

BOOKNEWS from

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MAY IS MERRY AND MYSTERIOUS

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.

MONDAY MAY 2 1:30 PM

Jennifer McMahon with Karen McMahon discusses [The Children on the Hill](#) (Gallery \$27)
Waiting on book info

MONDAY MAY 2 3:00 PM

Claudia Gray with John Charles
Gray discusses [The Murder of Mr. Wickham](#) (Knopf \$17)
Revisit Jane Austen characters in 1820
Signed bookplates

TUESDAY MAY 3 6:00 PM

Jayne Ann Krentz as Amanda Quick with John Charles
Quick discusses [When She Dreams](#) (Berkley \$28)
Signed books available

WEDNESDAY MAY 4 7:00 PM Live

Don Bentley and Christ Hauty
Bentley discusses [Hostile Intent](#) (Berkley \$27)
Hauty discusses [Storm Rising](#) (Atria \$28)
Signed books for both available

THURSDAY MAY 5 7:00 PM Live

Alaskans Marc Cameron and Dana Stabenow
Cameron discusses [Cold Snap](#) (Kensington \$27)
Arliss Cutter in wild Alaska
Signed books available

SATURDAY MAY 7 2:30 PM Live

Nancy Atherton discusses [Aunt Dimity and the Enchanted Cottage](#) (Viking \$26)
25th in this lovely British cozy series
Signed books available

MONDAY MAY 9 5:00 PM

Mike Lupica discusses Robert B. Parker's [Robert B Parker's Revenge Tour](#) (Putnam \$28) Sunny Randall
Signed books available

MONDAY MAY 9 6:15 PM The Gothic Novel

Isabel Cañas with JT Ellison and Jayne Ann Krentz
Cañas discusses [The Hacienda](#) (Penguin \$27)
Our May First Mystery Book of the Month
Signed books available

TUESDAY MAY 10 7:00 PM Live

Christopher Reich discusses [Once a Thief](#) (Grand Central \$28)
Simon Riske international thriller
Signed books available

WEDNESDAY MAY 11 7:00 PM Live

Alma Katsu discusses [The Fervor](#) (Putnam \$27)
Signed books available

FRIDAY MAY 13 7:00 PM Live

Dervla McTiernan with TJ Newman
McTiernan discusses [The Murder Rule](#) (Harper \$27.99)
Signed books available

SATURDAY MAY 14 2:00 PM Cozies, Cupcakes & Coffee Live with John Charles

Emmeline Duncan discusses [Double Shot Death](#) (Kensington \$15.95)
Jenn McKinlay discusses [Strawberried Alive](#) (Berkley \$8.99)
A Scottsdale Cupcake Bakery Mystery
Signed copies for both available

SUNDAY MAY 15 2:00 PM Live

Chris Bohjalian discusses [The Lioness](#) (Doubleday \$28)
Our May Crime Book of the Month
Signed books available

MONDAY MAY 16 4:00 PM Virtual Book launch

Linwood Barclay discusses [Take Your Breath Away](#) (Harper \$27.99)
Signed bookplates

MONDAY MAY 16 6:00 PM Live Book Launch

Jack Carr discusses [In the Blood](#) (Atria \$28)
Terminal List #5
Signed books available

TUESDAY MAY 17 5:00 PM

Robin Peguero discusses [With Prejudice](#) (Grand Central \$28)
A legal thriller debut
Signed books available

TUESDAY MAY 17 7:00 PM Live

Adrian McKinty discusses [The Island](#) (Mulholland \$27)
Australia proves really scary!
Signed books available

WEDNESDAY MAY 18 4:30 PM

Brian Klingborg discusses [Wild Prey](#) (St Martins \$27.99)
Inspector Lu Fei
Signed books available

WEDNESDAY MAY 18 6:00 PM

May Cobb with Jesse Q Sutanto
Cobb discusses [My Summer Darlings](#) (Berkley \$27)
Signed books available

THURSDAY MAY 19 7:00 PM Live

Boyd and Beth Morrison discuss [The Lawless Land](#) (Zeus \$29.95)
Our June Historical Fiction Book of the Month
Signed books available

FRIDAY MAY 20 6:00 PM

Jason Rekulak with Grady Hendrix
Rekulak discusses [Hidden Pictures](#) (Flatiron \$27.99)
Signed books available

FRIDAY MAY 20 7:15 PM

SciFi Friday discusses Iain M Banks' [Consider Phlebas](#) (\$17.99)

SATURDAY MAY 21 10:30 AM

Croak & Dagger discuss Vivica Sten's [Still Waters](#) (\$14.95),
Sweden's Sandham Murders #1

SATURDAY MAY 21 4:00 PM Live

Nancy Joaquim discusses [Build Me a City: Secrets, Lies and Love](#) (NAL \$28.95)
Signed books available

MONDAY MAY 23 5:00 PM Virtual Book launch

Chris Pavone discusses [Two Nights in Lisbon](#) (Farrar \$28)
Our June Crime Book of the Month
Signed books available

MONDAY MAY 23 7:00PM LIVE

Beatriz Williams, Lauren Willig, Karen White discuss [Lost Summers of Newport](#) (Harper \$28.99)
Books signed by all available

TUESDAY MAY 24 7:00 PM Live Book Launch

Graham Brown with Robin Burcell
Brown discusses [Clive Cussler's Dark Vector](#) (Putnam \$29)
Signed books available

WEDNESDAY MAY 25 12:00 PM

Deon Meyer with Michael Connelly
Meyer discusses [The Dark Flood](#) (Grove Atlantic \$27)
South African policeman Benny Griessel

WEDNESDAY MAY 25 5:00 PM

Chris Holm with James Rollins
Holm discusses [Child Zero](#) (LittleBrown \$28)
Two Michael Crichton style thrillers
Signed books available for both

WEDNESDAY MAY 25 7:00 PM Live

Tori Eldridge discusses [Dance Among the Flames](#) (Running Wild Press \$19.99)
A dark fantasy laced with Brazilian mysticism
Signed books available

THURSDAY MAY 26 7:00 PM

Hardboiled Crime discusses John D. MacDonald's [Dead Low Tide](#) (\$16)

WEDNESDAY JUNE 1 3:00 PM

James Lee Burke with Patrick
Burke discusses [Every Cloak Rolled in Blood](#) (SimonSchuster \$27)
The Holland Family
Signed books available

OUR MAY BOOKS OF THE MONTH

British Crime Club One unsigned hardcover or paperback per month

Shemilt, Jane. [The Patient](#) & Thorogood, Robert, [The Marlow Murder Club](#)

I could not choose between these 2 paperbacks so... both

Cozy Crimes Club One unsigned hardcover or paperback per month

Nagendra, Harini. [The Bangalore Detectives Club](#)

First Mystery Club One Signed First Printing per month

Cañas, Isabel. [The Hacienda](#)

The Crime Collectors Book of the Month Club One Signed First Printing per month

Bohjalian, Chris. [The Lioness](#)

History/Mystery Club One Signed First Printing per month
Maz, William. [The Bucharest Dossier](#) Signed copies sold out

Notable New Fiction One Signed First Printing per month
Egan, Jennifer. [The Candy House](#) Signed copies sold out

International Crime One Unsigned Hardcover or paperback per month

McCulloch, Amy. [Breathless](#)

GIFTS FOR MOM

For our non-resident customers we recommend a [Poisoned Pen Gift Card](#) since Mother's Day is coming right up on May 8 and shipping is so tight and, annoyingly, unreliable. A gift card can be for a \$ amount or for a specific book to be sent but avoids the timely delivery issue.

You can also sign her up for our [Enews](#). It's free and fun to read.

And even better, sign her up for one of our **six Books of the Month Club** and she will appreciate your thoughtfulness each time one arrives. The list of the clubs appears just above this section. Email Karen@poisonedpen.com

For local customers we have put together a colorful [Mother's Day Gift Bag](#) with bright tissue wrapped around three delightful paperbacks: *Summer on the Island* by Brtenda Novak, *Kamila Knows Best* by Farah Heron, and *The Secret Love Letters of Olivia Moretti* by Jennifer Probst—plus a grapefruit scented candle and a botanically themed notepad and pen set all for \$60. While supplies last!

For Moms and Grandmoms, a wonderful gift for youngsters: Rogge, Robie, [After the Buzz Comes the Bee](#) (Holiday House

\$17.99). It's a picture book with lift-the-flap animal sounds. How does it work? [Watch this video](#) which tells you more than I can through words.

And this one: Tabor, Corey R. [Sir Ladybug](#) (Balzer + Bray, \$12.99). "*Sir Ladybug* is a sweet tale about being the best version of yourself you can be, and the magic of a well-made lemon cake. *Sir Ladybug* and his pals will charm any reader; this is a sure classic for little ones learning to read on their own.»

And for teenagers: Saft, Allison, [A Far Wilder Magic](#) (Wednesday Books \$18.99. "Allison Saft's writing drips with color and paints a world so real you feel like you can touch it. A thrilling adventure full of magic and danger reminiscent of *Fullmetal Alchemist*."

Finally, give Mom these 3 lists to browse. I really enjoyed contributing to the [101 Best Mystery Books of All Time](#) (Tony Hillerman, *The Blessing Way*) and the [110 Best Thrillers of All Time](#) (Mary Stewart, *Nine Coaches Waiting*)—in both I had lots of other candidates in mind too. 32 authors [compiled the third list](#)

SIGNED BOOKS

Andrews, Mary Kay. [The Homewreckers](#) (St Martins \$28.99 **Tip-ins**) "is a frothy combination of a hectic old-house-renovation story and a cozy mystery with a hint of romance centered around a likable heroine who has been holding too many feelings at bay. A perfect summer escape." —*Booklist*. Longtime Pen customers will recall the mysteries Andrews wrote as Kathy Trochek that have echoes here.

⚡Atherton, Nancy. [Aunt Dimity and the Enchanted Cottage](#) (Viking \$26). It's early May in the small English village of Finch and the air is crackling with excitement: a newcomer is about to move into Pussywillows, a riverside cottage with a romantic reputation. Will the cottage's newest resident prove yet again its enchanting ability to matchmake? Unfortunately, Crispin Windle, a 75-year-old retired professor with an air of sadness, doesn't live up to the locals' expectations Redoubtable sleuth Lori and her English-village neighbors, not to mention insights from Aunt Dimity, who communicates via elegantly handwritten messages penned in an old blue journal, fail in their attempt to befriend standoffish newcomer Crispin Windle until they discover the ruins of a Victorian woolen mill-and the graves of children who worked there, whom they seek to identify. This is the 25th in this lovely paranormal cozy featuring Lori Shepherd, a self-described "friend, neighbor, gossip-monger par excellence, and community volunteer," and Lori's confidante, the late Dimity Westwood. Perfect reading for those who want to escape into a world where all problems can be resolved through kindness, without the need for fisticuffs or firearms.

Barclay, Linwood. [Take Your Breath Away](#) (Harper \$27.99).

Signed bookplates from the Toronto author. The disappearance of Andy Mason's wife, Brie, from their home in Milford, Connecticut, is the instigating incident in a standalone by Toronto's Barclay, an ingenious plotter. Andy was on a fishing trip with a friend at the time, but Milford police detective Marissa Hardy decides that Andy was involved, yet try as she might,

she can find no hard evidence. Meanwhile, Andy becomes "a public spectacle, fodder for true crime shows and social media speculation." Needing a fresh start, he changes his last name and moves to the nearby town of Stratford. Now, six years after Brie went missing, Andy is living happily with his girlfriend. Then, a woman shows up at Andy's former address in Milford. She seems frightened and leaves before the police can be summoned. Surveillance footage shows she looks like Brie. Barclay shifts among multiple viewpoints to keep the tension high, including the original witness statements taken by Hardy. Everyone is a plausible suspect, and the disparate plot pieces eventually fit together with the precision of a Chinese puzzle box

Bentley, Don. [Hostile Intent](#) (Berkley \$27). Special ops ace Matt Drake's planned vacation and much-needed break quickly become another mission when a man walks into the U.S. embassy in Vienna and asks for Drake by his real name, not his code handle. Once Drake arrives, and before he can even learn why the man known as Nolan Burke wants to talk to him, Russian operatives kidnap him and almost kill Drake. That's the dramatic beginning of a high-action thriller where Drake gets caught in the middle of multiple agencies who all want different outcomes. Will he play nice and save the day when war is threatened? Bentley brings his own pre-novelist experiences into orchestrating a plot where Drake, a skilled operative, has fun while dealing with serious potentially tragic, or actually tragic, scenarios, making him seem more human than superhero. The intricate level of who's-doing-what-to-whom adds twists. Read the first two for Drake and then look to June 7 when Bentley zooms with us about his new Tom Clancy for Jack Ryan, Jr.: [Tom Clancy Zero Hour](#) (Putnam \$29.95 Signed).

Black, Holly. [Book of Night](#) (Forge \$27.99). **Tip-ins, limited supply.** Charlie Hall has never found a lock she couldn't pick, a book she couldn't steal, or a bad decision she wouldn't make. She's spent half her life working for gloamists, magicians who

manipulate shadows to peer into locked rooms, strangle people in their beds, or worse. Gloamists guard their secrets greedily, creating an underground economy of grimoires. And to rob their fellow magicians, they need Charlie Hall. Now, she's trying to distance herself from past mistakes, but getting out isn't easy. Bartending at a dive, she's still entirely too close to the corrupt underbelly of the Berkshires. Not to mention that her sister Posey is desperate for magic, and that Charlie's shadowless, and possibly soulless, boyfriend has been hiding things from her. When a terrible figure from her past returns, Charlie descends into a maelstrom of murder and lies. Determined to survive, she's up against a cast of doppelgangers, mercurial billionaires, gloamists, and the people she loves best in the world—all trying to steal a secret that will give them vast and terrible power.

Bohjalian, Chris. [The Lioness](#) (Doubleday \$28). In 1964, Hollywood super star Katie Barstow honeymoons in the Serengeti with new husband David Hill and a bunch of their glittery Hollywood friends, including distinguished Black actor Terrance Dutton, with whom Katie starred in a controversy-sparking film. They're looking forward to a luxurious safari watching the giraffes and the wildebeest play and guzzling gin with ice from kerosene-powered ice makers. Instead, they get kidnapped, with Soviet mercenaries shuffling them into Land Rovers, leveling guns at their heads as their Tanzanian guides lie bleeding in the dirt. Worse follows, including fatal snake bites. "Bohjalian does a superb job of judiciously rolling out information of how past transgressions may have led to the heart-stopping episodes of chaos and carnage as the shocking, twist-filled plot builds up to the revelation of "the real reasons for the safari nightmare."

This novel is different from Bohjalian's 1660s Boston-set *Hour of the Witch*, the HBO-blessed *The Flight Attendant*, and the topical *Close Your Eyes, Hold Hands*, with Bohjalian doing what he does best: surprising us. Our **May Crime Book of the Month** is a must for suspense readers as well as those who love historical fiction and women's stories, plus literary readers with a desire for adventure and great language. This is our first time welcoming him to The Pen.

Brown, Graham. [Clive Cussler's Dark Vector](#) (Putnam \$29). A freighter carrying top-secret computers of unparalleled capability disappears in the Western Pacific. While searching for a lost treasure that once belonged to the famous Chinese pirate queen, Ching Shih, NUMA's Kurt Austin and Joe Zavala are redirected to look for the missing vessel. Discovering that the sinking of the ship is just part of an intricate web of deception, they find themselves in the middle of a cyber-war between rival groups of hackers, both of whom want to control the flow of data around the world. With no allies except a group of pirates who operate under their own crude laws, Kurt and Joe must rescue a colleague held hostage—while keeping the computers out of Russian or Chinese hands. Scary—this book may be more prescient than we would like.

Burke, James Lee. [Every Cloak Rolled in Blood](#) (SimonSchuster \$27). **Tip-ins.** At the start of this stunning supernaturally tinged entry in MWA Grand Master Burke's long-running Holland family saga, a teenage boy spray paints a swastika on the barn of octogenarian author Aaron Holland Broussard in rural Montana. Broussard's interactions with the teen lead him into conflict with a host of villains, including evangelical bikers and a meth dealer

who has been known to bury people alive. On the side of the angels is Ruby Spotted Horse, the state trooper who responds to his call about the graffiti and who, it turns out, is also entrusted with keeping the malevolent Old People from escaping their confinement beneath her house. Broussard's other ally is his dead daughter, Fannie Mae, who appears from time to time to just converse or to bring him warnings. Setting aside the ghosts, this is one of those extraordinary crime novels that feels more like real life, with incidents and people that aren't obviously connected piling up in the protagonist's life, rather than a neat set of clues pointing to a culprit. Once again, Burke uses genre fiction to plumb weighty issues, both social and emotional. "Drawn from James Lee Burke's own life experiences, here is a devastating exploration of the nature of good and evil and a deeply moving story about the power of love and family."

