

BOOKNEWS from

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THE SECOND AUGUST BOOKNEWS

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.
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MONDAY AUGUST 22 7:00 PM Live

William Kent Krueger discusses [Fox Creek](#) (Atria \$28)
A cat and mouse chase through the North Woods
Signed books available along with a special bookmark

TUESDAY AUGUST 23 7:00 PM Live Book Launch Party

Karin Slaughter discusses [Girl Forgotten](#) (Morrow \$28.99)
Signed books available along with a custom designed colorful Case Files from Karin

WEDNESDAY AUGUST 24 5:00 PM

Jeff Abbott discusses [Traitor's Dance](#) (Grand Central \$28)
Undercover Agent Sam Capra returns (at last!)
Signed books available

WEDNESDAY AUGUST 24 6:30 PM

Robert Dugoni discusses [What She Found](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$15.95)
Seattle's Tracy Crosswhite
Signed books available

THURSDAY AUGUST 25 5:00 PM

Joanna Schaffhausen discusses [Long Gone](#) (St Martins \$27.99)
Detective Annalisa Vega
Signed books available

THURSDAY AUGUST 25 7:00 PM

Faye Kellerman discusses [The Hunt](#) (Harper \$28.99)
A Decker/Lazarus Novel
Signed books available

THURSDAY AUGUST 25 7:00 PM

Hardboiled Crime discusses Donald E. Westlake's [Call Me a Cab](#) (\$14.95).

MONDAY AUGUST 29 7:00 PM Live

Amina Akhtar and Gabino Iglesias with Patrick Akhtar discusses [Kismet](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$15.95)
Iglesias discusses [The Devil Takes You Home](#) (Little Brown \$28)
Signed books available for both titles

TUESDAY AUGUST 30 7:00 PM Live

British bestseller Alice Feeney pays us her first visit
She discusses [Daisy Darker](#) (Flatiron \$28.99)
Our September British Crime Book of the Month
Signed books available

WEDNESDAY AUGUST 31 5:00 PM

Jincy Willet discusses [Amy Among the Serial Killers](#) (St Martins \$27.99)

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 3 2:00 PM Live

Laurie R King discusses [Back to the Garden](#) (Bantam \$28)
Signed books available. Great book introducing Inspector Raquel Laing

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 5 4:00 PM Live

Craig Johnson discusses [Hell and Back](#) (Viking \$28)
Walt Longmire
Signed books available

TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 6 7:00 PM Live

Mike Maden discusses [Clive Cussler's Hellburner](#) (Putnam \$28.99)
Oregon Files
A great chance to talk about writing in a bestselling author's world
Signed books available

WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 7 5:00 PM

Mike Lupica with Patrick Lupica discusses [Robert B. Parker's Stone's Throw](#) (Putnam \$28)
Jesse Stone
Signed books available

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 8 7:00 PM Live

Deanna Raybourn with John Charles Raybourn discusses [Killers of a Certain Age](#) (Berkley \$27)
Think *The Unexpected Mrs. Pollifax*, but four women, and deadlier....
Signed books available for our September Crime Book of the Month

OUR AUGUST BOOKS OF THE MONTH

British Crime Club One unsigned hardcover or paperback per month

Cannon, Joanna. [A Tidy Ending](#)

Cozy Crimes Club One unsigned hardcover or paperback per month

Valerie Burns, [Two Parts Sugar, One Part Murder](#) & TE Kinsey, [Rotten to the Core](#)

First Mystery Club One Signed First Printing per month

Emerson, Ramona. [Shutter](#)

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

Iglesias, Gabino. [Devil Takes You Home](#)

History/Mystery Club One Signed First Printing per month
Pryor, Mark. [Die Around Sundown](#)

Notable New Fiction One Signed First Printing per month

Howard, Catherine Ryan. [Run Time](#)

International Crime One Unsigned Hardcover or paperback per month

Osborne, Lawrence. [On Java Road](#)

Romance & Relationships One Unsigned Hardcover or 2 paperbacks per month

Tessa Arlen, [A Dress of Violet Taffeta](#) & KJ Dell'Antonia, [In Her Boots](#)

MORE ON OUR AUGUST INTO SEPTEMBER SIGNED BOOKS

Abbott, Jeff. [Traitor's Dance](#) (Grand Central \$28). Sam Capra is back! An addition to the roster of our Summer of Spies. Ten years after events in *The First Order*, the autonomous independent spy group called The Round Table has been disbanded, and Sam Capra contentedly manages bars and nightclubs worldwide while tending to his son. Then he gets a call that Marcus Bolt, the last of several U.S. traitors who turned over allied military secrets to the Russians, has disappeared from Moscow. Now Sam is asked to contact Marcus's estranged daughter to see what she knows. Three-time Edgar nominee Abbott's Sam Capra thriller *The Last Minute* won an International Thriller Writers Award.

Akhtar, Amina. [Kismet](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$24.95) is a funny and suspense-filled thriller, described by some as a vicious, that takes down the wellness industry, turning Sedona from a carefree haven a destination for murder. It begins with lifelong New Yorker Ronnie Khan who never thought she'd leave Queens. Then she meets socialite wellness guru Marley Dewhurst. Marley isn't just a visionary; she's a revelation. Seduced by the fever dream of finding her best self, Ronnie makes for the desert mountains of Arizona's Red Rock country. Healing yoga, transcendent hikes, epic juice cleanses... Ronnie consumes her new bougie existence like a fine wine. But is it, really? Or is this whole self-care business a little poisonous? When the glam gurus around town start turning up gruesomely murdered, Ronnie has her answer: all is not well in wellness town. As Marley's blind ambition veers into madness, Ronnie fears it's life-threatening. Akhtar has a cutting edge style that takes no prisoners. Her first was [#fashionvictim](#) (\$26.99), also Signed.

Brown, Sandra. [Overkill](#) (Grand Central \$29). Wow! Just wow! The premise of this gut-grabbing thriller is exceptional. Former Super Bowl MVP quarterback Zach Bridger hasn't seen his ex-wife, Rebecca Pratt, for some time—not since their volatile marriage imploded—so he's shocked to receive a life-altering call about her. Rebecca has been placed on life support after a violent assault, and he—despite their divorce—has medical power-of-attorney. Zach is asked to make an impossible choice: keep her on life support or take her off of it. Buckling under the

weight of the responsibility and the glare of public scrutiny, Zach ultimately walks away, letting Rebecca's parents have the final say. Four years later, Rebecca's attacker, Eban—the scion of a wealthy family in Atlanta—gets an early release from prison. The ludicrous miscarriage of justice reeks of favoritism, and Kate Lennon, a brilliant state prosecutor, is determined to put him back behind bars. Rebecca's parents have kept her alive all these years, but if her condition were to change—if she were to die—Eban could be retried on a new charge: murder. It isn't lost on Zach that in order for Eban to be charged with Rebecca's murder, Zach must actually be the one to kill her. To stay free, Eban must prevent him. But, there's more... I was really torn between this and the Iglesias for our August Crime Book of the Month but Iglesias is newer to most of you.

☒Cleeves, Ann. [The Rising Tide](#) (Macmillan \$44). A new Vera Stanhope begins fifty years ago when a group of teenagers spent a weekend on Holy Island, forging a bond that has lasted a lifetime. Now, they still return every five years to celebrate their friendship, and remember the friend they lost to the rising waters of the causeway at the first reunion. Now, when one of them is found hanged, Vera is called in. Learning that the dead man had recently been fired after misconduct allegations, Vera knows she must discover what the friends are hiding, and whether the events of many years before could have led to murder then, and now. But with the tide rising, secrets long-hidden are finding their way to the surface, and Vera and the team may find themselves in terrible danger.... Publishing in the UK on September 1 but slow to arrive. Best to order now.

Connolly, John. [The Furies](#) (Hodder UK \$45). Private investigator Charlie Parker is unwittingly drawn into a world of vengeance through two investigations that turn out to be vitally connected. In *The Sisters Strange*, criminal Raum Buker arrives in Portland, only for a shocking act of theft to threaten not only his own existence but those of his former lovers—the enigmatic sisters Strange. And in *The Furies*, Parker must protect two women under threat as Portland shuts down in the face of a global pandemic. Unbeknownst to him, however, these clients are more capable of taking care of themselves...and anyone else.

Dugoni, Robert. [What She Found](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$15.95). Just in, this Starred Review: “Bestseller Dugoni’s first-rate ninth police procedural featuring Tracy Crosswhite hands the Seattle homicide detective a cold case with threatening professional and personal implications. Twenty-five years earlier, newspaper reporter Lisa Childress vanished after going to meet an anonymous informant in a deserted parking lot. Now, Tracy is approached by Lisa’s daughter with a plea to look into the files again. Tracy, moved by her devotion to her own family, accepts the daunting task of finding the missing woman. When Tracy examines the cases Lisa was investigating, she becomes increasingly uneasy at how the criminal activities of a rogue unit of the police could connect with Tracy’s own dearest friends and most trusted mentors in the department. Even when the mystery of Lisa’s disappearance is miraculously resolved, it’s clear that no one is going to come out of this investigation untested or unscathed. Dugoni convincingly details Tracy’s methodical but creative approach to this tangle of guilt and denial, as well as showing her empathy for the people involved.”

✂Edwards, Martin. [Blackstone Fell](#) (Zeus \$44). **Not out until September 1 but our supply is limited so please reserve now.**

Rachel Savernake investigates a bizarre locked-room puzzle in this delicious Gothic mystery from the winner of the CWA Diamond Dagger. London, 1930. Nell Fagan is a journalist on the trail of an intriguing and bizarre mystery: in 1606, a man vanished from a locked gatehouse in a remote Yorkshire village, and now, 300 years later, it’s happened again. Nell confides in the best sleuth she knows, judge’s daughter and staunch defender of truth and justice, Rachel Savernake. Thank goodness she did, because barely a week later, while investigating a series of deaths at a sanatorium, Nell disappears, and Rachel is left to put together the pieces of the puzzle. Looking for answers, Rachel travels to lonely Blackstone Fell in Yorkshire, with its eerie moor and sinister tower. With help from her friend Jacob Flint – who’s determined to expose a fraudulent séance – Rachel will risk her life to bring an end to the disappearances and bring the truth to light. A dazzling mystery peopled by clerics and medics; journalists and judges, and third in this series where the first two are published in the US by Poisoned Pen Press.

Emerson, Ramona. [Shutter](#) (Soho \$27.95). Our **August First Mystery Book of the Month** signals increasing interest in #OwnVoices, and authors writing among other things, crime. From the NYTBR: “Rita Todacheene, a forensic photographer for the Albuquerque, New Mexico, police department, is an expert on capturing a crime scene, finding the small details that analysts sometimes missed. But she has other help, as well. As a baby on the Navajo reservation, she never slept, and her grandmother would assure people, ‘There is nothing wrong with her. She’s just talking to someone out there, and it’s none of our business.’ Eventually, though, it becomes everybody’s business. Rita sees the ghosts of the departed, they tell her things, sometimes insisting on justice or at least some answers. ‘If you keep inviting dead things into your life, it could open the door,’ warns a medicine man brought in by her grandmother. ‘Don’t let them know there is a door. Don’t let them know that you are the key.’ It is advice she follows carefully, until the day she’s called to the scene of a suicide, a woman who jumped off a bridge over a highway, her body torn apart by the traffic below. Furiously, the woman’s ghost insists that she was murdered, her body tossed off

the bridge, and refuses to let Rita rest, pushing harder and harder in a single-minded quest for revenge. As Rita investigates, her life starts to fall apart, driving her deeper and deeper into a different shadow world, one of drug dealers, cartel lieutenants, and crooked cops, the ghosts pulling her in one direction, the all-too-living criminals pulling in another. But she has no choice. The door is open now. She either has to see this through, or become a dead thing herself. *Shutter* is an extraordinary debut novel, a stunning mix of crime, character study, and the supernatural, told in propulsive prose against the landscape of the Navajo Nation. It’ll leave you gasping – and desperate to read what the author does next.” We have a few Signed Firsts left.

✂Feeney, Alice. [Daisy Darker](#) (Flatiron \$28.99). Daisy Darker, her siblings, and her estranged parents all gather at her grandmother’s house on a tiny tidal island to celebrate Nana’s 80th birthday. Nana’s quirky behavior and the strained relationships within the family all conspire to create an air of unsettledness that wraps around the Darkers like the high tide that laps at the base of the house, preventing anyone from leaving. When Nana announces she’s going to read her will (she’s convinced her death is around the corner), tensions rise even further as family members turn on one another. At the stroke of midnight, with a storm raging outside, Nana is found dead in the kitchen. Trapped on the island with her killer, the Darkers begin to fall one by one. “Feeney’s nod to Agatha Christie’s classic mystery *And Then There Were None* adds a delightful twist to this quirky thriller. Aficionados of locked-room stories and family dramas will relish this new gem from Feeney, a delightful author we have zoomed with and now get to host live for the first time as she delivers our **September British Crime Book of the Month**.

