

BOOKNEWS from

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THE FIRST 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.
You also can listen to our [Podcasts](#) on [Google Music](#), [iTunes](#), [Spotify](#), and other popular podcast sites.

FRIDAY AUGUST 5 2:00 PM

Rhys Bowen discusses [Where the Sky Begins](#) (Lake Union \$24.95).

London 1940

Signed copies available

There is a paperback too: [Where the Sky Begins](#) (\$14.95)

SATURDAY AUGUST 6 4:00 PM

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

Lucas Page

MONDAY AUGUST 8 1:00 PM

UK's **Natasha Pulley** discusses [The Half Life of Valery K](#) (Bloomsbury US \$27)

Signed UK edition: [The Half Life of Valery K](#) (\$55)

MONDAY AUGUST 8 5:00 PM

Ramona Emerson with David Heska Wanbli Weiden

Emerson discusses her debut [Shutter](#) (Soho \$27.95)

Our August First Mystery Book of the Month

Signed books available

MONDAY AUGUST 8 6:30 PM

Australia's **Hayley Scrivenor with Sulari Gentill**

Scrivenor discusses [Dirt Creek](#) (Flatiron \$26.99)

Signed UK edition [Dirt Town](#) (Macmillan \$40)

WEDNESDAY AUGUST 10 1:30 PM

Martin Walker discusses [To Kill a Troubadour](#) (Knopf \$27)

A new Bruno Chief of Police is always a joy

Our copies come with a special recipe from Bruno and a photo from Walker's European publisher that is a delight

WEDNESDAY AUGUST 10 4:00 PM

Brian Freeman discusses [The Bourne Sacrifice](#) (Putnam \$28)

Signed books available

WEDNESDAY AUGUST 10 7:00 PM Live

Spencer Quinn discusses [Bark to the Future](#) (Forge \$26.99)

Chet & Bernie (the dog), another metro Phoenix investigation

Signed books available

THURSDAY AUGUST 11 5:30 PM

Sri Lanka's **Amanda Jayatissa** discusses [You're Invited](#)

(Berkley \$27)

Murder at a Sri Lanka wedding celebration

THURSDAY AUGUST 11 7:00 PM Live

Ed Lin discusses [Death Doesn't Forget](#) (Soho \$27.95)

A Taipei Night Market Mystery

Signed books available

MONDAY AUGUST 15 5:00 PM

Taylor Moore discusses [Firestorm](#) (Harper \$27.99)

DEA Special Agent Garrett Kohl

Signed books available

TUESDAY AUGUST 16 1:00 PM

Ireland's **Catherine Ryan Howard** discusses [Run Time](#)

(Blackstone \$25.99)

A country house murder in West Cork

Signed books available

TUESDAY AUGUST 16 7:00 PM Live

Mark Pryor discusses [Die Around Sunset](#) (St Martins \$27.99)

His first true historical mystery, set in WWI Paris

Fans of Cara Black, alert

Signed books available

THURSDAY AUGUST 18 1:00 PM

Catherine Coulter discusses [Reckoning](#) (Harper \$28.99)

An FBI Thriller

Signed books available

THURSDAY AUGUST 18 7:00 PM Live

Sandra Brown and Ashley Winstead

Brown discusses [Overkill](#) (Grand Central \$29)

Winstead discusses [The Last Housewife](#) (Sourcebooks \$27.99)

Signed books available for both titles

FRIDAY AUGUST 19 7:00 PM

SciFi Friday discusses Elizabeth Bear's [Ancestral Night](#) (\$16.99)

SATURDAY AUGUST 20 10:30 AM

Croak & Dagger discusses Martin Edwards, [Many Deadly](#)

[Returns](#) (Severn \$28.99)

21 stories from the UK Murder Squad

MONDAY AUGUST 22 7:00 PM Live

William Kent Krueger discusses [Fox Creek](#) (Atria \$28)

Another super challenge for Minnesota's Cork O'Connor

Signed books available

TUESDAY AUGUST 23 7:00 PM Live Book Launch Party
Karin Slaughter discusses [Girl Forgotten](#) (Morrow \$28.99)
Signed books available
Fund raiser for newborn kittens. Karin will match up to \$2,500.

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 7:00 PM
Faye Kellerman discusses [The Hunt](#) (Harper \$28.99)
A Decker/Lazarus Novel
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
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
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)
Signed books available

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 3 2:00 PM Live Book launch
Laurie R King discusses [Back to the Garden](#) (Bantam \$28)
Signed books available

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 5 4:00 PM Live Book launch
Craig Johnson discusses [Hell and Back](#) (Viking \$28)
Walt Longmire
Signed books available

TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 6 7:00 PM Live Book launch
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

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
TBA

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
TBA

Notable New Fiction One Signed First Printing per month
TBA

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](#)

SOME SIGNED BOOKS FOR AUGUST

We continue with a mix of Live and Virtual Events

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

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.

And also, for some British imports, please ignore the publication date shown in our webstore; it's the Canadian one.

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](#) (Amazon \$24.95) is a funny and suspense-filled thriller that takes down the wellness industry. Lifelong New Yorker Ronnie Khan 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 Sedona, Arizona. 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 for her life.

Aster, Alex. [Lightlark](#) (Amulet \$19.99). Each edition is signed by author and #BookTok phenomenon Alex Aster and includes a limited edition print featuring a quote from the book and the image of the alternate book jacket.

Every 100 years, the island of Lightlark appears to host the Centennial, a deadly game that only the rulers of six realms are invited to play. The invitation is a summons—a call to embrace victory and ruin, baubles and blood. The Centennial offers the six rulers one final chance to break the curses that have plagued their realms for centuries. Each ruler has something to hide. Each realm's curse is uniquely wicked. To destroy the curses, one ruler must die. Isla Crown is the young ruler of Wildling—a realm of temptresses cursed to kill anyone they fall in love with. They are feared and despised, and are counting on Isla to end their suffering by succeeding at the Centennial. To survive, Isla must lie, cheat, and betray...even as love complicates everything. Recommended to fans of Marie Lu, Marissa Meyer, and Leigh Bardugo.

✦ Bowen, Rhys. [Where the Sky Begins](#) (Lake Union \$24.95). London, 1940. Bombs fall and Josie Banks' world crumbles around her. Her overbearing husband, Stan, is unreachable, called to service. Her home, a ruin of rubble and ash. Josie's beloved tearoom boss has been killed, and Josie herself is injured, with nothing left and nowhere to go. Evacuated to the English countryside, Josie ends up at the estate of the aristocratic Miss Harcourt, a reluctant host to the survivors of the Blitz. Awed

as she is by the magnificent landscape, Josie sees opportunity. Josie convinces Miss Harcourt to let her open a humble tea shop, seeing it as a chance for everyone to begin again. When Josie meets Mike Johnson, a handsome Canadian pilot stationed at a neighboring bomber base, a growing intimacy develops. Then Stan returns from the war. Now a threat looms larger than anyone imagined. And a dangerous secret is about to upend Josie's life again.

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.

✦ Cleaves, 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.

Coulter, Catherine. [Reckoning](#) (Harper \$28.99). When she was twelve years old, Kirra Mandarian's parents were murdered and she barely escaped with her life. Fourteen years later Kirra is a commonwealth attorney back home in Porte Franklin, Virginia, and her goal is to find out who killed her parents and why. She assumes the identity of E.N.—Eliot Ness—and gathers proof to bring down the man she believes was behind her parents' deaths. She quickly realizes she needs Dillon Savich's help. Savich brings in Special Agent Griffin Hammersmith to work with Lieutenant Jeter Thorpe, the young detective who'd saved Kirra years before. Emma Hunt, a piano prodigy and the granddaughter of powerful crime boss Mason Lord, was only six years old when she was abducted. Then, she was saved by her adoptive father, San Francisco federal judge Ramsey Hunt. Now a 12-year-old with a black belt in Tae Kwon Do, she narrowly saves herself from a would-be kidnapper at Davies Hall in San Francisco. Worried for her safety, Emma's entire family joins her for her next performance, at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. Sherlock and officers from METRO are assigned to protect her, but things don't turn out as planned.... Savich and Sherlock act to save two women with traumatic pasts from much worse.... This, too, is a real kick-ass thriller, like the Sandra Brown, and a rocket read for the end of summer and upcoming Labor Day Weekend.