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.

Cañas, Isabel. [The Hacienda](#) (Penguin \$27). How do I describe this marvelous debut? Maybe *Rebecca* crossed with Stephen King and Moreno-Garcia's *Mexican Gothic*? We have Beatriz, the young, impoverished, naïve bride. Don Rodolfo, the older powerful groom. Hacienda San Isidro, his estate in the Mexican countryside, not too far from the capital of newly independent Mexico, 1823. A hostile housekeeper—and another resident, the groom's autocratic sister Juana. But who is Padre Andres, the young and newly ordained priest, but not an ordinary priest; he comes from a native family that has birthed witches? Beatriz, whose affluent life collapsed when her hero father was summarily executed, has seized upon Don Rodolfo and San Isidro as a refuge, giving her her own home where she can feel secure and welcome her widowed mother who is living under the tyranny of relatives obsessed with caste—pureblood Spanish vs. mestizo vs. native Mexicans. Beatriz is careful to hide her mixed blood, careful to wear a hat and gloves, but they won't armor her against the malevolent presence in the hacienda, against what is in the house's walls, against.... Lord, not even burning copal incense is enough. Does a real crime—what happened to Don Rodolfo's first wife?—underlie the menace? Will an exorcism finally cleanse the house? Lush atmosphere, sinister doings, vivid characters, and an elegant narrative fuse to make this an outstanding start to what I hope will be a long literary career. One

Starred Review ends: “Cañas clearly knows the genre, alternately deploying and subverting haunted house tropes. The result is a brilliant contribution to the new wave of postcolonial Gothics.”

Other raves for our **May First Mystery Book of the Month** which I chose to highlight the current Gothic Revival and because, unlike Mrs. De Winter in *Rebecca*, Beatriz fights with real agency to survive and create a future: “[A] gothic tale of doomed love and vengeful spirits.” —*The Washington Post*. “Pretty much the perfect Gothic novel... meaning it reads like a brilliant piece of historical fiction and a, ‘Okay, I’m gonna need to sleep with the lights on now,’ horror novel.” —*Jezebel*. “A haunting gorgeous tale of doomed love, vengeful spirits, and tortured faith that I could not put down.”—S.A. Chakraborty

Carr, Jack. [In the Blood](#) (Atria \$28). When we launched *The Terminal List* back in 2018, I wrote to the publisher that Jack was going to be their new Vince Flynn. And sure enough, at book five he’s a #1 bestseller with a big movie due our July 1 from Amazon Prime that will surely cause his already massive following to further explode. Plus he’s a super nice guy with astonishing energy and a skill set that works for his James Reece thrillers. This is the book launch so ask for your copy to be signed and dated.

A woman boards a plane lifting off from Burkina Faso where she has just completed a targeted assassination. Two minutes later she and it are blown out of the sky. She was a Mossad operative known to former Navy SEAL James Reece. As he watches cable news her face triggers a memory of the Israeli as attached to the CIA years earlier in Iraq. He had never expected to see her again. So now he’s bent on tracking down her killer even if it might send him into a deadly trap.... You fans of high action international thrillers should order all five of the [Terminal Lists](#).

Cobb, May. [My Summer Darlings](#) (Berkley \$27). Jen Hansen has many admirable qualities—she’s a devoted mother and dedicated yogi—but astute judge of character doesn’t appear to be among them, as the freshly divorced homemaker discovers, at her peril. Jen, Kittie Spears, and Cynthia Nichols have been friends since childhood. They are now approaching forty and their lives have changed, but their insular East Texas town has not. They stay sane by drinking wine in the afternoons, dishing about other women in the neighborhood, and bonding over the heartache of their own encroaching middle age and raising ungrateful teens. Then golden-haired Will Harding arrives and moves into one of the neighborhood’s grandest homes. Mysterious and charming, he seems like the answer to each woman’s prayers. He’s single; they become besotted, their fascination twisting into obsession, threatening their friendships and their families. When he abruptly pulls away, each woman scrambles to discover the source of his affection. But what they’ll uncover is seriously, surprisingly sinister.

Cranor, Eli. [Don’t Know Tough](#) (Soho \$24.95). Patrick and I got to this debut late so we only secured a couple of dozen signed firsts before it reprinted. Cranor will be doing an event with John Vercher, another new author, in July hosted by Patrick, but meanwhile if you value debuts do grab one of these. Or if you’re a Wiley Cash or Megan Abbott noir fan.

We’re in Denton, Arkansas, where Trent Powers has been hired to coach the Pirates, the high school football team. Things sour when star player Billy Lowe, who shares a trailer

with his single mother, hits rich kid Austin Murphy too hard in practice, putting the coach in a bind on whether to play or bench Billy and placing him at odds with his wife, who’s desperate to get back to California. Meanwhile, home life in the Lowes’ trailer falls apart when Billy knocks out Travis Rodney, his mother’s abusive boyfriend. The discovery of Travis’s rotting body a week later raises the stakes.... “Eli Cranor’s top-shelf debut is Southern noir at its finest, a cauldron of terrible choices and even more terrible outcomes.... There is a raw ferocity to Cranor’s prose, perfectly in keeping with the novel’s examination of curdling masculinity.”—Sarah Weinman, *The New York Times Book Review*. “Readers may think they know what happened, but Cranor has some twists in store—in a plot that calls to mind Megan Abbott’s depictions of claustrophobic competitive cultures. A former quarterback who coached for five years at an Arkansas high school, Cranor brings an insider’s understanding of the game, the region and human nature.” —Paula Woods, *Los Angeles Times*

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).

Eldridge, Tori. [Dance Among the Flames](#) (Running Wild Press \$19.99). Eldridge, author of the Lily Wong series, “vows with this astonishing and challenging tale of religion, magic, and trauma. In 1974, Serafina Olegario is raising her newborn son, Carlinhos, in the slums of Salvadore, Brazil, when she is momentarily possessed by the goddess Yansã and compelled to pursue the religion of Umbanda under the guidance of the Mãe de Santos. After a perceived betrayal, however, she splits from Umbanda for Quimbanda, becoming a powerful Quimbandeira and wielding dark and sensual magic to pursue power and seek revenge against those who have wronged her. In a parallel narrative set in the early 2000s, Serafina’s granddaughter, Adriana, experiences tragedy after tragedy before falling in love with an American artist amid an abusive marriage. Eldridge masterfully navigates the nuances of Brazilian religious syncretism and takes a deep and daring look into the issues of colorism, class, generational trauma, and physical, sexual, and emotional abuse. Spanning decades and generations, this is both a page-turner and an emotional powerhouse.”—*PW* Starred Review

✂Gray, Claudia. [The Murder of Mr. Wickham](#) (Knopf \$17). **Signed bookplates.** It’s 1820 and a house party arranged by

Emma and Mr. Knightly, now married, becomes a country house murder where all of Austen's principal characters attend. The guests include Elizabeth and Fitzwilliam Darcy and other friends familiar to Jane Austen readers. George Wickham, the widower of Elizabeth's sister Lydia, now running a dubious investment scheme, crashes the party and is soon murdered. Gray perfectly captures the personalities of Austen's beloved characters, as well as their children, in this inspired homage. Agatha Christie fans will have fun figuring out whodunit.

Gray writes, "The concept for the book began about 11 years ago, when I read *Death Comes to Pemberley* by P.D. James. I was so hyped for the book, and then it didn't hit me the way I'd expected. It took me a while to recognize that I was judging not the novel she wrote, but the novel I'd wanted to read—one where the murder victim was someone we were interested in, and where the beloved characters were themselves suspect. Since James hadn't written that book, I eventually realized I had to do it. Your sleuths are two non-canonical characters: Juliet Tilney, the daughter of Catherine and Henry Tilney from *Northanger Abbey*, and Jonathan Darcy, the son of Darcy and Elizabeth from *Pride and Prejudice*. Juliet has elements of her parents' personalities, but she's not an amalgam of the two, but someone whom Catherine Morland and Henry Tilney would have raised. Initially, Jonathan was simply going to be "more Darcy than Darcy"—but as I began writing, his character emerged in a very different way. Once I had the insight that Jonathan might be neurodivergent, it opened up many fascinating questions".

Unsigned and excellent for teens: Tirzah Price, [Sense and Second-Degree Murder](#) (HarperCollins \$17.99). Thrown out of their house after the death of their father, aspiring scientist Eleanor Dashwood and her budding-detective sister Marianne make a startling discovery that points to murder—and the killer might be family in this witty teen take on Austen's classic *Sense and Sensibility*.

Hauty, Chris. [Storm Rising](#) (Atria \$28). Hauty is a great pairing with Don Bentley, for both their lead characters are high action and mission driven. I am a fan of Hauty's debut [Deep State](#), a 2020 First Mystery Book of the Month. And here we are at number three where former White House intern turned intelligence operative Hayley Chill is filling her time by training as an MMA fighter. She's not just staying fit, she's fighting the devastation of finding her supposedly dead father a suicide when she stumbles upon a ciphered document under the floorboards of her father's house. With permission from her handler to probe deeper, she is led into a terrifying subculture of white supremacy within the United States military. As her investigation intensifies, she uncovers an expansive conspiracy to bring about the secession of several states from the country. It's up to Hayley to stop a second Civil War before it starts, while also confronting the ultimate truth about her own father's role. This is a timely story and one analogous to plot elements in John Sanford's April hit, [The Investigator](#). I find Hauty's writing style to be propulsive as well as stylish.

Holm, Chris. [Child Zero](#) (LittleBrown \$28). Public health officials dismiss a dramatic global increase in bacterial infections resistant to antibiotics, initially unaware the phenomenon results from the release of an ancient virus from the permafrost due to global warming. The virus infects bacteria across the globe in weeks and leaves medicine helpless as the new combinations

render antibiotics not only obsolete but dangerous because continued use of them risks creating an even deadlier viral variant. The collapse of the "antibiotic era" means the resurgence of dormant diseases, as well as the end of surgical implants and organ transplants, since the risk of postoperative infections is too great. The crisis leads to the creation of an ultra-powerful American agency, the Department of Biological Security, which mandates citizens to report anyone suspected of having a high fever. Against this Orwellian background, NYPD Det. Jacob Gibson, a widower, must both care for his ill daughter and probe a massacre in Central Park that may have implications for the global health crisis. "Holm perfectly balances plot, characterizations, and science. Fans of Lawrence Wright's *The End of October* won't want to miss this one," says a Starred Review but I think it's for fans of Michael Crichton and James Rollins.

✂Jenner, Natalie. [The Bloomsbury Girls](#) (St Martins \$27.99).

Tip-ins. Set in 1950, here is the story of three women from different backgrounds who come together working in an old-fashioned bookstore in London, Bloomsbury Books. The shop runs with a strictly enforced list of "51 Rules" that ensure that only the men can make decisions or get ahead. Evie Stone, who appeared in the previous book, had hoped to launch an academic career at Cambridge, but was passed over for a man who was dating the professor's daughter. Vivien Lowry was engaged to an aristocrat who was killed in World War II. Grace Perkins lives with two adored sons and a mentally ill, out-of-work husband who was changed by the war. There is sexual tension among characters, and they all have secrets. The novel's background action includes real places in London and real literary figures of the time, including Daphne Du Maurier and Sonia Blair, George Orwell's widow, who mentor the characters. "For readers interested in women's changing roles after World War II, with intriguing details of women's lives and the spice of real writers," says *LJ*.

Joaquim, Nancy. [Build Me a City](#) (Joaquim \$29.95). In 1853, French citizen Charles Fabron is mourning the death of his wife and twin sons when he is offered a position as an architect in The Paris Project—a years-long initiative to physically and culturally transform old Paris into the "sanitized, soul-stirring urban masterpiece" nicknamed the "City by the Seine." Fabron reluctantly signs on under the project's mastermind, Prefect Baron Georges-Eugene Haussmann, but soon discovers that rebuilding a centuries-old city is not what he anticipated, in the process uncovering his own family secrets and finding love in the most unexpected places. Despite his initial vision for a modernized and elegant renovation of Paris, Fabron ends up walking a tightrope between Haussmann's almost-impossible demands and being forced to demolish "thousands of centuries-old houses" to clear enough land for the massive undertaking. His unhappiness is partially alleviated when 11-year-old Daniel Lazare, an orphan boy with dreams of going to Paris, is assigned as his new runner. Fabron becomes surprisingly fond of Lazare, until an ugly incident disrupts their growing relationship and sends Lazare into hiding. That disaster, combined with the destruction of the Franco-Prussian War, puts a halt to Fabron's rebuilding plans—and ultimately results in an exposé of family betrayal alongside a revelation of lost love.

Jonasson, Ragnar. [Outside](#) (\$55). In a deadly Icelandic snowstorm, four friends seek shelter in an abandoned hunting lodge. Miles from help, and knowing they will die out in the cold, they break in, hoping to wait out the storm until morning. But nothing can prepare them for what's inside.... With no other option, they are forced to spend a long and terrifying night in the cabin: watching as intently and silently as they themselves are being watched. "So atmospheric, I was immediately transported to the Icelandic moors... I read with bated breath, my heart pounding'."—Sara Blädel. For the unsigned US edition see below.

Katsu, Alma. [The Fervor](#) (Putnam \$27). The *LJ* Starred Review: "Told through multiple storylines in 1944, with key journal passages from Japan in 1927, the story follows Meiko and her daughter Aiko in an Idaho camp... Katsu has no peer when it comes to atmospheric, detail-rich historical horror, but this volume is more unsettling than anything she's written yet, because its demons attack readers uncomfortably close to home. A must-read for all, not just genre fans."

Thriller review Jon Land adds, "The setting is horrific in its own right, namely a Japanese internment camp during World War II. That's where Meiko Briggs and her daughter Aiko are taken, even though Aiko was born in America and her father is serving in the Air Force. No sooner have they arrived and strange events begin to occur, centering around a mysterious disease that is ravaging the camp. The outbreak attracts a mysterious medical team to the camp and their arrival suggests nefarious doings are afoot. It's up to Meiko and an intrepid reporter to dig into the true source in an insular world in which the outside world might as well be on Mars. This is the kind of hybrid horror tale that would make Robert R. McCammon, Dean Koontz and the master himself Stephen King proud. But *The Fervor* is actually more comparable to TV adaptations like FX's *The Strain* and AMC's *The Terror*. An absolute can't miss book for horror fans and fanatics." I love the way former CIAer Katsu pushes beyond spy stories into new realms.

Klingborg, Brian. [Wild Prey](#) (St Martins \$27.99). We met Inspector Lu Fei of the Chinese Police, stationed in a backwater town near Harbin in China's northernmost province, in last year's [Thief of Souls](#) (\$16.99). In that tangled investigation we met other officers and officials, and the attractive widow running a local restaurant, who all reappear in a story that opens in a remote region of Myanmar where something sinister is going on with tigers. Despite his desire to keep his head down and do his job, Lu Fei is a magnet for trouble. While reluctantly running a sting operation on the sale and consumption of rare and endangered animals, Lu comes across the curious case of a waitress who has gone missing. Her last known whereabouts: a Harbin restaurant frequented by local elites, owned by smooth-talking gangster, and known for its exotic — and highly illegal — delicacies. As usual, Lu's investigation ruffles some feathers, resulting in his suspension from the police force. Lu figures he's reached a dead-end. Then he's contacted by a mysterious government official in Beijing who wants him to go undercover to track down the mastermind behind an illegal animal trafficking network — and hopefully, the answer to the fate of the missing waitress. The mission will require Lu to travel deep into the lawless wilds of Myanmar, where he will risk his life to infiltrate the hidden compound of a mysterious and ruthless female warlord. This is great stuff from, as the Brits used to say, and Old China Hand.

Lupica, Mike. [Robert B Parker's Revenge Tour](#) (Putnam \$28). Boston PI Sunny Randall is consulted by former client Melanie Hall, a mega-bestselling romance novelist. Years earlier, after Sunny freed Melanie from her creepy husband, John Melvin, by getting him convicted of assault, Melanie gave Sunny an opulent Boston house to live in virtually rent free. Melanie's alarmed that an anonymous email has accused her of stealing the idea for her books, a plagiarism charge that could end her career. The threat came just months after John wrote Melanie from prison, advising her to enjoy her success while she could. The throat of someone associated with Melanie is slit as Sunny tries to find out who's behind the threat—and whether Melanie is guilty of plagiarism. Meanwhile, Sunny's retired cop dad, Phil Randall, is at risk from Joe Doyle, a powerful attorney who holds Phil responsible for his son's death. "The climax is a bit of a letdown, but this is Lupica's best yet in the franchise. Parker fans unfamiliar with Randall will be charmed." Lupica is handing Sunny over to Alison Gaylin as he takes over Spenser from Ace Atkins along with Jesse Stone.

