

# BOOKNEWS from

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## HAPPY NEW YEAR

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

Note: Event times are in Mountain Standard time

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

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.

So you don't miss it, here is a link to the game of [Monopoly, Scottsdale USA Edition](#) (\$40). This favorite board game is wonderful for long winter evenings.

### TUESDAY JANUARY 3 11:30 AM

**Carole Johnstone** discusses [The Blackhouse](#) (Scribner \$28)  
A Scottish island Gothic

### THURSDAY JANUARY 5 6:00 PM

**Jayne Ann Krentz** discusses [Sleep No More](#) (Berkley \$28)  
The first novel of the Lost Night Files, an exciting new romantic suspense trilogy Our January Romance & Relationships Book of the Month  
Signed books available

### SATURDAY JANUARY 7 2:00 PM Live

**Jenn McKinlay** discusses [Fatal Fascinator](#) (Berkley \$8.99)  
**Come for the story:** Hip hip, beret! British hat makers Scarlett Parker and Vivian Tremont return and must collar a killer when a castle wedding goes awry  
**Stay for the Best Hat Contest**

### SUNDAY JANUARY 8 4:00 PM

**Brad Meltzer and co-author Josh Mensch** discuss [The Secret Plot to Kill Roosevelt, Stalin, and Churchill](#) (Flatiron \$29.99)  
Signed books available

### MONDAY JANUARY 9 2:00 PM

**NZ Michael Bennett** discusses [Better the Blood](#) (Grove \$27)  
Our January International Mystery Book of the Month  
Signed bookplates

### MONDAY JANUARY 9 7:00 PM Live

**Peter Blauner** discusses [Picture in the Sand](#) (St Martins \$27.99)  
Our January Historical Fiction Book of the Month

### TUESDAY JANUARY 10 7:00 PM Live

**Jennifer Herrera** discusses [The Hunter](#) (Putnam \$27)  
Debut thriller  
**Mary Kubica** discusses [Just the Nicest Couple](#) (Park Row \$28.99)

### WEDNESDAY JANUARY 11 5:00 PM

**Iris Yamashita** discusses [City Under One Roof](#) (Berkley \$27)  
Signed books available

### THURSDAY JANUARY 12 7:00 PM Live

**Stacy Willingham** discusses [All the Dangerous Things](#) (St Martins \$27.99)

### TUESDAY JANUARY 17 7:00 PM Live

**Douglas Preston in person and Lincoln Child via zoom**  
They discuss [The Cabinet of Dr. Leng](#) (Grand Central \$30)  
Location: Desert Stages, Fashion Square Mall, west end of the Food Court on the lower level. Tons of free parking.

### WEDNESDAY JANUARY 18 5:00 PM

**PJ Tracy** discusses [The Devil You Know](#) (St Martins \$27.99)  
Signed books available

### WEDNESDAY JANUARY 18 7:00 PM Live

**Josh Haven** discusses [Fake Money, Blue Smoke](#) (Penzler \$26.95)  
**Thomas Perry** discusses [The Murder Book](#) (Penzler \$26.95)

### THURSDAY JANUARY 19 7:00 PM Live

**Kate Alice Marshall** discusses [What Lies in the Woods](#) (Flatiron \$28.99)

### FRIDAY JANUARY 20 7:00 PM

**SciFi Friday** discusses John Scalzi's [The Kaiju Preservation Society](#) (\$17.99)

### SATURDAY JANUARY 21 Live in our Annex

**Coffee & Crime** discusses Jean Korelitz's [The Plot](#) (\$17.99)

### MONDAY JANUARY 23 7:00 PM Live

**A double book launch with Don Bentley, host**  
**Stephen Hunter** discusses [The Bullet Garden](#) (Atria \$28.99)  
**Brad Taylor** discusses [The Devil's Ransom](#) (Harper \$28.99)  
Note: Those who preorder Taylor's book or attend will get the \$28.99 price; on January 24 the publisher's price of \$32 kicks in

### TUESDAY JANUARY 24 5:00 PM

**Matt Witten** discusses [Killer Story](#) (Oceanview \$27.95)  
Signed bookplates available

**WEDNESDAY JANUARY 25 2:00 PM**

**Britain's Janice Hallett** discusses [The Twyford Code](#) (Atria \$27)

**WEDNESDAY JANUARY 25 7:00 PM Live**

**Kathryn Lasky** discusses [Light on Bone](#) (Woodhall Press \$19.95)

A Georgia O'Keeffe mystery

**Ana Reyes** discusses [The House in the Pines](#) (Dutton \$27)

Our January First Mystery Book of the Month and the January Reese's Book Club Pick

**THURSDAY JANUARY 26 2:00 PM**

**A Crooked Lane Cozy Antiques Mysteries Quartet with John**

Abbott, Cordy. [Dead Men Don't Decorate](#) (\$28.99)

Berry, Connie. [The Shadow of Memory](#) (\$26.99)

Esden, Trish. [The Art of the Decoy](#) (\$26.99)

Gardner, Tracy. [Peril at Pennington Manor](#) (\$26.99)

**THURSDAY JANUARY 26 7:00 PM**

**Hardboiled Crime** discusses Ed Lacy's [Room to Swing](#) (Poisoned Pen \$14.99)

A Library of Congress Crime Classic

**FRIDAY JANUARY 27 7:00 PM Live**

**Jeff Guinn with Patrick**

**Guinn** discusses [Waco: David Koresh, the Branch Davidians, and A Legacy of Rage](#) (Simon & Schuster \$29.99)

**MONDAY JANUARY 30 7:00 PM Live**

**Jordan Harper with Patrick**

Harper discusses [Everybody Knows](#) (LittleBrown \$28)

A Los Angeles/Hollywood noir for fans of Ellroy

**WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 1 7:00 PM Live**

**Australia's Jane Harper** discusses [Exiles](#) (Flatiron \$27.99)

Federal officer Aaron Falk investigates in a small Southern Australia town

**OUR JANUARY BOOKS OF THE MONTH**

**British Crime Club** One unsigned hardcover or paperback per month

TBA

**Cozy Crimes Club** One unsigned hardcover or paperback per month

Meade, Amy Patricia. [Of Mushrooms and Matrimony](#)

**First Mystery Club** One Signed First Printing per month

Reyes, Ana. [The House in the Pines](#)

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

Marshall, Kate Alice. [What Lies in the Woods](#)

**History/Mystery Club** One Signed First Printing per month

Blauner, Peter. [Picture in the Sand](#)

**Notable New Fiction** One Signed First Printing per month

Hendrix, Grady. [How to Sell a Haunted House](#)

**International Crime** One Unsigned Hardcover or paperback per month

Bennett, Michael. [Better the Blood](#)

**Romance & Relationships** One Unsigned Hardcover or 2 paperbacks per month

Krentz, Jayne Ann. [Sleep No More](#)

**SIGNED BOOKS**

Blauner, Peter. [Picture in the Sand](#) (St Martins \$27.99 Jan. 9). When Alex Hassan gets accepted to an Ivy League university, his middle-class Egyptian-American family is filled with pride and excitement. But that joy turns to shock when they discover that he's run off to the Middle East to join a holy war instead. When he refuses to communicate with everyone else, his loving grandfather Ali emails him one last plea. If Alex will stay in touch, his grandfather will share with Alex – and only Alex – a manuscript containing the secret story of his own life that he's kept hidden from his family, until now. It's the tale of his romantic and heartbreaking past rooted in Hollywood and the post-revolutionary Egypt of the 1950s, when young Ali was a movie fanatic who attained a dream job working for the legendary director Cecil B. DeMille on the set of his epic film, *The Ten Commandments*. But Ali's vision of a golden future as an American movie mogul gets upended when he is unwittingly caught up in a web of politics, espionage, and real-life events that change the course of history. It's a narrative he's told no one for more than a half-century. But now he's forced to unearth the

past to save a young man who's about to make the same tragic mistakes.... "On rare occasions I read a book that reminds me of why I fell in love with storytelling in the first place. This is such a book." —Stephen King says about our **January Historical Fiction Book of the Month**.

Blake, Olivie. [Alone with You in the Ether](#) (Tor \$26.99). **Tip-ins**. From the bestselling author of *The Atlas Six* "comes an intimate and contemporary study of time, space, and the nature of love." For those interested in exploring new frontiers for storytelling and concepts of time, try this. Two people meet in Chicago's Art Institute by chance. Prior to their encounter, he is a doctoral student who manages his destructive thoughts with compulsive calculations about time travel; she is a bipolar counterfeit artist, undergoing court-ordered psychotherapy. By the end of the story, these things will still be true. But this is not a story about endings. For Regan, people are predictable and tedious, including and perhaps especially herself. She copes with the dreariness of existence by living impulsively, imagining a

new, alternate timeline being created in the wake of every rash decision. To Aldo, the world feels disturbingly chaotic. He gets through his days by erecting a wall of routine: a backbeat of rules and formulas that keep him going. Without them, the entire framework of his existence would collapse. For Regan and Aldo, life has been a matter of resigning themselves to the blueprints of inevitability—until the two meet. Could six conversations with a stranger be the variable that shakes up the entire simulation?

Brennan, Allison. [Don't Open the Door](#) (Mira \$28.99). In the second novel of the duology [The Sorority Murder](#) (\$9.99 also Signed if desired), US Marshal Regan Merritt has never bought the FBI's theory that her ten-year-old son's murder was tied to her job. Yet as leads went cold, she'd had to walk away from the marshals, the case and her now ex-husband, Grant, who blamed her for Chase's death. After Regan receives a chilling voice mail from her former boss, Tommy, claiming new information about Chase's murder, she can no longer stay away from her pain-filled past. Especially when Tommy's murdered before she can return his call. Now more than ever, Regan's determined to find the truth, but the more she digs, the more evidence points to Grant as the killer's true target. But Grant isn't talking.... There is a simultaneous [small paperback](#) (\$9.99) that Allison can also sign, she being a Phoenix-based author.

Ellis, Bret Easton. [The Shards](#) (Knopf \$30). **Tip-ins.** Ellis tracks a group of privileged high school friends in a vibrantly fictionalized 1980s Los Angeles as a serial killer strikes across the city. Seventeen-year-old Bret is a senior at the exclusive Buckley prep school when a new student arrives with a mysterious past. Robert Mallory is bright, handsome, charismatic, and shielding a secret from Bret and his friends even as he becomes a part of their tightly knit circle. Bret's obsession with Mallory is equaled only by his increasingly unsettling preoccupation with the Trawler, a serial killer on the loose who seems to be drawing ever closer to Bret and his friends, taunting them—and Bret in particular—with grotesque threats and horrific, sharply local acts of violence. The coincidences are uncanny, but they are also filtered through the imagination of a teenager whose gifts for constructing narrative from the filaments of his own life are about to make him one of the most explosive literary sensations of his generation. Can he trust his friends—or his own mind—to make sense of the danger they appear to be in? “Thwarted by the world and by his own innate desires, buffeted by unhealthy fixations, he spirals into paranoia and isolation. *The Shards* is a mesmerizing fusing of fact and fiction, the real and the imagined, that brilliantly explores the emotional fabric of Bret's life at seventeen—sex and jealousy, obsession and murderous rage. Gripping, sly, suspenseful, deeply haunting, and often darkly funny, *The Shards* is Ellis at his inimitable best,” says the publisher.

Gelernter, JH. [Hold Fast](#) and [Captain Grey's Gambit](#) (Norton \$25.95 each Jan. 18) join to create a kind of *Queen's Gambit* crossed with Bernard Cornwell's Sharpe series, or better yet, Patrick O'Brian's phenomenal Aubrey & Maturin series. Some of you may find the naval stuff or the card play and chess games (modeled on real contests as explained in a nifty footnote), a bit challenging, but the writing is so wonderful just stick with it. The espionage plot is also. And I enjoyed Grey's return from India where he delivered dispatches to one Arthur Wellesley (né Wesley) who in time will become Arthur, Duke of Wellington. This gem gets a Starred Review: “Early in Gelernter's superior

sequel to 2021's *Hold Fast*. Sir Edward Banks, England's chief of naval intelligence, orders Captain Thomas Grey, recently returned home from a mission to India, to appear at 10 Downing Street on New Year's Day, 1804, with no explanation. Grey is confused when he shows up at the appointed time, only to be directed to play chess against the prime minister's private secretary, George Atwood. At first, Atwood easily defeats Grey in one game after another, but over the course of a month Grey improves and starts to win. He later learns the match was an audition that he has passed. As the best chess player in the service, he's being sent to Frankfurt to compete in an international tournament. That's a cover for his exfiltration of a highly prized defector and chess champion, Joseph Leclerc, one of Napoleon's most trusted aides, who has become disillusioned with his master. Gelernter's clever premise matches his well-rounded and plausible lead, and vivid depictions of the developments in the conflict between England and France enhance the suspenseful espionage plot. A musical interlude at the beginning will only increase the appeal for Patrick O'Brian admirers.”

