

BOOKNEWS from

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A SIZZLING SEPTEMBER

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.

*Note: The events marked "Live" offer Signed books
The virtual events do so when noted*

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 1 6:00 PM Book Launch

AG Riddle with Diana Gabaldon

Riddle discusses [Lost in Time](#) (Zeus \$28)

"Amazing! One of the twistiest time-tales I've ever read"—Diana Gabaldon

Our September Notable New Fiction Book of the Month

Signed books available

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 3 2:00 PM Live Book Launch

Laurie R King discusses [Back to the Garden](#) (Bantam \$28)

Great book introducing Inspector Raquel Laing

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 5 4:00 PM Live Book Launch

Craig Johnson discusses [Hell and Back](#) (Viking \$28)

Walt Longmir

TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 6 7:00 PM Live Book Launch

Mike Maden discusses [Clive Cussler's Hellburner](#) (Putnam \$28.99)

The Oregon Files

A great chance to talk about writing in a bestselling author's world

WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 7 5:00 PM

Mike Lupica with Patrick

Lupica discusses [Robert B. Parker's Fallout](#) (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...

Our September Crime Book of the Month

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 11 4:00 PM

Yvonne Navarro and Weston Ochse with Pat King

They discuss [Aliens vs. Predators: Rift War](#) (Titan \$15.95)

SciFi Action adventure

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 12 7:00 PM Live

Kristina McMorris discusses [The Ways We Hide](#) (Sourcebooks \$16.99)

[Hardcover](#) is (\$27.99)

British Intelligence recruits an Illusionist

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 15 7:00 PM Live with Karen

Joel Dicker discusses [The Enigma of Room 622](#) (Harper Via

\$29.99)

A missing room at a posh High Alps hotel/rivalry at a Swiss bank

Our September International Thriller Book of the Month

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 16 7:00 PM

SciFi Friday discusses Leigh Bardugo, [Shadow and Bone](#)

(\$10.99)

Pat suggests watching the NetFlix series too

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 17 10:30 AM

Coffee & Crime discusses Julie McElwain, [A Murder in Time](#)

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 17 4:00 PM

Charlie Lovett discusses [The Enigma Affair](#) (Blackstone \$26.99)

A librarian confronts a Nazi assassin while deciphering a 75-year-old Enigma machine message at Bletchley Park

Signed books available

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 17 6:00 PM Live

Young Adult Fiction with Pat King

Ashley Bustamante, [Vivid](#) (Enclave \$22.99)

The Color Theory Book 1

Sara Ellis, [The Wonderland Trials](#) (Enclave \$22.99)

The Curious Realities Book 1

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 19 5:00 PM Book Launch

Jayne Castle (aka Jayne Ann Krentz) with John Charles

Castle discusses [Sweetwater and the Witch](#) (Berkley \$28)

Signed books available

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 19 7:00 PM Live

Kyle Mills with Don Bentley

Mills discusses [Oath of Loyalty](#) (Atria \$28.99)

Vince Flynn's Mitch Rapp

TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 20 4:00 PM Book Launch

Anne Perry discusses [A Truth to Lie For](#) (Random \$28)
Elena Standish
Signed books available

TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 20 7:00 PM Live Publication Day

Scott Turow discusses [Suspect](#) (Grand Central \$29)
Introducing reckless private investigator Clarice "Pinky" Granum

WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 21 4:00 PM

A Cozy Quartet with John Charles

Jennifer Ashley discusses [The Secret of Bow Lane](#) (Berkley \$17)
Amanda Flower discusses [Because I Could Not Stop for Death](#)
(Kensington \$17)
Anna Lee Huber discusses [A Certain Darkness](#) (Kensington \$15.95)
Andrea Penrose discusses [Murder at the Serpentine Bridge](#)
(Kensington \$26)

WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 21 7:00 PM Live

Kevin Hearne and Irish Wolfhounds

Hearne discusses the new reissues of his [Iron Druid Chronicles](#)

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 22 4:00 PM

Patrick hosts a discussion of [South Central Noir](#) (Akashic \$16.95)
Featuring brand-new stories by: Steph Cha, Nikolas Charles, Tananarive Due, Larry Fondation, Gar Anthony Haywood, Naomi Hirahara, Emory Holmes II, Roberto Lovato, Penny Mickelbury, Gary Phillips, Eric Stone, Jervey Tervalon, Jeri Westerson, and Désirée Zamorano

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 22 7:00 PM Live

James R. Benn discusses [From the Shadows](#) (Soho \$27.95)
Billy Boyle with 1944 French Resistance

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 23 7:00 PM Live

Susan Elia MacNeal discusses [Mother Daughter Traitor Spy](#) (Bantam \$28)
Uncovering a WWII Nazi cell in Los Angeles

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 26 5:00 PM

Ryan Steck discusses his debut [Fields of Fire](#) (Tyndale House \$25.99)
Debut introducing Marine Raider Matthew Redd
Signed books available

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 26 7:00 PM Live Book Launch

CJ Box discusses [Treasure State](#) (St Martins \$28.99)
Montana PI Cassie Dewell chases a con man
Offsite location, plenty of parking, free to attend
Veritas Prep Academy Theater, 3102 N. 56th St Phoenix AZ 85018

TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 27 2:00 PM

Jeffery Archer discusses [Next in Line](#) (Harper \$28.99)
London policeman William Warwick protects Princess Diana
Signed books available

TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 27 6:00 PM

Marcia Clark discusses [The Fall Girl](#) (Rare Bird \$27)
Signed books available

WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 28 7:00 PM

Hardboiled Crime discusses SA Cosby, [Razorblade Tears](#) (\$17.99)

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 29 5:00 PM

Adam Hamdy with Penn Shepherd
UK's Hamdy discusses [The Other Side of Night](#) (Atria \$27)
[Signed UK edition](#) (\$55) Ordered Upon Request

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 29 6:30 PM

Archer Mayor discusses [Fall Guy](#) (St Martins \$28.99)
Vermont's Joe Gunther
Signed books available

MONDAY OCTOBER 3 7:00 PM Live Book Launch

The Pen celebrates its 33rd birthday with **John Sandford**
Sandford discusses [Righteous Prey](#) (Putnam \$29.95)
Lucas Davenport and Virgil Flowers

TUESDAY OCTOBER 4 1:00 PM

Ian Rankin previews [A Heart Full of Headstones](#) (Little Brown \$28)
John Rebus
Signed UK edition [A Heart Full of Headstones](#) (Orion \$46)

OUR SEPTEMBER BOOKS OF THE MONTH

British Crime Club One unsigned hardcover or paperback per month

Feeney, Alice. [Daisy Darker](#)

Cozy Crimes Club One unsigned hardcover or paperback per month

Rue, Gretchen. [Steeped to Death](#)

First Mystery Club One Signed First Printing per month

Flowers, Ashley. [All Good People Here](#)

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

Raybourn, Deanna. [Killers of a Certain Age](#)

History/Mystery Club One Signed First Printing per month
King, Laurie R. [Back to the Garden](#)

Notable New Fiction One Signed First Printing per month
Riddle, AG. [Lost in Time](#)

International Crime One Unsigned Hardcover or paperback per month

Dicker, Joel. [The Enigma of Room 622](#)

Romance & Relationships One Unsigned Hardcover or 2 paperbacks per month

Alexander, Poppy. [The Littlest Library](#) and Lim, Roselle. [Sophie Go's Lonely Hearts Club](#)

SOME SIGNED BOOKS FOR SEPTEMBER

✚Archer, Jeffrey. [Next in Line](#) (Harper \$28.99). This is tremendous fun but also opens a window or two. One is into the work of a special policing team, that of the Royal Protection Command, trained to protect the Royal Family. The other is into Archer's personal take on Princess Diana whose death took place 25 years ago. Archer writes, "During my days as a Parliamentarian I was lucky enough to work with Princess Diana on occasions as an auctioneer. I hope in *Next in Line* you'll feel her warmth, her mischievous sense of humor, and the sheer humanity that made her so likeable."

It's London, 1988. Royal fever sweeps the nation as Britain falls in love with the "people's princess." Which means for Scotland Yard, the focus is on the elite Royalty Protection Command, and its commanding officer. Members of the RPC have to be the best—a weak link could spell disaster. And yet there is unease about the RPC. Detective Chief Inspector William Warwick and his Scotland Yard squad are sent in to investigate the team. Maverick ex-undercover operative Ross Hogan is charged with a very sensitive—and unique—responsibility. But it soon becomes clear the problems in Royalty Protection are just the beginning. A renegade organization has the security of the country—and the Crown—in its sights. And thus an exciting terrorist plot involving Libya and targeting Princess Di unfolds alongside another story personal to Warwick and his QC father, that of a fabulously wealthy criminal serving time, his art collection, his equally criminal divorced wife, and a crooked barrister with a nifty scheme. This is all good fun and smoothly written. I read it in one satisfying gulp.

Backman, Fredrik. [The Winners](#) (Atria \$28.99) is the long-awaited conclusion to the Beartown series—which inspired an HBO series of the same name. As in the two earlier books in this series, things are never settled between these two hockey-obsessed towns in the forests of Sweden. Only one can seemingly do well at a time—resourcewise or hockeywise; the two are interchangeable—and their residents share a mutual, pathological hatred. Beloved characters return, new ones are introduced, tragedy is promised—in 700 pages.

Benn, James R. [From the Shadows](#) (Soho \$27.95). It's now October of 1944 and Billy Boyle is rousted from R&R in Cairo into a supremely scary voyage to Crete. His mission: to locate Captain Richard "Dickie" Thorne, who's been helping the Greek partisans there but has been out of radio contact. The head of a Special Operations Executive team in Algiers wants Dickie to serve as his security officer as a team heads to the Vosges in southern France to meet Resistance groups, collect information on turncoats who betrayed their comrades to the enemy during a horrific late summer battle, and assist the French government in identifying those who then escaped with retreating Germans. So Billy, Kaz, and in time Big Mike, go to the Vosges too. In time, and in another SNAFU, the soldiers of the all-Nisei 100th/442nd Regimental Combat Team, seeking to save the Lost Battalion trapped in the Vosges Mountains in France, are included in Benn's spotlight.

"Benn has made superb use of little-known episodes of military history. This time he ups the ante, combining several of those episodes—and a host of real-life characters—into a story that displays both the bureaucratic bungling of the Allied armies and the astounding heroism of individual soldiers and resistance

fighters . . . a shocking tale of wartime perfidy." —*Booklist* Starred Review

Box, CJ. [Treasure State](#) (St Martins \$28.99). The Treasure State—Montana, new home to PI Cassie Dewell—and a treasure hunt! I think Box took inspiration for part of this exciting thriller from the real life Forrest Fenn (look it up). And he does a deep dive into the history of Anaconda and Butte as well as Montana's historic role in the copper mining industry and US labor organizing. I ripped right through this and you will too. Here's a Starred Review:

"Edgar winner Box... sets the former police officer Cassie, now a PI in Bozeman, on the trail of a con man who bilked wealthy Boca Grande, Florida, widow Candyce Fly out of millions and vanished. Fly earlier employed another PI—the marvelously noxious J.D. Spengler—to track the man down, but both Spengler and his quarry disappeared into the old mining town of Anaconda. Cassie travels there to investigate, and soon realizes that she has stumbled on a lethal conspiracy that goes far beyond the victimization of her client. A second case involving a buried treasure adds to the intrigue. Box has rarely been better in his plotting, with shifting timelines revealing the scope of the crimes. The criminal conspirators are both inventively corrupt and chilling, and the cleverly constructed mystery is leavened with generous doses of Montana history, along with the welcome appearances of characters from earlier Cassie novels. The story culminates with one of Box's most satisfying payoffs." I'm a fan of the previous Cassie, [The Bitterroots](#), which shows her moving to the Treasure State and becoming a private eye.

Castle, Jayne (Jayne Ann Krentz). [Sweetwater and the Witch](#) (Berkley \$28). Author Jayne writes this to me: "All I can say is that it seemed like a good idea at the time. This is futuristic romantic-suspense. With a dust bunny. I remember waking up one morning on the wings of a grand revelation: the skill-set for matchmaking probably has a lot in common with the skill-set needed for criminal profiling. My heroine, Ravenna Chastain was a very good profiler who is now a successful matchmaker. Things have been going well but her latest client, Ethan Sweetwater is her first professional failure. She's ready to cut him loose. He says she owes him one more date—and things go way off track from there because it turns out a killer is stalking Ravenna. Who just happens to be a fire witch. As for Ethan, well, the Sweetwaters are in a different line these days but the old family business was hunting the human monsters and he's still got the talent for the work. Also, the dust bunny's name is Harriet." Last year's Castle—introducing the dust bunnies!—is [Guild Boss](#).

Clark, Marcia. [The Fall Girl](#) (Rare Bird \$27). Our longtime friend, The Marcia Clark, tells me this novel began as an audio book—and she narrates the audio herself (pretty scary even for a seasoned trial lawyer!). But now it's a print book which Marcia is signing for you to go with our virtual conversation September 27 6:00 PM. Meanwhile Marcia is sending me an audio to listen to, so with no book I quote:

When Charlie Blair left Chicago behind—and her old life as Lauren Claybourne—for a gig in the Santa Cruz DA's office, things were supposed to be easier. Or at least nothing that a couple of Xanax and a tumbler of vodka couldn't handle. The plan had been working, until the murder of a local bail bondsman Shelly Hansen. Enter: hot-shot prosecutor Erika Lorman, she

of the stellar record and unfailing touch with juries, a veritable legend in her own right. Fresh off the prosecution of celebrity chef Blake Steers, the newest resident of California's penitentiary system and perhaps its most high profile, she's thrust back into action alongside her new co-chair from the windy city and ready to do anything to put criminals behind bars. But as the fevered search for answers intensifies and the hunt for a killer continues, secrets from the past threaten to undo not just the case—but Erika and Charlie, too.

✠Cleeves, Ann. [The Rising Tide](#) (St Martins \$27.99). Tip-ins. A new Vera Stanhope—note that Joe Ashworth is still on her team even though he's been replaced on TV—begins when a group of teenagers spent a weekend on Holy Island, forging a bond that has lasted a lifetime. They have returned every five years to celebrate their friendship, and remember the friend they lost to the rising waters of the causeway, which becomes dangerous and impassable, at the first reunion. This is their 50th year reunion. And their most celebrated member, a man whose career has imploded in a #MeToo scenario, is found hanged in his room. Vera is called to the scene, calls it murder (she's right!), and digs into the lives of the remaining friends. What are they hiding? Did the death of Isobel 45 years before lead to this? Lindisfarne is connected to the mainland by a kind of causeway, rendered impassable twice daily by tides. And now the tide is rising along with long-hidden emotions and secrets, putting Vera, Joe, and the team in terrible danger. As ever Cleeves imbues the investigation with landscapes special to a region: here, Northumberland, Vera's beat. And Vera is definitely older, heavier, frumpier than TV Vera, yet sharp as ever.

The Signed UK edition: [The Rising Tide](#) (MacMillan UK \$44).

Connolly, John. [The Furies](#) (\$46, half a dozen of this UK edition left). Connolly's visit to The Pen end of September has had to shift to October 12. So you can preorder the signed US edition of [The Furies](#) (Atria \$28).

In *The Sisters Strange*, an old foe returns to Portland, Maine. But in the years between his visits, Raum Buker has changed. Charlie Parker remembers a dishonest, malicious man, but this version of Buker is different: strange and hunted, drawing blood each time he claws at the newly tattooed pentagram on his arm. None of this matters to Charlie, not until he's hired by Will Quinn, a local lumberman, to look into Buker and what he wants with the Strange sisters. It should have been a simple case. But a dark power is moving toward Maine in search of Raum Buker and leaving a trail of bodies in its wake. When it reaches Portland, who will survive, and who will be left a corpse? In *The Furies*, we're taken back to the first weeks of the pandemic. Parker watches the news, knowing his investigation business is going to take a hit and thinking it might be better to hole up in Vermont, closer to his ex-wife and daughter. But before he can begin packing, his phone rings with a case he can't turn down. Sarah Abelli is a grieving mother, her five-year-old daughter, Kara, having died in a tragic accident. Unfortunately for Sarah, her daughter's death was only the beginning of her troubles. Her mobster husband, who had been embezzling from and snitching on his employers, was murdered by said employers for said activities. Murder wasn't enough for the mob—they wanted their stolen money back. After a rough shakedown, Sarah gave them what cash she could find, changed her name, and moved to

Maine, hoping she had left it all behind. Maybe she would have succeeded, but two of the men involved in her attack, Gilman Veale and Lyle Pantuff, were convinced she had more money. They might get it if it weren't haunted by her daughter's ghost, a ghost who very much wants to return to her mother.