Dugoni, Robert. [What She Found](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$15.95). Seattle Detective Tracy Crosswhite has agreed to look into the disappearance of investigative reporter Lisa Childress. Solving the cold case is an obsession for Lisa's daughter, Anita. So is clearing the name of her father, a prime suspect who became a pariah. After twenty-five years, all Anita wants is the truth—no matter where it leads. For Tracy, that means reopening the potentially explosive investigations Lisa was following on the dark night she vanished: an exposé of likely mayoral graft; the shocking rumors of a reserved city councilman's criminal sex life; a drug task force scandal compromising the Seattle PD; and an elusive serial killer who disappeared just as mysteriously as Lisa. As all the pieces come together, it becomes clear that Tracy is in the midst of a cluster f***

✦ 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). “Get ready for the next wave of Indigenous thrillers! *Shutter* is a soulful and mesmerizing exploration of the paranormal, set against the backdrop of New Mexico and the Navajo Nation. Written in tough, edgy prose, this book grabs you by the shoulders and refuses to let you leave. Ramona Emerson is a welcome new voice in Native literature.”—David Heska Wanbli Weiden, author of [Winter Counts](#), a 2020 First Mystery Pick, who cohosts Rebecca with me on August 8. With *Dark Winds* by the Hillermans on AMC TV now, this is brilliantly timed. Tony's [The Blessing Way](#) introduced us to Navajo ghosts. Rebecca goes a step further in this debut, our **August First Mystery Book of the Month**.

LJ agrees: “The debut novel by New Mexico-based Diné filmmaker Emerson is an atmospheric, haunting thriller that spans genres and introduces a fascinating character. Rita Todacheene was raised by her grandmother in the Navajo Nation in the American Southwest, but she's since left the reservation and become a forensic photographer for the Albuquerque police. Rita is known for her skills as a photographer (she captures details in her shots that no one else can) but she also has a secret gift: Rita has been able to see ghosts since birth. This supernatural ability aids her forensic photography, as the ghosts of crime victims point her toward clues that investigators have overlooked, but it also wreaks havoc in her personal life. Then, on the scene of a suspected suicide, the victim's angry ghost tells Rita she's been murdered and demands revenge, which soon puts Rita's life in danger from a vicious cartel. Emerson's novel jumps between the present and moments in Rita's childhood and early adulthood, setting a menacing undertone that weaves through the pages. The arid New Mexico landscape and Emerson's stark prose add layers of bone-chilling believability to the story. Fans of thrillers with supernatural elements will enjoy this great first novel.”

✦ 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.”

She also adds, “I loved [The Maid](#) by Nita Prose, I've been recommending that to everyone. [Run Time](#) by Catherine Ryan Howard is a great book that is also out in August.” See below.

Freeman, Brian. [The Bourne Sacrifice](#) (Putnam \$28). I'm a big fan of Freeman's propulsive writing and think he's just the guy to continue the Robert Ludlum series. Here, in his third, Jason Bourne is on the trail of Vladimir Putin's favorite assassin, the man known as Lennon. Besides wanting to take down the killer for his many assassinations, Bourne wants to question him because he has the keys to Bourne's forgotten past. Bourne finally corners Lennon in a cabin in Iceland, but he escapes a fiery death when his assistant, codenamed Yoko, arrives in a helicopter and whisks him away. Meanwhile, Bourne's old girlfriend, journalist Abbey Laurent, who hasn't seen him in two years, is looking into the death of a mysterious German woman in Washington, D.C. Bourne's hunt and Abbey's investigation lead them toward each other—and to the Pyramid, a secret organization that will stop at nothing to achieve its nefarious goals. Never mind the familiar plot. Exciting action scenes, the untangling of the Pyramid mystery, Bourne's fighting skills, and the enduring conundrum of his lost past keep the pages turning.

✎ 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.

✎ 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.

Howard, Catherine Ryan. [Run Time](#) (Blackstone \$25.99). We've enjoyed zooming with Irish author Howard, whose recent [56 Days](#) was a *New York Times* and *Washington Post* Best Thriller. She earns a coveted Starred Review for this gem:

“After a breakdown on a movie set, Irish actor Adele Rafferty, the narrator of this superior thriller, moved to L.A., where she's been reduced to reception desk duty at a motel and auditioning for commercials. Then she gets a call out of the blue inviting her to star in the psychological horror picture *Final Draft* being made in West Cork. The caller states that filming was to start the very next day, but the lead actress has just quit. Delighted that news of her breakdown hadn't reached the filmmakers, Rafferty accepts and flies to Ireland overnight. An encouraging text from her former agent leaves Adele comfortable that *Final Draft* is legit. But when she arrives in the isolated location for the shoot, she gets an anonymous message warning her that things aren't safe for her. That ominous communication presages some creepy doings on the set that place her sanity and life at risk. Howard makes her lead's experiences feel fresh and immediate as she breathes new life into tired horror tropes. Riley Sager fans will be riveted.” I expect to be too when I read this prior to our zoom on August 16.

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, Tex. Mario agrees to help Brian rob a Mexican cartel, a job that will yield them \$200,000 each. The pair rendezvous with Juanca, who takes

them to Mexico through a secret tunnel after a horrifying pit stop for a gruesomely obtained safety talisman. The stakes rise as supernatural beings threaten Mario and shake his confidence. Meanwhile, Juanca convinces Mario that Brian means to kill him for his share. Bizarre happenings increase as the two men prepare for a showdown with members of the cartel. Iglesias effectively portrays Mario's fragile mental state and builds a subtle but complex mythology out of chilling details. Iglesias doesn't shy away from violence. I like the passages of untranslated Spanish (*Melisa y yo morimos en vida.*).

✦ 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.

Krueger, William Kent. [Fox Creek](#) (Atria \$28). The ancient Ojibwe healer Henry Meloux has had a vision of his death. As he 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 hunters 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 guides this stranger and his great niece, Cork O'Connor's wife, to safety deep into the Boundary Waters, his home for more than a century. On the last journey he may ever take into this beloved land, Meloux must do his best to outwit the deadly mercenaries who follow. 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. Signed here the day before publication day so you ask request a personalization and/or date.

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. For a longer review of this new thriller by the Swedish author see Some New Hardcover for August below.

Lin, Ed. [Death Doesn't Forget](#) (Soho \$27.95). What could be timelier than a new amateur sleuth mystery set in Taiwan? It's the 4th from Lin in an excellent and atmospheric series featuring Taipei food stall operator Jing-nan. Siu-lien, the mother of Jing-nan's girlfriend, buys some cigarettes for her boyfriend, Boxer, and the receipt's number is drawn in the latest government lottery, winning her 200,000 New Taiwan dollars. (To track taxable income, every receipt in Taiwan is automatically entered in this lottery, incentivizing consumers to request one.) Boxer and Siu-lien agree to split the money evenly, but after he cashes in the receipt, he reneges on their agreement. Jing-nan, who has become a celebrity thanks to his previous misadventures, agrees to try to recoup Siu-lien's share, but he gets only a small portion of it from Boxer. Soon afterward, Boxer is bludgeoned to death, and the police focus on Jing-nan, the last person known to have seen him alive, and with a motive, as the killer. Lin ups the ante on his lead with a second murder, and once again he brings to life the sights and smells of the night market where Jing-nan works. [Order the whole series](#) now to get a feel for a country that may be facing radical change.

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.

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.

Pobi, Robert. [Do No Harm](#) (St Martins \$27.99 UNSIGNED). Not every great read has to be autographed. Pobi lives in Canada and so, curse it, we can't get his fabulous thrillers signed even though they are real staff favorites here. Karen in particular raves, also me. His lead Lucas Page is one of the most vivid recent creations. Pobi says, “He's an astrophysicist. He's got a brain that's just on a level that very few people are at. What made him different is

that he's viewing the entire world through data and numbers, so much so that he blinds himself, sometimes, leaving out the things that are right in front of him, because he's too busy looking at the data." He's the father of 5 adopted kids, and an ex-FBI agent following a severe wound, but his expertise at pattern recognition brings the agency to his door. Except here.