Gong, Chloe. [Foul Lady Fortune](#) (McElderry \$21.95). For Young Adult readers—although as a fan of Mo Hayder's remarkable dark thriller [The Devil of Nanking](#) (\$14) set in 1935. I plan to read Gong's book, here is a captivating new duology following an ill-matched pair of spies posing as a married couple to investigate a series of brutal murders in 1930s Shanghai. In 1931, the stage is set for a new decade of intrigue. Four years ago, Rosalind Lang was brought back from the brink of death, but the strange experiment that saved her also stopped her from sleeping and aging—and allows her to heal from any wound. In short, Rosalind cannot die. Now, desperate for redemption for her traitorous past, she uses her abilities as an assassin for her country. Code name: Fortune. But when the Japanese Imperial Army begins its invasion march, Rosalind's mission pivots. A series of murders is causing unrest in Shanghai, and the Japanese are under suspicion. Rosalind's new orders are to infiltrate foreign society and identify the culprits behind the terror plot before more of her people are killed. To reduce suspicion, however, she must pose as the wife of another Nationalist spy, Orion Hong, and though Rosalind finds Orion's cavalier attitude and playboy demeanor infuriating, she is willing to work with him for the greater good. But Orion has an agenda of his own, and Rosalind has secrets that she wants to keep buried. As they both attempt to unravel the conspiracy, the two spies soon find that there are deeper and more horrifying layers to this mystery than they ever imagined.

Graves, Stephanie. [A Courage Undimmed](#) (Kensington \$26). Weaving wartime intrigue, rural village life, and little-known historical facts about the role of carrier pigeons in WWII, Stephanie Graves continues the adventures of British pigeoneer Olive Bright, but as bitter cold weather forces her racing birds indoors in November 1941, Olive is assigned to a new role in the war effort – escorting none other than Lieutenant Commander Ian Fleming on his visit to the Brickendonbury Manor spy training center.... This cozy series will appeal to you fans of British village life in all its complexities. I give Graves big points for bringing the pigeons' war efforts to life, yet another fascinating aspect of the global conflict. I'd start with [Olive Bright, Pigeoneer](#) (\$15.95), a 2020 Historical Fiction Book of the Month, and go on to [A Valiant Deceit](#) (\$16.95).

Guinn, Jeff. [Waco](#) (Simon & Schuster \$29.99 Jan. 27). From the best-selling author behind *Manson* and *The Road to Jonestown*, comes a new and explosive investigation of the cult that the FBI came to refer to as the Branch Davidians: a fanatic religious group whose Texas compound was raided by the federal government in February 1993. Jeff Guinn is known for his ability to explore bombshell events widely reported, find new material about them, and tell the story like it has never been told before. He continues this tradition in *WACO*, putting you right alongside the ATF agents and members of the cult as they both move their chess pieces and get ready for attack – finally unveiling the lies each group had been told. Guinn has exclusive documents and photographs never seen before, as well as connections to former federal agents, and former and current members (and wives) who fell in with a “messiah” referring to himself as “David Koresh.” These contacts are – for the first time – speaking out about what happened before, during, and after the 51-day siege at Mount Carmel. In Guinn’s typical spell-binding narrative format, *Waco* captures not only the ambush, but also its lasting legacy.

Haddish, Tiffany. [I Curse You with Joy](#) (Harper \$32). In more than a dozen stories Tiffany is candid about her highs, lows, and everything in between. Stories run the gamut from Tiffany’s viral head-shaving video on Instagram where she found personal blessings right down to her scalp, her journey as a female stand-up comedian and auditioning for SNL to being the first Black women comedian to host it, and a bittersweet story of reconnecting with her estranged father after 20 years. So, basically, a memoir.

✂Hallett, Janice. [The Mysterious Case of the Alperton Angels](#) (Viper \$32). Open the safe deposit box. Inside you will find research material for a true crime book. You must read the documents, then make a decision. Will you destroy them? Or will you take them to the police? Everyone knows the sad story of the Alperton Angels: the cult who brainwashed a teenage girl and convinced her that her newborn baby was the anti-Christ. Believing they had a divine mission to kill the infant, they were only stopped when the girl came to her senses and called the police. The Angels committed suicide rather than stand trial, while mother and baby disappeared into the care system. Nearly two decades later, true-crime author Amanda Bailey is writing a book on the Angels. The Alperton baby has turned eighteen and can finally be interviewed. If Amanda can find them, it will be the true-crime scoop of the year, and will save her flagging career. But rival author Oliver Menzies is just as smart, better connected, and is also on the baby’s trail. As Amanda and Oliver are forced to collaborate, they realize that what everyone thinks they know about the Angels is wrong. The truth is something much darker and stranger....

Harper, Jane. [Exiles](#) (Flatiron \$27.99 Feb. 1). “Once again Harper proves that she is peerless in creating an avalanche of suspense with intimate, character-driven set pieces...—David Baldacci. And here she brings back Federal Agent Aaron Falk of [The Dry](#) (\$16.99) and *Force of Nature* (\$) who is summoned to wine country for the christening of an old friend and fellow investigator’s baby. It’s also the one-year anniversary of the disappearance of Kim Gillespie, a mother who was with her baby at the small town’s annual festival when she vanished, leaving the sleeping child behind. We are deep in Southern Australia (Harper again obligingly tours us around her country) in a lush valley,

such a contrast to the landscape of *The Dry*. Falk is plunged into Kim’s close circle of family and friends while the local law, on vacation when she disappeared, ramps up the search and Falk’s old buddy Raco who invited him to the christening can’t leave the case alone. Harper does a masterful job painting the landscape and the characters as well as the resolution of the plot.

Harper, Jordan. [Everybody Knows](#) (LittleBrown \$28 Jan. 30). Patrick reviews: Mae Pruett works as a crisis manager for a Los Angeles Black-bag PR firm. Their clients are often famous, always rich and are willing to spend a fortune to keep their dirty laundry out of the public eye. This is of course a complicated job and requires skillful handling. Mae thinks of herself as a bullet, ultra efficient and no BS when it comes to the job, but she soon learns that keeping a spoiled starlet’s drug-addled escapades out of the tabloids is a very different thing than protecting an uber wealthy business mogul from preying upon Hollywood’s youngest and most vulnerable. When her boss is killed, Pruett begins to investigate the side hustle he’d been working on, which takes her into an underworld darker than she could have imagined. Meanwhile, a series of bombings ravage the city’s homeless encampments... Talk about the right book at the right time, Harper’s really tapped into something here. Don’t miss it.

Haven, Josh. [Fake Money, Blue Smoke](#) (Penzler \$26.95 Jan. 18). An exceptional heist thriller makes our **December First Mystery Book of the Month**. It begins when former army sergeant Matt Kubelsky is picked up from an upstate New York prison—where he just served five years for killing an unarmed prisoner while in the army—by his ex-girlfriend, Kelly Haggerty, who’s hoping he might know someone who can pull off a robbery for her. Kelly’s been using skills learned studying art in college to make a decent living at counterfeiting (mostly foreign currency, easily passed in New York City, where she lives), but now she wants to make a big score: paying robbers in fake cash to steal some Klimt drawings, which she can sell to a Qatari gentleman wanted by the DEA for laundering cocaine money for Hezbollah. Matt happens to know a guy from prison, Bob Wharton, who was involved in armed robberies for a neo-Nazi group, and Bob agrees to take on the theft of the Klimts. “Haven stitches all this together seamlessly, and just when it seems that the story could be wrapping up, he piles on more action and twists. In addition, the various locales and the little flourishes (executioner’s scimitar, anyone?) raise this to the book equivalent of a blockbuster movie,” says the *PW* Starred Review. In its own Starred Review, *Booklist* adds, “Darkly funny, horrifically violent, packed with bizarre twists, and full of outrageous schemes, brutal double crosses, and sadistic revenge. It’s not for the squeamish, but it’s a powerful book—tightly written, with an original plot, compelling characters, and a stunning conclusion.”

Hendrix, Grady. [How to Sell a Haunted House](#) (Berkley \$28). Our **January Notable New Fiction Book of the Month** begins when Louise finds out her parents have died and she dreads going home. She doesn’t want to leave her daughter with her ex and fly to Charleston. She doesn’t want to deal with her family home, stuffed to the rafters with the remnants of her father’s academic career and her mother’s lifelong obsession with puppets and dolls. She doesn’t want to learn how to live without the two people who knew and loved her best in the world. Most of all, she doesn’t want to deal with her brother, Mark, who never left their hometown, gets fired from one job after another, and resents her



success. Unfortunately, she'll need his help to get the house ready for sale because it'll take more than some new paint on the walls and clearing out a lifetime of memories to get this place on the market. But some houses don't want to be sold, and their home has other plans for both of them... Like his novels *The Southern Book Club's Guide to Slaying Vampires* and *The Final Girl Support Group*, *How to Sell a Haunted House* is classic Hendrix: equal parts heartfelt and terrifying

Herrera, Jennifer. [The Hunter](#) (Putnam \$27 Jan. 10). A debut. Nobody knows why Leigh O'Donnell pulled her gun on a fellow NYPD officer during a chase, least of all Leigh herself. In those three minutes, she admits, "I had blown up my life." Now suspended from duty and alienated from her husband—who is also her commanding officer—she retreats to Copper Falls, Ohio, where her brother, a cop, invites her to join the local force. There, she begins to investigate what looks like a triple suicide, but it's one that eerily echoes a similar event decades earlier.

Hunter, Stephen. [The Bullet Garden](#) (Atria \$28.99 Jan. 23). A Starred Review: "Bestseller Hunter's superb 13th Bob Lee Swagger novel details the sniper's origin story. It's 1944, and Marine Gunnery Sgt. Earl Swagger, a veteran of three Pacific island campaigns—Guadalcanal, Bougainville, and Tarawa—is at Parris Island training recruits how to shoot their new M1 Garand rifles. In Europe, General Omar Bradley's First Army is bogged down just days after D-Day in what are called the "bullet gardens" of France—lush green meadows laced throughout with almost impenetrable hedgerows. Because German snipers are taking a heavy toll on Allied troops, especially at night, Swagger is called to London to join the OSS under Colonel David K.E. Bruce to develop an anti-sniper campaign. Several side plots add intriguing complications, including a romance with Bruce's beautiful assistant, WAC Lt. Millie Fenwick, and the unearthing of a surprising traitor. All the elements slot neatly into place in the end, particularly Swagger's ingenious solution to the problem of the German snipers. Terrific writing, amusing literary references, fascinating gun lore, and intense action scenes help make this one of Hunter's best. Established fans and newcomers alike will be enthralled." Local author Barrett Tillman adds, "Diehard Bob Lee & Daddy Earl fans will wonder how Earl got from sergeant of marines to army/OSS major...all part of the fun."

Koontz, Dean. [The House at the End of the World](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$28.99). In retreat from a devastating loss and crushing injustice, Katie lives alone in a fortress-like stone house on Jacob's Ladder island. Once a rising star in the art world, she finds refuge in her painting. The neighboring island of Ringrock houses a secret: a government research facility. And now two agents have arrived on Jacob's Ladder in search of someone—or something—they refuse to identify. Although an air of menace hangs over these men, an infinitely greater threat has arrived, one so strange even the island animals are in a state of high alarm. Katie soon finds herself in an epic and terrifying battle with a mysterious enemy. But Katie's not alone after all: a brave young girl appears out of the violent squall. As Katie and her companion struggle across a dark and eerie landscape, against them is an omnipresent terror

Krentz, Jayne Ann. [Sleep No More](#) (Berkley \$28). John reviews: When you have a history of sleepwalking and experiencing

nightmares, it's almost impossible to get someone to believe you witnessed a murder. At least that is author Ambrose Drake's experience when he tries to convince anyone he saw a woman's dead body being carted out of the Carnelian Sleep Institute. But oddly enough, interior designer and part-time true crime podcaster Pallas Llewellyn does believe Ambrose. What really cements Pallas' belief that Ambrose saw something criminal is when someone tries to kill them both. Krentz launches her new *Lost Night Files* trilogy with her signature combination of sleekly plotted suspense, stylish romance, a soupçon of the paranormal, and plenty of sharp wit.

Kubica, Mary. [Just the Nicest Couple](#) (Park Row \$28.99 Jan 10). Jake Hayes is missing. This much is certain. At first, his wife, Nina, thinks he is blowing off steam at a friend's house after their heated fight the night before. But then a day goes by. Two days. Five. And Jake is still nowhere to be found. Lily Scott, Nina's friend and coworker, thinks she may have been the last to see Jake before he went missing. After Lily confesses everything to her husband, Christian, the two decide that nobody can find out what happened leading up to Jake's disappearance, especially not Nina. But Nina is out there looking for her husband

Lasky, Katherine. [Light on Bone](#) (Woodhall Press \$27.95 Jan. 25). These are second prints as the first was probably about 200 copies, drat it. Lasky, a painter herself, uses vivid prose brushstrokes to bring the legendary artist, the Southwest landscape Georgia O'Keeffe loved, and a complicated plot with historical and imagined characters to life. This immersive mystery is so in part for its evocation of the NM landscape from Chama through Abiquiu south past Santa Fe to Albuquerque. For that alone I warmly recommend this excellent book that probes the relationships between O'Keeffe, her husband photographer Alfred Stieglitz, and numerous glitterati gathered at Ghost Ranch including Charles Lindbergh and wife Anne Morrow. Our blogger Lesa awards this gem a star: Before dawn in July 1934, Georgia O'Keeffe heads out from her New Mexico casita at Ghost Ranch to look for a horse's skull she had seen in the desert. Instead, she finds vultures feeding on a man's body. It takes Sheriff Ryan McCaffrey an hour to arrive from Santa Fe, where he finds a prickly artist who insists she has no aspirations to be an amateur detective. However, she does provide an artist's viewpoint of the desert and the death scene. While the sheriff questions why a man dressed as a priest has a gun in his luggage, Georgia worries because the victim had a map with her house marked with an X. The death is the first in a string of tragedies that throw Ryan and Georgia together. Both Ryan and Georgia contact authorities when they suspect German spies and espionage in this pre-World War II mystery. The intricately plotted mystery puts a new spin on several historical figures, including O'Keeffe and the Lindberghs, who are guests at the ranch. Lasky ("Calista Jacobs" mysteries) provides vivid descriptions through O'Keeffe's eyes that bring the setting and timeframe to life.

