

BOOKNEWS from

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A HAPPY FOURTH TO ALL

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.

As we have navigated the pandemic we have offered free content on our Facebook, YouTube, and podcast platforms. We wish to continue rather than create paywalls.

To support our work and the authors who benefit from it, please consider making a single or a regular donation. This will be a huge support and especially welcome from those of you who do not buy, for whatever reason, books from The Pen, which is our only income stream to maintain our free programming.

[DONATE](#)

And thank you.

FIREWORKS FOR THE FOURTH

We are closed July 4.

If you are able to shop at the bookstore July 2 and 3 we offer a paperback only special: Buy 3, Get One Free. Saturday 10-6. Sunday Noon-5.

EVENTS FOR EARLY JULY

We hope that more of you will return to our Live Events at The Pen. It's so much more meaningful to the visiting authors to have fans turn out. I feel as if we've created a bookstore version of Netflix and while we are beyond grateful for your steady and faithful support of the streaming events, when you can, those of you who can, please join us when possible.

We are giving away a free reading copy of various books at each live event.

TUESDAY JULY 5 5:00 PM Book Launch

Tess Gerritsen discusses [Listen to Me](#) (Ballantine \$28)
Rizzoli & Iles
Signed books available

TUESDAY JULY 5 6:30 PM Book Launch

Brad Thor discusses [Rising Tiger](#) (Atria \$28.99)
Our copies signed by Brad at home come with a nifty exclusive piece honoring 20 years of Scot Harvath.

WEDNESDAY JULY 6 5:00 PM

David Ellis with James Patterson
Ellis discusses [Look Closer](#) (Putnam \$27)
Signed books available
They both discuss [Escape](#) (Little Brown \$29)
Chicago PD Detective Billy Harney
Signed by Ellis with a signed Patterson bookplate

WEDNESDAY JULY 6 7:00 PM Live

Mark Greaney discusses [Armored](#) (Berkley \$28)
Ex-military contractor Josh Duffy
Signed books available

THURSDAY JULY 7 4:30 PM

Canada's Ian Hamilton discusses [Finale](#) (House of Anansi \$16.99)
The final novel of Ava Lee's Uncle Chow Tung's story

THURSDAY JULY 7 6:00 PM

James Byrne discusses [The Gatekeeper](#) (St Martins \$27.99)
New series start
Our July Crime Book of the Month
Signed books available

MONDAY JULY 11 5:00 PM

Dan Fesperman with Joseph Kanon
Fesperman discusses [Winter Work](#) (Knopf \$28)
1990 East Germany spy story
Signed books available
Kanon's [The Berlin Exchange](#) (\$28) covers similar ground

MONDAY JULY 11 7:00 PM Live

Kathy Reichs discusses [Cold, Cold Bones](#) (Scribner \$27.99)
Dr. Temperance Brennan
Signed books available

TUESDAY JULY 12 4:00 PM

Nev March with Julie McElwain
March discusses [Peril at the Exposition](#) (St Martins \$27.99)
Anglo-Indian Jim Agnihotri and bride in 1893 Chicago
Signed books available

TUESDAY JULY 12 6:00 PM

Lincoln Child with his editor Jason Kaufman

Child discusses [Chrysalis](#) (Doubleday \$29)
Enigmalogist Jeremy Logan
Mark Zuckerberg should hire Lincoln for Meta based on this fabulous thriller
Signed books available

WEDNESDAY JULY 13 5:00 PM

Bruns, Don discusses [Hotel California](#) (Blackstone \$26.99) with all the contributors Rick Bleiweiss, Bruns, Reed Farrel Coleman, Andrew Child, Jennifer Dornbush, Amanda Flower, John Gilstrap, Heather Graham.
Books are signed by all the authors

WEDNESDAY JULY 13 7:00 PM Live

Linda Castillo discusses [The Hidden One](#) (St Martins \$27.99)
Police Chief Kate Burkholder in Pennsylvania Amish Country

THURSDAY JULY 14 12:00 PM

KJ Dell'Antonia with John Charles

Dell'Antonia discusses [In Her Boots](#) (Penguin \$17)

FRIDAY JULY 15 7:00 PM

SciFi Friday discusses Sherry Tepper, [The Gate to Women's Country](#)

SATURDAY JULY 16 10:30 AM

Croak & Dagger discusses Chris Whitaker's [We Begin at the End](#) (\$17.99)

SUNDAY JULY 17 2:00 PM Live

Jane Lindskold discusses [A New Clan](#) (Baen \$18.99) with Pat King
A teen read written with David Weber.

MORE TO COME IN THE JULY BOOKNEWS

BUT DON'T MISS THIS ONE

SATURDAY JULY 23 7:00 PM

Offsite Ticketed Event

Daniel Silva discusses [Portrait of an Unknown Woman](#) (Harper \$29.99) with Jamie Gangel
Gabriel Allon returns to Venice

There will be NO STREAMING OF THIS EVENT

Location: The Valley of the Sun Jewish Community Center,
12701 N Scottsdale Rd, Scottsdale, AZ 85254.

Loads of parking on site

Tickets: [Details here and purchase](#)

If you cannot attend please order your copy by clicking on the book link

A NEW BOOK OF THE MONTH CLUB

Exciting news: we are offering a NEW CLUB: Romance & Relationships, as mostly curated by our in house specialist the insightful John Charles. The club is for one Unsigned hardcover or two Unsigned paperbacks per month, with free shipping.

To sign up please email johnc@poisonedpen.com

We continue to offer free shipping for our Books of the Months to club members only.

OUR JULY BOOKS OF THE MONTH

British Crime Club One unsigned hardcover or paperback per month

Toyne, Simon. [Dark Objects](#)

Cozy Crimes Club One unsigned hardcover or paperback per month

Hare, Louise. [Miss Aldridge Regrets](#)

First Mystery Club One Signed First Printing per month

To be announced

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

But with a bonus book for this July

Clark, Julie. [The Lies I Tell](#) and Byrne, James. [The Gatekeeper](#)

History/Mystery Club One Signed First Printing per month

Martin, William. [December '41](#)

Notable New Fiction One Signed First Printing per month

Goldman, Matt. [Carolina Moonset](#) (link is to the paperback, the hardcover sold out)

International Crime One Unsigned Hardcover or paperback per month

Reynolds, Ally. [The Swell](#)

Romance & Relationships One Unsigned Hardcover or 2 paperbacks per month

Holmes, Linda. [Flying Solo](#)

SIGNED BOOKS FOR EARLY JULY

We continue with a mix of Live and Virtual Events

A # indicates the author signs at The Pen and you can request a short personalization. However the continual evolution of COVID etc may cause live events to pivot back to virtual. Do please always check our calendar and/or stay subscribed to the Enews.

Baldacci, David. [The 6:20 Man](#) (Grand Central \$29). Army veteran Travis Devine had a distinguished career serving in Afghanistan and Iraq, but he quit under mysterious circumstances to join Cowl and Comely, a high-pressure Wall Street investment firm. Every weekday, he takes the 6:20 a.m. commuter train from the suburbs into Manhattan, where he toils until evening. His life's upended when he gets a text from an unknown person informing him that a colleague, Sara Ewes, whom he had a romantic interest in, was found hanging in a storage room in his office building. That death, which may not be the suicide it appears to be, triggers a cascade of dramatic developments including Devine becoming a murder suspect....

Bell, David. [The Finalists](#) (Berkley \$27). **We may run slow on this one.** Six ambitious students agree to lock themselves up in an old Victorian building for eight hours in hopes of winning a full ride to the fictional Hyde College. Totally secluded and far from campus, they have to impress college vice president Troy Gaines, a man nearly as desperate for money as they are, and Nicholas Hyde, the delinquent heir to the Hyde family fortune. Before they even step inside the house, though, things start to go wrong. Outside, there's a political protest concerning new discoveries about the college founder's activities in the Civil War. Nicholas Hyde shows up late and inebriated. Campus police escort the protestors away from the building as the crowd starts to get violent. Once the competitors—an eclectic group of students with nothing in common but financial need—give up their electronics and are locked in the house by the campus chief of police, things quickly get even worse. Ultimately the story pits the students and even Gaines against each other while exploring age-old questions of morality and duty and how far some people will go to enact their dream.

Bruns, Don, et al. [Hotel California](#) (Blackstone \$26.99). Go ahead. Check in, enjoy some room service, and stay until the very last tantalizing page. Just don't forget to search the closet or behind the curtains as you move from the titular tale "Hotel California" to a new, original Jack Reacher adventure. Music and Murder. **Signed by all the contributors:** Rick Bleiweiss, Bruns, Reed Farrel Coleman, Andrew Child, Jennifer Dornbush, Amanda Flower, John Gilstrap, Heather Graham.

Byrne, James. [The Gatekeeper](#) (St Martins \$27.99). Lord, the hero of this exciting thriller is like none other. We all fell for Dez who avoids nearly every trope assigned to a high action guy and remains both self contained while very human. This series start is our **July Crime Book of the Month**.

But because Julie Clark's [The Lies I Tell](#) is also so different – two amazing women each running a con against the other – it will be a bonus book, as I note above, for the Crime Club as we all need really tantalizing summer reading more than in say, December. It's also a hedge against my not finding a book I think worthy of the Crime Club later in the year – best to grab good ones while they are available.

Here is the *LJ* Starred Review echoing my enthusiasm: "Desmond Limerick was a mercenary specializing in getting

locked doors open and keeping them open until the mission was over. He's retired, but that doesn't mean his skills have vanished. When he sees a sniper on a building across the street from his hotel, he knows that he could choose to stay out of it, or to help. The woman he saves from being kidnapped is the daughter of a CEO of a major military contractor. She's not only grateful, but as she has no idea whom she can trust, she asks for his expertise. What appears to be a simple investigation turns into a conspiracy with significant ramifications across the entire country, and death and destruction are only part of the planned chaos. It's a mixture of the best black op novels like a Brad Thor or Mark Greaney, with a hint of the TV show *Leverage*. Dez has a bright future ahead, and this one is a true keeper." Recommended also by Gregg Hurwitz, Mark Greaney, Lisa Gardner, Steve Berry, and Nick Petrie. I add that this is an author reinventing himself in a very brave fashion so I give him extra points! And to you too if you figure out who he is.

Castillo, Linda. [The Hidden One](#) (St Martins \$27.99). It's just like visiting home to open up a new Amish Country thriller by Castillo. They are among my very favorite summer reading so attached am I to the lead characters at the Painter's Mill cop shop heading by Chief Kate Burkholder, a woman with a fraught history with her Amish family and the community, both of whom she left years ago. She has not returned to the faith but she has returned home. And she has an irresistible partner in agent Tomasetti whose own history contains tragedy. Each book is complete so if you have missed reading Castillo, waste no time beginning.

Over a decade ago, stern Amish bishop Ananias Stoltzfus disappeared without a trace. When skeletal remains showing evidence of foul play are unearthed, his disappearance becomes even more sinister. A trio of his Pennsylvania community's elders arrives in Painters Mill to ask chief of police Kate Burkholder for help, but she quickly realizes she has a personal connection to the crime. The handsome Amish man who stands accused of the murder, Jonas Bowman, was Kate's first love before she broke free. Reluctantly, Kate travels to Pennsylvania's Kishacoquillas Valley, where the Amish culture differs dramatically from the traditions she knows and where she has no official authority. But through dogged questioning she learns about a dark side to the dead bishop. Very quickly, someone doesn't want Kate asking questions. But even after being accosted and threatened in the dead of night, she sticks to her investigation for the sake of Jonas and his family, and for her own.

