high school crush Jackie Ochoa, begs him for a more familiar kind of help. In no time at all, Snow's up to his neck in civic corruption... 3<sup>rd</sup> in a series that has won The Nero Wolfe Award, The Hammett Prize, and been a finalist for the Shamus Award and the CWA's Ian Fleming Steel Dagger.

McLain Paula. [When the Stars Go Dark](#) (\$17). "At the start of this stunning crime novel, Anna Hart, a San Francisco detective who's on indefinite leave following a tragic incident that has brought her marriage to the brink and destroyed her faith in herself, is driving to Mendocino, California, where she spent part of her childhood with the foster parents who offered her a first taste of stability. Soon after she arrives in town, she spots a missing person poster: 15-year-old Cameron Curtis, adopted daughter of a recently retired actor, has vanished. Cameron's fate reminds Anna of the still-unsolved murder of a childhood friend that occurred when she was in high school. "Someone has to save this girl," she resolves. "And it has to be me." Then other similar crimes start coming to light, and Anna becomes eerily aware of the disturbing connection between the victims and their predators. McLain matches poetic prose with deep characterizations as she shines a light on the kindness in her characters' souls. Fans of literary suspense won't be able to put this one down," says the *PW* Starred Review. I agree. Atmospheric, suspenseful, wonderful—it was our March 2021 Crime Book of the Month in Signed hardcover, long sold out.

Preston, Douglas/Lincoln Child. [Bloodless](#) (\$17.99). On the evening of November 24, 1971, D. B. Cooper hijacked Flight 305—Portland to Seattle—with a fake bomb, collected a ransom of \$200,000, and parachuted into the night, never to be seen again... Maybe. Fifty years later, Agent Pendergast and his partner, Armstrong Coldmoon, take on a bizarre and gruesome case: in the ghost-haunted city of Savannah, Georgia, bodies are found completely drained of blood—sowing panic and reviving the infamous legend of the Savannah Vampire. A case like no other in Pendergast's career: Through twists and turns, Pendergast and his partner, Agent Coldmoon, race to understand how these murders are connected to the most mystifying hijacking in American history. Pressure to close the Savannah case quickly comes from a boorish U.S. senator, who fears bad press about the crimes will imperil his reelection bid. Pendergast's ward, Constance Greene, assists by befriending a reclusive hotel owner rumored to have prolonged her life by drinking human blood. How the plane hijacking ties in with the current action will surprise you! Then again, every Agent Pendergast adventure surprises!

Slaughter, Karin. [False Witness](#) (\$16.99). In 1998, teen sisters Callie and Leigh, the heroines of this superb thriller, murder Buddy Waleski, who sexually abused them for years while they babysat his son, Trevor, in Chicago. They leave the Waleski kitchen spotless after cleaning up any evidence of the murder and hide Buddy's body. In 2021, Callie, who became addicted to heroin after a gymnastics accident left her in constant pain, and Leigh, a defense attorney, unexpectedly confront the past after Leigh's boss assigns the case of an alleged serial killer to her. During their first meeting, Andrew Tenant tells Leigh he's actually the little boy she once babysat—Trevor Waleski—and

implies that he knows the sisters killed his father. Callie and Leigh work urgently to determine how and what he knows. Breaking into the abandoned former Waleski house, Callie finds a crawl space with cameras aimed both at the kitchen where Buddy's murder occurred and the living room couch where Callie was repeatedly raped as a 12-year-old by Buddy. If Leigh doesn't secure a not guilty verdict, the pathological Andrew threatens to retaliate by releasing his father's videos to the media and murdering her 16-year-old daughter. A shocking tragedy at the end will jolt you—no surprise for Slaughter readers.