This is one of the best January event reads. The signed paperback is also available: [Light on Bone](#) (\$19.95).

☕ Lovesey, Peter. [Showstopper](#) (Sphere \$36). It's so lovely to sink into a new Lovesey: the comfort of old friends, polished prose, snappy dialogue and humor, and brilliant plotting leading to surprise solutions. No wonder he has won the Diamond and Gold Daggers and awards too numerous to count. Here again, joy, is Superintendent Peter Diamond testing wits with his officious

and image-conscious boss, Assistant Chief Constable Georgina Dallymore, who now tells him it's time for him to think about retiring. Bath's top detective, Diamond, doesn't believe in jinxes or retirement. So when he's asked to investigate a top TV show plagued by a series of misfortunes, Diamond is unmoved. He's no fan of the show, which glorifies criminals and mocks the police, and the disturbing incidents were spread across six years. It's clear this is the press making a sensation out of nothing. So Diamond, a good mentor, puts the junior member of his squad on the case. But when young officer Paul Gilbert goes on location with the TV unit and witnesses another near-death incident, Diamond is forced to take an interest despite risking Georgina's wrath. To make matters worse, the press gets wind of his involvement. But his troubles have scarcely begun. Devastating traps and surprises make this the most baffling case of his entire career.

Marshall, Kate Alice. [What Lies in the Woods](#) (Flatiron \$28.99 Jan. 19). An edgy adult thriller from a YA and middle-grade author getting tremendous buzz is our **January Crime Collectors Book of the Month**. Once again a podcaster is a central player, and the weight of secrets that a small town can bear is surprising. At age 11, Naomi Shaw was left for dead in the woods outside her tiny Pacific Northwest hometown of Chester, stabbed 17 times by her would-be killer. With her friends Olivia and Cassidy—who were also in the woods at the time—she provided the damning evidence that put a dangerous serial killer behind bars. Now, 22 years later, that man has died in prison, resurrecting unwanted memories for the three women. Liv, in particular, is completely overwrought, insisting she has more that she wants to share. At the same time, Ethan Schreiber, an eager and persistent true-crime podcaster, is asking lots of questions, and when Naomi engages with him on several ill-advised levels, the scene is set for an explosive outcome, as decades of secrets begin to emerge. Marshall does a terrific job of maintaining a palpable current of tension throughout the book, and her depictions of the intricately tangled relationships inherent in small-town life are excellent. Elevating this novel beyond the plethora of other thrillers is terrific writing. “Marshall explores the complicated dynamics of childhood friendships and the powerful effect that memory has in shaping narratives...In a novel filled with emotional depth and convincing red herrings, Marshall delivers a propulsive mystery about trust, secrets, and friendships.” —*Booklist* Starred Review, bolstered by one from *Kirkus Reviews*. Riley Sager calls it “dark, unflinching, and as twisty and sharp as a tangle of thorns.”

Meltzer, Brad. [The Nazi Conspiracy](#) (Flatiron \$29.99). In 1943, as the war against Nazi Germany raged abroad, President Franklin Roosevelt had a critical goal: the first-ever face-to-face sit-down with his allies Joseph Stalin and Winston Churchill. This meeting of the Big Three in Tehran, Iran would decide some of the most crucial strategic details of the war. When the Nazis found out about the meeting, their own secret plan took shape—an assassination plot that would have changed history. It begins after the plot has been discovered, with Roosevelt hidden in the back of a decoy car on his way to the Soviet embassy, while his body double rides through Tehran's streets in a presidential motorcade. The book then flashes to other historical moments from the war, including, among others: Adolf Hitler's reaction to Pearl Harbor; the Nazi gathering in Madison Square Garden;

a torpedo launched directly at FDR's ship; the Nazis airlift rescue of Benito Mussolini off a remote mountaintop; and an introduction to Otto Skorenzy, a little-known Nazi officer who, by dint of his shared Austrian heritage with The Führer, almost becomes the most famous assassin in history. Brad debuts this important story with us on zoom on January 8, 4 PM, with TV documentary producer Josh Mensch.

Perry, Thomas. [Murder Book](#) (Penzler \$26.95 Jan. 18). When a sudden crime wave hits several small Midwestern towns, the U.S. Attorney for the region calls on Harry Duncan to investigate. An ex-cop known for his unorthodox methods, Duncan is reluctant to go up against a widespread criminal organization—but the attorney in question is Ellen Leicester, the wife who left him fifteen years earlier, and to her, he can't say no. Initially brought in as a consultant to determine if the racketeering is severe enough to require an all-out investigation by the FBI, Duncan quickly finds himself in conflict with a syndicate far more violent than first suspected. As the investigation develops, he begins compiling a “murder book,” the notebook in which a detective keeps records, interviews, photos—everything he needs to build his case. But his scrutiny of the gang soon makes Duncan a target. And Ellen, too. A thrilling and suspenseful tour of crime-addled Midwestern towns, this is signature Thomas Perry

Preston, Douglas. [The Cabinet of Dr. Leng](#) (Grand Central \$30 Jan 17). Against all odds, Constance Greene has found a way back to the place of her origins, New York City in the late 1800s, and sets off on a quest to prevent the events that lead to the deaths of her sister and brother, and stop Manhattan's most infamous serial killer, Dr. Enoch Leng of the seminal Pendergast novel *The Cabinet of Curiosities*, before his nefarious experiments come to fruition. Meanwhile, in present-day New York, FBI Special Agent AXL Pendergast is desperate to find a way to reunite with Constance—but will he find a way before it's too late?

Reyes, Ana. [The House in the Pines](#) (Dutton \$27 Jan 25) is a stellar debut, a compelling mix of psychological thriller and dark fairy tale, that “explores the many ways our memories can fail us—and how they can set us free.” —Riley Sager. And our **January First Mystery Book of the Month is the January Reese's Book Club Pick**. There are other First Mystery candidates in January but I go with this one in large part because of its originality

When Maya sees a YouTube video of a young woman dropping dead before a mysterious man named Frank, just as Maya's best friend did before this same man seven years previously, she returns to her Berkshires hometown to uncover the source of Frank's baleful influence. By focusing not on whodunnit but how and why, *The House in the Pines* is a compelling thriller built on a foundation of a nuanced literary sensibility—in short, it's a nod to the Impossible Crime. Reyes weaves together several books' worth of story—lost novels, unsolved murders, rocky relationships, and substance abuse, to name a few—into one gripping and nimble page-turner with an assuredness that makes it look easy. Library Reads adds, “Maya sees a viral video of a woman in a diner dropping dead while seated across from her boyfriend. Maya knows this man, as years ago her friend also died suddenly in front of him. Reyes keeps readers guessing, creating a wonderfully sinister undertone while enriching the suspense by incorporating elements of Guatemala's history. For fans of Gilly Macmillan and Lisa Jewell.

Rosenfield, Kat. [You Must Remember This](#) (Harper \$28.99). It's Christmas 2014 in this gothic thriller from Rosenfield, a 2021 First Mystery Book of the Month author of [No One Will Miss Her](#) (\$17). The dysfunctional Caravasio clan has gathered at the Whispers, the childhood home in Bar Harbor, Maine, of 85-year-old Miriam Caravasio, who has dementia and is in a nearby assisted living facility. The house, built by Miriam's father, who made his fortune in the 1920s selling bootleg liquor to the Mafia, is a veritable labyrinth of secret passages and hidden chambers. At 19, Miriam married the dashing Theodore Caravasio, who died in a boating accident a few years later. Miriam now returns to the Whispers in the company of her private nurse, Adam, for what turns out to be her final meeting with her three adult children and her devoted 26-year-old granddaughter, Delphine Lockwood. Hopes of inheriting Miriam's wealth keep her children bickering. When Miriam dies of apparently natural causes, Delphine wonders whether it might be murder. A subtle shiver of menace runs throughout the narrative, told in part from the point of view of Miriam at significant points in her life. This thoughtful look at the nature of memories will resonate

Rowland, Laura Joh. [River of Fallen Angels](#) (Crooked Lane \$28.99). April 1891. Sarah Barrett, a photographer for the Daily World, is shooting a construction worker who dangles precariously from London's Tower Bridge when she and a crowd of onlookers spot some body parts floating in the Thames below—remnants of what appears to be the latest of the Torso Murders. Having already solved the mystery of Jack the Ripper, Sarah finds herself drawn to the challenge of untangling this series of crimes as well. Her probe triggers the first threat to her post-honeymoon bliss with DS Thomas Barrett, her husband of less than a year. Thomas is clearly troubled but unwilling to share the reason why. Over the course of Sarah's previous cases, Rowland developed an engaging cast of supporting characters whom she introduces incrementally here so that new readers won't feel left behind

Royce, Deborah Goodrich. [Reef Road](#) (Post Row \$27). **Publishes in early January. Signed here February 2—best to order it now.** In a nod to the true crime that inspired *Reef Road*, Royce probes unhealed generational scars. “In 1948, 12-year-old Noelle Huber was brutally murdered. Seventy-two years later, an obsessed, lonely writer named Noelle (after the murdered girl) stalks Linda Alonso in search of the truth. Noelle is convinced that her namesake was killed by Matthew Huber, her older brother. She latches onto Linda because Linda is Matthew's daughter—Noelle Huber's niece—and inserts herself into Linda's life and befriends her. Noelle wants to know everything about Linda's marriage, her children, and the secrets in her house. Noelle even knows what happens when Linda's husband and children supposedly fly to Argentina, leaving Linda behind—she can't go during the pandemic because she's not an Argentine citizen, unlike her family members. Linda isn't suspicious until Noelle reveals her ties to the long-ago murder. Now, Linda is trapped in Palm Beach, FL, her family is AWOL, and she's being stalked by a writer who believes she knows everything. Inspired by an actual murder, this title by actress and author Royce will be appreciated by fans of psychological thrillers and stories of traumas affecting multiple generations.”—Lesla Holstine, our blogger

Shannon, Samantha. [A Day of Fallen Night](#) (Bloomsbury \$35). I expect these are tip-ins. Tunuva Melim is a sister of the Priory. For fifty years, she has trained to slay wyrms—but none have appeared since the Nameless One, and the younger generation is starting to question the Priory's purpose. To the north, in the Queendom of Inys, Sabran the Ambitious has married the new King of Hróth, narrowly saving both realms from ruin. Their daughter, Glorian, trails in their shadow, exactly where she wants to be. The dragons of the East have slept for centuries. Dumai has spent her life in a Seiikinese mountain temple, trying to wake the gods from their long slumber. Now someone from her mother's past is coming to upend her fate. When the Dreadmount erupts, bringing with it an age of terror and violence, these women must find the strength to protect humankind from a devastating threat. Intricate and epic, *A Day of Fallen Night* sweeps readers back to the world of *A Priory of the Orange Tree*, showing us a course of events that shaped it for generations to come.

Smith, Tom Rob. [Cold People](#) (Free Press UK \$32). **Publishes February 7 and Smith zooms with Pat King on February 7 and 5:00 PM. But best to order the UK edition now.**

A Starred review asks, “What lines, if any, shouldn't be crossed to save humanity from extinction? That question is at the heart of this stunning postapocalyptic thriller from bestseller Smith of 2008's [Child 44](#) (\$16). Twenty years after an alien invasion has decimated Earth's human population, those who remain have been struggling to survive in Antarctica, the only region not deemed off-limits by the invaders. While some focus on insuring that people have food and shelter, others have broader objectives; genetic engineers manipulate animal DNA, attempting to create versions of humans better capable of surviving in the intense cold. Some, like Echo, a teenager, appear basically human, despite their modifications, which in her case include scales instead of skin that change color to either retain or expel heat. But there are also monstrous creations, which may either point the way to a future for humanity or pose an existential threat. Echo and her family, along with those governing the remnants of humanity, face tough ethical choices as they try to ascertain the implications of what the genetic engineering has achieved for humanity's future. The central story line, a clever homage to Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, unfolds in a way to ensure readers become attached to Echo and her family. Smith, the author of brilliant historical and psychological suspense novels, shows his range is even broader in this triumph of imagination and empathy.” You can also order the unsigned US edition of [Cold People](#) (Scribner \$28).