Cavanagh, Steve. [The Accomplice](#) (Orion \$38). The Sandman killings have been solved. Daniel Miller murdered fourteen people before he vanished. His wife, Carrie, now faces trial as his accomplice. The FBI, the District Attorney, the media and everyone in America believe she knew and helped cover up her husband's crimes. Eddie Flynn won't take a case unless his client is innocent. Now, he has to prove to a jury, and the entire world, that Carrie Miller was just another victim of the Sandman. She

didn't know her husband's dark side and she had no part in the murders. But so far, Eddie and his team are the only ones who believe her. Gabriel Lake used to be a federal agent, before someone tried to kill him. Now, he's an investigator with a vendetta against the Sandman. He's the only one who can catch him, because he believes that everything the FBI knows about serial killers is wrong. With his wife on trial, the Sandman is forced to come out of hiding to save her from a life sentence. He will kill to protect her and everyone involved in the case is a target. Even Eddie Flynn...

Child, Lincoln. [Chrysalis](#) (Doubleday \$29). Honestly, I think Mark Zuckerberg could hire Lincoln for Meta given the research and world building that he has put into this thriller. Amazing! Enigmalogist Jeremy Logan takes on a dominant tech company—Chrysalis—whose groundbreaking virtual reality technology is redefining the way we live...and possibly introducing a catastrophic danger. As background for the action, Lincoln creates a tech campus like no other and then pits characters against each other in terrifying ways. Logan never loses his cool as he navigates the betrayals rife in Chrysalis, for surely what's going on has to be an inside job. As the new Preston & Child won't be out until winter—[The Cabinet of Dr. Leng](#) (\$30 Signed by both authors)—don't miss out on Child's first solo novel in four years since *Full Wolf Moon*.... And if you are a Michael Crichton fan, grab *Chrysalis*.

Here's a review echoing my own: "... the enigmalogist, who solves 'problems nobody has encountered before,' gets the challenge of his life. Claire Asperon, general counsel to the Chrysalis Management Group, is concerned about the bizarre death of a board member of the pioneering tech company. Russell Spearman, a producer at Chrysalis Film Studios, collapsed on a glass table, fatally impaling himself on its shards. Asperon then received an anonymous message reading: 'Spearman Was the First. No Accident. The Second Will Drop the Day After Tomorrow.' The threat comes at an especially fraught time for Chrysalis, which is about to roll out a breakthrough in virtual reality, a launch imperiled after a second board member dies. With no demand attached to the warning, Logan must use every bit of his formidable intellect to figure out what's going on and avoid more casualties. As Child masterfully ratchets up the tension, he makes even secondary figures feel real enough for readers to worry about their survival prospects."

Ellis, David. [Look Closer](#) (Putnam \$27) A wickedly clever and fast-paced novel of greed, revenge, obsession—and quite possibly the perfect murder involving a seemingly perfect Chicago couple. The day after Halloween 2022 brings the discovery of the hanged body of Lauren Betancourt in her suburban Chicago house. Flashback to May 13, 2022, when pompous law professor Simon Dobias bumps into Lauren on the street. Simon and Lauren, who last saw each other 19 years earlier, embark on an affair about which Simon keeps a journal. Meanwhile, Simon's wife, Vicky Lanier, a former sex worker, seduces aggressive financial adviser Christian Newsome with a scheme to steal her husband's \$21 million trust the day she gets access to it: their 10th wedding anniversary on November 3. Christian, a lonely-hearts scammer on his seventh victim, plots to get the money for himself. Ellis jumps between the tangle of relationships and the police's unraveling of Simon's questionable past in a "complex tale of triple-crossings and devious revenge."

NEW: Also available signed by Ellis with a bookplate signed by James Patterson: [Escape](#) (Little Brown \$29). As Chicago PD's special-ops leader, Detective Billy Harney knows well that money is not the only valuable currency. The filthy rich man he's investigating is down to his last twenty million. He's also being held in jail. For now. Billy's unit is called in when an escape plan results in officers down and inmates vanished. In an empty lot, Billy spots two Kevlar vests. Two helmets. Two assault rifles. And a handwritten note: *Hi, Billy. Are you having fun yet?* And if you want the Patterson biography [James Patterson](#) we should have signed bookplates for that.

Fesperman, Dan. [Winter Work](#) (Knopf \$28) A Spy thriller inspired by a true story about the precious secrets up for grabs just after the fall of the Berlin Wall. You won't be surprised to learn I've booked Joseph Kanon to zoom with Dan on July 11 as his last, [The Berlin Exchange](#) (\$28 SIGNED about 4 copies left), covers similar ground.

Here's Dan's usual Starred Review: "At the start of this superb spy thriller set in 1990 from Fesperman, Emil Grimm, who's soon to be discharged from the foreign intelligence service of East Germany's Ministry of State Security, is walking in the woods near his 'dacha' north of Berlin when he comes across a crime scene. Investigators are prowling near a body, which Grimm helps identify as his fellow Stasi officer, Lothar Fischer, with whom he was working on a final operation after the fall of the Berlin Wall. The gun in Fischer's hand suggests he died by suicide, but Grimm suspects otherwise. Meanwhile, CIA agent Claire Saylor, last seen in Dan's 2021 [The Cover Wife](#) (\$17), is in Berlin on a mission that leads her to cross paths with Grimm. Fesperman nicely works historical figures such as Markus Wolf, 'the Stasi's most renowned spymaster,' into the complex plot while painting an evocative portrait of East Berlin, 'spying's most storied theme park.' A surprisingly moving bond develops between Saylor and Grimm, who fears prosecution or worse after reunification, as the action builds to a deeply satisfying denouement. Cold War-era spy fiction doesn't get much better than this." Patrick, along with me, agrees.

✠ Fowler, Christopher. [Bryant and May Peculiar London](#) (Bantam \$44). The two old coppers say, "As the nation's oldest serving detectives, we know more about London than almost anyone. After all, we've been walking its streets and impulsively arresting its citizens for decades. Who better to take you through its less savory side? We'll be chatting about odd buildings, odder characters, lost venues, forgotten disasters, confusing routes, dubious gossip, illicit pleasures and hidden pubs. We'll be making all sorts of odd connections and showing you why it's almost impossible to separate fact from fiction in London. With the help of some of our more disreputable friends, each an argumentative and unreliable expert in his or her own dodgy field, we'll explain why some streets have genders, why only two Londoners got to meet Dracula, how a department store and a prison played tricks on your mind, when a theatre got stranded in the past, how a building vanished in plain sight, what excited Charlotte Brontë about the city and where the devils hide in London. We hope to capture something of the city's restless spirit by shamelessly and willfully wandering off course. It goes without saying that we'll bluff and bamboozle you along the way but that's all part of the fun. History is what you remember." This will be the final volume from Fowler who has revealed he has terminal cancer.

Freeman, Dianne. [A Bride's Guide to Marriage and Murder](#) (Kensington \$26). "Pure unadulterated fun" for fans of Ashley Weaver, Deanna Raybourn, Tasha Alexander, and, I add, debut novelist Kate Khavari, the Agatha Award-winning Countess of Harleigh Mysteries are a witty romp through the high society of Victorian England with a touch of romance, an appealing and independent female lead, and rich historical detail. In this charming fifth installment, Frances Wynn, the American-born Countess of Harleigh, finds her wedding day overshadowed by murder....

NEW: Speaking of Khavari, her [Botanist's Guide to Parties and Poisons](#) (Crooked Lane \$26.99) is a gem of an historical cozy with a germ of science fueling the plot. I got to it late but have now arranged for Signed copies. It's ideal for Raybourn's Veronica Speedwell fans. And opens in 1923, London University College, so also in its way a feminist Dark Academic, not very dark but there is a murder, academic rivalries, an adventurous, enigmatic male colleague, our young botanist heroine risking her own life testing possible poisons... just Great Stuff!!

Gerritsen, Tess. [Listen to Me](#) (Ballantine \$28). Boston homicide detective Jane Rizzoli and medical examiner Maura Isles are newly plagued by what seems like a completely senseless murder. Sofia Suarez, a widow and nurse who was universally liked by her neighbors, lies bludgeoned to death in her own home. Still, Sofia seemed to have plenty of secrets in her last days, making covert phone calls to traceless burner phones. When Jane finally makes a connection between Sofia and the victim of a hit-and-run from months earlier, the case only grows blurrier., Jane's mother Angela Rizzoli hasn't had a decent night's sleep in all the years since her daughter became a homicide detective. Maybe the apple didn't fall too far from the tree for nothing in Angela's neighborhood gets by her—not the gossip about a runaway teenager down the block and definitely not the stand-off neighbors who have just moved in across the street. Angela's sure there's no such thing as coincidence in her sleepy suburb. If only Jane would listen—but she writes off Angela's concerns as the result of an overactive imagination. Yet Angela's convinced there's a real wolf in her vicinity.... Series fans will enjoy a new aspect of Maura whose voice is one of three telling us the whole story.

Greaney, Mark. [Armored](#) (Berkley \$28). Ex-military contractor Josh Duffy lost a leg in his last mission and now works as a mall cop in Virginia. Low on self-esteem and struggling to provide for his family, Duffy leaps at the chance to join a private protection squad hired to guard a team of UN representatives venturing deep into Mexico in hopes of bringing peace to warring drug cartels and negotiating the return of 60 shoulder-launched missiles one cartel stole from the Mexican military. Fully aware that his new employer has a checkered reputation, Duffy ignores some early red flags....

Karp, Marshall. [Snowstorm in August](#) (Blackstone \$28.99). Want an over the top adrenaline ride? New Yorkers are stunned by what appears to be a massive summertime snowfall limited to Central Park. They're horrified when the falling white powder turns out to be thousands of pounds of cocaine, which kills hundreds. The coke was dropped from a helicopter on the orders of drug lord Joaquín Alboroto, "one of the most loved, most hated, most feared men on the planet." A flashback explains why Alboroto

has declared a vendetta against New York City. Alboroto's narcotrafficker son, Sebastián, is about to walk on federal charges because of a tainted chain of evidence, when Harvey Solomon, the terminally ill judge who dismissed them and whose son overdosed on drugs supplied by the Alborotos, guns Sebastián down in his courtroom. Alboroto is opposed by a secret team of ex-cops, financed by unidentified billionaires, led by Solomon's son-in-law....

Koontz, Dean. [The Big Dark Sky](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$28.99). Dean writes to me that he's never felt so productive. The evidence is the work he is turning out for you fans at a welcome rate, no? So here, as a girl, Joanna Chase thrived on Rustling Willows Ranch in Montana until tragedy upended her life. Now thirty-four and living in Santa Fe with only misty memories of the past, she begins to receive pleas—by phone, through her TV, in her dreams: *I am in a dark place, Jojo. Please come and help me.* Heeding the disturbing appeals, Joanna is compelled to return to Montana, and to a strange childhood companion she had long forgotten. She isn't the only one drawn to the Montana farmstead. People from all walks of life have converged at the remote ranch. They are haunted, on the run, obsessed, and seeking answers to the same omniscient danger Joanna came to confront. All the while, on the outskirts of Rustling Willows, a madman lurks with a vision to save the future. Mass murder is the only way to see his frightening manifesto come to pass. Through a bizarre twist of seemingly coincidental circumstances, a band of strangers now find themselves under Montana's big dark sky. Their lives entwined, they face an encroaching horror. "A nonstop actioner with cosmic overtones painted in consistently broad strokes."

Lindsfold, Jane/David Weber. [A New Clan](#) (Baen \$18.99). Signed by Lindsfold live at The Pen July 19. Star Kingdom #4 for Young Adults with Pat King.

March, Nev. [Peril at the Exposition](#) (St Martins \$27.99). Edgar finalist March takes Anglo-Indian Jim Agnihotri, a former British army captain, and his bride, Diana, whom he met while probing the supposed suicides of her sister and sister-in-law, from India to America in 1893. Before they can settle into their new life in Boston, Jim's employers at the Dupree Detective Agency send him to Chicago, the site of the under-construction World's Fair, to investigate the murder of a security guard. When weeks pass with no word from Jim, Diana gets increasingly anxious. She has more to worry about when a stranger shares a message in German intended for Jim referencing explosives. Diana then learns that Jim's bosses are also uncertain of his whereabouts and that the colleague he was supposed to aid in Chicago has been killed. The redoubtable Diana bullies the Duprees into hiring her as an operative to follow her husband's trail. And in doing so the relatively spoiled Diana encounters racism, misogyny, and active threats such as an immigrant of color might experience today. Think Erik Larson's *Devil in the White City* for the atmosphere of the Fair.

