

BOOKNEWS from

ISSN 1056-5655, © The Poisoned Pen, Ltd.
Volume 34, Number 9
July Booknews 2022
sales@poisonedpen.com tel (888)560-9919
http://poisonedpen.com

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



LIVENING UP THE DOG DAYS....

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.

I am always on the watch for trends. I predicted the resurgence of the Gothic two years ago and now you see it flourishing. And in a continuing refresh of classic forms, look for the miniboom in locked-room mysteries in this *Booknews*

MONDAY JULY 18 12:00 PM British Crime

Eve Chase and Lisa Jewell discuss their new books

Chase discusses [The Birdcage](#) (Putnam \$27)

Jewell discusses [The Family Remains](#) (Atria \$28)

Signed books for Jewell available

MONDAY JULY 18 5:00 PM Two debuts

Eli Cranor and John Vercher with Patrick

Cranor discusses [Don't Know Tough](#) (Soho \$24.95)

Vercher discusses [After the Lights Go Out](#) (Soho \$26)

Signed books available for both titles

MONDAY JULY 18 7:00 PM YA Event Live

Joanna Ruth Meyer and Sara Ella with Pat King

Meyer discusses [Wind Daughter](#) (Page Street \$18.99)

Ella discusses [The Wonderland Trials](#) (Enclave \$22.99)

Signed copies available for both

WEDNESDAY JULY 20 4:00 PM

Paula Munier discusses [The Wedding Plot](#) (St Martins \$27.99)

Mercy Carr & her Canine

Signed books available

WEDNESDAY JULY 20 5:30 PM

William Martin and Zac Topping

Martin discusses [December '41](#) (Forge \$27.99)

Our July Historical Fiction Book of the Month

Topping discusses his debut [The Wake of War](#) (Forge \$26.99)

Signed books available for both titles

SATURDAY JULY 23 1:00 PM

Christina Dodd with John Charles

Dodd discusses [Dodd](#) discusses [Point Last Seen](#) (Harlequin \$28.99)

Signed books available

SATURDAY JULY 23 7:00 PM Gabriel Allon

Offsite Ticketed Event

There will be NO STREAMING OF THIS EVENT

Daniel Silva discusses [Portrait of an Unknown Woman](#) (Harper \$29.99)

with Jamie Gangel

The Valley of the Sun Jewish Community Center,

12701 N Scottsdale Rd, Scottsdale, AZ 85254.

Loads of parking on site

[Details & Tickets](#)

\$35 admits one with one book \$40 admits two with one book

Order in the usual way if you are not attending

Gabriel Allon, retired, takes up forging Old Masters

MONDAY JULY 25 4:00 PM

Allison Montclair and Ashley Weaver discuss their British historicals

Montclair discusses [The Unkept Woman](#) (St Martins \$26.99)

Weaver discusses [The Key to Deceit](#) (St Martins \$27.99)

Signed books available for both post-WWII British investigations

TUESDAY JULY 26 2:00 PM Cozy Crimes

Kate Carlisle and Vicki Delany with John Charles

Carlisle discusses [The Paper Caper](#) (Berkley \$27)

Book restorer Brooklyn Wainwright

Signed books available

Delany discusses [Murder Spills the Tea](#) (Kensington \$26)

Tea by the Sea Mystery (Cape Cod)

WEDNESDAY JULY 27 4:00 PM Debut Noir

Dwyer Murphy discusses [An Honest Living](#) (Viking \$26)

Signed books available

THURSDAY JULY 28 12:00 PM

The UK's Sarah Pearse discusses [The Retreat](#) (Viking \$27)
Signed UK edition: [The Retreat](#) (Bantam UK \$36)

THURSDAY JULY 28 7:00 PM

Hardboiled Crime discusses Peter Rabe's [Kill the Boss Goodbye](#) (Stark House \$19.95)

SATURDAY JULY 30 2:00 PM Live

Megan Miranda discusses [The Last to Vanish](#) (Scribner \$26.99)
with John Charles
Signed books available

MONDAY AUGUST 2 2:00 PM

John hosts a Kensington Cozies Event

Darci Hannah, [Murder at the Blueberry Festival](#) (\$8.99)
Gabby Allan, [Something Fishy This Way Comes](#) (\$15.95)
Angela M. Saunders, [Witch and Famous](#) (\$8.99)
Cheryll Hollon, [Death a Sketch](#) (\$8.99)

TUESDAY AUGUST 2 4:00 PM

Karen Rose with **JA Krentz**
Rose discusses [Quarter to Midnight](#) (Berkley \$27)
Signed books available

FRIDAY AUGUST 5 2:00 PM

Rhys Bowen discusses [Where the Sky Begins](#) (Lake Union \$24.95).
London 1940
Signed copies available
There is a paperback too: [Where the Sky Begins](#) (\$14.95)

SATURDAY AUGUST 6 4:00 PM

Canada's **Robert Pobi** discusses [Do No Harm](#) (St Martins \$27.99)
Lucas Page

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

Teschner, John. [Project Namahana](#)

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](#)

MORE SIGNED BOOKS FOR SUMMER

We continue with a mix of Live and Virtual Events

An entry with a leading # 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 switches from Afghanistan to a high pressure Wall Street investment firm where a colleague is found hanged. That death, which may not be the suicide it appears to be, triggers a cascade of dramatic developments. Devine becomes a murder suspect, others are killed, and he's tapped to conduct a covert investigation into the Street's Cowl and Comely by a Homeland Security official.

Bell, David. [The Finalists](#) (Berkley \$27). Bell crafts a kind of Dark Academic Locked Room mystery. 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.

✂ Bowen, Rhys. [Where the Sky Begins](#) (Lake Union \$24.95). **Publishes August 2, our zoom discussion is August 5 at 2:00 PM. Meanwhile Rhys has signed our copies for us and will return November 1 to The Pen with a new Lady Georgie, [Peril in Paris](#)** (Berkley \$27)

London, 1940. Bombs fall and Josie Banks' world crumbles around her. Her overbearing husband, Stan, is unreachable, called to service. Her home, a ruin of rubble and ash. Josie's beloved tearoom boss has been killed, and Josie herself is injured, with nothing left and nowhere to go. Evacuated to the English countryside, Josie ends up at the estate of the aristocratic Miss Harcourt, a reluctant host to the survivors of the Blitz. Awed as she is by the magnificent landscape, Josie sees opportunity. Josie convinces Miss Harcourt to let her open a humble tea shop, seeing it as a chance for everyone to begin again. When Josie meets Mike Johnson, a handsome Canadian pilot stationed at a neighboring bomber base, a growing intimacy develops. Then Stan returns from the war. Now a threat looms larger than anyone imagined. And a dangerous secret is about to upend Josie's life again.

Bruns, Don, ed. [Hotel California](#) (Blackstone \$26.99).

Bookplates signed by the contributors. Each of these eight provocative tales is designed to entertain and mystify—and maybe even chill you to your core. Get lost in the wild imaginations of such New York Times bestselling writers as Andrew Child, Heather Graham, Reed Farrel Coleman, and John Gilstrap, plus authors Rick Bleiweiss, Jennifer Dornbush, Amanda Flower, and Don Bruns. 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.

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**. 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 and he and I had a wildly entertaining conversation about Dez and his future which I gleefully recommend [you watch here](#).**

In one of the Starred Reviews we learn that "Desmond Limerick was a mercenary specializing in getting locked doors open and keeping them open until the mission was over. [In short, he's a Gatekeeper, controlling ingress and egress. 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."

Carlisle, Kate. [The Paper Caper](#) (Berkley \$27) Brooklyn Wainwright bibliomystery lucky #13. Brooklyn is excited to be included in the Covington Library's first annual Mark Twain Festival. She'll rebind a rare first edition of *The Prince and the Pauper* before an enthusiastic audience of book nerds—her favorite people. The festival is the passion project of wealthy media mogul, book lover, and newspaper owner Joseph Cabot, who considers himself Twain's biggest fan. Brooklyn's hunky husband, Derek, and his security team once rescued Joseph from a corporate kidnapping attempt. Now Derek and his agents are charged with keeping Joseph and his beautiful young wife safe during the festivities taking place all over town. The centerpiece of the festival is a citywide contest based on *The Prince and the Pauper*: one lucky look-alike will trade places with Joseph for a few days—with access to all the money and power that Joseph commands. And so... This [Bibliophile Mystery](#) series has a long backlist you can order and enjoy.

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...

Dodd, Christina. [Point Last Seen](#) (Harlequin \$28.99). Our John Charles reviews: Adam Ramsdell has retrieved a number of different things from the Pacific Ocean, but this is the first time he finds himself dragging a woman's dead body out of the water. However, it quickly turns out that the woman in question is only temporarily dead. Once revived, she has absolutely no memory of anything except that her first name might be Elle, and she is certain someone tried to kill her. When it comes to nerve-shredding, edge-of-your-seat suspense, Dodd consistently delivers the literary goods, and her latest, the first in a new series set in the small Northern California beach town of Gothic, is no exception. Graced with a gutsy yet realistically vulnerable heroine and a hero with a tortured past, enhanced with cast of ingeniously quirky supporting characters that includes a Hollywood psychiatrist turned psychic and a lifestyle doyenne, who could give Martha Stewart lessons in branding, and punctuated with delicious bursts of Dodd's diabolically dry sense of wit, *Point Last Seen* is a gobsmackingly great read.

Ellis, David. [Look Closer](#) (Putnam \$27). A question I asked David and James Patterson during our conversation for this first solo thriller by Ellis since 2015 is, Why aren't there more writers focusing on Chicago? It's a city sadly underutilized in fictional crime. They didn't have an answer, but at least Ellis, an Illinois

Appeals Court Judge, has addressed the Windy City here. “The book opens on Halloween night, as a wealthy law professor named Simon, clutching a burner phone, flees the suburban mansion where a woman has just been murdered. That this scene is not what it seems is a given, and the reader is soon transported into a dizzyingly nonlinear narrative of family secrets, unsolved killings, financial scams, prenuptial agreements, salacious text messages and petty revenge. Though Ellis juggles a great many plot strands, he doesn’t drop them; the result is wildly entertaining, not tedious. It helps that just about every character in the book is the very definition of unreliable. As one of them muses, with more than a touch of menace: “That’s what you do with the people you love. You trust them. You trust them until they prove you wrong. Until they betray you. And then, you react however you’re wired to react.”—*NY Times Book Review*

✂Fowler, Christopher. [Bryant and May Peculiar London](#) (Bantam \$44). 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, Brian. [Robert Ludlum’s The Bourne Sacrifice](#) (Putnam \$28). **Virtual event on August 10 4:00 PM.** Jason Bourne has faced many killers before, but none as dangerous or as cruelly inventive as the assassin who calls himself Lennon. Bourne thought he had Lennon cornered in Iceland, only to have the killer escape in a fiery explosion. Now Lennon’s trail leads Bourne to New York and then to Washington – and the body count rises with each deadly encounter. But who is Lennon working for? Bourne believes the assassin has a shadowy new employer called the Pyramid. The only clue to the group’s agenda is a young German woman murdered in Washington on her way to a covert meeting. But the woman’s entire identity turns out to be a lie, and news reports of her death have been strangely twisted and suppressed. Finding the truth about this woman may be Bourne’s only chance to catch Lennon.

Gerritsen, Tess. [Listen to Me](#) (Ballantine \$28). I agree with the enthusiasm expressed in the *NY Times Book Review*: “The Rizzoli and Isles books are loved by many, including me; the women’s warm, complicated friendship and superior investigative acumen remain, in their 13th outing, an utter pleasure to keep readerly company with. The case they are tasked with investigating in *Listen to Me* — the bludgeoning of an I.C.U. nurse without a

seeming enemy — offers turns and twists that feel earned and organic. Meanwhile, Rizzoli is also preoccupied with constant phone calls from her mother, Angela, who’s convinced that the new couple on her street is up to no good, even though her daughter tells her ‘there’s nothing criminal about wanting to stay away from the neighborhood sleuth.’ As the threads come together, Angela emerges as the star of the novel. ‘I may not be a cop, and I know it’s easy to underestimate me because I’m an older woman and all,’ she tells her daughter, but ‘you inherited those detective chops from someone, and I don’t think it was your father.’”

Indeed, what I most enjoyed about this welcome new book after a five-year gap is the three-person narrative, all distinctly different, and the way Maura’s character gains new dimension through her music.

Greaney, Mark. [Armored](#) (Berkley \$28). Three terrific things distinguish this new thriller from Greaney who might, who knows, turn it into a series, especially if it, like *The Gray Man*, too makes it to the screen. So first, Josh Duffy in a stirring scene loses his lower leg in a messy op. It kills his high-level security contracting career. So the loss is not just about mobility, it’s about income and we see him as a mall cop with a prosthesis and a spare. Second, Josh’s wife, ex-Army, retired to raise their kids but now she’s operating a cleaning service. Do not discount her! Mark wrote the book in large part to show what a woman is capable of doing in this theater. And third, the landscape of this book is Mexico’s Sierra Madre Mountains, territory we rarely visit in a thriller. I should add that fourth, there’s an intriguing American fixer at work through the book. When Josh runs into a former contractor, the man reluctantly recruits him to a scrambled team run by a security company considered the worst in the business. Josh is hesitant, but \$35,000 will make a real difference to his family. So the stage is set to see what everyone is made of. It’s a stirring read. [Watch me discuss it with Mark](#) to learn more and also about *The Gray Man*.

Hand, Elizabeth. [Hokuloa Road](#) (LittleBrown \$28). This Hawaiian thriller is perfect for fans of *White Lotus* and is called a “perfectly crafted” mystery by horror author Grady Hendrix. Grady Kendall needs an escape from his boring small-town life in Maine, and so on a whim he takes a job as a live-in caretaker for a luxury property in Hawaii. But Grady soon discovers a dark side of the estate on remote Hokuloa Road—it’s a place where people frequently vanish.