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

Pryor, Mark. [Die Around Sundown](#) (St Martins \$27.99). English journalist-turned-Texas prosecutor Pryor moves us into World War II Paris, where Detective Henri Lefort has just a few days to solve the murder of a German major at the Louvre Museum. Pryor, author of the marvelous Hugo Marston mysteries mostly set in Paris, has many fans at The Pen.

Summer 1940: In German-occupied Paris, Inspector Henri Lefort has been given just five days to solve the murder of a German major that took place in the Louvre Museum. Blocked from the crime scene but given a list of suspects, Henri encounters a group of artists, including Pablo Picasso, who know more than they're willing to share. With the clock ticking, Henri must uncover a web of lies while overcoming impossible odds to save his own life and prove his loyalty to his country. Will he rise to the task or become another tragic story of a tragic time. Lefort is more Sam Spade than Armand Gamache, and his wisecracking jaundice eye makes this historical mystery a fun read. Of course, touring through Paris with Lefort satisfies the armchair traveler in us. Cara Black fans will love this.

Pulley, Natasha. [The Half Life of Valery K](#) (Bloomsbury UK \$55). It seems to me that anyone reading this elegantly written yet horrendously limned depiction of life in a Russian prison camp transformed into something potentially worse for nuclear specialist Valery Kolkhanov would do anything to avoid it. Once again recent news adds relevance to a story written before basketball great Greiner was arrested and sentenced. However this exceptional novel opens in 1963 in Siberia where Valery K has mastered doing whatever it takes to survive. And in taking pleasure in the smallest things in order to stay sane. He is surprised one day when his former university mentor steps in and sweeps him from the frozen camp to a mysterious unnamed city. It houses a set of nuclear reactors, and surrounding it is a forest so damaged it looks like the trees have rusted from within. In *City 40*, Valery regains dignity, he is Dr. Kolkhanov once more, and he's expected to serve out his prison term studying the effect of radiation on local animals. But as Valery begins his work, he is struck by the questions his research raises. Why is there so much radiation in this area? What, exactly, is being hidden from the thousands who live in the town? And if he keeps looking for answers, will he live to serve out his sentence? Based on real events in a surreal Soviet city, Pulley's story highlights the

inhumanity of pure scientific research along with that of man to man. And in the surprise ending, one question remains: what happened to the octopus? The Unsigned US edition: [The Half Life of Valery K](#) (Bloomsbury US \$27).

Quinn, Spencer. [Bark to the Future](#) (Forge \$26.99). Bernie Little, owner of the Little Detective Agency, and his canine partner and the series' narrator, Chet, are driving home to the Valley (somewhere in the American west but really an imagined Scottsdale) when Bernie stops the car to slip a few dollars to a homeless man standing by a freeway exit ramp. Bernie is shocked to realize that the man is Rocket Saluka, who played on Bernie's high school baseball team. Bernie takes Rocket to a burger place, where Rocket shows Bernie a switchblade, his "most valuable possession." Afterward, Bernie drops off Rocket at the exit ramp. When Bernie later hears Rocket has gone missing, Bernie traces his presence to a homeless encampment, where Chet digs up the knife in the man's tent. With this as their only clue to his whereabouts, the duo set out on a trail that leads them back to Bernie and Rocket's alma mater and into a web of crimes that culminates in murder. This entry offers a tidy mystery, a good dollop of action, and a rumination on life after high school—who could ask for more? Chet, with his innate doggie wisdom, is sure to inspire loyal fans and seduce new readers. But we here at The Pen, an inspiration for the books' locale, need no seducing to one or our most popular series. You can order [all the Chet and Bernies](#)... enjoy.

Raybourn, Deanna. [Killers of a Certain Age](#) (Berkley \$27). Think *The Unexpected Mrs. Pollifax*, but four women, and deadlier.... "Edgar finalist Raybourn makes a dazzling excursion out of the Victorian era [and the Veronica Speedwell series] with this uproarious contemporary thriller. Billie, Mary Alice, Natalie, and Helen have been a cozy quartet of 'avenging goddesses' for more than 40 years, one of the 'most elite assassin squads on earth,' recruited in late 1978 by an 'extra governmental' organization called the Museum. Soon after they're forced to go on an all-expenses-paid retirement cruise in the Caribbean, they discover they've apparently been targeted for death by the Museum board. They immediately go into investigative overdrive, relying on their expert training and experiences to uncover the means and motives behind their potential demise. Flashbacks to several of their high-profile cases, including a Zanzibar hit on an aging baroness that comes back to haunt Billie, keep the reader guessing. Colorful regional details and vividly portrayed secondary characters flesh out this rollicking tale. Fans of Helen Tursten and Richard Osman will relish watching these badass women in their 60s swing into action. Raybourn has outdone herself."—*PW* Starred Review

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." See the Unsigned US edition to order below in Some Hardcover covers for August.

Slaughter, Karin. [Girl Forgotten](#) (Harper \$28.99). **Signed here on publication day August 23 with a special extra 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.

Walker, Martin. [To Kill a Troubadour](#) (Knopf \$27). **We are sad that Walker is not able to join us from France as planned for this book, but he has sent us 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 card included in each of our copies.**

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.

Winstead, Ashley. [The Last Housewife](#) (Sourcebooks \$27.99). I think Winstead's Dark Academic thriller [In My Dreams I Hold a Knife](#) (\$6.99) is a dazzler. She doesn't shy from dark matter. Now here "is a story that needs to be told—about misogyny, sexual violence, and human trafficking, and how innocent trust can lead to abusive seduction. Shay Deroy leads a life of ease as a posh housewife in a Texas suburb. But her comfortable existence is jolted when she listens to a true-crime podcast hosted by her childhood friend Jamie. He's investigating the death of Laurel, one of Shay's college roommates, and Shay must help him. The

police declare it a suicide, but Jamie and Shay have doubts. Laurel's death is eerily similar to the hanging suicide of their other roommate, Clem, during senior year. Jamie doesn't know about the friends' dark history with the father of their fourth roommate, Rachel. He'd lured them with attention and adoration, and soon they blindly obeyed. Shay and Jamie follow Laurel's trail into the dark world of sex clubs and abusive manipulation as Shay struggles against being brainwashed into submission again. This explosive cautionary tale of a 'podcast meets sex cult meets murder' will captivate fans of twisted psychological suspense."—*LJ Starred Review*

CLASSICS

✦ Carr, John Dickson. [Till Death Do Us Part](#) (Poisoned Pen/British Library Crime Classics \$14.99). John Dickson Carr (1906-1977), author of [The Corpse in the Waxworks](#) (\$14.99, reissued in 2021) and many other books and stories, was considered by the *New York Times* to be "a master of the locked-door mystery." His 1944 whodunit, *Till Death Do Us Part*, is a doozy of an impossible mystery, and it is beautifully written, ingeniously plotted and compelling. Best of all, it doesn't cheat with the clues, which are all laid out in plain sight. But few readers will be able to put these puzzle pieces together before Carr's master detective, Dr. Gideon Fell, gathers everyone around to reveal all. After an introduction by CWA Diamond Dagger Award-winning author Martin Edwards, the story begins at an outdoor fair where local celebrity and playwright Dick Markham and his new fiancée, Lesley Grant, visit a fortune-teller. Lesley has a very agitating solo session and leaves in a panic. Before the fortune-teller—who is really Sir Harvey Gilman, "one of the greatest living authorities on crime"—can reveal anything to Dick, Lesley shoots Dick in the shoulder. Gilman summons Dick to his home and tells him that his fiancée is actually a murderer who killed two husbands and a boyfriend. But she evaded conviction by somehow convincing the men to inject themselves with poison while inside locked rooms. The following morning, Gilman is found dead in a locked and sealed room, a hypodermic syringe lying near him. This brings amateur sleuth Dr. Fell to town. This skillfully plotted, thoroughly enchanting, crackerjack entertainment will have mystery fans rejoicing that the British Library/Poisoned Pen Press has reissued a neglected treasure.

I add that there is much confusion today between the locked-room or impossible crime mystery where the whole point is the HOW of it, and the isolated setting story as written by DuMaurier or Christie. Alice Feeney's [Daisy Darker](#), our September British Crime Book of the Month which she signs here on August 30, is an interesting combination of both genres. Some of you will love it and some feel cheated, but it's a daring construction.