Winstead, Ashley. [In My Dreams I Hold a Knife](#) (\$16.99). Here is a sterling entry in the Dark Academia genre. "Jessica Miller's life is, and always has been, a performance. Duquette University was supposed to be a place of reinvention, somewhere she could transcend her broken, damaged background. At the beginning, surrounded by a group of new friends, that's what it is. But after one of those friends, Heather, is stabbed to death, reinvention means something else: burying nasty thoughts, secret shame and the lingering belief that she bears some culpability in what happened. Ten years later, when Jessica returns to Duquette for a college reunion, she finds that Heather's brother, Eric, has become obsessed with his sister's death. 'It's amazing what you can find out when you're a skinny loser,' he tells Jessica and her friends. 'People tell you all sorts of things — student, faculty, detectives. I know so much about each of you. Most of all, I know you're not what you pretend to be. One of you is a monster, hiding behind a mask.' At its heart, Winstead's novel examines what it means to covet the lives of others, no matter the cost."—*NYT Book Review*. Riley Sager is a fan as is Hank Phillippi Ryan. And me.

### SOME MARCH LARGE PAPERBACKS

*Many books published in April, some paperbacks of last year's hardcovers, focus on war and wartime, which makes them especially relevant now*

Abrams, Stacey. [While Justice Sleeps](#) (\$17). Avery Keene, a brilliant young law clerk for the legendary Justice Howard Wynn, is doing her best to hold her strained personal life together. But when the shocking news breaks that Justice Wynn—the cantankerous swing vote on the court—has slipped into a coma, Avery's life turns upside down. She learns that Wynn has appointed her to serve as his legal guardian and hold his power of attorney, plunging her into an explosive role she never anticipated. Avery finds that Justice Wynn had been secretly researching one of the most controversial cases before the court—a proposed merger between an American biotech company and an Indian genetics firm, which promises to unleash breathtaking results in the medical field. She also discovers that Wynn suspected a dangerous conspiracy was infiltrating the highest corridors of power in Washington. As political wrangling intensifies to replace the ailing judge, Avery begins to unravel the carefully constructed, chess-like sequence of clues Wynn left behind. Abrams is a truly interesting person, politically active, a closet romance writer, and now making a foray into thrillers.

Blackwell, Juliet. [The Paris Showroom](#) (Berkley \$17). Capucine Benoit works alongside her father to produce fans of rare feathers, beads, and intricate pleating for the haute couture fashion houses. But after the Germans invade Paris in June 1940, Capucine and her father must focus on mere survival—

until they are betrayed to the secret police and arrested for his political beliefs. When Capucine saves herself from deportation to Auschwitz by highlighting her connections to Parisian design houses, she is sent to a little-known prison camp located in the heart of Paris, within the Lévitan department store where hundreds of prisoners work to sort through, repair, and put on display the massive quantities of art, furniture, and household goods looted from Jewish homes and businesses. Forced to wait on German officials and their wives and mistresses, Capucine struggles to hold her tongue in order to survive, remembering happier days spent in the art salons, ateliers, and jazz clubs of Montmartre in the 1920s. Capucine's estranged daughter, Mathilde, remains in the care of her conservative paternal grandparents, who are prospering under the Nazi occupation. But after her mother is arrested and then a childhood friend goes missing, the usually obedient Mathilde finds herself drawn into the shadowy world of Paris's Résistance fighters....

Carter, Michaela. [Leonora in the Morning Light](#) (\$18). Michaela Carter invokes the bohemian intrigues of artistic pre-WWII Paris, and the terrors that ensued, in her riveting story of Leonora Carrington's tumultuous affair with celebrated painter, Max Ernst. "Vivid and colorful as her canvases, this novel depicts the conflicted heart of an artist, and a survivor who refused to admit defeat."

Collins, Megan. [The Family Plot](#) (\$17). At 26, Dahlia Lighthouse is haunted by her upbringing. Raised in a secluded island mansion deep in the woods and kept isolated by her true crime-obsessed parents, she is unable to move beyond the disappearance of her twin brother, Andy, when they were sixteen. After several years away and following her father's death, Dahlia returns to the house, where the family makes a gruesome discovery: buried in their father's plot is another body—Andy's, his skull split open with an ax. Dahlia is quick to blame Andy's murder on the serial killer who terrorized the island for decades, while the rest of her family reacts to the revelation in unsettling ways.....