NEW Hillier, Jennifer. [The Things We Do in the Dark](#) (St Martins \$27.99). I can’t say enough good things about this brilliantly conceived novel by Canadian Hillier. The characters are so alive, the deeds so horrendous, the emotions so real and raw, and the many turns in the plot so unexpected. Hillier uses this thriller to examine celebrity and its costs as applied to 68-year-old Jimmy, a comedian making a surprise comeback, and to those around him including his much younger wife who is instantly arrested for his murder, his PA, and his long, long time lawyer. Hillier shows a deft hand and understanding of effects of long-term abuse and imagines what it would take to seize a chance and create a new identity, a new life, away from the wife’s native Canada. All the threads come satisfyingly together in the end. I wish Canadian Hillier could join us for this knockout novel but we are catching her in NYC to sign copies for us. Yay!

☞Khavari, Kate. [A 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. 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!!

Koontz, Dean. [Big Dark Sky](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$28.99). 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."

NEW Lin, Ed. [Death Doesn't Forget](#) (Soho \$27.95). **This new Taiwan Night Market chapter will be Signed here August 11 Live at 7:00 PM.**

With Taiwan so constantly in the news, and in jeopardy, Lin's lively series is not only fun but informative. Here's a nice *PW* review: "In Lin's intriguing fourth novel starring Taipei food stall operator Jing-nan, Siu-lien, the mother of Jing-nan's girlfriend, buys some cigarettes for her boyfriend, Boxer, and the receipt's number is drawn in the latest government lottery, winning her 200,000 New Taiwan dollars. (To track taxable income, every receipt in Taiwan is automatically entered in this lottery, incentivizing consumers to request one.) Boxer and Siu-lien agree to split the money evenly, but after he cashes in the receipt, he reneges on their agreement. Jing-nan, who has become a celebrity thanks to his previous misadventures, agrees to try to recoup Siu-lien's share, but he gets only a small portion of it from Boxer. Soon afterward, Boxer is bludgeoned to death, and the police focus on Jing-nan, the last person known to have seen him alive, and with a motive, as the killer. Lin ups the ante on his lead with a second murder, and once again he brings to life the sights and smells of the night market where Jing-nan works

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. Neat, think Erik Larson's *Devil in the White City* for the atmosphere of the Fair.

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. Lisa Lee, a young YouTube star, has vanished after answering the door to what she thought was a pizza delivery. Police suspect her dad or the delivery guy, but in Lisa's last known video she ventured into an abandoned chateau in France, where she uncovered a priceless artifact. Anna knows they must find this young woman before it's too late. To do so, they need to track down that treasure, a casket that could hold answers to the greatest questions ever asked. But Anna and Fin might have misunderstood the stakes of the game. Soon, they find themselves mixed up with some very dark characters, on another thrilling chase across Europe—and another race to save their own lives.

#Miranda, Megan. [The Last to Vanish](#) (Scribner \$26.99). In this superb thriller Cutter's Pass, known as "the most dangerous town in North Carolina" because of a string of missing persons cases over the years, has been a refuge for the past decade for Abby Lovett. Abby loves her position as manager of the upscale Passage Inn, though the mountain resort town's permanent residents still treat her as an outsider. She has never been frightened by the urban legend surrounding the disappearances, the most recent being that of journalist Landon West, who came to Cutter's Pass to write about those who were lost without a trace before vanishing himself. Four months later, Landon's brother, Trey, arrives, determined to get some answers. Trey's questions stir up the town sheriff, the local tavern's owners, and a young man who leads ghost tours, making Abby feel even more like an outsider because she's constantly left out of conversations and others don't take her questions seriously. The tension rises after Abby discovers what may be a key piece of evidence. Evocative descriptions of such activities as hiking and rafting contain an underlying sense of dread, and realistic characters match the tight plotting. Miranda is writing at the top of her game."—*PW* Starred Review.

Miranda writes, "The idea for the town came first. I love setting stories in small towns, and this book in particular was inspired by thinking about places with notorious histories. But then I started thinking about a place that chooses to embrace that past as part of their identity instead of trying to hide it. And then I thought: What if that history isn't far in the past at all? And what if the urban legends are part of the draw to the place? The town of Cutter's Pass, North Carolina, was born from there, and its dangerous history was woven into the core from the start."

☞Montclair, Allison. [The Unkept Woman](#) (St Martins \$26.99). Here's a new chapter in a sprightly and somewhat satirical series I love for so many reasons. What a joy it was to discover it and to figure out it was the talented Alan Gordon whose medieval jester mysteries led by Feste the Fool were so beguiling in the early Oughts. That same sense of fun and tweaking conventions applies here in a series that, as the Starred Review quoted below agrees,

is for Dorothy L. Sayers fans. British Crime Club fans etc should gobble the [Montclairs](#) up.

“The friendship of Gwen Bainbridge and Iris Sparks, the ‘intelligent and resourceful’ owners of the Right Sort Marriage Bureau, is tested in Montclair’s exemplary fourth mystery set in post-WWII London (after 2021’s *A Rogue’s Company*). When someone is shot to death in Iris’s flat, where an ex-boyfriend of hers has been living as a renter, Iris’s ability to be fully frank with Scotland Yard is limited by the connection of the victim to her previous life as a British intelligence operative. Iris decides to investigate on her own and asks Gwen to help search for the killer. The case comes at a fraught time for Gwen, who attempted suicide in 1944 after learning her husband was killed in battle; she was subsequently institutionalized in an asylum. Gwen is in the process of petitioning to end the guardianship controlling her life, which could be jeopardized if she once again probes a murder. The solution to the crime is both surprising and fair to the careful reader. Montclair’s capable, funny, and fully developed leads set a gold standard for the amateur sleuth subgenre. Dorothy Sayers’s fans will hope this series has a long run.”

Munier, Paula. [The Wedding Plot](#) (St Martins \$27.99) Disaster looms over Vermont’s five-star Lady’s Slipper Inn just days before former MP and part-time investigator Mercy Carr’s grandmother Patience’s wedding. Family tensions flare when free-spirited Aunt Verity arrives in time to upset both the event’s carefully laid plans and her sister, Grace. Groom Claude Renault, meanwhile, has his share of domestic troubles with his two grown sons at each other’s throats over the family’s business empire. Matters go from bad to worse when Mercy and her Malinois shepherd, Elvis, searching for the inn’s missing spa director, Bodhi St. George, discover a stranger’s body on a nearby goat farm. When a wounded St. George turns up at the hospital and later escapes, and a missing girl’s remains and another body are discovered at the farm, Mercy and Elvis—with the aid of her boyfriend, game warden Troy Warner, and his dog, Susie Bear—must track down the killer before the wedding celebration descends into a funeral. Distinctive characters enrich the story. This series combines canine crime with darker investigations, though not as trickily plotted as the David Rosenfelt cases for lawyer Andy Carpenter, also out in July.

Murphy, Dwyer. [An Honest Living](#) (Viking \$26). Patrick calls this “A literate paean to classic PI fiction, seeped in antiquarian book culture and playing with the conventions of the genre. The first-person tone is infectious and old school and the book has the feel of a 1940’s novel transposed into early 2000’s New York. A fun debut and a good summer read.”

Our unnamed PI is actually a Brooklyn lawyer caught in the toils of a literary superstar (although she hasn’t published anything lately) and her bookseller husband. It’s the mid-2000s. Our guy gave up a career with a prestigious law firm to make an honest living in a solo practice doing odd jobs, contract work, and document reviews, but his earnings have been slim of late. Then Anna Rennick offers him a \$10,000 fee as well as a potential bonus if he can catch her husband offering any of her antiquarian books for sale. The trouble begins when the real Anna Rennick shows up, threatening to sue.

Murphy, the editor-in-chief of *CrimeReads*, writes with authority about the New York book world and literary references

abound, from Edith Wharton to Cormac McCarthy. Biblio-noir but in my opinion hard to follow. It meanders through the plot as Murphy shows us many many aspects of the city he clearly loves in a “lovingly rendered snapshot of an already-bygone city,” which has shaped him and his narrator to the men they are. One reviewer adds that the narrator “knows he’s in a story that mirrors the plot of the film *Chinatown*.”

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.

And Patrick is excited too and says, “Victor Li seems like any other small-time criminal trying to stay afloat. His latest gig involves breaking into government storage units that contain the personal effects of the recently deported, helping themselves to anything worth selling. Only his sister knows that he’s a wanted man on the run. As he is going through backpacks and suitcases, Li finds an incredibly rare gem along with a book of cryptic notes that lead Li and his new employer down to Mexico. Naturally, they find themselves involved in a much larger scheme than they bargained for, involving various global interests. A terrific thriller by a writer on the move. Don’t miss it.” Or the painite, “the world’s rarest gem,” worth \$65,000 per karat. Nieh’s second 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.”

Patterson, James/David Ellis. [Escape](#) (Little Brown \$29). **Signed by Ellis with a Signed Bookplate by Patterson.** 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.

⌘Pearse, Sarah. [The Retreat](#) (Bantam UK \$36). The author of the phenomenal [The Sanatorium](#) (\$17) returns with a new locked-room mystery powered by someone bent on revenge. A woman’s body has been found at the bottom of the cliff beneath the yoga pavilion. We believe her death was a tragic accident, though DS Elin Warner has arrived on the island to investigate. A storm has been forecast, but do not panic. Stick together and please ignore any rumors you might have heard about the island and its history. As soon as the weather clears, we will arrange boats to take you back to the mainland. In the meantime, we hope you enjoy your stay. “Pearse goes from strength to strength. The suspense inexorably builds to a stunning climax. An added treat is the return of Elin Warner, who is a fascinating character one can only root for.”—David Baldacci. The Unsigned US edition: [The Retreat](#) (Viking \$27)

Pobi, Robert. [Do No Harm](#) (St Martins \$27.99 UNSIGNED). **Join Canadian Pobi and me on August 6 at 4:00 PM to discuss one our staff's top favorite series.** Not every great read has to be autographed. His lead Lucas Page is one of the most vivid recent creations. Pobi says, "He's an astrophysicist. He's got a brain that's just on a level that very few people are at. What made him different is that he's viewing the entire world through data and numbers, so much so that he blinds himself, sometimes, leaving out the things that are right in front of him, because he's too busy looking at the data." He's the father of 5 adopted kids, and an ex-FBI agent following a severe wound, but his expertise at pattern recognition brings the agency to his door. Except here.

Page's wife Erin loses a friend, a gifted plastic surgeon, to suicide and Lucas begins to realize how many people Erin knew that have died in the past year, in freak accidents and now suicide. Intrigued despite himself, Page begins digging through obituaries and realizes that there's a pattern—a bad one. These deaths don't make sense unless the doctors are being murdered, the target of a particularly clever killer. This time, the FBI wants as little to do with Lucas as he does with them so he's left with only one option—ignore it and go back to his normal life. But then, the pattern reveals that the next victim is likely to be... Erin herself. If you haven't read him start with [City of Windows](#) (\$17.99).

Pulley, Natasha. [The Half Life of Valery K](#) (Bloomsbury UK \$55). Pulley's books are a delight, imaginative, well researched, and here taking on a Russian scenario. **The expense is such we are accepting orders on demand and as there is a limited number of this special edition, please order ASAP. Otherwise the [unsigned US edition](#) is available.**

In 1963, in a Siberian gulag, former nuclear specialist Valery Kolkhanov has mastered what it takes to survive: the right connections to the guards for access to food and cigarettes, the right pair of warm boots to avoid frostbite, and the right attitude toward the small pleasures of life. But on one ordinary day, all that changes: Valery's university mentor steps in and sweeps Valery from the frozen prison camp to a mysterious unnamed town hidden within a forest so damaged it looks like the trees have rusted from within. Here, Valery is Dr. Kolkhanov once more, and he's expected to serve out his prison term studying the effect of radiation on local animals. But as Valery begins his work, he is struck by the questions his research raises: what, exactly, is being hidden from the thousands who live in the town? And if he keeps looking for answers, will he live to serve out his sentence? Based on real events in a surreal Soviet city.

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. A blizzard is just the perfect atmosphere for this story of old bones, old murder, a copycat killer apparently stalking Tempe Brennan. Freed from a heavy work schedule, Tempe 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. You can't beat Rosenfelt for a fast, amusing, cleverly plotted read I gobble up as I used to the Spencers of Robert B. Parker. Try the [Andy Carpenter series](#) – it's addictive. And while the dogs enrich it, they are not active narrators or sleuths.

Rosenfelt visits us at The Pen on October 11 to launch his Christmas book. Puppies!! In [Santa's Little Yelper's](#) (\$25.99).

Scrivenor, Hayley. [Dirt Town](#) (Macmillan UK \$40). **Tip-ins. Drat it. Otherwise this would be a First Mystery Book of the Month but she lives in Australia so.... Note:** the US title is [Dirt Creek](#) (Flatiron \$26.99 Unsigned) and out August 2, rather than in July. We recommend you buy one edition or the other.

Scrivenor delivers a booming-big debut in which D.S. Sarah Michaels investigates the disappearance of 12-year-old Esther as she walked home from her rural Australian school even as Esther's classmates offer their own insight. Here's a Starred Review:

"Australian author Scrivenor's stunning debut blends a taut psychological thriller with a suspenseful police procedural. During Christmas week 2001, amid a summer so hot that the "edges of the road crumbled," Det. Sgt. Sarah Michaels and her partner, Det. Constable Wayne Smith, investigate the disappearance of 12-year-old Esther Bianchi in the gritty town of Durton. Esther's BFF, Veronica Thompson, may have been the last one to see her after she left school but didn't return home. Or maybe it was their 11-year-old friend, Lewis Kennard, who was bullied at school and telling lies to protect secrets. Progress is stymied with media attention and police support drawn to a high-profile case of missing twins "elsewhere in the state." The cases may be linked and connected to a drug ring. Betrayals, domestic violence, festering family secrets, and fractured friendships delineate clashes among spouses, parents, children, and extended relatives. Scrivenor does a superb job laying out Sarah and Wayne's backgrounds and their working relationship as the well-crafted plot builds to a powerful conclusion. Fans of Liane Moriarty and Jane Harper won't want to miss this page-turner."