Dicker, Joel. [The Enigma of Room 622](#) (Harper Via \$29.99). "One of the most widely read Francophone authors in the world... [Dicker] knows how to captivate readers ... twist and turns ... meticulous investigations, he jumps back and forth in time, all the better to lose us yet drive us impatient for the final denouement. Pure reading pleasure. — *Lire* on the Swiss writer's new novel following his international sensation [The Truth About the Harry Quebert Affair](#) (2014), a First Mystery Club selection back then. Once again the framing story is about a writer, one Joel, whose mentor is Bernard de Fallois, Dicker's publisher for *Harry* who died in 2018. So this is meta fiction built around a fight for the top job at a Geneva private bank where, since its founding in 1702, the reins have been handed from Ebenezer father to son—and the connection this may have to a murder in room 622 of the famed luxury Hotel de Verbier high in the Swiss Alps. When Joel and his guest, the mysterious Scarlett, check in and head to the 6th floor, they realize there is no Room 622. Meanwhile the drama of characters related to the bank twists and turns among key players. This is a very European story, IMHO, playing out as a "Matryoshka doll of intrigues" and possibly over elaborate for some readers.

✠Edwards, Martin. [Blackstone Fell](#) (Zeus \$44). 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.

✠Griffiths, Elly. [Bleeding Heart Yard](#) (Quercus \$45). When Cassie Fitzgerald was at school in the late 90s, she and her friends killed a fellow student. Almost twenty years later, Cassie is a happily married mother who loves her job—as a police officer. She closely guards the secret she has all but erased from her memory. One day her husband finally persuades her to go to a school reunion. Cassie catches up with her high-achieving old friends from the Manor Park School—among them two politicians, a rock star, and a famous actress. But then, shockingly, one of them, Garfield Rice, is found dead in the school bathroom, supposedly from a drug overdose. As Garfield was an eminent—and controversial—MP and the investigation is high profile, it's headed by Cassie's new boss, DI Harbinder Kaur, freshly promoted and newly arrived in London. The trouble

is, Cassie can't shake the feeling that one of them has killed again. Is Cassie right, or was Garfield murdered by one of his political cronies? It's in Cassie's interest to skew the investigation so that it looks like it has nothing to do with Manor Park and she seems to be succeeding. Until someone else from the reunion is found dead in Bleeding Heart Yard.... US edition, unsigned, in November: [Bleeding Heart Yard](#) (\$27.99). Meet DI Harbinder Kaur in Edgar winner [The Stranger Diaries](#) and in [The Postscript Murders](#) (\$16.99 each). Fabulous for fans of Richard Osman.

✂Harris, Robert. [Act of Oblivion](#) (Heinemann \$46). The inventive and careful researcher Harris "again turns a historical event into a canny page-turner. Following the restoration of the Stuart Dynasty to the throne of England, King Charles II and his court seek revenge for the execution of the monarch's father, Charles I, who was beheaded in 1649. The task of identifying and locating those involved falls to Richard Nayler, "one of those shadows who move, anonymous, along the private passages and through the council chambers of every nation in every age." Nayler has a personal grudge against his quarry; his wife died giving birth to their stillborn son after Cromwell's soldiers arrested him for participating in an illegal prayer service. After Nayler tracks down the death warrant ordering Charles I's beheading, he devotes himself to finding the 13 signatories still at large. The bulk of the narrative focuses on his Javert-like search for Edward Whalley and his son-in-law William Goffe. The fugitives live desperate lives in New England, constantly fearful of betrayal even from those who shelter them. Harris humanizes the hunter and the hunted, and brings to life an obscure chapter in colonial American history. This further burnishes Harris's reputation as a talented author of historical suspense"—*PW*. Unsigned US edition: [Act of Oblivion](#) (Harper \$28.99).

Johnson, Craig. [Hell and Back](#) (Viking \$28). "At the outset of bestseller Johnson's 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, Montana, 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.

It's so great to see Henry again.... and when Henry is in a book you know that ordinary forces become extraordinary. So Walt's apparent fugue state is, like... normal. You savvy fans will work out what's up with Walt before he does, part of the fun. Longtime fans will relish Johnson's new insights into Walt's character in a story that is, sadly, built from real events that have recently received, at last, a lot of scrutiny.

Khan, Vaseem. [The Lost Man of Bombay](#) (Hodder \$39). Just 4 left. 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](#) (Random \$28). A 50-year-old cold case is at the heart of this mystery about an influential family and an elusive serial killer called The Highwayman. The Gardener family has a long and legendary history in California, but when a skull is recovered during some renovation work, it raises questions about what really happened at the palatial Gardener Estate one summer in the 1970s when the counter culture was high. Most of the narrative is thus historical, but in the present, Inspector Raquel Laing takes up the case, unearthing family secrets as she searches for the answers that might lead her to a killer.... Read more about our **September Historical Fiction Book of the Month** in [this essay](#). It's unusual for an author of historical fiction to have lived the period, but in her youth, King absolutely did, so her narrative rings with authenticity. Plus Raquel is a terrific new character we hope to see again.

Lovett, Charlie. [The Enigma Affair](#) (Blackstone \$26.99). Wow. How much fun is this? A hired assassin whose life takes a turn. A librarian with a special wartime skill set—who is a target, but of whom? A group of Germans in Munich extending WWII to the present. A woman working at Bletchley who can use Enigma and the Bombe to decode. A British collector of Nazi artifacts to his own peril. And three American veterans with a mission. Key to this plot are a coded message, wartime documents, Heinrich Himmler's library, medieval scrolls, a book scam, a treasure hunt, and actual and attempted murder. And did I mention betrayals? The lovely Lovett has penned earlier books all revolving around books and libraries. Here is a worthy addition to his work, so much fun I gulped it down in one sitting. And as usual the plot is based at least in part on real people and events. Don't miss this one. The publisher likens it to Indiana Jones and it is escapist fare, but I'd put it in the Dan Brown category.

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.

☞Mackintosh, Clare. [The Last Party](#) (Sphere UK \$40). On the morning after huge New Year's Eve Celebration thrown by the residents of Llyn Drych (Mirror Lake), the body of Rhys Lloyd is found floating in the lake. Rhys is a former opera singer and developer of the luxury housing community, The Shore. While Rhys was once very successful, he is now struggling with all aspects of his life and has made plenty of enemies, especially in recent years. Rhys's exclusive lake lodge community is hated by the local village of Cwm Coed but all were welcome at the New Year's Eve party hosted by the residents of The Shore which means that an even larger pool of people had the opportunity to kill Rhys. Local detective, Ffion Morgan is assigned to the murder investigation as a representative of Wales. She has had a streak of hard luck recently as well. Ffion's marriage recently ended and she has found herself living back at home with her Mam and her younger sister, Seren. Ffion considers herself a "lone wolf" and is disappointed to find that she will be working the case with DC Leo Brady of Cheshire Major Crimes who will be representing the English side. Leo is currently fighting for shared custody of his son and has all but given up on improving his life. As Leo and Ffion work side by side to find the murder(s), they slowly grow closer bonding over past hardships. The diverse residents of The Shore and the local villagers keep the investigation jumping from suspect to suspect as it comes to light that almost everyone had motive to kill Rhys.

The US edition of [The Last Party](#) (\$27.99) with Signed bookplates publishes November 8 when I will be zooming with Mackintosh about it.

MacNeal, Susan Elia. [Mother, Daughter, Traitor, Spy](#) (Bantam \$28). Capturing the social issues perfectly as seen through the lenses of new journalism graduate, top of her class, Veronica Grace, and her German mother Vi, widow of a US Naval officer, this thrilling tale is more than just that. Like William Martin's [December '41](#), MacNeal looks within our country and here, more specifically in Los Angeles during the late 1930s and into the war years, to show us how active were Nazis and their American sympathizers. Spies. Coups. Sedition. Treason. A structure for "Hitler's White House" in the Pacific Palisades. Much of this stemmed from virulent anti-Semitism and White nationalism striking a chord with more Americans than just German immigrants. And there was a strong fear of communism in the mix. MacNeal has really done her research for an idea flowing out of her last Maggie Hope mystery, [The Hollywood Spy](#) (\$17), which is highlighted in her Sources and Author Notes. While WWII stories are heavy in our selections for this year's Historical Fiction Book of the Month, this stirring story has so much relevance to today it's our **October Historical Fiction Book of the Month**. I promise that November and December will be other time periods.

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.

Mayor, Archer. [Fall Guy](#) (St Martins \$28.99). Vermont's Mayor is one of my favorite authors; I collect the Joe Gunthers. So I am not going to rush through my Advance Reading Copy for our September 29 zoom conversation. Instead here is another of his many Starred Reviews and I agree that this would be an excellent place to start for anyone who has not yet found this superb police procedural series with an astounding range:

"The discovery of a body in the trunk of a stolen car propels bestseller Archer's expertly plotted 33rd Joe Gunther novel. Aided by other members of the Vermont Bureau of Investigation, Joe soon identifies the victim as a petty thief who's stolen from targets all over Vermont and New Hampshire. A number of suspicious items found at the crime scene, including discarded cell phones, lead to the arrest of a child pornographer and a link to a child's unsolved disappearance. Gunther and his team work across state lines as part of a task force, and Archer's skill at researching and writing about police procedure is on full display as the case grows more complex and disturbing. As always, the author takes an unsparing view of life in northern New England, capturing the region's beauty and economic disparity, while spinning a heart-pounding tale in which each character, clue, and subplot comes together with purpose. Even this far into the series, the supporting characters surrounding Gunther continue to grow and surprise. New and returning readers alike will be richly rewarded."

McMorris, Kristina. [The Ways We Hide](#) (Sourcebooks \$16.99) or [The Way We Hide](#) (\$27.99) a very limited number of hardcovers. British Intelligence recruits an Illusionist from Michigan! "Just like her heroine, Kristina McMorris works magic in this twisting tale of James Bond's Q meets World War II. I love this book!" — Kate Quinn.

As a little girl raised amid the hardships of Michigan's Copper Country, Fenna Vos learned to focus on her own survival. That ability sustains her even now as the Second World War rages in faraway countries. Though she performs onstage as the assistant to an unruly escape artist, behind the curtain she's the mastermind of their act. Ultimately, controlling her surroundings and eluding traps of every kind helps her keep a lingering trauma at bay. Yet for all her planning, Fenna doesn't foresee being called upon by British military intelligence. Tasked with designing escape aids to thwart the Germans, MI9 seeks those with specialized skills for a war nearing its breaking point. Fenna reluctantly joins the unconventional team as an inventor. But when a test of her loyalty draws her deep into the fray, she discovers no mission is more treacherous than escaping one's past.

McMorris adds, "I began with the true story of a girl raised in Michigan's Copper Country who, as a result of a childhood trauma, becomes obsessed with escape artists, especially Houdini. Britain's MI9, a highly classified group that invested in illusion and escape techniques during World War II,

recruited her. McMorris showed a sample of a silk map that they smuggled into POW camps inside Monopoly games, along with a compass and two files. The silk map could get wet and wouldn't rustle."

Mills, Kyle. [Oath of Loyalty](#) (Atria \$28.99). With President Anthony Cook convinced that Mitch Rapp poses a mortal threat to him, CIA Director Irene Kennedy is forced to construct a truce between the two men. The terms are simple: Rapp agrees to leave the country and stay in plain sight for as long as Cook controls the White House. In exchange, the administration agrees not to make any moves against him. This fragile détente holds until Cook's power-hungry security adviser convinces him that Rapp has no intention of honoring their agreement. In an effort to put him on the defensive, they leak the true identity of his partner, Claudia Gould. As Rapp races to neutralize the enemies organizing against her, he discovers that a new generation of assassins is on her trail. A killer known to intelligence agencies only as Legion. The shadowy group has created a business model based on double-blind secrecy. Neither the killer nor the client knows the other's identity. Because of this, Legion can't be called off nor can they afford to fail. No matter how long it takes—weeks, months, years—they won't stand down until their target is dead. Faced with the seemingly impossible task of finding and stopping Legion, Rapp and his people must close ranks... Interesting to me is the way so many recent thrillers postulate the enemy is inside the US, not outside....

Ochs, Weston/Yvonne Navarro. [Aliens vs. Predators: Rift War](#) (Titan \$15.95). The planet LV-363 teems with exotic life, including a plant growing in the shadows of its deep rifts. The plant's flower yields a valuable narcotic, and people are forced by the cartels to harvest it. When a Yautja (Predator) ship arrives for a hunting ritual, the Predators seed the rifts with Xenomorph eggs. The aliens emerge and the result is bizarre and deadly hybrids, with humans trapped between the Predators and their prey. These deadly Xenomorph hybrids—some of which possess the ability to fly—swarm out of control and may prove more than either the Yautja or the humans can defeat.

Osman, Richard. [The Bullet That Missed](#) (Viking \$56). It is an ordinary Thursday, and things should finally be returning to normal. Except trouble is never far away where the Thursday Murder Club is concerned. A local news legend is on the hunt for a sensational headline, and soon the gang is hot on the trail of two murders, ten years apart. To make matters worse, Elizabeth is paid a visit in which she's presented with a deadly mission: kill or be killed... While Elizabeth grapples with her conscience (and a gun), the gang and their unlikely new friends—including TV stars, money launderers and ex-KGB colonels—unravel a fresh mystery. But can they catch the culprit and save Elizabeth before the murderer strikes again?... The US edition would be tip ins if signed and so far has not been offered to us, but I will strive to get a few.

Patterson, James/Brendan DuBois. [Blowback](#) (LittleBrown \$29). **We have bookplates signed by Patterson.** US President Keegan Barrett has swept into office on his success as Director of the CIA. Six months into his first term, he devises a clandestine power grab with deadly consequences. This brilliant American President is also a psychopath. He has his finger on the red button. And he's about to start a world war with our most

dangerous enemy. Barrett personally orders CIA agents Liam Grey and Noa Himmel to execute his plan, but their loyalties are divided. The CIA serves at the pleasure of the president, yet they've sworn to support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic. When the threat comes directly from the Oval Office, that's where the blowback begins.

Perry, Anne. [A Truth to Lie For](#) (Random \$28). It is the summer of 1934, and Hitler is nearing the summit of supreme power in Germany, his eyes set on European domination. When Britain's MI6 gets word that a pair of German scientists have made breakthroughs in germ warfare, they send Elena Standish on a dangerous mission to get one of them out of Germany before he's forced to share his knowledge and its devastating power with Hitler's elite. But the British soon learn that it's more than just time that Elena is working against. The new head of Germany's germ warfare division is an old enemy of Elena's grandfather Lucas, the former head of MI6. And he's bent on using any means at his disposal to avenge his defeat at Lucas's hands twenty years before. What starts as an effort to save Europe from the devastation of disease soon becomes an intensely personal fight. As Elena and the scientist make their way across Germany, from Berlin to Bavaria and beyond, they confront not only the Gestapo but also a ragtag group of unpredictable Nazi supporters....

Rankin, Ian. [A Heart Full of Headstones](#) (Orion \$46). I won't get my advance copy for some weeks so here is one of the Starred Reviews for a new John Rebus: "Edgar winner Rankin's outstanding 24th John Rebus novel opens dramatically with the Edinburgh detective, officially retired but still working, in the dock charged with a crime that's not revealed until the very end. Flashbacks show familiar characters from Rebus's world pursuing various agendas. Organized crime kingpin Morris "Big Ger" Cafferty, an old adversary of the detective, asks Rebus to find a man he wronged, but Rebus still has eyes on taking down Cafferty. Det. Insp. Siobhan Clarke, a former colleague of Rebus's, is investigating a policeman accused of domestic abuse who threatens to expose a culture of police corruption ("Skeletons are about to come tumbling out of closets"). Malcolm Fox, a loathsome, ambitious detective inspector, wants to contain that threat's collateral damage. Every thread leads to murder. The well-constructed plot is matched by brooding, atmospheric prose (Rebus has 'spent his whole life in... a city perpetually dark, feeling increasingly weighed down, his heart full of headstones'). This is one of Rankin's best Rebus novels in years." That was said last year of [A Song for the Dark Times](#) (\$16.99) so I'm really pumped to plunge into this one.

Rankin is touring Canada but not the US, sob, hence the UK Signed copies. The Unsigned US is [A Heart Full of Headstones](#) (Little Brown \$28).

Raybourn, Deanna. [Killers of a Certain Age](#) (Berkley \$27). "Edgar finalist Raybourn makes a dazzling excursion out of the Victorian era [and the Veronica Speedwell series] with this uproarious contemporary thriller. Raybourn's sharply funny, cunningly plotted, creative thriller about four almost seniors, four women trained as assassins by a British WWII female spymaster but retired on pensions – Killers of a Certain Age – is a glorious chase novel where one by one players are unmasked after the women, summoned together to take a luxury cruise, realize that their former employer has put out a kill order on them. How

they strategize, survive, and maybe turn the tables is a real treat. Think Mrs. Pollifax, a senior spy created by the late Dorothy Gilman and much missed, on steroids. This is our **September Crime Book of the Month** – surely most of you, like me, yearn for motivated people to change the world? And **highly recommended as a gift book with the holidays coming, no need for the recipient to be a mystery fan. You might want to order extra copies. Deanna signs it here September 8 so your book can be inscribed.**

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

Riddle, AG. [Lost in Time](#) (Zeus \$28). From the author of bestsellers *Departure* and *Winter World* comes a standalone novel with a twist you’ll never see coming. *PW* Stars it: “Crichtonesque thrillers [with a touch of Jean Auel?] don’t come much better than this intricate outing which combines a fantastic premise – a time-travel device known as Absolom is used to imprison dangerous criminals in the prehistoric past – with a closed-circle whodunit... Riddle keeps the twists coming, including a mind-bending jaw-dropper that sets up the book’s second half. By creating sympathetic and complex characters, the author makes suspending disbelief easy. Readers won’t be able to turn the pages fast enough,” on this our **September Notable New Fiction Book of the Month**.