Feeney writes: “This is a dark and twisty mystery, set on a tiny tidal island just off the Cornish coast. The Darker family hasn’t all been in the same place at the same time for years, but they have come together one last time to celebrate a special birthday. When the tide comes in, they’ll be cut off from the rest of the world for eight hours. When the tide goes back out, things will never be the same again—because one of them is a killer.

“I’ve been visiting the same secluded spot in Cornwall, on my birthday, for years. Every time I am there, I think of Daisy. On the crumbling cliff path down to the black sandy bay, with the waves crashing on the rocks in the distance, I imagine Seaglass. I picture the eccentric old house with its turquoise roof and a hallway filled with clocks. My favorite book is *And Then There Were None* by Agatha Christie, and that novel sparked an idea for this one. I love a good locked-room mystery, and I love a good twist, and I wanted to invite readers to play a family-shaped game of Clue with me. For them to try to solve the puzzle before the tide goes out. It took me five years to write this book. I couldn’t stop thinking about Daisy’s story, so I knew it was one I had to tell.”

NEW: Flowers, Ashley. [All Good People Here](#) (Bantam \$28). This very hot debut written by the host of the #1 True Crime podcast *Crime Junkie* is our **September First Mystery Book of the Month**.

Everyone from Wakarusa, Indiana, remembers the infamous case of January Jacobs, who was discovered in a ditch hours after her family awoke to find her gone. Margot Davies was six at the time, the same age as January—and they were next-door neighbors. In the twenty years since, Margot has grown

up, moved away, and become a big-city journalist. But she's always been haunted by the feeling that it could've been her. And the worst part is, January's killer has never been brought to justice. When Margot returns home to help care for her uncle after he is diagnosed with early-onset dementia, she feels like she's walked into a time capsule. Wakarusa is exactly how she remembers—genial, stifled, secretive. Then news breaks about five-year-old Natalie Clark from the next town over, who's gone missing under circumstances eerily similar to January's. With all the old feelings rushing back, Margot vows to find Natalie and to solve January's murder once and for all. But the police, Natalie's family, the townspeople—they all seem to be hiding something. And the deeper Margot digs into Natalie's disappearance, the more resistance she encounters, and the colder January's case feels. The story reads to me as if inspired in part by the Jon Benet Ramsay case but only in some particulars. It's a very powerful and brave book, especially in the scenes set in 1994 when a courageous teenager navigates a promising life upended by a not uncommon dilemma exacerbated by the dynamics of her controlling family and the ethos of Wakarusa. In its way Flowers sends a personal and political message likely not intended when she wrote the book given the lag between completing a novel and its publication.

✎Gregory, Susanna. [The Pudding Lane Plot](#) (Little Brown \$50). The people and businesses of London are quickly recovering from the ravages of the plague, none faster than the Court of Charles II where excess, corruption and debauchery has rebounded at a frenetic pace. In Westminster, in the haphazard corridors of White Hall Palace, plans are afoot for a grandiose ball in honor of a long-dead but English-born Pope. Meanwhile, the markets and coffee houses in the city are awash with rumors of war and portents of a coming disaster, inflamed by uncensored newsheets and the wagging tongues of dissatisfied citizens. Mysterious killings at both ends of the capital have been caused by the use of an unusually long, slender blade, and Thomas Chaloner is ordered to investigate. The only common thread is the victims' connection to the Worshipful Company of Poulterers, whose members are struggling to keep ahead of London's enormous demand for eggs. But this leads him into a tapestry of conspiracy, outlandish claims of the Second Coming, the reappearance of a number of regicides and ever more brazen killings. As the date of the great ball looms closer, Chaloner fears that there is a dangerously credible conspiracy against the throne, and he has very little time to prevent history from repeating itself... Note how this latest for Thomas Chaloner coordinates with the new Robert Harris, just below, where those men who executed Charles I are pursued.

✎NEW: Griffiths, Elly. [Bleeding Heart Yard](#) (Quercus \$45). **Not out until late September but these always sell out so please order now to avoid disappointment over this third for the wonderful, Edgar-winning policewoman Harbinder Kaur.**

DS Cassie Fitzgerald has a secret—but it's one she's deleted from her memory. In the 1990s when she was at school, she and her friends killed a fellow pupil. Thirty years later, Cassie is happily married and loves her job as a police officer. One day her husband persuades her to go to a school reunion and another ex-pupil, Garfield Rice, is found dead, supposedly from a drug overdose. As Garfield was an eminent MP and the investigation is high profile, it's headed by Cassie's new boss, DI Harbinder

Kaur. The trouble is, Cassie can't shake the feeling that one of her old friends has killed again. Is Cassie right, or was Garfield murdered by one of his political cronies? It's in Cassie's interest to skew the investigation so that it looks like the latter and she seems to be succeeding. Until someone else is killed....

✎Harris, Robert. [Act of Oblivion](#) (Heinemann \$46). 1660. Colonel Edward Whalley and his son-in-law, Colonel William Goffe, cross the Atlantic. They are on the run and wanted for the murder of Charles I. Under the provisions of the Act of Oblivion, they have been found guilty in absentia of high treason. In London, Richard Nayler, secretary of the regicide committee of the Privy Council, is tasked with tracking down the fugitives. He'll stop at nothing until the two men are brought to justice. A reward hangs over their heads—for their capture, dead or alive. So, Regicide has consequences if royalty is restored....

✎Horowitz, Anthony. [The Twist of a Knife](#) (Century \$46). "Our deal is over." That's what reluctant author Anthony Horowitz tells ex-detective Daniel Hawthorne in an awkward meeting. The truth is that Anthony has other things on his mind. His new play, *Mindgame*, is about to open in London's Vaudeville theatre. Not surprisingly Hawthorne declines a ticket. On opening night, Sunday Times critic Harriet Throsby gives the play a savage review, focusing particularly on the writing. The next morning she is found dead, stabbed in the heart with an ornamental dagger which, it turns out, belongs to Anthony and which has his finger prints all over it. Anthony is arrested, charged with Throsby's murder, thrown into prison and interrogated. Alone and increasingly desperate, he realizes only one man can help him. But will Hawthorne take his call? This is another wickedly clever metafiction by the brilliant Horowitz.

Iglesias, Gabino. [The Devil Takes You Home](#) (Mulholland \$28). After Mario, the narrator of this bewitching paranormal thriller from Iglesias, a Bram Stoker, Anthony, and Locus award-nominated author, our **August Crime Book of the Month** and hot Indie Next Pick, racks up huge debts to pay for his four-year-old daughter's leukemia treatments, he becomes a hit man for Brian, his meth-addicted friend in Austin, Texas... Patrick is very keen on Gabino Iglesias' breakout novel. He is not alone, it is an Indie Next Pick, made by a large group of Independent Bookstores. It's had a terrific full page review in *The NY Times* titled "[A Writer of Noir Explores the Texas Underworld](#)" that is well worth reading. In case the link doesn't work for you, it begins: "Echoing the *Book of Job*, it follows a father in Austin who loses his job and health insurance, his young daughter to terrible disease and, finally, his marriage. At wit's end, the narrator, Mario, takes up an offer from a meth-addicted friend and embarks on a new line of work as a cartel hit man. This shift spawns a borderlands odyssey that blends noir and magical realism, meditations on religiosity and human cruelty, and social commentary on guns, the drug trade and resurgent racism. "I put all my anger with the health care system into this book," said Iglesias, 40, the author of "Zero Saints" and "Coyote Songs," two novels which were critically acclaimed and enthusiastically received, albeit by relatively small numbers of readers. In contrast, the arrival of Iglesias's new book, with praise pouring in from noir masters, a book tour in the works and film rights already optioned, is shaping into a breakthrough moment for a writer who has long toiled just to make ends meet."

☞Jewell, Lisa. [The Family Remains](#) (Atria \$28). This is a story about a broken family trying to piece itself back together in the aftermath of a shocking reunion, unaware that they are in the encroaching shadow of a detective who has evidence about their pasts that could blow them all to smithereens again. In short, it's Jewell's only sequel to an earlier book, the big 2020 hit [The Family Upstairs](#) (\$17). I urge you to grab both for hours of excitement. [Watch Lisa discuss both books](#) along with author Eve Chase on our Facebook videos or here on our [You Tube videos](#).

Early one morning on the shore of the Thames, DCI Samuel Owusu is called to the scene of a gruesome discovery. When Owusu sends the evidence for examination, he learns the bones are connected to a cold case that left three people dead on the kitchen floor in a Chelsea mansion thirty years ago. Rachel Rimmer has also received a shock—news that her husband, Michael, has been found dead in the cellar of his house in France. All signs point to an intruder, and the French police need her to come urgently to answer questions about Michael and his past that she very much doesn't want to answer. After fleeing London thirty years ago in the wake of a horrific tragedy, Lucy Lamb is finally coming home. While she settles in with her children and is just about to purchase their first-ever house, her brother takes off to find the boy from their shared past whose memory haunts their present. As they all race to discover answers to these convoluted mysteries, they will come to find that they're connected....

Johnson, Craig. [Hell and Back](#) (Viking \$28). “At the outset of bestseller Johnson's solid if surreal 18th Walt Longmire mystery, the Absaroka County, Wyoming, sheriff wakes up in the middle of a snowy street, part of his sheepskin coat frozen to the ground. He has no idea who he is or how he ended up in Fort Pratt, Mont., or why he's covered in blood with a bullet missing from his gun. Walt only learns his name when a waitress at a deserted café points out that it's printed in his cowboy hat's sweatband. Then, in a mystical turn, he's transported back to 1896, when 31 Native American boys died in a fire that destroyed Fort Pratt's Industrial Indian Boarding School. Meanwhile, Walt's undersheriff, Victoria Moretti, and friend Henry Standing Bear go looking for him. This departure from the usual straightforward police procedural centers on Walt's emotional health, keeping the reader wondering whether his fugue state is amnesia or insanity. Longtime fans will relish Johnson's new insights into Walt's character, though this isn't the place to start for newcomers.”—*PW* on another book I have not yet been able to read.

Kellerman, Faye. [The Hunt](#) (Harper \$28.99). Peter Decker and his partner, Detective Tyler McAdams, are thrown into an unsolved case and propelled into action when a body is found in the very woods where a man previously went missing in upstate New York. But that's not the only crisis that Peter has to deal with. Teresa McLaughlin, the biological mother of their foster son, Gabe, has fled to Los Angeles with her two children in tow, hoping to avoid a court injunction amid a messy divorce. But LA is no escape from her problems—she is found by ruthless men and beaten mercilessly. When she wakes, barely conscious, Teresa discovers that both of her children are gone and frantically calls Gabe for help. With his mother on the verge of death, Gabe contacts Peter and Rina, as well as his biological father, the notorious Christopher Donatti, a former hit man from a known criminal family who's now a millionaire in Nevada. In Los Angeles, by bringing Donatti into the fray, Gabe, Peter, and Rina

know they have made a deal with the devil—but they may not be able to recover the kids without him.

Khan, Vaseem. [The Lost Man of Bombay](#) (Hodder \$39). Bombay, 1950. When the body of a white man is found frozen in the Himalayan foothills near Dehra Dun, he is christened the Ice Man by the national media. Who is he? How long has he been there? Why was he killed? As Inspector Persis Wadia and Metropolitan Police criminalist Archie Blackfinch investigate the case in Bombay, they uncover a trail left behind by the enigmatic Ice Man—a trail leading directly into the dark heart of conspiracy. Meanwhile, two new murders grip the city. Is there a serial killer on the loose, targeting Europeans? Rich in atmosphere, the thrilling third chapter in the CWA Historical Dagger-winning Malabar House series pits Persis against a mystery from beyond the grave, unfolding against the backdrop of a turbulent post-colonial India, a nation struggling to redefine itself in the shadow of the Raj.