Suarez, Daniel. [Critical Mass](#) (Penguin \$28). **Publishes January 24, signed here on February 17.** *LJ* reviews: “Suarez's follow-up to [Delta-V](#) (\$28) describes a world in which science helps humanity rise above its petty political squabbles to enter an exciting new space age, where the bounty of the heavens can solve problems much closer to home. The novel is set on a near-future Earth, struggling with a changing climate and dwindling resources. The crew of the *Konstantin* comes back from space after successfully mining an asteroid that could potentially offer a wealth of new material. But a visionary scientist has a bold plan to instead use the material and energy resources to jumpstart the planet's space efforts. Tensions build as the crew becomes embroiled in the politics that threaten to keep humanity trapped under increasingly fraught conditions on Earth. The book gives



a fascinating look at how the challenge of space exploration will meet the realities of a politically divided world. It will appeal to audiences who have wondered how humanity can ever hope to explore space, given the political and environmental problems holding us back. This is a fantastic tech-minded sci-fi in the vein of Kim Stanley Robinson.”

Taylor, Brad. [The Devil's Ransom](#) (Harper \$28.99 Jan. 23). **Special pricing here as the publisher has increased the price to \$32. Our price is good for preorders and attending the event but then rises to \$32.**

I love this snarky *Kirkus* review: “Thriller fans will love the ticking-clock action. It’s 2021, and Afghanistan is falling. The Taliban wants to capture mortal enemy Jahn Azimi before he escapes their clutches, which he does with help from Logan and his crew. Aside from having killed many Taliban, Jahn has the Bactrian Treasure (yes, this is a real thing, a pile of ancient gold coins said to be worth billions of dollars). The Taliban want both the man and the gold. Blood flows, of course. Meanwhile, bad guys test ‘zero-click’ ransomware on a Washington, D.C., consulting company that happens to have ties to the U.S. intelligence community, but that’s just a dry run for a much bigger show. A private enterprise plans to send some rich dilettantes into space to dock with the International Space Station. Criminals plan to spoil that flight in spectacular and deadly fashion unless the American government tells them where the treasure is. Much of the action takes place in Croatia. Logan is a fun hero to follow, given that he only slaughters bad guys....”

Brad says, “The Bactrian Treasure is real and was discovered by a Soviet archeologist in the upper steppes of Afghanistan in the late ’70s. It was a unique find because tombs in that area held treasures from across the Silk Road, spanning the globe, from Serbian daggers to Chinese emeralds. Nobody knows who the people were in the tombs, but it was a big find. When the Soviets left Afghanistan, the treasure disappeared. Nobody knew what had happened to it. It was thought the Soviets had simply stolen it on the way out the door. Fast-forward to 2001, after we toppled the Taliban, and a guy produced a key to a safe underneath the main bank in Kabul. He’d hidden the treasure and kept it secret all those years. Fast-forward again to the present day, and the treasure was lost again, with the Taliban swearing vengeance to find it. That was enough to get me to incorporate Afghanistan into the story.”

Tracy, PJ. [The Devil You Know](#) (St Martins \$27.99). Here is Tracy’s strong third police procedural featuring LAPD Detective Margaret Nolan. When a scurrilous video pops up on the web showing beloved Disney actor Evan Hobbes having sex with a minor, the star’s career implodes, despite his fervent denials and claims that the video must be a deepfake. The following day, his battered body is found at the bottom of a cliff behind the home of Disney executive David Baum. Hobbes had been one of hundreds of well-heeled guests celebrating at a lavish party on the Baum estate. Was his death an accident, suicide, or murder? The displays of colossal Hollywood egos and Nolan’s reaction to them make her interviews with potential suspects and witnesses highly entertaining. Adding personal interest is Nolan’s ongoing friendship with Sam Easton, a troubled Afghan War vet who suffers from PTSD. Great atmosphere, vivid characters, and an intricate fair play plot that surprises as it twists its way to a satisfying resolution make this a winner.

Willingham, Stacy. [All the Dangerous Things](#) (St Martins \$27.99 Jan. 12). Willingham avoids second book syndrome as she pens a dynamite follow up to her January 2022 First Mystery Book of the Month [A Flicker in the Dark](#) (\$17.99). One year ago, chronic sleepwalker Isabelle Drake’s life changed forever: her toddler son, Mason, was taken out of his crib in the middle of the night while she and her husband were asleep in the next room. With little evidence and few leads for the police to chase, the case quickly went cold. However, Isabelle cannot rest until Mason is returned to her—literally. Except for the occasional catnap or small blackout where she loses track of time, she hasn’t slept in a year. Isabelle’s entire existence now revolves around finding him, but she knows she can’t go on this way forever. In hopes of jarring loose a new witness or buried clue, she agrees to be interviewed by a true-crime podcaster—but his interest in Isabelle’s past makes her nervous. His incessant questioning paired with her severe insomnia has brought up uncomfortable memories from her own childhood, making Isabelle start to doubt her recollection of the night of Mason’s disappearance, as well as second-guess who she can trust... including herself.

Witten, Matt. [Killer Story](#) (Oceanview \$27.95). Talented and idealistic young reporter Petra Kovach is on the brink of being laid off from her third failing newspaper in a row. To save her job, she pitches the launch of a true crime podcast about a sensational, unsolved murder. Years earlier, an alt-right YouTuber was killed in her Harvard dorm room, and the case went cold. Petra knew the victim—she was once her camp counselor and loved her like a little sister, despite their political differences. Petra’s investigation gets off to a rocky start, as her promising leads quickly shrivel up. In her passionate quest for justice—and clicks—Petra burns sources and breaks laws, ultimately putting her own life on the line. Even as her star rises, she worries it could all come crashing down at any moment if her actions are exposed. When her machinations start to backfire, there’s only one way to fix everything and solve the murder.... TV investigative reporter ace Hank Phillippi Ryan, who brings us her new thriller on February 4 at 2:00 PM with Deborah Crombie, calls this “an absolute page-turner! *Killer Story* is authentic and all-too-realistic—a deep dive into journalists’ tactics, ambition, and cut-throat passion, as well as the relentless pressure to produce ...

Yamashita, Iris. [City Under One Roof](#) (Berkley \$27). Unusual topography plays a major role in screenwriter Yamashita’s atmospherically charged debut, a locked-city mystery. Once a secret military base, the tiny city of Point Mettler, Alaska, is reached by land through a narrow, one-way tunnel. Full-time residents live in one self-sufficient high-rise. During eight months of winter, the temperature reaches  $-35^{\circ}\text{F}$  and “eyelashes could actually freeze.” When 17-year-old Amy Lin and friends discover a severed hand and foot in Hidden Cove, where they retreat to smoke pot, Detective Cara Kennedy comes from Anchorage to investigate. That Cara has hidden personal motives for wanting to be on the case raises the tension. Then a blizzard and avalanche block the tunnel, and harrowing secrets and lingering lies surface along with more body parts. The disappearance of a mother and her two sons prompts a search that leads to a spellbinding, unforgettable climax and an unpredictable resolution. Well-defined secondary characters include a roving gang of ruffians on snowmobiles with their own violent agenda. This distinctively



original perspective on a “community of stragglers, oddballs, and recluses” heralds the arrival of a major new talent. **This is another First Mystery Book of the Month candidate I recommend to you.**

### UNSIGNED EVENT BOOKS

Bennett, Michael. [Better the Blood](#) (Grove \$27). Our **January International Crime Book of the Month**. This debut author, an acclaimed Māori screenwriter and director, lives in New Zealand. He presents an “absorbing, clever debut thriller that speaks to the longstanding injustices faced by New Zealand’s indigenous peoples. Hana Westerman, a Maori cop in Auckland, sees her life falling apart before her eyes. Her rebellious daughter has just been arrested. A lawsuit is barreling toward her from an odious perp who smashed his own face into a pillar and insists that she did it. Her boss—who also happens to be her ex-husband—warns her that she’s in danger of dismissal. The Maori community still hasn’t forgiven her for the time, 18 years ago, when, a very junior officer, she helped forcibly break up a Maori land protest. And then there’s the case she’s working on. A video sent only to her has led to an abandoned building, where a junkie is found hanging from a rafter. But what is she to make of the fact that he died of a blow to the head and then was strung up? Or that she had to break through a wall to find him? Or that someone drew an odd spiral pattern outside the building—in blood, so that it could only be seen with luminol? Why was she the one who kept receiving videos pointing her to more bodies—a businessman who fell from the top of a building, an actor killed in his dressing room? Delving into the investigation after a second, apparently unrelated, death, she uncovers a chilling connection to an historic crime: 160 years before, during the brutal and bloody British colonization of New Zealand, a troop of colonial soldiers unjustly executed a Māori Chief.

I rarely submit a nomination for Indie Next but I did here: The many times I have visited New Zealand I’ve not been so made aware of the #OwnVoices of the Maori, its indigenous peoples and the brutalities of their colonization as I have reading Michael Te Arawa Bennett’s powerful debut crime novel. Hana Westerman demands admiration that bodes well for the sequel by this exciting author and screenwriter.

✎Hallett, Janice. [The Twyford Code](#) (Atria \$27). Hallett’s second book steps into Richard Osman and Alex Pavesi territory. Forty years ago, Steven Smith found a copy of a famous children’s book by disgraced author Edith Twyford, its margins full of strange markings and annotations. Wanting to know more, he took it to his English teacher Miss Iles, not realizing the chain of events that he was setting in motion. Miss Iles became convinced that the book was the key to solving a puzzle, and that a message in secret code ran through all Twyford’s novels. Then Miss Iles disappeared on a class field trip, and Steven has no memory of what happened to her. Now, out of prison after a long stretch, Steven decides to investigate the mystery that has haunted him for decades. Was Miss Iles murdered? Was she deluded? Or was she right about the code? And is it still in use today? Desperate to recover his memories and find out what really happened to Miss Iles, Steven revisits the people and places of his childhood. But it soon becomes clear that Edith Twyford wasn’t just a writer of forgotten children’s stories, but may have been a secret British agent during World War II involved in Operation Fish, a secret mission to move all of Britain’s gold stores to Canada

for safekeeping. And all of this told in voice mails, which can become annoying, but is done for excellent reasons. Code lovers, rejoice. See Signed Books for Hallett’s third novel.

✎Johnstone, Carole. [The Blackhouse](#) (Scribner \$28). From the author of the “dark and devious...beautifully written” (Stephen King) *Mirrorland* **comes a richly atmospheric thriller set on an isolated Scottish island where nothing is as it seems and shocking twists lie around every corner** in a story based in part upon bipolar disorder. The scenery is magnificent and the lifestyle in the Hebrides (her island is fiction, but think Lewis and Harris) fascinating. Who knew that a thriving local industry is making gin from seaweed? And that the beaches and waves are world class? “A highly immersive thriller on an insular and remote Scottish island in the Outer Hebrides. Johnstone uses this wild ‘thin place’ (where the division between this world and the next is porous) to great effect—the portrait of the island’s landscape and culture is vivid. The best way to learn more about what Johnstone describes as a Gothic Horror (and she does a brilliant job defining that) is to [watch her book debut](#) from January 3 with me on our zoom channels.

### SOME JANUARY COZIES

*First, our Cozy Antiques Mysteries Quartet:*

Abbott, Cordy. [Dead Men Don’t Decorate](#) (\$28.99). Roberto Fratelli, proprietor of the antiques store Waited4You, is the meanest man in Marthasville, Virginia. So when he puts the business up for sale, the other merchants in town are overjoyed. And now the business has a prospective buyer: local resident and the newly elected mayor’s mom, Camille Benson, who’s thrilled at the prospect of getting into the antiques business. During a celebration in honor of Camille’s new venture, her best friend, Opal, tells her about finding a letter, purportedly from Sally Fairfax to George Washington, dated 1756, hidden under a chair in the shop. When they return to retrieve the cache, they find Roberto’s lifeless body on the floor and no letter. Police question Ella Coleman, Roberto’s ex-wife, and discover that her current husband supplied Roberto with oh-so-faux Victorian furniture. Did the two cheat the wrong customer? Or could the murder be connected to an earlier theft of rare books from the shop—a theft Roberto never reported?

✎Berry, Connie. [The Shadow of Memory](#) (\$26.99). In Berry’s intriguing fourth mystery featuring Ohio antiques expert Kate Hamilton, Kate and two older friends, including Vivian Bunn, find Will Parker, a retired police inspector and a sweetheart of Vivian’s from many years ago, dead in a graveyard in the Suffolk village of Long Barton. Will was investigating a cold case that he, Vivian, and some friends had first encountered as teenagers when they discovered the abandoned home of a physician and his wife who had been poisoned. When Kate learns that Will was murdered, that the physician may have been embroiled in dubious activities connected to a local mental health facility and a priceless painting, and that suspicious circumstances have arisen with other members of Vivian’s teenage group, she begins to fear for her friend’s safety. New and faithful fans alike will appreciate the tying together of present and past, as well as the poignancy in the long effects of unfortunate choices. As usual, Kate and her fellow villagers provide congenial company for readers. I am very fond of this intelligent series that also explores a romance between two people of different countries and career: Kate and her British detective.