Diana Gabaldon, who hosted our September 1 event with Riddle, says, “Love, murder, betrayal, multiple universes, and dinosaurs—amazing! One of the twistiest time-tales I’ve ever read.” Like me, Diana enjoyed a tour of the Triassic Age which Riddle picked because the reptiles were reasonably small.

Sandford, John. [Righteous Prey](#) (Putnam \$29.95). “We’re going to murder people who need to be murdered.” So begins a press release from a mysterious group known only as “The Five,” shortly after a vicious predator is murdered in San Francisco. The Five is believed to be made up of vigilante killers who are very bored...and very rich. They target the worst of society—rapists, murderers, and thieves—and then use their unlimited resources to offset the damage done by those who they’ve killed, donating untraceable Bitcoin to charities and victims via the dark net. The Five soon become the most popular figures on social media, a modern-day Batman...though their motives may not be entirely pure. After a woman is murdered in the Twin Cities, Virgil Flowers and Lucas Davenport are sent in to investigate. And they soon have their hands full—the killings are smart and carefully choreographed, and with no apparent direct connection to the victims, The Five are virtually untraceable. But if anyone can destroy this group, it will be Virgil and Lucas.

Steck, Ryan. [Fields of Fire](#) (Tyndale House \$25.99). “You know Ryan Steck as the Real Book Spy. Now, get to know him as the author of his debut thriller featuring Marine Raider Matthew Redd in a battle that will leave you speechless and begging for more. Lock and load!” —Jack Carr. And I agree that this is a very strong debut with memorable characters and descriptions of the

western landscape, much like the work of Taylor Moore and, of course, CJ Box who is a Steck fan.

Steck’s debut actually gives us two bangs for the buck, hitting on a pair of classic thriller tropes in the same volume. First, we follow special ops Marine Matthew Redd dealing with the aftermath of a massacre he may or may not have perpetrated. That’s due not to the fog of war, or combat, but the fact Redd is suffering from amnesia and can’t remember what happened. We’re also treated to the angst-riddled Redd’s return home to Montana to deal with a deadly threat to his hometown in a fashion that would make Lee Child’s Jack Reacher proud. A veteran reviewer with one of the genre’s most popular blogs, the Real Book Spy, Steck is understandably well versed in the genre. But his command of battle scenes and the warrior mindset is exceptional. “Fields of Fire” reads like Nelson DeMille seamlessly blended with the likes of Brad Thor, Brad Taylor or Jack Carr, and is not to be missed. Redd will remind some of Reacher but he’s more vulnerable (and credulous).

Strout, Elizabeth. [Lucy by the Sea](#) (Random \$28). As a panicked world goes into lockdown, Lucy Barton is uprooted from her life in Manhattan and bundled away to a small town in Maine by her ex-husband and on-again, off-again friend, William. For the next several months, it’s just Lucy, William, and their complex past together in a little house nestled against the moody, swirling sea.

Turow, Scott. [Suspect](#) (Grand Central \$29). At the end of Turow’s prior book, *The Last Trial*, brilliant defense attorney Sandy Stern retires and closes his law practice. So far, he’s survived his cancer diagnosis and now lives in an assisted living center. But he still puts his knowledge to good use by helping his Goth granddaughter, Clarice “Pinky” Granum, navigate the legal world (and the world in general). Pink-haired Pinky isn’t your average private investigator. She’s lived her life as an overall screw-up—even flunking out of the police academy—but she’s finally found her perfect job. Working as an investigator for a local attorney and her cousin-through-marriage, Rik Dudek, allows Pinky to flex her fact-finding muscles. And her job with Rik is the first time she’s gone to work without believing she might be on her way to prison. Although so far, Rik has only worked small-time legal cases, the spectacular case against Highland Isle’s female police chief, Lucia Gomez-Barrera, could catapult them into the national spotlight. Especially if it is “sextortion”—by three cops with a grudge? Pinky is, to put it gently, colorful, as are her cohorts—an interesting cast for Turow to craft. And one where a minor character from a previous book refused to remain a bit player.

Walker, Joss (JT Ellison). [Master of Shadows](#) (Two Tales Press \$28.99). Jayne Thorne, CIA Librarian, first met in the exciting and imaginative [Tomb of the Queen](#) (\$18.99), is back for another exciting mission. When her mentor goes missing, Jayne is sent to Paris to find him, only to land in the crosshairs of a deadly terrorist organization and their diabolical weapon, a mysterious poison that renders their enemies powerless. Fighting to combat this weakness, Jayne struggles to make peace with her sister, who has been hiding the truth of their family history for years, and overcome difficulties with her shifter boyfriend, who can’t quite sync up with Jayne’s new powers. Even worse, the terrorists demand she locate a necromantic grimoire in France, or they will kill her mentor. As Jayne hunts for the grimoire, she unlocks the secret to summoning the Master of Shadows—a long-dead master

magician possessing a dark and destructive magic. With this lethal power unleashed, she must protect her team from the worst magical threats they've ever faced. Isn't it great to have librarian heroes, today thanks to partisan divides in reading, in real life as in fiction, in our books?

CLASSIC CRIMES

Crane, Frances. [The Turquoise Shop](#) (American Mystery Classics \$15.95). In a small, artsy New Mexico town, the arrival of a wealthy stranger from back East is enough to get folks talking. Even a few years after Mona Brandon landed in Santa Maria, the rumor mill still churns with tid-bits about her money, her influence, and — when a corpse is discovered in the nearby desert that may or may not be her husband — her secret and suspicious past. From the counter at her local jewelry and art shop, Jean Holly has a front row seat for all this gossip and more, after her acquaintance with Pat Abbott, the detective investigating the apparent murder, turns romantic. With his deductive reasoning and her local knowledge combined, they have everything they need to discover whodunnit. But will they be able to put the pieces together and solve the mystery before the killer strikes again? With characters and a setting inspired by Mabel Dodge Luhan and the Taos art colony, *The Turquoise Shop* is a delightful Golden Age mystery adorned with Southwestern historical detail. It is the first novel in the popular and long-running Pat and Jean Abbott series, which charmed mid-century audiences with over twenty-five installments and which was adapted for multiple radio programs in the 40s and 50s

✂Edwards, Martin. [Murder By the Book](#) (Poisoned Pen/British Library Crime Classics \$14.99). “Sixteen reprints from 1933 to 1973 showing golden age–inspired puzzle masters doing what they do best: bringing together readers, books, and felonies.” With Martin Edwards as librarian and guide, delve into an irresistible stack of bibliomysteries, perfect for every booklover and armchair sleuth, featuring much-loved Golden Age detectives Nigel Strangeways, Philip Trent, Detective Chief Inspector Roderick Alleyn, and others.

Here's an apposite opening paragraph in the *NY Times Book Review* essay on this seminal work by Edwards: “During its so-called Golden Age, in that fragile, frenetic interstice between the world wars, the detective story was a game between writer and reader, a puzzle to be solved through deduction. The rules helped ensure fairness — that the writer didn't ‘cheat’ by, say, murdering a victim via a hitherto undiscovered poison; as Knox might have put it, doing so ‘not cricket.’ But this ideal was short-lived. The horrors of World War II, and the seismic social changes and dislocations that followed, made a mockery of fairness and rationality as guideposts for understanding the modern world.”

Various. [Marple: Twelve New Mysteries](#) (Harper \$28.99). It's been nearly 50 years since Agatha Christie's last Marple novel, *Sleeping Murder*, posthumously published in 1976. Now here is more Jane Marple as written up by authors Leigh Bardugo, Alyssa Cole, Lucy Foley, Elly Griffiths, Val McDermid, Ruth Ware and other stellar authors to bring us their fun twists and takes on Jane. All the while sticking to the tradition of a mystery convention. So much wonderful reading in your hands here.

Good News: You can attend a zoom event for this anthology hosted by the publisher. [Click HERE](#) for information

and to register. Authors include Alyssa Cole, Lucy Foley, and Jean Kwok. September 15 at what I believe is 12 PM EDT.

COZY CRIMES

✂Berry, Connie. [A Dream of Death](#) (\$16.99). I am a fan of Berry's antiques dealer Kate Hamilton mysteries. Kate is an American who meets a British policeman and begins a cross-Atlantic romance in this, the first in the series and FINALLY out in paperback. Yay. Start here and then [enjoy the sequels](#).

Autumn has come and gone on Scotland's Isle of Glenroth, and the islanders gather for the Tartan Ball, the annual end-of-tourist-season gala. Spirits are high until an unexpected turn of events takes the floor. A recently published novel about island history has brought hordes of tourists to the small Hebridean resort community. On the guest list is American antiques dealer Kate Hamilton. Kate returns reluctantly to the island where her husband died, determined to repair her relationship with his sister, proprietor of the island's luxe country house hotel, famous for its connection with Bonnie Prince Charlie. Kate has hardly unpacked when the next morning a body is found, murdered in a reenactment of an infamous unsolved murder described in the novel—and the only clue to the killer's identity lies in a curiously embellished antique casket. The Scottish police discount the historical connection, but when a much-loved local handyman is arrested, Kate teams up with a vacationing detective inspector from Suffolk, England, to unmask a killer determined to rewrite island history—and Kate's future.

Black, Laura Gail. [Bound by Murder](#) (Crooked Lane \$28.99). The birds are singing, books are selling, and the Hokes Bluff Inn has begun to host weddings on its property. Antiquarian bookseller Jenna Quinn loves the romance in the air—until her ex-fiancé, Blake Emerson, walks in with his bride-to-be, Missy Plott. Blake continues to profess his love for Jenna if she'll have him back, no matter the consequences. And the consequences are grave, indeed, when Missy turns up dead. All evidence points to Blake, who was the last one to see her alive. He begs Jenna to help him clear his name. Blake's mother, Gwendolyn, is also bent on exonerating her son. Jenna doesn't believe Blake could have killed Missy, and she starts digging for suspects. It could have been Missy's ex-boyfriend, who proclaims a love for her he says only death could sever. Or might it have been Missy's bitter little sister, who was secretly besotted with Missy's ex. Evidence turns up that links Missy's death to embezzlement and another murder—crimes that had falsely implicated Jenna herself less than a year ago. I like this one, praised by our own Paige Shelton, but went with the Gretchen Rue book below for our September Cozy Crimes Pick as it starts a cozy series. This third entry in An Antique Bookshop Mystery series is a winner too.

Brook, Allison. [Dewey Decimated](#) (Crooked Lane \$28.99). Librarian Carrie Singleton is back on the case, alongside library ghost Evelyn, in the sixth installment of Agatha Award nominee Allison Brook's Haunted Library mysteries. She's just off a hot string of murder cases centered around the spooky local library in Clover Ridge, Connecticut. She could really use a break—but no such luck, as she; Smoky Joe, the resident cat; and Evelyn, the library's ghost, are drawn into another tantalizing whodunit. First, a dead body is found in the basement of the building attached to the library, and it turns out to be Carrie's fiancé's Uncle Alec, who Dylan hasn't seen in years. But Alec has no intention of

truly checking out, and his ghost makes itself at home in the library, greatly upsetting the patrons. Carrie and Evelyn work hard to keep Alec out of sight, but what was he doing in Clover Ridge to begin with? And why was he killed? Meanwhile, the town council, of which Carrie is also a member, is embroiled in a hot-headed debate over the fate of the Seabrook Preserve, a lovely and valuable piece of property that runs along Long Island Sound. Turn it into an upscale park? Sell it to a condo developer? Or keep it as protected land? As the dispute rages, there's another murder....

Goldenbaum, Sally. [A Dark and Snowy Night](#) (Kensington \$26). It's holiday season in the picturesque, coastal town of Sea Harbor, Massachusetts! But the sleuths of the Seaside Knitters Society will have to take a break from crafting cozy Christmas gifts to investigate a murder at the Mayor's holiday party.

Howell, Dorothy. [Seams Like Murder](#) (Kensington \$26). Abbey Chandler needs a new start and a place to escape, so Hideaway Grove, where she spent her childhood summers, seems like a perfect choice. Once there, she takes up a rewarding new hobby—but also gets tangled up in a hit-and-run homicide... Abbey has barely arrived in the quaint, quiet town of Hideaway Grove before things turn from blissful to bloody—as the new librarian is mowed down by a car. The only witness on the scene isn't much help, aside from handing Abbey the bag of books dropped by the victim. Even worse, the sheriff's office seizes Abbey's car because of a suspicious dent in the right front fender. While she waits for the problem to be sorted out, Abbey is drawn into a charity sewing project—even though she can't tell a bobbin from a seam ripper. Before she knows it, she's graduating from pillowcase dresses to aprons, setting up a studio in a back room of her aunt's bakery, and making plans to participate in the upcoming craft fair. But through it all, she keeps looking for patterns and possible conflicts in the late librarian's personal, professional, and romantic life. Then a shocking discovery sends her in a new direction.... And to the conclusion of this brand new series start by Howell.

Ireland, Liz. [Mrs. Claus and the Evil Elves](#) (\$15.95). In keeping with the supernatural elements blended into mystery this fall, here's a fanciful cozy. Ireland's funny, well-paced third Mrs. Claus's mystery finds Santa's wife, April, excited that her best friend from Oregon, Claire Emerson, will be visiting Santaland. April, Santa, and Claire travel from Fairbanks, Alaska, to Santaland in a flying sleigh pulled by a scab reindeer, since most reindeer have walked off the job to protest the introduction of drone-deer, which they fear “would prove the final nail in the coffin of reindeer usefulness.” Tensions ratchet up when a deer-drone bearing the message “THIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING!” crashes into a display at an ice-sculpting contest. April, who's tasked with investigating the incident, hopes to exonerate the obvious suspects for sabotaging the drone—the striking reindeer. But when a Santaland resident is beaten to death with a poker, the plot takes a darker turn....”

Kelly, Sofie. [Whiskers and Lies](#) (Berkley \$27). Baker Georgia Tepper has been hired to provide delicious and spooky cupcakes for the Reading Buddies Halloween Party at the library, and she and Kathleen are meeting to finalize the menu of festive confections. Unfortunately, once Georgia's former mother-in-law ambushes her at the library and threatens Georgia with legal

action, the afternoon of fun is soured. When Georgia's litigious in-law is later found dead and the friendly baker is implicated, Kathleen is eager to help prove her innocence. Luckily, Kathleen and her intrepid magical cats, Hercules and Owen, have plenty of experience cracking crimes....

McKenna, Clara. [Murder at Keyhaven Castle](#) (\$15.95). With her wedding to Viscount “Lyndy” Lyndhurst just days away, strong-willed American ex-pat Stella Kendrick is the talk of Edwardian society—and the focus of a deadly mystery that begins with the arrival of an anonymous gift and return of her overbearing father cast a dark shadow over the festivities, conjuring difficult memories and new fears.... Tensions intensify when a daytrip to Southampton ends with a suspicious stranger getting trampled by a horse-drawn cab. Before anyone can explain why the victim possessed a newspaper clipping about the upcoming ceremony at Morrington Hall, tragedy strikes again, this time resulting in a murder that turns Stella's world completely upside down while implicating one of Lyndy's well-regarded family members. Stella and Lyndy rush to connect two very different crimes and identify the guilty culprit hiding among elite wedding guests while unable to bridge the class divide....

Rue, Gretchen. [Steeped to Death](#) (Crooked Lane \$28.99). You fans of Laura Childs and her Charleston teashop mysteries will be pleased to step into Raven Creek, Washington, small-town chicanery, and into the world of Phoebe Winchester. As with many mysteries this fall there's a touch of magic for Phoebe learns that along with her inheritance of Aunt Eudora's Victorian mansion and bookshop/tea store The Earl's Study—not to mention the chubby tabby called Bob—she's inherited witchy gifts. And she will need them because a body, a dead man, is discovered on the shop's back step. Was he a burglar looking for an easy score? These are all familiar cozy crimes tropes, but what I like about this series start are a couple of serious social issues: what is gained or lost when a small town gentrifies—should it encourage development? And will a community support its local small businesses? Thus here is our **September Cozy Crimes Book of the Month**, a complicated but enjoyable package. Brew a pot and settle in to enjoy it.