King, Laurie R. [Back to the Garden](#) (Bantam \$28). Inspector Raquel Laing, who's with the San Francisco PD's Cold Case Unit, arrives at the Gardener Estate near Palo Alto—once the home of one of California's most influential families—where the remains of a long-buried body have been found on the grounds. Laing believes that the victim may be one of the young women murdered in the Bay Area in the 1970s by a serial killer known as the Highwayman. Flashbacks to the late 1970s show how Rob Gardener, then the estate's multimillionaire owner, turned it into a commune. The loosely knit and ever-changing community included Meadow, “a hippie earth-mother with the political skills of a Chicago mayor,” and “a Mephistopheles rock star” known as Rain. Could the killer have some connection with the Gardener family? King skillfully misdirects the reader as the action builds to a surprising resolution. Laing, dubbed “the Sherlock of San Francisco” by her colleagues “for her uncanny ability to put together unrelated facts,” is a welcome addition to the ranks of contemporary female detectives.

Bringing the historical divide up to the 1970s when much of this narrative takes place, I took a daring leap and have made this our September Historical Fiction Book of the Month. King is in the interesting position of having lived in the era she depicts so brilliantly.

Krueger, William Kent. [Fox Creek](#) (Atria \$28). **August 22 is the day before publication day so ask that your book be signed and dated. And request a very short personal inscription. AND, more good news, some of you have asked about the special bookmark created for Fox Creek as mentioned in Kent's recent newsletter. We do indeed have them and will include one in every Signed copy.**

This is a thrilling cat-and-mouse chase story. The ancient Ojibwe healer Henry Meloux has had a vision of his death just before he is drawn into a deadly game of cat and mouse. As Henry walks the North woods in solitude, he tries to prepare himself peacefully for the end of his long life. But peace is destined to elude him as men fill the woods seeking a woman named Dolores Morriseau, a stranger who had come to the healer for shelter and the gift of his wisdom. Meloux uses his highly developed sense of mysticism to lead Dolores and his great niece Rainy, Cork O'Connor's wife, to safety deep into the Boundary Waters, his home for more than a century. Why are ruthless mercenaries pursuing Dolores? On the last journey

he may ever take into this beloved land, Meloux must do his best to outwit The Wolf and his team. Meanwhile, in Aurora, Cork works feverishly to identify the hunters and the reason for their relentless pursuit, but he has little to go on. Desperate, Cork begins tracking the killers but his own skills as a hunter are severely tested by nightfall and a late season snowstorm. He knows only too well that with each passing hour time is running out. But his fiercest enemy in this deadly game of cat and mouse may well be his own deep self-doubt about his ability to save those he loves.

The journeys in Fox Creek are not only physical, but life changing for a few such as The Wolf, aka LeLoup. They are in theme similar to those Kent portrayed in [This Tender Land](#). You will love the new characters introduced by this story as well as spending time with series favorites. And Kent tells this tale from several points of view including that of The Wolf, Rainy, Cork, and Cork's son Stephen, which makes it more rounded and richer. And if you are new to it, [all 18 earlier Cork O'Connor novels](#) are available and it's a perfect binge read opportunity to stock up on them all from Iron Lake forward. Note that three of the books that the link brings up are not in the Cork O'Connor series.

NEW: Lagercrantz, David. [Dark Music](#) (MacLehose \$46). In this promising series launch, police officer Micaela Vargas, whose parents came to Sweden as political refugees from Chile, joins forces with a Stanford University academic. In 2003, youth soccer coach and Afghan refugee Jamal Kabir is murdered in Stockholm, his skull crushed by a rock. Once police realize that an enraged soccer dad did not commit the crime, they begin to dig—and to discover the killer, they must learn more about the victim. Was Kabir “some sort of terrorist”? Why had he smashed a woman's clarinet in Kabul? Women musicians had been banned from practicing their craft since 1992, but once the Taliban took power, “what had previously been prohibited became downright dangerous.” Police officer Micaela Vargas is part of the investigating task force, which hires renowned Stanford psychology professor Hans Rekke to assist. Vargas is an honest, hardworking young cop who happens to have a lowlife brother with criminal ties, while Rekke takes homicide investigation to a whole new level. The esteemed “specialist in interrogation techniques” is a pill-popping wreck who can hardly keep himself and his family together, but his observational powers rival those of Sherlock Holmes. But not just Sherlock Holmes fans will want to check this one out.

Lupica, Mike. [Robert B. Parker's Fallout](#) (Putnam \$29). The small town of Paradise is devastated when a star high-school baseball player is found dead at the bottom of a bluff just a day after winning the team's biggest game. For Jesse, the loss is doubly difficult—the teen was the nephew of his colleague, Suitcase Simpson, and Jesse had been coaching the young shortstop. As he searches for answers about how the boy died and why, he is stonewalled at every turn, and it seems that someone is determined to keep him from digging further. Jesse suddenly must divide his attention between two cases after the shocking murder of former Paradise police chief, Charlie Farrell. Before his death, Farrell had been looking into a series of scam calls that preyed upon the elderly. But how do these “ghost calls” connect to his murder? When threats—and gunshots—appear on Jesse's own doorstep, the race to find answers is on. Both old and new enemies come into play, and in the end, Jesse and his team must

discover the common factor between the two deaths in order to prevent a third. Lupica, a friend of Parker and with a similar voice, continues with Jesse and will give us the next Spenser, having turned over Sunny Randall to a new author.

Maden, Mike. [Clive Cussler's Hellburner](#) (Putnam \$29.95). Juan Cabrillo and the other series regulars from the state-of-the-art warship *Oregon*, which was sunk and then rebuilt in the last two volumes written by Boyd Morrison with Clive, take on a host of bad guys and their organizations—in particular, the politicians and criminals of the Gray Wolves, an ultranationalist Turkish group. The Gray Wolves launch a Russian torpedo with a 100-megaton nuclear warhead in the vicinity of Istanbul during a summit between the American and Turkish presidents. The plan calls for killing both presidents and millions more in the resulting tidal wave, after which they figure Turkey will declare war on Russia, causing NATO to intervene and launch WWII. If that sounds like too much to keep track of, it is, but a multitude of plotlines means plenty of action, and readers will hold their collective breath as Juan and crew rely on their guts, wits, and plenty of cool weaponry to battle their many foes. After what seems like the ending, a series of twists keeps the book racing ahead. No disappointments here for Cussler fans as Maden continues the Oregon Files series.

NEW: Marra, Anthony. [Mercury Pictures Presents](#) (Random \$28.99). A short supply of signed copies has come our way. The epic tale of a brilliant woman who must reinvent herself to survive, moving from Mussolini's Italy to 1940s Los Angeles—from the award-winning author of *A Constellation of Vital Phenomena*. It's getting a lot of buzz but some tepid reviews such as, “Like many before her, Maria Lagana has come to Hollywood to outrun her past. Born in Rome, where every Sunday her father took her to the cinema instead of church, Maria immigrates with her mother to Los Angeles after a childhood transgression leads to her father's arrest. Fifteen years later, on the eve of America's entry into World War II, Maria is an associate producer at Mercury Pictures, trying to keep her personal and professional lives from falling apart. Her mother won't speak to her. Her boss, a man of many toupees, has been summoned to Washington by congressional investigators. Her boyfriend, a virtuoso Chinese American actor, can't escape the studio's narrow typecasting. And the studio itself, Maria's only home in exile, teeters on the verge of bankruptcy. Over the coming months, as the bright lights go dark across Los Angeles, Mercury Pictures becomes a nexus of European émigrés: modernist poets trying their luck as B-movie screenwriters, once-celebrated architects becoming scale-model miniaturists, and refugee actors finding work playing the very villains they fled. While the world descends into war, Maria rises through a maze of conflicting politics, divided loyalties, and jockeying ambitions. But when the arrival of a stranger from her father's past threatens Maria's carefully constructed facade, she must finally confront her father's fate—and her own.

McDermid, Val. [1989](#) (Little Brown \$45). There's nothing like a killer story.... It began with [1979](#) (\$27, paperback in October at \$17)), Val's terrific 2021 thriller. Now it's 1989. The world is changing, and Allie Burns is still on the front line, covering the stories that count. Although Allie is no longer an investigative journalist with the Scottish daily *The Clarion*, her instincts are sharper than ever. When she discovers a lead about the

exploitation of society's most vulnerable, Allie is determined to give a voice to those who have been silenced. As Allie edges closer to exposing the truth, she travels behind the Iron Curtain, to East Berlin on the brink of revolution. The dark heart of the story is more shocking than she ever imagined. And to tell it, Allie must risk all....

Moore, Taylor. [Firestorm](#) (Harper \$27.99). Taylor's 2021 debut, [Down Range](#), a First Mystery Pick here, drew tons of praise like "a masterwork of classic storytelling: a man defending his own in the best tradition of a John Wayne or Clint Eastwood film. *Think No Country for Old Men* with Box's Joe Pickett taking over for Ed Tom Bell. I'm thrilled we can follow up with a hot new assignment for Special Agent Garrett Kohl when he finds trouble brewing back on his family's homestead. A powerful energy consortium, Talon Corporation, has started an aggressive mining operation that threatens to destroy Garrett's land, his family's way of life, and everything they hold dear. To achieve its goals, Talon is flouting the law, bribing public officials, and meeting anyone who challenges it with physical violence. When the Kohls themselves are attacked by Talon guards, Garrett goes on the offensive, embarking on an investigation that he hopes will rid the Texas High Plains of the intruders once and for all. Garrett soon discovers that the company has origins in the dark hinterlands of countries across the globe. Using coercion and assassination levied by men from former Russian special operations forces, Talon is working on a highly secretive scheme to commandeer precious U.S. resources. The tit for tat exchange between Talon and the Kohls erupts into a full-scale war when Russian spy, Alexi Orlov, kidnaps Garrett's friend and ally, CIA operative Kim Manning. While Talon may be accustomed to getting its way in many places around the world, they have yet to encounter a rare breed of warrior down in Texas like Kohl.

NEW: Raybourn, Deanna. [Killers of a Certain Age](#) (Berkley \$27). "Edgar finalist Raybourn makes a dazzling excursion out of the Victorian era [and the Veronica Speedwell series] with this uproarious contemporary thriller. Raybourn's sharply funny, cunningly plotted, creative thriller about four almost seniors, four women trained as assassins by a British WWII female spymaster but retired on pensions – *Killers of a Certain Age* – is a glorious chase novel where one by one players are unmasked after the women, summoned together to take a luxury cruise, realize that their former employer has put out a kill order on them. How they strategize, survive, and maybe turn the tables is a real treat. Think Mrs. Pollifax, a senior spy created by the late Dorothy Gilman and much missed, on steroids. This is our **September Crime Book of the Month** – surely most of you, like me, yearn for motivated people to change the world? And highly recommended as a gift book with the holidays coming, no need for the recipient to be a mystery fan. You might want to order extra copies. Deanna signs it here September 8 so your book can be inscribed.

"Fans of Helen Tursten and Richard Osman will relish watching these badass women in their 60s swing into action. Raybourn has outdone herself." —*Publishers Weekly* (starred review). "The writing is witty and original, and the plot is unpredictable...Raybourn vividly evokes a number of far-flung locations while keeping readers on their toes trying to figure out what's going to happen next. A unique examination of womanhood as well as a compelling, complex mystery." —*Kirkus* (starred review).

NEW: Reid, Taylor Jenkins. [Carrie Soto Is Back](#) (Random \$28). Billie, Helen, Mary Alice and Natalie were recruited in the 1970s by a clandestine international organization they called the Museum, which trained assassins to neutralize dictators across the globe. The women were part of Project Sphinx, the very first all-female assassin squad. Their mentor was Constance Halliday, a legendary former member of England's disbanded Special Executives Office, which engaged in espionage during World War II. Each young recruit developed a deadly specialty. The Sphinxes always worked together on missions, and their combined talents made them unstoppable. After 40 years spent assassinating people whose termination the Museum deemed necessary to make the world a better place, the four killers, now in their 60s, have retired. Their employers mark the occasion by inviting the ladies on an all-expenses-paid cruise to the West Indies. While enjoying Bloody Marys and mimosas on the ship, Billie spots a junior field operative for the Museum. There's only one reason for his presence on board: he's on a job. And his mark(s): one or all four of his former colleagues. What follows is an explosive chase as the Sphinxes try to stay alive and ahead of assassins from the Museum, which now wants the women dead for a reason unknown to them.

Bestseller Reid writes, "I had an incredible amount of fun plotting my fictitious murders! I've done a fair bit of research on poison for my historical novels, so I had a good idea of where to start with the work on this book. It would have been easy to create some mythical, untraceable toxin, but I wanted this to be a bit more realistic. Since they're on the run, my assassins don't have the luxury of a lab or chemists for these hits, so I had to work with items that would be easily obtainable. Luckily for me, we're surrounded by potentially fatal substances so I had a lot of options. (This is where I should probably post a disclaimer and say please don't experiment with any of the methods in this book.) I had a watch list of films that kept me in the right headspace, whether it was for the action scenes or for scenes of women working together—*Wonder Woman*, *Ocean's Eight*, *Killing Eve*, *Spy*, *Atomic Blonde*.

