

BOOKNEWS from

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HAPPY THANKSGIVING

We will close Thanksgiving Day to celebrate with you
Note: There will be a *Holiday Booknews* mid-November filled with Gift Ideas, Christmastime reading, and more recommendations

Opening Hours M-Fri 10 AM-7 PM; Sat 10 AM-6PM; Sun 12-5 PM

Note: Event times are now Mountain Standard time from Nov 7

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

TUESDAY NOVEMBER 1 7:00 PM Live Book Launch

Rhys Bowen discusses [Peril in Paris](#) (Berkley \$27)
Her Royal Spyness does Paris

WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 2 1:00 PM

Bonnie MacBird with Leslie S. Klinger
They discuss [What Child Is This?](#) (Harper \$26.99)
Our December British Crime Book of the Month
[Order the signed UK edition](#) (\$36)
For you Sherlockians, here is [a video conversation about Holmes](#)
between Laurie R. King and Leslie S. Klinger from a year ago

WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 2 5:00 PM

Ausma Khan discusses [Blackwater Falls](#) (St Martins \$27.99)
A much praised series launch

THURSDAY NOVEMBER 3 7:00 PM Live Book Launch

Dana Stabenow discusses [Theft of an Idol](#) (Zeus \$29.95)
The Eye of (Cleopatra's) Isis' works a tomb-robbing investigation

MONDAY NOVEMBER 7 6:00 PM Now virtual

Janet Evanovich discusses [Going Rogue](#) (Atria \$28.99)
Stephanie Plum #29
Signed books available

MST Begins

TUESDAY NOVEMBER 8 2:00 PM

Clare Mackintosh discusses [The Last Party](#) (Sourcebooks \$27.99)
Our November British Crime Book of the Month
Order the [Signed UK edition](#) (\$40)

TUESDAY NOVEMBER 8 7:00 PM Live

Lisa Unger [Secluded Cabin Sleeps Six](#) (Park Row \$27.99)
Twisty family drama full of surprises

WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 9 7:00 PM Live

Michael Connelly discusses [Desert Star](#) (LittleBrown \$29)
Ballard & Bosch work cold cases that turn hot

THURSDAY NOVEMBER 10 11:00 AM

Philippa Gregory with Gareth Russell
Gregory discusses [Dawnlands](#) (Atria \$28.99)
A tale set in the run up to the Glorious Revolution of 1688
Signed Bookplates available

THURSDAY NOVEMBER 10 6:00 PM

Mary Robinette Kowal with Diana Gabaldon
Kowal discusses [The Spare Man](#) (Tor \$30.99/\$18.99)
Signed hardcover available
SciFi Mystery introducing Tesla Crane, inventor and heiress
I did a deep dive into old PP You Tube videos and found one with me and Diana discussing *Trail of Fire*, a 2012 UK publication.
[Watch it for fun](#); my introduction talking about a visit to Baccarat in France was just to kill time until Diana made her entrance.

MONDAY NOVEMBER 14 7:00 PM

Charlaine Harris discusses [The Serpent in Heaven](#) (Saga Press \$27.99)
Gunnie Rose alternate US history saga where magic is despised
Signed copies available

TUESDAY NOVEMBER 15 2:00 PM

Brian Freeman with Karen
Freeman discusses [The Zero Night](#) (Blackstone \$26.99)
Duluth cop Jonathan Stride
Signed books available

WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 16 1:00 PM

Elly Griffiths discusses [Bleeding Heart Yard](#) (Houghton \$27.99)
A cold case murder in a British schoolyard solved by Harbinder Kaur in her 3rd brilliant case after the 2020 Edgar winner (Best Novel) [The Stranger Diaries](#) and the sequel [The Postscript Murders](#)
In stock now: [Signed UK edition](#) (\$45)

WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 16 5:00 PM

Lauren Nossett with Ashley Winstead
Nossett discusses [The Resemblance](#) (Flatiron \$28.99)
A Dark Academic mystery debut
Signed books available

THURSDAY NOVEMBER 17 5:00 PM

Mariah Fredericks with Susan Elia MacNeal
Fredericks discusses [The Lindbergh Nanny](#) (St Martins \$27.99)
Our November Historical Fiction Book of the Month
Signed Books available

THURSDAY NOVEMBER 17 7:00 PM Live

Matt Coyle with Patrick

Coyle discusses [Doomed Legacy](#) (Oceanview \$27.95)
San Diego PI Rick Cahill

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 18 7:00 PM Live

Rebecca Roanhorse with Pat King

Roanhorse discusses [Tread of Angels](#) (Saga \$22.99)
Dark fantasy of bestseller Roanhorse's mythological West

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 19 10:30 AM

Croak & Dagger discusses Isabella Maldonado's [The Falcon](#) (\$15.95).

TUESDAY NOVEMBER 22 1:00 PM

Kathryn Harkup discusses [Superspy Science](#) (Bloomsbury \$28)
Science, Death, and Tech in the World of James Bond
The full range of 007's exploits—such fun & a great gift idea

TUESDAY NOVEMBER 22 7:00 PM Live

Jack DuBrul discusses [Clive Cussler's Sea Wolves](#) (Putnam \$29.95)

Isaac Bell in 1914

Another deep dive into our video archives produced Clive in conversations

You can enjoy. Here he is talking [about how immigration is changing the world](#) he depicts. And here, also in his home office, he talks some about the business of publishing. [This video](#) was made for a December release long ago.

WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 23 7:00 PM

Hardboiled Crime discusses Richard Stark's [The Mourner](#) (\$14)

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 26 All Day

Independent Bookstore Day

Sales, treats, talks.... Please join us

MONDAY NOVEMBER 28 7:00 PM Live

Jeffery Deaver discusses [Hunting Time](#) (Putnam \$28)
Reward seeker Colter Shaw

WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 30 1:00 PM

Rae Meadows with Natasha Pulley

Meadows discusses [Winterland](#) (Holt \$27.99)

Our December Notable New Fiction Book of the Month
A Soviet-era look at gymnastics and patriotism
Signed books available

WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 30 3:00 PM

Ann R. Williams discusses [Treasures of Egypt](#) (National Geographic \$50)

A Legacy in Photographs from the Pyramids to Cleopatra on the 100th anniversary of the discovery of King Tut's tomb

SATURDAY DECEMBER 3 2:00 PM Live

Holiday Party with Kate Carlisle, Jenn McKinlay, Paige Shelton

Join the Ugly Christmas Sweater Contest

Shelton discusses [Winter's End](#) (St Martins \$26.99)

A new Wild Alaska thriller

OUR NOVEMBER BOOKS OF THE MONTH

British Crime Club One unsigned hardcover or paperback per month

Mackintosh, Clare. [The Last Party](#)

Cozy Crimes Club One unsigned hardcover or paperback per month

Romeril, Christina. [A Christmas Candy Killing](#)

First Mystery Club One Signed First Printing per month

Hays, Katy. [The Cloisters](#)

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

O'Connor, Carlene. [No Strangers Here](#)

History/Mystery Club One Signed First Printing per month
Fredericks, Mariah. [The Lindbergh Nanny](#)

Notable New Fiction One Signed First Printing per month
Assadi, Hannah Lillith. [The Stars Are Not Yet Bells](#)

International Crime One Unsigned Hardcover or paperback per month

Khan, Vaseem/Maxim Jakubowski, eds. [The Perfect Crime](#)

Romance & Relationships One Unsigned Hardcover or 2 paperbacks per month

Reichert, Amy. [Once Upon a December](#) (\$17) and Williams, Preslaysa. [A Sweet Lowcountry Proposal](#) (\$16.99).

SIGNED BOOKS SO FAR

Assadi, Hannah Lillith. [The Stars Are Not Yet Bells](#) (Penguin \$25). Here is a Starred Review for our **November Notable New Fiction Book of the Month**: “Assadi returns with a lyrical and melancholic tale of grief, love, and a marriage’s open secrets, narrated by a woman who has Alzheimer’s. In 1941, Elle Ranier and her jeweler husband, Simon, moved from New York City as young newlyweds to a remote island off the coast of Georgia in search of a variety of jewel akin to diamonds and known locally as the ‘blue legend.’ Many people have drowned while seeking the minerals, which are believed to lie at the bottom of the ocean, and Simon’s fruitless search eventually leaves his business in shambles. Now, in 1997, Elle remembers her previous lover, Gabriel, in Brooklyn, whom she arranged to work with Simon on the island after claiming he was her cousin, and who died shortly after they arrived. Then, in 1961, Simon grows close with a geologist hired to prospect for the jewels. Elle’s reminiscences become hazy as a result of her Alzheimer’s, though ‘for a while, life remained in bright dreams,’ which evokes a sense of magic with images of mermaids and fairies. As the story of the trio’s arrival to the island and their subsequent misfortunes gradually unfolds, Elle circles around the secrets about her and Simon’s relationships with other men. The beauty of Assadi’s prose and the splendid depiction of a love that transcends death make for a singular rendition of an oft-told story. This will leave readers undone.

Bowen, Rhys. [Peril in Paris](#) (Berkley \$27). **Signed November 1 a week before publication day so ask for your copy to be dated. And there will be champagne!**

Her Royal Spyness Lady Georgiana Rannoch is now wife to the dashing Darcy and is just feeling fit after the first months of pregnancy. She’s a bit bored living in the country at Eynsleigh, the home on loan to them, so when Darcy offers her a trip to Paris she jumps at it. Especially as she can leave Queenie at home. He will be involved in whatever clandestine work he does for Britain. Georgie will be spending her time as a guest of her BFF Belinda who is studying fashion design with Coco Chanel. Georgie, with nothing really to wear thanks to her bulge, is a bit daunted but game. Once in Paris and settled at Belinda’s apartment, Georgie has a chance to sightsee and meet a variety of characters, including her mother and a contingent of Nazis come for Chanel’s new season launch. Will Mummy kill Mrs. Simpson over a dress they both want? Will Georgie have to model once again for Chanel who has designed a bulge-concealing costume for her? It’s not all high life and high jinks. Where is Darcy and what dangerous game is he playing? In fact, what games are other than Darcy playing? Rhys sums it up: “A glamorous romp at a Chanel fashion show but with an added element of danger.” Plus, they gain a real Paris chef. Don’t forget to stock up for Christmas with two earlier adventures for Her Royal Spyness: [The Twelve Clues of Christmas](#) (\$7.99); [God Rest Ye, Royal Gentlemen](#) (\$17).

Connelly, Michael. [Desert Star](#) (LittleBrown \$29). Renee Ballard has organized an old Case team and now invites the capstone, the retired Harry Bosch, to volunteer to serve in the LAPD’s newly revived Open-Unsolved Unit. Although she’s some worried Bosch will go rogue, she entices him with the prospect of finding the man responsible for the 2013 slaying of an entire family who were found, by accident, buried in the desert up towards

Vegas. She also wants to reopen the 1994 murder of 16-year-old Sarah Pearlman, sister of the L.A. city councilman who helped resuscitate the cold case team. And planted a former cop on it as a back-room channel to their work. Ballard and Bosch work at the department’s new homicide archive where the unsolved murder books are stored: “hallowed ground to Bosch. The library of lost souls.” Both cases require deep dives into the past; both lead to great action scenes; and, as always, Connelly displays his encyclopedic knowledge of the latest forensics, such as “Investigative Genetic Genealogy,” the technique that nailed the Golden Gate killer but has since been reined in by privacy concerns. Bosch, however, takes a low-tech approach and follows leads in the field with his trademark intensity, driven by his desire to restore order in a violent world (“The dark engine of murder would never run low on fuel. Not in his lifetime”). “This entry, the 24th Bosch novel, may not be as expansive as *The Dark Hours*, but it ranks up there with Connelly’s best.”

Coyle, Matt. [Doomed Legacy](#) (Oceanview \$27.95). Private investigator Rick Cahill has been running from his past and chasing the truth his whole life. But his past is relentless—and so is his CTE, a disease caused by repeated head traumas that has attacked his body and his mind. As his CTE progresses, he realizes that the disease not only threatens his life but also endangers his family’s wellbeing. As Rick struggles to keep his family together, he does a favor for Sara Bhandari, a business contact. Then, Sara is murdered, and the police believe her to be yet another victim of a serial rapist who has been terrorizing greater San Diego. But Rick has reason to question their theory. Determined to find the truth at any cost, and against his wife’s warnings, he investigates on his own. Along the way, he bumps up against a sinister private investigative agency and a shady shell corporation that may be hiding more than company secrets.

Deaver, Jeffery. [Hunting Time](#) (Putnam \$28) is a challenging case for reward seeker Colter Shaw. Allison Parker is on the run with her teenage daughter, Hannah, and Colter Shaw has been hired by her eccentric boss, entrepreneur Marty Harmon, to find and protect her. Though he’s an expert at tracking missing persons—even those who don’t wish to be found—Shaw has met his match in Allison, who brings all her skills as a brilliant engineer designing revolutionary technology to the game of evading detection. She’s being stalked by her ex-husband, Jon Merritt. Newly released from prison and fueled by blinding rage, Jon is a man whose former profession as a police detective makes him uniquely suited for the hunt. And he’s not alone. Two hitmen are also hot on her heels.... Publishes November 22 but we’re not going to ask Jeff to fly in and out of Phoenix during Thanksgiving week.

Du Brul, Jack. [Clive Cussler’s Sea Wolves](#) (Putnam \$29.95). As New England swelters in the summer of 1914, Detective Isaac Bell is asked to investigate a cache of missing rifles—only to discover something much more sinister. Whoever broke into this Winchester Factory wasn’t looking to take weapons, they wanted to leave something in the shipping crates: a radio transmitter, set to summon a fleet of dreaded German U-boats. Someone is trying to keep American supplies from reaching British shores, and if Bell doesn’t crack the conspiracy in time, the Atlantic Ocean will run red with blood. So Bell must hunt down a new piece of technology that is allowing the Germans to rule the seas from New York to England.

I found [clips of an interview](#) I did with Clive 15 years ago in his home office. So lovely to hear his voice again.

Estleman, Loren D. [Paperback Jack](#) (Forge \$26.99). 1946. Fresh from the War in Europe, hack writer Jacob Heppleman discovers a changed world back home. The pulp magazines he used to write for are dying, replaced by a revolutionary new publishing racket: paperback novels, offering cheap excitement for the common man and woman. Although scorned by the critics, the tawdry drugstore novels sell like hotcakes – or so Jacob is assured by the enterprising head of Blue Devil Books, a pioneer in paperback publishing, known for its two-fisted heroes and underclad cover girls. As “Jack Holly,” Jacob finds success as the author of scandalously bestselling crime novels. He prides himself on the authenticity of his work, however, which means picking the brains of some less than reputable characters, including an Irish gangster who wants a cut of the profits – or else. Meanwhile, as Hollywood comes calling, the entire industry also comes under fire from censorious politicians out to tame the paperback jungle in the name of public morality. Targeted by both Congress and the Mob, Jay may end up the victim of his own success – unless he can write his way to a happier ending.

Evanovich, Janet. [Going Rogue](#) (Atria \$28.99). Monday mornings aren’t supposed to be fun, but they should be predictable. However, on this particular Monday, Stephanie Plum knows that something is amiss when she turns up for work at Vinnie’s Bail Bonds to find that longtime office manager Connie Rosolli, who is as reliable as the tides in Atlantic City, hasn’t shown up. Stephanie’s worst fears are confirmed when she gets a call from Connie’s abductor. He says he will only release her in exchange for a mysterious coin that a recently murdered man left as collateral for his bail. Unfortunately, this coin, which should be in the office—just like Connie—is nowhere to be found. The quest to discover the coin, learn its value, and save Connie will require the help of Stephanie’s Grandma Mazur, her best pal Lula, her boyfriend Morelli, and hunky security expert Ranger.

Evans, Richard Paul. [A Christmas Memory](#) (Gallery \$17.99 hardcover). It’s 1967, and for young Richard it’s a time of heart-break and turmoil. Over the span of a few months, his brother, Mark, is killed in Vietnam; his father loses his job and moves the family from California to his grandmother’s abandoned home in Utah; and his parents make the painful decision to separate. With uncertainty rattling every corner of his life, Richard does his best to remain strong—but when he’s run down by bullies at his new school, he meets Mr. Foster, an elderly neighbor who chases off the bullies and invites Richard in for a cup of cocoa. Richard becomes fast friends with the wise, solitary man who inspires Richard’s love for books and whose dog, Gollum, becomes his closest companion. As the holidays approach, the joy and light of Christmas seem unlikely to permeate the Evans home as things take a grim turn for the worse. And just when it seems like he has nothing left to lose, Richard is confronted by a startling revelation.

Fredericks, Mariah. [The Lindbergh Nanny](#) (St Martins \$27.99). Betty Gow, a 26-year-old Scottish immigrant and Lindbergh family nanny, narrates this poignant crime novel, our **November Historical Fiction Book of the Month**, which fictionalizes the 1932 kidnapping of 20-month-old Charles Lindbergh Jr. from the family’s New Jersey home. The prickly nanny tells the story

and limns Lindbergh family members, not sparing the nation’s darling, aviator hero Charles A. Lindbergh, a complicated and controversial man. In time, Gow is a witness at the trial of the man convicted of the crime. Fredericks infuses the known events of the crime with her imagination based on deep research. The Lindbergh kidnapping case led the US Congress to pass the Federal Kidnapping Act, also known as the Lindbergh Law. This act made kidnapping a federal offense and allowed federal investigators the authority to pursue kidnappers across state jurisdictions... a statute that I recall Sue Grafton telling me she’d missed and thus had to rename her work in progress, *K Is for Kidnapping*, discarding what she’d written, to *K Is for Killer*.