McKinlay, Jenn. [Strawberried Alive](#) (Berkley \$8.99). The prolific and versatile McKinlay continues her Cupcake Bakery series set here in Scottsdale. Life is smooth as butter cream at the Fairy Tale Cupcakes bakery, and newlyweds Mel and Joe are stopping to smell the flours. But things start to crumble one night when an unknown gunman takes a shot at Mel. Though the bullets miss their mark, the cupcake crew goes on high alert to figure out who would want to kill a small-town baker, and why. When more business owners are attacked, things turn fatal, and locals begin to wonder if the killer could be one of their own. Every shop owner in town starts to fear it's only a matter of time before they too become victims of the mystery murderer. Despite the cupcake crew's superb baking skills, it will be anything but a piece of cake to catch the killer. You can order the [entire yummy series](#) of which this is the 14th.

McKinty, Adrian. [The Island](#) (Morrow \$27). After moving from a small country town to Seattle, Heather Baxter marries Tom, a widowed doctor with a young son and teenage daughter. A working vacation overseas seems like the perfect way to bring the new family together, but once they're deep in the Australian outback, the jet-lagged and exhausted kids are so over their new mom. When they discover remote Dutch Island, off-limits to outside visitors, the family talks their way onto the ferry, taking a chance on an adventure far from the reach of iPhones and Instagram. But as soon as they set foot on the island, which is run by a tightly knit clan of locals, everything feels wrong. Then a shocking accident propels the Baxters from an unsettling situation into an absolute nightmare. When Heather and the kids are separated from Tom, they are forced to escape alone, seconds ahead of their pursuers. Heather has been underestimated her entire life, but she knows that only she can bring her family off the island. Islands make excellent closed landscapes for crime novels: think Lucy Foley's [The Guest List](#) (\$16.99); JT Ellison's [Her Dark Lies](#) (\$16.99); Francine Mathews' [Merry Folger Nantucket Mysteries](#); and of course Agatha Christie's [And Then There Were None](#) (\$15.99). Note: although he's from Northern Ireland, McKinty has lived in Australia for a time.

Here's a [list of more thrillers set on an island](#)

McTiernan, Dervla. [The Murder Rule](#) (Harper \$27.99). In 2019, University of Maine law student Hannah Rokeby, the protagonist of this psychological thriller from Thriller Award winner

McTiernan, shares a home with Laura, her alcoholic mother, until she transfers to the University of Virginia, where she wangles a highly desirable job with the law school's Innocence Project, which tracks down new evidence in cases of individuals convicted of a crime, but who profess their innocence. She's assigned to work on freeing Michael Dandridge, who's on death row, having served 11 years for the rape and murder of Sarah Fitzhugh. Meanwhile, vivid excerpts from her mother's diary recount dramatic events surrounding the death of wealthy Tom Spencer in 1994, when Laura was working as a maid at an exclusive hotel in Seal Harbor, Maine. McTiernan keeps the suspense high as she gradually reveals how Spencer's death relates to Hannah's work on the Dandridge case. The Irish author is visiting us from her home in Perth, Australia, and will appear at The Pen May 13 with TJ Newman.

Moore, Christopher. [Razzmatazz](#) (Harper \$28.99). Moore returns to the 1947 San Francisco setting of [Noir](#) (\$16.99), where bartender and amateur problem-solver Sammy Tiffin is faced with several requests for assistance. Jimmy Vasco, proprietress of a lesbian bar, asks Sammy to find the killer targeting her community; Eddie Shu wants Sammy to recover a dragon statue for his Uncle Ho; and Mabel, "the preeminent nookie bookie in Fog City," needs help smuggling her girls out of town to a Christmas party. Meanwhile, Sammy's squeeze, Tilly Stilton, uses her considerable welding skills on a mystery project at the telepathic behest of Scooter, the "moonman." And in flashbacks to 1906, a younger Ho contends with a very real and terrifying dragon. "Moore, entirely in his element and with tongue firmly in cheek, has his characters speak in gumshoe-esque vernacular, while warning in an author's note that 'the language and attitudes portrayed herein regarding race, culture, and gender are contemporary to that time and, sadly, all too real.' Indeed, punctuating all the spoofy amateur sleuthing are more serious depictions of the maltreatment of the Chinese and LGBTQ communities, adding some needed gravitas." I like the lively illustrations that carry the cover art over into chapter headings in an elegant production.

Morrison, Boyd/Beth. [The Lawless Land](#) (Zeus \$29.95). A Starred Review for our **June Historical Fiction Book of the Month**: "In the summer of 1351, English knight Gerard Fox, the hero of this exceptional series launch from siblings Boyd and Beth Morrison, is riding his horse in Kent when he's overtaken by a carriage hurtling down the road driven by a young woman fleeing murderous attackers. After rescuing the woman, Lady Isabel of Kentworth, Fox learns she's fleeing a hated fiancé. The two join forces, only to learn secrets about each other in a series of well-timed twists. The authors make splendid use of such medieval-plot standbys as a castle with secret tunnels, plague-riddled vagabonds, a grand tournament, a priceless manuscript, and duplicitous churchmen as the action ranges from Canterbury to Paris and elsewhere in France and finally Italy. But the novel's real strength is its antagonists: Isabel's ruthless fiancé, the Earl of Tonbridge; the power-hungry Cardinal Dominic Molyneux; and, best of all, the cardinal's sociopathic son, Basquin. Fox and Isabel must use every ounce of intelligence and cunning they possess to try to escape the grasp of this deadly trio." This is so much fun, a kind of medieval Cussler (Boyd wrote several thrillers with Clive). I had a marvelous time working on it with Boyd and look forward to meeting his distinguished medievalist sister Beth.

Parks, Alan. [May God Forgive Me](#) (Canongate \$38). Glasgow is a city in mourning. An arson attack on a hairdresser's has left five dead. Tempers are frayed and sentiments running high. When three youths are charged the city goes wild. A crowd gathers outside the courthouse but as the police drive the young men to prison, the van is rammed by a truck, and the men are grabbed and bundled into a car. The next day, the body of one of them is dumped in the city centre. A note has been sent to the newspaper: one down, two to go. Detective Harry McCoy has twenty-four hours to find the kidnapped boys before they all turn up dead, and it is going to mean taking down some of Glasgow's most powerful people to do it...." Glasgow Noir, for fans of Denise Mina and even Ian Rankin.

Pavone, Chris. [Two Nights in Lisbon](#) (Farrar \$28). I completely agree with Megan Abbott about this our **June Crime Book of the Month**: "Hairpin Hitchcockian suspense and true moral heft... utterly timely and brimming over with surprise, nuance, cunning, and a palpable weight." Yes, Edgar winner Pavone has written another international thriller filled with bait-and-switch twists and a fun side plot involving an independent bookstore. As ever with him, nothing and no one is as it seems, challenging you to keep up and make your best guess. Yet bravely I think he looks squarely at violence and the devastating effects on victims who are met with indifference or disbelief.

The *PW* Starred Review adds "When American businessman John Wright vanishes one morning from his hotel, his wife, Ariel Pryce, insists he was kidnapped, but issues soon emerge that make both the Lisbon police and the CIA skeptical. Why, for instance, are there no witnesses or video evidence of a crime taking place? Why did Pryce, whose account of the incident is fuzzy, change her legal name a decade earlier? And what's to be made of Wright's short stretch in the CIA a while back? When Pryce comes up with €2 million for a ransom payoff, the web leads investigators to the bank account of Pavone skillfully layers plot details, often shifting points of view, all the way to the end of this superior, elegantly crafted yarn. The enigmatic central character, whose moral compass is set a bit differently than most, sets this above the pack."

Peguero, Robin. [With Prejudice](#) (Grand Central \$28). Peguero's debut begins with seven strangers in a jury deliberation room, preparing to decide a man's fate. By the end of the first chapter, it's clear these people are far from being unbiased, for every single person has come to the table—as the title says—With Prejudice. In fact, ambitious prosecutor Sandy Grunwald tells her intern that the defendant's fate has been decided when the jury is empanelled. The story then shifts to fleshing out Sandy, who's preparing to start the murder trial of Gabriel Soto, accused of raping and killing a young woman named Melina Mora two years ago. An eyewitness claims Soto was arguing with Mora at a bar earlier in the evening on which she disappeared, though the witness originally described the suspect as being of an ethnicity different from Soto's. Mora's body was never found, only a set of bones in a morgue that were identified as hers. The night before the trial begins, Grunwald receives a stunning blow to her case. Gleefully lapping up this development is Grunwald's formidable opponent, public defender Jordan Whipple. His rejection from all the Ivy law schools has become "a chip he carries on his overdeveloped shoulders." Whipple will do whatever it takes to win, including going against his client's wishes to paint a false

picture of Soto in court. This all takes place in Miami where Peguero, the son of Afro-Latina immigrants whose career spans Harvard Law, speechwriting, and currently a stint as investigative counsel, has long “been storytelling to juries for a living.” This novel will test your ethics; it reminds me in ways of the hit TV *Line of Duty*. It’s not our May First Mystery selection but those interested in debuts should snag a signed copy. This author has all it takes to become a star.

Pronzini, Bill. [Small Felonies 2](#) (Stark House \$15.95). 50 short-short stories told in first-person, third-person, present as well as past tense, and in epistolary format; tales of detection (three feature long-running series character, the “Nameless Detective”), psychological suspense, historical noir, light and dark fantasy, satirical humor, horror, the biter-bitten, the O. Henry twist, a shaggy dog story or two, even a shameless futuristic Hemingway pastiche. The earliest entry, “I Know a Way,” was published in 1971; the most recent, “Such Things As Nightmares Are Made Of,” appears here for the first time. Fourteen were written in collaboration with Barry Malzberg. This welcome follow-up to 1988’s *Small Felonies* from MWA Grand Master Pronzini constitutes a “second slumgullion.” Written in the tradition of Fredric Brown and Gerald Kersh, these 50 crime stories run about 2,000 words each, and twist endings in the manner of O. Henry predominate.

Quick, Amanda. [When She Dreams](#) (Berkley \$28). John reviews this new and exciting entry in the Burning Cove series: When it comes to hiring a private investigator in Adelina Beach, Maggie Lodge is not exactly spoiled for choices. Still, while Sam Sage might be a divorced, disgraced ex-cop, at least he isn’t drunk at nine o’clock in the morning. After hiring Sam to find out who is blackmailing her current employer, syndicated advice columnist Aunt Cornelia, Maggie insists on taking an active role in the investigation. The blackmailer’s trail soon takes the new “partners” to the Guilfoyle Institute of Dream Analysis in Burning Cove, where they discover a charismatic con-man, his cool-as-a-cucumber wife/manager, a mad scientist obsessed with lucid dreaming, and a dead body. Quick (one of Jayne Ann Krentz’s alter literary egos) deftly tips her literary fedora to Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler with the latest superbly entertaining addition to her 1930s-set Burning Cove books. With its perfectly executed plot, snappy dialogue, and generous dash of dry wit, this is proof positive why Quick’s books continue to be the platinum standard for historical romance kissed with a hint of sophisticated suspense and a dash of the supernatural.

Reedus, Norman. [Ravaged](#) (Blackstone \$28.99). The star of *The Walking Dead* as the zombie killer Daryl Dixon, turns author with a “novel of gritty realism, exploring three different personal quests with eerily parallel outcomes.” Jack’s dying mother told him, “Run and never look back.” He spent his life amassing wealth, but after losing his family, he has no one to share it with. Alone with his demons and a backpack, he heads to South America, where people with nothing teach him what matters. After thrashing his dog-abusing boss, Hunter learns of his father’s death in a mysterious fire. Biker buddies Nugget and Itch ride with him from North Carolina to California. Stories from his father’s life help ease the struggles of small-town Americans. Hunter discovers a secret past. Seventeen-year-old Anne flees Tennessee after her older brother attacks her. She whacks him with a skillet and hops a freight to Alabama with her best friend.

Living hand to mouth, they build friendships, uncovering something they never had: family.

Rekulak, Jason. [Hidden Pictures](#) (Farrar Strauss \$27.99). Edgar-nominated for beloved *The Impossible Fortress* and also the editor behind *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*, Rekulak returns with a thriller that is original, heart-wrenching, surprising, uplifting—and fabulously illustrated with drawings that say what words cannot for five-year-old Teddy, the child at the heart of the story. How I love this book even though I should have seen what was right before me all along before coming to the ending. This is a month replete with terrific candidates for our Crime Book of the Month. **I can only urge those in the club to add this to Bohjalian’s *The Lioness* for an extra treat. Also Rekulak has a colorful, wonderful stamp he will add to the title page when he signs which makes our copies extra special.**

The narrator is Mallory Quinn, a young woman fresh out of rehab after her life took an unexpected bad turn, and determined to stay clean and forge a future. Her counselor arranges a summer job as a live-in nanny for Ted and Caroline Maxwell’s son Teddy. At the interview Caroline, a doctor at the VA specializing in treating trauma and addiction, is welcoming but Ted is so not. To her surprise Mal gets the job, her own cottage on the extensive grounds situated in the affluent hamlet of Spring Brook, NJ. And a shy acceptance by Teddy who presents her with a drawing. It contains a disturbing image, a menacing figure called Anya. But before long Teddy draws happier pictures and he and Mal bond, but a current of unease flows....there was a long-ago murder in the cottage and explosive emotions emanate from Teddy’s parents.

So what is this book? “*Hidden Pictures* isn’t a ghost story, it’s a scalpel that slices into our smug sense of self-satisfaction so deeply it hits bone. A perfect summer thriller complete with vengeful spirits, class warfare, and it even has pictures. What more could you want?” —Grady Hendrix, bestselling author of *The Final Girl Support Group*, who joins Jason and me on May 20th to discuss the book. “I read *Hidden Pictures* and loved it. The language is straightforward, the surprises really surprise, and it has that hard-to-achieve propulsion that won’t let you put it down. And the pictures are terrific!” —Stephen King. “For a few days, my life was completely hijacked by *Hidden Pictures*... The damaged but still fighting Mallory Quinn stole my heart.” Mine, too.

Scottoline, Lisa. [What Happened to the Bennetts?](#) (Putnam \$28). Here’s a retro rave from Jon Land: “Scottoline does a deep dive into how a single moment can change entire lives and, in this case, set those lives down a cruel and unforgiving path into a netherworld of uncertainty and despair. The single moment in question for Jason Bennett is a simple drive home from his daughter’s lacrosse game, when he’s violently carjacked. The ultimately tragic event seems totally random at first glance, but it’s the second glance and all that follows that makes for a great thriller. And what follows here is the FBI reporting that Jason has run afoul of dangerous drug traffickers. His family ends up in Witness Protection and, as their lives unravel, Jason uncovers the truth behind that fateful night. *What Happened to the Bennetts?* just might be the best book Scottoline has ever written. A masterpiece of misdirection, where nothing is as it seems, and a scorching character study of a man at the end of his rope not about to go down without a fight. A great thriller and novel to boot.”

Williams, Beatriz/Lauren Willig/Karen White. [The Lost Summers of Newport](#) (Harper \$28.99). **Signed by all three authors.** In 2019, architectural historian Andie Figuero arrives at Sprague Hall, a crumbling Newport, R.I., summer home to host an episode of a popular TV reality show called *Makeover Mansions*. The reclusive elderly heiress who lives at Sprague Hall threatens to cause trouble unless Andie meets certain conditions. Flashbacks to 1899 when Ellen Daniels came to the estate to teach singing to Maybelle Sprague, the new owner's stepsister, who's to be married off to an Italian prince, and to 1958 when Maybelle arrives home from Italy, reveal devastating family secrets and violent deaths. Superb pacing and elegant plotting will keep readers turning the pages right up to the fairy tale ending. The three authors love time-layered storytelling and elegant settings for them.