Martin, William. [December '41](#) (Forge \$27.99). **Our July Historical Fiction Book of the Month. We shipped it early** because it is the perfect Fourth of July read, a truly marvelous story that incorporates Old Hollywood, a German asset deep undercover with a terrible mission, all sorts of background about say two weeks following Pearl Harbor including speeches by FDR and by Winston Churchill who came to DC, and small

events showing how every day Americans were affected and reacted. The characters are superb, the voices wonderful, the plot truly suspenseful, and the patriotism nostalgic. I love this.

Mark Greaney tells us, “I loved the rich characters, the noir-like dialogue and settings, and the backdrop of those terrifying days in the American Homeland during the start of World War Two. A great piece of writing that was a blast to read.” And Hank Phillippi Ryan enthuses: “William Martin is the consummate storyteller! His brilliant *December ‘41* is a contemporary take on the classic spy thriller—It’s Herman Wouk meets *The Day of the Jackal*, with the ticking time bomb expertise of Hitchcock—and it is irresistible. Instantly cinematic and endlessly entertaining, *December ‘41* is an absolute page turner. Martin’s impeccable research shines through, seamlessly, in this historical look at old Hollywood, World War II, and the profound triumph of the human spirit.”

Mina, Denise. [Confidence](#) (Harvill \$39). Anna McDonald has made a terrible mistake. She has forced her blended family to vacation together. The weather is bad, her daughters are bored, and her ex-husband still insufferable. Oh, and Fin Cohen brought his latest girlfriend, too. So when news of a shocking kidnapping breaks, Anna and Fin do the responsible thing. They take off to solve the case. And find themselves at the center of an Internet frenzy to find internet sensation Lisa Lee, who has vanished from a small Scottish town. But Lisa is not the innocent victim she first appears to be. Anna and Fin uncover Lisa’s YouTube channel, which shows her breaking into an abandoned French Chateau and nabbing a Roman silver casket. Is it a mere coincidence that one day after Lisa’s disappearance the casket is listed for auction in Paris?

Nieh, Daniel. [Take No Names](#) (Harper \$26.99). “I blasted through this novel in one night! *Take No Names* combines striking characters, edgy prose, and a riveting plot that kept me guessing. Daniel Nieh skillfully blends his characters’ personal journeys with geopolitical tension and drama. Victor Li is one of the most memorable characters in years, and this gripping novel is a worthy successor to Nieh’s fantastic debut, [Beijing Payback](#) (\$16.99). Don’t miss this one.” — David Heska Wanbli Weiden. *Beijing Payback* was indeed irresistible and a 2019 First Mystery Club Pick.

So here is the continuing saga of Victor Li, California-raised son of a murdered Chinese crime syndicate member, here enmeshed in a deadly scheme involving a Chinese conglomerate, American Black Ops, and other corrupt forces tied to the building of a new airport in Mexico. Now hiding out in Seattle, wanted for a murder he didn’t commit, Victor has a job as a deluxe dumpster diver, breaking into a security firm’s storage bins to find sellable items left behind by the deported. His big find is a painite, “the world’s rarest gem,” worth \$65,000 per karat. With his nominal boss, Mark, a boisterous, uneven-tempered hustler, he heads to Mexico to fence the gemstone—mined by the Chinese in Burma and banned in the U.S.—using contact information found in its former owner’s intricately coded notebook. Shot by bad guys, imprisoned, and played by supposed American agents, Victor has insult added to those woes when his estranged sister, Jules, shows up with Sun Jianshui, his father Vincent’s lethal protégé and, Victor recently learned, Vincent’s killer. Can he really be Jules’ lover? “The good news is that Sun, who apologizes for slashing the elder Li’s throat, is an ace in the hole in fighting off

bad guys from both sides of the border...the new book combines biting humor, breathless action scenes, a clever presentation of mixed languages, and dark geopolitical commentary, including an indictment of America’s own duplicity. It’s a lot of fun.”

#Reichs, Kathy. [Cold, Cold Bones](#) (Scribner \$27.99) “reanimates all the ghosts from Temperance Brennan’s forensic past until they thoroughly haunt her present. Who or what is staging this grimly nostalgic murder spree?” —Harlan Coben. Winter has come to North Carolina and, with it, a drop in crime. Freed from a heavy work schedule, Tempe Brennan is content to dote on her daughter Katy, finally returned to civilian life from the army. But when mother and daughter meet at Tempe’s place in Charlotte one night, they find a box on the back porch. Inside: a very fresh human eyeball. GPS coordinates etched into the eyeball lead to a Benedictine monastery where an equally macabre discovery awaits. Soon after, Tempe examines a mummified corpse in a NC state park, and her anxiety deepens. There seems to be no pattern to the subsequent killings uncovered, except that each mimics in some way a homicide that a younger Tempe had been called in to analyze. Who or what is targeting her, and why?

Rosenfelt, David. [Holy Chow](#) (St Martins \$27.99) Andy Carpenter, the “professionally retired” Paterson, N.J., defense attorney, arranges for Rachel Morehouse to adopt a Chow Chow through his dog rescue organization, the Tara Foundation. When Rachel suddenly dies, Andy is surprised to learn she ran a multibillion-dollar corporation and left the Tara Foundation \$2 million. He attends the reading of the will, where he meets her stepson, Tony, a high school chemistry teacher who had been staying with Rachel as they attempted to build a relationship after the death of Tony’s estranged father. When an autopsy reveals that Rachel was murdered with potassium chloride, the police arrest Tony and charge him with murder. Believing in Tony’s innocence, Andy takes on the case and employs his team of investigators to help mount Tony’s defense.

Silva, Daniel. [Portrait of an Unknown Woman](#) (Harper \$29.99). **To attend the live event please see the details in our Events section. Otherwise please order [Portrait of an Unknown Woman](#) as usual using this ticket link.**

Gabriel Allon has at long last severed ties with Israeli intelligence and settled quietly in Venice, the only place he has ever truly known peace. His beautiful wife, Chiara, has taken over day-to-day management of the Tiepolo Restoration Company, and their two young children are clandestinely enrolled in a neighborhood *scuola elementare*. For his part, Gabriel spends his days wandering the streets and canals of the watery city, parting company with the demons of his tragic, violent past. But when the eccentric London art dealer Julian Isherwood asks Gabriel to investigate the circumstances surrounding the rediscovery and lucrative sale of a centuries-old painting, he is drawn into a deadly game of cat and mouse where nothing is as it seems.

Teschner, John. [Project Namahana](#) (Forge \$27.99). Five years ago, John Teschner awoke from a nightmare in which he’d been arrested and interrogated for a crime he hadn’t committed. This sparked the idea for his debut novel, which tells the enthralling and timely story of disappearances, deaths, dark secrets, and corporate evil. It explores how corporate executives could be responsible for evil without, presumably, being evil themselves. I am debating this debut thriller with one other July release for

our July First Mystery of the Month. Meanwhile it is in stock and should not be missed...the rough edges of Hawaiian natives vs. newcomers are spot on with a similar issue nearly everywhere.

PW Stars this debut: “Teschner’s hard-edged eco-thriller matches strong characters with a bold plot that fulfills its potential. Micah Bernt, who left the U.S. Army under a cloud but not jugged despite being charged with maltreating detainees, assault, and indecent acts. He’s trying for a new start on a remote Hawaiian island, where he’s taking a community college class and working as a salesman. Then his landlord, Clifton Moniz, turns up dead in the ocean, apparently an accidental drowning victim. Moniz’s death may be linked to another tragedy—the recent drowning of three local boys. Bernt’s unofficial investigation alternates with a look at the covert machinations of Benevoment Seed, a powerful international corporation that produces Efloxiflam, ‘the bestselling lawn care product in history.’ Benevoment has been testing a successor product, which may be causing deadly pollution on the island’s Namahana Mountain. Michael Lindstrom, the executive in charge, is torn between his obligations to his employer and his sense of morality, and he winds up in an unlikely partnership with Bernt. The action builds to a satisfying resolution that doesn’t pull punches and is true to the book’s spirit of portraying a less-than-postcard-perfect image of Hawaii.” Not to mention a hard look at corporations putting profit above all else.

Thor, Brad. [Rising Tiger](#) (Atria \$28.99). **Our copies signed by Brad at home come with a nifty exclusive piece honoring 20 years of Scot Harvath. We host his only event on July 5 at 6:30 PM virtually.**

To curb China’s global ambitions, America proposes creating an Asian version of NATO, with India at its core. But going from covert discussions to a formal alliance will be incredibly risky. Then a detachment of Indian Special Forces, known as the “Snow Warriors,” are encamped in a high mountain pass near the border. Drawn up under British colonial rule, the line is an ongoing source conflict between Beijing and New Delhi. With medieval style weapons, Chinese troops creep across the border and launch a brutal attack. Yet the Indian troops are winning until the Chinese introduce a new weapon allowing them to fall back. Four months later, in Jaipur, the man charged with forming the Asian NATO is murdered. And then....enter Scot Harvath.

☒ Toyne, Simon. [Dark Objects](#) (Harper \$27.99 UNSIGNED). This is our **July British Crime Club Book**. There is a UK edition, [Dark Objects](#) (Collins \$39) you can order on demand.

In its Starred Review, which I could have written, *PW* says, “British author Toyne, who has produced some offbeat thrillers like the Sanctus trilogy, may have found his true calling with this excellent police procedural. DCI Tannahill Khan of the North London Murder Squad investigates when a wealthy woman is stabbed to death in her home and her husband can’t be found. The body is staged with several mysterious objects placed around it, including the book *How to Process a Murder* by Laughton Rees. That Laughton is the daughter of Metropolitan Police Commissioner John Rees immediately adds an unwanted complication to Tannahill’s inquiry. As it becomes evident that the killer’s actions are directed in part toward Laughton, Tannahill brings her into the case as a consultant, not only to provide fresh insight but also to protect her from a deranged

murderer who may be connected to her own painful past. Tannahill and Laughton make a superb investigative team, and how Tannahill deals with the prejudice he encounters (‘When I was growing up I was called all sorts—Paki, camel jockey, raghead. My dad was Pakistani, you see, Irish mum but I got his skin and hair’) helps illuminate his character. A skilled storyteller, Toyne has upped his game with this one.”

Vercher, John. [After the Lights Go Out](#) (Soho \$26) is a heartbreaking look at Xavier Wallace’s fight inside the cage and out. John Vercher gives us an unraveling understanding of Xavier’s tumultuous relationship with his white father and Black mother, and the seedy underbelly of fighting. “One person’s entertainment is another’s extraordinary trauma of the mind, body, and soul in John Vercher’s stunning, stone-cold knockout, *After the Lights Go Out*. Heart-wrenching in its portrayal of anger, betrayal, and the value placed on the bodies of combat athletes, Vercher’s novel is as relentless as it is unforgettable. Brutally elegant prose, jet fuel-like propulsion, and Vercher’s powerhouse voice force us to confront a profound and tragic question: How do you save yourself when you’re the person you trust least? Dear reader, brace yourself.” —P. J. Vernon

☒ Ware, Ruth. [The It Girl](#) (Gallery \$28.99). **Signed Tip-ins plus some swag per copy while supply last. Those who reserve before we run out get both.**

Bookseller Hannah lives a peaceful existence in Edinburgh with her husband, Will, but her tranquility is rocked when she learns of the death of college porter John Neville. April Clarke-Cliveden was the first person Hannah Jones met at Oxford. Vivacious, bright, occasionally vicious, and the ultimate It girl, she quickly pulled Hannah into her dazzling orbit. Together, they developed a group of devoted and inseparable friends—Will, Hugh, Ryan, and Emily—during their first term. By the end of the year, April was dead. Now, a decade later, Hannah and Will are expecting their first child, and Neville, convicted of killing April largely on Hannah’s evidence, has died in prison. Relieved to have finally put the past behind her, Hannah’s world is rocked when a young journalist comes knocking and presents new evidence that Neville may have been innocent. And she realizes that the friends she thought she knew all have something to hide...including a murder.