Some years ago I edited another novel arising from the Lindbergh kidnapping and still prefer the version presented there, but am glad for the wealth of detail Fredericks provides about a crime that gripped the nation then and still does. “A bold and creative retelling of the Lindbergh baby kidnapping, a masterful blending of fact and fiction that is as compelling as it is entertaining. We know how this tragedy ends, but Mariah Fredericks takes us on an extraordinary journey along a different path to get there. The writing is superb and the characters—real and fictional—come alive on every page.” —Nelson DeMille

Freeman, Brian. [The Zero Night: A Jonathan Stride Novel](#) (Blackstone \$26.99). A new entry in this splendid Duluth-based series. After nearly dying of a gunshot wound, Jonathan Stride has been on leave from the Duluth Police for more than a year. When his partner, Maggie Bei, gets called about a suspicious abduction involving a local lawyer, she tells Stride it’s time for him to come back. Attorney Gavin Webster says he paid \$100,000 in ransom money to the men who kidnapped his wife. Now they’ve disappeared with the cash, and she’s still missing. Gavin claims to be desperate to find her—but Stride discovers that the lawyer had plenty of motive to be the mastermind behind the crime. Even as Stride digs for the truth about Gavin Webster and his wife, he must also deal with a crisis in his own marriage. His wife, Serena, is struggling after the death of her mother, the abusive woman she hadn’t seen in twenty-five years. When she loses control at a crime scene and draws her gun on a fellow cop, Serena finds herself kicked off the Webster case. Alone at her desk, she begins hunting through old police files and starts to ask questions about a mother’s death that was written off as suicide. Stride wonders whether going back to his detective work was the right decision. But all he can do is keep moving forward. Because Stride fears the Webster kidnapping may be only one part of a horrific murder conspiracy—that may not be over yet.

Garten, Ina. [Go-To Dinners: A Barefoot Contessa Cookbook](#) (Clarkson Potter \$35). **Tip-ins.** Ina shares her strategies for making her most satisfying and uncomplicated dinners. Many, like Overnight Mac & Cheese, you can make ahead and throw in the oven right before dinner. Light dinners like Tuscan White Bean Soup can be prepped ahead and assembled at the last minute. Go-to family meals like Chicken in a Pot with Orzo and Hasselback Kielbasa will feed a crowd with very little effort. And who doesn’t want to eat Breakfast for Dinner? You’ll find recipes for Scrambled Eggs Cacio e Pepe and Roasted Vegetables with Jammy Eggs that are a snap to make and so satisfying. Ina’s “Two-Fers” guide you on how to turn leftovers from one dinner into something different and delicious the second night. And sometimes the best dinner is one you don’t even have to

cook! You'll find Ina's favorite boards to serve with store-bought ingredients, like an Antipasto Board and Breakfast-for-Dinner Board that are fun to assemble and so impressive to serve. Finally, because no meal can be considered dinner without dessert, there are plenty of prep-ahead and easy sweets like a Bourbon Chocolate Pecan Pie and Beatty's Chocolate Cupcakes that everyone will rave about.

We have a very large selection of cookbooks and related volumes (wine, etc) in stock now for the holidays. You can browse our [Food](#) section.

Gauld, Tom. [Revenge of the Librarians](#) (Drawn & Quarterly \$24.95). **Tip-ins.** Confront the specter of failure, the wraith of social media, and other supernatural enemies of the author. Graphic novelist Gauld returns with his wittiest and most trenchant collection of literary cartoons to date. Perfectly composed drawings are punctuated with the artist's signature brand of humor, hitting high and low. After all, Gauld is just as comfortable taking jabs at *Jane Eyre* and *Game of Thrones*. "Some particularly favored targets include the pretentious procrastinating novelist, the commercial mercenary of the dispassionate editor, the willful obscurantism of the vainglorious poet. Quake in the presence of the stack of bedside books as it grows taller! Gnash your teeth at the ever-moving deadline that the writer never meets! Quail before the critic's incisive dissection of the manuscript! And most importantly, seethe with envy at the paragon of creative productivity!"

✚Gregory, Philippa. [Dawnlands](#) (Atria \$28.99). **Signed Bookplates.** Much fiction has been written set in England's Civil War between the Cavaliers and Roundheads, or Royalists and Parliamentarians. King Charles I lost his head. His son returned from exile in 1660 to be crowned Charles II, and died without a son, leaving his brother James to rule. I have always thought that Charles, who fathered multiple bastards but remained married to his barren Portuguese Queen (a Catholic) to his death, failed in his royal duty as James was going to be the wrong man for the job. Plus James' second wife Mary Beatrice of Modena was openly Catholic and the son she bore is still known as the "warming-pan baby" thanks to her reluctance to give birth in public and the rumor that evolved that a baby boy was smuggled into the birth chamber in a warming pan (misinformation campaigns are nothing new, no?).

All this is material for Gregory's third novel in the Fairmile Series wherein she writes of the run up from 1685 to the Glorious (bloodless) Revolution of 1688 that deposed James and Mary Beatrice in favor of James' daughter Mary and her Dutch husband William of Orange. They too were childless. When William, who outlived Mary, died, Mary's sister Anne became the last Stuart monarch. Her death brought a German branch from Hanover to the throne. How did ordinary or even extraordinary people get through this tense time and navigate their own alliances, misadventures, and good fortunes? Read this new chapter in a generational saga and find out.

Harris, Charlaïne. [The Serpent in Heaven](#) (Saga Press \$27.99). Harris continues to have fun with alternate US History where magic exists but its power is despised. Felicia, Lizbeth Rose's half-sister and a student at the Grigori Rasputin school in San Diego—capital of the Holy Russian Empire—is caught between her own secrets and powerful family struggles. As a granddaughter of Rasputin, she provides an essential service

to the hemophiliac Tsar Alexei, providing him the blood transfusions that keep him alive. Felicia is treated like a nonentity at the bedside of the tsar, and at the school she's seen as a charity case with no magical ability. But then she is set upon by her estranged family of Mexican wizards and discovers that she is the most powerful witch of her generation.

Hays, Katy. [The Cloisters](#) (Atria \$28) is one of my favorite NYC institutions, created by a Rockefeller from architectural treasures imported from Europe and situated atop the east bank of the Hudson in Fort Tryon Park. It houses The Unicorn Tapestries and its various buildings and gardens form the Metropolitan Museum of Art's medieval branch filled with extraordinary treasures. If you are a fan of Fiona Davis' work highlighting the city's iconic institutions, or Linda Fairstein's legal mysteries doing the same, you won't want to miss this deeply researched and well crafted debut, our **November First Mystery Book of the Month** and surely headed towards the bestseller lists. **Also this is a must for anyone interested in the Tarot as it includes actual Tarot charts, etc.**

Our own Lesa reviews: As a student of early Renaissance art history, Ann Stilwell is eager for her position in the summer associate program at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art. She's told on arrival, though, that there's no place for her. Fortunately, Patrick Roland, curator at the Cloisters, scoops her up. He and his assistant, Rachel Mondray, need help in researching for an exhibition on divination, the techniques and artworks used to tell the future. Ann questions whether it's fate or choice that brings her together with the small group of scholars who delve into fortune telling and the occult, searching for answers to the past and the future. But feelings and emotions aren't easy to hide in a group that revolves around the charismatic Rachel. As death and tragedy spin to their conclusion in the eerie setting, it's easy for an academic to say the future was ordained. The tension and foreboding builds gradually in this outstanding gothic debut, allowing readers to savor Ann's voice. The disturbing account plays with class differences and women friendship, set against a medieval, academic atmosphere sheltered from the city.

Author Rachel Kapelke-Dale adds, "*The Cloisters* begins as a fish-out-of-water story. But as Katy Hays deftly weaves in layer after layer of the occult, art, and academia, it turns into a rich tapestry that speaks to issues of privilege, power, and ambition—and, more than anything, the darkness lurking just inside ivory towers. Virtuoso and incredibly compelling, *The Cloisters* grabbed me in a way that no book has done since *The Secret History*." The Indie Next Pick: "Hays creates a world so sinister that it is a character in itself." And Library Reads adds, "This great debut set in the atmospheric world of dark academia is perfect for those who loved *The Ninth House* and *Discovery of Witches*."

Klinger, Leslie S. [The New Annotated HP Lovecraft](#) (Norton \$39.95). We managed to snag a few of this handsome colorfully illustrated volume from 2014. "Lovecraft's vast body of work—a mythos in which humanity is a blissfully unaware speck in a cosmos shared by ancient alien beings—is increasingly being recognized as the foundation for American horror and science fiction. With nearly 300 illustrations and more than 1,000 annotations, Klinger illuminates every hidden dimension of 22 of Lovecraft's most canonical works."

☞Lloyd, Robert. [The Poison Machine](#) (Melville House \$). **Signed Bookplates.** [Watch Lloyd's scintillating conversation](#) about this 17th Century complex mystery with Andrew Child following upon last year's interview with Lee Child for [The Bloodless Boy](#) (\$17), and then order a copy of this 2nd Lloyd with a bookplate we have just learned is coming our way. These novels are just the ticket for anyone who loved, as I did, Iain Pears' 1997 blockbuster international hit [An Instance of the Fingerpost](#) (\$20). Lloyd and Pears are both fascinated with the burgeoning scientific discoveries and exploration of the 1660s+.

☞MacBird, Bonnie. [What Child Is This?](#) (Collins Crime Club \$36). What more perfect for the season than a Sherlock Holmes (and Dr. Watson) tale set in Christmastime Victorian London? Even better, this lovely volume is delightfully illustrated by Frank Cho with line drawings that complement the text. **The Unsigned US version is our December British Crime Club Book of the Month.** And you can give it to any reader on your list as Sherlock Holmes needs no introduction.

Mackay, Margaret. [Iain of New Scotland](#) (\$12.99) **with a Foreword by Diana Gabaldon and signed by her.**

Thirteen-year-old Iain Robertson is homesick for the Highlands of Scotland. It's September 1773, and he has just arrived in Nova Scotia with his parents and little sister after the long, disastrous, Atlantic voyage of the ship Hector. They wanted a new life in New Scotland — but the land agent lied to them. With no money, no food, no shelter, and winter fast approaching, how will they survive? Includes a Glossary of Celtic words and many bonuses for a Young Reader but also for any Outlander fan.

Manning, Kate. [On Gilded Mountain](#) (Scribner \$28). **Signed Bookplates.** We are in early 1900s Colorado. Sylvie Pelletier recounts leaving her family's snowbound mountain cabin to work in a manor house for the Padgetts, owners of the marble-mining company that employs her father and dominates the town. Sharp-eyed Sylvie is awed by the luxury around her; fascinated by her employer, the charming "Countess" Inge, and confused by the erratic affections of Jasper, the bookish heir to the family fortune. Her fairy-tale ideas of romance take a dark turn when she realizes the Padgetts' lofty philosophical talk is at odds with the unfair labor practices that have enriched them. Their servants, the Gradys, formerly enslaved people, have long known this to be true and are making plans to form a utopian community on the Colorado prairie. Outside the manor walls, the town of Moonstone is roiling with discontent. A handsome union organizer, along with labor leader Mary Harris "Mother" Jones, is stirring up the quarry workers. The editor of the local newspaper—a bold woman who takes Sylvie on as an apprentice—is publishing unflattering accounts of the Padgett Company. Sylvie navigates vastly different worlds and struggles to find her way amid conflicting loyalties. When the harsh winter brings tragedy, Sylvie must choose between silence and revenge. Drawn from true stories of Colorado history, *Gilded Mountain* is a tale of a bygone American West seized by robber barons and settled by immigrants, and is a story infused with longing—for self-expression and equality, freedom and adventure. This historical fiction is a November Indie Next Pick: "A full-bodied historical novel relatable to today's issues of wage inequality."

Mathews, Francine. [Death on a Winter Stroll](#) (Soho \$27.95 Signed December 6.). Festive Nantucket is a marvelous

Christmas escape. Although Police Chief Meredith Folger is acutely conscious of the stress COVID-19 has placed on the community she loves. Although the island has proved a refuge for many during the pandemic, the cost to Nantucket has been high. Merry hopes that the Christmas Stroll, one of Nantucket's favorite traditions, in which Main Street is transformed into a winter wonderland, will lift the island's spirits. But the arrival of a large-scale TV production, and the Secretary of State and her family, complicates matters significantly. The TV shoot is plagued with problems from within, as a shady, power-hungry producer clashes with strong-willed actors. Across Nantucket, the Secretary's troubled stepson keeps shaking off his security detail to visit a dilapidated house near conservation land, where an intriguing recluse guards secrets of her own. With all parties overly conscious of spending too much time in the public eye and secrets swirling around both camps, it is difficult to parse what behavior is suspicious or not—until the bodies turn up.

Meadows, Rae. [Winterland](#) (Holt \$27.99). This timely story about Russians who as idealists under Stalin moved north of the Arctic Circle to work in mining and support the Fatherland as portrayed through the family of an aspiring gymnast a generation later in the 1970s is our **December Notable New Fiction Pick.** "With meticulous precision and smart, poetic prose, Meadows vaults us into the chilling and eerily relevant world of Soviet-era gymnastics. Get ready to fall in love with eight-year-old Anya, who offers us a heart-wrenching view of what it means to live, love and compete in a sport where one wrong move or the whisper of dissent can ruin you. This book is full of heart." Author Kristin Harmel sums up my take: "In the best of cases, books are more than just entertainment. Sometimes, they play a vital role in connecting us during divided times, across generations and cultures, reminding us that as human beings, we all have the common ground of love and want and pain. *Winterland* is one such book—an intimate look at the Soviet Union in the 1970s, a lost mother, and a daughter's journey to become a star Olympic gymnast, forced to choose between what's right for her and what's asked of her by a state that demands the impossible. Steeped in rich cultural detail and written with the confidence of someone who has spent much time in the trenches of gyms just like the ones Anya inhabits, *Winterland* will immerse you in rich period detail, the joy and anguish of first love, and the heartache of unimaginable loss and sacrifice. Both a searingly immersive tale and an important book for our times, *Winterland* is a must-read, for it will remind you that while we may live in a world divided, we are, as individuals, all similarly fragile, hopeful, and ultimately human at our core. Impeccably researched and beautifully written."

Nossett, Lauren. [The Resemblance](#) (Flatiron \$28.99). This debut, more of Dark Academe, i.e. campus thriller, "begins at a busy intersection on the campus of a college in Georgia, presumably a stand-in for the University of Georgia. It's often the scene of accidents, mostly involving distracted students staring at their cell phones. But the most recent incident, in which a seemingly blameless student named Jay Kemp was killed by a hit-and-run driver, is different for several reasons. First, the driver was seen deliberately speeding up as he approached the corner. Second, he looked uncannily like the victim. Then we follow Detective Marlitt Kaplan into the deepest recesses of Jay's skeezy, Greek-brotherhood-obsessed fraternity, Kappa Phi Omicron, a place

she disdains with all her heart because of her own past traumas and understandably post-#MeToo outlook. ‘If you start digging around,’ a security guard says ominously, ‘I would be prepared for some hassle.’ She has troubles of her own — a difficult relationship with her parents, a precarious position at work, an inexplicable tendency to speak German at times of stress. Nossett, as elegant and thoughtful a writer as she is, sometimes has trouble integrating all these elements into the murder investigation. Observant readers will notice the echo in the title of Tana French’s classic thriller *The Likeness* about an undercover cop who impersonates a dead woman in order to ferret out her murderer. The suggestion is a bit misleading, not least because the book doesn’t affect you as viscerally as French’s, doesn’t carry quite the same physical thrill. But it’s pleasingly knotty and suspenseful, particularly when you find out what’s really been going on in that fraternity.”—Sarah Lyall, *NY Times*

O’Connor, Carlene. [No Strangers Here](#) (Kensington \$26). *LJ* enthuses over our **November Crime Book of the Month** which I find to be *All Creatures Great and Small* with Murders: “In a tight-knit Irish town, the body of Johnny O’Reilly, the town’s richest man, is found staged on a local beach. The only clues are black stones spelling out “Last Dance,” a tarot card, a syringe containing veterinary euthanasia medication, and small footprints leading away from the scene. Recently transferred DI Cormac O’Brien, ignorant of the local lore and characters, is dependent upon longtime DS Neely for context. The O’Reilly family is determined to point O’Brien in the direction of local veterinarian Dr. Wilde, due to longstanding family grudges. Alerted to the situation by a friend and former police officer, Wilde’s daughter Dimpna, also a veterinarian, reluctantly returns home after a long absence to find her father not only a suspect in a murder, but also sadly losing his memory and incapable of maintaining his practice. She steps into his practice and the murder investigation. Cormac and Dimpna navigate the clues and uncover answers to long held secrets. Known for her cozies, O’Connor (“Home to Ireland” and “Irish Village” series) moves into darker territory here. For fans of Louise Penny.”

AND O’Connor is one of three authors contributing to [The Christmas Scarf Murder](#) (Kensington \$26) in which she teams up with Maddie Day and Peggy Ehrhart for a holly jolly Christmas collection of seasonal stories, as their beloved series sleuths each solve cases revolving around hand-knit Christmas scarves.

Patterson, James. [Triple Cross](#) (Little Brown \$29). **Signed Bookplates.** Detective Alex Cross hunts down a serial killer who targets entire families. A precise killer, he always moves under the cover of darkness, flawlessly triggering no alarms, leaving no physical evidence. Cross and Sampson aren’t the only ones investigating. Also in on this most intriguing case is the world’s bestselling true-crime author, who sees patterns everyone else misses. The writer, Thomas Tull, calls the Family Man murders the perfect crime story. He believes the killer may never be caught. Cross knows there is no perfect crime. And he’s going to hunt down the Family Man no matter what it takes. Until the Family Man decides to flip the narrative and take down the Cross family, including Alex.