Van Dine, S.S. [The Benson Murder Case](#) (American Mystery Classics \$15.95). "As both the first chapter and the introduction by Ragnar Jónasson make clear, Philo Vance is a languid Oxford-educated dilettante with an interest in art, philosophy, and contempt. So it's only natural that Manhattan District Attorney John F.-X. Markham would indulge his friend's desire to traipse along to the apartment of financial broker and man about town Alvin H. Benson, who's been shot through the head as he sat reading in an easy chair (no rationale is given for the DA's own need to be on the scene). Vance, accompanied by Van Dine, his legal adviser, agent, and virtually mute amanuensis, solves the

crime, as it turns out, within five minutes. Instead of enlightening Markham or the Homicide Bureau's Sgt. Ernest Heath, though, he stands idly by for nearly a week, bestirring himself only to scoff at Markham's investigation...."—*Kirkus Reviews*. There is also a hardcover edition: [The Benson Murder Case](#) (\$25.95)

This is a reissue of the first Philo Vance investigation from 1926 when it became a bestseller and engendered 11 more. IMHO they are very dated—I like *The Scarab Murder Case* the best of the Vances; the solution depends in part on Vance's extensive knowledge of Egyptian history and customs, which enable him to sort through suggestions of godly vengeance and reveal the misdirections perpetrated by the real murderer, no surprise given that Vance is the pen name of American art critic Willard Huntington Wright.—but they are part of the history of American crime fiction.

SOME HARDCOVERS FOR AUGUST

More coming soon when I have had a chance to read the 100 or so ARCs on my August shelf....

If you are missing travel, join Leila Slimani, winner of France's Goncourt Prize, as she advocates you [Read Your Way Through Paris](#). It contains a list of recommended titles, not all of which may be in print.

✦ Cannon, Joanna. [A Tidy Ending](#) (Scribner \$27). I absolutely loved, and admired the originality of, British author Cannon's [The Trouble with Goats and Sheep](#) (\$16)—if you missed it, waste no time ordering a copy. Now her new book, our **British Crime Book of the Month for August**, is earning new raves like this one: A tidy ending is elusive in this book of the same name, the third novel from Joanna Cannon. It thrums with uneasiness as an unreliable narrator relates her version of the serial murders of four women in her Scottish town. As in her previous novels, Cannon brings intrigue to the ordinary citizens of quiet villages. *A Tidy Ending* opens with a "Now" chapter in which Linda, age 43, refers to being in an apparent place of confinement where it feels "everyone has been sealed into some kind of vacuum and lost to the world forever." Such periodic "Now" chapters are rife with foreshadowing, as is Linda's unconventional behavior. Of her indifferent husband, Terry, she wonders "what my life would have been like if he wasn't in it." Dark references to a childhood tragedy in Wales that sent her to resettle in Scotland grow increasingly detailed, suggesting a link to Linda's reaction to the murders. With no friends besides Terry and her hypercritical mother, Linda develops a fascination with glossy catalogs, fantasizes a new self-image and nurtures an unlikely friendship with an intriguing couple. She touts her germophobic obsession with "hoovering" and sanitizing, and is soon cleaning the couple's apartment, an arrangement that feels sinister but delights Linda. Cannon, a psychiatrist, draws a character with fascinating contradictions: naïve but clever, awkward yet wily, aloof yet observant. "Everything you do and say and think is tied and knotted forever to something that went before," Linda cryptically notes. Readers will agree with her observation that summarizes this gripping novel: "You never see it coming."

Ford, Jamie. [The Many Daughters of Afong Moy](#) (Atria \$28). Ford has made a departure from his more traditional storytelling into the dizzying world of magical realism. There are two major elements to this novel: the Moy family and epigenetics, a field that examines the inheritance of stress trauma along with

ancestral or genetic memories passed down through families without affecting DNA structure. This vast, multi-generational tale centers on the titular character, Afong Moy, who was the first Chinese woman to set her tiny bound feet down on the docks in Baltimore in 1834. Better known by her stage name, “The Chinese Lady,” little is known about the real Afong Moy who quickly became a stage sensation in the U.S. and England before she stopped performing and vanished from written history around 1850. Here, Ford has vividly imagined her biography and created, for his fully fictional characters, a sweeping matrilineal line of descent through daughters, all only children, in an epic saga that spans over 250 years.

Goldin, Megan. [Stay Awake](#) (St Martins \$27.99). Liv Reese wakes up in a cab with no memory of the night before. Reese comes in the early morning heading for Brooklyn, but the last thing she remembers is being at her Manhattan day job. There are strange messages scribbled on her skin—one says ‘Don’t Sleep! I Forget Everything When I fall asleep’—and when she buzzes her apartment, her roommate is gone, and strangers answer the door. When Reese gets a call from a stranger asking where she’s put the knife, she panics, worrying that news reports about a murderer who wrote ‘Wake Up!’ in blood could be linked to what happened to her.

Jayatissa, Amanda. [You’re Invited](#) (Berkley \$27). This is an interesting time to converse, as we will on August 11, with an author living in Sri Lanka. The contrast between the trials besetting the island and the peaceful beauty of its landscapes as viewed in the wonderful TV show *The Good Karma Hospital*, strikes me. Jayatissa made an impressive debut in [My Sweet Girl](#) (\$17) and follows it up with a new psychological thriller getting raves. One of them reads: “In addition to offering unapologetically strong, vividly imperfect female characters, the novel offers commentary on social privilege in Sri Lanka and on the gaudy, illusion-filled world of social media influencers... *Crazy Rich Asians* meets *Gone Girl* with a mostly all-female cast.” —*Kirkus*

When a Sri Lankan woman now living in LA learns that her former best friend is marrying her ex-boyfriend, she will do anything to stop the wedding. Amaya Bloom exercises complete control over her life while also looking to number symbolism to guide most of her actions and decisions. When she learns, via Instagram, that her former best friend, Kaavindi Fonseka, a glamorous influencer who runs a successful charity, is engaged to marry Amaya’s ex-boyfriend Matthew Spencer, and when an invitation to the wedding arrives, this could be Amaya’s chance to bury the hatchet—literally. For Amaya will fly back to Sri Lanka to attend the days of wedding festivities with a Plan A, Plan B, and Plan C in hand, determined not to let Kaavi and Spencer tie the knot. The novel actually begins on the day of the ceremony, when it seems like Kaavi has been attacked in her hotel room and is now missing....

Lagercrantz, David. [Dark Music](#) (Knopf \$28). 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.

Marra, Anthony. [Mercury Pictures Presents](#) (Random \$28.99). I am not a Marra readers but his newest novel is getting a lot of play. Among the WWII stories a popular subgenre this year is the Hollywood wartime scene and here we enter Movieland after teenager Maria Lagana and her mother enter LA after Italian fascists exile her father. “By 1941, Maria is B-movie producer Artie Feldman’s second-in-command. Artie, a toupee-wearing loudmouth with a heart of gold (he’ll hire any down on their luck European exile), is at war with the censors, his twin brother/business partner, and the bankers with a stake in Mercury Pictures. Marra skillfully switches between small-town Sicily and a still-small Los Angeles where, post–Pearl Harbor, Maria must register as an internal enemy and her Chinese American boyfriend, Eddie, has to flee assailants who are convinced he’s a Japanese spy. The plot is intricate: Artie tries to release a political movie and fend off creditors, Maria and Eddie plot to make a film, a Berlin-born model-builder recreates her city, a Sicilian photographer flees Italy. While Marra’s pleasure in the details and argot of the past occasionally feels like overkill, this tough-minded, funny outing exemplifies what Maria calls the democratic promise of “the miniaturist’s gaze,” in which “all were worthy.”—*PW* displaying some nostalgia for a time when that was true.