AND PERFECT COMPANIONS TO COZIES

These are John's choices for the September Romance & Relationship Books of the Month but I confess I nudged hard to include the Poppy Alexander.

Alexander, Poppy. [The Littlest Library](#) (Harper \$16.99). This was the very favorite book I read on “vacation” in Santa Fe. Not only did I love it but so did my husband, Rob, and author Dana Stabenow, who snatched it from my very hands. If you are any kind of fan of British novels, cozies, mysteries, life, then this charmer will enchant you.

Jess Metcalf leads a safe, small life, keeping herself to herself alongside her beloved grandmother. But then grandmother dies and Jess loses her job at the local library. Roaming the countryside in her car, she chances upon a village near the sea and spots a dilapidated cottage for sale. It's small and a challenge but she has inherited just enough funds to reboot her life for a few months without a job and gradually restore the cottage. Among the few things she packs up for the move are her grandmother's cherished books, books that the old woman had herself sorted from a much larger collection. Settled in despite

the grumpy, somewhat intimidating neighbor who is among other things active in protecting endangered bats, like those that live in her cottage's attic, Jess also discovers she's now the owner of the derelict red phone box outside her door. What better use of grandmother's books than to turn the dilapidated box into a local free library? It may be her entrée into village life. And sure enough the books begin to work their literary magic. The journey of all the people under their sway is magical, the village and its neighboring seaside town, the feuds and rivalries and politics and love affairs, all delightful. One wishes there were little red phone boxes all over our country to draw people together.

Lim, Roselle. [Sophie Go's Lonely Hearts Club](#) (Berkley \$17). Newly minted professional matchmaker Sophie Go has returned to Toronto, her hometown, after spending three years in Shanghai. Her job is made quite difficult, however, when she is revealed as a fraud—she never actually graduated from matchmaking school. In a competitive market like Toronto, no one wants to take a chance on an inexperienced and unaccredited matchmaker, and soon Sophie becomes an outcast. In dire search of clients, Sophie stumbles upon a secret club within her condo complex: the Old Ducks, seven septuagenarian Chinese bachelors who never found love. Somehow, she convinces them to hire her, but her matchmaking skills are put to the test as she learns the depths of loneliness, heartbreak, and love by attempting to make the hardest matches of her life.

FOR THE HIGH HOLY DAYS...

Balson, Ronald H. [An Affair of Spies](#) (St Martins \$27.99). Balson has penned a superbly readable WWII story with engaging characters sent on a dangerous mission into Germany to assess its nuclear program and bring back a top scientist and very clear explanations (that in no way slow the story) about fission and chain reactions and more. The brilliantly limned Jewish characters are what bring this superior book alive.

Frank, Michael. [One Hundred Saturdays](#) (Avid Reader \$28). This memoir shares the story of Stella Levi, a nonagenarian from Juderia, the Jewish neighborhood on the Greek island of Rhodes. Through her conversations with author Michael Frank over six years, she shares her experience of growing up in Juderia, as well as the destruction of her community when Nazis rounded up all the neighborhood's inhabitants and deported them to Auschwitz. This important book allows readers to bear witness to not just the tragedy suffered by Stella Levi and her fellow Jews during the Holocaust, but to the richness of her life in Juderia and to how she constructed her life again after her community was destroyed.

MacNeal, Susan Elia. [Mother, Daughter, Traitor, Spy](#) (Ballantine \$28). See Signed Books for a review of a tense and well-wrought thriller that unsparingly scrutinizes anti-Semitism rife in America, here Los Angeles, in the 1930s and into the war years. It is our **October Historical Fiction Book of the Month** to coincide with Yom Kippur.

SOME HARDCOVERS FOR SEPTEMBER

For reviews of books mentioned earlier this summer here is [a trio of historical fiction reviews](#) by Alida Becker and [a trio of thriller reviews](#) by Sarah Lyall as well as a review of [Dirt Creek](#) by Scrivenor and of [Dwyer Murphy's hardboiled NY noir An Honest Living](#) recommended by Patrick (signed copies)

Adler-Olsen, Jussi. [The Shadow Murders: A Department Q Novel](#) (Dutton \$28). For fans of ScandiNoir, a new thriller that gets a *PW* Starred Review: "Opening teases don't get much more tantalizing than in bestseller Adler-Olsen's stellar ninth Department Q novel featuring Copenhagen's cold-case division. In 1982, six college students are killed by a bolt of lightning; an injured woman tells a first responder, with a creepy smile, that her survival means that she can survive anything, "with God's help." In 1988, when Maja Petersen goes to retrieve her car from an auto shop, along with her three-year-old son, the garage explodes, killing the child along with five men. In 2020, homicide chief Marcus Jacobsen asks his best investigator, Carl Mørck, to revisit the explosion after Maja dies by suicide. Both men were on the scene at the time, and Jacobsen has always felt there were some unresolved questions about the explosion. Those suspicions have been revived by the suicide and Jacobsen's noting an anomaly in the official reports that he'd previously missed: someone, for some reason, left a three-inch pile of kitchen salt near the entrance to the garage. Their digging reveals other cases where such a pile was left. The climax lives up to the promise of the brilliant opening, cleverly connecting all the plotlines. Christopher Fowler fans will be riveted."

Ames, Jonathan. [The Wheel of Doll](#) (LittleBrown \$26). Although badly scarred and down to his last kidney after the previous caper, Happy Doll is back in business. When a beguiling young woman turns up at his door, it's Doll's past that comes knocking. Mary DeAngelo is searching for her estranged mother, Ines Candle—a singular and troubled woman Doll once loved. The last he'd seen her she'd been near-death: arms slit like envelopes. Although she survived the episode, she vanished shortly thereafter. Now, years later, Mary claims Ines is alive and has recently made contact—messaging her on Facebook and calling her from a burner phone—only to disappear once again. Although his psychoanalyst would discourage it, Doll takes the case, desperate to see Ines again. But as the investigation deepens, there are questions he can't shake. What's led the flighty Ines to reappear? Is Mary only relaying half the truth? And who is Mary's strange and mysterious husband? In this wholly original follow-up to [A Man Named Doll](#) (\$15.99), Happy travels through L.A., Washington, Oregon and back again—a journey that gets wilder and woollier with each turn.

Atkinson, Kate. [Shrines of Gaiety](#) (Knopf \$29). Here's one librarian's rave: "Set in 1926 London, *Shrines of Gaiety* follows Nellie Coker, queen of the Soho club scene. As Nellie's empire grows and she works to advance her family's stature, she must confront the dark underbelly that lurks behind the glittery facade. I am still holding out a modicum of hope for this century's Roaring Twenties, but until that happens I am happy to sip on a French 75 and let Kate Atkinson transport me to this world. She is one of my favorite historical fiction novelists. She is so skilled at combining genres, imbuing elements of thrillers, detective fiction, and family drama throughout her books. I was blown away by *Life After Life* and its follow-up *A God in Ruins*.

Balson, Ronald H. [An Affair of Spies](#) (St Martins \$27.99). Balson has penned a superbly readable WWII story with engaging characters sent on a dangerous mission into Germany to assess its nuclear program and bring back a top scientist and very clear explanations (that in no way slow the story) about fission and chain reactions and more. We spend time at the University of Chicago

(and the Palmer House) learning stuff. With General Leslie Groves in NY at the Manhattan Project with Oppenheimer and other scientists. Our hero is a German Jew called Nathan who emigrated to America in 1938 with the help of aunt, worries constantly about the parents and sister left behind, and is the guy to spy re all the above. I really like Balson's easy prose style and keen knowledge in what is an adventure story, not non-fiction. But the story is grounded in stuff that enhances it. Highly recommended.

Buck, Rinker. [Life on the Mississippi](#) (Avid Reader \$32.50). While ostensibly this is the story of prize-winning journalist Buck building an old-style wooden flatboat and sailing it down the Ohio to the Mississippi and on to the Gulf, it's so much more. I can't believe all the things that I, a trained historian, didn't know about our history. "A rich mix of history, reporting, and personal introspection." —*St. Louis Post*- "Both a travelogue and an engaging history lesson about America's westward expansion after the Revolutionary War." —*Christian Science Monitor*. And it's a perfect companion read to William Kent Krueger's brilliant novel [This Tender Land](#) (\$17). Rob and I are sailing the river from St. Paul to St. Louis soon and this will be a companion for our journey.

Buckley, Christopher. [Has Anyone Seen My Toes?](#) (St Martins \$26.99). From Thurber Prize-winning Buckley, a comic novel. Hunkering down on the South Carolina coast during the pandemic, an aging screenwriter gorges on fast food while working feverishly on a screenplay about a Nazi plot to kidnap FDR from Bernard Baruch's South Carolina estate, and an article on English words of Carthaginian origin, prompting his alarmed doctor to order a battery of brain tests. Meanwhile, why are the Russians so concerned about the local coroner's race?

Carter, AF. [The Hostage](#) (Mysterious Press \$26.95). A new Nissan plant is coming to the depressed Rust Belt town of Baxter, and Captain Delia Mariola has been busy cleaning up the crime-addled city ever since the deal was announced. But when the 15-year-old daughter of the lead bidder on the construction project—a wealthy out-of-towner—suddenly disappears, and it becomes clear that a professional kidnapping ring may be responsible, Delia realizes that the factory's influx of cash could bring with it an entirely new sort of danger, never before considered in this working class milieu. Though Elizabeth's abduction was well-planned and bearing the mark of an experienced team, her captors could not have anticipated the quick and clever brilliance of the exceptionally smart teen. From the trunk of the car where she is held, she soon devises a clever trick to get cryptic messages to those who love her back down the highway in Baxter. The only problem is that the messages might be too cryptic even for their recipients to decipher. If Delia has any hope of bringing the girl home unharmed, she'll have to crack the code and discover the meaning behind the message. And unless she does it fast, there may be nobody left to save...

Carty-Williams, Candice. [People Person](#) (Scout Press \$27.99.). "Dimple Pennington might have accidentally killed her ex and reaches out to her four half-siblings—all raised by their mothers and sharing a neglectful father—in a panic. They learn the kind of family they can be as they deal with the fallout and their abandonment issues in this dark comedy" recommended by Library Reads. I quote Library Reads because I trust librarians!

Collins, Max Allan. [Kill Me If You Can](#) (Titan \$22.99). Celebrating the 75th anniversary of Mike Hammer, and including five brand new short stories, read the lost story of Velda's disappearance after *Kiss Me, Deadly*. Mike Hammer is on the case, this time hunting the murderer of his old friend and bootlegger-turned-legit-businessman Packy Paragon. Already torn up by the disappearance of Velda, his beloved secretary, Mike Hammer carves a brutal path for vengeance. Drinking heavily, his relationships fraying, his behavior self-destructive, Hammer has to track down Paragon's secret ledger, with the names of every corrupt official in town. With deception everywhere, and a whole host of reasons to want the ledger, Hammer has to pull himself together and solve the case before all hell breaks loose.

Corporon, Yvette Manesis. [Where the Wandering Ends](#) (Harper Muse \$27.99). Karen reviews: In 1946 the poor community of Corfu, in Greece, is moving toward Civil War. Marco and Katrina are best friends and consider themselves family. When the violence escalates, Marco is sent to a *paidopoleis*, a system set up by Queen Frederica to care for and feed children in need. He and Katrina promise to come back to their town once things cool down. But things go awry. Marco has seen something he finds strange, but does not understand what it means. He tells the wrong person and is turned over to the partisans, whose care and feeding were quite different than those of the Queen. Katrina is told that Marco died. She enters an arranged marriage which produces the only thing that brings her joy – a daughter. As time goes on, Katrina hears rumors that Marco is not dead and sets about searching among the *paidopoleis* for him. Eventually, she learns the secret that took him on his journey, much of it dealing with her own life. When she does find him, he is a shell of the person she was with some years ago. The author is skilled in creating the atmosphere of the times. The poverty requiring people to take on ugly tasks to survive. The importance of the family and home that give the characters a sense of hope that things will return to what they once had. She also, brilliantly, describes the fragrances of spices and flowers that surround daily life. Both an educational and entertaining read.

Dee, Jonathan. [Sugar Street](#) (Grove \$26). Jonathan Dee's pitch-dark eighth novel, is an intense character study of a man in crisis. It's a bleak tale of someone running from a troubled past into an equally perilous future, and Dee succeeds in maintaining the tension about his character's fate throughout. The unnamed protagonist takes to the American road heading eastward, lacking ID, credit card or any discernible resources save for an envelope stuffed with exactly \$168,548 in cash. He alludes often to unspecified transgressions, alternating between expressions of remorse and self-justification over those events. Soon making his way to an unidentified city, he scouts "poor neighborhoods, though not so poor that people would be suspicious of the sight of me." Once there, he finds a barely habitable room in the home of a hard-edged woman named Autumn, paying her six months' rent in advance and furnishing the spartan living space with purchases from the local Goodwill. Autumn and her secretive tenant play a cat-and-mouse game, with the suspicious landlord intermittently threatening eviction, while her boarder fitfully attempts to ingratiate himself with her. What ensues is a precisely drawn portrait of the near futility of attempting to lead a life totally off the grid. "With the skill of a virtuoso, Dee plays his character's shifting voice over its full emotional range—cunning, desperate, cynical, resigned and more...."—Harvey Freedenberg

Donoghue, Emma. [Haven](#) (Little Brown \$28). More info than in my brief remarks in August: Three seventh-century monks set sail for an island off the coast of Ireland. Their project of founding a new monastery will be beset by scarcity, personality clashes and everyday disasters. Artt has a dream, “an instruction to withdraw from the world. To set out on pilgrimage with two companions... and found a monastic retreat.” He chooses 19-year-old Trian and Cormac, an older man. This shabby trinity leaves the monastery in a small boat packed with meager supplies. A fraught journey delivers them to the Great Skellig, a craggy island where their days are marked by privation and repetitious tasks. A dropped bag of flour or an infected leg wound could mean the difference between life and death. Although the rituals of daily prayer and weekly Communion, and the recounting of legends, feed the soul, the body is another matter: “Hunger is a constant argument.” The Great Skellig, previously unvisited by humankind, seems like a kingdom of seabirds. The novel is saturated with the sight and sound of thousands of birds. excels at creating isolated atmospheres and examining the dynamic of small casts of characters. Haven may be just one letter away from heaven, but this island community looks less like either and more like a prison as time goes on.

Edwards, Martin. [The Life of Crime](#) (Harper \$32.99). I just got my hands on a copy—they are hard to come by already but we will persevere—and am dazzled at the way Martin has moved through the history of mystery (and more) with perfect topics per chapter—55 of them plus a Bibliography and Index totaling 724 pages with a red ribbon bookmark—ranging over with wide range of crime fiction with his sapient crime writer’s and historian’s eye. “However altered the world, certain themes that emerged early on in the genre — defined by Edwards as books that focus mainly on ‘the revelation of the truth about a crime’ — have remained constant. One is the perception of crime fiction as not ‘literary,’ and the resulting angst that authors (from Arthur Conan Doyle to Graham Greene to Willard Huntington Wright, who published under the pseudonym S.S. Van Dine to “avoid soiling his good name”) have felt about writing such ‘entertainments.’” Truly this is a book to explore, treasure, and give to any reader as a gift as this [full page review in the NY Times](#) makes clear.

Eskens, Allen. [Forsaken Country](#) (LittleBrown \$28). The way Itasca County Sheriff Tate Bolger tells it, there is no case. Sandy Voight withdrew most of her savings from her bank account, packed up her 6-year-old son, Pip, and all their belongings, and took off for parts unknown, leaving David Haas, her live-in lover, to come home from work to find her gone. She might have been afraid of Reed Harris, her violently abusive ex-husband, but Reed clearly didn’t have anything to do with her disappearance because he has a perfect alibi. Sandy’s father, Lyle Voight, doesn’t believe a word of this. He’s convinced that Sandy never would have vanished without a word to him, and he doesn’t think much of Bolger, who may have defeated him in the last election for sheriff but has no clue how to work the job. So Lyle looks up Max, who’s been living in an isolated cabin trying to come to terms with his complicated feelings about killing the man who murdered his wife in [The Deep Dark Descending](#) (\$15.95). Max isn’t eager to rejoin the human race, let alone get involved in another case, but he can’t resist the pleas of Lyle and his wife, Meredith, and soon enough he and Lyle are on the trail

of two men who’ve taken custody of Pip. Eskens provides an irresistible hook, a clever spin on a classic suspense plot, and a series of expertly escalating confrontations between enemies and ultimately between allies forced to acknowledge that their goals aren’t quite as consensual as they thought.