✠Perry, Anne. [A Christmas Deliverance](#) (Ballantine \$23) is set in the same Victorian world as her William Monk mysteries. Dr. Crowe is an idealist who runs a free medical clinic on the

riverbank of the Thames for anyone in need. When Crowe runs into Eliza Hollister, a former patient he treated after a traffic accident and for whom he has romantic feelings, he’s disturbed to see her verbally abused by Paul Dolan, whose father imports luxury goods. Crowe is even more upset to discover that Eliza has become engaged against her will to Dolan, in order to help her father, who’s in financial trouble. Crowe’s curiosity about the Dolans leads him to probe a fatal fire at a warehouse Eliza’s father owned, which was deemed accidental. What he learns leads him to dig deeper. Meanwhile, Scuff, Crowe’s assistant, who was rescued as a child by Monk and his wife from a life of scavenging the Thames at low tide, keeps the clinic running. The gripping plot is matched by moving portrayals of the clinic’s clientele. Readers drawn to Dickens’s searing portraits of the underprivileged will appreciate Perry’s homage to those characters. “This satisfying Christmas novella combines mystery, suspicion, upheaval, acts of kindness, and a Christmas miracle together to create a captivating story. . . . Anne Perry has once again created a Christmas tale that will captivate the reader and transport them straight to Victorian London during the holidays.”—Historical Novel Society

Rankin, Ian. [A Heart Full of Headstones](#) (Orion \$46). Edgar winner Rankin’s outstanding 24th John Rebus 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 (“Skel-etons 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.”

Roanhorse, Rebecca. [Tread of Angels](#) (Saga \$22.99). Celeste, a card sharp with a need for justice, takes on the role of *advocatus diaboli*, to defend her sister Mariel, accused of murdering a Virtue, a member of the ruling class of this mining town, in a new world of dark fantasy in a mythological West from the amazing Roanhorse who visits us from Santa Fe.

Rowell, DM. [Never Name the Dead](#) (Crooked Lane \$28.99). Our blogger Lesa reviews an #OwnVoices debut: Mud’s grandfather raised her to be the next story keeper of the Kiowas in Oklahoma, but when she was ridiculed because she didn’t look like a typical Kiowa, she fled to California, where she built a successful business in Silicon Valley, telling stories for companies. Her grandfather’s phone call saying come home sounds urgent, though, so she catches the first flight. He doesn’t meet her at the airport, but several tribal elders are there looking for him. Instead of her grandfather, she finds a tribe in trouble. Fracking is stealing their water, and their ancestral treasures are sold for necessary cash. And Mud’s own grandfather is accused of stealing the tribe’s prized Jefferson Peace Medal. When she finds a body in his house, Mud sets out to find her grandfather. It’s her quest as

she travels on foot, evades a wild boar, encounters a buffalo, and finds her way home to her people. The mystery is secondary in this debut wrapped in Kiowa history, stories, and culture. Recommended for readers of David Heska Wanbli Weiden's [Winter Counts](#) (\$16.99) or Marcie Rendon's [Sinister Graves](#) (Soho \$27.95) with its Ojibwe lead character.

Crime Reads adds, "Greed and murder face off against the power of traditional Native American wisdom and rituals in a gripping tale set in Oklahoma on a reservation fighting to preserve the Kiowa culture and way of life. "Rowell's *Never Name the Dead* is an impressive debut, charting a woman's return from Silicon Valley to her roots, the Kiowa tribal land in Oklahoma, where she finds a divided tribe, land threatened by fracking, and her own grandfather missing and possibly framed for a crime she knows he didn't commit. The novel then becomes a detective story with a deep sense of place and history. Rowell brings notes of poetry to the dark tale of corruption."

Shelton, Paige. [Winter's End](#) (St Martins \$26.99 Signed December 3). It's springtime in Benedict, Alaska, and with the warmer weather comes an unseasonably somber local tradition...the annual Death Walk. At the end of each brutal winter, citizens gather downtown and then break into groups to search the community for those who might have somehow gotten stuck at home. Beth Rivers sets off with her friend Orin and dog Gus, toward the cabin of an elderly resident, intending to check on him. When they reach the cabin, the old man is alive, but not in the best shape. Beth stays with him while Orin hurries to town for help, but it's not Orin who returns. Gril comes back with shocking news, and it soon becomes clear that Orin has also vanished. When they discover that their friend has been doing some top-secret research, they start to worry he's been exposed, or worse. Meanwhile, Beth continues on her own search, for her father, who allegedly is alive in Mexico, but won't return her calls....

Simpson, Rosemary. [Death at the Falls](#) (Kensington \$26 Signed December 10). The Gilded Age springs to life in a tantalizing tale of old money, new love, and grave suspicion, as newly-minted lawyer Prudence MacKenzie and ex-Pinkerton Geoffrey Hunter travel to Niagara Falls for a dangerous assignment... October 1890: As Prudence and Geoffrey settle into the most elegant hotel in Canadian Niagara, they observe a popular tourist area torn between natural beauty and industrial power. Also attracting their attentions are the antics of daredevil Crazy Louie Whiting, determined to be the first person to navigate the falls without drowning. Shortly after their arrival, Crazy Louie sends a specially designed test barrel containing a sheep over the falls. But when the barrel is retrieved and opened, the battered body of a local Tuscarora Indian spills out. When Geoffrey and Prudence learn of the dead man's suspicions about rampant bribery among greedy land developers and local officials, they wonder if there's a connection to their client, Rowan Adderly. A young woman whose father disappeared while she was a child, the land she is due to inherit could be worth millions—and inevitably the sharks have come feeding. In a move to block Rowan's inheritance, her greedy grandmother has declared Rowan to be the illegitimate offspring of an illicit affair between her son and a seductive Irish songstress....

Stabenow, Dana. [Theft of an Idol](#) (Zeus \$29.95). **Publication Day Party; ask for your copy to be Signed and Dated.** From the palaces of Alexandria reigns Cleopatra – seventh of her

name, avatar of the goddess Isis, ruler of the Kingdom of Egypt – surrounded by riches untold. Through the streets of her great city bustle scholars and sailors, politicians and priests. For those with the means, it is a comfortable life. But not all are invited to share in the wealth of Egypt's first city. For the peasants and farmers, their lives lie in the hands of the gods and the harvest. When Herminia, one of Alexandria's most beloved actresses, disappears on the eve of a great performance, Cleopatra sets Tetisheri, her Eye, to investigate, and we're off into tomb robbing and murder. Also descending into pyramids which Dana and I actually did when touring Egypt for research back in December 2019.

Stine, RL. [Spinetinglers](#) (Feiwel & Friends \$16.99). Ten all new stories for young readers by the master of Scary Tales! A boy who hates bugs starts to see them everywhere. A basketball player's skin starts to almost drip off his hands—but no one else can see it. Three friends find a hole in the ground that just gets bigger, and bigger, and bigger... And each story is introduced by Stine himself....

Unger, Lisa. [Secluded Cabin Sleeps Six](#) (Park Row \$27.99). A luxury vacation turns into a chain-reaction explosion of dark secrets in this tense tale. Three couples, some of whom are members of a wealthy but troubled Florida family, will gather for Christmas in 2017. Mako, a tech mogul, surprises his sister, Hannah, and the others with gifts of a genetic testing kit. The next day, the group leaves for the weekend at a luxurious cabin deep in the Georgia woods, complements of the demanding Mako. So right here we know we're in a kind of country house crime scene, no? And unusual Christmas gifts foreshadow what may come. At the cabin, Hannah feels something sinister, and when her friend Cricket arrives with boyfriend Joshua, Hannah thinks she recognizes Joshua, though they've never met. In its way this is an Agatha Christie Modern in its plot structure, crossed with *Gone Girl*. "For fans of creepy, cunning locked-room thrillers based on controversial social norms. Readers will revel in the search for genealogical justice amid best-kept secrets, while wondering who will live and who will die."

The Indie Next Pick adds: "This has family drama, secrets and great characters — so clear your weekend. Every book establishes Lisa Unger as a fantastic thriller writer and storyteller. This will bring even more fans into her camp (or cabin?)."

UNSIGNED EVENT BOOKS

(So you don't miss out on them)

✂Griffiths, Elly. [Bleeding Heart Yard](#) (Houghton \$27.99); [Signed UK copies](#) (\$45) are in stock now for a cold case murder in a British schoolyard solved by Harbinder Kaur in her 3rd brilliant case after the 2020 Edgar winner (Best Novel) [The Stranger Diaries](#) and the sequel [The Postscript Murders](#). These are brilliant British mysteries with a touch of Richard Osman and of course the skills of Griffiths' Ruth Galloway mysteries which I adore. The British do school stories terrifyingly well and of course the American analog is Donna Tartt's *The Secret History*. Joanne Harris has done a couple of these two, and Ashley Winstead is coming up strong in American campus crime. What we have here is Harbinder promoted from seaside Sussex to London where she grew up and is immediately thrust into a Dark Academic case. Harbinder is off to a shaky start as a supervisor when one of her officers, Cassie Fitzgerald, attends a class reunion at Manor

Park. Hers was a star-studded class of high achievers. And at the reunion the highest, an MP, is found dead in the school bathroom. Is it just a drug overdose? The problem is that Cassie and a couple of mates killed a fellow student in the '90s. She'd nearly suppressed this, but now she can't shake the idea that one of them has killed again. You'll love the way this one sorts out.

Harkup, Kathryn. [Superspy Science](#) (Bloomsbury \$28). Science, Death, and Tech in the World of James Bond. The full range of 007's exploits—such fun & a great gift idea. Harkup takes you through the world of Ian Fleming and of Bond through their history and gadgets. This is an engaging book I highly recommend.

Khan, Ausma Zehanat. [Blackwater Falls](#) (St Martins \$27.99). “At the start of this stunning series launch from Khan, the corpse of high school student and Syrian refugee Razan Elkader is found nailed to the door of a mosque in Blackwater Falls, Colorado Lt. Waqas Seif of the Community Response Unit, a small team assigned to cases involving vulnerable and minority groups, selects detective Inaya Rahman for the investigation, her first hands-on case since moving to Blackwater six months earlier. Rahman discovers that two Somali girls who were friends of Razan's disappeared months before, but were dismissed as runaways by Blackwater's powerful sheriff, who's known to mistreat minorities. Though the girls' bodies haven't been found, Rahman fears they too may be dead. Activist-attorney Areesha Adams and criminal psychologist Catalina Hernandez offer Rahman both support and assistance as the investigation leads to the aerospace company at which Razan had interned, the meatpacking plant that employs the three girls' fathers, and an anti-Muslim evangelical church. When Seif unexpectedly starts to oppose Rahman's efforts, she wonders whether he has an agenda other than solving the crime. Khan brilliantly depicts the complexities of her characters and the tensions of a multicultural American community struggling with bias, fear, and corruption. At once suspenseful, moving, and thought-provoking, this is not to be missed.”

Sarah Weinman adds in the *NYTBR*: “Khan understands that the best police procedurals are windows into small, specific communities — and that law enforcement can sometimes do more harm than good. You can see it in her earlier series, which stars the investigators Rachel Getty and Esa Khattak, and now in the impressive series debut of the Denver police detective Inaya Rahman, a Muslim woman who struggles with being ‘too brown for the badge, too blue for her coreligionists.’... As the detectives grapple with prejudice and fear, they discover links to other missing and murdered girls. Fortunately, Khan is far too good to let the narrative devolve into a clichéd showdown between immigrants and xenophobic locals. And Inaya is a fabulous character — shrewd and stalwart, yes, but also complicated and fully fleshed-out, as is the marginalized Syrian community of Blackwater Falls.”

✎Mackintosh, Clare. [The Last Party](#) (Sourcebooks \$27.99). I chose this as our **November British Crime Book of the Month** for many reasons, among them that it is set country bordering Wales and England with interesting cultural and jurisdictional elements. For Ellis Peters fans, remember how her medieval mysteries for Brother Cadfael played on this when it was even more of a border than it is today. Mackintosh is a former police officer who moved with her family to Wales and so writes this

procedural with real authenticity. Lauded for her novels' twisty plots and surprise endings, Mackintosh made her debut with the 2011 psychological thriller [I Let You Go](#) (\$16), which she brought to us live at The Pen, about the hit-and-run of a five-year-old boy; her books have sold more than 2,000,000 copies worldwide and been translated into 40 languages. Now here we have the first installment in a crime series starring “spiky” Welsh detective Ffion Morgan, who teams up with an English detective to solve the murder of a developer of lakeside vacation homes. We also have a few Signed UK [The Last Party](#) (\$40).

Backing me up is this Starred Review from *PW*: “This superb blend of psychological thriller and police procedural from bestseller Mackintosh begins with the discovery of Rhys Lloyd's body on New Year's Day in freezing Mirror Lake, which straddles North Wales and England. Rhys grew up in the village of Cwm Coed on the Welsh side, where he became disliked for building a luxury vacation development on the British side that the villagers believed would spoil the area and price them out. The case falls to DC Ffion Morgan of the North Wales Police and DC Leo Brady of the Cheshire Constabulary. Their working relationship doesn't start well because on New Year's Eve they had a one-night stand using fake names. Awkward doesn't begin to describe the situation, but the two professionals find their investigative skills complement each other. Ffion was raised in Cwm Coed, an advantage and drawback, as she knows everyone, including their secrets, while Leo's outsider status allows him to be more objective. A gripping portrait of two fractured people merges with believable plot twists, and the author perfectly captures the ennui of a small town where gossip can destroy lives.”

Williams, Ann. [Treasures of Egypt](#) (National Geographic \$50) is published to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the discovery of King Tut's tomb. The volume portrays the hallowed country's most remarkable achievements, viewed through decades of discovery chronicled in *National Geographic* magazine. From the breathless opening of King Tut's tomb in 1922 to the astonishing find of perfectly preserved boats, entombed for eternity near Giza's pyramids, here is the story of a proud and dynamic empire that changed the world; its colossal architecture and imposing statues force us to re-think the engineering limitations of the world before modern tools were available. Documenting a series of incredible discoveries—including a complex of royal graves filled with dazzling gold artifacts at the ancient city of Tanis, intriguing clues to the life and times of Cleopatra, and newly uncovered traces of Alexandria, Abydos, and other fabled sites—*Treasures of Egypt* embodies the culture's most fascinating historical milestones. Filled with vivid photographs, revealing time lines, and profiles of major explorers in the field.

COZY CRIMES

Abbott, Cordy. [Dead Men Don't Decorate](#) (Crooked Lane \$28.99) is “a charming series launch set in Marthasville, Virginia., a stand-in for Alexandria. At 55, Camille Benson wants a life change when she hears Waited4You, the antique store her parents used to own in Marthasville, is for sale. Camille jumps at the opportunity to buy the store from Roberto Fratelli, known as the meanest man in town. After a night of celebrating her first day of ownership, she and her best friend, Opal Wells, go back to the store only to find Roberto lying in a pool of blood and a valuable piece of inventory missing, a leather case that had been taped

under a chair, in which Opal had earlier found a letter dating to the mid-18th century. Could it be a clue to the murder? More crimes ensue, including the kidnapping of a police detective, as well as revelations of a messy political entanglement involving the local newspaper and the town's police chief. Abbott lovingly depicts Marthasville and its appealing residents while keeping the reader guessing whodunit."

Baldtree, Travis. [Legends & Lattes: A Novel of High Fantasy and Low Stakes](#) (Tor \$17.99). This rave from either Library Reads or Indie Next reminds me that not all Cozies are strictly mystery: "Legends & Lattes is the perfect low stakes, found family cozy fantasy. Viv, Cal, Tandri, and ESPECIALLY Thimble are such lovable characters. Who doesn't want a latte from an Orc barista and a hot cinnamon bun from an adorable ratkin?!"

Brecher, Christin. [Photo Finished](#) (Kensington \$16.95). This first in Brecher's brand new Snapshot of NYC Cozy Mystery series introduces aspiring photographer Liv Spyer, as she juggles rent on her postage stamp-sized Manhattan apartment, part time work at her grandparent's Greenwich Village key shop, her #lovelife with a guy who just might be FBI, posting to her thousands of Instagram fans, AND solving the odd murder!

Brown, Rita Mae. [Hiss and Tell: A Mrs. Murphy Mystery](#) (Random \$28). When a series of mysterious deaths spoil the Christmas season in Crozet, Virginia, Mary Minor "Harry" Haristeen and her beloved cats and dogs lend the police a helping paw. Harry's to-do list is a mile long. The days are filled with delivering holiday baskets to neighbors in need, chopping down the perfect tree with her best friend, Susan Tucker, and hunting for that elusive special gift for her beloved husband, Pharamond "Fair" Haristeen. Harry also decides to try her hand at dog showing, enrolling her handsome Irish wolfhound puppy Pirate in classes to prepare for a future exhibition. Through it all, holiday cheer—and plenty of treats for Pirate—keep spirits high. But the holidays aren't cheerful for everyone. Harry's friend on the police force, Cynthia Cooper, warns that the season can bring an uptick in crime. Her words prove tragically prescient when Harry and Susan discover the body of a man by the side of the road, dead, without any clues to his identity. One suspicious death is bad enough, but when Cooper reports that two more bodies have been found, also unidentified, Harry knows trouble is afoot. The autopsies for all three bodies reveal the presence of a deadly drug. Could their deaths have been accidental, or is a devious killer on the prowl?