Osborne, Lawrence. [On Java Road](#) (Random \$27). An atmospheric thriller set in a Hong Kong convulsed by student protests and China’s heavy-handed response to them circa 2019 is our **August International Crime Book of the Month**. After two decades in Hong Kong, ex-pat English journalist Adrian Gyle is just bumping along, bored and disaffected. Then the streets startle into violence as pro-democracy demonstrations gather strength, and the death of a young protester named Rebecca—the girlfriend of one of Adrian’s oldest buddies—compels him to investigate. The book is like a whodunit turned inside out, with what might usually be background—the precisely and evocatively drawn setting, especially—at center and the plot mostly crowding in around the edges. Hong Kong comes fiercely alive on the page, its fate the potential mystery, and Osborne’s command of complex history, geography, and politics (and poetry) is nuanced and sure-handed. He captures, too, Gyle’s feeling of wistful alienhood, the jadedness that approaches but never quite gets to cynicism. “Shades of Graham Greene and Patricia Highsmith fall across [Osborne’s] colorful pages. Like both, he has a nomadic imagination strongly responsive to the lure of the foreign and enthralled by duplicity, mistrust, and betrayal. Like Greene, he favors down-at-heel figures who have a kind of shabby integrity. Like Highsmith, he is fascinated by glamorously amoral

sociopaths....His most compulsive [novel] yet.”—*Sunday Times* (London)

Reid, Taylor Jenkins. [Carrie Soto is Back](#) (Random \$28). Carrie Soto is the best tennis player in the world, and she knows it. Her father, Javier, is a former tennis champion himself, and he’s dedicated his life to coaching her. By the time she retires in 1989, she holds the record for winning 20 Grand Slam singles titles. But then, in 1994, Nicki Chan comes along. Nicki is on the verge of breaking Carrie’s record, and Carrie decides she can’t let that happen: She’s coming out of retirement, with her father coaching her, to defend her record...and her reputation. Reid writes about the game with suspense, transforming a tennis match into a page-turner even for readers who don’t care about sports. Will Carrie win? And, more importantly, will she finally make time for a life outside of winning? Reid has scored another victory and created another memorable heroine with Carrie Soto, a brash, often unlikable character whose complexity makes her leap off the page. Sports commentators may call her “The Battle Axe” or worse, but readers will root for her both on and off the court in a compulsively readable look at female ambition from the author of *Malibu Rising* and *The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo*.

Rodgers, Mary. [Shy](#) (Farrar Strauss \$30). What could be a book more enticing for a lazy August read than this candid, outspoken, hilarious but shocking memoir of a true Broadway Baby, the daughter of famed composer Richard Rodgers – “composer, womanizer, alcoholic, genius”—and his unlikeable wife Dorothy? Despite what could be parents from hell, Mary admired her father whose music and theatrical prowess created a bond. Herself an enormous success in his world – her *Once Upon a Mattress* launched the career of Carol Burnett—her own life included two marriages and a “trial” marriage to Stephen Sondheim who was gay. The pantheon of showbiz figures Mary sketches is amazingly widespread from Roy Rogers and Dale Evans to Lenny Bernstein, Woody Allen, etc. The [review in the NYTBR](#) is hilarious, admiring, nearly reverential in delighting in Mary’s crackling, satirical, affectionate voice. I have ordered a copy and urge you do too.

✦ Schellman, Katharine. [Death at the Manor](#) (Crooked Lane \$26.99). Schellman’s excellent third Regency mystery featuring widow Lily Adler takes Lily from London to Hampshire for an extended stay with an aunt, Eliza Pierce. Eliza’s village is buzzing about the gray-garbed female ghost said to haunt Belleford, the derelict manor owned by the Wright family. Thomas Wright, a restless bachelor who lives with his sister, Selina, under their widowed mother’s thumb, relishes the attention the veiled specter commands. While Thomas gives Lily a tour of the ghost’s usual haunts, Selina discovers their mother dead in her bedroom. Mrs. Wright’s bruised chest and agonized expression indicate foul play, but her room was locked from the inside with the only existing key. Unlike the Wrights and the villagers, rational Lily doesn’t hold the “gray lady” responsible for the death. Attractive widower Matthew Spencer helps her probe the family and the few servants who haven’t fled Belleford in fear. Schellman ably interweaves appealing developments in Lily’s personal life, a classic locked-room puzzle, and a nuanced look at period society. Regency lovers will be enthralled

Scrivenor, Hayley. [Dirt Creek](#) (Flatiron \$26.99). *PW* stars this Australian debut. We have Signed copies of the UK edition which

is titled [Dirt Town](#) (\$40), as noted in Some Signed Books above where you can read the review. Sulari Gentill is excited to read it and joins me August 8 in talking about the book with Scrivenor.

✦ Walters, Minette. [The Swift and The Harrier](#) (Blackstone \$29.99). Were it not for Walters’ living in Dorset, scene of this splendid fiction opening in 1642, this would be our August Historical Fiction Book of the Month, but I can’t get Signed copies or even bookplates. I am not fond of the period, the English Civil War, but Walters’ characters’ reasoned take on it, one aimed at reconciliation rather than the extremist Puritan approach, gives me a new slant. I completely agree with this Starred *LJ* review and am delighted that Walters found her voice again in writing historical fiction:

“Readers who are initially alarmed at the page count of Walters’ latest historical novel will come to the end and wonder why the story couldn’t have gone on longer. During the English Civil War in 1642, families and friends are divided between the warring Parliamentarians and Royalists. Jayne, daughter of Royalists, was already a respected physician who treated the wealthy and the poor. She chooses neutrality to continue her work, treating persons from both sides. While on her way to help a sick child, Jayne’s chance meeting with Lady Alice Stickland and her mysterious footman, William Harrier, kicks off a series of events that present Jayne with difficult choices she never expected, with joy and sorrow coming in equal measure. Walters’s characters are true to their historical period, yet relatable to a modern audience, and notable historical figures and events are described accurately in detail—informative and full of dramatic tension. An author’s note provides a brief summation of the book’s era, and there are maps for better understanding. Endearing characters spark life into centuries-old which will appeal to fans of Philippa Gregory, Margaret George, and Sharon Kay Penman.” I add that the title refers to the last names of the two major characters. And that we hope to zoom with Gregory in November as she returns to the Royal Courts of *That Boleyn Girl*.

Woods, Stuart. [Black Dog](#) (Putnam \$28). You Woods fans already know that Stuart, a longtime visitor to The Pen up until COVID, died in July. His publisher will be sad, too, as *LJ* reports that Woods sold nearly a million copies across frontlist formats in 2020. In this his 62nd for NY attorney Stone Barrington, Stone is introduced to a glamorous socialite with a staggering inheritance. As it turns out, Stone’s intriguing new companion has some surprisingly familiar ties and other far more sinister ones—including a nefarious enemy who gets too close for comfort. When it becomes clear that this miscreant will stop at nothing to get what he wants, and will endanger all whom Stone holds dear, Stone must swing into action. Woods had a wonderful time writing of Manhattan high and low life as well as forays into England and Europe and gave Stone two of the things he himself loved and owned: a Gulfstream and a nifty boat, plus multiple houses.

We have a number of Signed first prints of Woods’ titles which you can browse and order [HERE](#).

OUR AUGUST LARGE PAPERBACK PICKS

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.

✚ Ashley, Jennifer. [The Secret of Bow Lane](#) (Berkley \$17). This late Victorian era series by Ashley is perfect for fans of *Upstairs/Downstairs* as well and what went on in the *Downton Abbey* kitchens. Twelve years after his reported death in 1870, Katharine Holloway’s husband is still making trouble for her. Not till after the *Devonshire* sank with all hands off the coast of Antigua did Kat realize Joseph Bristow was already been married to another woman when he took Kat to the altar and to bed and left her pregnant. Now Charlotte Bristow, Joe’s actual widow, has come to Mount Street, where Kat works as the Bywater family’s cook, with a bold-faced request: Could Kat join her in looking for a substantial pot of money Joe was reputed to have left behind? Kat, already dedicated to spending every free hour with Grace, the daughter she’s placed with her friend Joanna Millburn so that she can keep the girl’s existence secret from her employers, is far from eager to collaborate. But encouraged by Daniel McAdam, a friend who does dangerous freelance jobs for Scotland Yard, she agrees to make inquiries and soon learns Joe had many more secrets, one of which might make Kat a murder suspect.... John and I recommend you order the whole [Below Stairs Mystery](#) Series.