Downing, Samantha. [For Your Own Good](#) (\$17). Within weeks, Belmont Academy's image plummets from gilded Ivy League gateway to ghoulish #HomicideHigh in this slyly plotted page-turner from Edgar finalist Downing (He Started It). It's going to take more than a few inconvenient bodies on campus, however, to derail such driven Belmont community members as English lit instructor Teddy Crutcher, whose recent teacher of the year award seems to have done little to diminish the massive chip on his shoulder, or talented but entitled junior Zach Ward, the most recent individual to arouse his ire. That is, until the less than stellar police investigation targets a student close to both Teddy and Zach, gifted school newspaper editor Courtney Ross. Their independent efforts to help her only make matters much, much worse—as well as put them on a dangerous collision course with one another in yet another entry in the Dark Academia genre. Downing is a quirky but interesting plotter.

Fisher, Tarryn. [An Honest Lie](#) (Graydon House \$16.99). Rainy has moved from New York City, where she was a successful sculptor, to Washington State to be with her boyfriend, Grant. She has spent a year, largely in vain, trying to make friends with the wives of Grant's buddies. When "the girls" suggest a trip to Las Vegas, Rainy balks but decides to risk the trip. One of them is trapped by a killer as bait to lure Rainy whose past in a cult has

clearly caught up with her.... There is also a hardcover edition: [An Honest Lie](#) (\$28.99).

Harrison, Mette Ivie. [The Prodigal Daughter](#) (\$16.95). Linda Wallheim, the wife of an LDS bishop in Draper, Utah, is drawn into the role of amateur investigator by the oldest of her five grown sons, Joseph, who teaches Sunday School in nearby Ogden. Sabrina Jensen, a 15-year-old who regularly babysits for Joseph and his wife, has disappeared, but her parents appear unconcerned about her whereabouts. Linda, a self-described busybody who can't resist helping anyone in need, throws herself into searching for Sabrina, who she eventually learns was the victim of a terrible crime committed by "good Mormon boys." Linda winds up trekking the meaner streets of Salt Lake City in her effort to save Sabrina. Meanwhile, she struggles with the strictures of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and her fraught relationship with her husband, with whom she's in marriage therapy. Harrison adroitly raises various ethical issues as the suspenseful plot builds to a devastating climax. Harrison opens surprising windows into Utah's Mormon community in the [Linda Wallheim series](#) which we recommend you order and read in its entirety

✎Huber, Anna Lee. [A Perilous Perspective](#) (Berkley \$17). Argyll, Scotland. July 1832. After a trying few months in Edinburgh, Kiera and her husband and investigative partner, Sebastian Gage, are eager to escape to the Highlands with their three-month-old child. Kiera is overjoyed for her cousin Rye and her detractor-turned-friend Charlotte who are being wed in a private ceremony at the estate of Rye's great-uncle, the Marquess of Barbreck, in what seems to be the perfect wedding party. But when Kiera is invited to peruse Barbreck's extensive art collection, she is disturbed to discover that one of his most priceless paintings seems to be a forgery. The Marquess' furious reaction when she dares to mention it leaves her shaken and the entire house shocked. For it turns out that this is not the first time the word forgery has been uttered in connection with the Barbreck household. Matters turn more ominous when a maid from a neighboring estate is found murdered where the forged painting hangs.... I have enjoyed the [Lady Derby Mystery](#) series from book on to this tenth and recommend all of them.

Jackson, Joshilyn. [Mother May I](#) (\$16.99). "Fan favorite Joshilyn Jackson is back with the suspenseful (seriously!) story of Bree, who grew up poor but defiantly hopeful. After marrying into money, Bree now has everything she could've dreamed of. Until the day she sees an old, gray-haired woman—a witch?—haunting her. Then her baby boy vanishes in the blink of an eye, leading Bree down a tangled path with devastating consequences. After all, what wouldn't a mother do for her child?"—*Country Living*

✎Knight, Eliza. [The Mayfair Bookshop](#) (Harper \$16.99) delivers a portrayal of the fascinating Nancy Mitford and her sisters, all Bright Young Things. Nancy marries Peter Rodd, an unmoneyed minor aristocrat with a drinking problem, in 1933. As he begins seeing other women and WWII nears, two of Nancy's sisters embrace fascism, upending Nancy's life. But she finds comfort at Heywood Hill, a bookshop that has long championed her work and hires her when Peter's reckless spending forces her to find a job. In the present day, Lucy St. Clair arrives at Heywood Hill on an assignment to curate rare books for a collector. A fan of Nancy's, Lucy takes the opportunity to look into Iris, a woman

to whom Nancy inscribed a copy of one of her books that was eventually bought by Lucy's mother. "Woven with an intriguing modern timeline, this story brims with complicated relationships, infamous characters, heartbreak and, ultimately, triumph."