Byrne, MV. [Isabel Puddles Abroad](#) (Kensington \$15.95). Isabel Puddles—Lake Michigan's answer to Miss Marple—strikes out for new territory. She has crafted a life she loves in her Lake Michigan hometown, but she's eager to use her golden years to make up for missed opportunities. That's why she's traveling to England for the first time to visit her pen pal, Teddy Mansfield, an acclaimed mystery writer who lives just outside the village of Mousehole, Cornwall. First impressions are charming—Isabel is staying in the guest cottage on the grounds of Teddy's beautiful country manor, and Mousehole is home to an assortment of characters as colorful as any in Teddy's books. Teddy's housekeeper, Tuppence, is a dab hand at baking—her scones are regularly runner-up in the village bake-off, and this year she's determined to scoop top prize. But it appears that other, possibly more dangerous rivalries have been brewing in Mousehole. And

when a resident is found pushing up daisies in a flowerbed, Isabel is drawn into the investigation....

Claire, Ann. [Dead and Gondola: A Christie Bookshop Mystery](#) (Random \$17)." Claire's sparkling debut and series launch introduces resourceful Ellie Christie, who left her hometown of Last Word, Colorado, right after high school to travel the world, finding work in bookshops and private libraries, or guiding literary-themed tours. Back in Last Word for a mere three weeks, she's settling into her new role as co-manager, along with her sister, Meg, of her family's bookshop, the Book Chalet. A meeting of the store's book club is interrupted by the arrival of a mysterious man, who leaves behind a copy of *Absent in the Spring* by Mary Westmacott, an Agatha Christie pseudonym. He's subsequently found stabbed to death in one of the gondolas on the line that connects the mountainside hamlet to the larger village below. Meg and Ellie saw him board the gondola alone. Ellie pulls out all the investigative skills she has acquired from reading mysteries to ferret out the truth behind the murder. A fair-play plot, vivid characters, fascinating facts about Dame Agatha, and an intelligent and appealing protagonist make this a winner for Cozy fans."

Elliott, Lauren. [Steeped in Secrets](#) (Kensington \$26). "At the start of this charming series launch from Elliott of the Beyond the Page Bookstore mysteries, Shayleigh "Shay" Myers returns to her hometown of Bray Harbor, California, newly divorced, broke, and with no prospects. Much to her surprise, she discovers that Brigit Early, a woman she barely knew growing up, recently died under mysterious circumstances and left Shay Crystals & CuriosiTEAS (a tea and psychic shop), a cottage on the beach, and a prescient white dog. Shay has always had what her mother called "heightened senses," but she isn't quite prepared to give psychic readings for a living, so when her realtor tries to talk her into selling the store, Shay seriously considers it—until she spots a corpse lying on the glass ceiling of the shop's upstairs greenhouse. Who was this man and why was he killed on the roof of the store? When Shay investigates, she discovers the answer may be written in the tea leaves. Elliott delivers appealing characters, surprising twists, a bit of magic, and the promise of romance. Lovers of paranormal cozies are sure to get on board."

✂Kinsey, TE. [An Act of Foul Play](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$15.95). I really love this British historical cozy series and the voice of the irrepressible yet sensible Flo. It's now November, 1911. Lady Emily Hardcastle is celebrating her birthday by seeing a play at the Duke's Theatre in Bristol with her maid and confidante, the inimitable Flo. Act One is a triumph. Then Act Two opens with a body on stage—a real one. One of the cast has been brutally murdered during the interval. When other matters get in the way of Inspector Sunderland overseeing the case himself, he asks the ever-resourceful Lady H to keep a watchful eye on the suspects—and his police colleagues. Rustling up some cunning disguises of their own, she and Flo are soon in deep cover among the cast and crew, pulling back the curtain on some shocking secrets and rivalries.... The problem is, everyone seems to have a motive, and everyone seems to have an alibi... In this locked-room mystery in which nothing is as it seems, the amateur sleuths need to put on the performances of their lives. For a real holiday escape, and delight, [order the whole Lady Hardcastle series.](#)

Krotow, Geri. [A Santa Stabbing](#) (Tule Press \$17.99). Retired Navy pilot Angel Warren's new life awaits in Stonebridge, Pennsylvania, where she's opening Shop 'Round the World, her travel-inspired gift and novelty shop. A newly empty nester and longtime widow, she's looking forward to leaving her flying career and its many life-or-death decisions behind and reconnecting with family and friends. Right now, Angel's biggest challenge is getting the shop ready for its grand opening just weeks before Christmas. Until she finds a dead body in the shop murdered with one of her specialty Santa figurines. Even worse, Angel's fingerprints are on the "weapon" and she's a prime suspect. It doesn't help that the deceased is an old friend who's collected a long list of enemies as a cut-throat real estate agent. And then there's the Stonebridge Chief of Police—and Angel's high school BFF—who brings her in for questioning. If Angel wants to clear her name before the Christmas rush, she's going to need to do some sleuthing on her own—and with the help of her stressed out parrot, Ralph.

Levine, Laura. [Death by Smoothie](#) (Kensington \$26). Freelance writer Jaine Austen is all too familiar with the short-lived sitcom *I Married a Zombie*—she once solved the murder of its star, Cryptessa Muldoon. But in true zombie fashion, Cryptessa is back from the grave—sort of—courtesy of a new theatrical production, and murder is on the bill once more... The *Bewitched* knockoff has got a devoted cult following. Jaine is delighted when one of those rabid fans hires her as script doctor for his new play based on the show—until she reads the awful script and meets Misty, the actress who'll be playing Cryptessa's role. Misty has Audrey Hepburn's doe eyes but not a smidgen of her ability. Yet she can certainly act the diva, demanding a special smoothie every day at 3:00 pm. Meanwhile, Jaine is grappling with another spoiled female—her uncooperative cat, Prozac, who's refusing to be wrangled into a kitty harness for outside walks. When someone spikes Misty's signature drink with a fatal shot of rat poison, the cast of suspects extends far beyond the theater.

✚Murray, Amita. [Arya Winters and the Cupcakes of Doom](#) (Polis \$16.95). Arya Winters is your typical cozy heroine. She lives in a cottage in a small English village and bakes for a living—well, she specializes in macabre desserts. She has nosy neighbors, who she avoids ruthlessly due to her social anxiety. And she has a keen interest in all things sexy. Arya isn't one to take on residential gigs, but when she's invited to bake her cakes for a two-week art retreat in the dead of winter on a large estate, she can hardly turn it down. It has the added advantage of helping her get away from her nosy neighbors. Except Monk Hole is rife with secrets. Everywhere Arya turns, there are more people with problems, and they all want to talk to her. Could things get any worse? A corpse covered in her cupcakes might turn up perhaps. Or Branwell Beam, her ex, who seems to have a past she never knew about, might make an appearance – with a new girlfriend in tow. Oh no! Start with [Arya Winters and the Tiramisu of Death](#) (\$16.95).

Reyes, Raquel V. [Calypso, Corpses, and Cooking](#) (Crooked Lane \$28.99). Our blogger Lesa reviews this new title in a series recommended also by John Charles: Trouble seems to follow Miriam Quinones-Smith, a Cuban American cooking show star, wherever she goes. The morning after her son's school fall festival, Miriam finds a woman passed out in her yard among Halloween tombstone decorations. Miriam's husband knows

all the woman's family problems, but Miriam has her own. Her hateful mother-in-law volunteered her to head up the Women's Club gala and menu. It's usually a stodgy affair, but Miriam recruits friends so that this year's gala features Caribbean food trucks. When the committee meets at the country club, they overhear an argument, and the new chef takes a header off the stairway. Because she fears her best friend's assistant might be a suspect, Miriam starts poking around, but she has other things on her mind: she's three months pregnant, and she's a little slow to realize she's a threat to a killer. The first "Caribbean Kitchen Mystery," [Mango, Mambo, and Murder](#) (\$19.99), won the 2022 Lefty Award for Best Humorous Mystery. Lesa isn't as impressed with this sequel.

Romeril, Christina. [A Christmas Candy Killing](#) (Crooked Lane \$28.99). With so many series launches this month, and getting strong reviews, I went with Romeril's for our **November Cozy Crimes Book of the Month** for its blend of seasonal crime and chocolates! Also candy matched to mysteries. But there are several strong candidates here and one of them may become the December selection if nothing exceptional turns up next month.

Set shortly before Christmas, Romeril's exceptional debut and series launch introduces Alex Wright and her twin sister, Hanna, the owners of Murder and Mayhem: Killer Chocolates and Bookshop, in Harriston, Montana. Alex's "idea of naming chocolates after poisons used in murder mysteries" has been a great success in their close-knit community. When an elderly neighbor, Jane Burrows, claims that a murderer she saw on a true crime show is living nearby, everyone dismisses it as a kooky notion. Stopping by Jane's house, Alex discovers Jane's body on her bedroom floor, her nightgown covered in blood. She was stabbed to death, but the murder weapon is missing. To her surprise, Alex learns her name is on the suspect list because Jane made Alex a major beneficiary. The police warn headstrong Alex to stay out of the investigation, but she's determined to prove her innocence and unmask the real killer. A clever plot matches a cast of distinctive characters, and **for ambitious cooks there are exacting recipes for hand-molded chocolates**. With its inventive premise, this cozy stands out from the pack.

St. Anthony, Joyce. [Death on a Deadline](#) (Crooked Lane \$26.99). As World War II rages in Europe and the Pacific, the small town of Progress is doing its part for the soldiers in the field with a war bond drive at the annual county fair. Town gossip Ava Dempsey rumors that Clark Gable will be among the participating stars. Instead of Gable, the headliner is Freddie Harrison, a B-movie star. When Freddie turns up dead in the dunk tank, Irene Ingram, editor-in-chief of *The Progress Herald*, starts chasing the real headline. There are plenty of suspects and little evidence. Ava's sister Angel, who was married to the dead actor, is the most obvious. The couple had argued about his affair with the young starlet Belinda Fox, and Angel was the last person to see Freddie alive. Irene discovers there's more than one person who might have wanted Freddie dead. As Irene draws on her well-honed reporter's instincts to find the killer—nothing is what it seems in Progress...and "deadline" may take on a new meaning for Irene.

St. James, Dorothy. [A Book Club to Die For](#) (Penguin \$27). This Starred Review comes from *LJ (Library Journal)*: "Librarian Trudell Beckett has a knack for solving murders in her hometown of Cypress, SC, much to the dismay of the local police. When Tru walks into Hazel Bailey's kitchen and finds the dead body of

Rebecca White, leader of the Arete Society book club, on the floor covered in tuna casserole, she knows it's going to be a very long night. Hazel is immediately arrested—after all, it's her house and no one else was in the kitchen. Tru knows better and sets out to prove that there is a killer on the loose. Meanwhile, Tru's father is missing, so she tasks Jace, her boyfriend, a policeman and Hazel's son, to find her dad. Dewey Decimal, Tru's tabby cat, gets in on the action, sharing clues that eventually help Tru to dig out the truth. With the help of Tru's best friend Tori, Charlie, Tori's boyfriend, and many other friends, Tru eventually solves the case. This cozy mystery full of books, romance, and a crime-solving cat will appeal to readers of Kate Carlisle's Bibliophile mysteries."

CLASSICS

A double treat for this month makes for fine escape reading

Lorac, ECR. [These Names Make Clues](#) (Poisoned Pen Press \$14.99). This British Library Crime Classic gets a Starred Review, one of several for this author: "First published in 1937, this superior entry in the British Library Crime Classics series from Lorac (1884–1959) is an exemplar of the golden age closed-circle whodunit. It opens with Chief Inspector Robert Macdonald of Scotland Yard receiving an invitation to a treasure hunt from Graham Coombe, a book publisher. Macdonald accepts, and on arrival at Coombe's London home finds that the eclectic group of guests, including an economist and several mystery authors, are to have their real names kept secret. They compete to decipher the clues Coombe has carefully prepared for the game, only to have the lark end abruptly when one of their number is found dead in a room he shouldn't have been in, as no clues directed anyone to it. At first, the cause of death appears to be a heart attack, but Macdonald ascertains that the dead man was electrocuted by an elaborate device straight out of the fiction penned by one of Coombe's guests. Lorac plays scrupulously fair, but few will anticipate the denouement. Fans of clever puzzle mysteries will clamor for more Lorac."

Queen, Ellery. [The Spanish Cape Mystery](#) (American Mystery Classics \$15.95). The Godfrey family is vacationing among the picturesque rocky cliffs of the North Atlantic seaboard, expecting peace, quiet, and, perhaps, a bit of golf or tennis. But one dusky evening in an isolated spot on the grounds of Spanish Cape, Rosa and her uncle David get into an argument about her secretive romance with one of their guests, the roguish John Marco, a handsome cad with a yellow roadster and no visible source of income. That's when a towering one-eyed man with a .38 revolver emerges from the twilight. When renowned sleuth Ellery Queen arrives the next day from New York City, looking forward to a summer getaway on the coast, he realizes his trip will be no walk on the beach. Rescuing Rosa, he discovers her captor mistook David for John and struck the former down instead. But Ellery has more work to do when Rosa's shady sweetheart is found stone dead and stark naked... aside from a black fedora and a theatrical-looking opera cloak. There are plenty of guests and members of the household who might have wanted John dead, but who did it—and what in the world happened to the victim's clothes? In this iconic series inspired by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and praised by none other than Agatha Christie, carefully planted clues, logical deduction, and an atmospheric 1930s setting combine for an irresistibly enjoyable read for anyone who loves a murderous puzzle. Includes discussion guide questions.

THIS NOVEMBER: ANCIENT EGYPT

The possible discovery of the burial of Queen Nefertiti is among factors raising interest in this ancient civilization. So is the potential 2023 opening of the new Cairo Museum out at Giza. And we are at the 100th anniversary of the opening of King Tut's tomb and King Tut's treasure is right now immersively on tour. Plus a [fascinating article about one archaeologist's theory about Tut's tomb just](#) appeared in the *NY Times*. Here are a few nifty books to consider for yourself or for gifts.

And Viking cruises presents a [view on demand look](#) at King Tut's tomb and more over several episodes beginning October 31 you might wish to view first. It's a promo for Viking but... For *Downton Abbey* fans you will see what Egyptian treasures remain on display at Highclere Abbey courtesy of the present Earl of Caernarvon and the Countess who is the author of the December publication of [The Earl and the Pharaoh](#) (Harper \$28.99), linking the Real Downton Abbey to the Discovery of King Tut by the 5th Earl.

Alexander, Tasha. [Secrets of the Nile](#) (\$27.99). Signed. Edwardian and Ancient Egypt combine in a Lady Emily mystery taking a classic Agatha Christie form and adding the danger faced by a young woman artisan in the time of Ramses II.

Darnelle, John/Colleen. [Egypt's Golden Couple: When Akhenaten and Nefertiti Were Gods on Earth](#) (St Martins \$29.99). Akhenaten has been the subject of radically different, even contradictory, biographies. The king has achieved fame as the world's first individual and the first monotheist, but others have seen him as an incestuous tyrant who nearly ruined the kingdom he ruled. The gold funerary mask of his son Tutankhamun and the painted bust of his wife Nefertiti are the most recognizable artifacts from all of ancient Egypt. But who are Akhenaten and Nefertiti? And what can we actually say about rulers who lived more than three thousand years ago? In a journey through excavations, museums, hieroglyphic texts, and stunning artifacts. From clue to clue, renowned Egyptologists John and Colleen Darnell reconstruct an otherwise untold story.

El Zeini, Hanny/Catherine Dees. [Omm Sety's Egypt](#) (St. Lynn's Press \$23.95). This well produced large paperback is really fun and filled with bit of history, diagrams, a glossary, and a dynastic chart. Is it scholarship? Is it a work of imagination, for Omm Sety is here an adventuring Englishwoman – think Gertrude Bell – who in her 50s settled in the Sety Temple in Abydos and became the lover of Sety I, a pharaoh of the 19th Dynasty. Whether you take it seriously or not there's a lot of nifty reading here. I like this thought: What if, one day, you fell down and lost consciousness, and when you woke up you found strange memories in your head? And what if you pursued those memories, only to discover that they had instead been pursuing you? Certainly writers down the ages have felt this way....

⌘ Meyer, Nicholas. [The Return of the Pharaoh](#) (\$16.99). The premise of Meyer's Holmes pastiche is that it's a previously unreleased manuscript by Watson, telling the tale of a missing noble, an undiscovered pharaoh's tomb, and plenty of murder. In 1910 Watson travels to a sanitarium in Egypt to provide his ailing wife comfort and an atmosphere to speed her healing process. Juliet Watson has a full schedule of rest, mud baths, and tonics that leave much of her husband's time free to explore. He is surprised and excited when he bumps into a disguised Sherlock

Holmes, who immediately folds Watson into the case. A duke has gone missing, leaving a trail of unpaid bills and his wife searching for him. Holmes discovers that the duke was in Cairo, searching for gold in the undiscovered tomb of Tutankhamun. When three other treasure seekers die under suspicious circumstances, Holmes and Watson, aided by Howard Carter, are in a race to either save or capture the duke and his accomplices.

Riggs, Christina. [Treasured: How Tutankhamun Shaped a Century](#) (Public Affairs \$30). When it was discovered in 1922, in an Egypt newly independent of the British Empire, the 3,300-year-old tomb of Tutankhamun sent shockwaves around the world. The boy-king became a household name overnight and kickstarted an international obsession that continues to this day. From pop culture and politics to tourism and the heritage industry, it's impossible to imagine the past century without the discovery of Tutankhamun – yet so much of the story remains untold. Here, Riggs weaves her historical analysis with tales of lives touched, or changed forever, by an encounter with the boy-king. Who remembers that Jacqueline Kennedy first welcomed the young pharaoh to America? That a Tutankhamun revival in the 1960s helped save the ancient temples of Egyptian Nubia? Or that the British Museum's landmark Tutankhamun exhibition in 1972 remains its most successful ever? But not everything about 'King Tut' glitters: tours of his treasures in the 1970s were linked to Big Oil, his mummified remains have been exploited in the name of science, and accounts of his tomb's discovery exclude Egyptian archaeologists.