Ware writes, “All my books rest on a personal fear or a ‘what if’ that makes me uneasy in some deep way. Ever since doing jury duty, I had wondered what it would be like to give evidence in a really serious trial—and what if, after the fact, you began to doubt that what you thought you saw was really what happened? This is exactly Hannah’s nightmare—she reports truthfully what she thought happened, but ten years later, with the benefit of hindsight, she realizes how far her own fears and assumptions may have led her astray. I know in her shoes I wouldn’t be able to rest until I found out the truth—and that’s definitely how Hannah feels.”

SOME BEACH AND ISLAND READS

[Summer Reading Suggestions](#) from the *New York Times Book Review*

[Beach Read Suggestions and More](#)

[Your destination: The Beach—and ways to get there](#)

Bamford, Emma. [Deep Water](#) (Gallery \$28). First alphabetically in this list, and first in my opinion and heart, is this exceptional, insightful, compassionate yet suspenseful novel that begins in the middle of the Indian Ocean when a Navy vessel captained by Danial Tengku receives a distress signal. On board the yacht is a British couple: a horribly injured man, Jake, and his traumatized wife, Virginie, who breathlessly confesses, “It’s all my fault. I killed them.” Trembling with fear, she reveals their shocking story to Danial. Months earlier, the couple had spent all their savings on a yacht, full of excitement for exploring the high seas and exotic lands together. They start at the busy harbors of Malaysia and, through word of mouth, Jake and Virginie learn about a tiny, isolated island full of unspoiled beaches. When they arrive, they discover they are not the only visitors and quickly become entangled with a motley crew of expat sailors. Soon, Jake and Virginie’s adventurous dream turns into a terrifying nightmare. But how much of the story can Tengku believe? And what should he do? Seriously, this is a terrific book, unusual and brave, too.

✦ Barton, Fiona. [Local Gone Missing](#) (Berkley \$27). Detective Elise King investigates a man’s disappearance in a Sussex seaside town where the locals and weekenders are at odd over tourism, development, and... Barton has relocated to a Sussex beach town and is fascinated... and plans a sequel for her Detective Elise King who here is enduring, not cheerfully, a medical leave, when a newcomer wants to put Ebbing on the map with a local music festival and two teenagers die...

Brady, Ali. [The Beach Trap](#) (Penguin \$17). This, the first novel from Ali Brady (the pen name for the writing duo Alison Hammer and Bradeigh Godfrey), brings readers the sweet tale of two half sisters who must each overcome hardship from their pasts as they work together to fix up a ramshackle beach house. Now adults, Kat Steiner and Blake O’Neill first met at summer camp when they were 12. They struck up an instant friendship until a shocking revelation tore them apart: they share the same father. Unlike in *The Parent Trap*, the sisters didn’t bond over their relationship. Instead Blake grew up poor, raised by her loving grandparents, while Kat was raised by her wealthy father and mother, who feuded constantly. In the story, Blake, a nanny who was recently demoted to dog sitter, and Kat, a fashionable Instagram influencer, haven’t spoken now for 15 years. When their father abruptly dies, they discover he left the two of them his parents’ old beach house. As the women work on renovating the house in order to sell it, they continually argue. But as the summer progresses, each realizes the other has experienced hard times. Sure to appeal to fans of Jennifer Weiner or Tessa Bailey, *The Beach Trap* is a wonderful summer novel, perfectly blending romance and self-discovery.”

Brenner, Jamie. [Gilt](#) (Putnam \$27). “A summer sparkler about diamonds, revenge, family heirlooms, but-at its heart-the one thing we all desire most: Love. Gilt is a gem.” “One woman’s quest to find her way in the world and reclaim her rightful place

in the family-and famed jewelry company-that left her behind sets the stage for Jamie Brenner’s latest, delectable read. Family drama, summer love, and one fabulous piece of jewelry combine to create a delicious page-turner that I positively could not put down. Brenner’s perfect pacing and prose shine as brightly as the diamond at her novel’s center.

And also by Brenner, [Blush](#) (\$17). This stunning novel takes place at the beach *and* at a winery. For generations, the Hollander family has run the premier winery on Long Island’s North Fork. But times are tough, and there are worries that this summer season could be their last. Gathered together to try and enjoy one last summer, they uncover journals from the matriarch’s old book club dedicated to scandalous novels of decades past. Reviving the “trashy” book club, the Hollander women find that the stories hold the key to their fight not only for the vineyard, but for the life and love they’ve wanted all along.

Colgan, Jenny. [An Island Wedding](#) (Harper \$16.99.) We at The Pen remain alive to all things Scottish. Flora MacKenzie is planning a sweet, small wedding on the Scottish island of Mure when she learns that rich, gorgeous Olivia is returning home to Mure for her own extravaganza wedding—planned for the same day...

Cowie, Amber. [Last One Alive](#) (\$16.99). A wave of books inspired by the Golden Age classic, Christie’s [And Then There Were None](#) (\$15.99), and an island setting, continues to roll. Paul Doiron’s [Hatchet Island](#) (\$27.99 SIGNED) set off the coast of Maine for one. And here is Cowie’s chiller, set in the Pacific Northwest. “A haunting, claustrophobic, unpredictable thriller for fans of Agatha Christie showcases Amber Cowie’s extraordinary talent. As a violent storm rages outside a remote lodge, a group of strangers are stranded in a terrifying cat-and-mouse hunt for the murderer among them. Cowie writes with such skillful description that I could feel the cold and rain seep into my bones, and my pulse spike as the exhilarating story reached a breakneck pace. A bewitching read teeming with fascinating characters, this book is an absolute stand-out.”—Samantha Bailey

Ellison, JT. [Her Dark Lies](#) (\$16.99). For an island mystery, a new Gothic more like DuMaurier than Christie, you can’t beat this tale. Jutting from sparkling turquoise waters off the Italian coast, Isle Isola is an idyllic setting for a wedding. In the majestic cliff-top villa owned by the wealthy Compton family, up-and-coming artist Claire Hunter will marry handsome, charming Jack Compton, surrounded by close family, intimate friends...and a host of dark secrets. From the moment Claire sets foot on the island, something seems amiss. Skeletal remains have just been found. There are other, newer disturbances, too. Menacing texts. A ruined wedding dress. And one troubling shadow hanging over Claire’s otherwise blissful relationship—the strange mystery surrounding Jack’s first wife. Then a raging storm descends, the power goes out—and the real terror begins...

Hare, Louise. [Miss Aldridge Regrets](#) (Putnam \$27). View the ocean not from the beach but on board an ocean liner. London, 1936. Lena Aldridge wonders if life has passed her by. The dazzling theatre career she hoped for hasn’t worked out. Instead, she’s stuck singing in a sticky-floored basement club in Soho, and her married lover has just left her. But Lena has always had a complicated life, one shrouded in mystery as a mixed-race girl passing for white in a city unforgiving of her true racial

heritage. She's feeling utterly hopeless until a stranger offers her the chance of a lifetime: a starring role on Broadway and a first-class ticket on the *Queen Mary* bound for New York. After a murder at the club, the timing couldn't be better, and Lena jumps at the chance to escape England. But death follows her onboard when an obscenely wealthy family draws her into their fold just as one among them is killed in a chillingly familiar way. As Lena navigates the Abernathy's increasingly bizarre family dynamic, she realizes that her greatest performance won't be for an audience, but for her life.

"In Lena Aldridge, Hare has created a heroine who practically leaps off the page with her sharp wit and incandescence. Throw in a Jazz Age ocean crossing on the *Queen Mary* and series of diabolical murders that would make Agatha Christie proud, and I was done for, turning the pages late into the night. Irresistible and smart." —Fiona Davis on our **July Cozy Crime Pick**.

Hilderbrand, Elin. [Hotel Nantucket](#) (Little Brown \$29). Bring on the fresh-baked *gougères* and the hydrangea-blue cashmere throws: a classic fictional setting—the grand hotel—gets the Hilderbrand treatment. Her 28th book is another tour de force, deploying all her usual tricks and tropes and clever points of view, again among them a character from the afterlife and the collective "we" of gossipy island residents. Our ghost is Grace Hadley, a teenage chambermaid who died under suspicious circumstances in a hotel fire in 1922. Grace's lonely days are over when the historic property is purchased and reopened by a London billionaire. As Xavier Darling tells his general manager, Lizbet Keaton, their goal will be to get five out of five keys from Shelly Carpenter, an undercover hotel blogger who has not awarded top honors to any spot visited so far. A gorgeous remodel, a sterling staff, free treats in the minibar, and of course, since this is Hilderbrand, an incredible restaurant where a disco ball drops from the ceiling every night at 9:00 p.m. and the chef is hotter than any dish on the menu are all in play as the first guests come streaming in. Which one is the hard-to-please Ms. Carpenter?

Holmes, Linda. [Flying Solo](#) (Random \$28). **Our first Romance & Relationship Club selection (this club opens in July) is a perfect summer choice.** Smarting from her recently cancelled wedding and about to turn forty, Laurie Sassalyn returns to her Maine hometown of Calcasset to handle the estate of her great-aunt Dot, a spirited adventurer who lived to be ninety. Along with boxes of Polaroids and pottery, a mysterious wooden duck shows up at the bottom of a cedar chest. Laurie's curiosity is piqued, especially after she finds a love letter to the never-married Dot that ends with the line, "And anyway, if you're ever desperate, there are always ducks, darling." Laurie is told that the duck has no financial value. But after it disappears under suspicious circumstances, she feels compelled to figure out why anyone would steal a wooden duck—and why Dot kept it hidden away in the first place. Suddenly Laurie finds herself swept up in a righteous caper that has her negotiating with antiques dealers and con artists, going on after-hours dates at the local library, and reconnecting with her oldest friend and first love in her desperation to uncover her great-aunt's secrets.

Lauren, Christina. [Something Wilder](#) (Gallery \$26.99). This is a break from water and the beach, but fits right into a perfect Beach Read. Lily Wilder was just 19 when she fell for Leo Grady, a college boy working on her father's Wyoming ranch for the

summer. Then came the terrible week when Leo abandoned her and her notorious treasure hunter father abruptly sold the ranch that Lily loved. Ten years later, Lily has rebuilt her life, using her late father's notes and reputation to create a tourist expedition company leading city slickers on fake treasure hunts through the Utah wilderness. The business is barely breaking even when Leo turns up with three friends for a guys' weekend, shocking them both. Despite long-held feeling of betrayal on both sides, their old chemistry is strong as ever, and when the treasure hunt they're on turns out to be all too real, it will take Leo's puzzle solving skills and Lily's knowledge of the terrain to find the booty—but they're not the only ones searching. The tone veers from lighthearted rom-com to high octane romantic suspense as the danger ramps up and Lauren packs the plot with quirky characters, vivid scenery, and sizzling sexual tension.

Moore, Meg Mitchell. [Vacationland](#) (Harper \$27.99). From the author of *Two Truths and a Lie* and *The Islanders*, a delicious summer read set in midcoast Maine, tackling family secrets, marriage, motherhood, and privilege. As June turns to July turns to August, secrets will be unearthed, betrayals will come to light, and both Louisa and Kristie will ask themselves what they are owed and what they owe others. A delicious summer read and an exploration of family, responsibility, ambition and loss, *Vacationland* is a beach read filled with family relationships, drama, secrets, and reconciliation with realistic characters that you sometimes love and sometimes don't.