Benn, James R. [Road of Bones](#) (\$16.95). As the marvelous Benn works his way through WWII via the viewpoint of Captain Billy Boyle, an Army investigator, Billy arrives in Soviet territory in September, 1944, via a terrifying flight. He is there to investigate a double murder case: two intelligence officers, one Soviet, one American, both found dead at Poltava, a Ukrainian air base. The timing is terrible: The US is poised to launch Operation Frantic, a shuttle-bombing mission to be conducted by American aircraft based in Great Britain, southern Italy, and three Soviet airfields in the Ukraine. The Soviets insist Billy be paired with a KGB agent who has his own agendas and things spiral quickly out of control. The best feature of this thriller comes when Billy is aided by the Night Witches, a daring regiment of young Soviet women pilots skilled at flying at night, at very low altitudes, as they bombard German installations. Will Operation Frantic be doomed if Billy and the KGB guy can’t solve the murders?

This [exceptional series](#) should be read all the way through, in case you have missed it. And Benn returns live to The Pen on September 2XXX with a new chapter for Billy in [From the Shadows](#) (Soho \$27.95). So exciting!! Billy joins the French Resistance in southern France to protect a Royal Navy Commander.

Box, CJ. [Shadows Reel](#) (\$17). A day before the three Pickett girls come home for Thanksgiving, Joe is called out for a moose poaching incident that turns out to be something much more sinister: a local fishing guide has been brutally tortured and murdered. Meanwhile, Joe’s wife, the director of the county library, finds a rare Nazi artifact left on the library’s doorstep: a photo album that once belonged to a high-ranking Nazi officer. She learns that during World War II, several Wyoming soldiers were in the group that fought to Hitler’s Eagles Nest retreat in the Alps—and one of them swiped it. Did another take this one and

keep it all these years? When a close neighbor is murdered, Joe and Marybeth face new questions: Who is after the book? And how will they solve its mystery before someone hurts them...or their girls? Meanwhile, Nate Romanowski is on the hunt for the man who stole his falcons and attacked his wife. Using a network of fellow falconers, Nate tracks the man from one city to another, eventually grasping the true threat his quarry poses. Bonus: we get to meet a promising new character, rough-hewn falconer Geronimo Jones, who, CJ promises me, will be back since he comes close to stealing the book.

CJ returns live to The Pen on September 25 with a new thriller in his Montana series with Cassie Dewell: [Treasure State](#) (St Martins \$28.99)

Burke, James Lee. [Another Kind of Eden](#) (\$17). It’s 1962. Aaron Holland Broussard, a drifting aspiring novelist, hops off a boxcar near Denver and finds work on a large farm. After the son of a local tyrannical businessman assaults Aaron and some coworkers, Jo Anne McDuffy, a beautiful art student, warns Aaron not to seek revenge. But as much as Aaron, who begins a relationship with Jo Anne, tries to suppress his violent instincts, trouble won’t let him be, with local goons and law enforcement harassing him. Meanwhile, a nefarious professor circles Jo Anne with dubious intentions. Suffering nonchemical blackouts and warding off memories of his time in the Korean War, Aaron slowly unravels as the majestic beauty of the west turns into a hellscape of murdered women, cults, and mysterious forces that might not be of this world. Sharp prose and distinctive characters help propel Aaron’s journey from earnest farmhand to tormented soul in a world of horrors, that thing that MWA Grand Master and multiple award-winner Burke does so well.

Carter, Mary Dixie. [The Photographer](#) (\$17.99). Delta Dawn, the narrator of our May 2021 First Mystery Book of the Month, is a much-sought-after photographer of children’s fetes among Brooklyn’s artsy set, who has the ability to create picture-perfect moments of connection that never were through the magic of Photoshop and other manipulations. Trouble is, the egocentric young woman approaches life in similarly subjective fashion. Emotionally starved by her own parents, Delta hungers for family—even if it means insinuating herself into someone else’s, like that of her new clients, the Straubs: interior design guru Amelia; Amelia’s scruffily hunky architect hubby, Fritz; and needy 11-year-old birthday girl, Natalie. Using her well-honed manipulative skills, plus a timely offer to babysit, Delta swiftly gains the run of the Straubs’ brownstone, as well as ample opportunity to discover some of their most intimate secrets—which she aims to leverage to her advantage. Delta—arguably the inevitable product of a social media-driven universe where carefully curated images supplant messy reality—becomes increasingly scary as the depth of her obsession with the Straubs becomes apparent. Brace for hold-your-breath suspense from this dazzlingly devious newcomer.

Carson, Scott. [Where They Wait](#) (\$17.99). We are all longtime fans of the talent Michael Koryta who decided to write his books with supernatural elements under the name Scott Carson. His trademark skills are the same sterling set and produce winners for fans of Peter Straub, Richard Chizmar, Joe Hill, or Stephen King. Journalist Nick Bishop has fallen on hard times after being laid off. So, despite experience that includes a stint embedded in Afghanistan, he considers a job that would ordinarily be beneath

him—writing a puff piece for his alma mater’s magazine. A classmate who runs the PR department for Maine’s Hammel College offers Bishop \$5,000 to profile alum Bryce Lermond, who’s developed a new app that’s able to shape dreams. Lured by the payday and a chance to visit his mother, a dementia patient who was once “one of the nation’s preeminent scholars in the field of memory research,” Bishop, who says he never dreams, agrees. Lermond persuades Bishop to beta test the app, Clarity, which plays an ominous song before Bishop loses consciousness. His investigative reporter senses go on even higher alert after Lermond’s No. 2 at his company, an old friend of Bishop’s, warns him never to use Clarity. Superior prose (“The elevator doors sealed across her like gravedigger’s dirt”) enhances a craftily twisted plot, which sticks its landing.

Connolly, John. [The Nameless Ones](#) (\$18.99). Can it really be the 19th for Charlie Parker, the Maine PI whose cases, especially those involving Louis and Angel, cross into the supernatural? Here two Serbian war criminals, brothers Spiridon and Radovan Vuksan, torture and murder De Jaager, a Dutch fixer, and three other members of De Jaager’s Amsterdam household. These killings are the latest bloodshed in a cycle of violence that began years earlier when a relative of De Jaager was killed by Serbian gangster Andrej Buha, a cousin of the Vuksans. De Jaager’s American assassin friend, Louis, a colleague of Parker’s, fatally shot Buha, who committed atrocities during the Balkan wars in the 1990s, on De Jaager’s behalf. Aided by a contact in American intelligence who has his own reasons for wanting the Vuksans taken down, Louis travels to Europe to avenge De Jaager’s murder. PW writes, “Connolly makes all his characters, even the most evil, multifaceted, while keeping his audience on the edge of their seats. Series fans won’t mind that Parker is offstage much of the time and the plot is less dependent on supernatural elements than usual. This is another intelligent and haunting nail-biter.”

Connolly’s next Parker, [The Furies](#) (Hodder \$45), is coming to us Signed from London but we hope that Connolly will be live at The Pen on September 27 to sign the US edition, [The Furies](#) (Atria \$28). This is not yet confirmed so cross your fingers!

Greaney, Mark. [Sierra Six](#) (\$17). Courtland Gentry (aka the Gray Man), brought to life on the screen by Ryan Gosling with sequels to come, gets a remarkable and expertly done double story here in his 11th assignment, one that weaves in his backstory in a gripping way. Greaney smoothly alternates between his first assignment with the “door kickers” of CIA paramilitary team Golf Sierra to interdict a terrorist group intent on detonating dirty radioactive bombs against American forces and his present-day quest for revenge on the planners of that enemy action. In the past, Gentry, though already a whispered figure in the halls at Langley, struggles to integrate his “singleton” lone-wolf strategies (and sometimes naive moral code) with unfamiliar military tactics, but team leader Zack Hightower is impressed with his almost-preternatural killing and tradecraft abilities, and Gentry is deployed with the squad to Pakistan. Twelve years after the devastating end of that mission, Gentry stumbles into his presumed-dead adversary, Murad Khan, on the cusp of staging an even deadlier evolution of his earlier plan. Greaney seamlessly adjusts focus between the timelines, jumping from one exhilarating roller-coaster ride to the other.” This is an

exceptional action thriller and I am happy to say that Greaney reports the 12th for Gentry will come to us in February, 2023.