UNSIGNED EVENT BOOKS

Maz, William. [The Bucharest Dossier](#) (Oceanview \$27.95). Classic spy novels by the likes of Len Deighton, Helen MacInnes and John le Carré helped spawn the modern-day thriller. In that respect, Maz's debut, **our May Historical Fiction Book of the Month in our few Signed copies**, boasts both a retro feel and modern sensibility. Maz's version of Le Carré's George Smiley, Bill Hefflin, arrives in 1989, pre-revolution Bucharest, a dark homecoming for our conflicted protagonist given that he's a Romanian ex-pat. Hefflin is the handler of a CIA mole inside the KGB. As he desperately searches for his lost love, he also finds himself searching for the truth behind a rebellion that swiftly morphs into a revolution. Hefflin's existential quest turns into a race for survival with enemies from all sides converging upon him. Jon Land says, "*The Bucharest Dossier* is the first book I've ever reviewed that's also worthy of comparison with the great Graham Greene of *The Third Man* fame. This is spy writing of the highest order, an homage not only to the roots of the thriller, but also the genre's pop culture endurance."

McMahon, Jennifer. [The Children on the Hill](#) (Gallery \$27). Two alternating story lines set more than 40 years apart smoothly intersect, doling out clues about fragile childhood memories, in this stellar take on Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. In 1978, Violet "Vi" Hildreth and her brother, Eric, live with their Gran, acclaimed psychiatrist Helen Hildreth, in the shadow of Vermont's Hillside Inn, which at the time "was widely considered one of the best private psychiatric institutions in New England." The creep factor ramps up as rumors of violent patients and experiments at the Hillside Inn fuel Vi and Eric's fascination with monsters. The pair is soon hunting for werewolves, vampires, and shape-shifters. They're thrilled when Gran brings home a new playmate, the silent, fearful Iris, who joins them in their efforts to fight monsters. Then their lives take a tragic turn. In 2019, Vi, now known as Lizzy Shelley, travels the country as the host of mega-popular podcast *Monsters Among Us*. The suspense builds when she returns to Vermont to investigate a possible link between a missing girl and a monster sighting. McMahon keeps the reader wondering how much is real and how much is imagined. This is a must for psychological thriller fans

Meyer, Deon. [The Dark Flood](#) (Grove Atlantic \$27). Demoted from the elite Cape Town Hawks police unit for being too keen on uncovering state corruption, Meyer's stalwart detectives Benny Griessel and Vaughn Cupido barely survive a hearing with

the corrupt commissioner. They await transfer from Cape Town to dull duty in Stellenbosch when an anonymous warning and a missing-student assignment reveal that the flood of corruption they knew was there is worse than they imagined. "Absorbing procedural details lead to an explosive confrontation with a ruthless street gang and a police-corruption scheme that links South African Police Service to the country's devastating political scandals. It's a grim period for South Africa, but Griessel and Caputo remain loyal to justice and to each other. A gritty but surprisingly hopeful installment in Meyer's immensely popular series." —*Booklist*.

Patrick and I are fans and Patrick hosts a conversation with Meyer and his fan Michael Connelly on May 25 12:00 PM. And here is an [insightful essay on Meyer](#) and his work from South African author Michael Sears.

CLASSICS

Lowndes, Marie Belloc. [The Chianti Flask](#) (Poisoned Pen \$14.99). And another Starred Review for a British classic: "Best known for *The Lodger*, Lowndes (1896–1947) inverts the traditional courtroom drama in this psychologically complex mystery, first published in 1935. Laura Dousland has been charged with murdering her husband, Fordish Dousland, by poisoning his wine with rat poison, supposedly motivated by his mistreatment. One witness, a physician who was a golfing acquaintance of Fordish, testifies that the deceased, who was depressed and may have been suicidal, asked him whether the rat poison Fordish had requested his wife to purchase would be painless if administered to a human. The key proof incriminating the defendant comes from the household's sole servant, Angelo Terugi, who insists that the flask containing the tainted Chianti that killed Fordish mysteriously vanished the night Fordish drank from it. That damning account is interrupted by the defendant, who protests that Terugi has confused that night with a prior incident when her husband concealed a flask to keep the servant from imbibing from it. The jury's verdict comes early on, leaving Lowndes to tease out over the rest of the book whether the jurors' decision was the right one. This is another obscure title worthy of resurrection as a British Library crime classic."

Taylor, Phoebe Atwood. [The Cape Cod Mystery](#) (American Mystery Classics \$15.95). Lord, back in 1989 when I opened The Pen this New England series was a hot ticket, all of them in print from Countryman Press. Such is the cycle of publishing that now the first Asey returns in the American Mystery Classics series. The "Codfish Sherlock Holmes" solves a whodunnit in 1930s Cape Cod. Settled down from his former life as a seafaring adventurer, Asey is a Jack-of-all-trades who uses his worldly knowledge, folksy wisdom, and plain common sense to solve the most puzzling crimes to strike the peninsula. And in this, his first case, Asey finds himself embroiled in a scandal that will push his deductive powers to their limits. A massive heat wave is scorching the Northeast, and vacationers from New York and Boston flock to Cape Cod for breezy, cool respite. Then a muckraking journalist is found murdered in the cabin he's rented for the season, and the summer holiday becomes a nightmare for the local authorities. There are abundant suspects among the out-of-towners flooding the area, but they ultimately fix their sights on beloved local businessman Bill Porter as the murderer—unless Asey Mayo can prove him innocent and find the true killer.

STORY COLLECTIONS

Butcher, Jim, ed. [Heroic Hearts](#) (\$18). In this new collection, editors Butcher and Hughes introduce a dozen short stories by some of today's best urban fantasy writers. Standouts include Anne Bishop's "The Dark Ship," where, across the ocean from her tales of the Others, an act from a young woman brings her, and her town's troubles, to the attention of great powers. Two powerful women face grief and hope on a search for their daughter in Annie Bellet's "Train to Last Hope." Werewolf Asil discovers that online dating may not be the trial he believes it is in "Dating Terrors," by Patricia Briggs. Jim Butcher centers "Little Things" on the pixie Toot-Toot as he defends Dresden's new castle, with an uneasy ally in Mister the cat. Avid fans of these authors will enjoy where their stories intersect with favorite characters, while new readers will find the shorts accessible and filled with vivid worldbuilding and interesting figures.

Greenwood, Kerry. [The Lady with the Gun Asks the Questions](#) (Poisoned Pen \$27.99). The 15 1920s-era stories in this welcome will delight fans of Miss Phryne Fisher, who indulges in "Sherlockery" for Melbourne's citizenry when she's not indulging her passion for "food, sleep, intellectual puzzles, clothes and beautiful young men." Highlights include "Marrying the Bookie's Daughter," in which Miss Fisher intervenes unexpectedly at a society wedding; "The Boxer," in which Mrs. Ragne, who "was wrapped up so tightly in furs and a sense of personal grievance that she resembled a polar bear with a hangover," asks the detective to find her eight-year-old granddaughter; and "Come Sable Night," in which a flagrant lothario dies, but was it an allergic reaction to a bee sting or was it murder? Never mind that the mysteries are simple and sometimes silly. These tales are studded with slyly witty observation and are the perfect place to enjoy a few hours in the company of a favorite sleuth who dispenses justice in her own inimitable way. This volume is a fine companion to the 21 novels featuring this dashing Australian sleuth.

Oates, Joyce Carol. [Night, Neon: Tales of Mystery and Suspense](#) (\$16.95). Originally appearing in publications as disparate as *Harper's*, *Vice*, and *Conjunctions*, the stories comprising *Night, Neon* showcase Oates' mastery of the suspense story—and her relentless use of the form to conduct unapologetically honest explorations of American identity. These are tales of psyches pushed to their limits by the expectations of everyday life.

Swanson, Cynthia. [Denver Noir](#) (Akashic \$16.95). The 14 stories in this new Akashic noir anthology span time periods, neighborhoods, and milestones in the Mile High City's history. The action starts on Colfax Avenue, which, according to the editor's introduction, Playboy allegedly deemed "the longest, wickedest street in America," with David Heska Wanbli Weiden's "Colfax and Havana." Other contributors include Peter Heller, Cynthia Swanson, and Manuel Ramos.

SOME MAY HARDCOVERS

Adams, Ellery. [The Vanishing Type](#) (Kensington \$26). In the latest addition to Adams' "Secret, Book, and Scone Society" series, book store owner Nora Pennington helps Deputy Andrews plan a wedding proposal for his intended bride, Hester, and then suddenly notices that all her shop's copies of *The Scarlet Letter* have been vandalized. Coincidence? I think not. "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."—*PW* For more cozies go to pp 15-17.

Armstrong, Kelley. [A Rip Through Time](#) (St Martins \$27.99). Vancouver police detective Mallory Atkinson is in Edinburgh, Scotland, to be with her beloved grandmother, who is dying. When she's out running, she hears a scream and follows it down an alley. Instead of saving the woman, Mallory is attacked and loses consciousness. She wakes up in an Edinburgh household in 1869. She's in the body of Catriona Mitchell, the 19-year-old housemaid she saw being strangled. She's lucky that Dr. Duncan Gray is her employer because he's fascinated by forensics, and together with a police detective, he's interested in new methods. He's even willing to allow his housemaid to assist in his studies. Mallory believes the only way to get back to 2019 is to find the man who killed Catriona. She hides her knowledge of 21st-century police procedures while juggling her investigation and her incompetence as a housemaid. As the strangler escalates his killing, Mallory works with a small team of investigators without revealing she's from the future. The complex characters cope with racism and sexism in Victorian Edinburgh. Highly recommended for fans of Julie McElwain's "Kendra Donovan" time-travel series. Or, this is a kind of a reverse *Outlander* premise.

Charlaine Harris adds, "When police officer Mallory wakes up wearing a corset, she knows something's gone seriously sideways. Trapped in the body of a Victorian housemaid, Mallory must struggle to keep her secret and find a way home. Watching Mallory—and the talented Kelley Armstrong—juggle all these balls at one time is to get a great read."

Benson, Jendella. [Hope and Glory](#) (Harper \$27.99). A brilliant debut by a British-Nigerian author—a heartfelt family drama that will delight book club readers and fans of books like *Transcendent Kingdom*, *Erotic Stories for Punjabi Widows*, and *The Girl with the Louding Voice*. "Hope and Glory is the story of a family recovering from their father's unexpected death in the aftermath of decades of secrets. An exploration of grief, identity, immigration, and sibling dynamics, the story is powerful, and bittersweet."

Barnhill, Kelly. [When Women Were Dragons](#) (Doubleday \$28). The Indie Next Pick: "This story of an alternate 1950s America, in which rebellious women turn into dragons, is thrilling, subversive, and original. It's filled with such poignant beauty that deserves to be savored with tissues nearby."

Brown, Rita Mae. [Thrill of the Hunt](#) (Ballantine \$28). It's the start of fox-hunting season and Sister Jane Arnold is training a new generation of hounds in eager anticipation of Opening Hunt. But before they make it to that exciting day, several members of the hunt club receive ominous videos in which they appear to be doing scandalous, career-ending deeds. The videos are doctored, but does it matter? The unknown blackmailer promises to publish the clips if they don't get paid, and even the most upstanding citizen can be brought down by the court of public opinion. While Sister and her friends try to unmask the dastardly mind behind the videos, mysteries abound in their beautiful Blue Ridge Mountain town home. Two men die, apparently by suicide, shocking a community that never saw their deaths coming. And rumors

abound that Old Paradise, the estate being lovingly restored by Crawford Howard, houses a secret stash of gold from its original owner.

Carcattera, Lorenzo. [Nonna Maria and the Case of the Missing Bride](#) (Bantam \$27). Missing travel? Here's a surprise change of genre for the normally hardboiled Carcattera, a story more in the tradition of *The No. 1 Ladies Detective Agency*. Nonna Maria seldom travels from her home on the Italian island of Ischia, though she has a vast network of friends who come to her "with issues that should be brought to the attention of the local carabinieri and not a widow with a bad right leg." She, in turn, depends on her buddies, including a Camorra crime boss and a priest, to help her resolve any problems that can't be cleared up by common sense alone. One such is the plight of a reluctant bride-to-be, who has impetuously agreed to marry a handsome stranger and is now afraid to break things off for fear of what he might do to her family. Meanwhile, Nonna Maria uses her encyclopedic knowledge of the island and its inhabitants to help a *carabinieri* captain investigate the death of an 85-year-old tour boat captain. All the nice people involved are rewarded with happy endings. Italophiles wishing for a brief vacation in charming and clever company will revel in this love letter to Ischia.

Diaz, Hernan. [Trust](#) (Riverhead \$28). A Pulitzer and Pen/Faulkner finalist for *In the Distance*, Diaz uses a multilayered narrative to investigate money and power, truth and perception, and early 20th-century U.S. history. In 1920s New York, Wall Street tycoon Benjamin Rask and his wife, Helen, of offbeat aristocratic origins, are the *crème* of society's *crème*. They're also the protagonists of the novel *Bonds*, published in 1938 and on everyone's reading list. *Bonds* is a Wharton-esque novel by Harold Vanner that tells the story of a reclusive man who finds his calling and a massive fortune in the stock market in the early 20th century. But the comforts of being one of the wealthiest men in the U.S.—even after the 1929 crash—are undone by the mental decline of his wife. *Bonds* is followed by the unfinished text of a memoir by Andrew Bevel, a famously successful New York investor whose life echoes many of the incidents in Vanner's novel. Two more documents—a memoir by Ida Partenza, an accomplished magazine writer, and a diary by Mildred, Bevel's brilliant wife—serve to explain those echoes. "Diaz elegantly puts these competing narratives into conversation with one another—and in tension with the perspective of one woman bent on disentangling fact from fiction. The result is a novel that spans over a century and becomes more exhilarating with each new revelation." Structurally, Diaz's novel is a feat of literary gamesmanship in the tradition of David Mitchell or Richard Powers.

Greenwood, Kerry. [The Lady with the Gun Asks the Questions](#) (Poisoned Pen \$27.99). The 15 1920s-era stories in this welcome will delight fans of Miss Phryne Fisher, who indulges in "Sherlockery" for Melbourne's citizenry when she's not indulging her passion for "food, sleep, intellectual puzzles, clothes and beautiful young men. See the large paperback edition in our May Large Paperback Picks.

Grisham, John. [Sparring Partners](#) (Doubleday \$28.95). In his first collection of novellas, law is a common thread, but America's favorite storyteller has several surprises in store.

✂Hendy, David. [The BBC: A Century on Air](#) (Public Affairs \$38). Some of you have heard Lee Child talk about getting fired by the BBC which led him to write his first Jack Reacher. The Beeb has shaped British public and private lives for a century now. Hendy studs his magisterial history with photographs such as a 1931 picture of Arthur Burrows, a genial man who championed wireless as a technology to be used for the public good. This is timely as news of Elon Musk's vision for Twitter in a takeover bid institutes a debate about harm vs. good. You who enjoy British history and fiction will find this well worth dipping into. To help there are extensive Notes and an Index.

✂Herron, Mick. [Bad Actors](#) (Soho \$27.95). "The disappearance of Sophie de Greer, a "superforecaster" who predicts voter reactions to British government policies, drives Herron's terrific eighth Slough House novel. Since de Greer might be a Russian plant, two important people want her found: Anthony Sparrow, the prime minister's slimy enforcer, because he hired de Greer and wants to spare the government humiliation, and Diane Taverner, MI5's ruthless chief, because she knows Sparrow will blame her if de Greer turns out to be a spy. The actual work of finding de Greer falls to the so-called slow horses of Slough House, "the fleapit to which Regent's Park consigns failures, and where would-be stars of the British security service are living out the aftermath of their professional errors." Every piece counts in the intricate jigsaw puzzle of a plot, but the book's main strength is its dry, acerbic wit (Sparrow is "a homegrown Napoleon: nasty, British and short"). The result is an outstanding mix of arch humor, superb characterizations, and trenchant political observations."

Apple TV+ has released an extended first-look trailer for *Slow Horses*, based on the first of Mick Herron's novel series. The Wrap reported that the six-episode series, starring Gary Oldman and Kristin Scott Thomas, debuted April 1 with the first two episodes, followed by one episode every Friday thereafter. The cast also includes Olivia Cooke, Saskia Reeves, Dustin Demri-Burns, Rosalind Eleazar, Christopher Chung, Paul Higgins, Freddie Fox, Chris Reilly, Steve Waddington, Paul Hilton, Antonio Aakeel and Peter Judd, with a special guest appearance by Jonathan Pryce.

✂Horowitz, Anthony. [With a Mind to Kill](#) (Harper \$26.99) picks up after the final Ian Fleming novel, *The Man with the Golden Gun*, in which the Russians captured Bond, brainwashed him, and programmed him to kill M, the head of the British secret service. The British stage M's funeral and imprison Bond to fool the Russians into believing Bond succeeded in the assassination as part of a plot to get 007 into Russia to discover what its intelligence organizations are planning. The Russians oblige by snatching Bond from police custody and sending him to Leningrad, where he falls under the "care" of Colonel Boris, a mind control expert, and Katya Leonova, an icy, Communist technocrat. The Russians have a high-profile mission for Bond, which leads to a genuinely thrilling climax. Horowitz displays a thorough knowledge of Bondian tropes, captures the dreariness of Khrushchev-era Russia, and deepens 007 by allowing him a certain ambiguity about his profession. Horowitz writes a heartfelt homage, interesting given the fate of Bond in the most recent Daniel Craig movie.