Lawrence, Carole. [Cleopatra's Dagger](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$15.99). Set in 1880 Manhattan, we meet Elizabeth van den Broek, the *New York Herald's* only female reporter. Typically assigned to stories about high society soirees, Elizabeth hopes to be able to cover crime and soon gets the chance to do so. While riding the Third Avenue El, she spots a man in an upper-story apartment window apparently strangling a woman. Her editor rejects her pitch to investigate, but Elizabeth does so anyway, and her suspicions of foul play increase when she learns that the female occupant of the apartment has disappeared. Meanwhile, Elizabeth's serendipitous find of a woman's corpse buried in the hole being dug for the city's new Egyptian obelisk, Cleopatra's Needle, could be related to the case. Elizabeth's sleuthing never strains credulity, and Lawrence makes New York City come alive with numerous colorful details, from its mean streets, where girls selling hot corn differ "from prostitutes only in that they were usually younger and (hopefully) not sexually available," to the transit options of the time. Fans of Victoria Thompson's Gaslight mysteries should take note.

✠Lovell, Posy. [The Kew Gardens Girls at War](#) (Putnam \$16). "Lovell follows up her WWI-era [The Kew Gardens Girls](#) (\$16) with an emotional story of a new generation of brave Britons. It's 1940 and newlywed Daisy Cooper—whose mother, Ivy, and godmother, Louisa, were among the women who took up men's jobs at Kew Gardens during WWI—has just sent her dashing RAF pilot husband, Rex, to fight the Germans when she's invited to Kew Gardens to work as a gardener. There, she's paired with elegant nurse Beth Sanderson, who longs to be a doctor—but her physician father Geoffrey refuses to sign the necessary papers for her to start training. Through their work, Daisy and Beth become fast friends—and then Daisy, who recently learned she is pregnant, receives word that Rex has been killed in action. Beth, meanwhile, has fallen in love with a Jamaican cardiologist and must contend with her father's racism and bigotry, not to mention that of society at large. The horrible reality of war is on full display in this engrossing story, which Lovell enhances with a visceral sense of bombs falling and terrible news arriving via telegrams." This makes interesting reading for Jacqueline Winspear fans, especially the latest, [A Sunlit Weapon](#) (Harper \$28 Signed).

Murakami, Haruki. [First Person Singular: Stories](#) (\$16). "Whatever you want to call Murakami's work—magic realism, supernatural realism—he writes like a mystery tramp, exposing his global readership to the essential and cosmic (yes, cosmic!) questions that only art can provoke: What does it mean to carry the baggage of identity? Who is this inside my head in relation to the external, so-called real world? Is the person I was years ago the person I am now? Can a name be stolen by a monkey?... [Murakami allows] his own voice to enter the narratives, creating a confessional tone..."—*NY Times Book Review*

Patterson, James/JD Barker. [Death of the Black Widow](#) (\$18.99). On his first night with Detroit PD, Officer Walter O'Brien is called to a murder scene. A terrified twenty-year-old has bludgeoned her kidnapper with skill that shocks even O'Brien's

veteran partner. The young woman is also a brilliant escape artist. Her bold flight from police custody makes the case impossible to solve—and, for Walter, even more impossible to forget. By the time Walter's promoted to detective, his fascination with the missing, gray-eyed woman is approaching obsession. And then....