Stabenow, Dana. [Theft of an Idol](#) (Zeus \$29.95). Third in a kind of private eye series set in Cleopatra's reign. See Signed books for more about the Eye of Isis investigating tomb robbing.

Williams, Ann. [Treasures of Egypt](#) (National Geographic \$50). This magnificent book, published to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the discovery of King Tut's tomb, portrays the hallowed country's most remarkable achievements, viewed through decades of discovery chronicled in *National Geographic* magazine. From the breathless opening of King Tut's tomb in 1922 to the astonishing find of perfectly preserved boats, entombed for eternity near Giza's pyramids, here is the story of a proud and dynamic empire that changed the world. Filled with vivid photographs, revealing time lines, and profiles of major explorers drawn from National Geographic's unparalleled photo archive.

SOME NONFICTION AND MEMOIRS

Bono. [Surrender: 40 Songs, One Story](#) (Knopf \$34). The artist, activist, and the lead singer of Irish rock band U2—has written a memoir: honest and irreverent, intimate and profound, *Surrender* is the story of the remarkable life he's lived, the challenges he's faced, and the friends and family who have shaped and sustained him.

Dylan, Bob. [The Philosophy of Modern Song](#) (Simon & Schuster \$45). Dylan's first book of new writing since 2004's *Chronicles: Volume One*—and since winning the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2016. Dylan, who began working on the book in 2010, offers his extraordinary insight into the nature of popular music. He writes over sixty essays focusing on songs by other artists, spanning from Stephen Foster to Elvis Costello, and in between ranging from Hank Williams to Nina Simone. He analyzes what he calls the trap of easy rhymes, breaks down how the addition of a single

syllable can diminish a song, and even explains how bluegrass relates to heavy metal. These essays are written in Dylan's unique prose. Read a [three page essay about Dylan and the book](#) in the *NY Times Book Review* (NYTBR)

Obama, Michelle. [The Light We Carry](#) (Crown \$32.50). In a follow up to her memoir [Becoming](#) (\$18.99), the former First Lady shares practical wisdom and powerful strategies for staying hopeful and balanced in today's highly uncertain world.

Tarantino, Quentin. [Cinema Speculation](#) (Harper \$35). The long-awaited first work of nonfiction from the author of the #1 New York Times bestselling *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood*: a deliriously entertaining, wickedly intelligent cinema book as unique and creative as anything by Quentin Tarantino. In addition to being among the most celebrated of contemporary filmmakers, Quentin Tarantino is possibly the most joyously infectious movie lover alive. For years he has touted in interviews his eventual turn to writing books about films. Now, with *Cinema Speculation*, the time has come, and the results are everything his passionate fans—and all movie lovers—could have hoped for. Organized around key American films from the 1970s, all of which he first saw as a young moviegoer at the time, this book is as intellectually rigorous and insightful as it is rollicking and entertaining

Tetro, Tony/Giampiero Ambrosi. [Con/Artist: The Life and Crimes of the World's Greatest Art Forger](#) (Little Brown \$29). The world's most renowned art forger reveals the secrets behind his decades of painting like the masters—exposing an art world that is far more corrupt than we ever knew while providing an art history lesson wrapped in sex, drugs, and Caravaggio. History hasn't been kind to the Porters. Credit for their literary invention was given to their childhood friend, Sir Walter Scott, who never publicly acknowledged the sisters' works as his inspiration. With Scott's more prolific publication and even greater fame, the Porter sisters gradually fell from the pinnacle of celebrity to eventual obscurity.

SOME NEW HARDCOVERS FICTION FOR NOVEMBER

Andrea Carter. [The Body Falls](#) (Oceanview \$27.95). Irish solicitor Benedicta "Ben" O'Keefe has just returned to the Inishowen Peninsula after spending six months at a Miami law firm. When Ben heads to her office in Glendara, she sees the town square filled with cyclists who are there for a charity bike race the next day. Before the cyclists can start, a torrential rainstorm causes the race to be postponed. While residents are trying to protect their property from rising water, tempers flare among some of the race participants. Things come to a head when the body of the organizer of the event falls from a mountain ledge and lands on a car driven by one of Ben's friends. With roads and bridges impassable, the peninsula becomes cut off from the mainland. No one can leave to get help, so Ben and her friends must work with the local police to stop another murder from occurring. Note: The weather, as an additional character in the plot, is very effective and Carter keeps the suspense high en route to the exciting climax. I've enjoyed earlier entries in this atmospheric series.

Ballantyne, Lisa. [The Innocent One](#) (Pegasus \$25.95). See New in Large Paperback below as well. This is a simultaneous hard/soft cover publication." A Cambridge University professor has been murdered, and suspicion has fallen on a student she

has been tutoring. That student, Sebastian Croll, immediately calls his lawyer, Daniel Hunter, who knows he will have to take the case — but wishes he didn't. That's because the last time Daniel represented Sebastian, in a gruesome child murder case, he won an acquittal for his client, then just 11. (Never mind that Sebastian confided to Daniel during the trial, 'I put the brick on Ben's face.')

It's a story clearly inspired by the wrenching 1993 James Bulger case, one that haunts the collective U.K. psyche to this day. A decade later, Daniel, separated from his wife and dealing with child-custody issues, is trying to re-establish some semblance of equilibrium in his life, and Sebastian's re-emergence threatens to destroy the tentative progress he's made. Fashioning memorable suspense out of a well-known case is incredibly difficult, but Ballantyne makes it look easy."—Sarah Weinman, *NY Times Book Review*.

Boyne, John. [All the Broken Places](#) (Viking \$28). Karen reviews: The story is an examination of ninety-one-year-old Gretel Fernsby. The chapters alternate between her escape from Nazi Germany when she was 12 and how she came to a quiet, comfortable life in her later years. When leaving Germany, she and her mother periodically changed their names and locations to avoid any recognition, by others, who might identify them as the daughter and wife of a notorious concentration camp commandant. Gretel's carefully crafted, comfortable life gets interrupted by a young boy, Henry, whose situation re-awakens her age-old guilt and remorse, but to get involved with his issues would mean to reveal her guilt from the past. To quote one reviewer, "...a devastating, beautiful story about a woman who must confront the sins of her own terrible past, and a present in which it is never too late for bravery." In explaining the theme of many of his books, the author states, "...I have less interest in the monsters that I do in the people who knew what the monsters were doing and deliberately looked away." An intriguing read.

Bruce, Camilla. [All the Blood We Share](#) (Putnam \$27). A real-life family of 19th-century killers provides the cast here. In 1871, Kate Bender's family flees their comfortable farm in Pennsylvania after one of them kills a local man. Desperate for money in their hardscrabble new home on the Kansas prairie, Kate's mother, Elvira, concocts herbal remedies, and the Benders offer travelers meals and makeshift lodging. Kate, a gifted performer, is eager to cash in on the spiritualism craze by setting up as a medium, but Elvira argues that courting public recognition is too dangerous. The murder of one of their overnight guests who's carrying substantial cash proves an easier solution. Plus, the man is a transient, making the crime also low risk. Bruce excels at illuminating the inner life of a family that's at once roiled by tensions and staunchly loyal; as the Benders often say, "We take care of our own, and the rest can fend for themselves." First-person chapters from Kate and Elvira are particularly strong in a novel rich with characters as convincing as they are sinister. This is a riveting portrait of the dark side of the American dream of special interest to those intrigued by historical crimes.

Christie, William. [The Double Agent](#) (St Martins \$27.99). "Set in 1943 and 1944, having saved Prime Minister Winston Churchill from a Gestapo assassination plot in Tehran, Alexsi Ivanovich Smirnov, a Soviet spy under deep cover as a German intelligence officer, turns himself over to the British expecting gratitude and sanctuary. Instead, the British put Alexsi back in the field as a

double agent, assigned to the German SS headquarters in Rome. There he transmits coded messages back to England, beds an Italian princess, and avoids reprisal from German soldiers and Italian partisans. Christie's knowledge of old-school tradecraft is exhaustive, and his portrayal of the genuine Ardeatine massacre of more than 300 Italian civilians in 1944 is haunting. A reluctant operative driven more by self-preservation than quaint notions of duty, Alexsi nevertheless possesses a deep core of personal honor. If he can't prevent Nazi butchery, he at least won't participate, and when the opportunity to escape finds him, he'll instead risk it all to do the right thing. Fans of Ken Follett's and Len Deighton's espionage novels will find much to admire."—*PW Starred Review*

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.

Crais, Robert. [Racing the Light](#) (Putnam \$29). Adele Schumacher isn't a typical worried mom. When she hires LA PI Elvis Cole (meaning Joe Pike will show up too) to find her missing son, a controversial podcaster named Josh Shoe, she brings a bag filled with cash, bizarre tales of government conspiracies, and a squad of professional bodyguards. Finding Josh should be simple, but Elvis quickly learns he isn't alone in the hunt—a deadly team of mysterious strangers are determined to find Josh and his adult film star girlfriend first

DeLillo, Don. [Don DeLillo: Three Novels of the 1980s](#) (Library of America \$45). This first volume in the Library of America Don DeLillo edition presents three indispensable novels from the 1980s, published here with new prefaces from the author. *The Names* (1982) was DeLillo's breakthrough novel. Next, part campus satire, part midlife character study, and part fever dream of a hyperreality that has become uncannily familiar, the National Book Award-winning *White Noise* (1985) creates a terrifying yet wickedly funny portrait of a postmodern America that is still recognizably ours. It is now a major motion picture starring Adam Driver and Greta Gerwig. Three years in the research and writing, *Libra* (1988) offers a magnificent counter-history of the JFK assassination and a nuanced portrait of the president's

murderer. DeLillo has observed that “the novel, working within history, is also outside it, correcting, clearing up, finding balances and rhythms.” The result is a revelatory new depiction of a defining event in twentieth-century history. Rounding out the volume are two hard-to-find essays directly related to the novels: “American Blood,” the 1983 *Rolling Stone* article that was DeLillo’s first effort to grapple with the JFK assassination and the welter of information and speculation the events of the killing and Oswald’s own murder by Jack Ruby; and “Silhouette City,” an assessment of extremist right-wing groups and the troubling presence of neo-Nazism in the United States.

✦Francis, Felix. [Hands Down](#) (Crooked Lane \$28.99). In a Starred Review, *PW* calls this “a perfect homage to his father Dick’s major continuing character, champion jockey-turned-PI Sid Halley. Sid’s life is upended when his wife abruptly announces she’s leaving him and taking their nine-year-old daughter with her. As Sid wonders whether their relationship is salvageable, Gary Bremner, a former competitor, contacts him. Bremner, who’s now a trainer, claims his horses have been threatened, a fear vindicated when a fire at his stables kills several of the animals and apparently Bremner himself. Sid learns that an unknown agent has been imposing an additional fee for their services, making trainers’ access to jockeys to ride in races contingent on the payment, and even directing some jockeys to deliberately lose, undermining the integrity of the turf. Despite having taken a step back from investigating, Sid plunges into the case, risking his life to save the sport he loves from a devastating scandal. Francis nicely balances his lead’s personal challenges with his sleuthing.” I admit that Sid Halley is not my favorite Francis character, I preferring the standalones, but his return in form is good news and I will read it.

Gauld, Tom. [Revenge of the Librarians](#) (Drawn and Quarterly \$24.95). This gorgeous small hardcover with its bright cover and hilarious illustrations (I love the collective noun series for book people like “An Autopsy of Critics” or “A Stanza of Poets”) is billed to “Confront the spectre of failure, the wraith of social media, and other supernatural enemies of the author” of literary cartoons while being a perfect gift for a reader and a treat for you.

Graham, Heather/Jon Land. [Blood Moon: The Rising Series: Book 2](#) (Tor \$27.99). I love The Rising Series by Heather Graham and Jon Land, and this new chapter is an absolutely riveting adventure ride! You’ll root for young heroes Alex Chin and Samantha Dixon as they show brilliance, resilience, and courage on an action-packed quest that takes them to a lost Mayan civilization—and even brings them closer to each other. This is a propulsive science-fiction thriller of the highest order!” —Lisa Scottoline

Greer, Andrew Sean/Heidi Pitlor, eds. [Best American Short Stories](#) (Houghton \$27.99). 20 shorter reads for you.

✦Hannah, Sophie. [The Couple at the Table](#) (Harper \$27.99). This is not Hannah writing Hercule Poirot, but it is a novel with a Christie-style plot. It’s been six months since Jane Brinkwood, only daughter of Lord Brinkwood, was fatally stabbed at her father’s Tevendon Estate Resort, a British couples-only venue. Jane and William were enjoying their honeymoon at an exclusive couples-only resort...until Jane received a chilling note warning her to “Beware of the couple at the table nearest to yours.” At dinner that night, five other couples were present, and none of

their tables was any nearer or farther away than any of the others. It’s almost as if someone had set the scene in order to make the warning note meaningless—but why would anyone do that? But someone in this dining room will be dead before breakfast, and all the evidence will suggest that no one there that night could have possibly committed the crime. Six months later, Lucy Dean, a fellow guest and the ex-wife of Jane’s widowed husband, badgers DCI Simon Waterhouse, who was at the resort at the time of the murder, into vigorously renewing his inquiries.

✦Harris, Robert J. [The Devil’s Blaze: Sherlock Holmes 1943](#) (Pegasus \$26). “At the start of Harris’s strong sequel to 2020’s *A Study in Crimson: Sherlock Holmes 1942*, Holmes is consulted by Inspector Lestrade after three men—an army major, a Home Office official, and a government scientist—spontaneously combust in a matter of weeks, causing a panic. Those fears are exacerbated by an evangelist who claims that the deaths are a divine judgment on sinners incinerated by an “avenging fire.” The stakes rise when Sir Anthony Lloyd, the head of the Intelligence Inner Council, summons Holmes and Watson to a meeting in an ultra-secure location, where one attendee fatally combusts in front of them. Holmes’s investigation into the seemingly impossible killings overlaps with his efforts to bring Professor James Moriarty to justice. But despite his belief that Moriarty is a master criminal, the professor is so unsuspected of villainy that he’s been placed in charge of a top-secret facility similar to Bletchley Park, and Lloyd wants Holmes to seek Moriarty’s help with the devil’s blazes. While this is more thriller than whodunit, Harris makes his conceit plausible. Fans of the Basil Rathbone Holmes movies will be eager for more.”—*PW*

Henderson, Alice. [A Ghost of Caribou](#) (Harper \$27.99). Author Henderson is a dedicated wildlife researcher, bioacoustician, and geographic information systems specialist and she brings it all to the page in her thrillers featuring Alex Carter on location. This book Alex is in the Selkirk Mountains of Northeastern Washington State where the proximity of the Canadian border means that the all but gone mountain caribou can disappear north. They have disappeared north, but the coordinator of the Land Trust for Wildlife Conservation has picked up a blurry image that might be a beast that has wandered back into the US. He sends wildlife biologist Alex to investigate. She has the use of an old cabin, she has cameras, one of which she hopes to attach to the caribou if she can find him. What she doesn’t have is peace to do her work because clashes between loggers and activists rile the locals, and the body of a murdered ranger has been found strung up in the town’s park. Also a backcountry hiker went missing a year before. As Alex tracks the caribou she inevitably gets caught up in a fight for him and for her own life. Also for the woman who’s been sitting in an old forest tree for seven months fending off its extinction.

Henderson, Craig. [Welcome to the Game](#) (Grove \$27). Henderson, a host of the BBC’s “Books That Made Britain” series, debuts with a tense crime thriller set in Detroit. Englishman Spencer Burnham has left his home country and his successful career as a rally car driver and moved his family to the Motor City, his wife Marielle’s hometown, where he operates a dealership specializing in foreign cars. When Marielle dies in a car accident, he’s left the widowed father of seven-year-old Abby, and serious money troubles place his business on the verge of bankruptcy. With the walls closing in and his alcoholism

risking his custody of Abby, Burnham takes a desperate gamble. His superior driving skills and intimate knowledge of the city's streets have attracted the attention of Dominic McGrath, a vicious money launderer. Burnham accepts a job offer to drive for McGrath's operation, replacing a man executed on McGrath's orders after being suspected of being a snitch. Fans of the *Fast & Furious* movie franchise will be riveted.

✎Hornby, Gill. [Godmersham Park: A Novel of the Austen Family](#) (Pantheon \$25.95). Prepare for our December 6 evening with Austen scholar Devoney Looser and Stephanie Barron of the Jane Austen mysteries with this delight. It traces several years in the life of Anne Sharp, a friend of Jane Austen's. In 1803, Sharp's mother dies and her once affectionate father, Johnny, inexplicably drops off from contact. Anne, suddenly without a home at 31, seeks work as a governess, one of few professions open to women of her class. She finds a position at Godmersham Park, Kent, arriving there in 1804 to teach Fanny Austen, the 12-year-old daughter of Jane's older brother Edward. Anne struggles with the job's constrictions and the loneliness that comes from being considered neither gentry nor servant, which feels to her like living in "a small village set away from society, into which gossip from the capital arrived long after the event." Fanny proves a bright pupil, but she's confused by Henry, Edward's younger brother, who makes his admiration for her plain despite being a married man. With Jane, an observant and intelligent single woman, Anne develops an enduring bond. Then Edward's wife grows resentful of Henry's affection for Anne, even as new information about the mysterious Johnny upends Anne's beliefs about her past. "Hornby's skillful mix of fact and fiction captures the complexities of the Austens and their era, and her crisp, nimble prose sparkles throughout. Best of all, Hornby genuinely channels the sentiment of 19th-century English literature."