Schaffhausen, Joanna. [Long Gone](#) (St Martins \$27.99). Detective Annalisa Vega of the Chicago PD and Nick Carelli, her partner and ex-husband, are called to veteran police officer Leo Hammond's home, where they find him dead in his bedroom, shot with his own gun. Hammond's wife insists that an intruder, dressed in a black wetsuit complete with diving mask, killed him. An obvious suspect is Moe Bocks, who had a run-in with Hammond a month earlier in a bar. Bocks is believed to have murdered his girlfriend in 1998, but he wasn't charged for lack of evidence. That Vega's best friend has begun dating Bocks complicates the investigation. These and other cases entwine in unexpected ways and bring Vega to the attention of a band of dirty cops. She's soon suspected of murder, with conveniently planted evidence stacking up against her. Loads of exciting action, balanced with dramatic personal revelations and some fine nuts-and-bolts police work, keep the pages turning," says one reviewer who, like me, enjoys police procedurals.

Scrivenor, Hayley. [Dirt Town](#) (Macmillan UK \$40). "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,' DS Sarah Michaels and her partner, DC 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." A very Outback Noir being compared to Jane Harper's mammoth bestseller [The Dry](#) (\$16.99).

Slaughter, Karin. [Girl Forgotten](#) (Harper \$28.99). **Signed here on publication day August 23 with a special color Case Files postcard created for The Pen, and can be personalized.**

Longbill Beach, 1982. Emily Vaughn gets ready for the prom. For an athlete, who is smart, pretty and well-liked, this night should be the highlight of her high school career. But Emily has a secret. And by the end of the evening, that secret will be silenced forever and remain an unsolved murder. Forty years later, Emily's murder remains a mystery. Her tight-knit group of friends closed ranks; her respected, wealthy family retreated inwards; the small town moved on from her grisly attack. But all that's about to change. Newly minted US Marshal Andrea Oliver arrives in Longbill Beach on her first assignment: to protect a judge receiving death threats. But, in reality, Andrea is there to work a cold case with links to her father's past. It is to find justice for Emily. The killer is still out there – and Andrea must discover the truth before she gets silenced in this companion novel to *Pieces of Her*.

Tremayne, Peter. [Death of a Heretic](#) (Severn \$48). Ireland, AD 672. The abbey of Muman at Imleach Iubhair is being renovated when its guests' hostel burns to the ground. There is one fatality: Bishop Brodulf of Luxovium, a distinguished visitor and cousin to the King of Franks. Sister Fidelma is asked by Abbot Cuán to investigate the unfortunate incident and soon finds that the bishop had been stabbed to death before the fire had even started. Thrown into a world of treachery and jealousy, where religious beliefs are vehemently disputed, Fidelma and her companions, Eadulf and Enda, face a barrier of deceit. The abbey, a leading ecclesiastical teaching institution as well as a *conhospitae*, housing both men and women, is divided into factions. Can Abbot Cuán trust Prioress Suanach, who is in charge of the sisterhood? Can the professors trust each other as well as their students? Moreover, can suspicion be leveled at the builders working on the abbey under their dominant Master Builder, Sítae? As more deaths follow, Fidelma must use her wit and ingenuity to unravel the complexities of this her 33rd murder inquiry.

NEW: Walker, Joss (JT Ellison). [Master of Shadows](#) (Two Tales Press \$28.99). Jayne Thorne, CIA Librarian, first met in the exciting and imaginative [Tomb of the Queen](#) (\$18.99), is back for another exciting mission. When her mentor goes missing, Jayne is sent to Paris to find him, only to land in the crosshairs of a deadly terrorist organization and their diabolical weapon, a

mysterious poison that renders their enemies powerless. Fighting to combat this weakness, Jayne struggles to make peace with her sister, who has been hiding the truth of their family history for years, and overcome difficulties with her shifter boyfriend, who can't quite sync up with Jayne's new powers. Even worse, the terrorists demand she locate a necromantic grimoire in France, or they will kill her mentor. As Jayne hunts for the grimoire, she unlocks the secret to summoning the Master of Shadows—a long-dead master magician possessing a dark and destructive magic. With this lethal power unleashed, she must protect her team from the worst magical threats they've ever faced. Isn't it great to have librarian heroes, today thanks to partisan divides in reading, in real life as in fiction, in our books?

Walker, Martin. [To Kill a Troubadour](#) (Knopf \$27). **Our copies are not signed but come with a recipe made by Bruno that will truly surprise you and his European publisher shares a lively photo of Martin with you, all made into a colorful card.**

Can it already be the 15th enthralling investigation run by Bruno Courrèges, the chief of police of the small French town of St. Denis? A week before Périgord folk band Les Troubadours is scheduled to perform in St. Denis, their new hit, "Song for Catalonia", is banned by the Spanish government for encouraging the Catalan region to continue pushing for independence from Spain. The situation escalates exponentially with the spread of fake news on Spanish social media linked to Russia's campaign to stir up divisions in Europe. The musicians' website and Twitter feeds are soon overflowing with hateful comments and even death threats. Bruno begins to suspect that the song's composer may be a target for terrorists when the band performs in his town. Smoothly integrated into Bruno's investigation is information on a multitude of subjects, from medieval musical instruments to Ukrainian history, plus easy-to-follow recipes such as the British classic Coronation Chicken and Bruno's Gazpacho. Good food, fascinating history, and a crackerjack mystery: who could ask for more? No one! If you have missed [this our bestselling series](#) in paperback (hundreds and hundreds of copies), waste no time ordering the whole and reveling in visits to this charming and delicious part of France.

Willett, Jincy. [Amy Among the Serial Killers](#) (St Martins \$27.99). "I loved this novel—it's totally brilliant—witty and mordant and filled with these wonderful insights into the state of publishing and writing and the way we are now. I thought Willett couldn't top *Winner of the National Book Award*, but I was wrong—this one definitely does." —Nancy Pearl on [Amy Falls Down](#) (\$20). *Booklist adds*, "For anyone who has ever wondered what it's like to be an author, Willett's thinly veiled heroine provides a saucily irreverent look at the writing life." So here is Amy Gallup again, retired after decades as a writing instructor, and surprised to hear from her former student Carla out of the blue, three years since they last spoke. She's even more shocked when she finds out the reason for Carla's call. Suddenly, she finds herself swept up in a murder investigation that soon brings her old writing group back together. But they'll need all the help they can get, as one murder leads to another, and suspicions of a serial killer mount across San Diego.

COZY CRIMES

Andrews, Donna. [Round Up the Usual Peacocks](#) (St Martins \$26.99) puts blacksmith Meg Langslow on the trail of three

separate cold cases when a member of her techie nephew's true-crime podcast team has an unfortunate accident that could have been attempted murder. It begins when as a bridesmaid at her brother Rob's upcoming wedding, Meg is tasked with, among many other things, obtaining nonmolting peacocks to grace the reception.....

Berenson, Laurien. [Peg and Rose Solve a Murder](#) (Kensington \$26). "This solid series launch from Berenson, a spin-off from her Melanie Travis canine mysteries, features Melanie's forthright aunt, Peg Turnbull, a dog show judge in Greenwich, Conn., and Peg's sister-in-law, Rose Donovan, a former nun who married a former priest. From the moment they first met, the two women disliked each other, their animosity fueled by Rose having never considered Peg to be good enough for her brother. Now, both women are in their 70s, and Peg is widowed. Peg is taken aback when Rose asks Peg to be her partner at a bridge club. "I can't spend all my time doing good works," Rose explains, adding, "Besides, bridge isn't a frivolous game." Against her better judgment, Peg agrees to take part. Most of their fellow card players are retired and have been teamed together for years. When one of them is murdered, the two ladies decide to investigate. Their sleuthing efforts often take second place to the rapport that builds between the protagonists and the many tips on poodle care and dog training. Fans of Melanie will be delighted."—PW

Bissonnette, Zac. [A Killing in Costumes](#) (Crooked Lane \$26.99). Bestseller Bissonnette makes his fiction debut with a lively series launch. Cindy Cooper and Jay Allan, who were spouses and soap stars when they discovered their true sexuality, are eager to land the coveted costume collection of 90-year-old retired actress Yana Tosh so they can shore up Hooray for Hollywood, their struggling memorabilia business in Palm Springs. Yana, however, is in no hurry to ink a representation deal, pitting Cindy and Jay against the cutthroat Dylan Redman and Eydie Jackson of the big-time Cypress Collections. When Dylan turns up dead, detective Simon Fletcher seems to regard Cindy and Jay as the prime suspects, though Yana's longtime adviser, Ben Sinclair; her long-suffering son, Warren Limon; and well-connected reporter Lenae Randolph may have their own agendas regarding the collection and their own personal baggage. Where will all this go?

Burdette, Lucy. [A Dish to Die for](#) (Crippen \$26.99) finds Hayley Snow, a food critic for *Key Zest* magazine, taking a beach trip to an island north of Key West, along with Nathan Bransford, her police detective husband, and their two dogs. There, one of the dogs uncovers a body in the sand that turns out to belong to restaurant and bar owner Gerald Garcia. During the Covid pandemic, Garcia refused to close his eating and drinking establishments, and he was rumored to be bankrolling the lobbyists promoting cruise ships. In short, the victim had many enemies with multiple motives. Hayley and Nathan help the sheriff's department investigate as Hayley discovers a cookbook published by the Key West Woman's Club in 1949 hidden in a drawer at the club. The glimpses of life in Key West decades earlier adds historical color—and there are recipes.

Burns, Valerie. [Two Parts Sugar, One Part Murder](#) (Kensington \$15.95). Maddy Montgomery is a social media expert who's #StartingOver in small town Michigan after inheriting her great-aunt's bakery...and a 200-pound English Mastiff named Baby.

When Maddy is groom is a no-show to their livestream wedding, it's a disaster that no amount of filtering can fix. But a surprise inheritance offers a chance to regroup and rebrand—as long as Maddy is willing to live in her late, great-aunt Octavia's house in New Bison for a year, running her bakery and caring for a 250-pound English mastiff named Baby. Maddy doesn't bake, and her Louboutins aren't made for walking giant dogs around Lake Michigan, but the locals are friendly and the scenery is beautiful. With help from her aunt's loyal friends, aka the Baker Street Irregulars, Maddy feels ready to tackle any challenge, including Octavia's award-winning cake recipes. That is, until New Bison's mayor is fatally stabbed, and Maddy's fingerprints are found on the knife... Aunt Octavia had her suspicions about strange doings in New Bison. Will Maddy follow through? **John recommends this paperback original as one of two selections for the August Cozy Crimes Book of the Month.**

Canadeo, Anne. [Death on the Argyle](#) (Kensington \$26). Though it's not the first time a member of the Black Sheep has been accused of murder, heavily pregnant Lucy Binger finds this threat both a welcome distraction and a provocation to seek the truth. The group often meets at the Happy Hands Café, owned by Rebecca Hurley, the college friend Lucy has been getting reacquainted with years after they lost touch. Their two stepdaughters have already become fast friends. Rebecca's husband, Colin, seems an odd duck, but it's still a shock when he's killed by a falling bookcase. The police seize on Rebecca as the likeliest suspect. Lucy, who's a whiz at internet searches, soon turns up some disturbing information on Colin, who'd planned to skip out on Rebecca using money in a hidden bitcoin account. The thriller he was writing is both derivative and boring, but it provides some clues to his demise....

Childs, Laura. [A Dark and Stormy Tea](#) (Berkley \$27). The author writes, "Tea maven Theodosia Browning dashes down Charleston's famed Gateway Walk as wind and driving rain overtake her. This normally picturesque ramble of hedges and statuary has become a twisted, foggy labyrinth that leads to a moss-shrouded cemetery. There, Theodosia encounters two struggling figures and realizes she's witness to a brutal murder. In the throes of alerting police, Theodosia recognizes the victim—the daughter of a dear friend. And even though this appears to be the work of a serial killer, she launches her own shadow investigation, discovers multiple suspects, and stumbles upon a second dead body. I wrote this spooky cozy with plot, pacing, and action reminiscent of a thriller—then sprinkled in tea lore and recipes to make this Tea Shop Mystery highly entertaining." This is a new chapter in a very long running series, with recipes.