Jonasson, Ragnar. [Outside](#) (St Martins \$27.99). In a deadly Icelandic snowstorm, four friends seek shelter in an abandoned hunting lodge. Miles from help, and knowing they will die out in the cold, they break in, hoping to wait out the storm until morning. But nothing can prepare them for what's inside.... With no other option, they are forced to spend a long and terrifying night in the cabin: watching as intently and silently as they themselves are being watched. "So atmospheric, I was immediately transported to the Icelandic moors... I read with bated breath, my heart pounding?"—Sara Blædel. For the signed UK edition, [Outside](#) (\$55), see Signed Books.

Kingfisher, T. [Nettle and Bone](#) (Forge \$25.95). This isn't a fairy tale where the princess marries the prince. It's one where she kills him. As the shy, convent-raised, third-born daughter, she escaped the traditional fate of princesses, to be married away for the sake of an uncaring throne. But her sister wasn't so fortunate—and after years of silence, Marra is done watching her suffer at the hands of a powerful and abusive prince. Seeking help for her rescue mission, Marra is offered the tools she needs, but only if she can complete three seemingly impossible tasks: build a dog of bones; sew a cloak of nettles; capture moonlight in a jar. But, as is the way in tales of princes and witches, doing the impossible is only the beginning. Hero or not—now joined by a disgraced ex-knight, a reluctant fairy godmother, an enigmatic gravewitch and her fowl familiar—Marra might finally have the courage to save her sister, and topple a throne.

The Indie Next Pick: "I don't know how I lived this long without *Nettle & Bone*. It has everything: a princess on a quest, a goblin market, a fairy godmother, a demon chicken (wait, what!). It's fresh, funny, touching, and wonderfully well written."

Korelitz, Jean Hanff. [The Latecomer](#) (Celadon \$28). Here is the story of the wealthy, New York City-based Oppenheimer family, from the first meeting of parents Salo and Johanna, under tragic circumstances, to their triplets born during the early days of IVF, 1981. The story is narrated by Phoebe Oppenheimer, the younger sibling of the Oppenheimer triplets. As if traumatized by their forced togetherness in utero, the triplets have—to their mother's enduring despair—spent their lives trying to get away from one another. Why all this intra-fraternal rage? That's what Phoebe, looking back and looking on, is trying to figure out, ultimately intuiting what readers already know from the novel's early pages: the "fractured heart of the Oppenheims" stems from the cascading effects of a tragedy inadequately managed. While I have not yet gotten a reading copy I sense a kinship with a Jodi Picoult story here.

McCulloch, Amy. [Breathless](#) (Knopf \$28). Our **May International Crime Club Book of the Month** is "A vertigo-inducing page-turner by an author who brings the high-stakes world of expert mountain-climbing to life on the page." — Nita Prose, author of *The Maid*. Journalist Cecily Wong is in over her head. She's come to Manaslu, the eighth-highest peak in the world, to interview internationally famous mountaineer Charles McVeigh on the last leg of a record-breaking series of summits. She's given up everything for this story—her boyfriend, her life savings, the peace she's made with her climbing failures in the past—but it's a career-making opportunity. It could finally put her life back on track. But when one climber dies in what everyone else assumes is a freak accident, she fears their expedition is in danger. And by the time a second climber dies, it's too late to turn

back. Stranded on a mountain in one of the most remote regions of the world, she'll have to battle more than the elements in a harrowing fight for survival against a killer who is picking them off one by one.

Palmer, D J. [My Wife is Missing](#) (St. Martins \$28.99). Palmer has moved brilliantly from medical thrillers to domestic suspense powered by unreliable narrators. Here we have two. Michael Hart returns to his New York hotel room with pizzas and sodas to find his wife, Natalie, and their two young children gone. Michael worries that Natalie decided the vacation was too much for her to handle and has returned to their suburban Boston home with the children. Natalie has been suffering from extreme insomnia resulting in hallucinations, paranoia, and anxiety that has affected her marriage. But Natalie has planned their escape carefully, believing Michael has a violent streak, frightened he may harm them. "The character-driven plot cleverly keeps who's telling the truth an ingenious guessing game. Michael appears to be a concerned father and husband, worried about his family, yet he harbors deep secrets from his past. Natalie's concern for her children is genuine, yet her erratic behavior makes her fearful of everything as she often puts her family in harm's way...."

Paretsky, Sara. [Overboard](#) (Harper \$28.99). Chicago PI VI Warshawski's 21st investigation is a thorny one filled with corruption, greed, prejudice, and a hard look at police brutality as visited in part on VI herself. Paretsky has always had a handle on how the levers of power are operated in the Windy City but here one feels that COVID has fueled its worst sides and that survival, not justice, is the goal. It begins when her two dogs break loose along the lakefront and discover a near-dead young girl hiding in the shoreline rocks. She utters one word—*nagyi*—before the EMTs whisk her away. When the local news interviews VI about this dramatic rescue, it brings cops on the hunt (for what?), ugly scenes, bitter neighbors from her childhood, and memories of her beloved cousin Boom Boom, crashing into her life. The stakes are high, the pacing relentless, VI's quest for social justice undimmed, and the atmosphere dark.

Patterson, James/Maxine Paetro. [22 Seconds](#) (LittleBrown \$29). Pursuing a massive drugs-and-weapons shipment being shepherded across the U.S.-Mexican border by former cops with the warning "You talk, you die" written on their bodies, Sergeant Lindsay Boxer suddenly has 22 seconds to decide what her fate will be.

Richtel, Matt. [Inspired: Understanding Creativity](#) (Harper \$29.99). A groundbreaking new investigation into the mysteries of creativity and how to maximize your creative potential, from Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter and bestselling author of *An Elegant Defense* Matt Richtel. In his viral *New York Times* piece "How to Be Creative," Richtel presented readers with a list of prescriptive advice on how to unleash your inner creativity through steps like paying attention to your imagination, embracing imperfection, and giving your brain some much-needed rest. Now he expands these concepts into a full-length book aiming to uncover the secrets of being more creative, and arguing for the power of creativity in all walks of life.

Robinson, Kim Stanley. [The High Sierra: A Love Story](#) (LittleBrown \$40). Novelist Robinson of say The Mars Trilogy comes to earth with "this enthralling blend of memoir, history, and science. Robinson first hiked in the Sierras on LSD in 1973

as a college student, an experience that sparked decades of return visits with friends and family members. His personal stories of treks there are interspersed with chapters on ‘Sierra People,’ including Clarence King, a 19th-century geologist, and Mary Austin, ‘one of the first nationally known women writers to come out of the American West.’ Robinson’s discussions of what he terms psychogeology—the impact geology has on the mind—are particularly memorable, as when he shares the feeling of being in a ‘golden zone’ while walking in one of the Sierra’s basins. Fans of Robinson’s fiction will be delighted to find insights into his craft: he outlines, for example, the terrain’s impact on his efforts to imagine the lives of humans’ Paleolithic ancestors in the novel *Shaman*.... his heartfelt rendering of intense emotional interactions with the natural world pulsates with life. Fans of Bill Bryson’s *A Walk in the Woods* will be captivated.”—*PW* Starred Review

Scarrow, Simon. [Blackout](#) (Kensington \$27). Scarrow’s version of Arkady Renko, Criminal Inspector Horst Schenke, is already under fire for his refusal to join the Nazi party that has staked its claim to Germany; so the last thing he needs is a pair of murders that lead him to the corridors of power where he was already unwelcome. As in the aforementioned *Gorky Park* introducing Renko, Schenke finds himself sorting through a minefield of political realities and ambitions, including party higher-ups committed to thwarting his investigation at every turn. *Blackout* is a historical thriller extraordinaire penned by an author in complete command of his story and subject matter. Not since David Morrell’s incredible trilogy featuring Thomas de Quincey—a series I think is fabulous—has a book like this featured such a mastery of time and place with deep-seated echoes of America’s own divisions today.

Shapiro, BA. [Metropolis](#) (Algonquin \$27.95) “begins like a classic whodunit: Bostonglobe.com reports that someone fell down an elevator shaft at Cambridge’s Metropolis Storage Warehouse, after which the individual was rushed to the hospital with critical injuries. According to the news story, Neither police nor hospital officials identified the victim. As Shapiro’s ingeniously plotted hybrid social/suspense novel unspools, readers will try to determine who fell and why. But *Metropolis* prompts other, equally consuming questions: What would compel people to take up residence in their self-storage units, and what would it take to turn their lives around? The novel’s perspective wanders among the story’s key players, whose lives intersect in fate-altering ways. The building’s dodgy history is yet another of *Metropolis*’s finely etched dramas, which are steered by both personal choices and forces beyond characters’ control. Shapiro, who specializes in novels about art, here makes the Boston Red Sox are a touchstone she takes her time loading the bases, and in the last inning, she hits it out of the park.”—Nell Beram

Smith, Ali. [Companion Piece](#) (Knopf \$28). Smith’s expansive and tantalizing spin-off of her Seasonal Quartet series blends stories of mythology, English history, and personal trauma. While artist Sandy Gray waits for news about her elderly father who’s recovering in the hospital after an unspecified life-threatening episode, she gets a call from Martina Inglis Pelf, an assistant to an art curator and former university acquaintance of Sandy’s. Pelf tells a story about a lengthy airport customs detainment upon returning with a Boothby lock and key artifact belonging to a 16th-century chest and accidentally presenting

the wrong passport. Pelf thinks Sandy can decipher the meaning behind a voice in the holding room that whispered “curlew or curfew.” Therein lies Smith’s intricate, interlocking narratives, which involve the story of three-headed beast Cerberus...As ever, Smith’s flawless stream-of-conscious narration is at once accessible and transforming, and with it she manages to contain eye-blinking hallucinatory images, such as a shattered clock that reconstitutes itself. This is a captivating Rubik’s cube of fiction.

Thompson, Victoria. [Murder on Madison Square](#) (Berkley \$26) is the 25th in the Gaslight Series portraying 19th Century New York. In fact, it’s now 1900. Ethel Bing, who wants to divorce her husband, Alvin, part-owner of an electric automobile manufacturer, asks New York City private eye Frank Malloy to get evidence of her spouse’s infidelity by luring him into a compromising situation to be photographed. Frank declines the unethical request. A few days later, Frank runs into Ethel and Alvin at an auto show at Madison Square Garden, where Alvin touts one of his vehicles as easy for anyone to drive. That observation takes on added relevance after someone fatally runs him over, making Ethel the prime suspect. She again turns to the detective for help, and this time Frank agrees. He and his wife and investigative partner, Sarah, have several possibilities to consider, including possible murder motives of Alvin’s business partner and Alvin’s first wife, previously thought dead. Thompson does a good job showing how the automobile had begun to change people’s lives in the service of a nicely surprising plot.

Vo, Nghi. [Siren Queen](#) (Forge \$26.99). The Indie Next Pick: “Nghi Vo’s vision of magic in 1920s Hollywood enriches the protagonist’s transformation and shows readers all that was at stake for those in the early film industry.”

Walker, Sari. [The Cherry Robbers](#) (Houghton \$27.99). A mash-up of Victoriana and 1950s Americana, *The Cherry Robbers* takes the familiar story of the young white woman of the 1950s—destined for marriage and becoming a housewife in the suburbs—and turns that narrative violently on its head. “The Chapel sisters, of a fictional gun manufacturing fortune, grow up in a house that looks like a wedding cake. But each of them is fated to die on their wedding night, a multi-generational curse that seems to set free only those women who put art above marriage. A twisted take on the artist’s coming-of-age story, *The Cherry Robbers* tackles deep questions about marriage, sexuality, familial loyalty, guns and the artist’s life—a witty, delicious, demented joyride.” Think of it as a feminist Gothic ghost story.

✠Weir, Alison. [The Last White Rose](#) (Ballantine \$28.99). I am not a fan of this interpretation of Richard III, Elizabeth of York, eldest daughter of deceased Edward IV, and the arrival of Henry Tudor who, on gaining the throne as Henry VII, marries Elizabeth, thus ending the War of the Roses. Elizabeth made the best of the situations into which she was thrust, doing duty as a royal wife and mother. Her life was dramatic and she should be “heard.”

OUR MAY BRITISH CRIMES SELECTIONS

This month I find myself unable to choose between two very different, quite original, British mysteries for our May Book of the Month. So I am going with the two, both paperback originals. Club members will get a 10% discount and the usual free shipping. Non club members, please order as you wish.

Shemlit, Jane. [The Patient](#) (Harper \$16.99). Shemlit, author of a 2015 big hit *The Daughter*, writes a masterly novel of suspense about what you think is a boundary-breaking affair between a doctor, Rachel, and a patient, Luc, a French painter married to a rich American who has just bought and restored an historic mansion in an old and affluent village near Salisbury and its magnificent cathedral. I almost passed this by! Huge mistake. There are all sorts of boundaries strained here in relationships creating mayhem with ethics medical and marital and even maternal, but—and I can't tell you what without spoilers—it is actually an extremely clever plot laced with betrayals but also testing and forming loyalties along with the crimes. There is a murder. There is theft... and much more. And I am always intrigued by the pull that life in the South of France has upon the British... not just its climate, but also its very different lifestyle.

Thorogood, Robert. [The Marlow Murder Club](#) (Poisoned Pen \$16.99). This debut British cozy set in the delightful village of Marlow on the Thames is one of our **two British Crime Club Books of the Month for May**. It's very British in language and mores, so extra fun for you who love all that. But cozy fans too will love Judith Potts, age 77, dweller in a crumbling mansion, swimmer naked in the Thames, imbibor of cheap whisky, and "setter" (i.e. creator) of crossword puzzles. While navigating the river one summer evening she hears voices, a shot, and believes a neighbor has been killed. In time the vicar's wife Becks and the local dog walker Suzie team up with Judith, reluctantly at first, to form the Marlow Murder Club and puzzle out whether there was a murder... and why. Selected as a UK's Indie Book of the Month, this isn't a totally polished debut like its closest analogue, Richard Osman's Thursday Murder Club series, but it's a charmer. And a must for crossword fans. I've never quite cracked the British clues, but embedded in this mystery is a way of deciphering them I will give a try.

COZY CRIMES

May being the month for Mother's Day there are always more cozies and women's fiction than usual. So I've grouped cozies into two sections, this one and a small paperback one below.

✂Berry, Connie. [The Shadow of Memory](#) (Crooked Lane \$26.99). Antiques expert Kate Hamilton and two older friends, one being Vivian Bunn, find Will Parker, a retired police inspector and a sweetheart of Vivian's from many years ago, dead in a graveyard in the Suffolk village of Long Barton. Will was investigating a cold case that he, Vivian, and some friends had first encountered as teenagers when they discovered the abandoned home of a physician and his wife who had been poisoned. When Kate learns that Will was murdered, that the physician may have been embroiled in dubious activities connected to a local mental health facility and a priceless painting, and that suspicious circumstances have arisen with other members of Vivian's teenage group, she begins to fear for her friend's safety. "New and faithful fans alike will appreciate the tying together of present and past, as well as the poignancy in the long effects of unfortunate choices." I rate Berry's descriptions of Suffolk and the English countryside first rate and the antiques lore including a painting by Flemish master Jan van Eyck is too. Plus Berry has an easy prose style.

Bessette, Alicia. [Smile Beach Murder](#) (Penguin \$27). Mass layoffs at the *Charlotte Times* hit Callie Padget hard. Her

childhood home on Cattail Island seems as good a place as any to escape. Not that there's much of her family there. Her father left before she was born, and her mother died when she was 12. Her Uncle Hudson is a cantankerous old coot, but he's kept her old bedroom in his loft waiting for her. Hudson prods Callie into working part time for Antoinette Redfield at MotherVine bookshop, where she encounters Eva Meeks, who runs Meeks Hardware with her sister, Georgia. Eva, who's all atwitter with hopes of finding the pirate treasure long rumored to be buried near Cattail, consults every treasure-hunting volume that MotherVine stocks. But her dreams of rubies and pearls crash when she falls from the top of Cattail Lighthouse. Though the police rule her death a suicide, Callie has doubts. When Eva's daughter, Summer, brings Callie a poem that's the first in a series of treasure-hunt clues, she decides to investigate. MotherVine's book delivery service gives her the perfect excuse to question many of the island's residents. The more she digs, the more she falls back in love with Cattail, with its annual Paint Your Door Red Day, its fabulous Cattaillon, and its handsome martial arts instructor, who sets her pulse racing.