Reynolds, Ally. [The Swell](#) (Viking \$27), a pulse-pounding beach read that explores the dangerous ties between a group of elite surfers who are determined to find the perfect waves at any cost...even murder—is our **July International Crime Book of the Month**.

The author of [Shiver](#) (\$17), a locked-room thriller set in the French Alps, moves from the mountains to the beach as a passionate surfer finds herself caught in "an exhilarating, adrenaline-filled tale of surfing and rock scrambling."—*Kirkus* Starred Review. So three years ago, passionate surfer Kenna Ward lost her two great loves—after her boyfriend drowned, she hung up her surfboard and swore off the water for good. But she is drawn back to the beach when her best friend, Mikki, announces her sudden engagement to a man Kenna has never met—a member of a tight-knit group of surfers. Kenna travels to a remote Australian beach, entering a dangerous world far from civilization where the waves, weather, and tides are all that matter. Kenna is tempted back into the surf, and drawn into the dazzling group and the beach they call their own. But this coastal paradise has a dark side, and members of the group begin to go missing. Kenna realizes that in order to protect Mikki and learn more about the surfers, she must become one of them...without becoming one of their victim. Born in Britain, Reynolds is a former freestyle snowboarder who swapped her snowboard for a surfboard and moved to the Gold Coast in Australia

Rukeyser, Rebecca. [The Seaplane on Final Approach](#) (Random \$27). Tourists arrive all summer, by boat or seaplane, at Stu and Maureen Jenkins's Lavender Island Wilderness Lodge in the Kodiak Archipelago, expecting adventure. But the spontaneity of their authentic Alaskan wilderness experience is meticulously scripted, except when real danger rears its head. Stu and Maureen's lodge is failing, as is their marriage. Mira has been hired for the season as the lodge's baker and housekeeper. But

she's also busy gleefully nursing twin obsessions: building a working theory of what constitutes "sleaze" and pursuing a young fisherman she deems the embodiment of all things deliciously sleazy. Her plans become more perverse and elaborate, even as life on Lavender Island starts to unravel. By midseason, it becomes clear that Stu, the jovial, predatory patriarch of the lodge, has turned his sexual attentions to another young employee. As the mood of the lodge spirals into chaos, the inhabitants realize just how isolated Lavender Island really is. *The Seaplane on Final Approach* brilliantly illuminates the mirage-thin line between the artificial and the feral. In this daring and psychologically razor-sharp debut, Rukeyser's characters tear aside the facade of good manners to reveal all....

Silvie, Monica. [Chickadee: Criminal Mastermind](#) (Kids Can Press \$18.99. Meet Chickadee. Criminal. Rascalion. All-around bad seed. The Indie Next Pick says, "Bird lovers, you need this picture book! I adored the chickadee narrating this story, and could imagine my own backyard chickadees as masterminds who steal my blueberries! This picture book offers plenty of fun for readers of all ages." Kids (ages 4-7) need a beach read too.

Smith, Sarah Echavarre. [Simmer Down](#) (Berkley \$16). When Nikki DiMarco quit her job to help out on her mom's food truck in Maui, she had no idea the competition would be so intense, especially when British food truck owner Callum James sets up shop right next to her on the most coveted stretch of beach on the island. The solution? Let the upcoming Maui Food Festival decide their fate. But when Nikki starts to learn more about Callum, will she be brave enough to call a truce?

Van Pelt, Shelby. [Remarkably Bright Creatures](#) (Harper \$27.99). Perhaps the ultimate beach read. For fans of *A Man Called Ove*, a charming, witty and compulsively readable exploration of friendship, reckoning, and hope that traces a widow's unlikely connection with a giant Pacific octopus. After Tova Sullivan's husband died, she began working the night shift at the Sowell Bay Aquarium, mopping floors and tidying up. Keeping busy has always helped her cope, which she's been doing since her eighteen-year-old son, Erik, mysteriously vanished on a boat in Puget Sound over thirty years ago. Tova becomes acquainted with curmudgeonly Marcellus, a giant Pacific octopus living at the aquarium. Marcellus knows more than anyone can imagine but wouldn't dream of lifting one of his eight arms for his human captors—until he forms a remarkable friendship with Tova. Ever the detective, Marcellus deduces what happened the night Tova's son disappeared. And now Marcellus must use every trick his old invertebrate body can muster to unearth the truth for her before it's too late.

Weiner, Jennifer. [The Summer Place](#) (Atria \$28). "Expansive and moving, hilarious and heartwarming, meaningful and magnetic, I absolutely loved this story of a sprawling family reconvening in the place of their youth, a place sincerely special to them, for one last hurrah. Everything that comes before and proceeds their reunion captivated me. . We're back to the beach, but with so many secrets, so much drama, so much on the line, so much to learn and discover."

White, Adam. [The Midcoast](#) (Hogarth \$27). Maine is a large state with more coastline than California. Here it's spring in the tiny town of Damariscotta, a tourist haven on the coast of Maine known for its oysters and antiques. Andrew, a high school English

teacher recently returned to the area, has brought his family to Ed and Steph Thatch's sprawling riverside estate to attend a reception for the Amherst women's lacrosse team. Back when they were all teenagers, Andrew never could have predicted that Ed, descended from a long line of lobstermen, or Steph, a decent student until she dropped out to start a family, would ever send a daughter to a place like Amherst. But so the tides have turned, and Andrew's trying hard to admire, more than envy, the view from Ed's rolling backyard meadow. As Andrew wanders through the Thatches' house, he stumbles upon a file he's not supposed to see: photos of a torched body in a burned-out sedan. And when a line of state police cruisers crashes the Thatches' reception an hour later, Andrew and his neighbors finally begin to see the truth behind Ed and Steph's remarkable rise. Soon the newspapers are running headlines about the Thatches, and Andrew's poring over his memories, trying to piece together the story of a family he thought he knew.

White, Kiersten. [Wretched Waterpark](#) (Random \$16.99). What teen can resist the first in The Sinister Summer series? Readers may wallow in gothic mystery at its finest... and its most delightfully gloomy. The first here is filled with characters and scenes that would make Edgar Allan Poe shiver, and its hilarious quips and asides draw an even finer point on the ghastliness. Under suspicious and puzzling circumstances, the Sinister-Winterbottom children have been deposited at a weird water park with a cryptic assignment from their aunt: "Find what was lost." The three siblings can't quite remember how they ended up spending the summer with their spooky aunt Saffronia Sinister, "whom the children had never met, and who, by all appearances, had never encountered an actual human child before." When she tells them they are to get a week's pass at a water park, they are initially excited. Fathoms of Fun is not the usual water park, however. Stone gargoyles leer, their lolling tongues acting as slides. Angel statues with looks of horror adorn the mausoleum, er, cabana, where the kids are told to leave their belongings. And is that a hand the children keep seeing pressed against the window at the top of an inaccessible tower? Like Lemony Snicket's *A Series of Unfortunate Events*, this first title in the Sinister Summer series follows three siblings through one disastrous experience after another.

SOME BOOKISH SUMMER READS

Henry, Emily. [Beach Read](#) (Penguin \$16). Augustus Everett is an acclaimed author of literary fiction. January Andrews writes bestselling romance. When she pens a happily ever after, he kills off his entire cast. They're polar opposites. In fact, the only thing they have in common is that for the next three months, they're living in neighboring beach houses, broke, and bogged down with writer's block. Until, one hazy evening, one thing leads to another and they strike a deal designed to force them out of their creative ruts: Augustus will spend the summer writing something happy, and January will pen the next Great American Novel. She'll take him on field trips worthy of any rom-com montage, and he'll take her to interview surviving members of a backwoods death cult (obviously). Everyone will finish a book and no one will fall in love. Really.

Henry, Emily. [Book Lovers](#) (Berkley \$17). A cutthroat literary agent finds herself stuck in a small town with the grumpy editor she despises. Nora Stephens knows she isn't anything

like the heroines in small-town love stories. She's not sweet or unassuming, and she definitely doesn't own a Christmas tree farm or a quaint B&B. With her Peloton obsession, high-powered job at a literary agency, and expensive shoes, she's the villainous girlfriend who gets dumped when the hero realizes he really wants to leave New York City and embrace the simple life in a small town. But Nora has no interest in slowing down—she embraces the hustle of her life, enjoying the city and spending her time either negotiating for her clients or helping her pregnant sister, Libby. When Libby suggests they take a girls' trip to Sunshine Falls, a picture-perfect North Carolina town, Nora agrees. Trying to make her sister happy, Nora throws herself into Libby's checklist of classic small-town experiences. But there's one brooding, annoying wrench in her plans: editor Charlie Lastra. He and Nora met years before when he brusquely rejected one of her books, and now he's here in Sunshine Falls for some reason, terrorizing her by having the nerve to be both good-looking and funny. As Nora and Charlie get to know each other, she learns that there may be more to him than she suspected. But Nora's also concerned about her relationship with Libby—they've been close all their lives, but now something seems off. Can Nora get her happily-ever-after even if she doesn't want to ride off into the small-town sunset with a lumberjack?

Lee, Jayci. [Booked on a Feeling](#) (Griffin \$16.99). **Publishes July 26.** “After experiencing a panic attack during her first trial, overachiever lawyer Lizzie Chung, Esq., is given paid time off to relax. But how? She returns to her hometown, Weldon. Jack Park, her childhood friend, wants her to rediscover the iridescent joy she had pre-law school and college, and convinces her to stay with him in Weldon. He's been planning to move away from his parents' loving but overprotective gaze and more specifically away from Weldon and his family's brewery, but that can wait a few more weeks until his friend finds her footing again. They team up to help a struggling bookstore. It brings them closer, but will their anxieties and insecurities doom their relationship? A sweet romance that deals with some serious topics.

Mallery, Susan. [The Boardwalk Bookshop](#) (Mira \$16.99). Three women who join together to rent a large space along the beach in Los Angeles for their stores—a gift shop, a bakery, and a bookstore—become fast friends as they each experience the highs, and lows, of love.

Martin, Jessica. [For the Love of the Bard](#) (Penguin \$16). “Reading *For the Love of the Bard* is like entering a fantasy written specifically for bookworms.... This is a delight, full of florid language, slow-building tension, groan-inducing puns, loads of food descriptions, and a fun and fleshed-out supporting cast.” —*USA Today*. Miranda Barnes, a bestselling YA writer and co-owner of a literary agency, and her summer trip home to fictional Bard's Rest, N.H., a town with a near-overwhelming Shakespeare obsession. Besides hoping to beat her writers' block, Miranda's summer plans include volunteering as a director for the town's centennial Shakespearean Summer Festival—but her plans are thrown into disarray: first, when she gets alarming news about her mother's health, and second, when she runs into Adam Winters, the man who broke her heart in high school. Our own rom-com champ Jenn McKinlay adds, “Jessica Martin's rom-com debut delivers a sizzling second chance romance full of witty banter, quirky characters, and a sensational Shakespeare infused setting....For anyone who never got over their high school crush

or who adores Shakespeare, this is an absolute must read!” — Jenn McKinlay

Patrick, Phaedra. [The Messy Lives of Book People](#) (Park Row \$16.99). Mother of two Liv Green barely scrapes by as a maid to make ends meet, often finding escape in a good book while daydreaming of becoming a writer herself. So she can't believe her luck when she lands a job housekeeping for her personal hero, megabestselling author Essie Starling, a mysterious and intimidating recluse. The last thing Liv expected was to be the only person Essie talks to, which leads to a tenuous friendship. But when Essie dies suddenly, a devastated Liv is astonished to learn of her last wish: for Liv to complete Essie's final novel. But to do so Liv will have to step into Essie's shoes, and as Liv begins to write, she uncovers secrets from the past that reveal a surprising connection between the two women

Poston, Ashley. [The Dead Romantics](#) (Berkley \$16). “Poston makes her adult debut with a refreshing rom-com about love, loss, and hope. Florence Day's life is organized around two major secrets: she's the ghostwriter for a household name romance writer, and she can see ghosts. One secret is kept out of legal obligation, the other self-preservation. A recent breakup has halted her ability to write happily-ever-afters, but when she requests yet another extension from her new—and incredibly attractive—editor, Benji Andor, she is indisputably shut down. Her looming deadline is put on hold, however, when her father dies, and Florence returns to her hometown for the first time in 10 years. She's expecting to see her father's ghost. She's not expecting to see Benji's ghost. He's died in the time between their last encounter and her trip, and now he's haunting Florence. As she attempts to fulfill her father's peculiar last wishes, memories of him—the only other person in her family who could see ghosts—reignite her ability to write. And, as she and Benji grow closer posthumously, she rediscovers her belief in happy endings. Poston manages to both affirm the cynics and give hope to the romantics by simultaneously embracing and subverting rom-com tropes.