#Silva, Daniel. [Portrait of an Unknown Woman](#) (Harper \$29.99). This new Gabriel Allon isn't a spy story. It does draw upon the now retired Israeli super-spy's skill and international contacts, but Silva has taken Gabriel with his family back to Venice where he first met Chiara and where her father is a rabbi. The plan is he

will rest up and then return to restoring art under a firm managed by Chiara. But he and his highly honed skill set is summoned into the world of high stakes art, forgeries, finance, and the murder of an elderly French woman whose elegantly written summons to meet her in Bordeaux fails when she is killed in what appears to be a car accident. Silva has clearly had a marvelous time deep diving into the international art world, setting Gabriel to work as a forger in a “it takes a thief to catch a thief” scenario, revisiting Corsica, France, Italy, London, and New York.... And effecting forms of justice that are, how shall I say it, fluid....

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, our **July First Mystery Book of the Month**, 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.

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.**

This is a dazzling book. For one, Thor’s analysis of China and the CCP’s policies absolutely underlines (when he wrote it, it forecast Putin’s war on the Ukraine. For another, thinking of India as a focal point of an Asia NATO opens new frontiers, and opposition. For a third, engaging India’s Snow Warriors high in disputed territory in the mountains between India and China, not just kicks off the action but made me reach for my phone and study the geography, so there’s much to learn as well as enjoy. And fourth, Thor opens this gem with the longest high-action scene of his career in a scenario worthy of Steve McQueen. It will be criminal if a movie is not made of it.

So we have Harvath called into action in Kabul, Jaipur, and other unfamiliar cultures but operating with his usual skill set. But to navigate this world Thor creates a wonderful woman who steers him along, and at personal risk. Don’t worry, the Norwegian Ninja is not bumped by Ash, but Ash is a woman well

worth keeping. The very best way I can interest you in this books, which by the way is gorgeously produced with a tactile cover highlighting Harvath’s arc from Lions (of Lucerne) to Tigers, is to suggest you watch our lively (and his only) [book discussion](#) on publication day. It’s amazing!

☒Toyne, Simon. [Dark Objects](#) (Collins \$39) you can order on demand. The unsigned US edition, [Dark Objects](#) (Harper \$27.99), is our **July British Crime Book of the Month**. For a review of this outstanding police procedural see More Hardcover for July below. Also the wonderful guide to English behavior by Kate Fox just below.

Vercher, John. [After the Lights Go Out](#) (Soho \$26). Patrick reviews: Edgar-nominated John Vercher’s new novel is a gut-wrencher, simultaneously difficult and beautiful and impossible to put down. Xavier “Scarecrow” Wallace is a mixed race MMA fighter who is fighting a losing battle with CTE (chronic traumatic encephalopathy), or pugilistic dementia. Desperate to get back in the game after a year’s suspension from the game, Xavier trains and diligently watches his diet, but the migraines, paranoia and memory loss are getting worse. As if that isn’t enough, his white father is slipping into end-stage Alzheimer’s and is beginning to exhibit signs of the buried racism that sent Xavier’s African-American mother packing years before. Suddenly, Xavier gets a glimmer of hope when he is offered a comeback fight in the largest MMA promotion. Can he keep it together long enough to redeem himself in the ring? Wow, Soho Press is really on a roll here, with modern noirs by Gary Phillips, Eli Cranor, and now, Vercher. Don’t miss this one!

☒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.**

While I wouldn’t call it Dark Academia in a Donna Tartt or Ashley Winstead sense, the lure of Oxford, of becoming part of a college, makes this catnip to any Anglophile readers. Plus our focus comes through the awed student, the roommate of the fabulously wealthy, brilliant but over-privileged and risk addicted April Clarke-Cliveden. Together, they developed a group of devoted and inseparable friends—Will, Hugh, Ryan, and Emily—during their first term. But Hannah never fully finds her footing in the college’s hallowed halls or in the dazzling and perhaps dangerous orbit of the ultimate It Girl, April. But when we first meet Hannah she’s a bookseller living a quiet life in Edinburgh with her husband, Will, pregnant, and still plagued by being the roommate of April, the girl who discovered the body. This tranquility is rocked when she learns of the death of college porter John Neville, the man who thanks in large part to Hannah’s testimony, was convicted of April’s murder. He died still proclaiming his innocence. Her world is further rocked when a young journalist comes knocking and presents new evidence that Neville may have been innocent. And Hannah realizes that the friends she thought she knew all have something to hide... including a murder.

☒Weaver, Ashley. [The Key to Deceit](#) (St Martins \$27.99). Set during the early days of the Battle of Britain, Edgar finalist Weaver’s excellent sequel to 2021’s [A Peculiar Combination](#) (\$17.99) continues the adventures of Electra “Ellie” McDonnell and her uncle Mick, who have eschewed safe cracking in favor of more legitimate work. When a young woman’s body washes up

on the banks of the Thames with a bracelet locked to her wrist, Ellie is recruited by Major Ramsey, an impassive and exceedingly handsome British intelligence officer, to remove the bracelet from the corpse's wrist. Together, Ellie and the major soon realize the dead woman was working as a spy for the Germans. Meanwhile, Ellie works with Felix Lacey, a longtime friend and possible romantic partner, to undercover the secrets behind Ellie's mother's decades-old conviction for murder. Weaver does a sensational job of evoking 1940 London and populates the story with endearing characters, none more so than Ellie, who's gutsy, smart, and completely unwilling to be outmaneuvered or left behind when danger presents itself."—*PW* Starred Review. I recommend reading both novels.

THIS AND THAT....

✚Fox, Kate. [Watching the English: The Hidden Rules of English Behavior](#) (Notable Books \$19.95). I love this being a runaway bestseller in the UK where apparently even those living there need life decoded in its foibles, eccentricities, unwritten and sometimes bizarre codes of behavior, its whole complex and deeply embedded set of cultural rules invisible to the outsider. The ironic gnome rule. The reflex apology rule. Class anxiety tests. Reflex self-mockery. This book is a must for those loving British fiction and watching Britbox and other TV.

Garczynski, Matt. [This Is a Book for People Who Love the National Parks](#) (Running Press \$14). This splendid guide is nothing short of a celebration of America's natural wonders. An introduction to the storied history of the Parks Service is paired with engaging profiles of each of the sixty-one National Parks, from Acadia to Zion and everything in between. Quirky facts and key dates are woven throughout, while refreshingly modern illustrations capture the iconic features of each majestic setting. Deeply researched but not too serious,

Hooker, Kathy Eckles. [Voices of Navajo Mothers and Daughters: Portraits of Beauty](#) (Soulstice Publishing \$37.95). If you've been watching the Hillerman *Dark Winds* streaming TV, or reading both Hillermans handsome book with its penetrating color photos is well worth acquiring for the interviews with the generations of women in this matrilineal culture, how they survive and contrive to thrive. Often the fathers have left. It tours you around the Rez and into towns like Flagstaff.

Since we've added a Romance and Relationships Book(s) of the Month Club, here are two R&R gems with the added feature of two pretty terrifying mothers for the brave daughters to face down

KJ Dell'Antonia. [In Her Boots](#) (Putnam \$17). Flattened by the supernaturally organized powers of her mother and a soul crushing incident at her high school prom, Rhett Gallagher flees her home in rural NH. Now at 40, her ranch life in Argentina implodes, she's stalled writing her book based on her successful SM life as the Modern Pioneer Woman, her beloved grandmother has died. So home she goes to the farm she believes grandma left her. But.... On the way she stops in Brooklyn where her bestie Jasmine, a superb baker, lives. Jasmine's life has been sublimated to her overbearing health-guru husband. Once back on the farm, the high school dude reappears, her mother shows up owning the farm and wanting it for the college she heads, and Jasmine brings most of her kitchen to help the farm stand. It goes from there – fabulously. So is the food. You will root for Rhett even as

you want to give her a good kick. But hey, she's the one wearing the boots.... One of *BookBub*'s 23 Best Books of Summer 2022. One of *Good Morning America*'s 14 Books to Make Your July Bearable. "Heart-warming and complicated and uplifting. I couldn't put it down. Even though I usually prefer books with supernatural goats that eat people." –Jenny Lawson

Martin, Jessica. [For The Love of the Bard](#) (Berkley \$16). It knocked me down that a second story much like Dell'Antonia's would publish for summer, and charm me too. Literary agent and writer Miranda Barnes, like Rhett, the Modern Pioneer Woman, not only has a fake literary persona and hit with her series, she has hit a block: she needs the summer to finish her next Elf Shot book, but she's stuck. And soon her formidable, highly organized mother corners her into a role in Bard's Rest's centennial of the town's beloved (and lucrative) Shakespeare Festival. Suddenly she's directing *Twelfth Night*, confronting her mother's breast cancer when Mom won't, and dodging the guy who broke her heart at the high-school prom night. Hmm... Adam is now a veterinarian and the one person Miranda cannot avoid once she stumbles over and adopts a scared, loveable pup. Can one ever get over a high school crush? But Adam is also working on becoming his authentic self.

Hayes-McCoy, Felicity. [The Month of Borrowed Dreams](#) (Harper \$16.99). And finally, here's a charmer for those who miss Maeve Binchy or read Nancy Colgan. It has a strong bookish element for our Hanna Casey is a librarian pledged to start a film club showing movies based on popular novels at the Lissberg Library. However this charming Irish seaside village (located on the fictitious Finfarran Peninsula created for this series), is far from peaceful. Family dramas unfold, wedding plans are jeopardized, Hanna has to make choices when her ex returns and her suitor Brian engaged in building a dream house. Sure it's a lovely read, perfect for summer.

SPIES OF SUMMER

I love this annual round up which I pull together because summer brings us a boom in spy stories. [Tom Nolan in the WSJ](#) writes an excellent piece about a trio of them, all included below: Dan Fesperman, Mick Herron, and Anthony Horowitz writing his third and last James Bond story. You can also do a search for spy stories by Joshua Hood, Alma Katsu, Olen Steinhauer, Ken Follett, Frederick Forsyth, etc

Also you can find interviews we conducted with some of these authors in our [FB](#) or [YT](#) video collections, and view them for free.

Blum, Howard. [The Spy Who Knew Too Much](#) (Harper \$28.99). A Pulitzer nominee for investigative reporting pens a real-life thriller that offers a solution, one never yet presented, to a famous Missing Person case, that of CIA Officer John Paisley. His boat was found adrift in September 1978, in Chesapeake Bay. But *habeas corpus* hampered any successful investigation. Tennent "Pete" Bagley was once a rising star in America's spy aristocracy, and many expected he'd eventually become CIA director. But the star that burned so brightly exploded when Bagley—who suspected a mole had burrowed deep into the agency's core—was believed himself to be the mole. After a year-long investigation, Bagley was finally exonerated, but the accusations tarnished his reputation and tainted his career. When Bagley's daughter Christina, a CIA analyst, married another intelligence officer who was

the son of the man who had played a key role in the investigation into Bagley, it caused a painful rift between the two. But then came Paisley's strange death. A murder? Suicide? Or something else? Pete, now a retired spy, launches his own investigation that takes him deep into his own past and his own longtime hunt for a mole. What follows is a relentless pursuit to solve a spy story—and an inspiring tale of a man reclaiming his reputation and his family. It's a very personal quest that leads to a shocking conclusion. Though this is real, a hunt for a mole is a staple of spy fiction. The book includes 8 pages of black & white photos and lists a wealth of Blum's sources.

Cleveland, Karen. [You Can Run](#) (\$17). Part of the job of CIA analyst Jill Bailey, the narrator of this tense spy novel from Thriller Award finalist Cleveland, consists of vetting potential double agents. One morning at CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia, she receives a call telling her that her infant son, Owen, is being held hostage. In exchange for his return, she must green light the agency's documentation on a potential Syrian double agent code-named Falcon. With the pressure mounting, Jill does as she is told. Once Owen is safely in her arms, she realizes she's been compromised forever. Impulsively, she resigns her job and persuades her husband to move to Ft. Lauderdale, where she settles into a reassuring humdrum existence. Four years later, her new life rapidly unravels when she's approached by a journalist who wants "to talk about Falcon." Jill is soon putting her safety on the line to protect her family as Cleveland plunges the reader into a terrifying world of shifting alliances, action, and intrigue that fans of strong female characters will relish.

Carry on with [The New Neighbor](#) (Ballantine \$28 where former CIA analyst Cleveland engenders deep paranoia for the susceptibility of U.S. intelligence—under the guise of entertainment. "At the start of this clever national security cyberwar thriller cum suburban status-envy mystery from bestseller Cleveland, CIA counterintelligence analyst Beth Bradford drops her youngest child off at college, then sees her life unravel. As she mourns the sale of the suburban Virginia house where she raised her family, her husband announces he's leaving her. She's sidelined at work, shunted into a training role instead of continuing her 15-year pursuit of a U.S.-based covert Iranian operative known as "The Neighbor." Dazed by the speed at which everything in her life is upended, she cultivates an increasingly unhealthy obsession with the new occupants of her old house, Madeline and Josh Sterling, conflating her personal crisis with an off-the-books investigation of the Neighbor's identity. She digs into the Sterlings' backgrounds, sets up surveillance of a cul-de-sac in her old neighborhood, and appears increasingly unhinged to her friends and former neighbors. The strong plot takes several convincing twists that vindicate Beth's initially outlandish suspicions..."—*PW*

Cumming, Charles. [Box 88](#) (Penzler \$27.95). Out last January, but I include it as it's such a super story. A secret agent comes of age—and reckons with the legacy of his first mission. The story thus straddles two eras: 1989 and 2020. Lachlan Kite is a member of BOX 88, an elite transatlantic black ops outfit so covert that not even MI6 and the CIA are certain of its existence—but even the best spy can't anticipate every potential threat in a world where dangerous actors lurk around every corner. At the funeral of his childhood best friend, Lachlan falls into a trap that

drops him into the hands of a potentially deadly interrogation, with his pregnant wife, also abducted, being held as collateral for the information he's sworn on his own life to protect. Thirty years earlier Lachlan, then just out of the upper class boarding school where he was reared, was BOX 88's newest recruit. In the haze of a gap year summer, in which the study of spycraft was intertwined with a journey of self-discovery, he cut his teeth on a special assignment on the coast of France, where a friendship allowed him special access to one of Iran's most dangerous men. Today, Lachlan's nostalgia for the trip is corrupted by recollection of the deceit that accompanied it but, in order to save his family, he'll be forced to revisit those painful memories one last time.