MacNeal, Susan Elia. [The Hollywood Spy](#) (\$17). It is 1943, and Maggie Hope, an American stationed in England who works for MI5 now, but whom we first met as [Mr. Churchill’s Secretary](#) (\$17), arrives in Hollywood. Gloria Hutton, the fiancée of RAF pilot John Sterling, has been found dead in a hotel swimming pool. The police are quick to label the deceased a “hophead” and rule her death an accident, but Sterling refuses to believe their assessment and asks Maggie to investigate. Maggie’s inquiry, which takes her to film sets, nightclubs, and other Hollywood locales, eventually leads her to a charismatic L.A. cop who heads the local Ku Klux Klan and is plotting to blow up a theater. Maggie’s personal life, on edge since her 9th adventure, takes another turn here in her 10th. MacNeal underlines the deep divisions in our democracy today with a look at its earlier fractures. This reads well as a standalone so no worries if you don’t know the series.

MacNeal weaves in “lavender” marriages, a murder, and treason into the narrative which is also distinguished by her meticulously researched look at a Los Angeles fractured even in wartime by the widespread discrimination casually perpetrated against people of color, Jews, migrants, and LGBTQ communities. MacNeal underlines that in America, the past continues to erupt into the present and is a key to understanding today. She will join us on September 23 live at The Pen to discuss a standalone based in part upon her research here: [Mother, Daughter, Traitor, Spy](#) (Ballantine \$28).

Mo, Johanna. [The Shadow Lily](#) (Penguin \$17). Swedish author Mo’s follow up to 2021’s [The Night Singer](#) (\$17) finds Hanna Duncker still back in her hometown on the small island of Öland, still struggling to come to terms with her deceased father’s conviction for murder and arson and dealing with the shame, and still finding her way in continuing her career as a police detective despite it. Paired with cop Erik Lindgren, Hanna is thrust into a case where a father and his baby son disappear while the wife was away for the weekend. While working it there is a breakthrough into the web of relationships and half-truths that entrapped her father and her family. Can she withstand it?

Neville, Stuart. [The House of Ashes](#) (\$16.95). This gut-wrenching novel of psychological suspense with ghostly undertones from Edgar finalist Neville opens early one morning with social worker Sara Keane scrubbing off the blood stains she often sees on the kitchen floor of the Ashes, the 120-year-old house her father-in-law bought for her and her angry architect husband, Damien, in Belfast, where the couple moved after “things went bad” in England. Damien, who’s not yet up, believes Sara is imagining the blood stains. Then Sara hears someone hammering on the front door. Outside is Mary Jackson, a disheveled old woman, who says the Ashes is her house and rants about missing children. Damien appears, recognizes Mary, and ushers her out of the house to take her back to the “care home.” Sara and Mary later develop a friendship tempered by shared emotional anguish. Alternating story lines show how Sara’s present-day woes intersect with Mary’s traumatic past and shed light on how women called Mummies and men called Daddies mistreated children in the house. This unforgettable tale of servitude and subservience, domestic abuse, and toxic masculinity builds to a resolution offering redemption and heartfelt solace. Neville has outdone himself per Patrick, a major fan.

Sager, Riley. [Survive the Night](#) (\$17). Set in 1991, the Grunge Era, Charlie Jordan blames herself for the death of Maddy, her best friend and roommate at New Jersey's Olyphant University. A day after Charlie let Maddy walk back from a bar to their dorm on her own after an argument, Maddy's corpse was found. She was stabbed multiple times and one of her teeth was removed, the hallmark of a two-time murderer dubbed the Campus Killer. Wracked with guilt and self-loathing, Charlie resolves to leave in the middle of the semester, and finds a ride home to Ohio with Josh Baxter, a janitor employed by Olyphant driving to the state to tend to his ill father. Charlie soon suspects Josh has been lying to her about who he is. Her tendency to create movies in her mind makes her perceptions unreliable, even to herself. Sager excels at playing with reader expectations and in concocting plausible, gut-wrenching twists. Fans of Ira Levin's *A Kiss Before Dying* will be pleased."

Saylor, Steven. [Dominus: A Novel of the Roman Empire](#) (\$18.99). In what Saylor says is his last novel of Ancient Rome, it's A.D. 165: The Empire of Rome has reached its pinnacle. Universal peace—the *Pax Roma*—reigns from Britannia to Egypt, from Gaul to Greece. Marcus Aurelius, as much a philosopher as he is an emperor, oversees a golden age in the city of Rome. The ancient Pinarius family and their workshop of artisans embellish the richest and greatest city on earth with gilded statues and towering marble monuments. Art and reason flourish. But history does not stand still. The years to come bring wars, plagues, fires, and famines. The best emperors in history are succeeded by some of the worst. Barbarians descend in endless waves, eventually appearing before the gates of Rome itself. The military seizes power and sells the throne to the highest bidder. Chaos engulfs the empire. Through it all, the Pinarius family endures, thanks in no small part to the protective powers of the *fascinum*, a talisman older than Rome itself, a mystical heirloom handed down through countless generations. But an even greater upheaval is yet to come. On the fringes of society, troublesome cultists disseminate dangerous and seditious ideas. They insist that everyone in the world should worship only one god, their god. They call themselves Christians.

Schaffhausen, Joanna. [Gone for Good](#) (\$17.99). It's hard for me to resist a Chicago landscape for a book—actually I am surprised there are so few. Luckily Detective Annalisa Vega of the Chicago PD, daughter of a retired cop on the force, the strong, multilayered protagonist of this exceptional series launch, brings us a vivid portrait of the city. She is called to a crime scene at the home of Grace Harper, who has been strangled by an ingenious system of knotted ropes. On Grace's walls are photos of women in similar poses, killed slowly by ropes, all victims of the Lovelorn Killer, who murdered seven women in the late 1990s, then dropped out of sight. His last victim happens to have been Katie, the mother of Annalisa's childhood friend Colin, who became her lover when they reached their teens, and whom she loves still despite his many years' absence. The police soon discover Grace was part of a group of amateur sleuths called the Grave Diggers who attempt to solve cold cases. Had Grace come too close to identifying the serial killer, or was she the victim of a copycat? Interspersed with gripping chapters focused on Annalisa's detective work are extracts from Grace's journal that offer some tantalizing insights into a murderer's mind. Excellent fair-play plotting, genuine surprises, and convincing characters

also make this a surefire winner. See Signed books for a new novel by Schaffhausen.

Whitehead, Colson. [Harlem Shuffle](#) (\$17). Whitehead has a couple of Pulitzers under his belt, along with several other awards celebrating his outstanding novels. *Harlem Shuffle* is a suspenseful crime thriller that's sure to add to the tally — it's a fabulous novel you must read."—*NPR*. *Vox* adds, "A fiendishly clever romp, a heist novel that's also a morality play about respectability politics, a family comedy disguised as a noir... *Harlem Shuffle* reads like a book whose author had enormous fun writing it. The dialogue crackles and sparks; the zippy heist plot twists itself in one showy misdirection after another. Most impressive of all is lovable family-man Ray, whose relentless ambition drives the plot forward while his glib salesman's patter keeps you guessing about his true intentions. This book is a blast that will make you think, and what could be better than that?"

AND THREE MORE...

Cooper, Helen. [The Other Guest](#) (Penguin \$17). Dreaming of Italy this month? Maybe not so wise.... One year ago, Leah's feisty 21-year-old niece, Amy, mysteriously drowned in the beautiful lake near her family-owned resort in Northern Italy. Now, Leah's grief has caught up with her, and she decides to return to Lake Garda for the first time since Amy's death. What she finds upon her arrival shocks her—her sister, brother-in-law, and surviving niece, Olivia, seem to have erased all memories of Amy, and fought to have her death declared an accidental drowning, despite murky circumstances. Leah knows she must look beyond the resort's beautiful façade and uncover what truly happened to Amy, even if her digging places both her family ties and her very life in danger. Meanwhile, in Central England, thirtysomething Joanna is recovering from a surprising break-up when she is swept off her feet by a handsome bartender. But when she learns that he is on the run from something in his past, and that their meeting may not have been a coincidence, Joanna realized that he may just a bit too good to be true. What follows is a propulsive cat-and mouse game set against the Italian lakeside as the two seemingly-unconnected women are caught up in a dangerous conspiracy.