Esden, Trish. [The Art of the Decoy](#) (\$26.99). Edie Brown comes home to Scandal Mountain, Vermont, smarting from her mother's conviction for art forgery that has tarnished her own reputation, as well as that of her family's antiques business, and seeking a road to recovery. In addition, she herself has been on probation for selling stolen property. Aided by her horticulturally gifted uncle, Tuck, and tech-savvy assistant, Kala Acosta, Edie evaluates a prized collection of folk art decoys for Nina Graves-Bouchard and her father-in-law, Claude Bouchard. When the collection disappears, Nina accuses Edie of theft and threatens to go to the police. Spurred to clear her name and recover the decoys, Edie discovers a disturbing trail that may involve malice toward the family business, a previous robbery in Canada, and potential danger for a vulnerable Claude. An amusing purveyor of gossip, an exciting chase, a rich historical and cultural background, and a complex relationship between Edie and her former probation officer add interest and depth. Readers of this excellent series launch will look forward to further antique hunts with the stubborn, courageous Edie and her team

Gardner, Tracy. [Peril at Pennington Manor](#) (\$26.99). In Mary Higgins Clark Award finalist Gardner's winning sequel to [Ruby Red Herring](#) (\$26.99), a 2021 Cozy Crimes Club Book of the Month which I think is stronger, Nicholas Pennington IV, the Duke of Valle Charme, a small European kingdom, hires antique experts Avery Ayers and her father, William, to appraise and catalog his collection at Pennington Manor, his Hudson Valley mansion, before he sells the place. Soon after Avery and William arrive at the manor, a valuable pocket watch disappears, and the duke's housekeeper, Suzanne Vick, falls to her death from the roof. The police, including Det. Art Smith, suspect it's a murder made to look like an accident or suicide, a theory supported by Suzanne's predecessor having died under mysterious circumstances. Meanwhile, Avery notices that some of the duke's jewels have been replaced by fakes. The stakes rise after the duke is injured in a riding accident, and the attraction between Art and Avery adds some romantic heat as they seek to identify a killer who seems to know the Pennington estate well.

*And new:*

Berenson, Laurien. [Killer Cupid](#) (Kensington \$22.95). In a routine canine cozy aimed at the Valentine's market, Stamford, Connecticut, dog lover and breeder Melanie Travis, her husband, and other family members, head to the Berkshires for a Valentine's Day getaway at the White Birch Inn. The group, which includes Faith, Melanie's beloved standard poodle, arrives at the inn ready to embrace the romantic setting. One evening, Melanie comes across Belinda and a man embracing while walking Faith and Sammy, the Samoyed that belongs to the inn's owner, Evelyn Barker. Melanie's waking the following day to the sound of police sirens and discovering Belinda has died of exposure dampens the romantic atmosphere. Though Sheriff Anne Tinley doesn't appreciate Melanie's knack for uncovering clues, Evelyn begs Melanie to investigate the suspicious death. And of course she does....

✚Brett, Simon. [Waste of a Life](#) (Severn \$29.99). The King of Cozy Mysteries, Simon Brett, returns with another entry in his delightfully quirky Decluttering mystery series—Marie Kondo goes cozy. Professional declutterer Ellen Curtis is working to bring order to the home of an elderly recluse when the old man tragically dies. But when the police raise suspicion that Cedric

Waites might have been poisoned, Ellen gets drawn into an unexpected, twisty investigation

Delany, Vicki. [The Game Is a Foonote](#) (Crooked Lane \$26.99). Scarlet House, now a historical re-enactment museum, is the oldest building in West London, Massachusetts. Is it haunted? When things start moving around on their own, board members suggest that Gemma Doyle, owner of the Sherlock Holmes Bookshop and Emporium, might be able to get to the bottom of it. Gemma doesn't believe in ghosts, but she agrees to 'eliminate the impossible'. But when Gemma and Jayne stumble across a dead body on the property, they're forced to consider an all too physical threat. Gemma and Jayne suspect foul play as they start to uncover more secrets about the museum. With the museum being a revolving door for potential killers, they have plenty of options for who might be the actual culprit. Despite Gemma's determination not to get further involved, it would appear that once again, and much to the displeasure of Detective Ryan Ashburton, the game is afoot.

Hall, Traci. [Murder at a Scottish Wedding](#) (Kensington \$16.95) "opens at Old Nairn Kirk, where Lydia Barron, the best friend of Paislee Shaw, the owner of a sweater and yarn shop in Nairn, Scotland, is about to marry her old-money love, Corbin Smythe. In the church's dressing room, Lydia panics when she can't find the box containing the heirloom Luckenbooth brooch, a traditional Scottish love token that Corbin has given her. Matron of honor Paislee helps her search to no avail. Shortly before the ceremony, Felice, a Smythe cousin, rushes out of the church and takes a fatal fall down the stairs to the street. Inside Felice's hand is the missing brooch. Intuitive Paislee, an experienced amateur sleuth, thinks Felice's death was no accident and neither is Corbin's subsequent disappearance. Hall expertly juggles multiple story lines, of which the one involving the fraught Shaw family saga will most engage readers. That Detective Inspector Zeffler may have pertinent new details on Paislee's long-lost uncle, Craigh Shaw, lends counterpoint to the murder inquiry. Fans of all things Scottish will have fun."—PW

Jones, Valona. [Snuffed Out](#) (Crooked Lane \$28.99). In a paranormal cozy series debut by Maggie Toussaint, now writing as Jones, twins Tabby and Sage Winslow are proprietors of the Book and Candle Shop in Savannah, Georgia. The sisters come from a long line of "energetics," people who can manipulate their own personal energy fields and those of others. They can cause a heart attack, for example, by hastening a person's heartbeat. Tabby is reluctant to use her abilities after almost causing the death of an attacker, while Sage is less concerned about the repercussions of their abilities. One day, socialite Blithe McAdam has an explosive confrontation in their shop with Gerard, their clerk. Hours later, Blithe is found murdered. When a video of the argument turns up on social media, Gerard is suspect number one, and the sisters set out to clear their friend. The tension rises as they discover new powers....

Malliet, GM. [Invitation to a Killer](#) (Severn \$29.99). Agatha winner Malliet's entertaining sequel to 2022's *Augusta Hawke* opens at a book signing in Alexandria, Virginia, where mystery writer Augusta Hawke is surprised to be approached by Callie Moore, an influential D.C. lobbyist's wife. Callie asks Augusta to ghostwrite her memoirs, which she promises will be filled with "scandals that will rip this city—and the world!—wide

open.” When Augusta declines the offer, Callie counters with an invitation to one of her “Instagram-worthy dinner parties” and the chance to meet prominent literary agent Rem Larssen. Augusta accepts and finds herself in the company of former CIA agents, a congressman and his long-suffering wife, a famous media consultant, and a plastic surgeon to the stars, all of whom seem to be writing a memoir or a novel. As Augusta says, “all these writer manqués in one room could only lead to trouble.” Indeed, a guest dies, and Augusta is soon on the trail of a cunning killer. Along with a fair play mystery, readers are treated to some wry observations on politics and publishing (“Saying Rem Larssen is your literary agent is like saying the Pope is your religious confessor”).

✉Maxwell, Alyssa. [A Fashionable Fatality](#) (Kensington \$26). Amid the aftermath of the Great War and its hardships, it’s no wonder that many wish to rediscover life’s pleasures—parties, fashion, dancing. Still, Lady Phoebe Renshaw and her lady’s maid, Eva Huntford, are disconcerted when a small gathering at the home of Phoebe’s sister, Julia, becomes a far larger and more glamorous affair—Julia has invited her favorite French fashion designer, Gabrielle “Coco” Chanel, and Coco’s current beau, the Earl of Chesterhaven. Coco has brought an entourage of her own, including two models, and intends to use the gardens as a photographic setting for her latest creations. Madame Chanel is as outspoken as she is talented, offering a scathing critique of Phoebe’s fashion sense. There is tense competition between the models as well. When one of the guests is found dead of smoke inhalation, it appears to be a tragic accident. But was a footman really to blame for mistakenly closing the fireplace flue, or is there a more sinister explanation? Maxwell’s Lady and Lady’s Maid series set in the 1920s provides a view at England between the wars

Meade, Amy Patricia. [Of Mushrooms and Matrimony](#) (Severn \$29.99). Tish Tarragon, owner of the Cookin’ the Books literary café in Hobson Glenn, Virginia, is about to be evicted from her premises by her landlord and vengeful former boyfriend, Schuyler Thompson. Her last catering job until a new, affordable location can be found is a book-themed wedding weekend at Abbingdon Green Bed and Breakfast. Unfortunately for all concerned, overbearing celebrity chef Gunnar Randall, host of *Taste of America*, one of the most popular shows ever to air on the Food Channel, is also staying at the B&B. Worse still, he is producing an episode of his show, which means no one is safe from his scathing criticism. When he’s poisoned, there’s no dearth of likely suspects. Tish, an official consultant for the local sheriff’s department, works hand in hand with Sheriff Clemson Reade to resolve the mystery. Surrounded by a lively cast of friends and possible foes, Tish is the ideal cozy heroine—clever and sensible, with just the right amount of daring. Foodies and cozy lovers will enjoy both the puzzle and the recipes in this our **January Cozy Crimes Book of the Month**.

Meier, Leslie. [Irish Coffee Murder](#) (Kensington \$26). A trio of mystery novellas by Meier, Lee Hollis, and Barbara Ross show you don’t need to be Irish to enjoy St. Patrick’s Day in Maine whether in Tinker’s Cove, Bar Harbor, or Busman’s Harbor. I find it is a Kensington publishing trademark to put out seasonal cozies at least two months in advance of whatever holiday celebration they target.

Wilson Wesley, Valerie. [A Shimmer of Red](#) (Kensington \$16.95). With pandemic-fearing city dwellers fleeing to the New Jersey suburbs, Risko Realty—and Odessa Jones—are having their best year ever. Finally on solid financial footing, Odessa is debt-free and looking forward to the future. But she doesn’t need second sight to sense her new young co-worker, Anna Lee, is on edge—and straight-up terrified—in spite of her hot sales record and sunny, outgoing attitude. And when Anna is killed in a hit-and-run, Odessa sees immediately that it was no accident... It’s soon clear that Anna was being stalked. But even with the help of family, friends—and Odessa’s feisty cat, Juniper—Odessa is coming up with more questions than clues in this cozy. “There’s also something oddly comforting about a Black woman in fiction who isn’t weighed down by societal pathology and who can appreciate a good glass of Merlot and reruns of “Downton Abbey” as much as the next woman. In between heavier mystery fare, this unicorn of a Black cozy is a welcome palate cleanser.” —*The Los Angeles Times* on *A Glimmer of Death*

#### CLASSICS

✉Berkeley, Anthony. [Jumping Jenny](#) (Poisoned Pen \$14.99). A mystery dinner theater party thrown by local author with a taste “for rather gruesome humor” requires guests come dressed as infamous killers—Jack the Ripper, Dr. Crippen, and the like. Whatever could go wrong? Set in post-WWI England, this outstanding 1933 mystery from Berkeley (1893–1971) opens at “a murderer-and-victim party” outside London attended by amateur sleuth Roger Sheringham. The respectable guests are garbed as prominent killers, including Dr. Crippen and Jack the Ripper. The host, Ronald Stratton, who writes detective stories “full of a rather gruesome humor,” has even decorated his flat roof with a gallows, complete with three hanging dummies. The festivities turn grim after a guest finds a woman’s corpse in place of one of the stuffed figures. Sheringham rules out suicide, since there was nothing nearby for the woman to have stood on. For a surprising reason, however, he alters the crime scene by moving a chair near the body to mislead the police into concluding that she took her own life. In doing so, Sheringham places himself in legal jeopardy as he tries to both identify the killer and conceal his own complicity in altering the crime scene. Berkeley adroitly plays on readers’ expectations of genre conventions with a witty and tricky plot and a genuinely shocking conclusion. The British Library Crime Classics series does golden age fans a great service with this reissue” —*PW* Starred Review. It includes an introduction by CWA Diamond Dagger and Edgar ® Award-winning author Martin Edwards.