Sereno, Annie. [Blame It on the Brontës](#) (Grand Central \$15.99). In an effort to save her job, English professor Athena Murphy must publish. She decides to write a biography about the mystery author heating up bestseller lists. Athena's search for the reclusive writer takes her back to her hometown, where she crosses paths with her ex, Thorne Kent. She knows better than to get entangled with him again, but sparks fly whenever they are together.

AND A TRIO OF CRIME CLASSICS FOR SUMMER

Adams, Samuel Hopkins. [Average Jones](#) (Poisoned Pen \$14.99). The new Library of Congress Crime Classic presents ten detective stories about a self-described “Ad-Visor” that the versatile and once popular but now largely forgotten Adams (1871-1958) originally collected in 1911.... and “that at its clever, resourceful best sows the seeds of mystery's golden age.” — *Kirkus Reviews*

✦ Bennett, Margot. [The Widow of Bath](#) (Poisoned Pen \$14.99). While he was stationed in Paris during World War II, Hugh Everton refused a proposal from Freddy Ronson that he do a bit of illegal smuggling in return for some cash that Everton needed very much. Next thing he knew, he'd been fished from the Seine and was on his way to prison. Now, reviewing hotels for a travel agency back in England, he runs into Lucy Bath, the bewitching

woman who'd touched him for a loan, leaving him short back in Paris, and her retinue, which includes her husband, retired judge Gregory Bath; the judge's niece, Jan Deverell, who'd befriended Everton in Paris; Lucy's friend Gerald Cady; and hotel owner Col. Atkinson, who looks an awful lot like a freshly groomed Freddy Ronson. Yielding to Lucy's pressing invitation, Everton accompanies the party back to her place, where, shortly after an intimate dialogue with Everton, her husband is killed. "Bennett's novel, originally published in 1952, turns up the cleverness at every turn. The plot behind the judge's murder is mind-bogglingly complex, the subsequent developments a series of canny bait-and-switches, the observation of the familiar character types acidulous, and the killer deftly hidden till the very end.... those who love it will be eternally grateful to the British Library Crime Classics for digging it up," says *Kirkus Reviews*.

✎ Carr, John Dickson. [The Eight of Swords](#) (American Mystery Classics \$15.95). A tarot card discovered at a murder scene provides a clue for Dr. Gideon Fell. This is an older entry in this series but an excellent choice for summer reading.

The publishers says, "In a house in the English countryside, a man has just turned up dead, surrounded by a crime scene that seems, at first glance, to be fairly straightforward. He's found with a bullet through the head in an unlocked room, and all signs point to a recent strange visitor as the perpetrator. The body is even accompanied by an ostentatious clue, presumably left by the killer: The tarot card of The Eight of Swords, an allusion, perhaps, to justice. But when Dr. Gideon Fell arrives at the house to investigate, he finds that certain aspects of the murder scene don't quite add up—and that every new piece of evidence introduces a new problem instead of a new solution. Add to that the suggestion of a poltergeist on the property, the appearance of American gangsters, and the constant interruptions of two dabbling amateur sleuths adjacent to the case, and you have a situation puzzling enough to push Fell's powers of deduction to their limits. But will Fell be able to cut through their distractions and get to the heart of the matter, before more murders take place? Reissued for the first time in years, *The Eight of Swords* is an early Carr novel that highlights many of the qualities that made him such a successful writer, including his baffling plots, his twisty investigations, and his memorable characters. It is the third installment in the Dr. Gideon Fell series, which can be read in any order." Foreword by Douglas Green.

SOME NEW HARDCOVER BOOKS RECOMMENDED BY INDIE NEXT AND LIBRARY READS

For our July reviews, wait for the July Booknews which will come out about July 11.

Chambers, Becky. [A Prayer for the Crown-Shy: A Monk and Robot Book](#) (Tor \$21.99), "The second volume of this series returns to a world which is both post-apocalyptic and hopepunk, focusing on the ways that both the Monk and Robot have to deal with other people now that they've re-entered society after their travels together. For those who enjoyed *The Murderbot Diaries* and the more hopeful aspects of *Station Eleven*." Also an Indie Next Pick.

Crouch, Blake. [Upgrade](#) (Ballantine \$28). At first, Logan Ramsay isn't sure if anything's different. He just feels a little... sharper. Better able to concentrate. Better at multitasking. Reading a bit faster, memorizing better, needing less sleep. But before long, he

can't deny it: Something's happening to his brain. To his body. He's starting to see the world, and those around him—even those he loves most—in whole new ways. The truth is, Logan's genome has been hacked. And there's a reason he's been targeted for this upgrade. A reason that goes back decades to the darkest part of his past, and a horrific family legacy. "Blake Crouch is one of my desert-island authors. I had high expectations for this book, and he absolutely smashed all of them. *Upgrade* is fast paced — but most importantly, brilliantly written." Authors Diana Gabaldon and Andy Weir agree.

Harrow, Alix, E. [A Mirror Mended](#) (TorDotCom, \$18.99). "I was enthralled with Zinnia's impeccable voice in this *A Spindle Splintered* follow-up in Harrow's *Fractured Fables* series. Harrow's vast knowledge of fairy tales really shines in this installment where she "takes on 'Snow White' with feminist and subversive lenses. Zinnia, the terminally ill heroine of [A Spindle Splintered](#) (\$17.99), the first in the series, has been busy rescuing other Sleeping Beauties after she escaped her story and rescued her best friends, Prim and Charm. Zinnia sees herself as a heroic figure, helping young women save themselves from their dubious happily-ever-afters. Unfortunately, her actions are breaking the multiverse: stories blend together and magic leaks into the worlds in strange ways. The primary example of this rupture of the multiverse occurs when an Evil Queen pulls Zinnia through her magic mirror and into a dizzying series of 'Snow White' tales. As Zinnia empathizes with and then begins to fall for the queen—giving her a name and, therefore, some agency—readers are presented with a Sapphic journey through alternate retellings of "Snow White" and an exploration of what it means to rewrite the stories.

✎ Irwin, Sophie. [A Lady's Guide to Fortune-Hunting](#) (Pamela Dorman \$27). "In Regency London, recently orphaned Kitty Talbot is intent on finding a wealthy husband who will settle the family's debts and allow her sisters to remain in their home. Kitty is nuanced and layered, a well-developed heroine amid a cast of riveting characters. This enthralling novel is a must-read for *Bridgerton* and Jane Austen fans.»

Kingfisher, T. [What Moves the Dead](#) (Tor Nightfire, \$19.99). "Rarely do I come across horror novels with such witty and delightful characters. The dialogue made me want to sit down to tea with each person, but the creepy gothic atmosphere made me want to forgo the tea and run away screaming instead."

Tremblay, Paul. [The Pallbearers Club](#) (Morrow \$27.99). "Tremblay always knows how to tap into the deepest of emotions, and this dual-narration horror thriller is both unrelentingly creepy and filled with the bittersweet pathos of a formative, toxic, unforgettable friendship in which one participant may or may not be a vampire. For fans of Stephen Graham Jones and Samanta Schweblin.

Zevin, Gabrielle. [Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow](#) (Knopf \$28). In this new novel by the best-selling author of [The Storied Life of A. J. Fikry](#) (\$16.95), a book for booklovers, two friends—often in love, but never lovers—come together as creative partners in the world of video game design, where success brings them fame, joy, tragedy, duplicity, and, ultimately, a kind of immortality. The #1 Indie Next Pick: "I am deeply mourning finishing this book. Zevin has masterfully created a love story for friendship that will stay with me. While the

characters were imperfect — so, strikingly human — following this span of 30 years left me wanting more.”

SOME LARGE PAPERBACKS PUBLISHING BY JULY 15

Bartz, Andrea. [We Were Never Here](#) (\$17). This was the August 2021 selection for Reese’s Book Club. I love why: “Recommended for fans of vindictive women with slightly obsessive female friendships.”

Here’s a review: “Milwaukee resident Emily Donovan, the narrator of this riveting psychological thriller, and her best friend, Kristen Czarnecki, who left Milwaukee 18 months earlier for a job in Australia, reunite in Chile for their annual vacation. The trip turns deadly when Kristen kills a backpacker in self-defense. A similar fatal encounter occurred during an earlier trip to Cambodia, only then Kristen killed to defend Emily. Emily decides she needs to distance herself from Kristen, but the more she tries to do so, the more Kristen tries to stay connected. Kristen moves back to Milwaukee, where she soon starts popping up in places she doesn’t belong—such as Emily’s yoga studio and therapist’s office—constantly reminding Emily of the secrets they share and how they need each other. Bartz does a good job dramatizing the increasingly creepy relationship between the two women as the twisty plot builds to a slightly confusing conclusion.”

Bell, Matt. [Appleseed](#) (\$17.99). “This cross between a Shakespeare drama and a Grimm fairy tale is unsettling, attention-grabbing, and thought-provoking in the way stories do so well when reason often fails,” said the 2021 Indie Next Pick. From Young Lions Fiction Award–finalist Matt Bell, a breakout book that explores climate change, manifest destiny, humanity’s unchecked exploitation of natural resources, and the small but powerful magic contained within every single apple.

Burdette, Lucy. [A Scone of Contention](#) (\$16.99). Key West food writer Hayley Snow and police detective Nathan Bransford have recently married. Their honeymoon is a bit of an odd one, since Hayley’s neighbor, fellow *Outlander* fanatic Miss Gloria, and Nathan’s mother, Helen, are both accompanying them while they stay with Nathan’s sister, Vera, and her husband, William, in St. Andrews, Scotland. Vera, who’s working on a book project, plans to highlight thin places, mystical spots where heaven and Earth are close. William has made plans for Nathan that all involve golf, leaving the women on their own for parts of the trip that must dovetail with Vera’s schedule in order for her to finish up loose ends. A dinner party at the home of Vera’s longtime friend Ainsley, who’s organizing the project, introduces Glenda and her husband, Gavin, who are pushing the book in a totally new direction that includes virtual reality content. Hayley makes friends with Ainsley’s chef, who’s devastated when Glenda becomes ill and the police suspect poisoning. Further tragedy swiftly follows when someone is killed on a visit to the famous Falkirk Wheel. The trip continues, but the palpable tension encourages Hayley to investigate... “A scone by scone tour of Scotland” is for foodies and perhaps for hungry *Outlander* fans...