Davis, Krista. [A Colorful Scheme](#) (Kensington \$15.95). Coloring book creator and Washington, DC, bookstore owner Florrie Fox is attending the wedding of her wealthy boss and a famous romance author, who are taking their vows—for the second time—on the grounds of the gorgeous Maxwell mansion. But it soon becomes clear that the soothing vibe of coloring books is very different from the stress and backstabbing in some corners of the literary world. Arthur Bedlingham, for example, barely makes a living despite the many awards he's won—and his chances for better sales haven't been helped by the vicious review he just got from another guest at the party. Then there's an ex-FBI agent whose popular thrillers are a magnet for female fans; a less-successful romance writer; and an ambitious waitress

who's intent on a career in journalism. When Arthur's assistant, an aspiring writer, is murdered during the festivities, Florrie realizes this is no color-by-numbers case. Includes A Front and Back Cover for You to Color! Look for 3 earlier entries in this Pen & Ink series.

✚Huber, Anna Lee. [A Certain Darkness](#) (Kensington \$15.95). March 1920: Life has turned unsettlingly quiet for former British Intelligence agent Verity Kent and her husband, Sidney. But even that false calm is about to end; the impact of the recent Great War lingers, as British secret agent Verity discovers when the French police request her husband Sidney's help interrogating a woman collaborator who refuses to talk to anyone but Sidney. And Verity, too, is called to investigate a mystery. The murder of a Belgian lawyer aboard a train seems at first to be a simple case of revenge. But the victim was connected to British Intelligence, and possessed papers detailing the sinking of a gold-laden German ship during the war. As Verity and Sidney dig deeper, they discover their cases are intertwined—and a lethal adversary persists. Officially, the Great War may be over, but...

✚Kinsey, TE. [Rotten to the Core](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$15.95). Summer 1911. A scorching heat wave engulfs the quiet town of Littleton Cotterell and brings about an unusually early harvest. The villagers are thrilled, but events quickly turn sour when one of them turns up dead in an apple orchard, stabbed through the heart. Amateur sleuth Lady Harcastle and her trusty lady's maid, Flo, suddenly have a juicy case on their hands. Might the mysterious stranger they recently met in the village be to blame? When a second cider-related murder takes place, it quickly becomes clear that there's more to these mysterious deaths than brewing rivalry.

This 8th in the [Lady Harcastle](#) Mysteries is our other **August Cozy Crimes Book of the Month**. It's worth reading for the Author Note at the end, and the Author's Voice which is a lovely British one, and snide. As it pairs well given the orchards, the cider, and, with the Burns above, and since the two paperbacks strike me as a better value for Cozy Crime members than a single hardcover... there we are.

Matthews, Olivia. [Murder Out of Character](#) (Hallmark \$15.99). Marvey Harris, the library's director of community engagement, comes across a list with four names on it. One person on the list has recently died. One is found dead shortly after the party. Has Marvey found a hit list? Marvey takes it to the police, who dismiss her concerns. But Marvey's friend and secret crush, newspaper publisher and scion of the richest family in town, Spence Holt, is on the list, and Marvey won't rest until the killer is caught and she knows he's safe. Never mind the underdeveloped characters and the saccharine sentiments. A de rigueur budding romance, an intrepid heroine who rushes headlong into danger to keep her friends safe, and a happily-ever-after ending make this the prose equivalent of a Hallmark family movie. Lovers of small-town cozies can while away a pleasant afternoon with this one.

Maxwell, Alyssa. [Murder at Beacon Rock](#) (Kensington \$26). It's the summer of 1900 when reporter Emma Cross, a lesser Vanderbilt, discovers a drowned corpse. As a reporter, Emma is used to covering Newport's social events. But this time she is appearing on the arm of her fiancé, Derrick Andrews, at a small but exclusive gathering of the New York Yacht Club at Beacon

Rock, the Grecian-inspired summer "cottage" of Edwin and Elizabeth Morgan. The members—which include cousin and Yacht Club Commodore John Pierpont Morgan and widow Lucy Carnegie, the first woman to be admitted to the Club—are there to discuss their strategy for the next America's Cup Challenge, to be held in New York Harbor the following summer. But it's Emma who must come up with a strategy when she discovers a woman's body bobbing against one of the hulls of the boats moored at the base of Beacon Rock. Suicide? or Murder?

CLASSICS

Edwards, Martin. [The Life of Crime: The History of Mysteries and Their Creators](#) (Harper \$29.99). Edwards has assumed the mantle of the late Julian Symons and HRF Keating in researching and writing about the evolution of the genre from the 18th Century to the present.

Medawar, Tony, ed. [Bodies from the Library 5](#) (Harper \$16.99). Another volume compiled by Medawar of Forgotten Stories of Mystery and Suspense by the Queens of Crime and Other Masters of the Golden Age.

NEW IN HARDCOVER

Note that if you click on "See other editions" when in our [webstore](#) you will be taken straight to the audiobook of the title, offered to you by Libro.fm, which remits part of the purchase price to The Pen.

Adlakha, Sarah. [Midnight on the Marne](#) (Forge \$26.99). In the summer of 1918, WWI rages through France and Marcelle Marchand, both a nurse and a spy for British Intelligence, crosses paths with American soldier George Mountcastle, who is immediately captivated by her beauty. When Marcelle's assignment goes wrong, history is rewritten, and Germany succeeds in conquering France. George rescues Marcelle with the help of Marcelle's twin sister, Rosalie, and they escape to Soissons. The price for hiding American soldiers is death, but Marcelle risks it. She and George have fallen in love, and she'll do anything to protect their life together. But as the war threatens everything they hold dear, George wonders what might have happened if, at various points in their relationship, they had made different choices, and contemplates altering history to end their suffering. "Adlakha expertly lays the foundation for this sweeping, tragic romance while never shying away from the merciless bloodshed of war. The mystical element of George playing with time does not detract from its powerful emotional impact." In fact playing with time and some supernatural elements are prevalent in recent fiction.

✚Barnes, Julian. [Elizabeth Finch](#) (Knopf \$26). Among the tepid reviews is this from *LJ*: "When he signed up for an adult class called Culture and Civilization, Neil didn't expect to develop a sort of intellectual crush on demanding Professor Elizabeth Finch. Their relationship shapes his life, even after she dies—she leaves him notes on his latest obsession, Julian the Apostate—as Booker Prize winner Barnes explores the many variations on love and the undercurrents of 'culture and civilization' in our lives.

Beinhart, Larry. [The Deal Goes Down](#) (Melville House \$27.99). A legendary, Edgar-Awarding winning writer returns, and so does his legendary detective, with a gripping thriller about marital discord, contract killing, off-piste skiing and the deep state... perfect for fans of Donald E. Westlake's Dortmunds. How we

miss Westlake and, up until now, Beinhart whose *American Hero* morphed into the DeNiro film *Wag the Dog*.

His new novel stars detective Tony Casella, last seen in 1991's *Foreign Exchange*. "Now a 70-year-old ex-PI, Casella boards a train in upstate New York. In the club car, he's approached by a woman he's never met who asks if he can kill her bad—and fabulously wealthy—husband. Tony's broke, his house is up for foreclosure; he says yes. It needs to be done soon, before the husband can hide his money. Eventually, Tony notches up three kills, though none in ways he expected. En route, everything that can go wrong does. An associate tries to take Tony's earnings. Government agents trail him. He's sent to Switzerland to assassinate a truly scary Russian oligarch. One of the great creations in the book is Tony's accomplice, Allison, a young sex worker who looks like (and was) a Bard College undergraduate. An interesting twist: Beinhart appears as a character in his own novel. There's enough action in this thoroughly enjoyable comedy of errors to please the most discriminating reader, but it's the humor that captures." For fans of crime capers—and who get enough of those?

Bradby, Tom. [Yesterday's Spy](#) (Grove \$27). Best-selling novelist and ITV television broadcaster Bradby's latest historical espionage thriller is set amid the political turmoil of Iran in the 1950s. "Recently retired and recently widowed British Intelligence lifer Harry Towers learns that his estranged son Sean, a muckraking journalist in Tehran, has disappeared after publishing a piece about government corruption there. Harry can't shake the feeling that the morally ambiguous choices he made in Tehran during his intelligence career have come back to haunt him, in the form of Sean's disappearance, and he decides to take action. Against the backdrop of an impending coup, Harry travels to Tehran and revisits his old life there as he begins his search. He joins forces with Sean's fiancée, Shahnaz, but soon discovers that her motivations are as questionable as everyone else's. The novel's ending has a twist that's unusual in a spy thriller, and Bradby's writing is crisp... The atmospheric, geopolitical issues, montage writing style, and protagonist's moral ambiguities will remind readers of spy novels by Jack Higgins and Frederick Forsyth."—*LJ*. I have been a serious fan of Bradby's novels since his brilliant portrait of 1920s Shanghai in [The Master of Rain](#) (\$14).

Buck, Rinker. [Life on the Mississippi](#) (Avid Reader \$32.50). Seven years ago, readers around the country fell in love with a singular American voice: Rinker Buck, whose infectious curiosity about history launched him across the West in a covered wagon pulled by mules and propelled his book about the trip, *The Oregon Trail*, to ten weeks on the *New York Times* bestseller list. Now, Buck returns to chronicle his latest incredible adventure: building a wooden flatboat from the bygone era of the early 1800s and journeying down the Mississippi River to New Orleans. A modern-day Huck Finn, Buck casts off down the river on the flatboat *Patience* accompanied by an eccentric crew of daring shipmates. Over the course of his voyage, Buck steers his fragile wooden craft through narrow channels dominated by massive cargo barges, rescues his first mate gone overboard, sails blindly through fog, breaks his ribs not once but twice, and camps every night on sandbars, remote islands, and steep levees. As he charts his own journey, he also delivers a richly satisfying work of history that brings to life a lost era. This is a perfect book for fans of Kent Krueger's [This Tender Land](#) (\$17).

Burton, Jessie. [House of Fortune](#) (Bloomsbury \$28). Burton continues to mine historical Amsterdam for her intricate novels. Here is 1705 and Thea Brandt's 18th birthday. Her life at home is difficult, full of arguments about money and sell offs to keep possession of the family home. Then as catastrophe looms, she takes refuge in the city's theaters where, while enjoying the performances, she can spend time in the backrooms with her secret lover Walter, the chief set painter for her favorite playhouse. While Aunt Nella believes Thea must find a husband, and an invitation to an exclusive ball could open that door, Thea knows her birthday marks the death of her mother Marin, and the silence maintained about "the miniaturist," that shadowy figure from the family's past. The power of secrets is profound. If you missed the UK's Burton's first novel, [The Miniaturist](#) (\$16.99), adapted into a PBS series, you might want to read it first.

☞Dean, Sunyi. [The Book Eaters](#) (Forge \$26.99). Out on the Yorkshire Moors lives a secret line of people for whom books are food, and who retain all of a book's content after eating it. To them, spy novels are a peppery snack; romance novels are sweet and delicious. Eating a map can help them remember destinations, and children, when they misbehave, are forced to eat dry, musty pages from dictionaries. Devon is part of The Family, an old and reclusive clan of book eaters. Her brothers grow up feasting on stories of valor and adventure, and Devon—like all other book eater women—is raised on a carefully curated diet of fairy tales and cautionary stories. But real life doesn't always come with happy endings, as Devon learns when her son is born with a rare and darker kind of hunger—in short, a vampire's taste.... A dark story and an Indie Next Pick.

Donoghue, Emma. [Haven](#) (LittleBrown \$28) takes place in seventh-century Ireland, where three monks try to found a monastery on an inhospitable island. Note under Signed Books a new book by Peter Tremayne, Signed, set in medieval Ireland.

Edwards, Martin. [The Life of Crime: The History of Mysteries and Their Creators](#) (Harper \$29.99). Edwards has assumed the mantle of the late Julian Symons and HRF Keating in researching and writing about the evolution of the genre from the 18th Century to the present along with his role as author of, currently, two series, see Signed Books above for Rachel Savernake, and editor of the British Library Classic Crimes. He is the President of the Detection Club, past Chair of the Crime Writers Association, last year's Gold Dagger winner... and theoretically "retired" from his law practice in Liverpool. In short, he's a demon!!

☞Eliot, TS/Qiu Xiaolong. [The Wasteland and Other Poems](#) (Berkshire Publishing Group \$60). **Ordered upon request.** For the 100th anniversary of publication, this centenary edition is based on both the original Hogarth Press edition, produced by Leonard and Virginia Woolf, and the American Boni & Liveright design. It has a clean layout, no notes, and marginal translations of non-English lines, to make this famous and famously obscure poem accessible to the general reader. The Introduction is by the wonderful Qiu Xiaolong who notes: "The protagonist in my Inspector Chen series turned out to be an honest cop working under the omnipresent surveillance of the regime while still trying hard to keep some distance as an independent-thinking intellectual. He frequently quotes or paraphrases Eliot's lines, which help to give him an alternative, humane perspective in spite of that suffocating system." The paperback edition is available at (\$40).