We have a few Signed UK editions left: [Godmersham Park](#) (\$36).

✎Horowitz, Anthony. [The Twist of a Knife](#) (Harper \$29.99). Once again, protagonist Anthony Horowitz is accused of a crime he didn't commit. After writing three books and solving several murders, he has just ended his partnership with ex-detective Daniel Hawthorne so that he can focus on his play *Mindgame*, which is making its West End debut. On opening night, *Mindgame* receives a malice-filled review from *Sunday Times* critic Harriet Throsby. Early the next morning, Horowitz is awakened by the London police, seeking to question him in the murder of Throsby, who has just been stabbed to death in her home. Horowitz soon finds himself under arrest and in need of help from his now ex-partner Hawthorne. The duo team up once again to solve the case. Readers of character-driven novels will love the twists and turns of this Agatha Christie-style mystery that leads to an unexpected reveal. Perfect for fans of Elly Griffiths' Harbinder Kaur series, and Richard Osman's Thursday Murder Club mysteries.

Here is an essay about the TV adaptation of Horowitz's [Magpie Murders](#) (\$18) from a different series.

Kells, Claire. [An Unforgiving Place](#) (Crooked Lane \$27.99). I really liked the first for our National Parks Investigative Services Bureau Agent Felicity Harland, [The Vanishing Edge](#) (\$26.99), billed as a National Parks Mystery and set in Sequoia National Park, as it reminded me of Nevada Barr's Anna Pigeon series, much missed. Not to mention the mysteries by Christine Carbo

and Scott Graham also set in our parks. Here we move to a remote corner of Alaska when Felicity, enjoying a rare weekend off, learns her cousin Kelsey has gone missing there. Felicity recruits her partner, ex-SEAL Hux Huxley, and they head to the Koyukuk River in the Arctic where rumors of a fertility guru is rumored to be living off the land in the Gates of the Arctic, the most remote of all our National Parks. But as they go in undercover as tourists they discover a dangerous game is underway and they are not sure who the players are.... I'm not a fan of cults in crime fiction myself so I read this for the excellent tour of Gates and the climb to Mount Doonerak, the park's highest peak, as well as learning more about Felicity and Hux who are promising series leads.

Khan, Vaseem. [The Lost Man of Bombay](#) (Hodder \$26.99). 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? This 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. "The hugely entertaining result is not unlike an India(na) Jones adventure: history and mystery mixed with brutal slapstick, thwarted romance and sly humor... Malabar House is a subcontinental version of Mick Herron's Slough House...If only all period procedurals were as good as this—*The Times*

Khan, Vaseem/Maxim Jakubowski, eds. [The Perfect Crime](#) (Harper \$28.99). Our blogger Lesa Holstine reviews the outstanding choice for our **November International Crime Book of the Month**: Stories from 22 BIPOC authors, including established writers and up-and-coming novelists, are included in this collection loosely connected by crime themes. Anthology editor Khan's "Death in Darjeeling" features India's first female police detective in a 1950s Bombay—set traditional mystery. In Sulari Gentill's "A Murder of Brides," a traveling photographer's pictures are evidence in a murder investigation in Australia. Felicia Yap's "Gnome Man's Land" adds humor to the collection, as a commandant at a military academy desperately searches for 277 gnomes before a royal visit. The anthology also includes stories by Oyinkan Braithwaite, S. A. Cosby, Rachel Howzell Hall, Thomas King, Silvia Moreno-Garcia, Walter Mosley, Abir Mukherjee, and David Heska Wanbli Weiden. The *NYTBR* adds, "This collection stretches far beyond mere D.E.I. box-ticking. The quality of the stories is high, particularly a delicious morsel of marital deception from Oyinkan Braithwaite."

✎Lloyd, Jones, Emily. [The Drowned Woods](#) (Little Brown Books for Young Readers \$18.99). "A lush and haunting heist novel inspired by Welsh folklore. Emily's beautiful prose draws you in from the first page. If you like atmospheric fantasy, high stakes adventure, and a touch of romantic tension, you will love *The Drowned Woods*," says the Indie Next Pick.

Lux, Claudia. [Sign Here](#) (Berkley \$27) is a debut novel with an original premise: a guy who works in Hell (literally) is on the cusp of a big promotion if only he can get one more member of the wealthy Harrison family to sell their soul. Peyote Trip has a pretty good gig in the deals department on the fifth floor of Hell. Sure, none of the pens work, the coffee machine has been out of order for a century, and the only drink on offer is Jägermeister, but Pey has a plan—and all he needs is one last member of the Harrison family to sell their soul. When the Harrisons retreat to the family lake house for the summer, with their daughter Mickey’s precocious new friend, Ruth, in tow, the opportunity Pey has waited a millennium for might finally be in his grasp. And with the help of his charismatic coworker Calamity, he sets a plan in motion. But things aren’t always as they seem, on Earth or in Hell. And as old secrets and new dangers scrape away at the Harrisons’ shiny surface, revealing the darkness beneath, everyone must face the consequences of their choices.

✎MacBird, Bonnie. [What Child Is This?](#) (Harper \$26.99). MacBird’s latest Sherlock Holmes tale is a Christmas one... Even better, this lovely volume is delightfully illustrated by Frank Cho with line drawings that complement the text. **The Unsigned US version will be our December British Crime Club Book of the Month.** And you can give it to any reader on your list as Sherlock Holmes needs no introduction.

Marske, Freya. [A Restless Truth](#) (Tordotcom \$27.99). “This second installment of The Last Binding trilogy focuses on a magical locked-room mystery aboard an early 1900s ocean liner. Full of thrills, steamy romance, and clever humor, this delightful queer historical fantasy will appeal to fans of Naomi Novik and C.L. Polk.” The Indie Next Pick adds: “A sexy, mysterious romp at sea! It was exciting to be reacquainted with some characters from *A Marvellous Light* and to meet some phenomenal new characters. I had a blast reading this!”

And to go with Marske: Polk, CL. [Even Though I Knew the End](#) (Tordotcom \$19.99). “Short, sweet, romantic, and full of secrets. This magical noir stars wonderful characters and so many twists and turns that I never knew quite what was going to happen next. A delightful ride, handbasket optional.”

Miller, Madeline. [Galatea: A Short Story](#) (Harper \$12). This is a small hardcover that “that boldly reimagines the myth of Galatea and Pygmalion.”

Montillo, Roseanne. [Deliberate Cruelty](#) (Atria \$28.99). When Ann Woodward shot her husband, banking heir Billy Woodward, in the middle of the night in 1955, her life changed forever. Though she claimed she thought he was a prowler, few believed the woman who had risen from charismatic showgirl to popular socialite. Everyone had something to say about the scorching scandal afflicting one of the richest and most famous families of New York City, but no one was more obsessed with the tale than Truman Capote. Acclaimed for his bestselling nonfiction book *In Cold Blood*, Capote was looking for new material and followed the scandal from beginning to end. Like Ann, he too had ascended from nobody to toast of the town, but he always felt like an outsider, even among the exclusive coterie of high society women who adored him. He decided the story of Ann’s turbulent marriage would be the basis of his masterpiece — a novel about the dysfunction and sordid secrets revealed to him by his high society “swans”—never thinking that it would eventually lead to

Ann’s suicide and his own scandalous downfall. “A 20th-century morality tale of enduring fascination,” *Deliberate Cruelty* is a haunting cross between true crime and literary history that is perfect for fans of *Furious Hours*, *Empty Mansions*, and *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*.

O’Malley, Daniel. [Blitz](#) (Little Brown \$30). A new recruit to the most powerful supernatural intelligence agency on Earth is accused of going rogue and must go on the run to clear her name. September, 1940. Three women of the Checquy, the secret organization tasked with protecting Britain from supernatural threats, stand in the sky above London and see German aircraft approach. Forbidden by law to interfere, all they can do is watch as their city is bombed. Until Pamela, the most sensible of them, breaks all the rules and brings down a Nazi bomber with her bare hands. The three resolve to tell no one about it, but they soon learn that a crew member is missing from the downed bomber. Charred corpses are discovered in nearby houses and it becomes apparent that the women have unwittingly unleashed a monster. Through a city torn by the Blitz, the friends must hunt the enemy before he kills again. Their task will take them from the tunnels of the Underground to the halls of power, where they will discover the secrets that a secret organization must keep even from itself. Today. Lynette Binns, a librarian with a husband and child, is a late recruit to the Checquy, having discovered only as an adult her ability to electrify everyday objects with her touch. After completing her training, she is assigned to examine a string of brutal murders and quickly realizes that all bear the unmistakable hallmark of her own unique power. Unable to provide an alibi and determined to prove her innocence, she flees, venturing into the London underworld to find answers. But now she is prey, being tracked by her own frighteningly capable comrades. As Lyn fights off powered thugs and her own vengeful colleagues, she will find that the solution to the murders and to the mystery of her own past lies in the events of World War II, and the covert actions of three young women during the Blitz.

✎Paris, BA. [The Prisoner](#) (St Martins \$28.99). Amelie has always been a survivor, from losing her parents as a child in Paris to making it on her own in London. As she builds a life for herself, she is swept up into a glamorous lifestyle where she married the handsome billionaire Ned Hawthorne. But then, Amelie wakes up in a pitch-black room, not knowing where she is. Why has she been taken? Who are her mysterious captors? And why does she soon feel safer here, imprisoned, than she had begun to feel with her husband Ned? Weaving between the recent past and present, the book’s first half is tense and uneasy with a lonely young woman stumbling into a world she can barely conceive

Penny, Louise. [A World of Curiosities](#) (St Martins \$28.99). Siblings Fiona and Sam Arsenault return to Three Pines more than a decade after Gamache investigated the bludgeoning murder of their mother, Clotilde. His inquiry revealed that Clotilde had prostituted her children, then 13 and 10, at the time of the killing. During the case, he met his future number two and son-in-law, Jean-Guy Beauvoir, who came to a different conclusion than his own. Gamache stayed involved in Fiona’s life, even aiding her graduate studies in engineering. The Arsenaults’ arrival coincides with other changes. Myrna and her partner, Billy, are thinking of moving from above the bookshop. Instead, it is suggested they break through to an attic room that had been bricked off by Billy’s ancestor and about which he’d

only recently learned upon receiving a letter dated 1862. In the room, they find a trove of unusual objects, some of which had been stolen from Gabi and Olivier's bistro, and an enormous painting. The painting looks to be "The Paston Treasure," better known as "A World of Curiosities," painted in the 1800s and housed in the U.K. But oddly, the painting in Three Pines is a copy filled with modern objects. Also in the room is something long sought by Raine-Marie; a grimoire, a textbook of magic, inscribed with the name Anne Lamarque, a woman who'd been banished as a witch. After the death of the woman who sent the letter to Billy, Gamache brings in Agent Ameila Choquet to set up an Incident Room in Three Pines in order to learn how all these pieces fit together.

Watch [a video of Louise at The Pen](#) four years ago. And [here is a trailer](#) for a new TV series featuring Gamache and Three Pines. Hurray, as Louise herself agrees the one TV Gamache episode was a real stinker.

Phillips, Gary/Gary Anthony Haywood, eds. [Witnesses for the Dead](#) (Soho \$27.95). A powerful collection of stories asks whether witnessing a crime will change a person. Edited by Anthony Award-winner Gary Phillips and Shamus Award-winner Gary Anthony Haywood, the collection includes contributions from NAACP Image Award-winner Pamela Samuels Young, Cara Black, Christopher Chambers, Sarah M Chen, Aaron Philip Clark, Teresa Dovalpage, Tod Goldberg, Edgar Award-winner SJ Rozan, Agatha Award-winner Richie Narvaez, Alex Segura, Pamela Samuels Young. Sales proceeds go to the Alliance for Safe Traffic Stops.

Priest, Cherie. [Flight Risk](#) (Atria \$27). When psychic travel agent Leda Foley is approached by a man searching for his sister, she quickly agrees to help. The missing woman disappeared with a vintage orange car, a fat sack of her employer's cash, and a grudge against her philandering husband—a man who never even reported her missing. Meanwhile, Seattle PD detective Grady Merritt has temporarily misplaced his dog. While he's passing out bright pink "Lost" flyers at the Mount Rainier visitor's center, the wayward pooch appears—with a human leg in his mouth. Thanks to DNA matching, Grady learns that the leg has something to do with Leda's new client, and soon the two cases are tangled. Theories abound, but law enforcement is low on leads. Lucky for Grady, Leda has a few ideas that might just be crazy enough to work. They'll need one yellow dog, a fair share of teamwork, and perhaps a bit of Klairvoyant Karaoke to piece the clues together in this sequel to last year's amusing [Grave Reservations](#) (\$17).

Quick, Matthew. [We Are the Light](#) (Avid Reader Press \$27.99). Lucas Goodgame is dealing with a lot. He's a high school counselor in Majestic, Pennsylvania, who survived a mass shooting in the town's historic theater. His wife, Darcy, was killed and has been transformed into an angel; his analyst, whose own wife was killed in the shooting, won't answer his desperate letters; and there's a kid camped in his yard who might hold the key to helping the town heal. Quick became a household name thanks to his debut novel and the 2012 Oscar-winning movie adaptation of *The Silver Linings Playbook*, and he's conjured a similar feeling of community and tender family affection here, with plenty of people helping Lucas cope with the unimaginable. This is the #1 Indie Next Pick for November – Indie Next means a tally of independent booksellers' recommendations.

Rowling, JK. [Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix Illustrated Edition](#) (Scholastic \$54.99). The current #1 Children's lit bestseller is this brilliantly illustrated edition, a visual feast created by artists Jim Kay and Neil Packer. It's rich in iconic scenes and much loved characters – Tonks, Luna Lovegood, and many more – as the Order of the Phoenix keeps watch over Harry Potter's fifth year at Hogwarts. With its oversized format, high-quality paper, ribbon bookmark, and color on nearly every page, this edition is the perfect gift for Harry Potter fans and book lovers of all ages.

Sanderson, Brandon. [The Lost Metal: A Mistborn Novel](#) (Tor \$29.99). Enter the Mistborn world of Scadrial as its second era, which began with *The Alloy of Law*, comes to its earth-shattering conclusion. For years, frontier lawman turned big-city senator Waxillium Ladrian has hunted the shadowy organization the Set—with his late uncle and his sister among their leaders—since they started kidnapping people with the power of Allomancy in their bloodlines. When Detective Marasi Colms and her partner Wayne find stockpiled weapons bound for the Outer City of Bilming, this opens a new lead....

Skelton, Douglas. [A Rattle of Bones](#) (Arcade \$26.99). When banners proclaiming the innocence of James Stewart spring up at the gravesite of his famous namesake—a clan leader who was falsely accused of murder and hanged almost 300 years ago in a miscarriage of justice that still resonates—investigative reporter Rebecca Connolly smells a story. The publicity stunt was clearly meant to draw attention, but what's behind it and why now? The young Stewart has been in prison for ten years for the brutal murder of his lover, lawyer and politician Murdo Maxwell, in his home in Appin, near the site of the Stewart monument. Rebecca soon discovers that, prior to his murder, Maxwell believed he was being followed, and his phones were tapped. What would justify a government phone tap against a public figure? And why is a Glasgow crime boss so interested? As Rebecca keeps digging, she finds herself in the sights of Inverness crime matriarch Mo Burke, who wants payback for the damage caused to her family in a previous case—all this set against the stunning backdrop of the Scottish Highlands.

Stackpole, Michael. [Dark Souls: Masque of Vindication](#) (Yen Press \$25). It's been some time since Scottsdale's Stackpole has had a new hardcover for us. I think *Dark Souls* is a kind of series. Anyway....A nameless undead awakens in an ancient crypt, and thus does the journey begin. Drawn mysteriously toward the horizon, he ventures into a land of perils beyond death. A once shining kingdom has been fractured, and mindless Hollows prowl the dark corners. To see it united and restored, the old king must be freed by his get-the youth Balarion. The undead and his companions, surviving champions of the halcyon era, accompany Balarion on this journey to release his father, battling foes both monstrous and clever. Yet it is not their enemies that give them doubt, it is their quest.

Stott, Rebecca. [Dark Earth](#) (Random \$27). For you historical fiction fans who are tired of WWII stories, here's a dive back into early 6th Century Britain in the aftermath of the Roman Empire. By 500 CE, the Romans have abandoned Britain, their city of Londinium lies abandoned, and Seax leader Osric is consolidating his power among the diverse peoples south of the Thames. Sisters Isla and Blue live with their father, "The

Great Smith,” who forges Osric’s ceremonial swords. The Great Smith’s seemingly magical metalworking skills, Isla’s differently colored eyes, and Blue’s psychic gifts signal an occult power to Osric, who fears this will bring his people bad luck. As such, the family remains under Osric’s protection, but he exiles them to a tiny island on the Thames. When The Great Smith dies unexpectedly, Blue and Isla travel to Osric’s camp hoping to find safety. Instead, they encounter Osric’s violent son Vort, who is enraged to discover Isla has defied the sacred law against women entering a forge, possibly cursing the swords she has helped make. While fleeing retribution, the sisters discover a hidden community and new possibilities for the future. Stott concretely captures the brutality of the women’s world, their deep resourcefulness, and the power of the stories that sustain and endanger them. I’m a fan of the long-running series by Rosemary Rowe featuring Libertus, a mosaic maker in Roman Britain’s Glevum. And Lindsey Davis’s Roman series. So....