Chizmar, Richard. [Chasing the Boogeyman](#) (\$17.99). Horror fans know Richard Chizmar as the founder of the influential genre magazine *Cemetery Dance*; a prolific author, editor, and anthologizer of short fiction; and, lately, Stephen King’s frequent publisher and co-writer. Thriller fans are about to know him as the author of one of the year’s most inventive, compelling,

and moving crime novels. Here Chizmar inserts a gruesome—and entirely fictional—serial-killer narrative into a largely autobiographical coming-of-age story. Set in 1988, the book finds a young Chizmar returning to his family home in Edgewood, Maryland, to spend the summer between his college graduation and his upcoming wedding. Chizmar mostly plans to hole up in his childhood bedroom to write horror stories and turn out the first issue of *Cemetery Dance*, but fate has something else in mind for him. When teenage girls begin disappearing from their bedrooms and driveways, only to turn up dead and mutilated hours later, Chizmar is drawn into the investigation that quickly consumes his hometown. The book is presented as true crime, complete with pages of photos ostensibly culled from local newspaper coverage of the murders and the personal collections of some of the people involved. (The photos were staged by Chizmar, his son Billy, and a Baltimore production company.) It’s a remarkably convincing piece of metafiction; if not for the words “A Novel” tucked beneath the title on the cover, you might be tempted to wonder if a young Chizmar really did go toe-to-toe with a serial murderer.

Cooper, Glen. [The Fourth Prophecy](#) (Grand Central \$17.99). It’s been a long time since the *Da Vinci Code* took the world by storm. There was a tsunami of religious conspiracy thrillers that followed in its wake. But then a lull. So I am pleased to have read a new and good one that both Steve Berry and James Rollins find as much fun as me. Superstar academic Cal Donovan, esteemed Harvard professor of religion and archaeology, roguish lady’s man, and loyal cat’s-paw of the pope, returns where the plot centers on the earthshaking “fourth secret” divulged by the famous apparition of Mary to three young children at Fátima in 1917. Lúcia dos Santos, the principal recipient of the vision’s message, described some of Mary’s revelations and prophecies, which included visions of hell, the advent of World War II, and the assassination attempt on Pope John Paul II in 1981. Long-standing rumors of a fourth, as yet undisclosed, secret prophecy come to a head some nine decades later on the cusp of Lúcia’s beatification as the pope is threatened by a mysterious group with their own designs regarding the secret vision. Our man Donovan is tasked with solving the mystery of the fourth prophecy before Lúcia is sainted a few days hence and the promised doom arrives—hence the famous thriller ticking clock pushing the action. I learned a lot about the “miracle” witnessed by the Portuguese children and its real impact on the Catholic Church. Rollins calls it “A seamless blend of modern-day thriller and historical mystery.”

Cordova, Zoraida. [The Inheritance of Orquídea Divina](#) (\$17). One day a house occupied by Orquídea Divina suddenly appears near the Midwestern town of Four Rivers. Her arrival leads the townspeople to believe she is a witch. Orquídea survives multiple husbands, raises nine children, helps care for some of her grandchildren, but never leaves town. One day, she sends invitations summoning her offspring home for her death. Only Orquíeda doesn’t die but instead transforms to the shock of her family, and leaves her granddaughter Marimar the property in Four Rivers. The narrative moves back and forth between Orquídea childhood in Ecuador, her travels, and the bargain she made for magic, with that of her granddaughter Marimar as she works to create a new life for herself restoring the family home. A mysterious figure stalks family members and a series of

sudden deaths has Marimar, with her cousins Rey and Tatinelly, traveling to Ecuador to unravel Orquídea past in a race to save the rest of the family. This beautiful, magical realism story ties together ancestors and descendants, and the threads that hold them together across time. Orquídea's death leads to a magical transformation that leaves her descendants with a target on their backs. For fans of Isabel Allende and of *Mexican Gothic* and *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue* with a touch of *The Immoralists* by Chloe Benjamin.

Coulter, Catherine. [Vortex: An FBI Thriller](#) (\$16.99). It was [The Cove](#) (\$8.99) that started it all back in 1996. And now here is #25 in Coulter's bestselling series featuring Agents Sherlock and Savich. Seven years ago, Mia Briscoe was at a college frat rave with her best friend Serena when a fire broke out. Everyone was accounted for except Serena, who was never seen nor heard from again. Now an investigative journalist covering the political scene in New York City, Mia discovers old photos taken the night of Serena's disappearance, and begins to uncover a sinister string of events going all the way back to that disastrous party. Working with Sherlock, the secrets begin to unravel. But some very powerful—and very dangerous—people will do anything to keep them from learning the truth. CIA Operative Olivia Hildebrandt is a team leader on a mission in Iran to exfiltrate a betrayed undercover operative. She's nearly killed by an exploding grenade and saved by a team member. But by the time Olivia is released from Walter Reed Hospital, that team member—and a critical flash drive he was carrying—have disappeared. When she is savagely attacked on her first night home...enter Savich.

De Giovanni, Maurizio. [Bread for the Bastards of Pizzofalcone](#) (Europa \$18). I fell in love with the assemblage of cops in a backwater of Naples, Italy, as shown in the terrific TV series on MHZ-TV. I'm hoping this new novel will inspire a new season although the finale of the last one seems... final. So here in the 5th installment of the series, *The Bastards of Pizzofalcone* may have found their true worth as the brutal murder of a baker rattles the city. There's nothing they wouldn't do to prove themselves to their community. But this time the police are divided: for the special anti-mob branch, the local mafia is doubtlessly responsible for the crime, but the Bastards are not so sure.... De Giovanni is one of Europe's most renowned and versatile mystery writers. His award-winning and bestselling novels, all of which take place in Naples, engage readers in gripping tales of Europe's most fabled, atmospheric, dangerous, and lustful city.

✧ Dean, Will. [First Born](#) (Atria \$17). A deceptively simple premise—a woman investigates her twin sister's murder—evolves into a story that grows twistier, and more twisted, with each new chapter. Molly Raven lives a quiet, structured life in London, finding comfort in security and routine. Her identical twin Katie, living in New York, is the exact opposite: outgoing, spontaneous, and adventurous. But when Molly hears that Katie has died, possibly murdered, she is thrown into unfamiliar territory. As terrifying as it is, she knows she must travel across the ocean and find out what happened. But as she tracks her twin's final movements, cracks begin to emerge, and she slowly realizes her sister was not who she thought she was and there's a dangerous web of deceit surrounding the two of them. Dean is a powerful voice but quite dark so do not expect a cozy or a traditional English mystery here.

Evanovich, Janet. [Game On: Tempting TwentyEight](#) (\$17.99). Diesel is back, back as though two years was just yesterday. And he's in Stephanie Plum's apartment. Not an arrangement her longtime main squeeze, cop Joe Morelli, will relish. In fact Steph is sorry her gun is in the cookie jar in her kitchen. But it turns out fellow apprehension agent Diesel is on the trail of the same fugitive as Steph: one Oswald Wednesday, a brilliant hacker. Is Diesel her competition or her partner here? And has Trenton, NJ's, group of small time hackers known as the Baked Potatoes taken Wednesday on? If not why are they dying? Both Morelli and Ranger start to worry about Steph's safety. And amazingly, Grandma Mazur proves to be a rising digital age adept.

Goldman, Matt. [Carolina Moonset](#) (Forge \$16.99). Here's a Starred *LJ* review supporting my affection for Goldman which was born in Goldman's Nils Shapiro mystery series: "Joey Green, the owner of a Chicago jewelry company, returns to Beaufort, S.C., to visit his father, Marshall, who's suffering from a disease that's rapidly destroying his short-term memory. Joey offers to stay with Marshall for a few days while his mother, Carol, takes a much needed break. Carol's three-day vacation in Florida turns into a feverish nightmare for Joey when Thomas Hammond, patriarch of Beaufort's most important family, is shot dead one night near the Greens' house. Joey left his father alone during the time of the murder, Marshall hated the Hammond family, and—most worrying—Marshall's gun is missing. When the police come knocking, Joey is desperate to protect his father, but his impulse to help may make things much worse. As Joey tries to discover who killed Thomas, he comes to realize that Marshall's teenage memories hold the key to murders that occurred decades earlier. The often amusing dialogue flows naturally, the emotional undercurrents ring true, and the mystery itself offers a full complement of suspects and motives. This novel about love, loss, and family ties isn't to be missed."

Goodman, Carol. [The Disinvited Guest](#) (Harper \$16.99). Two-time Mary Higgins Clark Award-winning author Carol Goodman joins the many authors this year writing a new version of Christie's *And Then There Were None*. Her we have a group of friends isolated on a remote island with a history of foul play. Lucy Harper still has traumatic memories and lingering health problems from the 2020 pandemic. So, when a new virus surfaces years later, she and her husband, Reed, seek refuge on his family's private island off the coast of Maine. Ostensibly safely sequestered with their five closest friends and family, Lucy should feel at ease. So why does she feel the weight of the island's dark history pushing down on the group? As Lucy uncovers Reed's family secrets and the island's history as a quarantine hospital for typhus patients, she becomes obsessed with the past and feels her own grip on reality slipping. Tempers flare, strange signs appear in the woods, and accidents turn deadly

Greaney, Mark. [The Gray Man](#) (\$17). With the Netflix movie starring Ryan Gosling as Greaney's terrific action hero dropping July 15, here is a new release of the first in this crackerjack series. The original *The Gray Man* was a small paperback original.

Hamilton, Ian. [Finale](#) (House of Anansi \$16.99). Set in 2015, Hamilton's bittersweet fourth and final outing for Uncle Chow Tung opens with Uncle, the former leader of Hong Kong's Fanling Triad, learning that he has inoperable stomach cancer.

Despite this grim diagnosis, Uncle and his partner, forensic accountant Ava Lee, investigate a scam involving a Vietnamese businessman, a Canadian bank, and the disappearance of around \$30 million of investors' money. When Uncle and Ava uncover an elaborate scheme to launder Italian mafia money, he realizes this will be of interest to the Hong Kong police. The exciting resolution to this case leaves several dead. Meanwhile, as Uncle undergoes chemotherapy, he often dreams about his fiancée, Lin Gui-San, who drowned when the two fled Mainland China in 1959 by swimming across Shenzhen Bay to Hong Kong. Uncle also continues to engage in his passion for gambling on horse races and makes a last trip to Shanghai to pursue a distribution deal. At the poignant conclusion, after a stroke in the hospital, Uncle has a vision of his old, deceased friends and his beloved Gui-San. Series fans will be sorry to see the last of Uncle. I certainly am and rave over the [Ava Lee thrillers](#), which refreshingly turn on finance, business, treachery, Chinese movies, asset recovery, murder, as well as the four about her mentor [Uncle Chow Tung](#) that allow us to see Ava Lee from his perspective as well as illuminating his terrific backstory as an escapee from the Cultural Revolution and rise as a top Triad leader.

Jayatissa, Amanda. [My Sweet Girl](#) (\$17). This is Sri Lanka's Jayatissa's debut thriller. Critic Neil Nyren writes: "Paloma Evans, now age thirty, adopted at twelve from an orphanage in Sri Lanka by a sweet, rich California couple. Now she's on the wrong end of a blackmail threat and furious at an incompetent bank clerk for not getting her the money to pay him off. It isn't her only problem: she drinks too much, she's on meds, she has nightmares about something that happened back at the orphanage, sometimes she thinks she's being stalked by a Sri Lankan ghost who followed her to the States and she knows she's being stalked here by someone who keeps calling her and ringing her buzzer. But then she gets back to her apartment and finds she has an even bigger problem: her roommate, dead, in a dark puddle of blood. And until she passes out, wakes up the next morning in the stairwell of her building, hysterically calls in the police and finds a bigger problem yet: no body in the apartment, and no blood ... in fact, no evidence that the roommate had ever even existed.

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

"Jayatissa's gift for plotting is matched by her grace with lacing her fleet narrative with rich social themes, among them cultural assimilation and the different values placed on white versus brown bodies. In a canny touch, the novel's plot hinges on the literary classic *Wuthering Heights*." And aspects of the novel's plot call to mind several of Hitchcock's classics—especially *Vertigo*—but *My Sweet Girl* is neither derivative nor a Hitchcock homage.