✠Perry, Anne. [Death with a Double Edge](#) (\$17). It's 1911. Daniel Pitt identifies a dead man in a police morgue as Jonah Drake, a colleague in his law firm. Drake's slashed corpse was found in the East End early that morning, but why was he in such a dangerous neighborhood at that time? Daniel breaks the sad news to his head of chambers, who fears the killing may have been related to Drake's work for the firm and asks Daniel to do some digging. Daniel uncovers unresolved questions concerning two homicide defendants Drake represented, including one whose father, Erasmus Faber, is the owner of Britain's biggest shipbuilding company. Daniel's father Thomas, the Head of Special Branch, warns him to tread carefully, as Faber's business is vital to a country fearful of a German naval buildup. For Daniel's next investigation see Signed Books above.

Rendon, Marcie R. [Girl Gone Missing](#) (Soho \$16.95). Our blogger Lesa Holstine reviews: Although Renee "Cash" Blackbear is most comfortable drinking and playing pool in her favorite bar in Fargo, ND, she's enrolled in college at Moorhead State in Minnesota, thanks to Sheriff Wheaton. He's taken an interest in the 19-year-old Native American ever since he pulled her from a car accident at age three. She's escaped foster homes and abuse but is still a loner at school, one of a handful of Native Americans enrolled there in the late 1960s. Before she even learns about Janet Tweed's disappearance, Cash dreams about a blonde girl calling for help. The vision changes to include two blondes when another girl disappears. Cash asks questions, but when she journeys to Minneapolis/St. Paul, she's pulled into the room where the lost girls are kept. White slavery, Vietnam, the American Indian Movement, and young Native Americans lost to their families are important issues in this melancholy mystery. Native American author Rendon's authentic story of a brooding, displaced young woman follows up *Murder on the Red River* and will appeal to readers looking for fresh voices and characters, as well as stories with a strong sense of place and historical atmosphere. Start with [Murder on the Red River](#) (\$9.99).

Royce, Deborah Goodrich. [Ruby Falls](#) (Post Hill \$16.99). Reissue. In 1968, young Ruby Russell loses her father while touring an underground cave. She recalls the moment his hand left hers, and nearly twenty years later, his disappearance remains a mystery. Ruby has reinvented herself as Eleanor Russell, married the man of her dreams, and is acting in a feature film. "But as her new life begins to go awry, the mystery surrounding her past and present collide in a well-crafted and head spinning twist that I did not see coming. *Ruby Falls* is a skillfully plotted page turner!" —Wendy Walker

Siger, Jeffrey. [One Last Chance](#) (Poisoned Pen \$15.99). A new investigation for Athens' Chief Inspector Andreas Kaldis set on the tiny island of Ikaria where some of its oldest inhabitants are strangely dying.... See Signed Books for a review of the hardcover edition.

✠Starford, Rebecca. [An Unlikely Spy](#) (\$17.99). "Class and ideologies collide in Starford's consummate debut, a clever combination of home front drama and espionage thriller. A chance encounter at a London hotel in 1948 with an old boarding

school friend sends heroine Evelyn Varney’s mind reeling back into her past. At school, the charismatic Julia Wharton-Wells, a little older and from a higher class background, takes Evelyn under her wing. Evelyn then goes on to study German at Oxford, and when the war begins, she finds work at the War Office. Her ability to speak German brings her to the attention of MI5, whose Bennett White recruits her for a dangerous assignment to infiltrate a group of homegrown Nazi sympathizers known as the Lion Society. Evelyn can’t tell any of her friends of the role she’s undertaken, which has repercussions when she finds out that Julia’s lover might be a spy for Germany. Plot twist follows plot twist as Evelyn’s assignment forces her to confront multiple layers of betrayal and deception. The author does an excellent job of recreating London before, during, and after the war, and in Evelyn has created a complex heroine whose sense of duty gets her in way over her head. With suspense worthy of Hitchcock and a moral reckoning straight out of *Le Carré* or Graham Greene, this is a winner.”—*PW*