Fesperman, Dan. [Winter Work](#) (Knopf \$28 Signed). A spy thriller inspired by a true story about the precious secrets up for grabs just after the fall of the Berlin Wall. It uses the tropes of the genre to depict a world changing so quickly that anxiety is ever present. It's 1989, just after the fall of the Berlin Wall, as the book follows Emil Grimm, a former Stasi officer trying to trade state secrets in exchange for his family's safe harbor in the wake of the collapse of the Communist government. *Winter Work* has the shape and propulsive energy of a traditional thriller while also accomplishing something slightly subtler: it uses the tropes of the genre to depict a world changing so quickly that anxiety is ever present. The uncertainty of the time is as much the antagonist of *Winter Work* as is the Russian thug that Grimm and his compatriots must outsmart. The book's tremendous realism is due to Fesperman's long and successful journalism career. Fesperman, who continues to write espionage novels that couldn't help but be a little subtler, a little more atmospheric, a little more character based than the average thriller, has taken readers to the streets of Sarajevo, to Hamburg, to Dubai, to Guantanamo, and to Berlin. They have won several international prizes for crime fiction, and have allowed Fesperman to do some work writing for television as well. But Fesperman thinks *Winter Work* tops them all:

East Germany "still had this atmosphere of rapid change, of people moving in, of a whole system having just collapsed, and this deep breath that everyone was taking before it all transformed. I didn't realize how lucky I was to be witnessing all of that. Which way is East Germany going to go? What is this country? What will this part of the city end up like? What's going to happen to these people?" His office at the time was in East Berlin... Now it's all cleaned up; it's very nice. Then, it was still like the Wild West and freewheeling.

For Fesperman's 2021 superb spy story, see [The Cover Wife](#) in our July Large Paperback Picks below. And for all his work, [click here](#).

Forsyth, Kate. [The Crimson Thread](#) (Blackstone \$27.99). Here's a WWII theater for a woman's story we have rarely seen—Crete!

Freeman, Brian. [Robert Ludlum's The Bourne Sacrifice](#) (Putnam \$28 Signed). Jason Bourne has faced many killers before, but none as dangerous or as cruelly inventive as the assassin who calls himself Lennon. Bourne thought he had Lennon cornered in Iceland, only to have the killer escape in a fiery explosion. Now Lennon's trail leads Bourne to New York and then to Washington—and the body count rises with each deadly encounter... Join us August 10 at 4:00 PM to talk about all things Bourne.

☞Herron, Mick. [Bad Actors](#) (Harvill \$44 Signed). This is the latest in Herron's Slough House series which this spring came to Apple TV with *Slow Horses* starring Gary Oldman and Kristin Scott Thomas. What we have is a cadre of spies who've been put out to pasture in Regent's Park, London, where they somehow bungle their way through time and again despite the exacting Jackson Lamb. And here, in London's MI5 headquarters, a scandal is brewing that could disgrace the entire intelligence community. The Downing Street superforecaster—a specialist who advises the Prime Minister's office on how policy is likely to be received by the electorate—has disappeared without a trace. Claude Whelan, who was once head of MI5, has been tasked with tracking her down. But the trail leads him straight back to Slough House... The US edition: [Slow Horses](#) (Soho \$27.95).

☞Horowitz, Anthony. [With a Mind to Kill](#) (Harper\$26.99).

Our signed bookplates are expected to arrive sometime this month.

Before Mick Herron and Dan Fesperman (and John Le Carré) there was Ian Fleming: creator of the iconic James Bond. The fictional adventures of Agent 007, one way or another, influenced generations of readers and writers—including the abundantly talented Anthony Horowitz. *With a Mind to Kill* is Mr. Horowitz's third and final Fleming estate-approved Bond novel. It's set in the 1960s, after the Cuban Missile Crisis, and begins with the funeral of Bond's longtime boss, "M," head of the Secret Intelligence Service. M died at his desk, we're told—killed by none other than 007. But wait! That's a top-secret hoax to convince Russian intelligence it succeeded in its recent attempt to brainwash Bond into becoming a Communist assassin. The plan is for the Russians to rescue Bond from English imprisonment and bring him back to Moscow, where he can then counterspy on the Soviet Union. With the sadistic Col. Boris, the interrogator who subjects the returning Bond to a marathon of mind-bending tortures, we have an antagonist reminiscent of Fleming's most evil creations. Boris, working with Steel Hand, a new super-network of four spy agencies, aims at world domination. It's almost uncanny how well Mr. Horowitz summons Bond's mindset on everything from women ("Goodnight was a wonderful girl with her golden hair and deep sunburn, the perfect bosom and hips") to motorcars ("Only the Soviets could have chosen a car that was so poorly designed and engineered"). Yet this Bond also feels the winds of change: "He had his license to kill. But was it possible that in this new, more questioning age, that license might have expired?" A drop of retro pleasures, a pinch of things to come; shaken, not stirred."—Tom Nolan

Kanon, Joseph. [The Berlin Exchange](#) (Scribner \$28). And here is Edgar-winning espionage ace Kanon, whose work tracks well with Fesperman and LeCarre, taking his own look at East Germany. American physicist Martin Keller was one of the scientists entrusted with the secrets of the Manhattan Project, but he later betrayed that trust by sharing top-secret plans and drawings he memorized with East German intelligence. Keller continued his spying at Harwell, England's analogue to Los Alamos, until he was found out and imprisoned in 1953. Out of the blue in 1963, Keller's freed in Berlin as part of a British–East German spy swap, but a gunman almost takes him out at Checkpoint Charlie. Once safe in East Berlin, he reunites with his ex-wife, Sabine, and their 11-year-old son, but he's dismayed to learn Sabine has a terminal illness. Meanwhile, Keller wonders

why he was set free and why an assassin tried to kill him. Kanon vividly depicting the impact of secret lives on the loved ones of those engaged in espionage which prompts one critic to compare this to Len Deighton's Bernard Samson series. Or again, think LeCarre.

If you are new to Kanon you can read the books in any order. I love them all, particularly *Los Alamos* and *Istanbul Passage*. [Order a set](#) and binge.

Martin, Madeline. [The Librarian Spy](#) (Hanover Square \$17.99). Martin's book is "inspired by the true history of America's library spies of WWII). And one of the women, Ava, is indeed delightedly employed at the Library of Congress when she is abruptly recruited into the OSS and dispatched to Lisbon, there to gather intelligence on the Nazis. The other, Elaine, has begun an apprenticeship at a printing shop in Lyon, a job usually reserved for men. Her husband, a declared Pacifist, has gone missing after an argument about the Resistance. It is this that in time triggers off a connection between the two women through coded messages. Martin has done an admirable job of research into both the big stuff and the minutiae of everyday wartime life. But I find her prose is often in service of dropping in the research. If you've read her [The Last Bookshop in London](#) (\$16.99) you can make your own critical judgment.

Mazzeo, Tilar J. [Sisters in Resistance](#) (Grand Central \$30). "Reads like a John LeCarré novel, too incredible to be true—and yet it is." —*Booklist*. Drawing from in-depth research and first-person interviews with eyewitnesses, Mazzeo tells a [tale as twisted as any spy thriller](#) about three women who delivered critical evidence of Axis war crimes to Allied forces during World War II. In 1944, Benito Mussolini's daughter, Edda, gave Hitler and her father an ultimatum: release her husband, Galeazzo Ciano, from prison, or risk her leaking her husband's journals to the press. To avoid the peril of exposing Nazi lies, Hitler and Mussolini hunted for the diaries for months, determined to destroy them. Hilde Beetz, a German spy, was deployed to seduce Ciano to learn the diaries' location and take them from Edda. As the seducer became the seduced, Hilde converted as a double agent, joining forces with Edda to save Ciano from execution. When this failed, Edda fled to Switzerland with Hilde's daring assistance to keep Ciano's final wish: to see the diaries published for use by the Allies. When American spymaster Allen Dulles learned of Edda's escape, he sent in Frances De Chollet, an "accidental" spy, telling her to find Edda, gain her trust, and, crucially, hand the diaries over to the Americans. Together, they succeeded in preserving one of the most important documents of WWII

Quirk, Matthew. [Red Warning](#) (Harper \$28.99 Signed). CIA officer Sam Hudson races to find a deep cover operative loose in the U.S. and a mole in the Agency before they can launch a devastating attack on Washington, D.C., in this adrenaline-fueled thriller from the author of *The Night Agent* and *Hour of the Assassin*.

For years CIA officer Sam Hudson has been hunting Konstantin, a Russian deep cover operative responsible for a string of assassinations in the West—and he believes a well-placed source in Geneva can finally get him close to the killer. But when their meeting is ambushed, Sam's partner is murdered and he barely makes it out alive himself. Back in the States, the bosses put him on leave and want him to drop his obsession with

Konstantin, but Sam can't let a man who's taken so many lives slip away again. When he gets a mysterious call at the Lincoln Memorial just before a bomb goes off, he realizes Konstantin has followed him to the U.S.—and is targeting him and everyone close to him. Teaming up with fellow CIA officer Emily Pierce, he sets out to redeem himself and uncover a plot that has been lying in wait since the end of the Cold War, its elements hidden among the most iconic buildings in the capital.

Scott, Anika. [The Soviet Sisters](#) (Harper \$16.99). Sisters Vera and Marya were brought up as good Soviets, loyal to Stalin. Several years after fighting on the Eastern front, both women find themselves deep in the mire of conflicts shaping a new world order in 1947 Berlin. When Marya, an interpreter, gets entangled in Vera's cryptic web of deceit and betrayal, she must make desperate choices to survive—and protect those she loves. Nine years later, Marya is a prisoner in a Siberian work camp when Vera, a doyenne of the KGB, has cause to reopen her case file and investigate the facts behind her sister's conviction all those years ago in Berlin. As Vera retraces the steps that brought them both to that pivotal moment in 1947, she unravels unexpected truths and discoveries that call into question the very history the Soviets were working hard to cover up. This novel pairs well, offering a different perspective to that of Fesperman and Kanon.

Silva, Daniel. [Portrait of an Unknown Woman](#) (Harper \$29.99 Signed). For our offsite event with Silva see our July Calendar of Events above.

I have included this new Gabriel Allon here but it isn't a spy story. It does draw upon the now retired Israeli super-spy's skill and international contacts, but Silva has taken Gabriel with his family back to Venice where he first met Chiara and where her father is a rabbi. The plan is he will rest up and then return to restoring art under a firm managed by Chiara. But he and his highly honed skill set is summoned into the world of high stakes art, forgeries, finance, and the murder of an elderly French woman whose elegantly written summons to meet her in Bordeaux fails when she is killed in what appears to be a car accident. Silva has clearly had a marvelous time deep diving into the international art world, setting Gabriel to work as a forger in a "it takes a thief to catch a thief" scenario, revisiting Corsica, France, Italy, London, and New York.... And effecting forms of justice that are, how shall I say it, fluid....

Thor, Brad. [Rising Tiger](#) (Atria \$28.99). **Our copies come with a nifty handsome sticker celebrating 20 years of Scot Harvath, and signed at home by Brad.**

This is an amazing book. For one, Thor's analysis of China and the CCP's policies absolutely underlines (when he wrote it, it forecast Putin's war on the Ukraine. For another, thinking of India as a focal point of an Asia NATO opens new frontiers, and opposition. For a third, engaging India's Snow Warriors high in disputed territory in the mountains between India and China, not just kicks off the action but made me reach for my phone and study the geography, so there's much to learn as well as enjoy. And fourth, Thor opens this gem with the longest high-action scene of his career in a scenario worthy of Steve McQueen. It will be criminal if a movie is not made of it.

So we have Harvath called into action in Kabul, Jaipur, and other unfamiliar cultures but operating with his usual skill set. But to navigate this world Thor creates a wonderful woman who steers him along, and at personal risk. Don't worry, the

Norwegian Ninja is not bumped by Ash, but Ash is a woman well worth keeping. The very best way I can interest you in this books, which by the way is gorgeously produced with a tactile cover highlighting Harvath's arc from Lions (of Lucerne) to Tigers, is to suggest you watch our lively (and his only) [book discussion](#) on publication day. It's amazing!

Walker, Joss (JT Ellison). [Master of Shadows](#) (Two Tales Press \$15.99). Jayne Thorne, CIA Librarian, returns in a spy-spin on urban fantasy that is enormous fun. Here she is coping with a lost grimoire, a dangerous new enemy, and a powerful magical weapon that could destroy the world. It begins when her mentor goes missing and Jayne heads to Paris to find him. There terrorists demand she locate a necromantic grimoire or they will kill him. As she hunts—also trying to make peace with her sister who has hidden the truth of their family for years, and hoping her shape-shifting boyfriend will sync up with her heightened powers—Jayne unlocks the secret to summoning a master magician with dark and lethal powers.... Start with [Tomb of the Queen](#).