JT Ellison, echoed by Jenn McKinlay, calls our **June Cozy Crimes Book of the Month** "A perfectly plotted mystery from a wonderful writer, with everything I want from a cozy—barrier-island beaches, a welcoming bookshop, a quaint small town—all balanced against deep secrets and complicated deaths. Callie Padget is a sharp and compassionate amateur sleuth with a compelling backstory, and a quirky cast of characters, family and townspeople alike, round out the story. I can't wait to see what washes up next on the shores of Cattail Island!"

Davis, Krista. [The Diva Says Cheesecake!](#) (Kensington \$26). Our own Lesa Holstine reviews: In midsummer, event planner and advice columnist Sophie Winston has several big events planned, including a dinner for Bobbie Sue Bodoin, "the Cheesecake Queen." Bobbie Sue didn't realize, when she scheduled her dinner to coincide with Old Town Alexandria's midsummer celebration, that her daughter would be in a ballet that evening, her son would be running in a marathon, and her husband Tate wouldn't show up for any of the events. When Sophie finds a dead body in the basement of Tate's restaurant, she has no reason to get involved in the case. That is, until one of her best friends is arrested for murder and Tate's family members beg Sophie to find the killer.... Fans should concentrate on the recipes and the familiarity of Sophie's circle of friends.

Fletcher, Jessica. [Murder, She Wrote: Killer on the Court](#) (Berkley \$26). Having just sent her latest manuscript to her editor with three hours to spare, Jessica is free to join her beloved nephew, Grady, his wife, Donna, and their son, Frank, in a Rockaway Beach vacation cottage. In connection with her unexpected promotion at Courtland Finance and Investments, Donna has been rewarded with a month at one of the cottages owned by the Courtland family. When Jessica meets the family—including the matriarch, Matilda, whose oldest son, Jason, is the CEO—she can't help noticing undercurrents among its competitive members. Jessica and young Frank's great time at the beach and the Courtland-sponsored art classes ends when Donna finds Jason's dead body on the tennis court, still being bombarded by high-speed tennis balls. Jessica is convinced that Jason's death was no accident, but detectives Vincent Tieri and Aisha Kelly, who clearly aren't familiar with her resume, aren't impressed....

Kirkus says, “A unique murder method and welcome local color make this one of Jessica’s best adventures.”

Gates, Eva. [Deadly Ever After](#) (\$16.99). The friends and family of librarian Lucy Richardson are celebrating her long-awaited engagement to Connor McNeil, the mayor of their small town on North Carolina’s Outer Banks, at a local restaurant. The situation becomes awkward when Lucy’s former boyfriend, Ricky Lewiston, and his formidable mother crash the party—ostensibly to congratulate the happy couple, but actually to persuade Lucy to dump Connor and marry Ricky. The discovery of the body of Ricky’s father, Rich, behind the restaurant really puts the kibosh on the festivities. The police can’t figure out who killed Rich, or even why he’d come to town from Boston in the first place. Getting involved in a murder investigation is the last thing on Lucy’s to-do list, but she soon realizes that in order to move forward, one sometimes has to take care of a few loose ends from the past. Plenty of unexpected plot twists and characters the reader can really care about help make this cozy a winner. Gates is a pen name for author Vicki Delany.

Gilbert, Victoria. [Reserved for Murder](#) (\$16.99). Gilbert’s captivating sequel to 2020’s [Booked for Death](#) (\$16.99) finds former teacher Charlotte Reed hosting famous romantic fantasy author Amanda Noble at her inn, Chapters Bed-and-Breakfast, in Beaufort, N.C., where Amanda is doing a signing at the local bookstore. The event has drawn a large crowd, including Lisette Bradford, the head of Amanda’s biggest fan club. When Lisette’s body is pulled from the water near the Beaufort docks, trauma to her head indicates she was murdered. The prime suspect is Lisette’s ex-husband, who’s been stalking her, but inquisitive Charlotte asks around and soon realizes several attendees might have had a motive for murder. Charlotte and her neighbor, retired spy Ellen Montgomery, join forces to uncover the truth. A tantalizing subplot involves Ellen’s mysterious visiting “cousin,” Gavin Howard, who’s actually a spy on a mission, and the growing attraction between Charlotte and Gavin provides some romantic heat. Well-rounded characters match the finely crafted plot. “—PW Starred Review on a pair of cozies for you who like them bookish.

✧Lloyd, Catherine. [Miss Morton and the English House Party](#) (Kensington \$26). Lady Caroline Morton’s engagement was broken and her reputation destroyed when her father, the Earl of Morton, committed suicide, leaving her and her sister, Susan, penniless. For some years Lady Eleanor, their aunt, has taken in stray children and raised them along with her own offspring, if not always successfully, and some of these are still friends of the family. Lady Eleanor has been housing Susan, and she’s offered Caroline a home as well. But Caroline decides that she’d rather be a paid companion than an unpaid drudge. Now Lady Eleanor insists that Caroline come to the birthday party for her cousin Mabel. To that end, Lady Eleanor has assembled a house party where inevitably a member is murdered. I haven’t yet read this but I am fond of Lloyd’s Kurland St. Marty’s series (hoping she hasn’t ended it) and Kirkus says this series launch is “A charming cross between a Regency romance and a well-constructed detective story with a surprising denouement.” There’s Regency and then there’s real Regency, i.e. not an excuse for sex, so I look forward to reading this.

McKevett, GA. [Murder Most Grave](#) (Kensington \$26). Raising her no-account son’s brood isn’t easy for Granny Reid. Even

when the older seven are in school, she has 6-month-old Macon Jr. to care for. Still, when only six of her rambunctious grandchildren pile into her tiny cottage after school one day, it isn’t hard to figure out that the missing Reid is Waycross; aside from Macon, he’s the only male. After calling her best friend, Miss Elsie Dingle, to babysit, Stella drives out to the McGill town cemetery, Waycross’ favorite refuge in times of trouble. She finds Waycross at her late husband’s gravesite, sharing his woes with his Grandpa Art. Trouble is, she also finds a dead body over by the Patterson crypt, a mausoleum filled with deceased members of one of McGill’s most prominent families. When Sheriff Manny Gilford confirms that the body isn’t another Patterson but Dexter Corbin, Stella knows there’ll be an abundance of suspects because Dexter managed to rub most of McGill the wrong way. “Sleuthing, smooching, and Southern charm fight for center stage in the latest Moonlight Magnolia prequel.”

Nagendra, Harini. [The Bangalore Detectives Club](#) (Pegasus \$26.95). Nagendra makes her fiction debut with an exceptional series launch. In 1921, 19-year-old Kaveri Murthy, who has a passion for advanced mathematics, lives just outside the sprawling city of Bangalore. While Kaveri and her physician husband, Ramu, are attending a reception at the prestigious Century Club, the body of a pimp is found murdered in the garden. When the deputy inspector of the local police force arrives to investigate, Kaveri confides that she saw the dead man in the garden with his hands around the throat of a beautiful woman. Kaveri’s desire to see justice done takes her from the bastions of British wealth to humble mud-floored shacks. By placing her intelligent and clear-eyed protagonists in the multilayered and multicultural milieu of colonial India, Nagendra, a university professor in Bangalore, imbues this mystery with a rich, edifying, and authentic feel. She rounds out the volume with easy-to-follow recipes for dishes like spiced rice with lentils, a welcome change from the sugary fare that culinary cozy recipes typically offer. Here is our **May Cozy Crimes Book of the Month**.

Popp, Misha. [Magic, Lies, And Deadly Pies](#) (Crooked Lane \$26.99). Sparkling with sinister magic, sugary pies, and vigilante homicide, *Magic, Lies, and Poison Pies* is rocking the *Pushing Daisies* vibe. When Daisy Ellery’s mother died from cancer and her father fell apart, she and her dog, Zoe, took off in the pink RV her witchy family had passed down. Now she makes a living selling her deliciously enhanced pies. After she accidentally kills a man with a pie, she realizes she may have been called to avenge women who get no justice from the law. She brings pies laced with power to a support group for abused women and pies laced with vengeance to men who deserve it. Popp serves up “An exciting debut that has you rooting for a morally conflicted witch while salivating over her pies.” This may be our July Cozy Crimes Book of the Month—we are truly spoilt for choice in cozies this month!

✧Thorogood, Robert. [The Marlow Murder Club](#) (Poisoned Pen \$16.99). This debut British cozy set in the delightful village of Marlow on the Thames is one of our **two British Crime Club Books of the Month for May**, the other being Jane Shemlit’s [The Patient](#) (Harper \$16.99) which I would not call a cozy but is fabulous. I couldn’t choose between them so am calling two paperbacks “one” book. See British Crime Club above for more.

MORE COZY CRIMES IN SMALL PAPERBACKS

Barrett, Lorna. [A Deadly Deletion](#) (\$8.99). Booktown #15. When her quasi-boyfriend Marshall is killed in a hit-and-run after proposing to her, bookstore owner Tricia Miles investigates after narrowly escaping the same fate while walking her sister's dog.

Berenson, Laurien. [Pup Fiction](#) (\$8.99). Melanie Travis #27. Sending her kids to the Graceland School's summer camp, Melanie discovers that murder is on the schedule when she is thrown into a mystery involving the owner's dead estranged husband and three prize-winning Dalmatians.

Berry, Tamara. [Buried in a Good Book](#) (Sourcebooks \$8.99). By the Book #1. When the start of their summer vacation is marred by murder, best-selling thriller writer Tess Harrow is thrust into the subsequent investigation, involving a big foot sighting and a handsome local sheriff, which puts so much more than her teenage daughter's summer plans at stake.

Blake, Deborah. [Claws for Suspicion](#) (Berkley \$8.99). Catskills Pet Rescue #3. When her unpleasant ex-husband arrives in town, demanding partial ownership of her Serenity Sanctuary, lottery winner Kari Stuart and her feisty feline Queenie finds things going from bad to worse when Kari is implicated in a murder.

Coco, Nancy. [A Midsummer Night's Fudge](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Candy-Coated #10. When Winona, a parade float judge, dies during the Midsummer Night's Festival, fudge shop owner Allie is asked to step in as the new judge and hears rumors leading her to believe that Winona was murdered.

Dylan, Jess. [Fatal Flowers](#) (St Martin's \$8.99). Death in Bloom #3. Hired to provide flowers for the biggest wedding Aerieville has ever seen, Sierra, during the rehearsal, becomes a suspect in the murder of the wedding planner and must dig up the dirt on the other guests to reveal who's been a bad seed.

Laurie, Victoria. [Coached in the Act](#) (\$8.99). Cat Cooper #3. East Hampton life coach Cat Cooper investigates the stabbing of a socialite whose mean-spirited, one-woman show spilled secrets about the area's most eligible bachelors.

McKinlay, Jenn. [Strawberried Alive](#) (Berkley \$8.99). Cupcake Bakery #14. When someone takes a shot at Mel, and other shop owners in town are attacked, resulting in a fatality, Mel and her cupcake crew must put both their baking and detecting skills to good use as they sift through the clues to catch the mystery killer.

Mentink, Dana. [A Sprinkle in Time](#) (Sourcebooks \$8.99). Shake Shop #2. While preparing for her sweet upcoming feature in *The Scoop* magazine, Shimmy and Shake Shop owner Trinidad Jones must deal with her Papa Luis, who, setting himself up as a taxi driver in his classic 1951 Buick, finds a body in his trunk, which then disappears.

Smith, Karen Rose. [Murder with Darjeeling Tea](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Daisy's Tea Garden #8. When Wilhelm Rumble, rumored to be as cold and hard as the statues he sells, is found dead behind Four Paws Animal Shelter, Daisy Swanson is steeped in a murder mystery as she tries to ferret out a heartless killer among the town's residents.

OUR MAY LARGE PAPERBACK PICKS

Abbott, Megan. [The Turnout](#) (\$17). Enter the world of amateur ballet with sisters Dara and Marie Durant, the protagonists of this gut-punching noir from Thriller Award winner Abbott. I guarantee you will never feel the same way about *The Nutcracker* again! And interestingly, the human body is in some sense its own character in the novel. Ballet is not all about beauty—there is a high price exacted for it and its hothouse atmosphere. The sisters have been running the Durant School of Dance since the accidental death of their parents. They're aided by Dara's husband, Charlie, who was the ballet school's prize student until crippled by injuries, and who became a surrogate sibling after his mother moved to England. Marie's move out of the family home to live in the building housing the dance studio changes the dynamic among the three, which is upended even further after a fire damages the school. A suspicious death follows. Abbott is pitch-perfect at making the sisters' complex dynamic and mix of emotions plausible and painful, while capturing the competitiveness and cruelty of children's ballet, where every young girl wishes to be the center of attention. This look at the darker side of the dance world demonstrates why Abbott has few peers at crafting moving stories of secrets and broken lives.

Davidson, Ash. [Damnation Spring](#) (\$17.99). This remarkable debut unfolds between 1977 and 1978 and follows the Gundersen family: husband and wife Rich and Colleen; and their kindergartner son, Chub. Rich is a fourth-generation logger who dreams of a less financially burdensome future for his family when, without telling Colleen, he plunks down their savings to buy a ridge near their home in Northern California with a harvestable forest of primordial redwoods. Meanwhile Colleen—who has suffered eight miscarriages before and after Chub's birth and who, as the local midwife, has witnessed a disturbing number of defective births—is listening to an environmentalist friend's warning that the defoliants used by the timber company that employs Rich are leaching lethal toxins into the local water supply. *Kirkus* awards it a Star: "As thoughtfully as Davidson establishes these dilemmas, she's equally skilled at writing an outdoorsy adventure novel, in which logging threatens the lives of workers in a working class community with snapped cables and everybody else via landslides. Thematically, it's a strong work of climate fiction, but it's rooted in age-old man-versus-nature storytelling. An impressively well-turned story about how environmental damage creeps into our bodies, psyches, and economies."

Greenwood, Kerry. [The Lady with the Gun Asks the Questions](#) (Poisoned Pen \$15.99). The 15 1920s-era stories in this welcome will delight fans of Miss Phryne Fisher, who indulges in "Sherlockery" for Melbourne's citizenry when she's not indulging her passion for "food, sleep, intellectual puzzles, clothes and beautiful young men." The most recent Phryne Fisher novel is [Death in Daylesford](#) (\$15.99). When a mysterious invitation for a spa holiday arrives for Miss Phryne Fisher from an unknown retired Captain Herbert Spencer, Phryne's curiosity is piqued. Spencer runs a retreat in Victoria's rural spa country for shell-shocked veterans of World War I. It's a cause after Phryne's own heart, but what can Spencer want from her?

Heller, Peter. [The Guide](#) (\$17). A sequel to 2019's [The River](#) (\$16), *The Guide* evokes a near future in which coronavirus variants have pushed America's leisure class westward in search of open space and outdoor recreation. Heller's thrillers unfurl like campfire yarns relayed second- or third-hand, his drifting narratives peppered with question marks and qualifiers. Jack, the 25-year-old title character, "isn't looking to save the world—just his own sanity. Guilt-ridden by the death of his mother in a horse accident and the demise of his best friend in a river mishap, he's retreated into a solitary life centered around fishing. He leaps like a trout at the chance to work as a guide at Kingfisher Lodge, 'a rustic getaway for the rich and famous' that promises 'boutique fishing at its finest'" in a glorious canyon near Gunnison, Colorado. "The first guest entrusted to him is Alison, a popular singer who fishes well and finds Jack charming. Yet what about those off-limits areas where the penalty for trespassing is being shot at? And once Jack didn't find evidence suggesting that his predecessor as guide was murdered. Jack and Alison both wonder: What is Kingfisher Lodge, really, operation even fishier than the resort's abundant brown trout? "Mr. Heller's descriptions of nature and fishing are Hemingwayesque, and he's also good at writing about people—their passions, impulses and ethical boundaries—even if his book's transition from bucolic mystery to gothic nightmare to action thriller is"... unexpected? (*WSJ*).