Burgess, Gelett. [The Master of Mysteries](#) (Poisoned Pen \$14.99) offers a twentieth-century, mystical twist on the classic consulting detective genre made popular by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. “First published in book form in 1912, the 24 short stories by humorist Burgess (1866–1951) in this exemplary Library of Congress Crime Classics reissue feature Astro the Seer, whose intellect allows him to make Holmesian deductions. (As editor Leslie S. Klinger notes in his introduction, these tales were ‘part of a tsunami of Holmes imitators.’) Born Astrogon Kerby, Astro learned magic in Cairo before studying at MIT. To support his private physics lab in New York City, Astro ‘set up in business as palmist, seer, and detective.’ In one of the volume’s high points, ‘The Stolen Shakespeare,’ Astro examines the hand of a prospective client and informs the man, accurately, that he



attended a popular revue the previous night and was bored. Other memorable cases involve official corruption and kidnapping. The romantic dynamic with his sidekick, Valeska, who contributes significantly to his inquiries, adds an element missing from traditional Holmes-Watson-inspired pairings. “Those seeking quality Sherlock Holmes pastiches in a humorous vein will be well rewarded.”— *PW* Starred Review

Palmer, Stuart. [The Penguin Pool Murder](#) (American Mystery Classics \$15.95). For the third graders at Jefferson School, a field trip is always a treat. But one day at the New York Aquarium, they get much more excitement than they bargained for. A pickpocket sprints past, stolen purse in hand, and is making his way to the exit when their teacher, the prim Hildegard Withers, knocks him down with her umbrella. By the time the police and the security guards finish arguing about what to do with Chicago Lew, he has escaped, and Miss Withers has found something far more interesting: a murdered stockbroker floating in the penguin tank. With the help of Detective Oscar Piper, this no-nonsense spinster embarks on her first of many adventures. The mystery is baffling, the killer dangerous, but for a woman who can control a gaggle of noisy third graders, murder is a mere bagatelle. Hardcover edition: [The Penguin Pool Murder](#) (Norton \$25.95).

Petry, Ann. [Country Place](#) (Harper \$17.99). Johnnie Roane has come home from four years of fighting in World War II to his loving parents and his beautiful wife, Gloria. But his first doubts of Gloria’s infidelity are created on the way home by the local taxi driver, a passionate gossip, and these doubts which mature with the hurricane that is bearing down on them darkening the seemingly perfect town of Lennox, Connecticut. But a greater violence lurks beneath the surface of the storm... *Country Place* is a classic, page-turning story that masterfully captures the transformation of small-town life in America. Also reissued, two more classics by Petry, “the writer we have been waiting for; hers are the stories we need to fully illuminate the questions of our moment, while also offering a page-turning good time (Tayari Jones in the *NY Times*)”: [The Narrows](#) and [Miss Muriel and Other Stories](#) (\$17.99 each).

#### NEW IN HARDCOVER

*I kid you not, there are more than 150 new ones in our system for January. I could only get to some of them, and include numerous quotes below for ones I highlight but haven't yet read.*

*I add that in my Enews comments about Trends for 2023 I now add Magic, magic and fey as plot drivers. Maybe it reflects a general need for escape or for rescue from reality....*

Arend, Nicole. [Vamps: Fresh Blood](#) (Atria \$27.99) transports you to an elite vampire academy where a half vampire, half human must hone his bloodthirsty side in order to survive in a cutthroat world. Perfect for fans of *The Atlas Six* and *True Blood*

Bardugo, Leigh. [Hell Bent](#) (Flatiron \$29.99). Galaxy “Alex” Stern is a member of Lethe House, the ninth of Yale’s secret societies. And not just any member—she’s Virgil, the officer who conducts the society’s rituals. In the world of Bardugo’s Alex Stern series, Yale’s secret societies command not just powerful social networks, but actual magic; it’s Lethe’s job to keep that magic in control. Alex is new to the role. She had to take over in a hurry after the previous Virgil, Darlington, her mentor and love interest, disappeared in a cliffhanger at the end of the first book. He appears to be in hell, but is he stuck there for good? Alex and

Pamela Dawes—Lethe’s Oculus, or archivist/administrator—have found a reference to a pathway called a Gauntlet that can open a portal to hell, but can they find the Gauntlet itself? And what about the four murderers the Gauntlet ritual requires? “Well-drawn characters introduce the criminal underworld to the occult kind in a breathless and compelling plot.”—*Kirkus Reviews*

✠Benedict, Marie. [The Mitford Affair](#) (Sourcebooks \$27.99). I know much history of this eccentric English family, in their way a kind of 1920s Kardashians, whose literary and political activities have left a timeless stamp. I’m also an admirer of the youngest sister, Deborah, who became the Duchess of Devonshire and did an astonishing job polishing up the legacy and finances of Chatsworth, the Devonshire’s fabled country house which inspired other owners of such estates in ways to preserve them. But Benedict’s story focuses on the 1930s and the run up to WWII and “delves into the Mitford family’s fatal attraction to fascism and Hitler in her captivating latest. Diana, the middle child of six sisters and a brother, is a famous beauty who is married to Bryan Guinness, heir to the brewing fortune. Diana, 22, leaves Bryan for ‘fascist gadabout’ Sir Oswald Mosley, founder of the British Union of Fascists. Diane later teaches her children the Hitler salute, and her connections to elite Nazis keep Mosley’s BUF afloat until the political tide turns against them when WWII looms. Younger sister Unity, 18, hoping to help Great Britain prevent war with Germany, is a fierce Nazi sympathizer and anti-Semite, and her obsession with Hitler leads her to join his inner circle—a decision followed by dire consequences. When the oldest Mitford sister, 29-year-old novelist Nancy, grasps the precise nature of her sisters’ visits to Germany, she sleuths out Diana’s and Mosley’s treasonous scheme to start up a radio station for spreading Nazi propaganda, and outs them to her cousin Winston Churchill. This engaging tale of genteel spies shifts easily between the sisters’ perspectives and provides timely insight on British fascists and supporters of appeasement.”—*PW*

Black, Holly. [The Stolen Heir](#) (Little Brown \$20.99). In the first book of a duology for teen readers, Black returns to the opulent world of Elfhome, following Jude’s brother Oak, and the changeling queen, Suren. A reluctant prince. A runaway queen. And a quest that may destroy them both.

Carlsson, Christoffer. [Blaze Me a Sun: A Novel About a Crime](#) (Random \$28) is “Part police procedural, part cold case and part sociological study, *Blaze Me a Sun* cements Christoffer Carlsson as one of Sweden’s new crime fiction stars...[and] is further proof that he is a worthy heir to titans such as Henning Mankell, Stieg Larsson and Håkan Nesser.”—*Bookpage*—a view echoed in the *NY Times Book Review*. So you ScandiNoir fans, take note. In February 1986, the Halland police receive a call from a man who claims to have attacked his first victim. *I’m going to do it again*, he says before the line cuts off. By the time police officer Sven Jörgensson reaches the crime scene, the woman is taking her last breath. For Sven, this will prove a decisive moment. On the same night, Sweden plunges into a state of shock after the murder of the prime minister. Could there possibly be a connection? As Sven becomes obsessed with the case, two more fall victim. For years, Sven remains haunted by the murders he cannot solve, fearing the killer will strike again. Having failed to catch him, Sven retires from the police, passing his obsession to his son, who has joined the force to be closer to his father.

Decades later, the case unexpectedly resurfaces when a novelist returns home to Halland amid a failed marriage and a sputtering career. The writer befriends the retired police officer, who helps the novelist—our narrator—unspool the many strands of this engrossing tale about a community confronting its shames and legacies.

Collins, Max Allan. [The Big Bundle](#) (Forge \$22.99). “In MWA Grand Master Collins’s superb 18th Nathan Heller novel, the PI crosses paths with Robert Kennedy and Jimmy Hoffa. It’s 1953 in Kansas City, Missouri, when millionaire Robert Greenlease retains Heller’s services after his six-year-old son, Bobby, is kidnapped and ransomed for \$600,000. Greenlease makes the payment, but the kidnappers delay returning the child. Heller uses his underworld contacts to try to get a lead on Bobby’s whereabouts by attempting to trace the marked bills used for the payoff, though he fears that the boy is already dead. Flash forward to 1958. Heller is working both for Hoffa, the corrupt Teamsters leader, and Kennedy, then chief counsel for the Senate Rackets Committee, who’s looking to nail Hoffa. With half of the ransom never accounted for, Kennedy hopes Heller can help him prove it ended up in the Teamsters Pension Fund. “Heller’s search for the money and the truth behind Bobby’s abduction proves perilous. Collins again artfully uses a real-life crime, one now obscure but headline-making in the 1950s, as the springboard for a crackerjack plot.”—*PW*

Correa, Armando Lucas. [The Night Travelers](#) (Atria \$27.99). WWII stories continue to dominate both fiction and non-fiction. Here we get a link between Nazi Germany and the Cuban Revolution. “In 1931 Berlin, poet Ally Keller gives birth to Lilith, her daughter with jazz musician Marcus, a Black German man. After Marcus goes missing, and as Germany marches toward war, Ally fears Lilith may be targeted by the Nazis because of her skin color, so she begs her Jewish neighbors, Beatrice and Albert Herzog, to take seven-year-old Lilith with them to Cuba. As Lilith adapts to life in Cuba with the Herzogs, she befriends Martín Bernal, and they eventually marry. But Martín’s alliance with Batista’s government puts him in danger when Fidel Castro comes to power, forcing him to leave Lilith and their daughter Nadine alone after he is captured, and Lilith arranges for Nadine to leave Cuba for the U.S., where she’s adopted by an American couple. Years later, Nadine attends college in Germany, and while working as a scientist at a research center in Berlin, her interest in her heritage leads her to information about her birth mother’s early years. Correa makes palpable the sacrifices made by Ally and Lilith for their children’s survival, and the taut pacing keeps the pages flying. Readers will be deeply moved.”

Crewe, Tom. [The New Life](#) (Scribner \$28). A brilliant and captivating debut, in the tradition of Alan Hollinghurst and Colm Tóibín, about two marriages, two forbidden love affairs, and the passionate search for social and sexual freedom in late 19th-century London. In 1894, John Addington, a well-off married man with three daughters, can no longer deny his attraction to men. Henry Ellis, a virgin who’s studied to be a doctor and has an academic interest in sex, has married Edith, a young bisexual writer, and they soon invite another woman into their relationship. (The quasi-throuple is almost as scandalous as his fetish for watching women urinate.) Coincidence and a shared enthusiasm for Walt Whitman connect John and Henry, and though they never meet, they begin to collaborate via letters on a kind of proto-

Kinsey report about the lives of gay British men. At that time, gay men were subject to two years to life in prison if found out; to publish a book on homosexuality courted additional calamities. (The plot integrates Oscar Wilde’s 1895 trial, conviction, and imprisonment for “gross indecency.”) Crewe, an editor at the *London Review of Books*, deftly captures the atmosphere when “the law frightens us into lies,” as John puts it.

Dong, Maria. [Liar, Dreamer, Thief](#) (Grand Central \$28). In this arresting debut, Katrina Kim may be broke, the black sheep of her family, and slightly unhinged, but she isn’t a *stalker*. Her obsession with her co-worker, Kurt, is just one of many coping mechanisms—like her constant shape and number rituals, or the way scenes from her favorite children’s book bleed into her vision whenever she feels anxious or stressed. But when Katrina finds a cryptic message from Kurt that implies he’s aware of her surveillance, her tenuous hold on a normal life crumbles. Driven by compulsion, she enacts the most powerful ritual she has to reclaim control—a midnight visit to the Cayatoga Bridge—and arrives just in time to witness Kurt’s suicide. Before he jumps, he slams her with a devastating accusation: his death is all her fault. Horrified, Katrina combs through the clues she’s collected about Kurt over the last three years, but each revelation uncovers a menacing truth: for every moment she was watching him, he was watching her. And the past she thought she’d left behind? It’s been following her.

Fawcett, Heather. [Emily Wilde’s Encyclopaedia of Faeries](#) (Random \$28). A Cambridge professor specializing in the study of faeries gets more than she bargained for when she goes meddling in the Folk’s business. Fawcett makes her adult fiction debut with this story told in the form of a journal. Emily Wilde arrives in the Scandinavian country of Ljosland with a singular goal: to become the first scholar to confirm and formally document the existence of Ljosland’s legendary faeries. As a dryadologist—a sort of anthropologist specializing in the fae—Emily has spent a lifetime studying these nigh unknowable creatures. She is a genius researcher with meticulous practices, the very opposite of her colleague Wendell Bambleby. Wendelle is a leading researcher with many accolades, but who is he really? Emily has many suspicions about him, and their field work will bring them closer than ever, as Wendell shows up unexpectedly in Hrafnsvik. What’s more, faeries are abducting and harassing humans, which forces Emily and Wendell to team up in order to help the locals and so that Emily can finish her research. “While the pacing starts off slow, Fawcett grabs readers’ attention by drawing them into the folklore as well as the surrounding world. She does a fantastic job building complex characters, and the academic-prose style of Emily’s journal entries works well for the story. A great read for fans of Sarah J. Maas and Erin Morgenstern.”—*LJ*. BookPage adds, “Full of awe-inspiring shows of power and striking moments of humanity, Emily Wilde’s *Encyclopaedia of Faeries* is perfect for readers who love the atmospheric qualities of Susanna Clarke’s *Jonathan Strange & Mr. Norrell* and the pacing of writers like Zen Cho or Charlie N. Holmberg. Follow the lights into the woods and dance with the fae under Emily’s careful guidance—just be sure not to get carried away.”