✦Vaughan, Sarah. [Anatomy of a Scandal](#) (\$17). Cases don’t come much higher-profile than the potential career-maker assigned to driven British barrister Kate Woodcroft, QC: prosecuting golden boy junior Home Office minister James Whitehouse, the prime minister’s best friend since their boyhood at Eton, for raping the young parliamentary researcher with whom he recently ended a brief affair—in a lift at the House of Commons, no less. But the focus isn’t simply the he said–she said courtroom fencing match, but deeper truths about the nature of privilege and power. Skillfully interweaving the story of the unfolding scandal with James’s and his wife Sophie’s student days at Oxford—as well the drug-fueled, swept-under-the-carpet tragedy there that has informed his relationship with the PM ever since—Vaughan gradually reveals just how shockingly high the stakes are. This is a penetrating and exhilarating novel asking whether you can ever really know someone and how difficult it is to establish justice and truth. This paperback is a reissue of a 2018 edition. **We have 2 signed UK firsts still priced at \$20: [Anatomy of a Scandal](#).**

White, Loreth Anne. [The Patient’s Secret](#) (Montlake, \$12.95). A visit to British Columbia is a wonderful idea. Inspired by real events, this exceptional psychological thriller centers on therapist Lily Bradley and her psychology professor husband, Tom, who live with their two children in Story Cove, British Columbia. When Tom finds the body of a female jogger on the beach, a broken string of beads in her hand, Sgt. Rue Duval, the lead police investigator on the Jogger Killer case, believes the woman could be the serial killer’s latest victim. Rue identifies the deceased as a single mother whose 16-year-old son, Joe, recently started a relationship with the Bradleys’ 12-year-old daughter, Phoebe. Tom and Lily suspect each other of hiding secrets related to the murder and mutually agree to protect their secrets, determined to preserve their family. Meanwhile, the number of suspects grows as the police search for a match to the broken strand of beads. White does a superb job keeping the reader guessing as she peels back the layers of a seemingly perfect family to reveal the shocking truth.

✦Williams, Pip. [The Dictionary of Lost Words](#) (\$17). A young British woman quietly creates a compendium of words from women and the lower classes in this sweeping feminist *bildungsroman* set against the writing of the first Oxford English

Dictionary. In late 19th-century England, Esme Nicoll spends her childhood hiding under tables in the Scriptorium, a garden shed in Oxford where a team of lexicographers, including her widowed father, work diligently at collecting and editing definitions on paper slips for the first Oxford English Dictionary. At age five, she swipes a slip bearing the word “bondmaid.” Years later, the realization that this word applies to Lizzie, a maid and her close companion, as easily as to a Roman slave girl angers Esme. She questions why the OED leaves words out, often the language of working-class people and women. “All words are not equal,” or not considered so, explains family friend and female intellectual Ditte. While remaining devoted to the OED, Esme begins. Using oral history techniques combined with lexicography to collect the words of market vendors, actresses and servants. As British suffragists protest and World War I draws near, writing *The Dictionary of Lost Words* becomes Esme’s guiding purpose. This sweeping coming-of-age story illuminates a tumultuous time in British history

### OUR APRIL SMALL PAPERBACK PICKS

Cahoon, Lynn. [Three Tainted Teas](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Kitchen Witch #3. After taking on her toughest gig yet as a last-minute wedding planner, Mia Malone finds the couple’s previous wedding planner murdered in an apparent attempt to stop the union. Now Mia is the police’s prime suspect, leaving her no choice but to investigate in order to save the wedding, her professional reputation—and maybe even her life!

Castillo, Linda. [Fallen](#) (\$9.99). Kate Burkholder #13. Painters Mill Chief of Police Kate Burkholder investigates the murder of a troubled Amish girl who left both the Plain life and town years ago. “In addition to providing readers with plenty of Amish cultural context, Castillo adds surprising twists to the gripping plot and touches upon police brutality and Amish discrimination. This sterling entry can be easily read as a standalone.” (*PW*)

Child, Lee. [Better Off Dead](#) (\$9.99). Jack Reader #26. Reacher goes where he wants, when he wants. This morning he is heading west, walking under the merciless desert sun—until he comes upon a curious scene. A Jeep has crashed into the only tree for miles around. A woman is slumped over the wheel. Dead? No, nothing is what it seems.