Hunter, Stephen. [Basil's War](#) (\$16.95). So first, this is Hunter writing more like Ian Fleming than the author of the Earl and Bob Lee Swagger thrillers. British Army Captain Basil St. Florian, the hero of this terrific WWII story, is known for his wit, his bravery as a Special Operations Executive agent, and as a man who enjoys dating film stars. In the spring of 1943, Basil parachutes into Nazi-occupied France, steals some identity papers, and catches a train to Paris, where his mission is to photograph pages from *The Path to Jesus*, a rare 18th-century pamphlet written by a Scottish ecclesiastic held in the library of a Paris museum. Stealing the pamphlet would alert the enemy that the British know the Nazis are using it as the basis of a secret code. Deciphering the code is key to catching a traitor employed at Bletchley Park, the Allied code-breaking center in England. The Nazis figure out a British spy is among them, and a clever German counterintelligence agent is soon hot on Basil's trail. Hunter adopts a style that complements Basil's derring-do exploits. Nelson DeMille calls the swashbuckling spy «the James Bond of his time,» as he's sent behind enemy lines in search of a religious text that is believed to hold the key to ending the war

✚Jewell, Lisa. [The Night She Disappeared](#) (\$17.99). On a beautiful summer night in a charming English suburb, a young woman and her boyfriend, Tallulah and Zach, disappear after partying at the massive Surrey estate of a new college friend. One year later, Sophie Beck, a successful author of cozy mysteries, moves into a cottage on the edge of the woods that border the same estate to be with her partner who has taken on a job at a local school. Known locally as the Dark Place, the dense forest is Sophie's favorite area for long walks and it's on one such walk that she stumbles upon a mysterious note that simply reads, "DIG HERE."

Klingborg, Brian. [Thief of Souls](#) (\$16.99). In the Raven Valley Township of China northernmost province Heilongjiang, Inspector Lu Fei is drinking himself into his customary oblivion at the Red Lotus bar when he's called to a brutal murder scene.

The young victim, Yang Fenfang, has been "hollowed out like a birchbark canoe." Suspicion immediately falls on her boyfriend, Zhang Zhaoxing, who works as a butcher. Once he's arrested, Lu's bosses at the Public Security Bureau are content to end the investigation and incarcerate Zhang. Lu finds a kindred spirit in sarcastic medical examiner Dr. Ma Xiulan, who takes his rejection of her sexual advances in stride. No forensic evidence implicates Zhang. Though Lu thinks the young man is innocent, he's overruled by his superiors, who order that Zhang be kept in custody until more conclusive evidence against him can be found. A wave of protests has little effect on this decision. But the discovery of two similar murders in nearby Harbin gives the investigation new life.... "In his debut, Klingborg takes the time to lay out the structure and conventions of law enforcement in China, a welcome aid for Western readers." See Signed Books for the sequel that Klingborg signs for us this month.

Korelitz, Jean Hanff. [The Plot](#) (\$17.99). It begins as New Yorker Jacob Finch Bonner arrives at his three-week teaching gig at a low-residency MFA program in Vermont. It feels like—and is—a step back for "the once promising author of the 'New & Noteworthy' novel *The Invention of Wonder*. Jake's writing career is now at a standstill. One consolation of his teaching job is that Jake knows his work is at least a cut above the puerile prose of his students—that is, until, during a teacher-student chat, Evan Parker shares aloud a synopsis of his planned novel. Jake can't disagree with Evan's appraisal: "This story I'm writing, it's like, a sure thing." But the prospect of its publication would seem to evaporate with Evan's death, which Jake learns about while poking around on the Internet a couple of years later. Fast-forward three more years, and Jake, having convinced himself of the uprightness of stealing Evan's plot, finds his name on the cover of two million copies of his by now *New York Times* bestseller. Jake is certain that only he knows the book's origin—until the day he receives a disturbing e-mail, the first of several of an increasingly worrisome kind.. Deep character development, an impressively thick tapestry of intertwining story lines, and a candid glimpse into the publishing business make this a page-turner of the highest order. Korelitz, who tells me she doesn't think of herself as a mystery writer, deserves acclaim for her own perfect plot.

Massey, Sujata. [The Bombay Prince](#) (\$16.95).). "Perveen Mistry is much more than a sari-clad Miss Marple: she's Bombay's first female lawyer as well as a keenly intelligent sleuth, a trail-blazing woman balancing the weight of family tradition with her own dreams. Perveen's investigation into the mysterious death of a young university student coincides with the imperial visit of the future Edward VIII, and the resulting trail of breadcrumbs through royal receptions, street riots, squalid jails, and lavish hotels makes for a deliciously satisfying read!" —Kate Quinn on a series I too think is terrific. Start reading with the first two [Perveen Mistry novels](#), excellent stories.

Newman, TJ. [Falling](#) (\$17.99). Bill Hoffman, a Coastal Airways pilot is regretfully missing his son's Little League game to steer a transcontinental flight as a favor for his boss. As he prepares to leave town, his wife, Carrie, isn't happy with him, but, alas, he's too focused on the task at hand to give her more than a guilty excuse. In a rather dramatic karmic response, as Bill launches his plane into the sky, he quickly learns his family has been taken hostage by the Internet repairman he passed without a thought

earlier that morning. The repairman-turned-terrorist sends Bill a picture of his family, bound and strapped with explosive devices. Through a live video stream, he presents the pilot with a choice: crash your plane when and where I instruct or watch your family die before your eyes. Bill refuses to make such a choice and hatches a plot to rescue both his loved ones and the souls on board his vessel. For that, he'll need to rely on his flight attendants... of whom Newman was one when she conceived this her debut novel, a massive bestseller.

Reichs, Kathy. [The Bone Code](#) (\$17.99). We are in 2021, with some references to Covid. A waste container turns up with two bodies, similar to an old unsolved case of Brennan's. The coroner of South Carolina's Charleston County needs a forensic anthropologist. The coroner knows Brennan, who specializes in analyzing "remains unfit for a pathologist's scalpel: the decomposed, dismembered, burned, mummified, mutilated, and skeletal," and happens to be headed from Charlotte, NC, her home base, to Charleston. A recent hurricane has tossed ashore a container with two decayed bodies inside wrapped in plastic secured by electrical wire, and at least one of the bodies shows evidence of a bullet to the head. These details rattle Brennan, as they match those of a 15-year-old unsolved case involving two victims that Brennan worked on with Andrew Ryan, a former Quebec homicide detective turned PI, who's her long term lover. The new victims spur Brennan to labor to identify the killer or killers of all four people. "Kathy Reichs is expert at making science both scary and thrilling, and she's in top form in *The Bone Code*. The story moves at such a relentless pace I couldn't stop turning the pages!" —Tess Gerritsen. Nor could I so I chose it for one of last year's Crime Books of the Month.

Tapper, Jake. [The Devil May Dance](#) (\$17.99). Set against the glittering backdrop of 1960s Hollywood, CNN's Tapper's excellent sequel to 2018's [The Hellfire Club](#) (\$16.99) follows husband-and-wife team Charlie and Margaret Marder on a dangerous 1962 mission. It was a busy year in Washington, DC, and in Los Angeles' studios and circles of stars, notably amidst the Rat Pack headed by Frank Sinatra. The Marders are sent into this world as undercover agents of Attorney General Bobby Kennedy who postulates a threat to his brother's presidency and to US Security. War veteran Charlie, who suffers from PTSD and drinks to conceal it, wrestles with the internal and external missions while Margaret is the more focused. Before you know it their late night adventures with the stars lead to a body in the trunk of their car, pursuit by sinister figures from stages and screens, and maybe from the newly founded Church of Scientology, while Sinatra, already shattered by his divorce from Ava Gardner, learns JFK will let him down too. Tapper makes good use of the rich source material and eye-popping portraits of a host of figures like JFK as well as Bobby, politicians, movie stars (Bing Crosby, Judy Garland), gossip columnists—a whole panoply of 1960s figures. He writes in the school of Max Allan Collins's Nathan Heller books, but with greater candor, and spares no one.

Vlautin, Willy. [The Night Always Comes](#) (\$16.99). PEN/Faulkner finalist Vlautin introduces us to Lynette, who's working multiple jobs to earn enough for a down payment on the house she rents with her mother and developmentally disabled brother in increasingly expensive Portland, Oregon. She's about to sign the loan papers when her mother reneges on a promise to contribute,

which sends Lynette scrambling dangerously for the extra funds. "Only Vlautin could cross the harrowing emotional richness of *A Woman Under the Influence* with the breakneck desperation of the greatest of film noir. Lynette will have you from the first page and put you to the test a hundred times before the last. You'll finish knowing you'll never forget her." Patrick is a fervent Vlautin fan.

Williams, Beatriz. [Our Woman in Moscow](#) (\$16.99). Beatriz writes a Cold War spy story replete with real players like Guy Burgess. It was a time when being a Communist for some was like a religion. And it played hell with lives. Those of Iris and her sister Ruth Macallister are ensnared from the time they join their diplomat brother Harry in Rome in 1940 and Iris is captivated by Sasha Digby, a colleague of Harry's at the embassy. The narrative switches back and forth from 1940 to 1952 and time inbetween and comes to a head four years after the Digbys defected to Russia in 1948. The KGB now suspects Sasha of working as a double agent. In New York, the FBI's Sumner Fox devises a plan to have Ruth travel to Moscow. Fox will accompany Ruth as her spouse and extract the Digbys. Ruth and Sumner's efforts to rescue the Digbys from the Soviet Union, however, are complicated by the KGB, operative Lyudmila in particular, whose story we have also been following. An excellent look at the roles of women in a time when few had agency and unfortunately, timely today.

SOME LARGE PAPERBACKS FOR MAY

Afria, Nekesa. [Harlem Sunset](#) (Penguin \$16). Harlem, 1927. Twenty-seven-year-old Louise Lloyd has found the perfect job! She is the new manager of the Dove, a club owned by her close friend Rafael Moreno. There Louise meets Nora Davies, one of the girls she was kidnapped with a decade ago. The two women—along with Rafael and his sister, Louise's girlfriend, Rosa Maria—spend the night at the Dove, drinking and talking. The next morning, Rosa Maria wakes up covered in blood, with no memory of the previous night. Nora is lying dead in the middle of the dance floor. And soon it is clear that someone has gone to great lengths to frame and terrify Rosa Maria, leaving Louise to stop at nothing to clear the woman she loves.

Cartmel, Andrew. [The Vinyl Detective Attack and Decay](#) (Titan \$15.95). It starts with a perfectly normal evening in, except for the corpse-faced gentleman dressed all in black, with a crow on his shoulder, staring into the house, of course. And the visit from Owyn Wynter, head of Whyte Ravyn Records, who needs the Detective's unique skills. So begins an all-expenses-paid trip to Trollesko, Sweden for the Detective, Nevada, Tinkler and Agatha to track down a copy of the debut album from demonic metal legends, Storm Dream Troopers. Condemned by the church and banned on release, *Attack and Decay* is a legendary record. But their trip to the homelands of Nordic noir is quickly thrust into a world of intrigue as the Detective closes in on the deal, the band unexpectedly converge on the peaceful town, And worse, their trip somehow coincides with a visit from Stinky Stanmer... Soon the bodies start piling up.... I love this edgy series for [The Vinyl Detective](#).

Dorn, LR. [The Anatomy of Desire](#) (\$16.99). Claire Griffith has it all, a thriving career, a gorgeous boyfriend, and glamorous friends. Having rebranded herself as Cleo Ray, she stands at the threshold of realizing her biggest dreams. One summer day, Cleo and a woman named Beck Alden set off in a canoe on a serene mountain lake. An hour later, Beck is found dead in the water

and Cleo is missing. Authorities suspect foul play, and news of Cleo's involvement goes viral. Who was Beck? An infatuated follower? Were she and Cleo friends or lovers? Was Beck's death an accident . . . or murder? Told in the form of an immersive investigative docuseries, Dorn's reimagining of Theodore Dreiser's classic crime drama, *An American Tragedy*, captures the urgency and poignancy of the original and rekindles it as a very contemporary thriller.

Flynn, Laurie Elizabeth. [The Girls Are All So Nice Here](#) (\$17). A lot has changed in years since Ambrosia Wellington graduated from college, and she's worked hard to create a new life for herself. But then an invitation to her ten-year reunion arrives in the mail, along with an anonymous note that reads, "We need to talk about what we did that night." And so two former best friends return to their college reunion to find that they're being circled by someone who wants revenge for what they did ten years before—and will stop at nothing to get it.

Freeman, Dianne. [The Fiancée's Guide to First Wives and Murder](#) (\$15.95). November, 1899. Frances Wynn, Countess of Harleigh, happily contemplates her upcoming marriage to her next-door neighbor and occasional detecting partner, the Honorable George Hazelton. Her thoughts are disrupted by the arrival of a police inspector and Irena Teskey, an attractive young French woman who announces that she is Mrs. George Hazelton. The impetuous fantasist also claims to be the owner of a London theater, the victim of serial abductions, the recipient of menacing letters, and the daughter of a Russian grand duke. Her accusations against George could lead to his and Frances's ostracism from polite society and put a damper on their nuptials, and the situation becomes even worse when Irena is murdered in Frances' back garden. Order all of [this award-winning series](#) for summer escape reading.

Gailey, Sarah. [The Echo Wife](#) (\$16.99). If robots in our homes are the future, here's a domestic suspense story that may arrest your interest in having one. Martine is a genetically cloned replica made from Evelyn Caldwell's award-winning research. She's patient and gentle and obedient. She's everything Evelyn swore she'd never be. And she's having an affair with Evelyn's husband. Now, the cheating bastard is dead, and both Caldwell wives have a mess to clean up. Good thing Evelyn Caldwell is used to getting her hands dirty.

Goldberg, Leonard. [The Abduction of Pretty Penny](#) (\$17.99). One 1927 morning Joanna, the daughter of the late Sherlock Holmes, receives a visit at 221B Baker Street, which she shares with her husband, Dr. Watson's son, from Emma Adams, a playwright and the owner of a pub and a theater in Whitechapel. Mrs. Adams persuades Joanna to find Penny Martin, the star of her current play, who has gone missing. Meanwhile, the commissioner of Scotland Yard asks Joanna and both Watsons to help investigate a series of murders of prostitutes. The mutilation of their bodies is similar to that inflicted by Jack the Ripper. However, 28 years separates the Ripper's killing spree from the current deaths. Is it the same man? Joanna believes it is and is sure that Penny will be the next to die.... Order the entire [Daughter of Sherlock Holmes mystery series](#).

Goldman, Matt. [Carolina Moonset](#) (Forge \$15.99). Death, love and murder — no one can escape the first, hopefully everyone experiences the second and the third befalls no one.

In this paperback original novel, Goldman circles all three in a traditional mystery that follows the path of a gun found, a gun gone missing and then found again. From family and memory loss to the memories of lost days.

Harmel, Kristin. [The Forest of Vanishing Stars](#) (\$17.99). After being stolen from her wealthy German parents and raised in the unforgiving wilderness of Eastern Europe, a young woman finds herself alone in 1941 after her kidnapper dies. Her solitary existence is interrupted, however, when she happens upon a group of Jews fleeing the Nazi terror. Stunned to learn what's happening in the outside world, she vows to teach the group all she can about surviving in the forest—and in turn, they teach her some surprising lessons about opening her heart after years of isolation. But when she is betrayed and escapes into a German-occupied village, her past and present come together in a shocking collision....

Jonasson, Ragnar. [The Girl Who Died](#) (\$17.99). Reykjavík substitute teacher Una, who's ready for a change of scene, accepts an opportunity to teach in the remote fishing village of Skálar, which has only 10 residents, two of them girls aged seven and nine. Una moves into an attic room in the home of one of the girl's mothers, and soon finds how insular and isolated Skálar is. Meanwhile, to Una's distress, she has visions in the room of a girl singing a lullaby. A neighbor discloses that a girl named Thrá died in the house in 1927 under mysterious circumstances, and is rumored to still haunt it. A shocking death in the present and a local conspiracy connected to a missing person add to Una's fears. Jónasson makes Una's plight feel vivid and immediate, and effectively uses the isolated setting to create a claustrophobic atmosphere for this standalone novel of suspense.

Kalla, Daniel. [The Darkness in the Light](#) (Simon Schuster \$17.99). After Brianna O'Brien takes her own life, Dr. David Spears blames himself. Though he understands suicides can be a tragic occurrence in psychiatric practice, this loss hits him particularly hard. With Brianna, he's convinced he missed crucial warning signs. When David suspects Brianna's friend, Amka Obed—whom he's also been treating virtually—is in crisis, he flies to the remote Arctic community of Utqiagvik, Alaska, only to discover that she has disappeared. While the regional police are confident that Amka will turn up safe, David and the town's social worker, Taylor Holmes, have serious doubts. Each battling their own demons, David and Taylor launch an investigation, determined to help uncover the truth about what happened to Amka. David wonders if a new antidepressant he recently prescribed both Amka and Brianna played a role in what took place. Taylor, who's familiar with the locals, suspects a drug lord with connections to Amka's boyfriend. Who is right? Where is Amka? Is she still alive? What begins as a missing persons inquiry and suspicion over a pharmaceutical cover-up quickly evolves into a terrifying journey of treachery and death. Kalla draws you in to the remote, intriguing world of the Arctic and the tragic, inexplicable suicide clusters that have ravaged a small, tight-knit town.