♀Fellowes, Jessica. [The Mitford Secret](#) (St Martins \$27.99). It’s 1941, and the Mitford household is splintered by the vicissitudes of war. To bring the clan together—maybe for one last time,

Deborah invites them to Chatsworth for Christmas, along with a selection of society's most impressive and glamorous guests, as well as old family friend Louisa Cannon, a private detective. One night, a psychic arrives, and to liven things up Deborah agrees she may host a séance. But entertainment turns to dark mystery as the psychic reveals that a maid was murdered in this very same house—and she can prove it. Louisa steps forward to try to solve the cold case. But with a house full of people who want nothing more than to bury their secrets, will she succeed? Check out my comments about Benedict's novel of the Mitfords above and then you can see how Fellowes, daughter of the *Downton Abbey* creator, has fictionalized them into players in a mystery series that ends with this the 6<sup>th</sup> entry. You can [find them all here](#).

Golden, Christopher. [All Hallows](#) (St Martins \$27.99). Bram Stoker Award-winner Christopher Golden blends 1980s nostalgia with eldritch horrors in Halloween terror-fest *All Hallows*. This ensemble cast horror story is a bloody race against the clock to survive the night set against a backdrop of family and neighborhood drama. "Tonight, the woods would be full of screams, and he intended to cherish every last one." It's Halloween night in 1984 Massachusetts, and Tony Barbosa and his teen daughter Chloe have put extra effort into their annual homegrown Haunted Woods attraction. Financial troubles and an impending move are sounding a death knell for the tradition. Their neighbors on Parmenter Road face their own struggles. Barb Sweeney fights to stay strong for her kids in the face of her husband's constant infidelity. Everyone whispers rumors that the Burgess couple ran a brothel in their last town and abducted children. While conflict distracts the adults, the kids on Parmenter Road notice something odd while trick-or-treating. Unknown, unkempt children in costumes that look like they came from bygone decades are appearing around the neighborhood. Tween Rick Barbosa and his best friend Billie are trailed by a little boy in a scarecrow costume whom they later must rescue, but Rick is sure something about the child is off. Other creepy children beg kids in the neighborhood for help hiding from "the Cunning Man," the monstrous being hunting them. His coming spells gruesome disaster as well as some surprising twists. Golden captures the flavor of the 1980s suburb through accurate social dynamics and pop culture references, much as the hit Netflix horror series *Stranger Things* has done. The chills and kills horror fans expect are certainly here, but Golden also leverages the «selfish cruelty of ordinary people» to create that prickly, on-edge feeling needed to set up a good scare

✎Harrod-Eagles, Cynthia. [Before I Sleep](#) (Severn \$29.99). Our blogger Lesa writes about a potential British Crime Club Book of the Month selection for January: "Detective Chief Inspector Bill Slider knows he's in trouble when the borough commander mentions Slider has been involved in sensitive cases before. In other words, if the investigation goes wrong, it's okay to sacrifice Slider and his team. This time, the pressure comes from the top. Henry Holland, a writer of seafaring adventure novels, went to school with the police commissioner. Holland's wife Felicity disappeared after leaving her pottery class the day before, and he demands a search. Although the couple has been married for 24 years, Felicity had a slightly risqué youth, and she's alienated from her prominent father. As the investigation progresses, Slider wonders if Felicity chose to disappear, but the discovery of her purse, in a wooded area where murderer often dump bodies,

leads the team to intensify their search. Slider questions family members gingerly, until the case leads him right back to Henry and the realization that the man hasn't told them the truth about the day his wife disappeared. Harrod-Eagles follows *Dying Fall* with another delightful mystery for fans of unconventional police teams, witty dialogue, and excellent procedurals." I am SO with Lesa on this series which is one of my favorites. I hope Harrod-Eagles lives as long as I do and keeps writing!

Hawkins, Rachel. [The Villa](#) (St Martins \$27.99). As kids, Emily and Chess were inseparable. But by their 30s, their bond has been strained by the demands of their adult lives. So when Chess suggests a girls' trip to Italy, Emily jumps at the chance to reconnect with her best friend. Villa Aestas in Orvieto is a high-end holiday home now, but in 1974, it was known as Villa Rosato, and rented for the summer by a notorious rock star, Noel Gordon. In an attempt to reignite his creative spark, Noel invites up-and-coming musician, Pierce Sheldon to join him, as well as Pierce's girlfriend, Mari, and her stepsister, Lara. But he also sets in motion a chain of events that leads to Mari writing one of the greatest horror novels of all time, Lara composing a platinum album—and ends in Pierce's brutal murder. As Emily digs into the villa's complicated history, she begins to think there might be more to the story of that fateful summer in 1974.

Kapoor, Deepti. [Age of Vice](#) (Penguin \$30). New Delhi, 3 a.m. A speeding Mercedes jumps the curb and in the blink of an eye, five people are dead. It's a rich man's car, but when the dust settles there is no rich man at all, just a shell-shocked servant who cannot explain the strange series of events that led to this crime. Nor can he foresee the dark drama that is about to unfold. "In the shadow of lavish estates, extravagant parties, predatory business deals and calculated political influence, three lives become dangerously intertwined: Ajay is the watchful servant, born into poverty, who rises through the family's ranks. Sunny is the playboy heir who dreams of outshining his father, whatever the cost. And Neda is the curious journalist caught between morality and desire. Ajay soon learns that the Wadia family, entrenched in a feud, is more sinister and dangerous than he thought and that he's being made to take the fall for a crime he didn't commit. Kapoor switches points of view and timelines throughout the book to great effect; it doesn't take long for the reader to become invested in the Mario Puzo-esque drama of the Wadia family and their associates. Equal parts crime thriller and family saga, transporting readers from the dusty villages of Uttar Pradesh to the urban energy of New Delhi, *Age of Vice* is an intoxicating novel of gangsters and lovers, false friendships, forbidden romance, and the consequences of corruption." It's long-winded, but fun. And it's bound to be a movie in the Mario Puzo books-to-film tradition.

✎Kelly, Erin. [The Skeleton Key](#) (Mobius \$28). This is the other British Crime Club candidate but I can't read it until it gets here January 24 to decide. Summer, 2021. Nell has come home at her family's insistence to celebrate an anniversary. Fifty years ago, her father wrote *The Golden Bones*. Part picture book, part treasure hunt, Sir Frank Churcher created a fairy story about Elinore, a murdered woman whose skeleton was scattered all over England. Clues and puzzles in the pages of *The Golden Bones* led readers to seven sites where jewels were buried—gold and precious stones, each a different part of a skeleton. One by one, the tiny golden bones were dug up until only Elinore's



pelvis remained hidden. The book was a sensation. A community of treasure hunters called the Bonehunters formed, in frenzied competition, obsessed to a dangerous degree. People sold their homes to travel to England and search for Elinore. Marriages broke down as the quest consumed people. A man died. The book made Frank a rich man. Stalked by fans who could not tell fantasy from reality, his daughter, Nell, became a recluse. But now the Churchers must be reunited. The book is being reissued along with a new treasure hunt and a documentary crew is charting everything that follows. Nell is appalled, and terrified. During the filming, Frank finally reveals the whereabouts of the missing golden bone. And then all hell breaks loose....

Lehane, Con. [Murder by Definition](#) (Severn \$29.99). Crime-fiction librarian Ray Ambler gets more than he bargained for when he acquires the archives of a controversial hardboiled crime author in this twisty mystery set in '90s New York City. Ambler's ready for the controversy that greets news of the acquisition of crime writer Will Ford. He's not ready, however, for what he finds when he finally receives the papers: a gripping unpublished short story apparently based on a real case, with an explosive author's note. If it's true, there's been a shocking cover up at the heart of the NYPD – and a cop has got away with murder. As he investigates, Ray is drawn into the sordid underbelly of NYC – packed with renegade coppers, thugs, and mobsters. Can he uncover the truth and survive?

Lester, Natasha. [The Three Lives of Alix St Pierre](#) (Grand Central \$28). Alix St. Pierre. An unforgettable name for an unforgettable woman. She grew up surrounded by Hollywood glamour, but, as an orphan, never truly felt part of that world. In 1943, with WWII raging and men headed overseas to fight, she lands a publicity job to recruit women into the workforce. Her skills—persuasion, daring, quick-witted under pressure—catch the attention of the U.S. government and she finds herself with an even bigger assignment: sent to Switzerland as a spy. Soon Alix is on the precipice of something big, very big. But how far can she trust her German informant...? After an Allied victory that didn't come nearly soon enough, Alix moves to Paris, ready to immerse herself in a new position as director of publicity for the yet-to-be-launched House of Dior. In the glamorous halls of the French fashion house, she can nearly forget everything she lost and the dangerous secret she carries. But when a figure from the war reappears and threatens to destroy her future, Alix realizes that only she can right the wrongs of the past ...and finally find justice

Shroff, Parini. [The Bandit Queens](#) (Random \$28). Geeta's no-good husband disappeared five years ago. She didn't kill him, but everyone thinks she did—no matter how much she protests. But she soon discovers that being known as a “self-made” widow has some surprising perks. No one messes with her, no one threatens her, and no one tries to control (ahem, *marry*) her. It's even been good for her business; no one wants to risk getting on her bad side by *not* buying her jewelry. Freedom must look good on Geeta, because other women in the village have started asking for her help to get rid of their own no-good husbands...but not all of them are asking nicely. Indie Next calls this, “An amazing debut novel about a group of women who are part of a micro-loan community in an Indian village. Everyone thinks Geeta has killed her no-good, rotten, abusive husband, so the other women want her to kill their husbands too. A story full of humor, pathos, and suspense.”

Stevenson, Benjamin. [Everyone in My Family Has Killed Someone](#) (Harper \$28.99). “Everyone in my family has killed someone. Some of us, the high achievers, have killed more than once. I'm not trying to be dramatic, but it is the truth. Some of us are good, others are bad, and some just unfortunate. I'm Ernest Cunningham. Call me Ern or Ernie. I wish I'd killed whoever decided our family reunion should be at a ski resort, but it's a little more complicated than that. Have I killed someone? Yes. I have. Who was it? Let's get started....” From an Australian author, a novel that mimics and updates the Golden Age mystery. Applying Roland Knox's “Ten Commandments of Detective Fiction” (1929) Ernie is bound and determined to solve this whodunnit. This book is getting a load of buzz such as this recommendation from either Indie Next or Library Reads, can't remember which: “Ernie Cunningham writes books on how to write mystery novels for a living and is part of a family where everyone has killed someone. But the story of how and why is unraveled in the pages, and there's another murderer in the midst. The narration is perfect—a retrospective that includes lots of misdirection and breaking the fourth wall. A must-read for mystery fans.”

Tudor, CJ. [The Drift](#) (Random \$28). “In this tour de force from Tudor, a postapocalyptic thriller, a haven called the Retreat, which has been constructed for a select few in the wake of a devastating new plague, proves to be not much of a haven. Some of those in residence at the mountainside facility begin to disappear, even as vital supplies go missing and power outages increase, leading up to the discovery of a body floating in the recreational pool. Meanwhile, a cable car transporting a group to the Retreat is stranded mid-journey; its occupants, including Meg, a former homicide cop, are stunned to find they're trapped with a corpse, whom Meg recognizes. And a second group also faces a threat to their lives; Hannah Grant has been evacuated from a boarding school, but the bus she's in crashes, possibly not by accident, trapping her and several others. Tudor shifts among the three situations, teasing a common link, and gradually ratchets up the pressure on her characters as they try to preserve their humanity while surviving. This is a masterpiece of its kind,” says the Starred Review. If you enjoyed Sarah Pearse's *The Retreat*, try this.

Wegert, Tessa. [The Kind to Kill](#) (Severn \$29.99). After the revelations of the previous book—grab a copy of [Dead Wind](#) (\$17/95) to find out!—dip into this. Wegert's fine fourth crime thriller featuring Shanna Merchant. It finds Merchant, now a senior investigator for the New York State Police in Alexandria Bay, N.Y., whose expertise is missing persons, continuing to try to cope with her own victimization. Merchant was once a respected member of the NYPD, until she was captured by the serial killer she'd been hunting, Blake Bram, and learned he was her own cousin. She managed to escape, but in the process, Bram fatally shot a rookie police officer, Jay Lopez. With Bram now dead, Merchant is hoping her current position will become calmer and more routine. Those hopes are dashed when tourist Rebecca Hearst vanishes after an argument with her husband. Evidence surfaces that Rebecca may have become the victim of a murderer copying Bram's m.o., and Merchant fears that the possible homicide may be connected to the arrival in town of Lopez's widow and her brother, who has a significant criminal record; both of them promise to make Merchant's life “a living

hell.” The complex plot and subtle characterizations elevate this Shana is determined to win back her community’s trust and move on with her life in Thousand Islands. That is, until a visitor to the area goes missing, and the case threatens to destroy not just the celebrations, but what remains of Shana’s reputation. I really enjoyed the first for Shanna, [Death in the Family](#), a 2020 First Mystery Book of the Month, as well as time spent in NY’s Thousand Islands.