Theroux, Marcel. [The Sorcerer of Pyongyang](#) (Atria \$26). Cho Jun-su, the hero of Theroux’s expert, engrossing seventh novel, is 11 when his life is transformed by Dungeons & Dragons—more specifically, a Dungeon Masters Guide that a foreign visitor left behind at the hotel where Jun-su’s father works. Jun-su is frightened by the book’s inscrutable contents—foreign media is suspect under the dictatorship’s iron rule—but he begins to decipher the book with the help of an English-speaking teacher, who dubs the game the House of Possibility. D&D’s core concepts of assuming different roles and having multiple life choices are baffling but inspiring for the young man, who soon gets attention for his inventive poetry—work that in time introduces him to the nation’s elite. Theroux offers a cross section of North Korean society, from brutal work camps where assassinations are common to the wealthy, druggy orbit of Kim Jong Il’s friends and family to the desperate efforts of bureaucrats to cadge money for its starving people via ransomware and insurance fraud. But the heart of the story is consistently Jun-su, who navigates the traditional matters of maturity—love, sex, friendship—alongside a growing understanding of opportunities and mindsets that his friends and family aren’t privy to.

✠Tudor, C J. [A Sliver of Darkness: Stories](#) (Random \$27) provides plenty of subtle chills in this superior collection of 11 stories. The highlight is “End of the Liner,” a powerful postapocalyptic tale that only hints at what has devastated most of humanity. Tudor avoids clichés and facilitates suspending disbelief by making all her characters credible, no matter how fantastic the situation they find themselves in. Twilight Zone fans will hope for another collection from Tudor.

Wilson, Kevin. [Now is Not the Time to Panic](#) (Ecco \$27.99). “It’s the summer of 1996 in the small town of Coalfield, Tennessee. Awkward teenagers Frankie and Zeke just want to make art, but lose control over their creation. This coming-of-age novel is uniquely compelling about how art can be appropriated by others and morph into legend.”

Wurth, Erika T. [White Horse](#) (Flatiron \$27.99). An Indigenous woman encounters the supernatural when she touches her missing mother’s old bracelet and raises a monster. Just missing the Scary Season is Wurth’s chilling debut where “Past demons beget present terrors that’s perfect for fans of Stephen Graham Jones and Catriona Ward. Abandoned by her mother when she

was just two days old, Kari James is a tough-talking, rough-around-the-edges Indigenous woman who loves cigarettes and heavy metal and has more questions about her past than she cares to acknowledge. She is, however, unable to avoid the mystery of her childhood when her cousin and confidant, Debby, presents her with a bracelet of her mother’s, hoping to facilitate a connection that Kari has for so long been without. Decorated with unfamiliar symbols, the bracelet soon conjures not only the ghost of Kari’s mother but a beast reeking of death. Readers will be enthralled and as desperate as Kari for answers, as Wurth’s story continues at a steady, bone-chilling pace and as Kari faces not only her mother’s demons but her own as well. With tangible characters, insightful dialogue, and the horror and painful beauty of discovering one’s truth, Wurth’s debut is must-read horror with a big, bleeding heart.”—*Library Journal* Starred Review

Wyatt, Merrill. [Tangled Up in Nonsense](#) (McElderry Books \$17.99). In this warmhearted, very funny, madcap caper for readers ages 9-12, Sloane and Amelia hate they haven’t had a good case since they solved the century-old mystery of the Cursed Hoäl Jewels in [Tangled Up in Luck](#) (\$8.99; hardcover \$17.99). And they’re losing YouTube subscribers. But they have an amazing opportunity: What if they find the missing fortune of bootlegger Jacqueline “Ma” Yaklin, a legendary Toledo criminal? Sloane’s troublemaking, gambling, scheming grannies (whom she adores) trick Amelia’s hypercompetitive family into attending the Annual Ohio Peony Enthusiasts Competition—at a hotel that was once Ma Yaklin’s mansion. Now the Osburn and Poe Detective Agency has no excuse for not solving the cold case of the missing millions. Harassed by the over-the-top shenanigans of Amelia’s family’s ridiculous braggadocio, pestered by the grannies to (cough) discreetly acquire cuttings of prizewinning peonies, and accompanied everywhere by Amelia’s costume-wearing, joyful dramatics, the girls will surely solve the mystery and find the lost lucre. Sloane helps Amelia feel better about her family’s disrespect, and Amelia comforts Sloane, who’s worried about her dad’s new girlfriend. But even the laughter at their families’ antics is not unkind in this friendship-building yarn

OUR NOVEMBER LARGE PAPERBACK PICKS

Chizmar, Richard/Stephen King. [The Gwendy Trilogy: Gwendy’s Button Box, Gwendy’s Magic Feather, Gwendy’s Final Task](#) (Gallery\$48.99). In “Gwendy’s Button Box,” twelve-year-old Gwendy Peterson’s life is forever changed when she is given a mysterious wooden box by a stranger for safekeeping. It offers enticing treats and vintage coins, but he warns her that if she presses any of the box’s beautifully colored buttons, death and destruction will follow. Years later, in “Gwendy’s Magic Feather,” she’s a successful novelist with a promising future in politics. But when the button box suddenly reappears in her life, she must decide if she is willing to risk everything for its temptations. And in the thrilling conclusion “Gwendy’s Final Task,” evil forces seek to possess the button box and it is up to Senator Gwendy Peterson to keep it from them at all costs. But where can one hide something so destructive?

✠Cowan-Erskine, Beth. [Loch Down Abbey](#) (Hodder \$15.99). This enchanting book, a natural delight for anyone who enjoyed *Knives Out* or in fact any basic Agatha Christie country house murder, albeit this one is in Scotland, is one of my favorite recent reads. I love the satire. It’s the 1930s but wait, a mysterious

illness is spreading over the country. Lord Inverkillen and his family, so insular, are focused on the household's dwindling lavatory paper and who will mind the children now that elderly Nanny has gone sick and died. Then the Earl is found dead in circumstances not related to the illness but the local Inspector rules it an accident. It's left to head housekeeper Mrs. MacBain to chart an investigation while the family, accustomed to doing nothing for no one and locked down in the Abbey because of the illness along with what servants remain, strive to keep a wealth of secrets covered up. Meanwhile the servants step up or step out as the household dynamics change forever.

Eriksson, Kjell. [The Deathwatch Beetle](#) (\$17.99) is top-notch Scandinavian noir and a welcome addition to the Ann Lindell series. Though former Uppsala police inspector Ann Lindell has left the force for a quieter rural life, her innate curiosity and empathy for the victims of crime continue to exercise a hold. Now a cheese maker, Ann visits her lover Edvard Risberg on the Swedish island of Gräsö. She learns that a young woman named Cecilia Karlsson disappeared from the island four years ago, and her parents are still trying to find her. Unable to ignore a mystery, Ann visits Cecilia's parents to see if she can help them by uncovering their daughter's fate. When a neighbor of Cecilia's insists that he recently spotted her in Lisbon, Ann calls in some favors from her former colleagues and digs deeper into the disappearance; is it a coincidence that Cecilia vanished the day after the (apparently accidental) drowning of a Gräsö resident? When a new death occurs, the police are brought in, and Ann and Edvard work with them to find out if there's any relation to their case. "Eriksson effectively portrays Sweden in the throes of change, being eroded from the inside out like the destructive insect of the title, while exploring social class, family, and, above all else, how men treat women. The plot slowly and steadily builds to a genuinely shocking denouement. Fans of literary fiction will be equally rewarded."

Ferencik, Erica. [Girl in Ice](#) (\$17.99). *PW* Stars this: "Linguist Val Chesterfield, the narrator of this exemplary thriller, grapples with two mysteries—the apparent suicide of her twin brother, Andy, while on a research expedition in northern Greenland that included the discovery of an eight- or nine-year-old girl who was miraculously revived after being found frozen in a glacier. Despite her fears of travel, Val accepts an invitation from expedition leader Wyatt Speeks to travel to the Arctic to see whether she can decipher the child's language, unknown even to the region's indigenous people. Wyatt and his team are hoping the ice cores they're studying can offer answers that could avert a climate disaster at a time when sudden, freezing storms are occurring with increasing frequency worldwide. Val's moving struggles to communicate with the girl alternate with her investigation into Andy's death, which she suspects was a homicide. Trenchant details about catastrophic climate change bolster a creative plot featuring authentic characters, particularly the anxious, flawed Val. Ferencik outdoes Michael Crichton in the convincing way she mixes emotion and science" The Indie Next pick adds: "I knew little about linguistics or the Arctic until I read Erica Ferencik's fascinating book. Her style is fast, impossible to put down, and the landscape is beautifully written."

Hawkins, Rachel. [Reckless Girls](#) (\$17.99). The hope of Lux McAllister, the protagonist of this diabolically plotted nail-biter, that sailing the Pacific with her hot new boyfriend, Nico

Johannsen, will help put a tragic past behind her stalls in Maui, along with Nico's damaged boat. Then a pair of strangers, college besties Amma and Brittany, offer the couple a huge sum that covers the boat's repair to take them to remote, notorious Meroe Island. Insecure Lux accurately anticipates sexual tension among the four 20-somethings during the voyage; what she doesn't expect is to arrive at their middle-of-nowhere destination to find a luxury catamaran already anchored off the beach, *GQ*-ready twosome Jake and Eliza on deck. Later, while exploring the island, Lux is alarmed to stumble on a skull clearly too fresh to be from the 1821 shipwreck that gave Meroe its name. And then.... "It started as a romantic idyll. It ended with a stack of corpses. A vacation on a remote atoll in the South Pacific goes very, very wrong...the ending feels like that great moment in "Body Heat" when the camera swoops down to reveal the identity of the last person standing at the end of all the mayhem. Who will it be?" —*The New York Times*. The Indie Next pick adds: "A tropical murder mystery perfect for mid-winter reading, this book is set on a sinister island in the Pacific, packed with Hawkins' wonderfully gritty characters and a murderer amongst them."

Hunter, Stephen. [Targeted](#) (\$17). In bestseller Hunter's superb 12th Bob Lee Swagger novel, a determined *New York Times* reporter wants to interview Bob, who's 74, about his part in recently bringing down a bad guy known as Juba the Sniper in this sequel to 2019's [Game of Snipers](#) (\$9.99). Bob, who's recovering from a bullet wound in his upper body, declines, but after the reporter publishes an article describing Bob's role, Bob is subpoenaed to testify before a House subcommittee set up for purely political purposes. A confrontational congresswoman, a wily and ancient veteran who's facing a tough upcoming election campaign, leads the hearing, which is convened in a Boise, Idaho, high school auditorium near Bob's home for his convenience. Bob holds his own at the hearing, but eventually the committee charges him with "wanton endangerment." In a battle where "words are bullets," he's on the ropes, until a prison bus commandeered by a Chechen crime family of five, all escaped inmates, crashes the hearing, setting loose wild mayhem. "The suspense rises as Bob must try to save the lives of the very people accusing him of wrongdoing. With this inventive nail-biter, Hunter sets a new bar for both himself and the genre."—*PW* Starred Review. I add that Hunter drops you back over two centuries into Swagger family history during our Revolutionary War that interleaves with the present action and is enormous fun.

Dana Stabenow, a Hunter fan like me, adds: "Hunter starts out this book pissed off at everyone, especially Congress and the media, but by the end he has mellowed a trifle, toward everyone except the media. Again with the Hunterian edge-of-your-seat thrill ride, with excellent villains both Congressional and Chechen, another fascinating peek into Bob Lee's family history, and Bob Lee himself at his rough guy best."

Loewenstein, Laurie. [Funeral Train](#) (Akashic \$18.95). The *NY Times* reviews: "For Temple Jennings, the small-town Oklahoma sheriff who returns in Laurie Loewenstein's engaging new Dust Bowl-era mystery, day-to-day matters have become challenging. Drought and the Great Depression make for desperate times, and now the very train that his beloved wife, Etha, is on has derailed, landing her and many others in the hospital (or worse). Was it a tragic accident, or did someone wreck the train on purpose? Temple has barely begun investigating the train crash

when the local recluse, Ruthie-Jo Mitchem, is killed. Her private life yields more pernicious secrets than he could ever have imagined, tangling him in ‘a big old spiderweb’ of suspects. Reading *Funeral Train* feels like being catapulted back in time to experience the 1930s at an almost unbearably visceral level. The parched prairie is ‘flat as a dried cowpat. Brown. Beige. Russet. Snuff. One tint merging into the next, stitched together with an unbroken line of telephone poles.’ In town, the buildings have ‘absorbed the grit of the swirling dust storms, and taken on the color of a turbid creek,’ and ‘a rusted sign screeched in the wind.’”

Rai, Alisha. [Partners in Crime](#) (Avon \$16.99). What better holiday escape that “this delightful action-packed rom-com/caper mash-up full of jewel heists, sizzling hot sex scenes, and high-stakes backroom poker games. Mira Patel ran from her family’s less-than-legal life in Las Vegas when she was 18. Now she’s settled down in California and hires a matchmaker to find love—but she screens out anyone she thinks might reject her for not coming from a “good family,” among them lawyer Naveen Desai. When Mira’s Aunt Rhea dies and leaves her a mysterious note and the key to a storage locker, she learns that her estranged father stole a \$10 million necklace from the crime lord Cobra. Complicating things even further, the lawyer handling Rhea’s estate is none other than Naveen, and when Cobra’s henchmen come after Mira, he winds up kidnapped right alongside her. Now they must work together to escape. Escape-room-loving, emotionally intelligent Naveen makes a delightful hero, and Mira’s progression from mild-mannered accountant to card-counting James Bond–style badass is by turns hilarious and thrilling.”

Scott, J. Todd. [The Flock](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$15.95). Ten years after a fiery raid kills her family, former cult member Sybilla “Billie” Laure has a completely new identity. She’s settled in rural Colorado with her daughter, hoping for a quieter life. But the world has other plans. With wildfires raging and birds dropping from the sky, Billie wonders if her cult leader father’s apocalyptic predictions are finally coming true. When an intruder murders her husband and kidnaps her daughter, Billie has no choice but to confront the secrets of her past. But Billie’s journey has other perils, too—namely, a police chief hot on her trail, determined to expose the dangers of the defunct doomsday cult. To save her daughter, Billie will have to go back to where it all began—to the ruined compound in New Mexico where the real threat is the truth. “It’s all here: doomsday cults, innocents and grifters, unexplainable phenomena. Heartache and regret. A chance at redemption. What sets *The Flock* above your average thriller is the absolute ring of authenticity from this twenty-plus-year career DEA agent. You got the real deal right here.” —Alma Katsu

Winters, Ben H. [The Quiet Boy](#) (\$17.99). This legal thriller follows a sixteen-year-old who suffers from a neurological condition that has frozen him in time—and the team of lawyers, doctors, and detectives who are desperate to wake him up. In 2008, a cheerful ambulance-chasing lawyer named Jay Shenk persuades the grieving Keener family to sue a private LA hospital. Their son Wesley has been transformed by a routine surgery into a kind of golem, absent all normal functioning or personality, walking in endless empty circles around his hospital room. In 2019, Shenk—still in practice but a shell of his former self—is hired to defend Wesley Keener’s father when he is

charged with murder... the murder, as it turns out, of the expert witness from the 2008 hospital case. Shenk’s adopted son, a fragile teenager in 2008, is a wayward adult, though he may find his purpose when he investigates what really happened to the murdered witness. Two thrilling trials braid together medical malpractice and murder... It’s like having *House* return, but in a book.

NEW IN LARGE PAPERBACKS

Baldree, Travis. [Legends & Lattes: A Novel of High Fantasy and Low Stakes](#) (Tor \$17.99). This gas-lamp romantic fantasy adventure gets a Library Reads recommend for November: “Weary of her boisterous warrior lifestyle, an Orc hangs up her sword and pairs with a succubus to open up a coffee shop in a quirky medieval town. This light, slice-of-life speculative tale is sure to appeal to fans of cozy fantasies like *A Wizard’s Guide to Defensive Baking* and *The House in the Cerulean Sea*.”

✦Ballantyne, Lisa. [The Innocent One](#) (\$16.95). Solicitor Daniel Hunter successfully defended 11-year-old Sebastian Croll against a charge of murdering an eight-year-old friend. Ten years later the police want to question Sebastian after his Cambridge classics tutor, Frances Owen, is found murdered in her office. See New in Hardcover for more.

✦Beverly, Jo. [The Viscount Needs a Wife](#) (Jove \$12). How have I missed the historical romances of Beverly up to now? This Regency follows a plot line familiar to readers of Georgette Heyer, that Goddess of Regencies, but in a fresh way. A widow desperate to escape her in-laws, a fashionable beau doing clandestine diplomatic work who unexpectedly, and reluctantly, inherits the estate and title of Viscount Daunry. As Miss Austen said, a man in possession of a fortune must be in want of a wife. What about a sensible widow? But is she? And then a threat to the Royals necessitates they remove to London from the country....

Blanchard, Alice. [The Witching Tree](#) (\$17.99). In remote Burning Lake, long known for both its witches and its dangerous accusations thereof, the honored citizen who runs the town’s oldest coven has been murdered, and Detective Natalie Lockhart gets the case. She wishes she hadn’t—she’s still unsettled by two notorious murder cases that involved her family—but it’s clear that some evil presence now pervades the town. Follow along the winding story path but do not expect a neat resolution.

✦Burnet, Graeme Macrae. [Case Study](#) (Biblioasis \$16.95). A dark, inventive mystery involving a young woman in 1960s London who believes that a charismatic therapist has driven her sister to suicide is longlisted for the 2022 Booker Prize. “A mystery story—or is it?—that takes us into the heart of the psychoanalytical consulting room. Or does it? Interleaving a biography of radical ‘60s ‘untherapist’ Collins Braithwaite with the notebooks of his patient ‘Rebecca’, a young woman seeking answers about the death of her sister, ‘GMB’ presents a forensic, elusive and mordantly funny text(s) layered with questions about authenticity and the self.” —2022 Booker Prize Jury Statement. Brisk and engaging...A provocative send-up of midcentury British mores and the roots of modern psychotherapy.” Also Shortlisted for the 2022 Gordon Burn Prize • Shortlisted for the 2022 Ned Kelly Awards • Longlisted for the 2022 Booker Prize • Longlisted for the 2022 HWA Gold Crown Award.