Pleiter, Allie. [Knit or Dye Trying](#) (Berkley \$7.99). Riverbank Knitting #2. When artisan fiber dyer Julie Wilson is murdered right before her special dyeing workshop, Y.A.R.N. store owner Libby Beckett must unravel a long list of suspects to catch a killer determined to tie up loose ends.” Keeps the small-town charm of the series debut (*On Skein of Death*) while adding more mystery.” (*Kirkus*)

Rendon, Marcie R. [Murder on the Red River](#) (\$9.99). Set in 1970s along Red River Valley, this gripping new mystery follows young Ojibwe woman Renee “Cash” Blackbear as she struggles to come to terms with the callous murder of a Native American stranger, bringing to life the gritty, dark reality of a flawed foster care system and the oppression of indigenous people. See Large Paperbacks above for the sequel.

Ricciardi, David. [Shadow Target](#) (\$9.99). Jake Keller #4. Jake Keller must elude a killer targeting CIA field officers while trying to find out if someone inside the Agency is feeding his every move to the very people who want him dead.

☞Robotham, Michael. [When She Was Good](#) (\$9.99). This sequel to *Good Girl, Bad Girl* finds criminal psychologist Cyrus Haven uncovering answers about Evie Cormac's dark past that force the latter to flee and question whether or not her secrets should remain hidden.

Thor, Brad. [Black Ice](#) (\$9.99). Scot Harvath #20. When a man he killed years ago shows up in Norway, Scot Harvath, America's top spy, is tested in ways he has never imagined as he races against time to stop one of world's most dangerous actors from taking down the United States and its allies.

#### SMALL PAPERBACKS FOR APRIL

Barber, Kathleen. [Follow Me](#) (Pocket \$9.99). This sequel to *Are You Sleeping* follows the experiences of a thriving social-media personality whose detailed postings about her new job capture the attentions of a predatory follower.

Bokur, Debra. [The Bone Field](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Dark Paradise #2. When a murder case draws her deeper into the mysteries of the island's ancient legends, Kali Mahoe, Hawaiian cultural expert and detective with the Maui police department, questions her beliefs in what appears to be series of illogical links in a twisting chain of deadly events.

Elliott, Lauren. [A Margin for Murder](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Beyond the Page #8. When the bookmobile bus she purchased is involved in a fatal accident while on its way to her—and her first editions go missing—bookshop owner Addie Greyborne discovers the crash victim was murdered and it is up to her to figure out what would drive someone to murder.

Fletcher, Jessica. [Murder, She Wrote: Debonair in Death](#) (\$8.99). Murder She Wrote #54. Jessica Fletcher is determined to prove the innocence of a nail tech from her favorite beauty parlor after she is implicated in a murder.

Hausmann, Romy. [Dear Child](#) (\$9.99). A windowless shack in the woods. A dash to safety. But when a woman finally escapes her captor, the end of the story is only the beginning of her nightmare. She says her name is Lena. Lena, who disappeared without a trace 14 years prior. She fits the profile. She has the distinctive scar. But her family swears that she isn't their Lena.

Hunter, Stephen. [Hot Springs](#) (\$9.99). Reissue. Earl Swagger is a lawman just returned home from World War II to Hot Springs Arkansas, where he has a score to settle with the Mafia and the corrupt men who run the casinos there.

Johansen, Iris. [Hunting Eve](#) (\$9.99). Reissue. Eve Duncan #17. A second installment in a new Eve Duncan story arc trilogy finds the stakes raised higher as the forensic sculptor battles her captor and discovers brutally dangerous truths about why she has been targeted.

Muller, Marcia. [Ice and Stone](#) (\$9.99). Sharon McCone #35. Hired by Crimes Against Indigenous Sisters, private investigator Sharon McCone goes undercover in Eiwok county on the Oregon border to determine who killed two women.

Perry, Carol J. ['til Death](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Witch City #12. Finally tying the knot in their hometown of Salem, Massachusetts, psychic sleuth Lee Barrett and Detective Sergeant Pete Mondello find their romantic honeymoon in Maine

interrupted by Lee's past as she tries to wrap up crimes both old and new.

Wallace, Auralee. [When the Crow's Away](#) (Berkley \$8.99). Evanfall Witches B&B #2. Haunted by the ghost of a candy shop owner who wants her to solve his murder, young witch Brynn Warren, to bring him peace, must rely on all of her skills—both magical and mundane—to unmask a killer with a sweet tooth.