Fielding, Joy. [The Housekeeper](#) (Random \$28). *LJ* writes, “Fielding’s latest is an exciting roller-coaster ride of family dysfunction, marital dynamics, and gaslighting. Jodi Bishop is a successful real estate agent, wife, and mother whose busy life is made even busier by her mother’s Parkinson’s diagnosis. She hires Elyse Woodley as a housekeeper to take care of her mother and help her aging father, and she couldn’t be happier with her choice. Elyse is kind and hardworking, ingratiating herself and becoming a confidante to Jodi. She seems like a dream come true until suddenly she’s shutting Jodi out and her mother’s health declines rapidly. Elyse is wearing her mother’s jewelry, flirting with her father, controlling everything. How did it go wrong so quickly, and why is Jodi the only one who notices? Fielding’s novel is gripping from the beginning, and Jodi is a fleshed-out, relatable protagonist. The plot builds to a nail-biting climax, but readers might feel let down by the quick, albeit satisfying, conclusion. Recommended for fans of women-led suspense novels such as Mary Kubica’s *The Other Mrs.* and Ruth Ware’s *The Lying Game*.”

✎Galbraith, Robert. [The Ink Black Heart](#) (LittleBrown \$30). When frantic, disheveled Edie Ledwell appears in the office begging to speak to her, private detective Robin Ellacott doesn’t know quite what to make of the situation. The cocreator of a popular cartoon, *The Ink Black Heart*, Edie is being persecuted by a mysterious online figure who goes by the pseudonym of Anomie. Edie is desperate to uncover Anomie’s true identity. Robin decides that the agency can’t help with this—and thinks nothing more of it until a few days later, when she reads the shocking news that Edie has been tasered and then murdered in Highgate Cemetery, the location of *The Ink Black Heart*. Robin and her business partner, Cormoran Strike, become drawn into the quest to uncover Anomie’s true identity. But with a complex web of online aliases, business interests and family conflicts to navigate, Strike and Robin find themselves embroiled in a case that stretches their powers of deduction to the limits – and which threatens them in new and horrifying ways.... Here’s the 6th for British investigator Cormoran Strike and pals. Rob has become addicted to them and we have watched the TV as well.

✎Glass, Ava. [Alias Emma](#) (Bantam \$27). The job Emma’s assigned is extracting Michael, the son of a Russian spy who has defected to the U.K. The Russians want their asset back, so she and her husband are taken into protective custody [by British officials], but their adult son refuses to go with them. If Emma can’t get him to safety, he’ll be killed. He doesn’t understand the danger he’s in. During this rescue, Emma is ordered to use no technology that can be tracked. So, she can use no phones, bank cards, computers or tablets. At the same time, London’s extensive CCTV system has been hacked by the Russians who are using the cameras to hunt for Emma and Michael. Technology is everywhere (including the CCTV cameras), but Emma can’t access any of it.

Glass writes, “Britain and Russia are old enemies (the Great Game and the Cold War both come to mind), but this story is set in the 21st century and feels very fresh. Why a British/Russian conflict? I believe the Great Game never ended. We all thought it stopped when the Berlin Wall came down and the Soviet Union collapsed, but we were wrong. It went on. That became quite clear when a former Russian FSB agent named Alexander Litvenenko was murdered by his ex-colleagues with

polonium placed in a teapot in an expensive London hotel in 2006. That was followed by a spate of mysterious deaths of Russian exiles and former spies and government officials in the U.K. until, finally, a Russian exile named Sergei Skripal and his daughter were attacked with nerve gas in a leafy town (near where I live) in 2018. That was when it occurred to me that this secret war might make an interesting subject for a series of novels.” And, she is right.

Hart, Allison B. [The Work Wife](#) (Graydon House, \$27.99). The Indie Next Pick: “Three women, a Hollywood high roller, and an explosive day set the stage for a novel that will blow you away. Any woman whose work has been overlooked, underestimated, uncredited, or unrewarded needs a copy of *The Work Wife*. Hear her roar!”

Hokeah, Oscar. [Calling for a Blanket Dance](#) (Algonquin \$27). An August Indie Next Pick: “This is an incredible family epic in sleek, unpretentious form. Hokeah uses his characters as crisp prisms through which we see the nature of family: vicious and precious, mournful and joyful, everything in-between. A remarkable debut from a powerful new Native Voices author” who is a citizen of the Cherokee Nation and the Kiowa Tribe of Oklahoma plus some Mexican heritage! He’s the author of a number of short stories as well.

Hogan, Chuck. [Gangland](#) (Grand Central \$28). The acclaimed author of *The Town* is back with an epic thriller novel that follows the secret right-hand man of one of the most infamous unprosecuted mob bosses in American history. Based on the true story of Tony Accardo, the longest-reigning mob boss in history, this book is set in the 1970s and follows Nicky Passero, one of Accardo’s loyal soldiers. After Accardo’s Christmas gift for his wife is stolen, along with other items in a jewelry heist, Nicky is tasked with tracking down and returning the items—by whatever means necessary. In the late 1970s, The Outfit has the entire city of Chicago in its hands. Tony Accardo is its fearless leader. Nicky Passero is his loyal soldier, though no one knows he has a direct line in to the boss of bosses. When the Christmas gift Accardo got for his wife, an inscribed bracelet with gold and diamond inlay, is stolen along with other items in a jewelry heist, Nicky is charged with tracking down and returning all of the items—by whatever means necessary. Forced into an impossible situation, Nicky must find a way to carry out Accardo’s increasingly unhinged instructions and survive the battle for control of Chicago. What Accardo doesn’t know: Nicky has a secret which has made his life impossible and has put him in the pocket of the FBI. *Gangland* is a Shakespearean-esque drama

Johnson, Tyrell. [The Lost Kings](#) (Knopf \$27). A riveting psychological thriller with a killer twist about a woman forced to confront the darkest moment in her childhood in order to move on from her past and open her heart to love. At once a propulsive, heart-pounding mystery and an affecting exploration of love and the familial ties that bind us, this one truly grabbed me. The author is Canadian or it might well have been a Book Club Pick.

Kies, Thomas. [The Whisper Room](#) (Poisoned Pen \$24.99). This is the first book by Kies I did not edit but still, the mystery is why neither the Press nor Tom got in touch. However I have read it as I am fond of reporter Geneva Chase who despite the downhill run for print journalism has found ways to dig her teeth into stories mostly originating in her beat in Sheffield, Connecticut, adjacent

to the Gold Coast. This time a paid escort service is the trigger for the crimes that begin with the blackmail of a smug local TV anchor who despite his wealthy wife and successful career can't resist ordering girls. Apparently the most recent was underage and she took him to a hotel room where they were filmed. His life implodes and in time he kills himself... But then one of The Whisper Room's escorts is actually murdered, a girl who looks like the blonde in the video. Genie digs into the story with the help of a local homicide cop and former hook up while trying to be a good stand-in mom to her orphaned stepdaughter, keep her jobs going, resist drinking, and crack the case. There are familiar tropes here from earlier Geneva stories but as ever Kies breathes life into contemporary journalism from personal experiences and keeps advancing Genie's life, slowly, in a better direction. There is a trade paperback edition [The Whisper Room](#) (\$16.99) which is the better bet for you to order.

Mann, Michael/Meg Gardiner. [Heat](#) (Morrow \$28.99). This week's brand new #1 bestseller is by Michael Mann, four-time Oscar-nominated filmmaker and writer-director of *Heat*, *Collateral*, *Thief*, *Manhunter*, and *Miami Vice*, who teams up with Edgar Award-winning author Meg Gardiner to deliver Mann's first crime novel—an explosive return to the world and characters of his classic film *Heat*. Described by Michael Mann as both a prequel and sequel to the renowned, critically acclaimed film of the same name, *Heat 2* covers the formative years of homicide detective Vincent Hanna (Oscar winner Al Pacino) and elite criminals Neil McCauley (Oscar winner Robert De Niro), Chris Shiherlis (Val Kilmer), and Nate (Oscar winner Jon Voight), and features the same extraordinary ambition, scope, rich characterizations, and attention to detail as the epic film. This one is already very hard to source.

And Chicago homicide detective Vincent Hanna—a man unreconciled with his history—is following his calling, the pursuit of armed and dangerous men into the dark and wild places, hunting an ultraviolent gang of home invaders. Meanwhile, the fallout from McCauley's scores and Hanna's pursuit cause unexpected repercussions in a parallel narrative, driving through the years following *Heat*. *Heat 2* projects its dimensional and richly drawn men and women into whole new worlds—from the inner sanctums of rival crime syndicates in a South American free-trade zone to transnational criminal enterprises in Southeast Asia.

✚McAllister, Gillian. [Wrong Place, Wrong Time](#) (Morrow \$27.99). This one was supposed to publish in December but popped out earlier this month to become a big bestseller. I missed it other than the UK edition, Signed, that sold out. Apologies.

Here's another psychological thriller with time-travel and thus a supernatural element that both allows a mother to save her son and learn a startling truth about her life. Happily married divorce lawyer Jen Brotherhood awakes on the morning of October 30, 2022, to find that her 18-year-old son, Todd, hasn't returned home. She goes to the front window and watches in horror as Todd pulls a knife and stabs an older man who's been following him. She awakes the next morning, after having witnessed her son's arrest for murder, to find that it's October 29, the day before the incident. Each succeeding morning, she finds herself further back in time—jumping days, weeks, and even years. She decides her mission is to discover what led to this act of violence and stop it from happening. “McAllister gives read-

ers a chance to solve the crime from a refreshing new perspective while also providing elegant insights into how one creates one's past and confronts “friendships and addresses and life phases that feel endless but never, never last.” Lisa Jewell admires it, Chris Whitaker too, and while I was skeptical going in I found it compelling and even better, original. Yay.

Mosberg, Jason. [My Dirty California](#) (SimonSchuster \$28.99). This is a big month for screenwriters turning to novelists. This debut is thus cinematic in nature as it tracks the quest by Jody into why he came home one day to find his long absent brother Marty and their father shot to death in the house as their masked killer flees out the back door. With no police interest in what is felt to be a robbery/homicide, Jody, who has long wondered what Marty did while off in California and almost entirely out of touch for ten years, heads west from Pennsylvania on Marty's trail. What he finds is a series of strange and apparently random videos recorded by Marty that lead him into a very dirty California filled with crooked cops, surf gangs, profiteers, and drug dealers, plus a documentary filmmaker called Pen who postulates that humanity is living in a simulation from which her missing relative, her father, found a means to escape. Maybe an elusive stolen art stash has answers to all these mysteries. I will say that Mosberg, who thought about this story for years, pulls it all together no matter how improbable it seems that he will.

Patterson, James/Richard DiLallo. [The Ninth Month](#) (Grand Central \$32). Emily Atkinson leads a complicated life in New York City. She's a successful marketing executive who lives in a luxury apartment and enjoys a glamorous existence until she lands in the hospital with a double diagnosis: she parties too much—and she's pregnant. Her nurse and new best friend, Betsey, helps Emily rediscover how much she loves morning runs in the park and quiet nights at home. But as a series of women in her wealthy social circles go missing, and a stalker becomes apparent, Emily's pregnancy becomes decidedly high-risk.

Pepper, David. [A Simple Choice](#) (Putnam \$28). A medium-warm review from *Kirkus* for a book I haven't read but intend to as I think his [The Voter File](#) (\$17) is a gem: “When esteemed U.S. Senator Duke Garber dies in an apparent suicide, CNN reporter Palmer Knight—whose late grandfather was Garber's mentor in Congress—suspects the Saudis of pushing him off a Maine cliff. Garber had targeted the Saudis' use of deepfake videos to justify ethnic cleansing. Then, after questioning Saudi officials, Knight himself is victimized by a doctored video. Meanwhile, the highly regarded lawyer Amity Jones, an Afghanistan veteran, gets herself in trouble while caring for her cancer-stricken mother in Ohio. Angry that her mother can't get the same miracle treatment that cured her next-door neighbor's 9-year-old boy of cancer, Jones investigates the caregivers who still regularly visit the boy's house, dragging in mysterious equipment. Following their van across state lines, she is abducted and later nearly killed before agreeing to keep quiet in exchange for getting her mother treated. At the heart of the mystery is the unlikely relationship between Garber, an entrenched Rhode Island Republican, and aged Sen. Gigi Fox, a populist Florida Democrat with a shadowy past. Pepper, former chairman of the Ohio Democratic Party and author of the Jack Sharpe series, knows how to cast a chill with deep state politics. The secrets being kept are good ones. But this jumpy, overlong stand-alone too often gets in its own way.”