Krueger, William Kent. [Lightning Strike](#) (\$17.99). Aurora is a small town nestled in the ancient forest alongside the shores of Minnesota's Iron Lake. In the summer of 1963, it is the whole

world to twelve-year-old Cork O'Connor, its rhythms as familiar as his own heartbeat. But when Cork stumbles upon the body of a man he revered hanging from a tree in an abandoned logging camp, it is the first in a series of events that will cause him to question everything he took for granted about his hometown, his family, and himself. Cork's father, Liam O'Connor, is Aurora's sheriff and it is his job to confirm that the man's death was the result of suicide, as all the evidence suggests. In the shadow of his father's official investigation, Cork begins to look for answers on his own. In this prequel to the Cork O'Connor series we meet 12-year-old Cork's family as his father investigates a murder. Even as Cork believes he will never be a cop, we can see Cork's inevitable future as an investigator.

Kent writes, "This is a very different entry in the series, a prequel. It's set in the summer when Cork is 12 years old and involves two mysterious deaths that cause a clash between the Ojibwe of the Iron Lake Reservation and the white populace of Tamarack County. Cork's father is the county sheriff, and the family finds itself caught in the middle of the racial tensions that arise. I love this story because it's allowed me to explore the relationship between Cork and his father, so important in shaping Cork into the man at the heart of the series." You would do well to order the entire [Cork O'Connor series](#) beginning with *Iron Lake*.

✦ Le Carré, John. [Silverview](#) (\$17). Le Carré's exit deserves among other praise this Starred *PW* review: "First-rate prose and a fascinating plot distinguish the final novel from MWA Grand Master le Carré (1931–2020). Two months after leaving a banking job in London, 33-year-old Julian Lawndesley gets a visit from an eccentric customer, Edward Avon, just before closing time at the bookshop Julian now runs in East Anglia. When Julian asks the man what he does, he replies, 'Let us say I am a British mongrel, retired, a former academic of no merit and one of life's odd-job men.' The next morning, Julian runs into Edward at the local café, where Edward claims he knew Julian's late father at Oxford. Julian later learns that Edward, a Polish emigré, was recruited into the Service years before. Julian senses something is off, as does the head of Domestic Security for the Service, who's investigating Edward's wife, an Arabist and outstanding Service intelligence analyst. While laying out the Avons' intriguing backstories and their current activities, le Carré highlights the evils spies and governments have perpetrated on the world. Many readers will think the book is unfinished—it ends abruptly—but few will find it unsatisfying. This is a fitting coda to a remarkable career."

MacLean, Julianne. [Beyond the Moonlit Sea](#) (Lake Union \$14.95). The Bermuda Triangle is a fitting backdrop for a vortex of love found and lost, mistakes made and buried, and secrets too deep to let go displayed as an unsuspecting wife attempts to unravel the mystery of her pilot husband's disappearance. Olivia Hamilton is married to the love of her life, Dean, a charismatic pilot who flies private jets for the rich and famous. But when he vanishes over the Bermuda Triangle, Olivia's idyllic existence unravels. After years of waiting, Olivia must eventually let go of the fragile hope that her beloved husband might still be alive. Melanie Brown is a particle physicist who spends late nights studying the Bermuda Triangle. But her research interests falter when her mother dies in a tragic accident. Struggling to reboot her life and career, Melanie begins a forbidden love affair with

her therapist. When a shocking discovery shows Olivia's and Melanie's paths are intertwined, it casts Dean's disappearance in a new light. The two women's strange connection threatens to unlock secrets that will change everything Olivia thought she knew about her marriage, her husband, and most importantly, herself. I was surprised and you will be too.

Pepper, David. [The Voter File](#) (\$17). I, and perhaps you, was somewhat put off by the title. But make no mistake, this is a genuine thriller with a truly scary scenario, not a political agenda. Yes, it drills into election chaos, and yes, into outside interference in elections, starting in Appleton, Wisconsin (birthplace of Harry Houdini and Edna Ferber, FYI). A young woman temping in a campaign whose job it is to manage the voter file (new to me, and something truly scary in a digital age—Pepper explains it well), has lured a recently fired investigative reporter (from a cable TV gig) to town. Tori Justice (great name, no?) tells Jack Sharpe that there is no way a local judge could have beaten his opponent in the recent election. And explains (to you, too) why. But the bad actors (Russian, naturally, but not all) get wind of the leak and the whole plot rolls into motion on a global scale. It's really clever. And fast paced. And against corporate power, not a particular party. I think it's a book all of us should be reading

Quinn, Spencer. [Tender Is the Bite](#) (\$17.99). PI Bernie Little of the Little Detective Agency is on the road with his canine partner, Chet, in the unidentified southwestern U.S. city where they live [it's Scottsdale!!] when Bernie realizes that their battered Porsche is being followed. Through some creative maneuvering, they block the car on their tail and thus meet an attractive and very frightened potential client, Mavis, who was driving the car. When Mavis spots a bumper sticker for Griffin Wray, a candidate for U.S. senator, in Bernie's car, she panics and runs off. In their effort to discover why Mavis was scared of Wray, Bernie and Chet must contend with dead bodies that disappear and reappear in unlikely places, spying neighbors, and job offers that are too good to be true, not to mention a pesky ferret. Along the way, narrator Chet is a source of wisdom and innate doggie joie de vivre, making this a real pleasure for anyone who has ever looked into a dog's eyes and asked: who's a good boy? This outing should win this offbeat series new readers who can join the raging fan club among The Pen's staff. I was always nut for Peter Abraham's clever thrillers and so transitioned to Chet & Bernie with ease.

Richmond, Michelle. [The Wonder Test](#) (\$17). I truly loved this book, so well crafted, so surprising, so different. It has had various reviews, *NY Times*, etc. I like this one from Tom Nolan in the *WSJ* the best (besides my own):

"Lina Connerly is having an *annus horribilis*: Her father died, her husband died, and she made a terrible blunder in her job as an FBI agent. Craving a break from stress, she goes on hiatus and moves from New York with her 15-year-old son Rory to her dad's old house in the Northern California town of Greenfield, where things become even more problematic. Kyle, a brand-new Greenfield police officer who was friends with Lina's father, asks for her help with his first case: the two-week disappearance, then reappearance, of a classmate of Rory's, who seems to be suffering PTSD but whose parents won't discuss the matter. His experience is reminiscent of what happened a year before to a pair of

twin siblings at the same school. Despite her vow to take a rest from law enforcement, Lina is soon 'embroiled,' in the words of a Bureau colleague, 'in a triple kidnapping case with a side of the seriously weird.' The oddity seems related to the town's obsession with an annual exam assessing high-school students' multi-disciplinary aptitude and knowledge.... Ms. Richmond maintains a creepy sense of dread throughout, even as she explores Rory's coming-of-age and Lina's coming-to-terms." Even better, I did not see the true wonder of the plot twist coming, a twist that owes something to last year's headlines. Richmond's tale poses the question: "Is it better to do the right thing for the wrong reason or the wrong thing for the right reason? Using diacritical logic, chart your answer."

Rosenfelt, David. [Dog Eat Dog](#) (\$16.99). This one is a summer delight for its fast and witty style, Maine setting, nifty plot resolution for a legal thriller... and buoyant humor. Semi-retired Pater-son, N.J., defense attorney Andy Carpenter is enjoying a stroll with his wife, Laurie, and their dogs when they see a man kicking a pug on a leash. They rush to the rescue, but another bystander, Matt Jantzen, gets to the man first and saves the pug after a brief fight. The police arrive and take the pug's owner and Matt into custody, and Matt is soon arrested for the double murder of Peter Charkin and his girlfriend in Maine two years earlier. Though DNA found underneath Charkin's fingernails matches Matt's, Matt asserts his innocence, and Andy decides to represent him in court. Andy travels to Maine, to a community that doesn't in the least welcome him and his "elite" ways, where he discovers Charkin had dangerous ties to drug dealers and a quasi terrorist militia group. Laurie and her partners from her investigation group, the K Team, come to join Andy when it becomes clear he's settling in for the long term preparing to take the case to trial with the aid of a local lawyer. Unpredictable yet credible plot twists, along with Andy's dry sense of humor and wit, keep the pages turning. See Signed Books above for this July's sequel.

Schaffert, Timothy. [The Perfume Thief](#) (\$17). For many gender fluid men and women—such as narrator Clementine—Paris "had been invented for us, inspired by imaginations, but that was before the Nazi occupation. A perfumer, former thief and an American expatriate in her 70s, Clementine easily moves among Paris's bordellos and cabarets, concocting fragrances based on personal experiences, the memory of an old lover, the ticking of a pocket watch, a field of bluebells. It's dangerous business, as Nazi soldiers often lounge at the bordellos, giving prostitutes luxuries taken from Jewish shopkeepers who have now disappeared; the Nazis' largess could—and will—vanish at any moment. Clementine returns to crime when she's asked to steal the diary of a well-known perfumer that contains formulas that may date back to Cleopatra. The mission is to keep the book from the Nazis, especially bureaucrat Oskar Voss, whose ruthlessness Clementine uses for her own purposes. "For Clementine, perfumes reveal personalities, are useful as codes to military secrets and essential as escapism, allowing one 'to slip away into tranquility, into that part of your brain where all the awful things get hushed.' *The Perfume Thief* lyrically savors the myths and lore of fragrance made of whispers, of secrets written in the cream of your coffee, wrapped in a gripping historical mystery."—Katie Noah Gibson. This excellent book with its "intoxicating blend of decadence and intrigue" is recommended for summer beach reading.

☒ Valentine, Carla. [The Science of Murder](#) (Sourcebooks \$16.99). Since Agatha Christie is having a real Moment right now—so many authors writing a perhaps pandemic-inspired version of *And Then There Were None*, or exploring her famous disappearance, or...—so this excellent books about her use of forensics in her books, thoroughly demonstrated with science linked to the relevant books and to episodes in her life like her war work and the archaeology she explored with her renowned second husband Max Mallowan, is fascinating. I loved this and enjoyed a tour encompassing all her work, not just the famous novels but the lesser known, the stories, and her romances as Mary Westmacott. There's a full list of Agatha's work plus sources to explore. This is perfect for summer as you can dip in and out of it.

SMALL PAPERBACKS PUBLISHING BY JULY 15

Bazon, Lara. [The Good Mother](#) (\$9.99). Returning from maternity leave, LA attorney Abby Rosenberg agrees to defend a young mother accused of murdering her husband, a decorated combat veteran

Becker, James. [Titanic Secret](#) (Camden \$9.99). On board RMS *Titanic* are three men scheming to create a new military alliance between the United States and Germany. Their goal: war with Great Britain and the destruction of the British Empire. Alex Tremayne and his American colleague Maria Weston are sent by British Intelligence to stop the spies and, with them, the greatest war in history.

Bond, Veronica. [Castle Deadly, Castle Deep](#) (Berkley \$8.99). Dinner and a Murder Mystery #2. Staging their latest murder-mystery show in the catacombs beneath Castle Dark, Norma Blake must investigate the very real murder of one of the audience members.

Bradford, Laura. [A Perilous Pal](#) (Berkley \$8.99). Friend for Hire #2. While helping a lonely, divorced empty-nester fulfill her bucket list, Emma Westlake turns into an amateur sleuth when her client's ex is murdered.

Chow, Jennifer J. [Death by Bubble Tea](#) (Berkley \$8.99). LA Night Market #1. Yale Lee and her cousin from Hong Kong, Celine, open a stall together at the Eastwood Village Night Market and are excited that their bubble tea is a runaway hit until a customer turns up dead following his order.

Hawkins, Jennifer. [A Cold Nose for Murder](#) (Berkley \$8.99). Chatty Corgi #3. Emma Reed and her talking dog, Oliver investigate when two friends running the local Cornish pub discover a skeleton in the old smuggling tunnels beneath their establishment.