“The best stories test our view of the moral universe, which is one of the many reasons I love the work of Allen Eskens. *Forsaken Country* is a shining example of what fine crime fiction offers—a tight plot, intriguing characters, and important ethical questions. In this tale of a kidnapped boy and the men who desperately seek to save him, Eskens offers no easy answers, but delivers a taut Northwoods thriller with a raging pace guaranteed to sweep you along from first page to last. This is one of our best crime writers at the top of his game.”—William Kent Krueger

✠Fellowes, Jessica. [The Best Friend](#) (St Martins \$26.99). Set in England and spanning 76 years, this searing domestic noir chronicles shy protagonist Bella’s toxic relationship with narcissistic, charismatic Kate. The girls meet at age six and are inseparable until they’re 17, when Kate kisses Bella’s crush and then moves away without disclosing her new address. At 42, Kate—a married actor with an eight-year-old son—moves to Bella’s neighborhood. Though Bella—a married painter with a nine-year-old daughter—still harbors hurt, resentment, and distrust, she’s unable to resist the pull of Kate’s orbit. The pair fall back into old patterns, with Kate manipulating Bella at every turn, but then Kate’s actions kick off a devastating chain of events that changes the trajectory of both women’s lives and causes ripple effects for decades. “The tragic tale unfolds largely via revelatory snippets of conversation between the keenly drawn characters, lending a voyeuristic air.” This book is so not for me. You will know Fellowes from her series *The Mitford Murders*.

Greer, Sean Andrew. [Less Is Lost](#) (Little Brown \$31). For Arthur Less, life is going surprisingly well: he is a moderately accomplished novelist in a steady relationship with his partner, Freddy Pelu. But nothing lasts: the death of an old lover and a sudden financial crisis has Less running away from his problems yet again as he accepts a series of literary gigs that send him on a zigzagging adventure across the US. Less roves across the “Mild Mild West,” through the South and to his mid-Atlantic birthplace, with an ever-changing posse of writerly characters and his trusty duo – a human-like black pug, Dolly, and a rusty camper van nicknamed Rosina. He grows a handlebar mustache, ditches his signature gray suit, and disguises himself in the bolero-and-cowboy-hat costume of a true “Unitedstatesian”... with varying levels of success, as he continues to be mistaken for either a Dutchman, the wrong writer, or, worst of all, a “bad gay.” We cannot, however, escape ourselves—even across deserts, bayous, and coastlines. From his estranged father and strained relationship with Freddy, to the reckoning he experiences in confronting his privilege, Arthur Less must eventually face his personal demons. “With all of the irrepressible wit and musicality that made the earlier novel [Less](#) (\$16.99) a bestselling, Pulitzer Prize-winning, must-read breakout book, *Less Is Lost* is a profound and joyous novel about the enigma of life in America” and especially now for the LGBTQ+

✠Hamdy, Adam. [The Other Side of Night](#) (Atria \$27). In the preface to this stellar thriller from British author Hamdy, popular

novelist David Asha reflects on the close bond he shared with his son, Elliot, grateful for their time together but lamenting the tragic events that drove them apart. In the main narrative, various pertinent letters and emails, court and police reports, and news clippings tell the story of two people: disgraced police detective Harriet Kealty, dismissed from the force over manslaughter allegations; and the widowed David Asha whose wife, university physicist Elizabeth Asha, may have involved foul play. While researching a cryptic note found in a book, Harri learns about the Asha family; David appears to have stepped off a cliff to his death, leaving his orphaned little boy Elliott entrusted to a family friend, Ben Elmys, a man Harriet once held strong feelings for, but who spurned her love. “Mistrustful of Ben and concerned about the boy’s safety, Harriet goes on a private crusade to uncover evidence of wrongdoing, with shocking consequences. Intelligently plotted and powerfully told, Hamdy’s deviously twisty tale of fate and coincidence, love and courage, and profoundly tough choices will shock, stir, and haunt readers long after the final page.”

I haven’t yet gotten a reading copy so... this might be our British Crime Book of the Month for October. Note: The [Signed UK edition](#) (\$55) can be ordered Upon Request as long as the UK supply lasts.

Harrison, Jim. [Search for the Genuine](#) (Grove \$28). Harrison’s Nonfiction, 1970-2015. In this collection of new and previously published essays, the giant of letters (1937-2016) muses on everything from grouse hunting fishing to Zen Buddhism and matters of the spirit, including reported pieces on Yellowstone and shark-tagging in the open ocean, commentary on writers from Bukowski to Neruda to Peter Matthiessen, and a heartbreaking essay on life—and, for those attempting to cross in the ever-more-dangerous gaps, death—on the US/Mexico border. This is the first collection of his essays and journalism, some never before published, in 30 years.

Hartman, Virginia. [The Marsh Queen](#) (Gallery \$27.99). For fans of *Where the Crawdads Sing*, this debut follows a Washington, DC, artist as she faces her past and the secrets held in the waters of Florida’s lush swamps and wetlands. Loni Murrow is an accomplished bird artist at the Smithsonian who loves her job. But when she receives a call from her younger brother summoning her back home to help their obstinate mother recover after an accident, Loni’s neat, contained life in Washington, DC, is thrown into chaos, and she finds herself exactly where she does not want to be. Going through her mother’s things, Loni uncovers scraps and snippets of a time in her life she would prefer to forget—a childhood marked by her father Boyd’s death by drowning and her mother Ruth’s persistent bad mood. When Loni comes across a single, cryptic note from a stranger—“There are some things I have to tell you about Boyd’s death”—. Pulled between worlds—her professional accomplishments in Washington, and the small town of her childhood—Loni begins a dangerous quest

Hewson, David. [The Medici Murders](#) (Severn \$29.95). Starting a new series the wonderful British author Hewson takes us to Venice. **This will be our October International Thriller Book of the Month; if you do not belong to that club please order now. There is a UK Signed edition (\$45) available in October.**

When a well-known British TV historian, Marmaduke Godolphin, is found murdered in the canals of Venice during

carnival, stabbed by a stiletto blade, the Venetian police are eager to have the case solved and cleared up within a day—murder is bad for tourism! The police recruit the help of retired archivist, Arnold Clover. Godolphin had hired his services on arriving in Venice to help sort through some historical papers of note. These dusty documents may contain previously unknown information about the assassination of the murderer, Lorenzino de’ Medici, 500 years previously. How coincidental that Godolphin meets his death in the same place as the Medici murderer, Lorenzino, on a cold, dark, bloody night. Can Arnold use his powers of perception to establish a link and solve the murder of Godolphin?

Hoover, Colleen. [Verity](#) (Grand Central \$29). Hoover is such a buzzy bestseller thanks to TikTok that this paperback original now gets a hardcover edition.

House, Silas. [Lark Ascending](#) (Algonquin \$27). As fires devastate most of the United States, Lark and his family secure a place on a refugee boat headed to Ireland, the last country not yet overrun by extremists and rumored to be accepting American refugees. But Lark is the only one to survive the trip, and once ashore, he doesn’t find the safe haven he’d hoped for. As he runs for his life, Lark finds an abandoned dog who becomes his closest companion, and then a woman in search of her lost son. Together they form a makeshift family and attempt to reach Glendalough, a place they believe will offer protection. But can any community provide the safety that they seek? For readers of novels such as *Station Eleven*, *The Dog Stars*, and *Migrations*. The Indie Next Pick adds, “In a near future that seems closer and closer to becoming a reality, *Lark Ascending* follows Lark as he survives ordeal after ordeal. Silas House manages to imbue Lark’s story with humanity and hope.”

Huynh, Carolyn. [The Fortunes of Jaded Women](#) (Atria \$27) follows a female-led Vietnamese family long ago cursed to give birth to females only—until a prophecy predicts a son, beginning a phase of reuniting and healing for many generations.

Johansen, Iris. [Captive](#) (Grand Central \$28). The 29th Eve Duncan novel opens in Scotland, where forensic sculptor Eve’s adopted daughter, artist Jane MacGuire, is “a guest at the estate of John Angus MacDuff, the Earl of MacDuff’s Run.” When not sketching, Jane researches the elusive history of Fiona, an ancestor of MacDuff, who suspects Fiona may also be an ancestor of Jane, based on a portrait of Fiona that reminds him of Jane. Meanwhile, Jane’s significant other, MI6 agent Seth Caleb, is in Africa, where he’s being hunted by Hugh Bohdan, second in command to the late dictator Niko Rozkor, whom Seth killed on a mission for MI6. Though Seth is desperate to see Jane again, he’s staying away from her until Bohdan is no longer a threat. When Bohdan discovers Jane’s tie to Seth, he sets out to harm her. Just as Jane uncovers a 200-year-old secret regarding Fiona, she must go on the run from Bohdan. So Jane and Seth must join forces to unlock the fascinating puzzle, even as they hurtle toward a lethal final confrontation in the Highlands. “Jane and Seth wind up overcoming almost insurmountable odds in their efforts to elude the vengeful Bohdan and readers will eagerly turn the pages to see what happens next. Johansen gives romantic suspense fans exactly what they want.”

King, Stephen. [Fairy Tale](#) (Scribner \$32.50). I just listened to a conversation with Stephen King and learned that King’s mom read fairy tales to him when he was young. And that Oz and the

Emerald City were an influence on this book which, King says, is basically a story about a boy and his dog but in the King universe where the real and the supernatural exist in parallel.

Charlie Reade looks like a regular high school kid, great at baseball and football, a decent student. But he carries a heavy load. His mom was killed in a hit-and-run accident when he was ten, and grief drove his dad to drink. Charlie learned how to take care of himself—and his dad. When Charlie is seventeen, he meets a dog named Radar and her aging master, Howard Bowditch, a recluse in a big house at the top of a big hill, with a locked shed in the backyard. Sometimes strange sounds emerge from it. Charlie starts doing jobs for Mr. Bowditch and loses his heart to Radar. Then, when Bowditch dies, he leaves Charlie a cassette tape telling a story no one would believe. And what that is you must read this book to discover.... Excellent for Dark Tower fans.

Kuang, RF. [Babel: Or the Necessity of Violence: An Arcane History of the Oxford Translators' Revolution](#) (Harper Voyager \$27.99). In this latest from the multi-award-nominated Kuang, a Chinese boy orphaned in 1828 Canton (now Guangzhou) is brought to London and eventually enters Oxford's Royal Institute of Translation—called Babel—which doubles as a center for magic and compels him to work in support of Britain's imperial ambitions in China. The Indie Next comment on an instant bestseller (meaning we will not offer first prints): "What power do words really have? Kuang explores this question in a unique standalone fantasy where a magical system drawn from translation and silverwork fuels colonialism. With beautiful writing and well-developed characters, this is a fabulous book. For readers of Katherine Addison, Zen Cho, and N.K. Jemisin."

Miley, Mary. [Deadly Spirits](#) (Severn \$29.99). Summer, 1924. Young widow Maddie Pastore has been working for fraudulent spiritual medium Madame Carlotta for nearly a year—if "work" you could call it. Investigating Carlotta's clients, and attending séances as her shill, keeps Maddie and her young son Tommy fed and clothed, and she's grown to love the kind, well-meaning spiritualist like family. Still, Maddie, estranged from her abusive parents for over a decade, can't help but wonder what fates befell her brothers and sisters. So when she lucks into two free tickets to a glamorous Chicago speakeasy and recognizes the star performer as her pretty little sister Sophie, she's beyond delighted. But before Maddie can meet with Sophie again, the telephone rings. It's Sophie's husband, calling in a panic to tell her that his wife is locked in the Cook County jail, charged with first-degree murder.... Ordered Upon Request like all titles published by Severn House

Muir, Tamsyn. [Nona the Ninth](#) (Tor \$28.99). The Locked Tomb Series, our Pat King's favorite, continues. Her city is under siege. The zombies are coming back. And all Nona wants is a birthday party. In many ways, Nona is like other people. She lives with her family, has a job at her local school, and loves walks on the beach and meeting new dogs. But Nona's not like other people. Six months ago she woke up in a stranger's body, and she's afraid she might have to give it back. The whole city is falling to pieces. A monstrous blue sphere hangs on the horizon, ready to tear the planet apart. Blood of Eden forces have surrounded the last Cohort facility and wait for the Emperor Undying to come calling. Their leaders want Nona to be the weapon that will save them from the Nine Houses. But Nona would prefer to live an ordinary life....

North, Claire. [Ithaca](#) (Orbit \$28). The Indie Next Pick: "Rich with detail and compelling characters, this gorgeously written novel left me brimming with warmth and courage. The often-misunderstood Hera provides a perfect lens for a faithful, unique, and satisfying retelling of a beloved story."

O'Farrell, Maggie. [The Marriage Portrait](#) (Knopf \$28). Library Reads makes a Pick: "In 16th-century Italy, teen Lucrezia de Medici passes from her father's control to her husband's, with neither considering her a person with a right to her own life. O'Farrell's poetic writing pulls you into this tale based on the likely subject of Robert Browning's poem 'My Last Duchess.' For fans of Geraldine Brooks, Isabel Allende, and Hilary Mantel." Quoting bookseller Gayle Shanks, "Though the subject matter is sometimes difficult to read—a wealthy teenager given in marriage to a much older Duke who expects loyalty, obedience, and acquiescence to nightly sex to create an heir to the throne—one cannot but hope for the young woman to rebel against her plight. Control of women's bodies and minds is foremost in the thinking of many men of power these days, and this historical novel reveals that some men will stoop to anything to get their way—and that women will resist until that is no longer an option or they are intelligent enough to recognize the danger they are in and seek relief through any means possible. O'Farrell's Lucrezia is artistic, naive, kind, and insightful. She's a wonderful heroine and will be remembered long after you close the book."

Osman, Richard. [The Bullet That Missed](#) (Viking \$27) delivers laughs along with a nicely woven plot involving fraud, murder, and life in the Kent retirement village of Coopers Chase. At the club's regular meeting in the Jigsaw Room, the four members—Elizabeth, a retired but still well-connected British spy; Ibrahim, a well-meaning psychiatrist; Ron, a still-feisty activist for workers' rights; and the unexpectedly shrewd Joyce, whose diary entries enliven the narrative—decide to tackle the cold case of Bethany Waites, a journalist for the local TV station whose wrecked car was found at the bottom of a cliff 10 years earlier. The police declared it a murder, surmising that Bethany's body had been washed out to sea. The group's investigation stirs up a hornet's nest and leads to another death, a kidnapping, and blackmail. While Elizabeth grapples with her conscience (and a gun), the gang and their unlikely new friends—including TV stars, money launderers and ex-KGB colonels—unravel a fresh mystery. But can they catch the culprit and save Elizabeth before the murderer strikes again?

The pace is breezy, the characters are intelligent and varied in their interests and backgrounds, and the humor is often pitched to readers who understand the vagaries of getting older. For a UK Signed edition check Signed Books. Library Reads raves: "The Thursday Murder Club cracks open the decade-old death of a journalist who was hot on the trail of a fraud scheme when she was murdered. Another hilarious mystery featuring the quirky (but highly effective) quartet and all their friends. For fans of Julia Chapman and SJ Bennett."

Paretsky, Sara, ed. [Mysterious Bookshop Presents the Best Mysteries of 2022](#) (Mysterious Press \$28.95). See New in Large Paperbacks below for highlights of this year's stories collection.

Penrose, Andrea. [Murder at the Serpentine Bridge](#) (Kensington \$26). The Napoleonic Wars are finally over, and the Prince Regent has invited the sovereigns of Europe to London for a

gala peace celebration. Charlotte Sloane, whose secret identity is scathing political cartoonist A.J. Quill, has finally married the dashing Earl of Wrexford, and they have created an unorthodox family with their two rambunctious, streetwise wards. But after the boys discover the body of engineering wizard Jeremiah Willis floating in a lake in Hyde Park, Charlotte's long-desired life of domesticity will have to wait a while longer. Willis was designing a fearsome secret weapon, but the prototype for his invention is missing, and the Crown's spymaster, Lord Grentham, recruits Wrexford to retrieve it before it falls into the hands of a foreign enemy.

☞Preston, Alex. [Winchelsea](#) (Canongate \$28). This is a remarkable novel set in the 1740s around the vicious Hawkshurt smuggling gang in the Winchelsea/Rye area of England's southern ports with a journey up to Culloden for the defeat of Bonnie Prince Charlie's try for the throne. But Preston (with two cool maps) begins with the history of the flourish port known as Old Winchelsea which fell into the Channel in 1287 and was rebuilt with useful tunnels for smugglers. By the 1700s the flourishing port fell into decline, hence the smugglers. Goody is the adopted daughter of a physician and leader of a rival gang, also a supporter of the Jacobites, who was killed for siphoning off funds. Her adopted mother has her tongue cut out. Goody is unusually tall, very brave, and in time after various adventures and misadventures becomes William to fight in Scotland and then cross dresses in a return to the Romney Marshes. It's a complex tale, well told, and full of fascinating stuff. I have stayed in Rye and East Grinstead, and visited Dungeness and Winchelsea which all retain the flavor described so eloquently by Preston.