Wiehl, Lis. [A Spy in Plain Sight](#) (Pegasus \$27.95). A legal analyst for NPR, NBC, and CNN, delves into the facts surrounding what has been called the "worst intelligence disaster in U.S. history": the case of Robert Hanssen—a Russian spy who was embedded in the FBI for two decades

CLASSICS

Burnett, WR. [High Sierra / The Asphalt Jungle](#) (Stark House \$20.95). Two classics in one volume. Enjoy this discussion of the movie made of *High Sierra*: "If George Raft hadn't turned down both *High Sierra* and *The Maltese Falcon*, Humphrey Bogart might have continued playing second-billed gangsters to the end of his days. Adapted from W. R. Burnett's novel by both Burnett and John Huston, *High Sierra* opens with gangster Roy Earle (Bogart) being paroled after a lengthy prison term. Though he enjoys the fresh air and sunshine of the outside world, Earle has no intention of giving up his criminal ways. In fact, his parole has been arranged by Big Mac (Donald MacBride), so that Earle can mastermind a big-time heist at a fancy California resort hotel. After a few unkind words with a crooked cop, Kranmer (Barton MacLane), in Big Mac's employ, Earle heads toward a fishing resort, where he is to commiserate with his inexperienced, hot-headed cohorts Babe (Alan Curtis) and Red (Arthur Kennedy). En route, he befriends a farm family, heading to LA in search of work. He falls in love with the family's club-footed daughter Velma (Joan Leslie)—though she never really gives him any encouragement—and makes a silent promise to finance an operation on her foot once he's gotten his share of the loot. At the mountain cabin rendezvous, Earle meets Marie (Ida Lupino), Babe's tough-but-vulnerable girlfriend. He angrily orders her to scram, but she stubbornly remains. Earle also finds himself the owner of a "jinxed" dog, whose previous masters have all met with early demises (a none-too-subtle foretaste of things to come).... *High Sierra* was remade in 1949 as *Colorado Territory* and in 1955 as *I Died a Thousand Times*.

Penzler, Otto, ed. [Golden Age Locked Room Mysteries](#) (Penzler \$25.95). Given the Penzler publication of Tom Mead's [Death and the Conjuror](#) (\$25.95) this month, this collection of impossible crime stories could not be more apt (be real... this conjunction is not by chance). Here's a Starred Review for

this sterling anthology: “In the thoughtful introduction to this superb anthology of impossible crime stories, Penzler notes the inherent tension of such tales (“Be warned. As you read these astoundingly inventive stories, you will inevitably be disappointed, just as explanations of stage illusions exterminate the spell of magic that we experienced as we watched the impossible occur”), and anticipates that readers, as they see how the impossibilities are explained, will shift from awe to admiration. As is typical in American Mystery Classics anthologies, the 14 entries include the best-known practitioners in this subgenre, including Ellery Queen, as well as names few will recognize, such as MacKinlay Kantor. The plots range from a mystery featuring time travel, Anthony Boucher’s “Elsewhen,” to a disappearance of a corrupt judge inspired by an actual case, despite the jurist’s being watched by multiple cops at the time he vanished from a phone booth, in Clayton Rawson’s “Off the Face of the Earth.” Unsurprisingly, top honors go to John Dickson Carr’s “The Third Bullet,” in which a judge is shot to death under three impossible circumstances. This is a perfect introduction for those new to this particular subgenre.” I add that the point of it is not the why of the crime (usually murder), or the who did it, but the *how!* And notice there are several locked-room sorts of stories in this Booknews.

COZY CRIMES

✎Alexander, Poppy. [The Littlest Library](#) (Avon \$16.99). Not a mystery, but I can’t resist another novel featuring a librarian, a woman who turns an ordinary red phone box into the littlest library in England and brings together a struggling town. Jess Metcalf is perfectly content with her quiet, predictable life. But when her beloved grandmother passes away and she loses her job at the local library, Jess’ life is turned upside down. Determined to pick up the pieces, Jess decides it’s time for a new beginning. Unable to part with her grandmother’s cherished books, she packs them all up and moves to a tiny cottage in the English countryside. To her surprise, Jess discovers that she’s now the owner of an old red phone box that was left on the property. Missing her job at the local library, Jess decides to give back to her new community—using her grandmother’s collection to turn the ordinary phone box into the littlest library in England. It’s not long before the books are borrowed and begin to work their literary magic—bringing the villagers together... and managing to draw Jess’ grumpy but handsome neighbor out of his shell. Maybe it’s finally time for Jess to follow her heart, let go of her old life, and make the village her home? But will she? Can she? I think of this as a precursor to the Free Library movement which has reached my own neighborhood. Yay.

Brown, Rita Mae. [Claws for Alarm](#) (\$17). Pharamond “Fair” Haristeen is known throughout Crozet, Virginia, as a good horse vet and a better man. So when Benjamin Wagner, a new vet in town, is found dead in his unopened clinic, local police turn to Fair for help getting to the bottom of things. Fair quickly realizes Ben’s clinic has been robbed of ketamine, used by doctors as a horse tranquilizer but also a popular recreational drug. Then Fair’s own ketamine goes missing from the back of his truck. Was Ben killed for his supply? Or was he mixed up in something bigger? With a little aid from hungry helpers Tee Tucker the corgi and sweet puppy Pirate, as well as feline sleuths Mrs. Murphy and Pewter, Harry and Fair team up to restore justice—and maybe a little peace and quiet.

Crowe, Kitt. [A Poisonous Page](#) (Crippen \$26.99). Here’s a chirpy review from *PW* for a new Sweet Fiction Bookshop Mystery: In Crowe’s sprightly follow-up to 2021’s [Digging Up Trouble](#), bookshop manager Lexi Jones of tourist town Confection, Oregon, is suspicious of the sudden death of real estate agent and chamber of commerce chair Marilyn Freeman. Though imperious Det. Chad Berg is more inclined to regard it as the result of a sudden heart attack, Lexi wonders if it might relate to shady property deals in the area. When Marilyn’s rival, Rachel Nevis, also turns up dead, Lexi is convinced that the two cases are connected and is impelled to investigate when Dash Hagen, the brother of a friend of hers and a former lover of Marilyn and Rachel, becomes the police’s prime suspect in Rachel’s killing. Members of the Macaroons book club are more than willing to assist Lexi, despite Berg’s hostility toward amateurs meddling in official investigations. Winning characters, slapstick interactions between Lexi and Berg, and an offbeat climax will keep readers riveted.” I’m sure many of you Cozies readers wish this publisher would put out more paperbacks of its earlier titles.

Delany, Vicki. [Murder Spills the Tea](#) (Kensington \$26). Virtuoso pastry chef Lily Roberts never wanted to enter a made-for-TV cooking contest, but she has no choice when Bernadette Murphy, her best friend, and Rose Campbell, her maternal grandmother—who owns the Victoria-on-Sea B&B whose grounds are graced by Lily’s shop, Tea by the Sea—enter her in the contest. On *America Bakes!* each episode takes place at a different bakery, and one will be proclaimed the winner at the end of the season. Lily quickly learns that *America Bakes!* is nowhere near as civilized as *The Great British Baking Show* when director Josh Henshaw and his assistant, Reilly Miller, arrive at Tea by the Sea and deliberately begin to stir up tensions among its helpers including Cheryl and her daughter. When difficult British chef Tommy Greene is found dead in Lily’s kitchen, his head bashed with her marble rolling pin, Cheryl becomes a prime suspect. “Cape Cod provides an appealing backdrop for a food-centric cozy replete with red herrings and likable sleuths,” says *Kirkus Reviews*.

✎Ellicott, Jessica. [Murder Through the English Post](#) (Kensington \$26). When a rash of poisoned pen letters envelops their sleepy English village, Beryl and Edwina, the delightfully mismatched friends and sleuths-of-a-certain-age, step up to stamp out the evil-minded epistles. This old-fashioned form of creating a Twitter mob or shaming someone on Facebook is not why I named our bookstore The Poisoned Pen—I liked the literary allusion to the act of writing crime fiction, not spreading poisonous gossip.

Fluke, Joanne. [Apple Turnover Murder](#) (\$12.95). A reissue of the 13th Lake Eden investigation for Minnesota baker Hannah Swensen, repackaged and including ten scrumptious recipes for readers to try at home.

✎Penrose, Andrea. [Murder at the Royal Botanic Gardens](#) (\$15.95). A new chapter in Penrose’s Regency era cozy begins when Lady Charlotte Sloane has finally agreed to marry the Earl of Wrexford. For their first outing as an engaged couple, Charlotte and the earl attend a lecture by American botanist Josiah Becton at London’s Royal Botanic Gardens. Becton has made a momentous scientific breakthrough, but before he can share his discovery, he’s found dead in the solarium. The head of Becton’s American delegation believes the botanist was murdered for his formula and asks Wrexford to investigate. The earl is

reluctant, until he and Charlotte learn their young ward, Hawk, was in the solarium when Becton died and may have seen—or been seen by—the killer....

If you like Regency fiction, check out Sophie Irwin's *A Lady's Guide to Fortune Hunting* below.

Wojtas, Olga. [Miss Blaine's Prefect and the Vampire Menace](#) (Felony & Mayhem, \$26). Wojtas' excellent sequel to 2018's [Miss Blaine's Prefect and the Golden Samovar](#) (\$14.95) continues the time-traveling adventures of middle-aged Edinburgh librarian Shona McMonagle, a proud graduate of the Marcia Blaine School for Girls. See the next section for a longer review.

MORE HARDCOVERS FOR JULY

And some repeat reviews

✎ Billingham, Mark. [The Murder Book](#) (Atlantic \$26). "This is the eighteenth book in a series that began in 2001 and has established Thorne as one of British crime fiction's most iconic characters. Billingham is a masterful plotter, and here he supplies a few alarming teasers before delivering one of his most amazing endings ever."—Booklist Starred Review. Tom Thorne is content in his relationship with Melita Perera, who works with the police as a forensic psychiatrist, following a period of social isolation. Meanwhile, Thorne's nemesis, Stuart Nicklin, who once tortured and nearly killed Thorne's best friend, pathologist Phil Hendricks, escapes from prison and undergoes cosmetic surgery that makes him all but unrecognizable. When three grotesque murders, which imitate the proverbial "see no evil" theme, occur in London, Thorne and partner Det. Insp. Nicola Tanner investigate. They tie all three to sociopath Rebecca Driver, an acolyte of Nicklin's, who meets her victims on a dating website, and arrest her. While Driver is in a holding cell after conviction and waiting to be sentenced, she finally decides to expose Nicklin's evil manipulations. In the brilliant denouement, Thorne confronts Nicklin in Melita's home, and the fallout from their violent encounter is sure to reverberate through the lives of Tanner, Hendricks, and himself in future installments.

✎ Chase, Eve. [The Birdcage](#) (Putnam \$27). In January 2019, three half-sisters, Kat, Flora, and Lauren, are summoned by their eccentric artist father to his picturesque and isolated far-west Cornish summer cottage for a surprise announcement. The sisters spent idyllic summers on the Cornish coast with their father when they were young, but they've avoided one another since the summer of 1999, when a tragedy tore the family apart. Now finally thrown together again, Kat, Flora, and Lauren are forced to deal with their involvement in a horrendous event that has overshadowed their lives for 20 years. The tension ramps up when they realize that someone is watching them—someone who knows what they did. "Chase conjures up a bohemian, artistic world filled with damaged daughters and their charismatic, largely absent and narcissistic father."—Sarah Vaughan

Crosley, Sloane. [Cult Classic](#) (Farrar \$27) offers "a witty and fantastical story of dating and experimental psychology in New York City. After Lola, 37, bumps into two exes in two days, she suspects it's more than coincidence. Then her friend Vadis, with whom she used to work at a prestigious psychology journal, drags her to a meeting held by a secretive startup named Golconda run by their charming former boss, Clive Glenn. Clive is putting an obscure theory to the test involving meditation and technological manipulation, in which participants can lure people from their

past for a final interaction and closure. Lola balks at the cultlike reverence the others show for Clive, as well as their New Agey vibe, but also hopes to clarify whether she really wants to marry her glassmaker fiancé, Bootsookish roundup. "Crosley is nothing if not ambitious here, interrogating contemporary wellness culture and the very nature of love as [her narrator] confronts a gauntlet of ghosts from her romantic past . . . It's Crosley's analytical acumen and gift for the striking metaphor that really gives the book life. [Read a Time Magazine feature about the book here](#)

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.

Dark, Alice Elliott. [Fellowship Point](#) (Scribner \$28.99). This novel set on the coast of Maine is filled with insights about writing, about the perils and freedoms of aging, about the great mysteries, as well as the pleasures, of life. The story about the relationships between three women unfolds, as life does, through joys and losses, confrontations and confessions, with twists along the way that change your perception of all that came before. "Marvelous... Reading this novel is a transportive experience, similar to spending a long, luxurious summer on the shores of a picturesque Maine peninsula. It's full of memorable adventures, tense moments of family drama, and opportunities for restorative contemplation. Through it all, *Fellowship Point* harkens back to one of *Howard's End*'s big messages: 'Only connect.'"—BookPage Starred Review.

Davis, Lindsey. [Desperate Undertaking](#) (St Martins \$27.99). "Davis's superior 10th whodunit featuring private inquiry agent Flavia Albia combines an engrossing plot with a plausible evocation of life in ancient Rome. In 89 CE, Davos, an actor friend of Flavia's adoptive parents, Marcus Didius Falco and Helena Falco, seeks their help probing the murder of Chremes, an actor-manager who also knew the older Falcos, who was 'stripped naked and hung up to die on a cross' in one of Emperor Domitian's stadiums. The emperor had modified performances of a popular drama so that the lead role—a bandit—would be played by a condemned criminal, enabling the execution by crucifixion at the end to be real. Outside the arena where Chremes was found, someone had posted a fake notice advertising the dead man's upcoming appearance in the play as a means of getting passersby to enter and view the grim tableau. Meanwhile, Flavia has another bizarre murder to solve—a woman gored to death by a bull that identified "the undertaker" as her killer just before expiring. The tension is sustained throughout, and the mystery of the murders satisfactorily explained. This entry reinforces Davis's place at the top of the Ancient Roman historical subgenre." We have 3 Signed UK copies: [Desperate Undertaking](#) (Hodder UK \$44).