Chin, Rita Zoey. [The Strange Inheritance of Leah Fern](#) (Melville House \$17.99). When 6-year-old empath Leah Fern—once “The Youngest and Very Best Fortune Teller in the World”—is abandoned by her beautiful magician mother, she is consumed with longing for her mother’s return. Until something bizarre happens: On her 21st birthday Leah receives an inheritance from someone she doesn’t even know, and finds herself launched on a journey of magical discovery. It’s a voyage that will spiral across the United States, Canada, into the Arctic Circle and beyond—and help her make her own life whole by piecing together the mystery surrounding her mother’s disappearance. “This is an enchanting novel about the transcendent power of the imagination, the magic at the threshold of past and present.”

Dams, Jeanne. [Murder in the Park](#) (\$17.99). Dams wrote a very popular British village series awhile back featuring American widow Dorothy Martin who married an English Chief Constable. Now she begins a series set in 1920s Oak Park, Illinois, back then a village. June, 1925. Having been widowed in the First World War, Elizabeth Fairchild lives a quiet life at the home of her wealthy parents in genteel Oak Park village, Illinois. Although she does her best to avoid emotional entanglements, determined never to be hurt again, Elizabeth forms a close friendship with gentle Mr. Anthony, who owns the local antiques store. But tragedy strikes when Mr. Anthony is found stabbed to death in the alley behind his shop. Why would anyone murder a mild-mannered antiques dealer who simply loved beautiful things? A robbery gone wrong? A gangland execution? Or could it have something to do with the mysterious customer who bought a gold pocket watch from Mr. Anthony on the day he died? When one of her father’s oldest friends is accused of the crime, Elizabeth determines to expose the real killer. But her investigations soon attract unwelcome attention. Quick, Owens has Kate planning to hold her wedding at a church called Small Angels in the town where she once found shelter with the Gonne sisters, little realizing that they’ve been tasked with keeping a marauding ghost from invading the village—and they’re falling down on the job.

Downie, David. [Roman Roulette](#) (Alan Squire \$19.99). This handsome paperback in flapped format takes readers into modern Rome albeit one with echoes of its Cold War past. Commissioner Daria Vinci of DIGO, Italy’s FBI, relaxes as he attends a benefit concert for the Institute of America. It’s a glamorous evening in a handsome setting. Yet underneath dark deeds take place in the catacombs underneath the guests’ feet. Is it a suicide? Or a murder?

Ge, Yan. [Strange Beasts of China](#) (Melville House \$17.99). In the fictional Chinese city of Yong’an, an amateur cryptozoologist is commissioned to uncover the stories of its fabled beasts. These creatures live alongside humans in near-inconspicuousness—save their greenish skin, serrated earlobes, and strange birthmarks. Part detective story, part metaphysical enquiry. “Magical realism of the best kind, where the spectacular is paired with just enough irony and daffy humor to keep it grounded on earth—or whichever world this fun and beguiling book takes place.” — Sam Sacks, *Wall Street Journal*. “Delightful. Through the narrator’s futile quest to catalog beasts, Yan captures the fluidness of city life, the way urban space defies definition even for people hell-bent on making sense of it.” —*The New York Times*

Harrod-Eagles, Cynthia. [Dying Fall](#) (\$17.95). The DCI Bill Slider mysteries remain among my very favorite policing series, in part because they tour you around London. The characters and their banter are important as well, and it’s hard to beat Harrod-Eagles for truly tricky plots. This investigation begins with a woman lying dead at the foot of the stairs. It’s obvious what happened: she tripped and fell. But PC D’Arblay, called to the dilapidated West London villa by an anonymous tip-off, can’t shake the feeling that’s exactly what someone wants him to think. Maybe it’s the absence of blood meaning what did she hit her head on? DCI Slider, of the Shepherd’s Bush murder squad, is soon convinced D’Arblay’s right. But with no motive, no murder weapon and no idea even who the victim is, Slider faces steep odds working this case to any sort of conclusion.

Herron, Mick. [Standing by the Wall](#) (Soho \$16.95) is a one-volume collection of his Slough House spy series novellas including the never-before-published Christmas interlude “Standing by the Wall.”

Karunatilaka, Shehan. [The Seven Moons of Maali Almeida](#) (Norton \$18.95) is the winner of the 2022 Booker Prize. Head Judge Neil MacGregor praised the “scope and the skill, the daring, the audacity and hilarity” of the novel, calling it an “afterlife noir” which “takes the reader on a rollercoaster journey through life and death.” The judges had previously written of the novel, “Life after death in Sri Lanka: an afterlife noir, with nods to Dante and Buddha and yet unpretentious. Fizzes with energy, imagery and ideas against a broad, surreal vision of the Sri Lankan civil wars. Slyly, angrily comic.” Karunatilaka is the second Sri Lankan to win the Booker Prize. The winner receives £50,000.

MacBird, Bonnie. [The Three Locks](#) (\$16.99). The 4th adventure for Holmes and Watson in this captivating series by MacBird centers on three possibly connected mysteries. The first fleshes out the backstory of Dr. Watson, who’s unsettled to receive a letter and a locked box from an unknown woman, Elspeth Carnachan, who claims to have been his late father’s estranged half-sister. In the letter, Carnachan states the box was given to her by Watson’s mother, who died under mysterious circumstances two days afterward. Carnachan was supposed to pass the box to Watson when he turned 21, but forgot. Meanwhile, Watson and Holmes get two more puzzles to handle. One involves a magician whose wife worries that a human finger sent to her husband presages a threat to him. Another prospective client, a deacon, worries about the disappearance of a young woman he’s fond of whose family members don’t appear concerned. MacBird artfully alternates among the multiple plotlines, maximizing suspense, and probes deeply into the detectives’ friendship. See Signed Books for the 5th novel or [go here](#) and order a whole set.

McFadden, Freida. [The Housemaid](#) (Grand Central \$12.99). Every day I clean the Winchesters’ beautiful house top to bottom. I collect their daughter from school. And I cook a delicious meal for the whole family before heading up to eat alone in my tiny room on the top floor. I try to ignore how Nina makes a mess just to watch me clean it up. How she tells strange lies about her own daughter. And how her husband Andrew seems more broken every day. But as I look into Andrew’s handsome brown eyes, so full of pain, it’s hard not to imagine what it would be like to live Nina’s life. The walk-in closet, the fancy car, the perfect husband. I only try on one

of Nina's pristine white dresses once. Just to see what it's like. But she soon finds out... and by the time I realize my attic bedroom door only locks from the outside, it's far too late. But I reassure myself: the Winchesters don't know who I really am....

Mezrich, Ben. [The Midnight Ride](#) (\$17.99). Mezrich, best known as a true-crime author, turns to fiction with this history-based thriller. The prologue recounts the notorious (and still unsolved) real-life theft of 13 artworks from the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston in 1990, then jumps to the present. Math genius Hailey Gordon is paying her way through graduate school at MIT by gambling at the casinos, and she's just been spotted counting cards. Fleeing casino security, she dodges through an open hotel room door—and finds a dead man. Right behind her is Nick Patterson, an ex-convict who's there to meet the now-deceased Jimmy the Lip, who was supposed to be his connection to the deal of a lifetime—one connected to the Gardner heist. Hailey's and Nick's mutual desire to elude the cops quickly turns into a partnership to find the real object of the Gardner theft—which wasn't any of the priceless paintings. I'd call this fun but uneven.

Patterson, James/Brian Stitts. [The Perfect Assassin](#) (\$17.99). Dr. Brandt Savage is on sabbatical from the University of Chicago. Instead of doing solo fieldwork in anthropology, the gawky, bespectacled PhD finds himself enrolled in a school where he is the sole pupil. His professor, "Meed," is demanding. She's also his captor. Savage emerges from their intensive training sessions physically and mentally transformed, but with no idea how he'll use his fearsome abilities in his first mission....

Robinson, Shauna. [The Banned Bookshop of Maggie Banks](#) (Landmark \$16.99). When Maggie Banks arrives in Bell River as a temp to run her best friend's struggling bookstore, she expects to sell bestsellers to her small-town clientele. But running a bookstore in a town with a famously bookish history isn't easy. Bell River's literary society insists on keeping the bookstore stuck in the past, and Maggie is banned from selling anything written this century. As she discovers the entire town seems to revolve around the legacy of author Edward Bell. Before she knows it, she's selling books from a secret stash, planning author events, and finding love. Library Reads calls this "A fun read for fans of Abbi Waxman and Emily Henry." A bookseller reporting to Indie Next adds, "I love a book about a bookstore! This was cute and funny, but also showed that we're never too old to figure out what we want to do with our lives — or to not know what the heck we're doing at any age."

Rai, Alisha. [Partners in Crime](#) (Berkley \$16.99) "is Alisha Rai at her very best! This is an action-packed, swoon worthy second-chance romance with humor, heart, and fun. Perfect for fans of *The Lost City*, *Lovebirds*, or *Date Night*; this book is an absolute blast!" says the Indie Next Pick.

Walter, Jess, ed. [Best American Mystery & Suspense Stories](#) (Houghton \$17.99). The annual anthology gets Walter as editor this year.

OUR NOVEMBER SMALL PAPERBACK PICKS

Brown, Sandra. [Blind Tiger](#) (\$9.99). Thatcher Hutton, a war-weary soldier on the way back to his cowboy life lands in more than he bargained for when he arrives in Foley, Texas, on the same day a local woman goes missing.

Carr, Jack. [In the Blood](#) (\$9.99). James Reece #5. Former Navy SEAL James Reece relies on allies around the world to track down who is responsible when a Mossad operative dies in a plane explosion.

Childs, Laura. [Twisted Tea Christmas](#) (\$8.99). Tea Shop #23. While catering a Victorian Christmas party for Drucilla Heyward, one of the wealthiest women in town who is about to make a huge announcement, tea maven Theodosia Browning finds herself steeped in murder when she stumbles upon Drucilla's dead body

Gardner, Lisa. [One Step Too Far](#) (\$9.99). Frankie Elkin #2. Searching for a young man who disappeared without a trace, missing persons expert and recovering alcoholic Frankie Elkin goes up against something very dark to find what she is looking for. Lisa, a serious wilderness hiker, uses what she knows to create the landscape for this tense story. Frankie is a terrific character first met in Boston-based [Before She Disappeared](#) (\$17).

Greaney, Mark. [Sierra Six](#) (\$9.99). Gray Man #11. When he sees a ghost from the past—a terrorist leader who was taken out years ago during his very first mission as a junior member of a CIA action team—the Gray Man is not one to leave a job unfinished or a blood debt unpaid. Greaney skillfully gives series readers a kind of prequel Gray Man, an origin story, entwined in the contemporary thriller. It's super well done.

Hawkins, Rachel. [The Wife Upstairs](#) (\$9.99). Supplementing her modest income by stealing small valuables from her gated-community clients, a broke dog-walker endeavors to win the heart of a wealthy bachelor before learning his late wife's own rags-to-riches story.

Moore, Taylor. [Down Range](#) (\$9.99). Garrett Kohl #1. An elite, undercover DEA officer helps out a formerly-peaceful ranching community in Texas who are under assault by a group of criminals controlled by a rich, entitled businessman with ties to law enforcement and local businesses. Former intelligence officer Moore is a new thriller writer to watch with a terrific lead character. His second book is [Firestorm](#).

Rollins James. [Kingdom of Bones](#) (\$9.99). Sigma Force #16. When an insidious phenomenon spreads from a cursed sight in the African jungle called the Kingdom of Bones, scientific warriors Commander Gray Pierce and Sigma Force must head off a global catastrophe and uncover the shattering secret at the heart of the African continent

Scottoline, Lisa. [What Happened to the Bennetts?](#) (\$9.99). Forced into the witness protection program after being caught in the crosshairs of a drug-trafficking organization, Jason Bennett and his family, trapped in an unfamiliar life, start falling apart at the seams until Jason takes matters into his own hands.

Swanson, Peter. [Eight Perfect Murders](#) (\$9.99). Years after establishing a literary career through his compilation of the mystery genre's most unsolvable classics, an unsuspecting bookseller is tapped by the FBI for help solving murders that eerily mimic the books on his list. Swanson likes adapting classic mystery forms in fresh ways.

SOME NOVEMBER SMALL PAPERBACKS

Archer, Winnie. [Bread Over Troubled Water](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Bread Shop #8. When a regular at Yeast of Eden is murdered, photographer Ivy Culpepper searches for a grain of truth when a band of rabble-rousers pickets the bakery, claiming that their sourdough rolls are what killed Josh.

Bell, David. [Since She Went Away](#) (\$9.99). Reissue. After her best friend Celia disappears, Jenna Springer blames herself, but when her son's new girlfriend also goes missing, Jenna discovers disturbing secrets about Celia's life that show how even simple lies can tear a family apart.

Berenson, Alex. [The Power Couple](#) (\$9.99). When their college-aged daughter is abducted on a European family vacation, Brian and Rebecca Unsworth—both U.S. intelligence staffers—race to find the kidnappers and keep their fragile marriage intact.

Berry, Tamara. [On Spine of Death](#) (Sourcebooks \$8.99). By the Book #2. While converting the family hardware store into the town's first independent bookstore, Tess Harrow finds bones from two cold cases, igniting rumors that her grandfather was a serial killer, and pushing Tess to prove his innocence.

Corrigan, Maya. [Bake Offed](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Five-Ingredient #8. While at the Maryland Mystery Fan Fest with her grandfather, who, competing in a costume-themed dessert bake-off, faces off against his nemesis Cynthia Sweet, they are both drawn into a mystery when Cynthia is murdered by someone who is definitely not a fan.

Cussler, Clive. [Shock Wave](#) (\$9.99). Dirk Pitt #13. Reissue. While studying a deadly plague in the Pacific, Dirk Pitt rescues a band of rich castaways who were deserted by their cruise ship and learns that the plague had been caused by a passenger's father, who uses ultrasound to mine diamonds.

Finlay, Alex. [The Night Shift](#) (\$9.99). When four teenage girls are attacked at an ice cream shop in Linden, New Jersey, and only one makes it out alive, which is similar to a case in 1999, an FBI agent must delve into the secrets of both crimes to uncover the truth.

Gilstrap, John. [Blue Fire](#) (Kensington \$9.99). Victoria Emerson #2. A former congressional representative tries to keep her West Virginia town safe after Hell Day, a world war that lasted only 24 hours and destroyed a century's worth of technology.

Hollis, Lee. [Murder on the Class Trip](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Maya and Sandra #3. While accompanying SoPo High seniors to the nation's capital, Maya Kendrick and PTA president Sandra Wallage must solve the murder of a female intern who worked for Sandra's soon-to-be-ex-husband, a senator.

Jackson, Lisa. [Twice Kissed](#) (\$9.99). Reissue. When her twin, Marquise – a TV star, goes missing, widow Maggie, knowing that Marquise is in danger, must unravel the layers of her sister's life, bringing her within a hair's breadth of a killer bent on revenge.

Lansing, Kate. [Till Death Do Us Part](#) (Berkley \$8.99). Colorado Wine #4. When a wedding turns into a crime scene, young vintner Parker Valentine investigates the full-bodied problem in this captivating Colorado-set cozy mystery.

North, Alex. [The Shadows](#) (\$9.99). Forced by his mother's failing health to return to the hometown where a misfit friend committed a shocking murder 25 years earlier, Paul learns about an investigation into a local copycat killing.

Perrin, Kayla. [We'll Never Tell](#) (St Martin's \$9.99). Reissue. Deciding to teach man stealer Shandra James a lesson in humiliation, Alpha Sigma Pi sorority sisters Phoebe, Miranda and Camille are forced to follow a new set of rules when the lesson turns deadly and a murderer comes calling for them.

Perrin, Kayla. [What's Done in Darkness](#) (St Martin's \$9.99). Reissue. After a series of mishaps that lead everyone to believe that she is crazy, Jade Blackwin takes a job in Key West at a coffee shop where her new boss explodes into fits of rage, a crime writer asks too many questions and a killer lurks in the shadows.

Pleiter, Allie. [It Came Upon a Midnight Shear](#) (Penguin \$8.99). Riverbank Knitting #3. The owner of Y.A.R.N., Libby Beckett finds the holiday looking merry and bright for her business, but when her ex-husband turns up in town, and then turns up dead, her life slowly unravels as she tries to knit the clues together to solve this case.

Scottoline, Lisa. [Most Wanted](#) (\$9.99). Reissue. Using a sperm donor to conceive when she learns that her husband is infertile, a happily pregnant woman is shattered to learn that a man arrested for a series of brutal murders is the biological father of her baby.

Thompson, Victoria. [City of Shadows](#) (\$8.99). Counterfeit Lady #5. Elizabeth Miles Bates investigates when a friend's mother begins paying a medium increasingly large amounts of money to make contact with her son who recently died of influenza.

Woods, Stuart. [A Safe House](#) (\$9.99). Stone Barrington #61. Stone Barrington is looking forward to some quiet time in New York City, until he is asked to transport precious, top-secret cargo across the Atlantic. Taking on the challenge, Stone flies off unaware of what—or who—he is bringing with him.

Zanetti, Rebecca. [You Can Hide](#) (Kensington \$8.99). When her newly discovered half-sister is linked to a series of dead bodies discovered in the Sauk River, FBI Special Agent Laurel Snow forms a risky alliance to catch a clever killer.