☞Ripley, Mike. [Mr. Champion's Mosaic](#) (Severn \$29.99). Ripley scores another Starred Review for his continuation of this marvelous series I have always loved: "Even devoted admirers of Margery Allingham's originals will be hard-pressed to find any false notes in Ripley's impressive 10th novel continuing the exploits of her amateur gentleman detective, Albert Champion. It's 1972, and the 72-year-old Champion has been a rush replacement speaker at a London gathering of a society dedicated to the works of late crime writer Evadne Childe, whom he knew. Champion was tapped in place of film star Peyton Spruce, who portrayed Childe's archaeologist sleuth, Rex Troughton, in a less than successful 1950s movie. The BBC has just begun work on a TV series featuring Troughton, with an aging Spruce again playing the lead. But the production has been disrupted by many disturbing incidents, including an assault on the director and a car running over Spruce in what may have been a murder attempt. Champion agrees to investigate, aided by his actor son, Rupert, and his entertaining longtime ally, ex-con Magersfontein Lugg. The lead remains in character, even as Ripley both ages him and features him in plots set after his creator's death in 1966. Ripley's brilliant inventiveness demonstrates that golden age characters and tropes can still work for contemporary fair-play fans."

Robb, J D. [Desperation in Death: An Eve Dallas Novel](#) (St Martins \$28.99). This series now has an astonishing 55+ entries, due in large part to Robb's, aka Nora Roberts, ability to deliver exactly what her fans expect, even if it's not always credible. The heat between NYPD Lt. Eve Dallas and her mega rich, supportive, and gorgeous husband Roarke, is a major part, but so is the confidence with which Dallas, strides into danger to best the bad guys. Here, in 2061, it's to a crime scene in Manhattan's

Battery Park, where a 13-year-old girl has been impaled through the chest with a spear of wood. Eve presses her identi-pad to the victim's right thumb and up pops the name Mina Cabot of Devon, Pa., who vanished from her home months ago while returning from soccer practice. The case leads Eve to other murders, abductions, and the disturbing world of child trafficking, besides stirring up traumatic memories from her own past. The principals behind these abhorrent crimes are identified early on, and Eve and company do little investigating as such (electronic devices readily provide needed information), but who cares?

Rowland, Alexandra. [A Taste of Gold and Iron](#) (TorDotcom \$27.99)"delivers a breathtakingly intimate narrative in this gorgeous fantasy, in which the political intrigue of a kingdom serves as backdrop to a romance between the softest of hearts. It ought to be a happy occasion when Prince Kadou Mahisti's older sister, the sultan, gives birth to a daughter, but a break-in at one of the kingdom's guilds that same night calls Kadou away. Already prone to bouts of debilitating worry, Kadou spirals when a minor confrontation with his niece's father tragically escalates into an incident that causes the death of several of his bodyguards.... Desperate to regain the perceived lost love of his sister, Kadou throws himself into investigating the break-in, dragging Evemer along with him, and the two are irrevocably bonded as they uncover a plot that puts both the royal family and the stability of the kingdom itself in danger. Rowland brings wonderful depth to the interpersonal relationships; the romance that blossoms between Kadou and Evemer puts fun, familiar tropes alongside soul-wrenching acts of devotion, and the familial bonds are just as well crafted. In exploring what monarchs owe their people, and what individuals owe each other, this achingly tender fantasy wows."—*PW* Starred Review

Ryan, Annelise. [A Death in Door County](#) (Penguin \$27). A Wisconsin bookstore owner and cryptozoologist is asked to investigate a series of deaths that just might be proof of a fabled lake monster in this first installment of a new mystery series. Morgan Carter, owner of the Odds and Ends bookstore in Door County, Wisconsin, has a hobby. When she's not tending the store, she's hunting cryptids—creatures whose existence is rumored, but never proven to be real. It's a hobby that cost her parents their lives, but one she'll never give up on. So when a number of bodies turn up on the shores of Lake Michigan with injuries that look like bites from a giant unknown animal, police chief Jon Flanders turns to Morgan for help. A skeptic at heart, Morgan can't turn down the opportunity to find proof of an entity whose existence she can't definitively rule out. She and her beloved rescue dog, Newt, journey to the Death's Door strait to hunt for a homicidal monster in the lake

Salvatore, RA. [The Dao of Drizzt](#) (Harper \$40). Growing up in the chaos of Menzoberranzan, one young drow elf tries to make sense of the conflict between the traditions he must serve and the protestations of his own conscience. To lay bare the injustices he sees and to strengthen his own resolve to follow the ethical call of his heart, Drizzt Do'Urden is both an agent of action and self-reflection. These, his writings, become critical to his salvation, the way in which he makes sense of a world that to him makes little sense at all. The impact of his words, of his meditation, of his inward determination will carry him forward, forcing upon him decisions that others would consider noble, perhaps, but surely foolhardy...impossible even. But to Drizzt, the only choice

is to do what is true and right. These journal entries, then, show the struggle between what has always been and what should be, where the courage to transcend the many obstacles of societal expectations and entrenched power—if nowhere else, then in the soul of an idealist. They were written to help Drizzt understand himself. But the universal truths will resonate with readers throughout the Realms. At this price point consider this as a Gift Idea for a Salvatore fan.

Scott, James M. [Black Snow](#) (Norton \$35). Amid all of the rage for WWII fiction comes an excellent nonfiction. While this is the Pacific theater, not the European, this work pairs very well with that of the James R. Benn found in Signed Books.

Pulitzer finalist Scott contends that the 1945 firebombing campaign against Japan marked a moral shift in U.S. military strategy and paved the way to the use of the atomic bomb. Drawing on oral histories and survivor diaries, Scott vividly recounts the air raid on Tokyo orchestrated by Major General Curtis LeMay, which incinerated one out of every four buildings in the Japanese capital and killed more than 100,000 people. LeMay continued the campaign for 159 days, targeting Nagoya, Osaka, and Kobe, among other cities, destroying homes, factories, aircraft plants, and oil refineries. “Scott carefully builds up to the firebombing campaign, detailing the pressure on American commanders to bring the war to a close, the capture of the Mariana Islands to be used as airfields, challenges involved in building the B-29 bomber, and General Haywood Hansell Jr.’s refusal to shift strategies from high-altitude daylight precision bombing of industries to nighttime, low-altitude incendiary bombing of civilian neighborhoods. Also profiled is Army Air Forces commander Henry “Hap” Arnold, who thought that ‘crush[ing] Japan’ would demonstrate the need for an independent air force and made the decision to replace Hansell with LeMay. Full of vivid action scenes and sharp character observations, this riveting WWII history reveals the staggering cost of obtaining peace.”

Smith, Alexander McCall. [A Song of Comfortable Chairs](#) (Knopf \$27). Even as Grace Makutsi’s husband faces cutthroat competition from an international firm seeking to price him out of the office furniture market with a sleazy campaign touting subpar products, he and Mma Makutsi agree to help a friend’s troubled child. Mma Ramotswe and grande dame Mma Potokwani pitch in, and the No. 1 Ladies Detective Agency triumphs again.” McCall Smith choreographs an ingenious ‘trickster tricked’ plot here, centered on a swarm of cutthroat business people and one surly teenager.... Readers [will] delightedly immerse themselves in descriptions of the Botswana landscape; in Precious and Grace’s conversations over mugs of red bush tea; and in the doings of the rest of the cast of comic characters.”—*Booklist* Starred Review

Spicer, Charles. [Coffee with Hitler: The Story of the Amateur Spies Who Tried to Civilize the Nazis](#) (Pegasus \$29.95) explores the amateur British intelligence agents who tried to make friends with the Nazis. Read this terrific review in the [Wall Street Journal](#)

St John, Katherine. [The Vicious Circle](#) (Harper \$27.99). St. John sweeps us away to another exotic locale, this time to a remote part of the Mexican jungle. Sveta, a model engaged to the scion of a wealthy NY family who disdain her, inherits her Uncle Paul’s entire magnificent estate including Xanadu, a cult-like wellness

center run by a charismatic but dangerous leader. And a huge fortune. As the jungle closes in, the story takes several sinister turns under St. John’s skilled hands. But in many ways this is a coming of age story, or a story of a woman gaining agency and also unmasking family secrets, many held by her stubborn Russian mother. St. John masters the bougie lifestyle with a real talent for pacing and characters. I loved [The Lion’s Den](#) and [The Siren](#).

Stashower, Daniel. [American Demon](#) (St Martins \$29.99). Fans of true crime, or rather historical crime fiction, will enjoy a story of Eliot Ness’s hunt for Cleveland’s the Mad Butcher of Kingsbury Run that began on September 5, 1934, when a gruesome discovery, the lower half of a woman, was found on the shores of Lake Erie. Over the next four years twelve more dismembered bodies would be found scattered across the city. The newly appointed director of public safety, Ness, was the mayor’s choice for working this case and calming the terror and uproar. It became a battle of wits between a law enforcement hero and a madman. Stashower annotates his story and wrestles with the character of Ness and with his legacy, IMHO the most interesting aspect of the book.

Here’s a review from *PW*: “The case of the Torso Killer, who killed at least 12 people in Cleveland during the 1930s, is the subject of Edgar winner Stashower’s fascinating book. Eliot Ness was the city’s director of public safety when the crime spree took place and Stashower details how Ness’s failure to capture the killer took a huge toll on his reputation. The nuanced presentation of Ness—he was cheating on his wife, while not giving the case enough attention—is part of what makes the book hum. We admire the combination of a baffling unsolved crime with a nuanced portrayal of an American icon.”

✂Stephenson Simon. [Sometimes People Die](#) (Hanover Square \$27.99). There aren’t many medical thrillers these days, so here’s one that may be overlong but still fills the bill. After opioid addiction costs the unnamed 29-year-old narrator his job in a Scottish hospital, he finds work at the desperate, understaffed St. Luke’s in London, where he struggles to cope with the onslaught of poverty-stricken patients with “Victorian ailments” and “obscure exotic diseases.” When an older patient dies unexpectedly, her barrister daughter’s questions prompt a police investigation, which shows an alarming number of unexpected deaths at St. Luke’s. The narrator, hauled in for questioning, worries that he’s going to be arrested as suspicious deaths continue with no clear pattern of victim or method. When his roommate, an affable orthopedic surgeon, dies by suicide in the hospital parking lot, the narrator relapses. The police arrest a suspect, and the novel’s tone shifts from dread to suspense as the narrator turns amateur sleuth when the facts don’t seem to add up....

Theroux, Paul. [Bad Angel Brothers](#) (Harper \$28.99). With no advance copy, and with an interest in Theroux as a travel writer, I quote this *Kirkus* review: “Brothers Frank and Cal Belanger are as mismatched as the halves of Frank’s visage that give him ‘the contradictory face you see in some Greek masks.’ A lawyer in their hometown of Littleford, Massachusetts, Frank has accumulated wealth and power through his undeniable skill at manipulating people, while his adventurous younger brother, a geologist, has roamed the world mining precious gems. Now in their 50s, the brothers’ longtime rivalry boils over into escalating,

if asymmetrical, psychological warfare when Cal returns from one of his frequent lengthy international sojourns for an extended stay in Littleford with his wife, a crusader against child labor, and son. Whether he's simply gaslighting or unleashing every weapon in his legal arsenal, Frank marshals a set of emotional and professional tools honed over a lifetime to destroy the successful career and family life Cal has built. Cal, who narrates the novel, describes his mounting sense of helplessness as Frank turns his strengths into weaknesses and exploits his every misstep. Eventually, Cal's frustration turns to thoughts of mayhem, as he imagines ending his torment by dispatching his brother without leaving a trace. In Cal's telling, Frank is the embodiment of pure evil, while Cal has at least enough insight to describe some of his own moral failings with a minimum of self-justification. All of this offers a promising setup that turns out to be stronger than its execution, as the novel takes too long to reach its inevitable climax. Theroux is an acclaimed travel writer, and he brings those skills to bear in intermittent scenes vividly describing Cal's gem-hunting work in places like Colombia and Zambia and some interesting aspects of the rare gem business

Totenberg, Nina. [Dinners with Ruth: A Memoir on the Powers of Friendship](#) (Simon & Schuster \$27.99). Celebrated NPR correspondent Nina Totenberg delivers an extraordinary memoir of her personal successes, struggles, and life-affirming relationships, including her beautiful friendship of nearly fifty years with Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

Trinchieri, Camilla. [Murder on the Vine](#) (Soho \$27.95) finds former NYPD detective Nico Doyle enjoying breakfast one Sunday morning at his rented farmhouse with his friends from the local *carabinieri* station, *Maresciallo* Salvatore Perillo and *Brigadiere* Daniele Donato. A distress call brings the policemen back to the station, where hotel manager Laura Benati reports that her 80-year-old bartender, Cesare Rinaldi, has been missing for three days. The next morning, Nico goes to the assistance of Jimmy Lando, co-owner of the Bar All'Angolo in Gravigna, after Jimmy runs out of gas on the road from Florence. Nico, with the help of his dog OneWag, discovers Cesare's body in the trunk of Jimmy's car. Nico, Perillo, and Donato try to figure out the links between Cesare's murder, the dead man's missing 1972 Ducati 750GTs, and the sale of prime vineyard properties. Rabelaisian feasts ("Fried polenta with sautéed porcini mushrooms, garlic and parsley") provide seasoning as the action builds to a festive, celebratory bar gala. Trinchieri makes crime solving adventuresome, fun, and flavorful. This is the best in the series so far. To really enjoy visiting the glorious Tuscan Wine Country, start with the excellent [Murder in Chianti](#) and [The Bitter Taste of Murder](#) (\$16.95 each).

✦Trow, MJ. [The Yeoman's Tale](#) (Severn \$28.99). Mob violence was a problem in the 14th Century as today. June, 1381. Embarking on his annual pilgrimage to Canterbury, Geoffrey Chaucer and his fellow travelers are forced to turn back when confronted with a horde of armed and angry peasants, intent on marching to London. Returning to the city to warn the authorities of the approaching danger, the pilgrims hole up at the Tabard Inn and prepare for the coming invasion. That same night, a woman's body is fished out of the River Thames, her throat cut. When he discovers that the victim was the wife of one of his fellow pilgrims, Chaucer determines to investigate. Could the woman's henpecked husband be responsible for her death? A jealous

business rival? Or was she murdered by one of the pilgrims? For you medieval mystery lovers. Ordered Upon Request.

Urquhart, Alaina. [The Butcher and the Wren](#) (Zando \$27). "Urquhart is a true Weirdo, in the best way possible. As an Autopsy Technician and co-host of a widely successful podcast, *Morbid*, she uses her extensive knowledge and experience to bring us up close and dirty behind the scenes of the role of a Medical Examiner and into the mind of a deranged serial killer. Dr. Wren Muller may not be able to speak to the dead, but that doesn't mean they don't have stories to tell. And with a dangerous killer dumping his victims throughout New Orleans, it is only a matter of time before she strays into his crosshairs trying to unfold the who, and the why, of this monster." —*The Bookloft* on this debut getting lots of attention. Reviewer Neil Nyren adds, "Urquhart takes a cat-and-mouse chase between two instantly memorable antagonists and turns all the conventions of the genre upside down. Dark, twisty, full of authentic detail, it'll have you listening to the night in an entirely different way."

"*The Butcher and the Wren* is perfect for fans of Dexter. Pitting a brutal serial killer against a determined medical examiner, the story is a pulse-pounding race against time. And the details the author weaves in due to her unique background as an autopsy tech heighten the realism and the suspense. Fans of *Morbid* will love the co-host's debut novel." —Kaira Rouda. It is vaguely possible we may score Signed copies of this debut. Stay tuned.

OUR SEPTEMBER LARGE PAPERBACK PICKS

✦Cambridge, Colleen. [Murder at Mallowan Hall](#) (\$15.95). This is classic *Upstairs/Downstairs* stuff, emphasis on Downstairs. You will enjoy a visit with Agatha Christie but the real interest lies in the incredibly meticulous way the servants under the stern direction of the housekeeper (and Agatha's friend) Mrs. (courtesy title) Phyllida Bright. We're in Devon (where Christie's actual country house Greenway is located, now deeded to the National Trust), 1930. WWI has reduced the number of people employed domestically, but this household staff is kept up to the Gilded Age high standards although they slip during the investigation. Phyllida is an unabashed fan of Hercule Poirot, and one reason she's currently unwed is "that she had yet to find a man who met the standards set by the proper Belgian detective." Early one morning, Phyllida goes to draw the curtains in the library and finds one of the Mallowans' house-party guests lying dead on the rug, a fountain pen protruding from the side of his neck. Another murder follows. The general ineptitude of the local police offends Phyllida, who decides to use her little gray cells to solve the case. Of course it's not nearly as easy as Poirot makes it look.

Cash, Wiley. [When Ghosts Come Home](#) (\$17.99). Karen reviews: Sheriff Winston Barnes has a full plate. Elections are coming up and he has a formidable opponent who just might win. His wife has cancer and his relationship with his adult daughter is fractured. Added to all that is a plane crash and, when found, had no pilot or cargo. Not too far from the site, is a man, whose wounds indicate a murder. Were the two connected? The FBI is called in before Barnes has a chance to begin his investigation. Barnes knows his community and struggles to speak the truth rather than say what works best. The murdered man is the son of a black school teacher who challenges Barnes to do the right thing. Thus begins the sheriff's attempt to navigate the

racial issues that have always existed in the community, but not acknowledged. The characters are interesting, flawed, and deal with events as they come their way, and remind me of Chris Whitaker's [We Begin at the End](#) (\$17.99).