Deutermann, P T. [The Last Paladin](#) (St Martins \$28.99) is based on the true story of the USS *Holland* (DE-24), a World War II Atlantic Fleet destroyer escort which has spent the past two years in the unforgiving battle for survival against the German U-boats of the North Atlantic. It's the summer of 1944. Lt. Commander Mariano deTomasi, captain of the destroyer escort *USS Holland*, has arrived in the Solomon Islands to assist the Pacific theater war effort. Previously stationed in the North Atlantic hunting German U-boats, the small ship is considered an afterthought to "the Big Blue Fleet" that will take the fight north to the Japanese home islands. The *Holland* is assigned to patrol an area of the empty ocean based on rumors of a line of Japanese submarines intent on ravaging the approaching U.S. armada. After aircraft spot a Japanese sub, the *Holland* begins a tense search and destroy mission for a pack of submarines, which may strike readers as unlikely, but as with all Deutermann's novels, it has a strong historical basis.

Gailey, Sarah. [Just Like Home](#) (Forge \$26.99). "Come home." Vera's mother called and Vera obeyed. In spite of their long estrangement, in spite of the memories — she's come back to the home of a serial killer. Back to face the love she had for her father and the bodies he buried there, beneath the house he'd built for his family. Coming home is hard enough for Vera, and to make things worse, she and her mother aren't alone. A parasitic artist has moved into the guest house out back and is slowly stripping Vera's childhood for spare parts. He insists that he isn't the one leaving notes around the house in her father's handwriting... but who else could it possibly be? There are secrets yet undiscovered in the foundations of the notorious Crowder House." Gailey's newest gothic novel is painfully suspenseful and richly dark, their rushing, intoxicating writing in peak form. Delightfully creepy and heartbreakingly tragic, *Just Like Home* is equal parts raw terror of a dark childhood bedroom, creeping revelations of a true-crime podcast, and searing hurt of resentment within a family. It's a must-read for all gothic horror fans." —*Booklist* Starred Review

Hare, Louise. [Miss Aldridge Regrets](#) (Berkley \$27). This is an interesting choice by John for the **July Cozy Crimes Book of the Month**. It begins in 1936 London where Lena, her hopes of good roles in theater, maybe musicals, crushed, her married lover departed, is looking at a dead end. And then a stranger appears and offers her the chance of a starring role in America on Broadway, and to get there, a first class ticket on the *Queen Mary*. How can she refuse? Even though if something seems too good to be true, it is! Jumping at her chance to escape England, she agrees, and on board finds herself drawn into the orbit of an obscenely rich American family headed by a tyrant of an old man in poor health. And soon, as in an Agatha Christie novel (the ship is after all like a country house filled with suspects), he is murdered.... What lifts this to a new level is that Lena is mixed race, white enough to pass, but not by everyone. Britain had/has no segregation laws so she isn't prepared for America and Jim Crow. Nor has she any idea who her White mother is as her father raised her the best way he could.

✠Irwin, Sophie. [A Lady's Guide to Fortune-Hunting](#) (Pamela Dorman \$27). Irwin has written a version of *Pride and Prejudice* wherein 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. Her only recourse when

her engagement to a wealthy local is broken is to scrape up all resources and go London, hoping that she will be winner in the Season's annual Marriage Mart. There's a ticking clock here, and a need for strategy. Once confronted by the rich Lord Radcliffe whose young brother Kitty has hoped will come up to scratch, she eventually goes with honesty, a plain declaration of her predicament and campaigning, in a bargain they make. And it goes from there.... It's not Jane Austen but it plays well alongside *Bridgerton*, the TV and the novels by Julia Quinn.

Austen fans can challenge themselves with puzzles that test knowledge of Jane's work in Richard Galland's [Pride & Prejudice & Puzzles](#) (Imagine \$14.99), *Ingenious Riddles & Vexing Dilemmas*. Take a break from Wordle and tackle these Sudoku, code-breaking, and various visual and word games that are based on each of Austen's novels. As he demonstrates, Austen offered maps and charts for decoding her society in her writing, a society for which she was one of its most keen observers.

✠Mead, Tom. [Death and the Conjuror](#) (Penzler \$25.95) is the debut novel from the veteran mystery short-story writer Mead. The *NY Times Book Review* writes that "It's a loving tribute to the locked-room master John Dickson Carr and a sharply drawn period piece. In 1930s London, the dour Scotland Yard inspector George Flint has noted 'a burgeoning subgenre of crime, which had rolled over the city like fog. These were the 'impossible crimes' — typically high-society affairs, where men in locked rooms were killed under impractical circumstances.' The renowned psychiatrist Anselm Rees, found with his throat slit in his study, is one such case. The door is locked from the inside and there's no weapon in the room. Unable to figure out how the murder was committed, Flint turns to an acquaintance, Joseph Spector, a magician whom he'd once viewed 'with the guardedness he reserved for clever con men.' But it turns out that 'the useful part about knowing a magician is learning how the tricks are done.' Locked-room mysteries shine best with memorable characters, which were Carr's biggest weakness — and one of Mead's strengths."

There are [several reissues of Carr's challenging puzzles](#) available so you can have fun with both Mead and with them. New to our shelves is Carr's [The Eight of Swords](#) (American Mystery Classics \$15.95).

Mina, Denise. [Confidence](#) (LittleBrown \$28). Glasgow's Anna McDonald and Fin Cohen, a pair of podcasters whose spouses left each of them for one another, escape a hideous blended family vacation to go looking for Lisa Lee, a minor maker of videos about the joys of urban exploring who went missing after discovering a small silver casket in an abandoned French chateau that is disintegrating daily. But the casket, an artifact whose legend purports to offer proof of Pontius Pilate's conversion to Christianity and the resurrection itself, is up for auction in Paris, and Anna and Fin decide to head there hoping to find clues to Lisa's whereabouts. Bram van Wyk, a mysterious South African art expert who knows the casket's recent history, offers to help the podcasters track down Lisa and find out how the object made its way to a Parisian auction house, where deep-pocketed religious collectors are ready to bid fortunes to possess it. A recipe for serious crime, no? This isn't very believable but most treasure hunts aren't.

O'Donnell, Paraic. [The Maker of Swans](#) (Norton \$27.95). "Like O'Donnell's previous book, [The House on Vesper Sands](#)

(\$16.95) [which I loved] this novel is determined to unfold at its own pace. There are layers of narrative within the framework of gothic suspense, with a limited but rich cast of characters whose backgrounds and motivations are revealed only slowly. One of the pleasures of this genre is seeing how the disparate threads of the novel come together, and O'Donnell weaves a careful tapestry. Central to the story is Eustace, butler—although really much more—to the mysterious Mr. Crowe, who possesses supernatural powers that are never really explained. An act of random violence (which turns out to be not so random) sparks a chain of events which draws Clara, a young mute girl who lives in Mr. Crowe's sprawling mansion, into the clutches of some shadowy villains and, ultimately, to the revelation of her own abilities. Significantly, those powers connect to the act of writing, of imagination, of creation. So it is fitting that the story is reflected by O'Donnell's use of language, which is unfailingly evocative and beautiful. He is able to find poetry in dowdy, simple things, even an arrangement of cutlery or a piece of fabric. The action, when it comes, has an edge like a razor, and even a knife fight is described like a dance. Readers who are looking for a sorcery-driven blockbuster of rollicking heroes will not find it here. This novel is more like a maze that has to be negotiated step by step, with paths that sometimes bend back on themselves or lead to unexpected turns. The conclusion, when it is reached, is strange but satisfying, with a sense of inevitability."—*Kirkus Reviews*

Patterson, James/James O. Born. [Shattered](#) (LittleBrown \$29). **Signed bookplate by Patterson available.** NYPD master homicide investigator Michael Bennett and top FBI abduction specialist Emily Parker have a history. When Emily is found strangled in Washington, DC, only Bennett knows her well enough to find the perpetrator—or so he thinks. At every turn, Bennett discovers that she was a woman as adept at keeping secrets as she was at forging powerful connections. And that those closest to her had both the means and the motives to permanently silence her. Bennett aches to return home to his new wife and the familiar chaos of his family. Yet he's driven to perform the most brilliant detective work of his career....

✚Pulley, Natasha. [The Half Life of Valery K](#) (Bloomsbury \$27) revolves around a horrifying and secretive research project deep in the countryside of the Soviet Union in 1963. After having spent several years in a Siberian prison camp, biochemist Valery Kolkhanov is moved to the facility, where he's initially pleased with the warm water, plentiful food, and opportunity to study an irradiated ecosystem. Eventually, he begins to suspect that all is not as it seems, despite assurances from his former professor and current boss, the glamorous Dr. Resovskaya. As Valery forms an unusual bond with Konstantin Shenkov, the KGB officer in charge of security for the center, the two discover evidence of a conspiracy along with unspeakable human damage caused by the facility's experiments with radiation exposure, and find their lives at risk. Pulley, extrapolating out from the records of a historic Soviet research center, raises questions about scientific experimentation and the ways in which it can be manipulated for less than honorable purposes. Her dark humor, which turns on the blind faith given to Soviet authority figures despite their outlandish claims, combines with complex characters and a clear understanding of radiation science to yield an explosive blend. The chilling result feels all too plausible.

Reynolds, Allie. [The Swell](#) (Putnam \$27) is set in the fascinating and often dangerous world of surfing ... where a close-knit, thrill-seeking community will do anything to protect their own version of paradise ... and where everyone has something to hide. The tension builds with the heat and the waves. Wow. Our **International Crime Book of the Month** seemed to me to be best as a beachy read. And this trip to Australia's beaches fills the bill as a passionate surfer finds herself caught in an exhilarating, adrenaline-filled tale of surfing and rock scrambling that begins when sports therapist Kenna Ward flies into Sydney from her home in England, determined to rescue her best friend, Mikki, from her new fiancé, Jack. Kenna hasn't met Jack, but from what she's gathered long-distance from Mikki, she's convinced that he's overly controlling and possibly abusive. Her concern is only to be expected—after all, Mikki and Kenna's friendship dates back to their early schooldays when they were both surf-mad and shared adventures together, and Mikki's engagement to Jack was awfully sudden. But Kenna's plans to investigate Jack take an unexpected turn when he and Mikki whisk her off to their secret hideaway, a remote beach in a semi abandoned national park, where they hang out with a motley crew of buddies known as the Tribe. And then.... Reynolds made a splash with her 2021 debut [Shiver](#) (\$17), a "locked room" puzzler set in the French Alps.

Schaitkin, Alexis. [Elsewhere](#) (Celadon \$26.99). *Saint X* author Schaitkin's compelling new novel whisks readers away to a mysterious mountain village in the clouds where women become mothers and some mothers simply vanish into thin air. These vanishings are both tragic and beautiful; residents of the isolated community marvel at the baffling disappearances, while new mothers speculate over whom among them will be the next to go. Young Vera is all too familiar with the singular affliction that plagues her village; when she was just a girl, her own mother disappeared. Now on the verge of becoming a mother herself, Vera wonders whether she'll be around to raise her child or if she too will vanish into the swirling mist. "A spellbinding tale of motherhood," *Elsewhere* is "elaborately imagined [and] ethereally detailed" (*Kirkus*) and will keep you enthralled.

Stanfill, Francesa. [The Falcon's Eyes](#) (Harper \$30). Set in France and England at the end of the twelfth century, the moving story of a spirited, questing young woman, Isabelle, who defies convention to forge a remarkable life, one profoundly influenced by the fabled queen she idolizes and comes to know—Eleanor of Aquitaine. "Here is a great successor to Sharon Kay Penman [whom we lost last year]. Stanfill's attention to historical detail is surpassed only by her storytelling. Like a luxurious tapestry, the extraordinary life of Eleanor of Aquitaine is the backdrop to the life story of equally rebellious Countess Isabelle de Ravinor whose exploits are woven in and around great and small events in French and English history. This is a good old fashioned epic."

Topping, Zac. [Wake of War](#) (Forge \$26.99). Topping, with two tours in Iraq under his belt, debuts with a near future military thriller. The United States of America is a crumbling republic. With the value of the dollar imploding, the government floundering, and national outrage and resentment growing by the hour, a rebellion has caught fire. The Revolutionary Front, led by Joseph Graham, has taken control of Salt Lake City. In a nation where opportunity is sequestered behind the gilded doors of the rich and powerful, joining the Army seemed like James Trent's best option. He just never thought he'd see combat. Now Trent

finds himself on the front lines fighting for something he doesn't even know if he believes in. Destroying innocent lives wasn't what he signed on for, and he can feel himself slipping away with every casualty. Sharpshooter Sam Cross was just fourteen when American soldiers gunned down her parents and forced her brother into conscription. Now, five years later, retribution feels like her only option to stitch the wound of her past. She has accepted Joseph Graham's offer to be his secret weapon. His Reaper in the Valley. But retribution always comes at a cost. When forces clash in Salt Lake City, alliances will be shattered, resolve will be tested, and when the dust clears....?

✦Toyne, Simon. [Dark Objects](#) (Harper \$27.99). Our **July British Crime Book of the Month** earns this Starred Review, which I could have written myself. *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."

✦Vaughan, Sarah. [Reputation](#) (Atria \$27). I highly recommend Vaughan's 2018 [Anatomy of a Scandal](#) (\$17), a kind of political thriller cum crimes. It has become a hit miniseries on Netflix. Her new novel bids fair to become a hit too as it considers the corrosive impact of social media on the lives of girls and women in this timely, twisty story. Divorced English parliament member Emma Webster divides her time between the house she shares in London with fellow politicians and her home in Portsmouth, where she lives with her 14-year-old daughter, Flora. After she does an interview with a London paper complete with a photo shoot that makes her look "more like an Oscar-nominated actress than a Labour politician," she's swarmed by trolls on social media. Meanwhile, Flora endures an equally intense online campaign directed against her by her former best friend, until she finally snaps, with consequences that lead to trouble for both her and her mother. But there's a more pressing problem: the dead body found at the foot of the stairs in Emma's London home. Just who the person was, and what Emma did or didn't have to do with its appearance, are the questions Vaughan explores with nail-biting suspense. While the focus is more on hot topics than character development, Vaughan delivers plenty of insights into how a person's reputation can slip, and the ways violence can spring out of the pressures of being in the spotlight. This is as thoughtful as it is surprising.