King, Stephen/Richard Chizmar. [Gwendy's Final Task](#) (\$17.99). Since she was a 12-year-old girl living in Castle Rock, Maine, Gwendy Peterson has been the on-and-off guardian of the button box, a mysterious and sinister box with the power to grant marvelous wishes and destroy entire worlds. Ireland sensitively

communicates Gwendy's dismay when, at 64 years old, she finds that the button box has been returned to her once again. This time, instead of serving as its guardian, she must overcome formidable obstacles in order to destroy the box and keep it from evildoers. This is the final book in King and Chizmar's Button Box Trilogy.

Koepp, David. [Cold Storage](#) (\$16.99). For fans of *The Martian*, *Dark Matter*, *Before the Fall* and *Kingdom of Bones* comes an astonishing debut thriller by the screenwriter of *Jurassic Park*: a wild and terrifying bioterrorism adventure about three strangers who must work together to contain a highly contagious, deadly organism. When Pentagon bioterror operative Roberto Diaz was sent to investigate a suspected biochemical attack, he found something far worse: a highly mutative organism capable of extinction-level destruction. He contained it and buried it in cold storage deep beneath a little-used military repository. When Pentagon bioterror operative Roberto Diaz was sent to investigate a suspected biochemical attack, he found something far worse: a highly mutative organism capable of extinction-level destruction. He contained it and buried it in cold storage deep beneath a little-used military repository. They thought it was contained. They were wrong.

McConaghy, Charlotte. [Once There Were Wolves](#) (\$17.99). Inti Flynn arrives in Scotland with her twin sister, Aggie, to lead a team of biologists tasked with reintroducing fourteen gray wolves into the remote Highlands. She hopes to heal not only the dying landscape, but Aggie, too, unmade by the terrible secrets that drove the sisters out of Alaska. Inti is not the woman she once was, either, changed by the harm she's witnessed—inflicted by humans on both the wild and each other. Yet as the wolves surprise everyone by thriving, Inti begins to let her guard down, even opening herself up to the possibility of love. But when a farmer is found dead, Inti knows where the town will lay blame. Unable to accept her wolves could be responsible, Inti makes a reckless decision to protect them. But if the wolves didn't make the kill, then who did? And what will Inti do when the man she is falling for seems to be the prime suspect? And don't miss out on McConaghy's bestseller [Migrations](#) (\$16.99) limning the amazing landscape of Antarctica and the fate of Arctic terns.

McHugh, Laura. [What's Done in Darkness](#) (\$17). A week after her abduction from her home in rural Arkansas and fundamentalist parents, Sarabeth is found alongside a highway in a bloodstained dress—alive—but her family treats her like she's tainted, and there's little hope of finding her captor, who kept Sarabeth blindfolded in the dark the entire time, never uttering a word. One good thing arises from the horrific ordeal: a chance to leave the Ozarks and start a new life. Five years later, Sarabeth is struggling to keep her past buried when investigator Nick Farrow calls. Convinced that her case is connected to the strikingly similar disappearance of another young girl, Farrow wants Sarabeth's help, and he'll do whatever it takes to get it, even if that means dragging her back to the last place she wants to go—the hills and hollers of home, to face her estranged family.

Michaelides, Alex. [The Maidens](#) (\$17.99). Edward Fosca is a murderer. Of this Mariana is certain. But Fosca is untouchable. A charismatic Greek Tragedy professor at Cambridge University, Fosca is adored by staff and students alike. Particularly by the members of a secret society of female students known as

The Maidens. Mariana Andros is a brilliant but troubled group therapist who becomes fixated when one of The Maidens, a friend of Mariana's niece Zoe, is found murdered. Mariana, who was once herself a student at the university, suspects that behind the idyllic beauty of the spires and turrets, lies something sinister. And she becomes convinced that, despite his alibi, Edward Fosca is guilty of the murder. But why would the professor target one of his students? And why does he keep returning to the rites of Persephone, the maiden, and her journey to the underworld?

Moreno-Garcia, Silvia. [Velvet Was the Night](#) (\$17) draws on the real-life efforts of the Mexican government to suppress political dissent in the 1970s. Maite, a 30-year-old secretary in Mexico City who feels life has passed her by, escapes from routine by reading the magazine *Secret Romance*, oblivious to the political upheaval around her. When her beautiful art student neighbor, Leonora, disappears, Maite, with the help of Rubén, Leonora's former lover, begins a search that takes her into the world of student radicals. Meanwhile, 21-year-old Elvis, muscle for a clandestine, government-funded shock troop employed to suppress student protests, longs for something more and wishes to escape his old life. When Elvis's boss assigns him to track down Leonora, his search crosses that of Maite, with whom he becomes fascinated. As the two get closer to discovering the reason behind Leonora's disappearance, they uncover secrets that shadowy forces, both domestic and foreign, will kill to protect. "The author's previous novel, *Mexican Gothic*, turned the screw on the traditional ghost story; here she gleefully pries hard-boiled noir from the cold, white hands of Chandler and Hammett."—*Oprah Daily*. The *NY Times Book Review* adds, "Moreno-Garcia mashes up Anglocentric genres with midcentury Mexican history, resulting in a brew flavored with love, heartbreak, violence, music and unsettling dread..." which is the brew also crafted by Isabel Cañas in *The Hacienda*, reviewed in Signed Books, our May First Mystery Book of the Month.

O'Rawe, Richard. [Goering's Gold](#) (Melville House \$17.99). "In the prologue of O'Rawe superior sequel to 2021's [Northern Heist](#), Reichsmarschall Hermann Goering sends an aide to Ireland on an important mission in 1944. In 2009, four years after Ructions O'Hare stole £36.5 million from the National Bank of Ireland in Belfast, a heist blamed on the IRA, the IRA is hunting O'Hare, who's been lying low in France. They are seeking both a share of the loot and O'Hare's help exonerating them. Meanwhile, members of a neo-Nazi group break into the home of Serge Mercier, a Frenchman who helped O'Hare launder much of the proceeds of his robbery, because they think he possesses Goering's ceremonial baton, a gift from Hitler. Mercier turns for help with the neo-Nazi threat to O'Hare, who learns the baton is considered the key to finding a legendary lost cache of gold bullion that Goering possibly concealed in Northern Ireland. As the plot moves at a breakneck pace, O'Rawe adds more depth to his already complex antihero."—PW Starred Review. We will host a conversation with this Northern Ireland author in June and will get Signed Bookplates.

Patterson, James/David Ellis. [The Red Book](#) (\$17.99). For Detective Billy Harney, getting shot in the head, stalked by a state's attorney, and accused of murder by his fellow cops is a normal week on the job. So when a drive-by shooting on the Chicago's west side turns political, he leads the way to a

quick solve. But Harney's instincts—his father was once chief of detectives and his twin sister, Patti, is also on the force—run deep. As a population hungry for justice threatens to riot, he realizes that the three known victims are hardly the only casualties. When Harney starts asking questions about who's to blame, the easy answers prove to be the wrong ones....

Penny, Louise. [The Madness of Crowds](#) (\$17.99). Penny's 17th entry in the "Chief Inspector Gamache" series finds the Gamache family in the Québec village of Three Pines during the Christmas holidays. The threat of COVID-19 has subsided, and the villagers may gather again. Many of the village windows still display children's drawings with the words "Ça va bien aller" ("All will be well"). That phrase was used as comfort during the pandemic but now it has been co-opted by statistician Abigail Robinson, who uses data to prove that better times may come, but that there will be a price. Inspector Gamache must protect Professor Robinson during her lecture, which is attended by an unstable crowd. An incident at the lecture pulls Gamache into the world of this controversial academic. As the conflict moves to Three Pines, the tension escalates, resulting in crimes that seem impossible to untangle. To read the first 16 Gamaches, [click here](#).

Quirk, Matthew. [The Night Agent](#) (\$16.99). No one is more surprised than FBI Agent Peter Sutherland when he's tapped to work in the White House Situation Room. When Peter was a boy, his father was suspected of selling secrets to the Russians—a breach that cost him his career, his reputation, and eventually his life. Now Peter's job is monitoring an emergency line for a call that has not—and might never—come. Until tonight. This series start from 2019 is slated for a Netflix series. Yay.

Richardson, Kim Michele. [The Book Woman's Daughter](#) (\$16.99). In the ruggedness of the beautiful Kentucky mountains, Honey Lovett has always known that the old ways can make a hard life harder. As the daughter of the famed blue-skinned, Troublesome Creek packhorse librarian, Honey and her family have been hiding from the law all her life. But when her mother and father are imprisoned, Honey realizes she must fight to stay free, or risk being sent away for good. Picking up her mother's old packhorse library route, Honey begins to deliver books to the remote hollers of Appalachia. If Honey wants to bring the freedom books provide to the families who need it most, she's going to have to fight for her place, and along the way, learn that the extraordinary women who run the hills and hollers can make all the difference. If you missed it start with [The Book Woman of Troublesome Creek](#) (\$15.99).

✠Taylor, Andrew. [The Royal Secret](#) (\$16.99). Two young girls plot a murder by witchcraft. Soon afterwards a government clerk dies painfully in mysterious circumstances. His colleague James Marwood is asked to investigate – but the task brings unexpected dangers. Meanwhile, architect Cat Hakesby is working for a merchant who lives on Slaughter Street, where the air smells of blood and a captive Barbary lion prowls the stables. Then a prestigious new commission arrives. Cat must design a Poultry House for the woman that the King loves most in all the world. Unbeknownst to all, at the heart of this lies a royal secret so explosive that it could not only rip apart England but change the entire face of Europe.... I always think that Charles II failed England and his dynasty by sprinkling bastards everywhere but refusing to divorce his sterile wife, a princess of Portugal's royal house of Braganza.

✠Weaver, Ashley. [A Peculiar Combination](#) (\$17.99). A gifted lock-picker is called upon to serve her country during WWII in this superb series launch from Edgar finalist Weaver. After business slows down for locksmith Mick McDonnell, Electra "Ellie" McDonnell helps her uncle crack a safe at a posh home in London, only to find it is a setup. The arrogant Major Gabriel Ramsey has a job for her: steal secret plans from a traitor's safe, and Mick will walk free. When Ellie and Ramsey enter the traitor's house, however, they find him dead and the safe empty. Ramsey thinks likely suspects belong to a group of Chinese porcelain devotees with potential ties to Germany, and takes Ellie to one of their parties to break into the host's safe. Suspicion swirls around a former girlfriend of Ramsey, setting Ellie, Ramsey, and their associates on the trail of spies in the town of Torquay. Weaver signs the sequel for us in July.

Wright, Lawrence. [The Plague Year](#) (\$18). "Insightful... Indispensable as a coronavirus compendium. Very little escapes Wright's notice, and he is adept at placing the ongoing story in an enlightening context . . . The illuminating profiles include, among others, vaccine researchers Barney Graham and Jason McLellan; Bellevue Hospital doctor Barron Lerner; University of Virginia professor and anesthesiologist Ebony Hilton; and from the Trump Administration, National Security Advisor Matthew Pottinger and Coronavirus Response Coordinator Deborah Birx." —Michael King, *The Austin Chronicle*, whose take on a lively, detailed, inevitably contentious account echoes that of many other reviewers.

OUR MAY SMALL PAPERBACK PICKS

Atkins, Ace. [The Heathens](#) (\$9.99). Quinn Colson #11. When her mother is murdered, 16-year-old juvenile delinquent TJ Byrd places her trust in Tibbehah County Sheriff Quinn Colson to find the real killer while trying to elude a U.S. Marshal who believes she is responsible for her mother's death.

Downes, Anna. [The Safe Place](#) (\$9.99). Emily Proudman has just lost her acting agent and her job in one miserable day. Then Scott Denny offers Emily what seems the perfect summer job as a housekeeper and nanny on his remote French estate. Emily is quickly enchanted by his lovely wife Nina, and even his strange young daughter, and falls headlong into this apparent paradise. But before long, Emily realizes that Scott and his wife are hiding dangerous secrets.

Freeman, Brian. [Robert Ludlum's the Bourne Treachery](#) (\$9.99). Bourne #16. A lone operative working in the shadows for Treadstone, Jason Bourne engages in a cat-and-mouse game with Lennon across the British countryside in an attempt to prevent another assassination — a mission that calls into question everything he thought he knew about the past.

Gaylin, Alison. [Never Look Back](#) (\$9.99). More than four decades after a 1976 killing spree by two teens, a young podcaster, who blames his troubled upbringing on the murders, receives a terrifying message that one of the killers may still be alive.

Penny, Louise. [The Madness of Crowds](#) (\$9.99). Gamache #17. When a visiting professor spreads lies so that fact and fiction are so confused which leads to murder, Chief Inspector Armand Gamache must investigate this case as well as this extraordinary popular delusion – and the madness of crowds.

MORE MAY SMALL PAPERBACKS

Cornwell, Patricia. [Autopsy](#) (\$9.99). Scarpetta #25. New chief medical examiner and forensic pathologist Kay Scarpetta is given a highly classified case involving two scientists who were found dead on a private space laboratory.

Feehan, Christine. [Murder at Sunrise Lake](#) (\$8.99). The owner of Sunrise Lake resort high in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, Stella Harrison must face her traumatic past, with the help of a mysterious man, when her premonitions reveal that a killer is out there.

Goldin, Megan. [The Night Swim](#) (\$9.99). A popular true-crime podcaster finds an unsettling note on her windshield begging for help before she uncovers dark community secrets from the past and present, including one involving the disappearance of her own sister.

Griffin, Laura. [Midnight Dunes](#) (Berkley \$8.99). Texas Murder Files #3. When the woman whose cottage she is renting is found dead in the sand dunes, documentary filmmaker Macy Burns, who has come to Lost Beach, Texas, to start over, helps Detective Owen Breda with the ensuing investigation.

Iles, Greg. [True Evil](#) (\$9.99). Reissue. The idyllic life of busy Natchez doctor Chris Shepard is turned upside down when undercover FBI agent Alex Morse recruits him for a case involving a local divorce attorney who is suspected of murdering the spouses of his clients.

Jackson, Lisa. [Wicked Ways](#) (\$9.99). Suburban wife and mother Elizabeth Gaines Ellis worries that she is somehow the cause of a series of brutal deaths, but no one will take her fears seriously except the private investigator digging into her past.

King, Stephen. [Colorado Kid](#) (Forge \$8.99). Reissue. A rookie newspaperwoman learns the true meaning of mystery when she investigates a twenty-five-year-old unsolved and very strange case involving a dead man found on an island off the coast of Maine.

King, Stephen. [The Eyes of the Dragon](#) (\$9.99). Reissue. Once, in a kingdom called Delain, there was a king with two sons... Thus begins one of the most creative tales that master storyteller Stephen King has ever written—a sprawling fantasy of dark magic and the struggle for absolute power that utterly transforms the destinies of two brothers born into royalty.

Martin, Kat. [The Last Goodnight](#) (\$8.99). Blood Ties #2. When he hires Ellie Bowman, a talented PI, to track down the man who murdered his estranged wife, Kade Logan finds old scandals about his wife's many affairs resurfacing and new violence erupting leading to the discovery of another body.

Patterson, James. [Deadly Cross](#) (\$10.99). Cross #28. Investigating the assassination of the vice president's wife, Detective Alex Cross and FBI Special Agent Ned Mahoney travel to Alabama to uncover clues from the victim's early life.

Smith, Sherri. [The Retreat](#) (Forge \$9.99). Four women. Four secrets. A weekend that will change them forever...if they survive.

Tata, A.J. [Chasing the Lion](#) (\$9.99). Army Lieutenant General Garrett Sinclair and his special ops team race to stop the viral spread of a deadly psychoactive nerve agent released by Iranians

on the evening of the inauguration of the first woman president.

Unger, Lisa. [The Stranger Inside](#) (\$9.99). When former journalist Rain Winter was twelve years old, she narrowly escaped abduction while walking to a friend's house. The abductor was eventually found and sent to prison, but years later was released. Then someone delivered real justice—and killed him in cold blood.

Webb, Brandon. [Steel Fear](#) (\$9.99). Discovering that there is a serial killer onboard the U.S.S. Abraham Lincoln, disgraced Navy SEAL sniper Finn finds suspicion falling on him as a newcomer and must expose the real killer.

Young, Tom. [Silver Wings, Iron Cross](#) (\$9.99). Two enemy combatants—an American pilot and German U-boat officer—are united by fate in an epic fight for survival.