Cooper, Tea. [The Fossil Hunter](#) (Harper Muse, \$17.99). This elegant dual narrative follows a young woman as she pieces together the fate of a 19th-century paleontologist. In 1847 Wollombi, Australia, 12-year-old Mellie Vale is put in the care of Dr. Pearson and his wife, Edna, while Mellie recovers from chicken pox and her father awaits sentencing for his murder conviction. At Edna's behest, Mellie accompanies Edna's two daughters for an extended stay in nearby Bow Wow with Anthea Winstanley, a paleontologist and friend of the Pearsons. Mellie takes to fossil hunting, but becomes spooked by the arrival of a London gentleman with shadowy motives angling to buy Winstanley's land and telling stories about bunyips, the mythical amphibious creatures Mellie believes responsible for her ill-remembered trauma. In 1919 London, P.J. Martindale visits the Natural History Museum and finds a fossil with a connection to her hometown of Wollombi. Eager to outrun her grief over her brothers' deaths in WWI, she returns to Australia and visits the Bow Wow Gorge, where her discovery of human remains leads her to investigate what became of a paleontologist rumored to have disappeared there decades earlier. Cooper's confident prose

and deep empathy for her characters will keep readers hooked as she unspools her intrigue-filled mystery.

Leadbetter, David. [The Vatican Secret](#) (Harper \$16.99). When ex-MI5 operative Joe Mason is sent to Rome to guard an elderly professor and his daughter, he thinks he's in for an easy ride. But on their first day in the Vatican secret archives, a masked assassin gains entry, shoots Joe's client in cold blood and steals an ancient manuscript. Giving chase, Joe can't imagine what could lie within those pages that would make someone willing to kill. The search for answers leads Joe and his comrades in a race against time, across continents and into treacherous mountains. Only they have a hope of rescuing the Vatican Book of Secrets before a centuries-old enemy can succeed in bringing Rome—and the world as we know it—crashing down....

OUR AUGUST SMALL PAPERBACK PICKS

Cosby, S A. [Blacktop Wasteland](#) (\$9.99). Compelled by poverty to agree to a lucrative final heist that will allow him to go straight, a skilled getaway driver finds his efforts complicated by racial dynamics and the ghosts of his past.

Cosimano, Elle. [Finlay Donovan is Killing It](#) (\$9.99). Finlay Donovan #1. When Finlay is overheard discussing the plot of her new suspense novel with her agent over lunch, she's mistaken for a contract killer, and inadvertently accepts an offer to dispose of a problem husband in order to make ends meet.

Cussler, Dirk. [Clive Custer's the Devil's Sea](#) (\$9.99). Dirk Pitt #26. Dirk Pitt discovers a 60-year-old, forgotten plane crash in the Philippe Sea while recovering a failed hypersonic missile from Luzon Strait.

Flynn, Vince. [Enemy at the Gates](#) (\$9.99). Mitch Rapp #20. CIA operative Mitch Rapp accepts a job protecting the world's first trillionaire, but also uses him as bait to catch a traitor with access to government secrets.

Kellerman, Jonathan/Jesse. [The Burning](#) (\$9.99). Clay Edison #4. When deputy coroner Clay Edison discovers a link between the murder he is investigating and his brother, he is forced to reckon with his own suspicions, resentments and loyalties.

Lescroart, John. [The Rule of Law](#) (\$9.99). Dismas Hardy #18. Attorney Dismas Hardy is called to defend the least likely suspect of his career: his longtime, trusted assistant who is suddenly being charged as an accessory to murder.

Taylor, Brad. [End of Days](#) (\$9.99). Pike Logan #16. Two Mossad terrorist hunters visit Pike Logan and Jennifer Cahill to request assistance in tracking down who was behind an attack that killed government officials.

Wingate, Marty. [The Librarian Always Rings Twice](#) (\$8.99). First Edition Library #3. The curator of Lady Georgiana Fowling's collection of Golden Age of Mystery writers' first editions, Hayley Burke must protect her late benefactor's legacy when a strange man arrives, claiming to be her grandson, which leads to murder and scandal.

SMALL PAPERBACKS FOR AUGUST

⌘ Beaton, M C. [Down the Hatch: An Agatha Raisin Mystery](#) (\$8.99). Agatha Raisin #33. Private detective Agatha Raisin investigates when she discovers a distressed elderly couple standing over the body of a local gardener and notoriously heavy drinker.

Flower, Amanda. [Peanut Butter Panic](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Amish Candy Shop #7. When former judge Zaran Beven, who's famous for actively harming the Amish community, attends Harvest, Ohio's first village-wide Thanksgiving celebration with her young boyfriend, chocolatier Baily King, after the boyfriend in a suspicious death-by-peanut allergy, must serve the killer their just desserts.

Gardner, Lisa. [The Next Accident](#) (\$9.99). Reissue FBI Profiler #3. When the daughter of FBI Special Agent Pierce Quincy dies suddenly, everyone from the police to the coroner rules the death an accident, until ex-cop-turned-investigator Rainie Conner uncovers evidence that points to a terrifying plan of murder and to a killer with the ability to unleash his victims' innermost fears.

Granger, Mimi. [Murder of a Mail Order Bride](#) (Berkley \$8.99). Love is Murder #2. When the mail-order bride of Al Little, the owner of the local hardware store, is found drowned in the creek, bookstore owner Lizzie Hale has more suspects than she knows what to do with as she tries to solve this case before someone else winds up dead.

Grisham, John. [The Judge's List](#) (\$9.99). Lacy Stoltz #2. While on the hunt for a serial killer, Lacy Stoltz, an investigator for the Florida Board on Judicial Conduct, discovers that a man hiding behind the black robe may not only taking bribes but may be taking lives.

Kelly, Sofie. [Hooked on a Feline](#) (Berkley \$8.99). Magical Cats #13. It's summer in Mayville Heights, and Kathleen Paulson and her detective boyfriend, Marcus, are eager to attend the closing concert of the local music festival. The concert is a success, but then one of the band members is discovered dead shortly after it. At first it's assumed the death is a robbery gone wrong, but Kathleen suspects foul play.

Lupica, Mike. [Robert B Parker's Stone's Throw](#) (\$9.99). Jesse Stone #20. Investigating the apparent suicide of the town's mayor, Jesse Stone, with tempers running hot in Paradise due to a fight over prime real estate, must discover in whose way the mayor was standing as the body count rises.

Lyons, Jenn. [The House of Always](#) (\$9.99). Chorus of Dragons #4. As the enemies of Kihrin move forward with their plans to free the King of Demons, the Eight Immortals must decide if they can save the world while saving Kihrin, too, or watch him become the very evil they have all been sworn to destroy.

Marsons, Angela. [First Blood](#) (Grand Central \$8.99). Kim Stone #1. When two gruesome murders are linked to a woman's shelter, Detective Kim Stone, no stranger to the care system herself, must bring her rookie squad in line in time to catch the killer before another life is taken.

Meier, Leslie. [Halloween Party Murder](#) (\$8.99). Three novellas from three cozy mystery writers all feature murders that happen at Halloween parties, including a fête in a Victorian home where someone overdoses on tainted drugs and a teenage sleepover where the attendees discover a murdered neighbor

Penney, Elizabeth. [A Treacherous Tale](#) (St Martins \$8.99). Cambridge Bookshop #2. Arriving at author Iona York's cottage to convince her to participate in a reading at her family's bookshop, Molly Kimball is instead confronted by the dead body of one of Iona's acquaintances and must figure out what happened before someone rewrites the ending of a sweet story

Quigley, Mindy. [Six Feet Deep Dish](#) (St Martins \$8.99). Deep Dish #1. When, right before opening her new gourmet deep-dish pizzeria in Geneva Bay, Wisconsin, Delilah O'Leary is dumped by her fiancé and her aunt is accused of murder, she must save her pie-in-the-sky ambitions before they can even get off the ground.

Rovin, Jeff. [Tom Clancy's OpCenter: The Black Order](#): (St Martins \$9.99). Op-Center #20. When the Black Order, a group of military veterans and high-tech specialists, start publicly assassinating politicians and celebrities, Op-Center's Black Wasp are the only ones who can defeat these domestic terrorists.

Wilton, Traci. [Mrs. Morris and the Pot of Gold](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Salem B & B #6. B&B owner Charlene Morris needs the luck of the Irish when she witnesses a murder during a dinner at the Ancient Order of club and, to unmask the killer, decides to investigate this case with the help of the charming Hibernians ghost haunting her B&B.