✦Walters, Minette. [The Swift and the Harrier](#) (Blackstone \$29.99). Walters continues to produce historical fiction rather than the atmospheric contemporary thrillers like *The Ice House*

she was known for. This one is too big a book for me to devour in time to write about it so here is the *LJ* Starred Review: "Readers who are initially alarmed at the page count of Walters's latest historical novel will come to the end and wonder why the story couldn't have gone on longer. During the English Civil War in 1642, families and friends are divided between the warring Parliamentarians and Royalists. Jayne, daughter of Royalists, was already a respected physician who treated the wealthy and the poor. She chooses neutrality to continue her work, treating persons from both sides. While on her way to help a sick child, Jayne's chance meeting with Lady Alice Stickland and her mysterious footman, William Harrier, kicks off a series of events that present Jayne with difficult choices she never expected, with joy and sorrow coming in equal measure. Walters's characters are true to their historical period, yet relatable to a modern audience, and notable historical figures and events are described accurately in detail—informative and full of dramatic tension. An author's note provides a brief summation of the book's era, and there are maps for better understanding. Endearing characters spark life into centuries-old history in Walters's latest, which will appeal to fans of Philippa Gregory, Margaret George, and Sharon Kay Penman."

Welsh, Louise. [The Second Cut](#) (Canongate \$25). This return to the world of Rilke is a master class in engaging storytelling. Emotionally complex, and full of dark wit and deviant energy, this is a wonderful examination of the state of our culture today as we walk the dark side of 21st Century Glasgow. Auctioneer Rilke has been trying to stay out of trouble, keeping his life more or less respectable. Business has been slow at Bowery Auctions, so when an old friend, Jojo, gives Rilke a tip-off for a house clearance, life seems to be looking up. The next day Jojo washes up dead. Jojo liked Grindr hook-ups and recreational drugs—is that the reason the police won't investigate? And if Rilke doesn't find out what happened to Jojo, who will?

Wojtas, Olga. [Miss Blaine's Prefect and the Vampire Menace](#) (Felony & Mayhem, \$26). Wojtas's excellent sequel to 2018's [Miss Blaine's Prefect and the Golden Samovar](#) (\$14.95) continues the time-traveling adventures of middle-aged Edinburgh librarian Shona McMonagle, a proud graduate of the Marcia Blaine School for Girls, where she received "the finest education in the world." Indeed, she speaks a great many languages fluently, is a whiz at history and advanced mathematics, and her "martial arts skills are second to none." So "all these accomplishments come into play when she's spirited back to 1900 and the French Alpine village of Sans-Soleil on a mission for the remarkable Marcia Blaine, the school's namesake. What that mission might be, though, is uncertain, as Miss Blaine failed to provide written instructions. Shona suspects that it may have something to do with the villagers who have recently gone missing and are believed to have been "torn to death by wild animals," and perhaps also with the mysterious Scottish milord who lives in a nearby castle. The zany plot is a whirling dervish of unexpected events, all narrated with aplomb and wry wit by the erudite and intrepid librarian, who often hilariously misconstrues the clues she ferrets out. Readers will have a rollicking good time."

OUR JULY LARGE PAPERBACK PICKS

✦Cleeves, Ann. [The Heron's Cry](#) (\$17.99). North Devon is

enjoying a rare hot summer with tourists flocking to its coastline. Detective Matthew Venn is called out to a rural crime scene at the home of a group of artists. What he finds is an elaborately staged murder – Dr. Nigel Yeo has been fatally stabbed. His daughter Eve is a glassblower, and the murder weapon is a shard of one of her broken vases. Dr. Yeo seems an unlikely murder victim. He’s a good man, a public servant, beloved by his daughter. Matthew is unnerved, though, to find that she is a close friend of Jonathan, his husband. Then another body is found – killed in a similar way. Matthew finds himself treading carefully through the lies that fester at the heart of his community and a case that is dangerously close to home.... 2nd in Cleeves’ new Two Rivers series after [The Long Call](#) (\$16.99), which has been serialized on Britbox. Meanwhile *Shetland* and *Vera* are filming for more terrific serial TV.

Fesperman, Dan. [The Cover Wife](#) (\$17) fictionalizes the story of the terrorist cell in Hamburg, Germany, responsible for the 9/11 attacks. CIA agent Claire Saylor goes undercover, posing as the wife of an academic with an explosive new interpretation of the Koran launching a book at an event in Hamburg. But Saylor’s real job is to understand what the terrorist cell is up to—and she soon discovers other American agents are focused on the same group of Islamists. A parallel plot focused on Mahmoud Yassin, an Arab youth who becomes radicalized and joins the cell, raises the tension. Identities and motives are tantalizingly muddled, and Fesperman, a fine stylist, does a good job portraying the elusive, frustrating nature of espionage. Although we know the outcome, Fesperman does an ace job getting us there. He’s a wonderful writer.

Gardner, Lisa. [One Step Too Far](#) (\$17). We met Frankie Fallon in [Before She Disappeared](#) (\$17), a woman whose self-appointed mission is working missing-persons cold cases. That one brought her to Boston. Now she’s moved to Wyoming’s Shoshone National Forest to insert herself into a search party for Tim O’Day organized for the 5th year by Tim’s grieving father. Five years earlier, Tim and four of his best friends set out into the woods for a bachelor party weekend. Tim, the future groom, disappeared without a trace. Every year since, Martin, Tim’s father, has guilted the boys into the hunt. This is to be Martin’s last attempt. Frankie succeeds in joining when one of the boys, an alcoholic, is too ill to go. One day into their six-day trek, problems arise. From missing provisions and the sense of being watched, things escalate quickly, and the question becomes: who will survive? “Fascinating details on cadaver dog training, as well as on camping and tracking in difficult terrain, complement the suspenseful journey as it winds toward a surprising conclusion.” Remember, this is a crime novel. And a real page turner (although there’s a step back at the end wrapping up several threads). “An authentic Wyoming setting, a tantalizing mystery, and a Labrador named Daisy. What’s not to like?”—C.J. Box.

Howard, Catherine Ryan. [56 Days](#) (\$15.99). Oliver and Ciara, two young professionals who are new to Dublin, meet in a supermarket just as the pandemic is about to descend on Ireland. The pair hit it off, but fate soon throws them a curveball: to curb the spread of the virus, Ireland’s government is instituting a strict two-week lockdown, and socializing with anyone from a different household is off-limits. When Oliver asks Ciara to move in with him for the duration of lockdown, she agrees—it’s an opportunity to have him all to herself and get to know him without having to introduce him to her family and friends (or meet his). In fact,

Ciara doesn’t tell a soul where she’ll be spending lockdown, or who she’ll be spending it with. Things do not go as planned. At the beginning of the novel, a decomposing body is discovered in Oliver’s apartment; how it got there is only one of the mysteries that will unfold over the course of Howard’s book, which saves its most devastating reveal for its final pages. The story is teased out in two timelines: the present day, which follows a pair of Gardaí (Irish state police) as they investigate the gruesome discovery, and flashbacks that detail Oliver and Ciara’s meeting and courtship. While both are intensely sympathetic characters, it quickly becomes clear that at least one of them is harboring a dark secret.

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

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."

☞Osman, Richard. [The Man Who Died Twice](#) (\$17). Coopers Chase, an upscale retirement village in the British countryside, is home to the Thursday Murder Club, which consists of shrewd, deadly former spy Elizabeth Best, retired nurse Joyce Meadowcroft, psychiatrist Ibrahim Arif, political activist Ron Ritchie, and three honorary members, fixer Bogdan Jankowski, DCI Chris Hudson, and Police Constable Donna De Freitas. A letter from a dead man plunges Elizabeth and her friends into a dangerous case involving local crooks, the Mafia, and MI6, just part of the action in this sequel to runaway bestseller [The Thursday Murder Club](#) (\$17). Not quite a cozy, the twisty plot, knotty issues of relationships with life partners, and steadfast loyalty among the sleuths provide depth and poignancy. Those who prefer their mysteries with touches of spycraft, humor, and eccentricity will, like our staff, plunge happily in.

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?

Richmond, Michelle. [The Wonder Test](#) (\$17). "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....' 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.

Walker, Martin. [The Coldest Case](#) (\$17). After attending an exhibit on the facial reconstruction of ancient skulls at the famed prehistory museum in Les Eyzies, Bruno Courrèges, Chief of Police in his village, wonders if this technology might provide an invaluable clue to a thirty-year-old cold case his senior colleague JJ has tried to crack since he ran the original investigation. A decision is made to bring a student of facial reconstruction to try her hand and help identify the dead man. The case quickly turns thorny. DNA testing points towards a probable ID and in time a witness to events at a summer festival weekend, the likely time of the crime, is found. From there the case goes in directions that will certainly surprise you so I recommend you don't read any of the blurbs and reviews that will certainly spoil the unfolding of the story. And to make matters even worse, the Dordogne is suffering from an intense summer drought that is sparking fires across the region. As ever Bruno draws us into life in the Périgord with his cooking, his animals including his beloved Basset Hound, now proud father to a litter of nine pups, his many friends professional and personal, and his inability to sever his hopeless relationship with Isabelle, whose high-flying job in Paris is instrumental in solving this very cold case. Walker's long and distinguished career as a journalist injects a broad scope and European politics into his tales, so they are both regional and international in scope.

This is our bestselling series in paperback and if you have somehow missed out on Bruno you can improve upon August by ordering the entire [Bruno Chief of Police series](#). They are also great gifts for any reader, even foodies.

MORE LARGE PAPERBACKS FOR JULY

✦Arlen, Tessa. [A Dress of Violet Taffeta](#) (Berkley \$17). Moving out of crime, Arlen pens a novel based on the fascinating true story of La Belle Époque icon Lucy, Lady Duff Gordon, who shattered the boundaries of fashion with her magnificently sensual and enchantingly unique designs after she was deserted by her wealthy husband.

Berry, Steve. [The Kaiser's Web](#) (\$18.99). Two candidates are vying to become Chancellor of Germany. One is a patriot having served for the past sixteen years, the other a usurper, stoking the flames of nationalistic hate. Both harbor secrets, but only one knows the truth about the other. They are on a collision course, all turning on the events of one fateful day—April 30, 1945—and what happened deep beneath Berlin in the Führerbunker. Did Adolph Hitler and Eva Braun die there? Did Martin Bormann, Hitler's close confidant, manage to escape? And, even more important, where did billions in Nazi wealth disappear to in the waning days of World War II? The answers to these questions will determine who becomes the next Chancellor of Germany. From the mysterious Chilean lake district, to the dangerous mesas of South Africa, and finally into the secret vaults of Switzerland, former-Justice Department agent Cotton Malone discovers the truth about the fates of Hitler, Braun, and Bormann. Revelations that could not transform Europe...

Berry, Steve. [The Lost Order](#) (Orion \$10). **Signed by Berry. We have just a few copies.** This is the UK edition of an earlier Cotton Malone adventure which earned this excellent review in 2017: While on assignment for the Smithsonian in rural Arkansas, Malone becomes entangled with the "most powerful subversive organization in the history of the United States." Founded in 1854, the Knights of the Golden Circle have allegedly been guarding billions in stolen gold and silver for more than a century. But the treasure can only be found by locating a series of invaluable artifacts that are encrypted with a seemingly unbreakable code. Malone's quest becomes deadly when he discovers links to a conspiracy by the ambitious present-day speaker of the house, who wants to radically change the political power structure of the country. The fusion of contemporary and historical adventure makes this a page-turner of the highest order."

✦Bilyeau, Nancy. [The Fugitive Colors](#) (Lume Books \$14.99) As Genevieve Sturbridge struggles to keep her silk design business afloat, she must face the fact that London in 1764 is very much a man's world. Men control everything, especially the women. A Huguenot living in Spitalfields, Genevieve one day receives a surprise invitation from an important artist. Grasping at the promise of a better life, she dares to hope her luck is about to change and readies herself for an entry into the world of serious art. She soon learns that for the portrait painters ruling over the wealthy in London society, fame and fortune are there for the taking. But such high stakes spur rivalries that darken to sabotage and blackmail-and even murder. And watching from the shadows are ruthless spies who wish harm to all of England. Genevieve begins to suspect that her own secret past, when she was caught up in conspiracy and betrayal, has more to do with her entrée into London society than her talent. One wrong move could cost her not just her artistic dreams but the love of those she holds dear ... and even her life.

Constantine, Liv. [The Stranger in the Mirror](#) (\$16.99). A woman is found hitchhiking in New Jersey in ripped clothing, with bloodstained hands. Diagnosed with retrograde amnesia, she adopts the name Addison Hope and begins a new life in Pennsylvania with a kind couple who become her surrogate parents. Over the next two years, she falls in love and becomes engaged to gallery owner Gabriel Oliver. Despite a happy life, Addy is plagued by recurring violent flashbacks that frighten her and might hint at her past. Suddenly, Addy's promising new life tilts off-kilter when a man named Julian Hunter claims she is Cassandra, his missing wife and the mother to his young daughter Valentina. As Addy attempts to piece together her past, she is pulled in two directions. Does she belong with Gabriel, or is she obligated to rejoin a life she doesn't remember?