Pook, Lizzie. [Moonlight and the Pearler's Daughter](#) (Simon & Schuster \$27.99\$). For readers of *The Light Between Oceans* and Lisa See's [The Island of Sea Women](#) (\$18) despite the difference in location, etc, here's a feminist adventure story set against the backdrop of the dangerous pearl diving industry in 19th-century Western Australia, about a young English woman who sets off to uncover the truth about the disappearance of her eccentric father.

Pringle, Paul. [Bad City](#) (Celadon \$29.99). This terrific book by a Pulitzer Prize winning journalist who went into the story unprepared for the level of corruption and betrayal radiating across Los Angeles that he unearthed reads as propulsively as a thriller. I was dazzled. It begins with audacious events by male staff at USC, especially its prestigious medical school. Pringle, who'd long done battle with USC and its almost impenetrable culture of silence, knew reporting the story wouldn't be a walk in the park. USC is one of the biggest employers in L.A., and it casts a long shadow. But what he couldn't have foreseen was that this tip would lead to the unveiling of not one major scandal at USC but two, wrapped in a web of crimes and cover-ups. The rot rooted out by Pringle and his colleagues at The Times would creep closer to home than they could have imagined—spilling into their own newsroom. Packed with details never before disclosed, Pringle goes behind the scenes to reveal how he and his fellow reporters triumphed over the city's debased institutions, in a narrative that reads like L.A. noir. Think Ellroy for real, or Winslow. Patrick will love this. I did.

Rocha, Kit. [Dance with the Devil](#) (Forge \$30.99). Rocha's third Mercenary Librarians adventure sees that trio (Nina, Maya, and Dani), along with the Silver Devils (the former Protectorate squad), ready to lead the rebellion against the TechCorps as it struggles to retain control of Atlanta. When a contact within TechCorps shows interest in helping them, Dani knows that as a superhuman assassin who cannot feel pain she is one of the few to be able to infiltrate the Hill, where the most protected and prestigious of the TechCorps leaders live. Undercover and surrounded by the enemy, Dani will have to rely on Rafe Morales, the Silver Devil who might break through her thick shield of self-reliance. When they both have to face their past, it will take all of their strength and skill to ensure that they, and all of Atlanta, survive. *LJ* writes that "Fans of J. D. Robb's Eve Dallas and Nalini Singh's "Psy/Changeling" series will likely enjoy Rocha's postapocalyptic setting, fast-paced action, and strong female characters. Rocha has crafted a solid ending for the arcs of Nina, Maya, and Dani, but still leaves room to continue with some of the secondary characters." There is a paperback edition too: [Dance with the Devil](#) (\$18.99).

Stanfill, Francesca. [The Falcon's Eyes](#) (Harper \$32.50). If you crave sinking your teeth into a big historical, this novel of Eleanor of Aquitaine is for you...and any fan of the late Sharon Kay Penman. We view the Queen, married to both a King of France and then a King of England, through the eyes of Isabelle, Countess of Meurtaigne, It begins at Eleanor's death in 1204 and looks backwards, then circles back. Isabelle's turbulent story and that of her arranged marriage are intertwined with that of the Queen—a life wider than fiction.

Takamura, Kaoru. [Lady Joker, Volume 2](#) (Soho \$28.95). With this second volume, Takamura wraps up a story based on

Japan's notorious Glico-Morinaga kidnapping in 1984, though the kidnapping here takes place in 1995. The first, multi-best-booked installment, [Lady Joker Volume 1](#) (\$18.95), introduced a cluster of individuals who trace their health problems (or those of loved ones) to a Hinode Beer factory and plot to kidnap the corporation's president. The second volume chronicles the kidnapping's aftermath, revealing high-level business malfeasance and fractures in Japanese society. With *Lady Joker*, the multi-award-winning Takamura gets her first translation into English. "Like Ellroy's *American Tabloid* and Carr's *The Alienist*, the book uses crime as a prism to examine dynamic periods of social history . . . Takamura's blistering indictment of capitalism, corporate corruption and the alienation felt by characters on both sides of the law from institutions they once believed would protect them resonates surprisingly with American culture." — Paula Woods, *Los Angeles Times*

Tang, Belinda Huijuan. [A Map for the Missing](#) (Penguin \$27). "An engrossing saga of a young mathematician caught between two countries, two cultures, two eras, and two loves. Set against the violent turmoil of the Chinese Cultural Revolution, this powerful debut explores the wrenching impact of political ideologies on individual lives in a way that is resonant and timely." —Ruth Ozeki

✂Wingate, Marty. [Orphans of Mersea House](#) (Crooked Lane \$27.99). Another book for my TBR shelf. Here's a *PW* review for it: "Wingate takes a moving look at a group of young women as they navigate life in postwar England. Olive Kersey, about to become homeless after her mother dies, is rescued by her childhood friend, Margery Paxton, whom she hasn't seen for 15 years. Margery, raised by her aunt and uncle in Southwold, returns from London, having inherited her uncle's shop for kitchen goods and his house, which she decides to turn into a boarding house. She'll run the shop— unheard of in 1957— and hire Olive as manager. In addition to being responsible for boarders, two of whom have secrets about their pasts, Margery unexpectedly becomes guardian to 11-year-old Juniper, daughter of her wartime boyfriend and his wife. The amiable Juniper, who contracted polio at age four, enchants Olive—a good thing as Olive takes on more of a mother role than Margery, who is caught up with her store. Wingate has a sure hand in detailing changing societal mores, both progressive or retrograde; in a poignant scene, Olive feels a mix of relief and guilt after revealing to friends that her brother, who died in the war, was gay, which was at that time was illegal. It adds up to a nuanced look at a makeshift family." Wingate has written [several books I like](#) including some cozies set at a library in Bath, England.

FOR OUR LARGE & SMALL PAPERBACK PICKS AND REVIEWS SEE [THE FIRST AUGUST BOOKNEWS](#) final pages. Also don't forget to check the [AUGUST BOONOTES](#) written by John Charles.

Ackerman, Sara. [The Codebreaker's Secret](#) (Mira \$16.99). A WWII women's story switching to the theater that gets less attention. "In this enthralling World War II saga, we first meet the brilliant Isabel Cooper and her fellow codebreaker colleagues as they decipher secrets from the Pearl Harbor airwaves. . . . A thrilling, heartfelt read." —*Woman's World*

✂Adams, Sara Nisha. [The Reading List](#) (Harper \$16.99). I like this review from a reader, not a reviewer, for a book I hope to

get to soon. “A debut novel, Adams tells the story of several characters who have all come in contact with a reading list in or near a small neighborhood library on Harrow Road in West London. The main characters are Mukesh, an old widower who has three grown daughters, but who is very lonely until he happens upon a library book his always-reading wife left. That prompts him to go to the library for the very first time where he encounters the grouchy 17 year old Aleisha working at the desk. Aleisha is not a reader but working there gets her out of the house where her mother resides and never leaves meaning she and her brother Aiden – who’d been a huge reader as a kid – must forgo their own lives to care for her. wonderful read of how books can help us cope and even escape if only for a little while; how those fictional stories can bring us real life lessons; and how sharing a book can bring you closer to those you love. And wonder how many of those books on the list you’ve read and loved.” Another reader comments this delight actually teaches you something too.

Armstrong, Addison. [The War Librarian](#) (Putnam \$17). “Two young women decades apart struggle to find their place in the old boys’ club culture of the military. Kathleen Carre realizes her lifelong dream when she becomes one of the first women to accepted into the Naval Academy in 1976, but her grandmother Nellie, who raised Kathleen and served in the Motor Corps during WWI, expresses skepticism that a military career will lead to happiness. Kathleen enrolls anyway and meets with hostility from her mostly male peers. Soon after training begins, Nellie dies of cancer, a diagnosis she had hidden from Kathleen, leaving Kathleen to piece together the mysteries of her grandmother’s past. Meanwhile, in 1918, Emmaline Balakin travels from Washington, D.C., to Bazoilles-sur-Meuse, France, to work as the librarian at a U.S. Army base. She’s told ‘war is no place for women,’ but sticks around in hopes of reuniting with her childhood crush who’s stationed in France, along the way finding a kindred spirit in Nellie. However, Emmaline’s interest in banned books gets her into trouble and compels her to make a difficult decision with long-lasting consequences. The dual story lines masterfully reflect how nominal moves toward institutional inclusion can belie the persistence of cultures of exclusion. Historical fans will devour this intimate story about fighting for dignity and respect during trying times.”—*PW*

Beck, Hazel. [Small Town, Big Magic](#) (Graydon House \$16.99). For fans of [The Ex Hex](#), so popular here, and [Payback’s a Witch](#) (\$16), here’s another fun, witchy rom-com in which a bookstore owner who is fighting to revitalize a small Midwestern town clashes with her rival, the mayor, and uncovers not only a clandestine group that wields a dark magic to control the idyllic river hamlet, but hidden powers she never knew she possessed. Instead of Treats to ward off Tricks at Halloween, consider wrapping up some of the delicious books like these.

⌘Billingham, Mark. [Rabbit Hole](#) (\$17). Note we still have 2 Signed UK firsts as well. They were meant to be safe on Fleet Ward: psychiatric patients monitored, treated, cared for. But now one of their number is found murdered, and the accusations begin to fly. Was it one of his fellow patients? A member of staff? Or did someone come in from the outside? DC Alice Armitage is methodical, tireless, and she’s quickly on the trail of the killer. The only problem is, Alice is a patient too. Here’s a standout standalone from the bestselling author of the Tom Thorne series.

⌘Douglas, Claire. [The Couple at Number 9](#) (Harper \$16.99). In 2018, Saffron Cutler, one of the narrators of this intricately plotted puzzle from British author Douglas, and her partner are enlarging the kitchen of their cottage in Beggars Nook, a quaint Cotswold village, when builders discover a human skeleton in their back garden. Further digging uncovers yet another body. Forensic evidence indicates that the two—a man and a woman—were killed sometime between 1970 and 1990, years that overlap with the period that Saffron’s grandmother, Rose Grey, occupied the house. Rose, now suffering from dementia, lives in a nursing facility. Her occasional flashes of lucidity seem to offer clues to what might have happened all those years ago. But danger isn’t confined to the past. The discovery of the bodies awakens the interest of a murderer who will do anything to protect his secrets. Tension builds as the characters’ backstories unfold through multiple perspectives as Douglas does a fine job fairly misdirecting the reader. I enjoyed this one, expertly done.

Galligan, John. [Bad Day Breaking](#) (Atria \$17). A Midwestern *Longmire*. A strange religious sect has arrived in Bad Axe County, Wisconsin. Armed with guns, an enigmatic spiritual leader and his followers set up their compound in an abandoned storage lot. It’s not long before rumors start to spread of sadistic rituals and a planned takeover of the local government. But when one of the followers is found dead in the river, that’s when full-on panic sets in. Sheriff Heidi Kick may not be a fan of the new group, but she is also dismayed by the hostile reaction of the Bad Axe community. With a murder investigation on her hands, the situation becomes more complicated when Sheriff Kick finds out an ex-boyfriend from her youth is out on parole early and looking to hunt her down. With a tumultuous snowstorm on the horizon, the cult members are on the verge of freezing, Bad Axe is on the edge of violence, and Sheriff Kick is just one false step away from losing her family, her town, and her very life. Galligan warns of the pitfalls in following false leaders which has been an issue in Wisconsin as elsewhere. Order earlier [Bad Axe County](#) novels which are becoming better known as the series moves along.