Crane, Frances. [The Turquoise Shop](#) (American Mystery Classics \$15.95). In a small, artsy New Mexico town, the arrival of a wealthy stranger from back East is enough to get folks talking. Even a few years after Mona Brandon landed in Santa Maria, the rumor mill still churns with tid-bits about her money, her influence, and — when a corpse is discovered in the nearby desert that may or may not be her husband — her secret and suspicious past. See Classics for more.

Engberg, Katrine. [The Harbor](#) (\$17.99). I was much struck by Danish Engberg's mystery [The Butterfly House](#) (\$16.99). And now, yay!, Detectives Jeppe Kørner and Anette Werner return in another fast-paced and rich Scandinavian noir. When affluent parents, who own an auction house, find a cryptic, threatening note addressed to them in their kitchen, they're convinced their 15-year-old son Oscar Dreyer-Hoff is being held ransom. Soon, Oscar's Danish teacher, Malthe Saether, is found strangled. Convinced that Oscar's apparent kidnapping and Malthe's death are tied together, Jeppe and Anette begin their investigation, aided by a large cast of supporting characters, all of whom, like retired academic Esther de Laurenti (who had a lead role in 2019's *The Tenant*), are delightfully fleshed out. Meanwhile, Jeppe struggles to maintain an amicable relationship with his girlfriend's daughters, and Anette becomes attracted to one of the witnesses.

Eskens, Allen. [The Stolen Hours](#) (\$16.99). A law clerk still battling demons from her past must rise to dizzying heights in preparing a case against a serial sex killer. Lila Nash has never truly recovered from her rape when she was 18. She's cut herself, tried to kill herself, spent years in therapy, powered her way through law school, and landed a plum entry-level job with the Hennepin County Attorney's Office despite the fact that Frank Dovey, the new prosecutor, has hated Lila ever since she and her law school mentor, professor Boady Sanden, embarrassed him in court. Now Andi Fitch, the aggressive prosecutor to whom Dovey has assigned Lila as an assistant in the serene confidence that she'll fail, presses her to make the case against wedding photographer Gavin Spencer, who's accused of assaulting and nearly killing bridesmaid Sadie Vauk. Spencer, a serial predator who plans and executes his murderous assaults meticulously and has a special gift for seeing around curves and destroying the evidence that might incriminate him, is a ruthless antagonist. As Eskens demonstrates, however, he's cut from the same cloth as Frank Dovey, whose bloodless campaign against Lila is every bit as unscrupulous. Even readers who predict the tale's biggest twist before it arrives will still have the breath knocked out of them by the surprises that follow."—*Kirkus Reviews*

Flower, Amanda. [Because I Could Not Stop for Death](#) (Berkley \$17). I can't resist the start of an Emily Dickinson Mystery series although I have mixed feelings about using real people as lead characters. Our blogger Lesa Holstine, however, is all in as her review reveals: When Emily Dickinson hires Willa Noble as a housemaid in 1855, neither young woman knows it will lead to a murder investigation. At 18, Willa's brother Henry dreams of adventure. But his schemes lead to his death in the livery stable. With no one left in her family, a grieving Willa confides in Emily

that she suspects her brother was killed. Emily is determined to find Henry's killer. She and Willa soon uncover stories of slave catchers and secret involvement in the Underground Railroad in Amherst, MA. Emily even finds ways to investigate when she joins her father and family in Washington, DC, insisting on bringing her maid along so they can follow and meet with men from Amherst. But when they're back home and questioning local residents, they stir up trouble that endangers them. Agatha Award winner Flower's ("Amish Candy Shop" and "Magical Bookshop" series) first historical mystery introduces a courageous Emily Dickinson as a protagonist who's stronger than expected. The thoughtful story involving class, social, and political issues may appeal to the poet's fans, as well as readers of Edith Maxwell's "Quaker Midwife Mysteries" series.

✠Lovesey, Peter. [Diamond and the Eye](#) (\$16.95). Stone the crows! It's 30 years since Peter Diamond made his debut in the award-winning [The Last Detective](#) (\$9.99). Now a detective superintendent — still luxuriating in a lovely Bath — his 20th investigation forces him into a reluctant collaboration with Johnny Getz, a private eye whose office is above a hairdressers called Shear Amazing, and who has overdosed on American private eye style and language which rubs Diamond very much the wrong way. A Bath dealer in antiques has gone missing. Unfortunately, a body is soon found dead in the shop in an Egyptian coffin, prompting the wisecracking Getz to quip: "No mummy, for sure, but I had a nasty feeling he was someone's daddy." As this suggests, Peter Lovesey writes feel-good crime yet he never lets the comedy viti-ate the ingenious mystery plots.

Mills, Kyle. [Vince Flynn: Total Power](#) (\$17.99). After 20 years in the game, Rapp is seriously banged up, he's got a wife and child to protect, he has no relationship with the new U.S. president, and he sees his beloved America collapsing into extremism. Mitch heads to South Africa, where he has a house and plans to become a long-distance bicycle racer. But shortly after his arrival, Nicholas Ward, the world's first trillionaire, shows up to ask for his help finding missing virologist David Chism. Chism, who was working on a vaccine for any type of coronavirus that exists now and any that might arise in the future, disappeared after his laboratory in Uganda, financed by Ward, was attacked by a local terrorist. Mitch, with his wife's blessing, accepts and joins old pal Scott Coleman's security team to locate Chism. Mills delivers the goods, including a CIA mole, perfidy at the highest levels of the U.S. government, and close-combat with a messianic psychopathic terrorist villain who commands a drug-fueled army.

Rosenfield, Kat. [No One Will Miss Her](#) (\$17.99). An Edgar nominee and 2021 First Mystery Book of the Month in hardcover. The twist in this one is terrific, and unexpected. Rosenfield thrills with a gruesome murder in the atmospheric New England town of Copper Falls. Lizzie Ouelette is known in her hometown as "the junkyard girl." Raised on her father's junkyard and derided by the town as a misfit, there's nothing wholesome about Lizzie's upbringing. A dark, ferocious cloud seems to follow her, even when she shocks the town by marrying high school baseball star Dwayne Cleaves. But now Lizzie is dead, found shot at her lake cabin with her nose cut off and her body stuffed into the garbage disposal. Dwayne is missing and there's no sign of Adrienne and Ethan Richards, the wealthy Boston couple who rented the cabin from Lizzie. When homicide detective Ian Bird is assigned to the case, he realizes Ethan is the infamous financier whose fraudulent

actions destroyed the life savings of many innocent people, including Bird's parents. Rosenfield dares readers with tantalizing hints and glimpses of what initially appears as a straightforward crime. Then "the superb character-driven plot delivers an astonishing, believable jolt! Rosenfield shines a searing light on issues of classism, jealousy, and squandered potential."

Sallis, James. [Drive](#) (\$14.99). "Full throttle... Sallis' riveting novella reads the way a Tarantino or Soderbergh neo-noir plays, artfully weaving through Driver's haunted memory and fueled by confident storytelling and keen observations about moviemaking, low-life living, and, yes, driving. Short and not so sweet, Drive is one lean, mean, masterful machine. "—*Entertainment Weekly*. Originally written in 2005 and published by Poisoned Pen Press, this novel is the inspiration for the iconic 2011 film starring Ryan Gosling in the role of the man known only as 'Driver', a Hollywood stunt driver by day and a getaway driver by night. The gritty back streets of Los Angeles are the backdrop for what the New York Times calls "a perfect piece of noir fiction" in which the Driver is double-crossed in a burglary gone horribly wrong. This beautiful new edition introduces a noir classic to a new generation of readers, featuring added materials, including a reading group guide and author Q&A.

Tarantino, Quentin. [Once Upon a Time in Hollywood](#) (\$17.99). Tarantino delivers his movie of the same name to the book world. Here, 1960's Hollywood is brought to you by the filmmaker who loves ALL things movie-related. "Classic, sparks-flying Tarantino... Tarantino's explosive dialogue, with its blend of streetwise and formal cadences, is almost as effective written down as read aloud... Far from being the throwaway artifact it sometimes pretends to be, Tarantino's first novel may even, as he's hinted, herald the start of a new direction for this relentlessly inventive director." —*The Washington Post*

Thor, Brad. [Near Dark](#) (\$17.99). This terrific thriller, the 19th Scot Harvath (yes the large paperback has been slow to come), is not just a killer story but it's a transition from one stage of Harvath's life to another. The world's largest bounty has just been placed upon Harvath. His only hope for survival is to outwit, outrun, and outlast his enemies long enough to get to reason behind recruiting a pool of assassins, winner take all. And the person who set it in play. But for Scot Harvath to accomplish his most dangerous mission ever—one that has already claimed the lives of the people closest to him, including his new wife—he's going to need help—a lot of it. Not knowing whom he can trust, Harvath finds an unlikely ally in Norwegian intelligence operative Sølvi Kolstad. Just as smart, just as deadly, and just as determined, this Norwegian ninja not only has the skills, but also the broken, troubled past to match Harvath's own.... Thor went on in Harvath #20, [Black Ice](#) (\$9.99), with another ripping Arctic story, and then brilliantly switched to an India/China landscape in this year's book, [Rising Tiger](#) (\$25 SIGNED), new price, which I absolutely loved.

Turnbull, Cadwell. [No Gods, No Monsters](#) (\$18.99). This huge favorite with our Pat King is also an Indie Next Pick along with the *NY Times*, NPR, *Library Journal*, *Kirkus Reviews*... "Cadwell Turnbull weaves fantasy with current events to reveal how difficult it is to hold onto your humanity when society denies your existence or, worse, systematically erases you."

One October morning, Laina gets the news that her brother has been shot and killed by Boston cops. But what looks like a case of police brutality soon reveals something much stranger. Monsters are real. And they want everyone to know it. As creatures from myth and legend come out of the shadows, seeking safety through visibility, their emergence sets off a chain of seemingly unrelated events. Members of a local werewolf pack are threatened into silence. A professor follows a missing friend's trail of bread crumbs to a mysterious secret society. And a young boy with unique abilities seeks refuge in a pro-monster organization with secrets of its own. And the basic mystery is: why now?

Unger, Lisa. [Last Girl Ghosted](#) (\$17.99). Unger's terrific 2020 novel [Confessions on the 7:45](#) was one of our Crime Books of the Month we were so impressed. And we are again with this one: Advice columnist Wren Greenwood, the protagonist of this enthralling psychological thriller, meets Adam Harper after she joins the online dating app Torch. Wren and Adam begin an emotional affair that she believes will last, but three months later Adam vanishes, ghosting Wren by deleting all his contact information, including his Torch profile, and disconnecting his cell phone. Wren is further devastated when a private investigator shows up at her Brooklyn townhouse claiming that Adam may be responsible for the disappearance of three women, who, along with all their money, have never been located. The search for Adam forces Wren to confront her turbulent childhood, which included a violent father who insisted his family live off the grid. Readers will root for the appealing, intelligent characters, even when they're not acting in their own best interest.

Vidich, Paul. [The Matchmaker](#) (\$16.95). It's 1989, and American Anne Simpson works as an interpreter at the Joint Allied Refugee Operations Center in West Berlin briefing refugees from Eastern Europe. She's happily married to German piano tuner Stefan Koehler. Then a consular officer informs her Stefan is missing, his wallet found next to a canal. Simpson believed her husband had been in Vienna and Prague tuning orchestra pianos. Her alarm grows when she finds out West German intelligence suspects Stefan is working with the so-called Matchmaker, the head of East German counterintelligence, to provide confidential details about NATO deployments. As Anne tries to ascertain her spouse's fate and the truth of the allegations against him, she learns secrets that change her view of the man she loves. Anne is an interesting woman, hard to like but you have to admire her tenacity as well as her guts as revelations sock her. "Shades of Graham Greene, Eric Ambler and John le Carré hover over the pages of a Cold War thriller set in West and East Berlin in the eventful years of 1989 and '90. While some of the book's elements are familiar—the tense stakeout at the crossing bridge, the moral doubletalk—the innovative Mr. Vidich subverts expectations in ways that surprise."—Tom Nolan, *WSJ*.

NEW IN LARGE PAPERBACKS

Ames, Jonathan. [A Man Named Doll](#) (\$15.99). In this deliciously noir novel from the creator of HBO's *Bored to Death*, idiosyncratic private detective Happy Doll embarks on a quest to help a dying friend in a sun-blinded Los Angeles as "quirky, edgy, charming, funny and serious" as its protagonist"—Lee Child. For the follow up see Hardcover Books above.

Armas, Elena. [The American Roommate Experiment](#) (Atria \$18). This is more John's department but I like what Library Reads has to say: "The follow-up to *The Spanish Love Deception* has all the makings of a great rom-com: a good slow burn, forced proximity, a mix of steamy and funny scenes, and two leads that are easy to root for. Recommend to anyone in need of a delightful contemporary romance in the vein of *The Bride Test* and *Get a Life, Chloe Brown*."

Banville, John. [April in Spain](#) (\$17.99). The early investigations involving Dublin pathologist Quirke, last seen in 2015 and under Banville's mystery pen name Benjamin Black, were dark yet compelling. Sadly this new one centered in San Sebastian, Spain, isn't. The title is both a play on the springtime holiday Quirke and Evelyn make to the region and the young dead woman, April Latimer... or is she? Her body has never been found. She's the catalyst drawing the storylines together. I recommend the earlier Quirke's if you missed them, and there's quite a dark Irish TV series made of them, but skip this one.

Barbery, Muriel. [A Single Rose](#) (\$16.95). "Though *A Single Rose* is centered around vulnerable, tenacious Rose, its core is found in its Japanese setting. The novel balances lush, cultivated gardens and weighted symbolism with mischievous foxes, *matcha*, sliced eel, and sushi, all forming "one happy chaos" and a fascinating maze of emotional release." French author Barbery is the author of the amazing gem and international hit [The Elegance of the Hedgehog](#) (\$17).

Casey, Jane. [The Killing Kind](#) (\$16.99) London Barrister Ingrid Lewis is afraid for her life. She believes she is being stalked by an ex-client, John Webster. They have a tumultuous relationship. She originally defended him against a stalking charge, and then he turned his attention to stalking her, he followed her everywhere. He ruined her relationship, even burned down her home. As he has recently been released from prison and one of her colleagues is killed in a hit and run accident, Ingrid is fearful that her life is in danger. And then he shows up at her door. He has something to say—but can she believe anything that comes out of his mouth?

Bond, Linda Hurtado. [All the Broken Girls](#) (Entangled \$8.99). I can't tell if this is a large paperback or a small one, but this review from Jon Land caught my eye so I am including it here: "Crime reporter Mari Alvarez, Hurtado's literary doppelganger, has long been haunted by her mother's unsolved murder. She gets a shot at redemption when a serial killer stakes his/her claim to the Tampa turf, leaving dolls behind at the murder scenes of two women and on consecutive days. That would make for a great story in itself, before we even get to the fact this might be the very culprit who murdered Mari's mother ten years ago. Beautifully conceived and brilliantly plotted, *All the Broken Girls* echoes strongly of the Thomas Harris classic *The Silence of the Lambs*. This is the best serial killer tale of the year so far, as harrowing as it is haunting."

Chang, Lan Samantha. [The Family Chao](#) (\$16.95). The paperback of a Notable New Fiction Book of the Month selection presents an engrossing and darkly comic take on *The Brothers Karamazov* as it tells a focused story about the fortunes of a dysfunctional Chinese immigrant family splintered by the murder of the patriarch, a man disliked by nearly everyone in their small Wisconsin town.

Cowan-Erskine, Beth. [Loch Down Abbey](#) (Hodder \$15.99). Delivery date for this UK import is a little sketchy but if you order now you will be first in line for a copy of a book called "An entertaining romp and a fascinating insight into the weird and wonderful ways of the British aristocracy" by S.J. Bennett. It's the 1930s and a mysterious illness is spreading over Scotland. But the noble and ancient family of Inverkillen, residents of Loch Down Abbey, are much more concerned with dwindling toilet roll supplies and who will look after the children now that Nanny has regretfully (and most inconveniently) departed this life. Then Lord Inverkillen, Earl and head of the family, is found dead in mysterious circumstances. The inspector declares it an accident but Mrs MacBain, the head housekeeper, isn't so convinced. As no one is allowed in or out because of the illness, the residents of the house – both upstairs and downstairs – are the only suspects. With the Earl's own family too busy doing what can only be described as nothing, she decides to do some digging – in between chores, of course – and in doing so uncovers a whole host of long-hidden secrets, lies and betrayals that will alter the dynamics of the household forever. Perfect if you love Richard Osman's Thursday Murder Club mysteries.