Ellroy, James. [Widespread Panic](#) (\$17). Freddy Otash was the man in the know and the man to know in '50s L.A. He was a rogue cop, a sleazoid private eye, a shakedown artist, a pimp—and, most notably, the head strong-arm goon for *Confidential* magazine. *Confidential* presaged the idiot internet—and delivered the dirt, the dish, the insidious ink, and the scurrilous skank. It mauled misanthropic movie stars, sex-soiled socialites, and putzo politicians. Mattress Jack Kennedy, James Dean, Montgomery Clift, Burt Lancaster, Liz Taylor, Rock Hudson—Frantic Freddy outed them all. He was the Tattle Tyrant who held Hollywood hostage, and now he's here to CONFESS. "In Freddy's viciously entertaining voice, *Widespread Panic* torches 1950s Hollywood to the ground." Patrick recommends.

Hall, Rachel Howzell. [We Lie Here](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$15.95). L.A. screenwriter Yara Gibson, the narrator of this crafty thriller, reluctantly returns to her childhood home in suburban Palmdale, California, to oversee her parents' 20th wedding anniversary. Yara, forgetful, asthmatic, and anxiety ridden, is figuratively and literally allergic to Palmdale, with its overwhelming desert dust storms and violent subculture. Her own house is toxic with cigarette smoke, especially the dust-filled attic with its forbidden secrets. While in Palmdale, Yara's lifelong clashes with her sassy younger sister, petulant father, and dominating and manipulative mother reignite. Felicia Campbell, a second cousin she hardly knows, arrives in a dust storm with a cryptic message: "I have information that will change your life." Felicia is found dead the next day, and it is Yara's search for the message's meaning that wrenches her toward a shocking resolution. Hall exhibits a mastery of slowly building pressure-cooker tension until it explodes.

Kadrey, Richard. [King Bullet: A Sandman Slim Novel](#) (\$16.99). It's been three months since Stark stopped a death cult and a potential ghost apocalypse, and he's at loose ends. His personal life is a mess. His professional life isn't much better. And the world...well, the world is going to shit. L.A. is gripped by a viral epidemic that has everyone wearing masks and keeping their distance from each other. But what's even more frightening is the Shoggot gang and their leader, King Bullet, who revels in the city's collapse. Who is King Bullet? No one knows. He seemingly came from nowhere with nothing but a taste for mayhem and an army of crazed killers who follow his every command. What king wants seems simple on its face: Chaos.

Lapena, Shari. [Not a Happy Family](#) (\$17). After an Easter dinner with their three adult children, filthy-rich Fred and Sheila Mercer are murdered at their fancy Brecken Hill sprawl in upstate New York. The children stand to inherit millions; was one of them responsible? Ah, Agatha Christie never goes out of style, but transfers and updates well.

Patterson, James/Bill Clinton. [The President's Daughter](#) (\$17.99) features a new family in the White House—and a former White House family targeted by an international assassin, the daughter abducted by a terrorist with a scimitar. What would a father do in this situation?

Priest, Cherie. [Grave Reservations](#) (\$17). Our own blogger Lesa Holstine reviews: Travel agent Leda Foley, owner of Foley's Far-Fetched Flights of Fancy, has been honing her skills as a psychic and practicing "clairvoyant karaoke" regularly at a local bar. When she gets a strong feeling that she should reroute Grady Merritt's flight, he's upset, until the scheduled plane goes up in flames. Grady then shows up at Leda's office and introduces himself as a police detective; he wants to hire her to help solve a murder that has bothered him for 18 months. They visit the crime scene, and Leda gives Grady just enough clues before passing out from the effort. Her blinding white lights and flashes of insight eventually cause her to link Grady's case with the unsolved murder of her fiancé three years earlier. Even someone who isn't psychic can foresee that the killer will eventually focus on Leda, a constant worrier who finally refuses to be a victim. Priest, the Locus Award-winning author of *Boneshaker*, is known for writing horror and steampunk. Her witty mystery has a likable amateur sleuth and a strong supporting cast. For fans of Wendall Thomas's offbeat travel agent Cyd Redondo.

Pulley, Natasha. [The Kingdoms](#) (\$18). For fans of *The 7 1/2 Deaths of Evelyn Hardcastle* and David Mitchell, a genre bending, time twisting alternative history. Joe Tournier has a bad case of amnesia. His first memory is of stepping off a train in the nineteenth-century French colony of England. The only clue Joe has about his identity is a century-old postcard of a Scottish lighthouse that arrives in London the same month he does. Written in illegal English-instead of French-the postcard is signed only with the letter "M," but Joe is certain whoever wrote it knows him far better than he currently knows himself, and he's determined to find the writer. The search for M, though, will drive Joe from French-ruled London to rebel-owned Scotland and finally onto the battle ships of a lost empire's Royal Navy. In the process, Joe will remake history, and himself. "As scenes spiral back and forth between centuries, the book's emotional center crystallizes around a fundamental mystery: Who, in fact, is Joe? All time-travel plots are fraught with paradox, but not all rise to Pulley's level of tricky cleverness, and few of those trickily clever books rise to her level of emotional intensity. Suspenseful, philosophical, and inventive, this sparkling novel explores the power of memory and love." —*Kirkus Reviews*. *USA Today* adds, "Natasha Pulley poses such a beguiling set of questions at the opening of *The Kingdoms* that even readers who are resistant to speculative fiction will barrel forward to discover the answers... *The Kingdoms* is interested not only in the adventure of its historical and imaginative plot, but also in what it would actually feel like to slip out of time.... an insightful meditation on how a sense of oneself can be lost – and found."

Stevens, Chevy. [Dark Roads](#) (\$17.99). LJ writes, “At the heart of Stevens’ latest stand-alone thriller are two resilient young women whose lives become joined by the same dark, violent set of events. Hailey McBride is 17 years old and recently orphaned in the town of Cold Creek, British Columbia. The loss of her father has sent her reeling, and now she’s forced to live with a domineering, terrifying uncle, who also happens to be the chief of police. Hailey begins to suspect that her uncle’s threatening behavior may be even worse than she thinks and wonders if it might be connected to the string of murders of young women in the area—then Hailey disappears. She leaves behind a girlfriend, Amber, who soon meets with violence as well. A year later, Amber’s sister Beth drops out of college, quits her job, and moves to Cold Creek, determined to find out what happened to her sister and Hailey. As Beth delves into the locals’ secrets, her life and Hailey’s collide to explosive effect. Though dark and foreboding, none of the violence here is gratuitous and the strength and resilience shown by Stevens’ female characters offers leavening moments of heart and hope. For fans of Karin Slaughter and Lisa Gardner.” I wish we could see more of Stevens who is Canadian.

Takamura, Kaoru. [Lady Joker, Volume 1](#) (\$18.95) is “a work you get immersed in, like a sprawling 19th century novel or a TV series like *The Wire*. It reveals its world in rich polyphonic detail. Inspired by a real-life case, it takes us inside half a dozen main characters, follows scads of secondary ones and enters bars and boardrooms we could never otherwise go... Yet for all its digressions, *Lady Joker* casts a page-turning spell.” —John Powers, NPR’s Fresh Air. One of Japan’s great modern masters, Kaoru Takamura, makes her English-language debut with this first of a three-volume publication. Tokyo, 1995. Five men meet at the racetrack every Sunday to bet on horses. They have little in common except a deep disaffection with their lives, but together they represent the social struggles and griefs of post-War Japan. Inspired by the unsolved true-crime kidnapping case perpetrated by “the Monster with 21 Faces,” *Lady Joker* has become a cultural touchstone since its 1997 publication, acknowledged as the magnum opus by one of Japan’s literary masters, twice adapted for film and TV and often taught in high school and college classrooms. Rob recommends this, all 576 pages—think of reading say *War and Peace*—and eagerly awaits Volume 2.

Trinchieri, Camilla. [The Bitter Taste of Murder](#) (\$16.95). Former Bronx homicide detective Nico Doyle, who relocated to his much-loved late wife’s hometown of Gravigna, Italy, a year ago (he was fired from his cop shop so he’s mourning that too), investigates the death of unpopular wine critic Michele Mantelli. Mantelli drove a hot sports car and apparently lost control, plunging down a ravine. An autopsy report suggests it was no accident. Maresciallo Salvatore Perillo and his brigadier, Daniele Donato, help sort out the many suspects, who include the victim’s soon-to-be ex-wife, an irate husband who threatened to kill him, several vintners, and Nico’s landlord. Meanwhile, Nico tests recipes at Sotto Il Fico, his wife’s relatives’ restaurant, where he enjoys seven-layer eggplant, zucchini lasagna, almond biscotti, and other treats. Though the mouthwatering cuisine at times distracts from the detective work, Trinchieri generally does a good job balancing food with folly as the action builds to an unexpected but satisfying solution. Start with [Murder in Chianti](#) (\$16.95)—and pour yourself a glass to go with.

OUR JULY SMALL PAPERBACK PICKS

Abrams, Stacey. [While Justice Sleeps](#) (\$9.99). Avery Keene, now the legal guardian of power of attorney for the legendary Justice Howard Wynn, must unravel the clues he left behind in regards to a dangerous conspiracy that has infiltrated the highest power corridors of Washington.

Petrie, Nick. [The Runaway](#) (\$9.99). Peter Ash #7. War veteran Peter Ash is driving through northern Nebraska when he encounters a young pregnant woman alone on a gravel road, Peter offers her a lift, but what begins as an act of kindness soon turns into a deadly cat-and-mouse chase across the lonely highways with the woman’s vicious ex-cop husband hot on their trail.

Robb, J D. [Abandoned in Death](#) (\$9.99). In Death #54. Homicide detective Eve Dallas investigates after a woman’s body is found on a city playground bench holding a sign reading “bad mommy.”

Shelton, Paige. [Deadly Editions](#) (\$8.99). Scottish Bookshop #6. Mysteriously invited to participate in an eccentric socialite’s exclusive treasure hunt, bookseller Delaney Nichols investigates her hostess’s dangerous past when a man connected to the competition is found murdered.

JULY SMALL PAPERBACKS

Allen, Meri. [Mint Chocolate Murder: An Ice Cream Shop](#) (St Martin’s \$8.99). Ice Cream Shop #2. When a cold-hearted photographer winds up dead during the opening of his exhibit, former CIA librarian-turned-ice shop manager, Riley Rhodes, realizes there’s more than one suspect who wanted to put him on ice.

Archer, Jeffrey. [Over My Dead Body](#) (\$9.99). William Warwick #4. At the heart of three murder investigations—one in London involving a cold case, one in Geneva involving a millionaire art collector, and one in New York involving a wealthy dynasty—Detective Chief Inspector William Warwick must catch the killers before it’s too late.

Campbell, Michele. [The Wife Who Knew Too Much](#) (\$9.99). Marrying the once-wealthy man who she loved as an underprivileged girl, Tabitha discovers a diary by her new husband’s suicide-victim wife, who blames Tabitha and their husband for the violent way her life ended.

Danna, Jen J. [Shot Caller](#) (Kensington \$9.99). NYPD Negotiators #2. **NYPD detective Gemma Capello is called to Rikers Island, where a prison riot threatens to become a bloodbath.**

Grafton, Sue. [E is for Evidence & F is for Fugitive](#) (\$9.99). Millhone #5 and #6. In *E Is for Evidence*, P.I. Kinsey Millhone finds herself taking on a case that places her career on the line. In *F Is for Fugitive*, the escaped suspect of a teen murder resurfaces after seventeen years in the seemingly-idyllic Floral Beach, California.

Graham, Heather. [Aura of Night](#) (Mira \$9.99). Krewe of Hunters #37. All book editor Megan Law wants is to bury the memory of her brutal kidnapping and move on with her life. So when her publisher asks her to spin her hellish experience into the next bestseller, Megan agrees only because it might help keep other women safe. Then a mysterious, gruesome package arrives in the mail—a reminder that the nightmare isn’t over just yet.

Hannah, Darci. [Murder at the Blueberry Festival](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Beacon Bakeshop #3. When the town of Beacon Harbor is plagued by pranks leading up to the blueberry festival, and then ending in murder, bakery-cafe owner Lindsey Bakewell and her beau, a former SEAL, dive into this juicy mystery.

Hollis, Lee. [Death of an Ice Cream Scooper](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Food and Cocktails #15. When Lydia Partridge's husband is accused of murdering one of his students, food and cocktails columnist Hayley Powell must get the scoop on this case before someone else is frozen in death.

Hollon, Cheryl. [Death a Sketch](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Paint & Shine #3. When the teamwork-fostering activities for an outdoor sporting goods company result in the death of a participant, Miranda Trent, the owner of a unique Appalachian adventure tour company, must now find a way to beat a killer at their own game.

Jackson, Lisa. [The Third Grave](#) (Kensington \$9.99). Reed & Gillette #4. When three graves are found with only two skeletons at an old mansion in Savannah, Georgia, crime writer Nikki Gillette can't stay away from the story despite the warnings from her husband, Detective Pierce Reid.

Jansson, Susanne. [Winter Water](#) (Grand Central \$9.99). Withdrawing from his family and community after the drowning of his son, Martin discovers that other children have tragically died in these waves, all on the same day in January, though decades apart, and now he must find a way to break the cycle.

King, Stephen. [If it Bleeds](#) (\$9.99). The award-winning literary master presents a collection of four novella-length tales, complementing the title piece with the stories, Mr. Harrigan's Phone, The Life of Chuck and Rat.

Patterson, James. [Three Women Disappear](#) (\$9.99). When three female suspects in the murder of an accountant, who was a master manipulator, go missing, Detective Sean Walsh, who has a personal connection to the case, discovers why the women have to stay hidden from both the law and each other.

Reilly, Linda. [No Parm No Foul](#) (Sourcebooks \$8.99). Grilled Cheese #2. After her competitor accuses her of sabotage and then winds up dead, Carly Hale, the owner of a thriving grilled cheese eatery, becomes the #1 suspect and must slice through the clues to save both her business and herself from melting away.

Sanders, Angela M. [Witch and Famous](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Witch Way Librarian #3. When A-list movie star Daphne Morris comes to Wilfred, Oregon, new librarian and fledgling witch Josie Way finds herself in a murderous plot twist when Daphne's personal chef is found dead and her novelist friend Roz, whom Daphne was interviewing, is framed for the crime.