Hadfield, Chris. [The Apollo Murders](#) (\$17). 1973 brings a final, top-secret mission to the Moon. Three astronauts in a tiny spaceship, a quarter million miles from home. A quarter million miles from help. NASA is about to launch Apollo 18. While the mission has been billed as a scientific one, flight controller Kazimieras “Kaz” Zemeckis knows there is a darker objective. Intelligence has discovered a secret Soviet space station spying on America, and Apollo 18 may be the only chance to stop it. But even as Kaz races to keep the NASA crew one step ahead of their Russian rivals, a deadly accident reveals that not everyone involved is quite who they were thought to be. With political stakes stretched to the breaking point, the White House and the Kremlin can only watch as their astronauts collide on the lunar surface, far beyond the reach of law or rescue. Full of the fascinating technical detail that fans of *The Martian* loved, and reminiscent of the thrilling claustrophobia, twists, and tension of *The Hunt for Red October*, *The Apollo Murders* is a high-stakes thriller unlike any other. Chris Hadfield captures the fierce G-forces of launch, the frozen loneliness of space, and the fear of holding on to the outside of a spacecraft orbiting the Earth at 17,000 miles per hour as only someone who has experienced all of these things in real life can. Strap in and count down for the ride of a lifetime

Hall, Tamron. [As the Wicked Watch](#) (\$16.99). Chicago crime reporter Jordan Manning prides herself on always being the first on the scene. Jordan has what other reporters don't—a master's degree in forensic science, which allows her to see what others miss when investigating crime scenes. When a 15-year-old Black girl is found dead in an abandoned lot, Jordan is unable to shake the feeling that there someone lurking on Chicago's streets is particularly targeting and killing young Black girls, even after three young boys are charged with the girl's murder. "Jordan is an exciting lead for this series. She is tireless in her search for answers, isn't afraid to be the smartest in the room, and is determined to shine light on the missing and murdered Black girls that no one else seems to care about. Her perseverance leads to a heart-pounding and unexpected climax. Hall's decades of field experience lend a lot of credibility to the story and provide a strong footing for an intriguing new crime series."—*LJ*

Heller, L Alison. [The Neighbor's Secret](#) (\$17.99). This is perfect for Liane Moriarty fans—as well as book club catnip since a neighborhood book club organized on almost military lines is the core of this novel of suspense. Lena Meeker, a resident of upscale Cottonwood Estates, has been a virtual recluse ever since the fatal alcohol-fueled car crash that occurred shortly after one of her signature neighborhood soirées 15 years earlier. Her neighbor Annie Perley, who's not much older than Lena's grown daughter, Rachel (who fled home as a teen after the car crash tragedy), starts making persistent overtures of friendship, including pressing Lena to attend a meeting of the spirited monthly book club that serves as the local moms' social lifeline. It turns out that Annie, a middle school guidance counselor hitting turbulence with her own teenage daughter, harbors a surprising hidden agenda for wanting to connect with Lena—albeit one arguably less shocking than the secrets her new friend has allowed to imprison her for so many years. "Readers will relate to these appealing women, who toss off one-liners even as they wrestle with such issues as teen substance abuse, bullying, and workaholic spouses."

Holahan, Cate. [The Darkness of Others](#) (Grand Central \$16.99). Imani Banks lives in a posh Brooklyn Heights neighborhood that has just been rocked to its core. An acclaimed movie director has been murdered, and his blond trophy wife—Imani's closest friend—is missing. Their neighbors, along with the media, jump to the conclusion that Melissa Walker has killed her husband in a fit of rage and is on the run. Fortunately for the missing actress, Imani is a psychiatrist as well as a steadfast friend. She will never give up her search and is determined to prove Melissa's innocence. It shouldn't take a degree in human behavior to know that Melissa would never leave her daughter behind. Recently, Imani and her chef husband rented some extra rooms in their house to a struggling waitress from his restaurant. Tonya Sayre has moved in with her teen daughter and the convenient timing and her suspicious behavior soon lead Imani to suspect that the true killer is living right under her own roof. Now all she has to do is prove it.

Jamilla, Nassin. [The Bruising of Qilwa](#) (Tachyon \$25.95). Firuz has relocated to Qilwa with their family to avoid persecution in their homeland as a practitioner of the much-feared Sassanian blood magic. In Qilwa, they find a city unwelcoming to outsiders, with a deep-seated fear and suspicion of Sassanians—particularly

any that may be adept at blood magic. Despite the climate, Firuz is fortunate enough to find work as an apprentice healer at a local clinic, where they work alongside healer Kofi as a plague sweeps through the city. When the plague begins to wane, however, Firuz and Kofi start to see startling signs of a new "blood-bruising" disease that leaves healthy people ailing, and cadavers behaving in ways that should be impossible. Unless, as Firuz suspects, the new illness may not be an illness at all, but a side effect of poorly used blood magic—but by whom? And to what end? Jamnia has built an intricate, multi-layered world full of magic that explores the murky and nuanced complexities of migration.

Kies, Thomas. [The Whisper Room](#) (Sourcebooks \$16.99). See New Hardcover above for more on a new reporter Geneva Chase investigation in Sheffield, Connecticut.

Kilmer, Maureen. [Suburban Hell](#) (Putnam \$17). A Chicago cul-de-sac is about to get a new neighbor...of the demonic kind. Amy Foster considers herself lucky. After she left the city and moved to the suburbs, she found her place quickly with neighbors Liz, Jess, and Melissa, snarking together from the outskirts of the PTA crowd. One night during their monthly wine get-together, the crew concocts a plan for a clubhouse She Shed in Liz's backyard—a space for just them, no spouses or kids allowed. But the night after they christen the She Shed, things start to feel . . . off. They didn't expect Liz's little home-improvement project to release a demonic force that turns their quiet enclave into something out of a nightmare. And that's before the homeowners' association gets wind of it. OK, be Very Afraid!

King, Stephen. [Billy Summers](#) (\$19.99). Billy Summers is a man in a room with a gun. He's a killer for hire and the best in the business. But he'll do the job only if the target is a truly bad guy. And now Billy wants out. But first there is one last hit. Billy is among the best snipers in the world, a decorated Iraq war vet, a Houdini when it comes to vanishing after the job is done. So what could possibly go wrong? How about everything?...

☞Lloyd-Jones. [The Drowned Woods](#) (Little Brown \$18.99). Hair-raising narrow escapes and unlikely alliances encumbered by bitter, uncertain loyalties abound in this thrilling heist tale set in a melancholic world of fae magic drawn from Welsh mythology. Once upon a time, the kingdoms of Wales were rife with magic and conflict, and eighteen-year-old Mererid "Mer" is well-acquainted with both. When this farmer's daughter was eight, she was taken from her family by cold-blooded human Prince Garanhir for her ability to manipulate water. After years under his thumb, Mer, now 18, has escaped and is horrified by the atrocities that Garanhir committed with her unwitting help. She is soon recruited by former spymaster Renfrew, one of the prince's closest confidants, for a quest. Renfrew proclaims he has betrayed the prince and is building a team—which includes Fane, a man endowed with magic by the fae; Fane's pet corgi, Trefor; and Ifanna, a thief from Mer's past—to pull off a daring caper to destroy the heart of Garanhir's power. This is written for teens but what fun for any adult? I love the world of Welsh magic written about so enchantingly by Lloyd Alexander in his *Mabinogian* novels and look forward to diving into this.

☞Mandanna, Sangu. [The Very Secret Society of Irregular Witches](#) (Penguin \$17). As one of the few witches in Britain, Mika Moon knows she has to hide her magic, keep her head down, and stay away from other witches so their powers don't mingle and

draw attention. She's "A misfit witch who finds her place in the world in this utterly enchanting fantasy. Mika Moon has never felt like she belonged; as an orphaned child, she was raised by a controlling older witch named Primrose and educated by a succession of nannies, each of whom was whisked away before they could realize Mika's power. She's never told anyone her secret, but as an adult she takes a risk by posting videos online in which she "pretends" to be a witch. It's all harmless fun—until retired actor Ian Kubo-Hawthorn recognizes her as the real deal. He invites her to Nowhere House, home to a found family working together to raise three young, untrained orphan witches. The children's unchecked magic has become impossible to contain, and Ian recruits Mika to become the trio's live-in magic tutor. But not everyone is pleased with the arrangement: "devastatingly handsome" Jamie Kelly, the house librarian, is hyperprotective of the children, and despite the immediate heat between him and Mika, he's determined not to let her melt his icy exterior. Mandanna crafts a cast of winningly quirky characters, each with their own part to play in Mika's path to belonging. The masterfully shaded relationships between Nowhere House's residents give rise to plenty of touching moments sure to tug on readers' heartstrings. This charming romantic fantasy is a gem" setting you in the mood for October. "Witty, witchy, and wonderfully romantic, *The Very Secret Society of Irregular Witches* will warm your heart with its endearing characters, grumpy-sunshine love story, and gorgeously sparkling magic."

McCreight, Kimberly. [Friends Like These](#) (\$16.99). Six college friends have reunited for a glamorous weekend in the Catskills, a decade after a fatal accident that nearly destroyed them. Keith, once the ringleader of the group, was a handsome charmer on the fast track to success. Now he's spiraling into addiction and stands at the edge of losing it all. This weekend is the last chance to save him. But Keith, it turns out, is not the only one who needs saving. By dawn on Sunday morning, a car has been found deep in the woods—one of the friends is dead, another is missing. When a local detective turns up to investigate, it's clear the group is hiding something ominous....

Myers, BR. [A Dreadful Splendor](#) (Harper \$16.99). This super Gothic with, once again, a seaside estate and dreadful doings, takes place in 1852. It's not about séances and spiritualists, they are a means to an end. "Genevieve Timmons, a fake spiritualist who robs the wealthy of their jewels, is making a hasty exit from a séance she had just conducted in a London house when the police arrest her. Soon after Genevieve is imprisoned on charges of theft and murder, she's bailed out by a lawyer named Lockhart, who represents Lord Chadwick. Genevieve's release is conditioned on her agreeing to travel to the nobleman's coastal home. Six months earlier, the body of Chadwick's bride, Audra, was found washed ashore, but the heartbroken widower refuses to accept the official verdict of suicide. Lockhart promises to defend Genevieve if she'll use her 'talents and trickery' to perform a séance in which she claims to communicate with Audra's ghost and gives Chadwick the closure he craves. Chadwick, in turn, hopes the séance will elicit a murder confession from one of the attendees. Genevieve agrees, but.... Myers nicely couples an unlikely and unethical sleuth with an atmospheric puzzle. Fans of roguish investigators will be delighted."—PW

Paris, BA. [The Therapist](#) (\$17.99). After Alice Dawson and her boyfriend, Leo Curtis, move into a house in a London gated community, Alice can't figure out why the neighbors keep their distance. Then she learns from Thomas Grainger, a private investigator who appears at the door, that the previous occupant, therapist Nina Maxwell, was murdered there more than a year earlier; Nina's husband, now dead, was falsely accused of the crime, and Thomas is looking into a miscarriage of justice. Alice reels at the news. Why did Leo, who handled the sale and must have heard about the murder from the estate agent, not tell her? That Alice's deceased sister was named Nina makes her prone to take a strong interest in anyone with that name, and she determines to help Thomas investigate. Alice soon discovers everyone in the community has secrets, including Leo.

Patterson, James. [The Ninth Month](#) (\$17.99). Emily Atkinson is a successful marketing executive who lives in a luxury apartment and enjoys a glamorous existence until she lands in the hospital with a double diagnosis: she parties too much—and she's pregnant. But as a series of women in her wealthy social circles go missing, Emily's pregnancy becomes decidedly high-risk.

Paul, Gill. [The Manhattan Girls](#) (Harper \$16.99). It's 1921 in Manhattan, the war is over, fashions are daring, bootleg booze is flowing, and four women form a bridge group. They are Dorothy Parker (the reason I mention this book), Jane Grant, the first female reporter for the *NY Times*, Winifred Lenihan, Broadway actress, and Peggy Leech, magazine assistant by day, novelist by night. What goes on amongst them as they play their cards?

Rooney, Sally. [Beautiful World, Where Are You?](#) (\$18). Alice, a novelist, meets Felix, who works in a warehouse, and asks him if he'd like to travel to Rome with her. In Dublin, her best friend, Eileen, is getting over a breakup, and slips back into flirting with Simon, a man she has known since childhood. Alice, Felix, Eileen, and Simon are still young—but life is catching up with them. They desire each other, they delude each other, they get together, they break apart. They have sex, they worry about sex, they worry about their friendships and the world they live in. Is it, will it be, beautiful?

Soyinka, Wole. [Chronicles from the Land of the Happiest People on Earth](#) (\$18). Nobel Prize winner Soyinka's first novel in almost 50 years (after the essay collection *Beyond Aesthetics*) delivers a sharp-edged satire of his native Nigeria. The tone is set early, as an omniscient narrator caustically refers to the country as the home of "the Happiest People in the World," a status bolstered by a Nigerian governor's creation of "a Ministry of Happiness," to be led by the governor's spouse. Soyinka presents a dizzying array of characters and plotlines to bolster the notion that his country's "success" is a facade built on corruption and lies. This is perhaps best illustrated by the story line involving Dr. Kighare Menka, a surgeon particularly adept at treating the victims of terror attacks. Menka's approached by representatives of Primary Resources Management, dedicated to combating waste by maximizing "human resources." Menka learns that behind the slogans is a business plan to obtain body parts for an affluent clientele, and that he's viewed as a steady source for the limbs and organs the venture needs. "Soyinka injects suspense as well with a whodunit plot....the imaginatively satirical treatment of serious issues makes this engaging on multiple levels."