Doerr, Anthony. [Cloud Cuckoo Land](#) (\$20). Another long-term bestseller for Doerr, author of [All the Light I Cannot See](#) (\$18), imagines three dreamers, outsiders to their cultures, past, present, and future, whose lives become intertwined story of Aethon, who longs to be turned into a bird so that he can fly to a utopian paradise in the sky

Erdrich, Louise. [The Sentence](#) (\$18). A small independent bookstore in Minneapolis is haunted from November 2019 to November 2020 by the store's most annoying customer. Flora dies on All Souls' Day, but she simply won't leave the store. Tookie, who has landed a job selling books after years of incarceration that she survived by reading "with murderous attention," must solve the mystery of this haunting while at the same time trying to understand all that occurs in Minneapolis during a year of grief, astonishment, isolation, and furious reckoning. *The Sentence* begins on All Souls' Day 2019 and ends on All Souls' Day 2020. Many of you know Erdrich owns a bookstore herself.

Fellowes, Jessica. [The Mitford Vanishing](#) (\$17.99). War with Germany is dawning in 1937, and a civil war already rages in Spain. Split across political lines, the six Mitford sisters are more divided than ever. Meanwhile their former maid Louisa Cannon is now a private detective, working with her policeman husband Guy Sullivan. Louisa and Guy are surprised when a call comes in from novelist Nancy Mitford requesting that they look into the disappearance of her Communist sister Jessica in Spain. But one case leads to another as they are also asked to investigate the mysterious vanishing of a soldier. As the two cases come together, Louisa and Guy discover that every marriage has its secrets—but some are more deadly than others.

Foster, Thomas C. [How to Write Like a Writer](#) (\$17.99). The author of the beloved classic *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* teaches you how to write everything from a report for your community association to a meaningful memoir in this masterful and engaging guide combing anecdotes and hard-won lessons from decades of teaching and writing—and invoking everyone from Hemingway to your third-grade teacher. Review the basics and apply them.

Holahan, Cate. [The Darkness of Others](#) (Grand Central \$16.99). Imani Banks is a wife, mother, and psychiatrist struggling to hold her world together in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. So far, she's managing, but when her Brooklyn Heights neighbor Nate Walker's body is discovered by their maid Oksana, and his wife—also Imani's best friend—Melissa, can't be found, the fabric keeping her world from spiraling apart starts to fray. Nate, Melissa, Imani, and her celebrity-chef husband, Phillip, inhabit a world of Hollywood glamour and financial privilege that has begun to erode thanks to the economic crises brought on by the pandemic. Tensions are high as their money has dwindled. But just how badly had Nate and Melissa's fortunes fallen? Enough for a wife to murder her husband?

Kingsolver, Barbara. [Homeland and Other Stories](#) (\$10). This is a reprint. "Spreading her memorable characters over landscapes ranging from Northern California to the hills of eastern Kentucky and the Caribbean island of St. Lucia, Kingsolver tells stories of hope, momentary joy, and powerful endurance. In every setting, Kingsolver's distinctive voice—at times comic, but often heartrending—rings true as she explores the twin themes of family ties and the life choices one must ultimately make alone."

Kurian, Vera. [Never Saw Me Coming](#) (Park Row \$17.99). An Edgar Award Nominee for Best First Novel and named a *New York Times* Best Thriller of 2021. It would be easy to underestimate Chloe Sevre... She's a freshman honor student, a legging-wearing hot girl next door, who also happens to be a psychopath. She spends her time on yogalates, frat parties and plotting to kill Will Bachman, a childhood friend who grievously wronged her. Chloe is one of seven students at her DC-based college who are part of an unusual clinical study of psychopaths—students like herself who lack empathy and can't comprehend emotions like fear or guilt. The study, led by a renowned psychologist, requires them to wear smart watches that track their moods and movements. When one of the students in the study is found murdered in the psychology building, a dangerous game of cat and mouse begins, and Chloe goes from hunter to prey. As she races to identify the killer and put her own plan for revenge into action, she'll be forced to decide if she can trust any of her fellow psychopaths "Fans of Gillian Flynn and Caroline Kepnes will love this intense book," says the Indie Next Pick.

LeGuin, Ursula. [The Wind's Twelve Quarters](#) (\$10). Another issue in Harper's Olive editions of stories by well known authors. This collection was first published in 1976. You might also like Sylvia Plath's [Johnny Panic and the Bible of Dreams : Short Stories, Prose, and Diary](#) Excerpts (\$10).

Myers, BR. [A Dreadful Splendor](#) (Harper \$16.99). It is an attention grabbing, vividly imagined, suspenseful Victorian gothic mystery romance which this reader found impossible to put down! It evoked memories of some of my late serious-minded mother's favorite writers such as Daphne du Maurier, Victoria Holt and Mary Stewart whose works she dubbed "guilty pleasures". *A Dreadful Splendor* hints of the magical reveal in Frances Hodgson Burnett's *A Little Princess*. While it feels authentically vintage, the writing is fresh, original, full of surprises and features a captivating heroine in Genevieve Timmons. It's a gem of a summer or anytime read! The novel begins in 1852 in the poorer streets and back alleys of

London. Genevieve, the beautiful and remarkably still innocent protagonist, is mightily troubled by her penury, her role in her mother's recent death as well as fears of the hangman's noose. She is desperate to escape her current situation as a reluctant "guest" of the Metropolitan Police Force in an overcrowded, squalid gaol. [Read more about it...](#) and reflect on the increase in the Gothic that I predicted two years go.

Paretsky, Sara, ed. [Mysterious Bookshop Presents the Best Mystery Stories of 2022](#) (Mysterious Press \$17.95). Paretsky selects the twenty best mystery short stories of the year, including tales by Michael Connelly, Jo Nesbø, Joyce Carol Oates, Colson Whitehead, and more!

Tan, Sue Lynn. [Daughter of the Moon Goddess](#) (\$17.99). "Glimmering with lavish imagery and ethereal world-building, *Daughter of the Moon Goddess* is a hero's journey where love is essential to coming of age. A remarkable debut filled with monsters, magic, power, and my favorite — dragons." This Indie Next Pick is mysteriously low in stock or unavailable but we'll stick with getting copies.

Taylor, Patrick. [An Irish Country Village](#) (\$17.99). Taylor returns to the colorful Northern Ireland community of Ballybucklebo, where there's always something brewing beneath the village's deceptively sleepy surface. Young Doctor Barry Lavery has only just begun his assistantship under his eccentric mentor, Dr. Fingal Flahertie O'Reilly, but he already feels right at home in Ballybucklebo. When the sudden death of a patient casts a cloud over Barry's reputation, his chances of establishing himself in the village are endangered, especially since the grieving widow is threatening a lawsuit. While he anxiously waits for the postmortem results that he prays will exonerate him, Barry must regain the trust of the gossipy Ulster village, one patient at a time... James Herriot fare but with people as patients, not animals.

Toibin, Colm. [The Magician](#) (\$20). A novel of novelist Thomas Mann, born in Germany, ending in Los Angeles, that spans WWI into the Cold War. "*The Magician* recaptures a literary giant... Toibin's symphonic and moving novel humanizes [Mann]... Maximalist in scope but intimate in feeling... The great theme of Toibin's novel, as in much of Mann's fiction, is decline — of manners and morals, of families, of countries and institutions." —Dwight Garner, *New York Times*

Verdon, John. [On Harrow Hill](#) (\$17.95). I'm a fan of this series and happy to see this enthusiastic praise from author Heather Young: Retired NYPD detective Dave Gurney, a sharp-minded, Sherlockian sleuth with an old soul, is drawn into a murder investigation in a seemingly idyllic small town that has been corrupted by one family's manipulative power. When the family's patriarch is brutally killed, the list of suspects with motives rooted in betrayal, loss, and toxic social inequality seems endless, but all evidence points to the one man with the perfect alibi: he died two days before the murder. Or did he? As the plot's precisely calibrated gears move from one revelation to the next with sure-handed finesse, *On Harrow Hill* engages the mind and heart in equal measure."

Walter, Jess. [We Live in Water: Stories](#) (\$10). 12 darkly comic stories in a new edition.

Winman, Sarah. [Still Life](#) (\$17). Tuscany, 1944: As Allied troops advance and bombs sink villages, a young English soldier, Ulysses Temper, finds himself in the wine cellar of a deserted villa. There, he has a chance encounter with Evelyn Skinner, a middle-aged art historian intent on salvaging paintings from the ruins. In each other, Ulysses and Evelyn find a kindred spirit amidst the rubble of war-torn Italy, and paint a course of events that will shape Ulysses's life for the next four decades. Returning home to London, Ulysses reimmerses himself in his crew at The Stoat and Parot—a motley mix of pub crawlers and eccentrics—all the while carrying with him his Italian evocations. So, when an unexpected inheritance brings him back to where it all began, Ulysses knows better than to tempt fate: he must return to the Tuscan hills. “A captivating, bighearted, richly tapestried story of people brought together by love, war, art, flood, and the ghost of E. M. Forster, by the celebrated author of *Tin Man*.”

OUR SEPTEMBER SMALL PAPERBACK PICKS

Adams, Ellery. [Murder on the Poet's Walk](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Book Retreat #8. When corpses clutching poems begin turning up around Storyton Hall, resort manager Jane Steward is on the trail of someone exercising poetic license to kill.

Brady, Eileen. [Last But Not Leashed](#) (Poisoned \$8.99). Dr. Kate #2. As the only veterinarian at Oak Falls Animal Hospital, Dr. Kate's life is already busy, but discovering who murdered Sookie Overman, a professional organizer, quickly becomes Kate's number one priority.

Brennan, Allison. [The Wrong Victim](#) (\$9.99). Quinn and Costa #3. Was the explosion of a bomb on a sunset charter cruise out of Friday Harbor an act of domestic terrorism, or was one of the dead the primary target? That is the first question Special Agent Matt Costa, Detective Kara Quinn and the rest of the FBI team need to answer.

Harper, Jane. [The Survivors](#) (\$9.99). Kieran Elliott's life changed forever on the day a reckless mistake led to devastating consequences. The guilt that still haunts him resurfaces during a visit with his young family to the small coastal community he once called home. When a body is discovered on the beach, long-held secrets threaten to emerge.

McKinlay, Jenn. [Killer Research](#) (\$8.99). Library Lovers #12. Ms. Cole, a librarian and current candidate for town mayor, is shocked when she opens her trunk to discover a murder victim. Does this mean her campaign for mayor is now turning deadly? It is up to Lindsey, Sully, and the rest of the crafters to figure out who is trying to frame Ms. Cole for murder and why.

Meltzer, Brad. [The Lightning Rod](#) (\$9.99). Zig and Nola #2. Mortician “Zig” Zigarowski, while working on the body of a successful military man, discovers something he was never meant to see, and, to get the answers he needs, sets out to find military artist Nola Brown—a search that reveals one of the U.S. government's most intensely guarded secrets.

St James, Dorothy. [A Perfect Bind](#) (\$8.99). Beloved Bookroom #2. Tru Beckett succeeded in building a secret book room in her now bookless library, where book lovers from lovely Cypress, South Carolina, can rejoice in the printed word. Now the last thing she needs is a mysterious vandal who seems intent on breaking into her secret book-filled sanctuary and creating chaos.

NEW IN SMALL PAPERBACKS

Andrews, Donna. [The Twelve Jays of Christmas](#) (\$8.99). Meg Langslow #30. When a blizzard traps the friends and family members gathered to celebrate Rob Langslow and his fiancée Delaney's upcoming nuptials, the last thing the party needs is a killer on the loose. Fortunately, Rob's sister Meg has some experience in sleuthing out murderers.

Bell, Ted. [Sea Hawke](#) (\$9.99). Alex Hawke #12. After saving the kidnapped heir to the British throne, gentleman spy and MI6 legend Alex Hawke is due for some downtime. But the chief of MI6, Lord David Trulove, has other plans Hawke and tasks him with stopping an unholy alliance of nations who are plotting to attack Western democracies.

Christa, Faust/ Priscilla Petraitis/Marco Lesko. [Hit Me](#) (Artisans \$9.99). After she is witness to the execution of one of her regular clients, Lulu escapes into the night with a briefcase filled with diamonds and a pack of killers on her trail. Navigating the dark underbelly of decaying, early-90's Atlantic City, one step ahead of her pursuers, Lulu must call upon every one of her street-born instincts and underworld connections in what will be the longest—and possibly last—night of her life

Davis, Krista. [A Good Dog's Guide to Murder](#) (Berkley \$8.99). Paws and Claws #8. The great Gingerbread Dog & Cat House competition has come to Wagtail, along with another murder to solve for Holly and her supersmart Jack Russell terrier Trixie.

Day, Maddie. [Murder in a Cape Cottage](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Cozy Capers #4. 'Tis the day after Christmas, following a wicked-busy time of year for Mac's bike shop, but Mac still has last-minute wedding planning to do. But all pre-wedding jitters fade into the background when Mac and her fiancé, Tim, begin a cottage renovation project and open up a wall to find a skeleton dressed in an old-fashioned bridal gown.

Glatt, John. [Doomsday Mother](#) (St Martins \$8.99). At first, the residents of Kauai Beach Resort took little notice of their new neighbors, who seemed to keep to themselves—until the police knocked on their door with a search warrant. Lori Vallow and Chad Daybell had fled to Hawaii in the midst of being investigated for the disappearance of Lori's children back in Idaho—Tylee and JJ—who hadn't been seen alive in five months.

Hewitt, JM. [The Life She Wants](#) (Canelo \$9.99). Paula wants to save her marriage, and she hopes a romantic cruise vacation will help. But the more she learns about the mysterious Anna, a new woman Paula and her husband meet on the ship, the more Paula realizes that Anna wants to destroy it.

Kubica, Mary. [The Other Mrs.](#) (\$9.99). Sadie and Will Foust have only just moved their family from bustling Chicago to small-town Maine when their neighbor Morgan Baines is found dead in her home. As the eyes of suspicion turn toward the new family in town, Sadie is drawn into the mystery of Morgan's death.

Marsons, Angela. [Silent Scream](#) (Grand Central \$8.99). Westerley research facility—a “body farm” known for its investigations into human decomposition—is not for the faint-hearted. When Detective Kim Stone and her team discover the fresh body of a young woman among Westerley's donated cadavers, it seems a killer has discovered the perfect cover to bury their crime.

McKevett, GA. [A Few Drops of Bitters](#) (\$8.99). Savannah Reid #26. Plus-sized PI Savannah Reid doesn't shy away from high-profile cases with the Moonlight Magnolia Detective Agency. But when an upscale party ends with murder, drawing clues from famous guests may prove trickier than squeezing into an old pair of jeans.

Moss, Korina. [Gone for Gouda: A Cheese Shop Mystery](#) (St Martins \$8.99). Cheese Shop #2. Yarrow Glen's newest cheese shop, Curds & Whey, has a lot on its plate, but cheese monger Willa Bauer relishes a challenge. There's a float to build for the fall festival, plus the French-inspired cheese shop is playing host to celebrity vegan chef Phoebe Winston. But when photos surface that prove this vegan influencer is, in fact, a carnivore, someone takes this very personally and Phoebe is murdered.

Robinson, Patrick. [Diamondhead](#) (Canelo \$9.99). Mack Bedford #1. When Navy SEAL Mack Bedford, who was expelled from the military after recklessly avenging the death of fellow soldiers, is asked to assassinate infamous terrorist abettor Henri Foche, his hand is forced. His reward: survival—for his son, and for his country.

Ryan, Rachel. [The Woman Outside My Door](#) (\$9.99). All children have imaginary friends, Georgina tells herself. It's perfectly normal, and they all grow out of it in the end. But when her seven-year-old son tells her about New Granny, the new friend he's met in the park, Georgina is instantly suspicious. Something tells her he isn't making it up.

Taylor, Patrick. [An Irish Country Welcome](#): (\$8.99). Irish Country #15. In the close-knit Northern Irish village of Ballybucklebo, young doctor Barry Lavery and his wife Sue are anxiously awaiting their first child, but as the community itself prepares to welcome a new decade, the closing months of 1969 bring more than a televised moon landing to Barry, his friends, his neighbors, and his patients.

Tremblay, Paul. [A Head Full of Ghosts](#) (\$9.99). The lives of the Barretts, a normal suburban New England family, are torn apart when fourteen-year-old Marjorie begins to display signs of acute schizophrenia. As their stable home devolves into a house of horrors, they reluctantly turn to a local Catholic priest for help. Father Wanderly suggests an exorcism; he believes the vulnerable teenager is the victim of demonic possession.

Woods, Stuart. [Criminal Mischief](#) (\$9.99). Stone Barrington #60. After a dangerous adventure has him traveling up and down the coast, Stone Barrington is looking forward to some down time at his Manhattan abode. But when an acquaintance alerts him to a plot being hatched across the city, he finds himself eager to pursue justice.