Zigman, Laura. [Small World](#) (Harper \$27.99). A year after her divorce, Joyce is settling into being single again. She likes her job archiving family photos and videos, and she’s developed a secret comforting hobby: trolling the neighborhood social networking site, Small World, for posts that help solve life’s easiest problems. When her older sister, Lydia, also divorced, calls to tell her she’s moving back east from Los Angeles after almost thirty years away, Joyce invites Lydia to move into her Cambridge apartment. Temporarily. Just until she finds a place of her own. But their unlikely cohabitation—not helped by annoying new neighbors upstairs—turns out to be the post-divorce rebound relationship Joyce hadn’t planned on. Instead of forging the bond she always dreamed of having with Lydia, their relationship frays. And they rarely discuss the loss of their sister, Eleanor, who was significantly disabled and died when she was only ten years old. When new revelations from their family’s history come to light, will those secrets further split them apart?

#### OUR JANUARY LARGE PAPERBACK PICKS

✚Barron, Stephanie. [Jane and the Year Without a Summer](#) (\$17.95). Jane Austen is using some of the profits from her novel *Emma* to treat herself and her sister, Cassandra, to two weeks at Cheltenham Spa in Gloucestershire in May 1816. Jane hopes that taking the waters there will alleviate her lassitude, back pain, and “want of spirits.” The new acquaintances the sisters meet include a beautiful invalid in her 20s, a heroic naval captain, and an evangelical clergyman (“Repent, Miss Austen—*Prepare*. The end of all things is upon us”), who’s accompanied by his impertinent sister (“*You* do not appear to suffer. *You* cannot claim ill health,” she tells Jane). When one of these sharply defined characters dies of poisoning, Jane once again turns sleuth. The Austen family’s financial constraints and Jane’s own failing health add verisimilitude to this taut, sometimes perplexing tale of lost opportunity and unfulfilled aspirations. “[Barron] has painstakingly sifted through the famed author’s letters and writings, as well as extensive biographical information, to create a finely detailed portrait of Austen’s life—with a dash of fictional murder . . . Some of the most enjoyable, well-written fanfic ever created.”—*O Magazine*.

Berry, Steve. [The Omega Factor](#) (\$17.99). UNESCO investigator Nicholas Lee is following a lead to the long-missing 12th panel of the relentlessly plundered Ghent Altarpiece when he stumbles upon a centuries-old conflict between some no-nonsense nuns called the Maidens of Saint-Michael and the Vatican, which is desperate to grab a secret the maidens guard. The Altarpiece was painted by the van Eyck brothers, Hubert and Jan, at the threshold of the Renaissance in the early 15<sup>th</sup> Century. The use of oil paints and incredible detail created something not seen before. Magical. You can Google it and its 12 panels, the most famous of which focuses on a symbolic lamb. So in a thriller perfect for you Dan Brown/*The Da Vinci Code* fans as well as the Preston & Child, Rollins, and Berry faithful, enjoy a tale with scenes alternating

between Jan van Eyck and Nick, a field operator focused on artistic and cultural issues. His former fiancée, art restorer Kelsey Deal, who broke it off with Nick for a greater love, is restoring the altarpiece at Ghent’s Cathedral of Saint Bavo, working on a replica of a panel stolen in 1934, when a fire breaks out. Nick, already in town, arrives and chases after the vandal who not only started the blaze but stole her laptop and its images. Hmmm. Is this a conspiracy linked to the Catholic Church that originated some 2000 years ago? As ever Berry has done thorough research into the landscapes, the history, and the art as he crafts his adventure for a new cast of characters. Berry returns to his Cotton Malone thrillers in February when he debuts [The Last Kingdom](#) (Grand Central \$29) at The Pen on February 21.

Cosimano, Elle. [Finlay Donovan Knocks ‘em Dead](#) (\$17.99). Fresh from a debut in which she kept getting offered money to kill people who then fortuitously died, novelist Finlay Donovan goes another round with murder most absurd. “Somebody besides Finn must be unhappy with her ex, sod farmer Steven Donovan, because a message-board poster identifying herself only as FedUp broadly hints that she’d pay \$100,000 to anyone who’d dispose of him. As Finn looks on in virtual horror, another poster, EasyClean, accepts the proposition. Run ragged as she already is by the usual domestic problems—caring for her two small children, juggling hot law student Julian Baker and Nicholas Anthony, the Fairfax County detective who’s still interested in her despite what she put him through in [Finlay Donovan Is Killing It](#) (\$17.99)—read it first—and struggling to get started on her next suspense novel. Finn tries to rescue Steven, who deserves execration but not execution, by hiring a teenage network expert named Cam to identify EasyClean. When Cam comes up empty, the only other thing Finn can think of is to volunteer to do the hit herself for half the price.

Crosby, Ellen. [Bitter Roots](#) (\$17.95). In Crosby’s 12<sup>th</sup> Wine Country mystery, the marriage of Lucie Montgomery, owner of the Montgomery Estate vineyard in Virginia, to winemaker Quinn Santori has been planned to the last detail by Francesca Merchant, who runs the retail side of the business. Their attention is diverted from the nuptials by a plot of Cabernet Franc grapes that are dying of unknown causes. Lucie and several other vineyard owners are furious with Jackson Landau, Eve Kerr, and Dr. Richard Brightman, who developed, heavily promoted, and sold the failing vines but deny any responsibility. Lucie calls in her own expert, Josie Wilde, who’s sure the vines are suffering from black goo. Only a few very wealthy owners, like Lucie’s new neighbor, former NBA star Sloane Everett, can shrug off the threat of bankruptcy. The beautiful Eve tries to charm the distraught owners, but Landau digs in, blaming the problem on climate change. Seeking peace, Quinn tries to meet with Eve, a fellow Californian, but meanwhile, a vicious storm hits the area, ruining the wedding and leaving the place with no power. But the ill wind does blow some good, uncovering a crucial clue to a murder. “Crosby’s reliable character-driven Wine Country series more offers a good mystery and relevant social commentary.” And she always does her homework about viticulture which is fascinating!

Hamilton, Ian. [The General of Tiananmen Square](#) (House of Anansi \$15.99). Ava Lee is in the French Riviera with her lover, film star, Pang Fai, and director Lau Lau for the long-awaited premiere of *Tiananmen* at the Cannes Film Festival. As the

film collects numerous awards and international acclaim, a distribution deal with a major American firm is arranged by the film's producer, Chen. When several months go by with no word from the Americans, Chen decides to travel to Los Angeles to determine what is preventing the film's release. En route from his home in Bangkok, Chen goes missing. Ava is called in to investigate and soon learns that Chen is being held by the Thai immigration services on orders of the Chinese government, which is unhappy with the film's depiction of the infamous massacre at Tiananmen Square and seeks to punish those responsible for its production. To protect her investment, Ava must find a way for *Tiananmen* to be released, while keeping secret her own involvement in the film's creation and ensuring her friends are kept safe from retribution. It's a difficult balancing act, perhaps the most difficult of her life. I love this unusual series with its surprising characters, global reach, and fast-paced plots, most of them rooted in finance for Ava Lee is a crack businesswoman and asset recovery expert, but also in various cultures political and economic. You can learn a lot as you enjoy the ride. Ava Lee is based in Toronto as is Canadian bestseller Hamilton.

✚Lloyd, Ellery. [The Club](#) (\$17.99). This scorching look at celebrity and catering to the rich and celebrated strips the characters down to the bone. The Home Group is a glamorous collection of celebrity members' clubs dotted across the globe, where the rich and famous can party hard and then crash out in its five-star suites, far from the prying eyes of fans and the media. The most spectacular of all is Island Home—a closely-guarded, ultra-luxurious resort, just off the English coast—and its three-day launch party is easily the most coveted A-list invite of the decade. But behind the scenes, tensions are at breaking point: the ambitious and expensive project has pushed the Home Group's ego-driven and maniacal really CEO and his long-suffering team to their absolute limits. All of them have something to hide—and that's before the beautiful people with their own ugly secrets even set foot on the island. As tempers fray and behavior worsens, as things get more sinister by the hour and the body count piles up, some of Island Home's members will begin to wish they'd never made the guest list. No wonder this was a Reese's Book Club Pick as well as Our April 2022 British Crime Book of the Month—and a major bestseller.

✚Lovesey, Peter. [Reader, I Buried Them & Other Stories](#) (\$16.95). The 16 dazzling selections in this inviting collection from MWA Grand Master Lovesey (the Peter Diamond series) range from his first published story, "The Bathroom" (1973), to three new ones. In one of these three, "And the Band Played On," a boy learns the surprising truth about the hidden past of his mentally impaired grandfather, who likes to sing an old-fashioned tune about dancing with a beautiful blonde. More than one twist graces this affecting tale. The sly title story, narrated by a monk who tends a monastery garden in London, puts a nice spin on a classic Agatha Christie trope. Other notable entries are "The Deadliest Tale of All," in which an obituary writer attempts to repair Edgar Allan Poe's reputation, and "A Three Pie Problem," in which police detective Peter Diamond exposes the dalliances of an aged attorney at a toxic corporate Christmas gathering. Throughout, Lovesey delivers crisp dialogue, effortless narration, appealing characters, ingenious plots, and effervescent whimsy. A concluding essay, "The Tale of Three Tubs," details the true story of the inspiration behind "The Bathroom." This is a thoroughly

entertaining compendium of the best of the best by one of the best.

Mann, Peter. [The Torqued Man](#) (\$17). An Irish double agent and his German handler form an unlikely bond in 1940s Berlin. "When ex-Irish resistance fighter Proinnsias "Frank" Pike is liberated from a Spanish prison in 1940 by German intelligence operative Adrian de Groot, aka Johann Grotius, the ill-matched duo are launched on a daring series of exploits inside Nazi Germany. Debut novelist Mann seamlessly intertwines two narratives—de Groot's candid journal and a third-person account of Pike's escapades entitled "Finn McCool in the Bowels of Teutonia" (his alter ego is a well-known hunter/warrior figure in Irish mythology)—to describe some of the same events from their wildly differing perspectives. De Groot, a philologist and translator and the titular torqued man (another sly nod to Irish myth), recruits Pike to engage in missions intended to turn Ireland's ancient antipathy to England into full-fledged support for Hitler's regime, but the Germans are a step behind the English, who intend to take advantage of Pike's presence in the heart of the Reich's war machine to thwart these schemes and serve their own ends."—*Kirkus* Starred Review

Qiu, Xiaolong. [Shadow of the Empire](#) (\$17.95). The *Wall Street Journal* crime critic gives this March book a rave: "Judge Dee Renjie, based on a historical figure from 7th-century China, is the protagonist of Qiu Xiaolong's new novel. Mr. Qiu is best-known for his excellent procedural series starring Shanghai policeman Chen Cao. Like Inspector Chen—and Mr. Qiu—Judge Dee is a student and writer of verse. Poets and poetry figure throughout." When the book begins, Dee has been appointed Imperial Circuit Supervisor of the Tang Empire—an office bestowed to remove him from the capital, where the judge's recent pronouncement on imperial succession has sparked the empress's ire. Dee and his assistant Yang are surprised, then, to be visited on the eve of their departure by a government messenger who asks Dee to look into a sensational murder committed 10 days ago. Is this a scheme hatched in the "cut-throat" capital to delay Dee from assuming his new post and further anger the empress? The killing took place at the home of Xuanji, a well-known poetess and courtesan who's now accused of beating her maidservant to death. Dee, who can recite Xuanji's work, agrees to an unofficial survey of the affair. "We're just taking a look into it," he tells Yang, "but not doing any real investigation." He concocts the cover story of assembling an anthology of the suspect's poetry. In Dee's Confucian China, writing poetry is part of the civil-service examination. Poems become clues, even evidence, in the far-from-cursory probe he conducts. And here's a further strong recommendation from [CrimeReads](#).

✚Robotham, Michael. [When You Are Mine](#) (\$17.99). Philomena McCarthy of London's elite Metropolitan Police is an ambitious officer. When she responds to a domestic violence call, she finds A Tempe Brown, the victim, trying to protect her abuser. He's a married man, one Darren Goodall, and he's a decorated hero from Scotland Yard, more or less bullet proof. Philomena is not intimidated and tries to build a case against him, which puts her at odds with her colleagues and also with Tempe, who is not really what she says she is. Philomena has an additional problem: her estranged father is a powerful gangster heading a criminal empire along with his brothers. It handicaps Philomena's pursuit of being a cop on her own terms. When she is inevitably



accused of stalking and harassing Goodall (a real shit), her father inevitably becomes involved. Further complications arise thanks to Tempe's lies and her skill at maneuvering to trap Philomena. Then there is Goodall's terrified wife and children to consider. The result: Philomena's career, her impending marriage to Henry, and her very survival are all at risk. Two-time Gold Dagger winner Robotham structures this story with his usual skill, limning the characters brilliantly with all the relish he brings to coming up with exploring new lives and new characters. He says "this is a novel about abuse, toxic friendships, and the baggage that all families carry with them," but it's his gift to tell a story that flows unfreighted by any agenda(s). We'll be speaking to the Australian ace in February about his new book.

Rollins, James. [The Starless Crown](#) (\$19.99). If you were a Michael Crichton fan, Rollins is the strongest heir to his brand of adventure for Sigma Force. Why not move with him into a fully realized fantasy world where a top-of-the-class student predicts an apocalypse and is promptly sentenced to death? She goes on the run with a crew of motley souls now finding purpose in their lives: a disillusioned soldier, a dissolute prince ducking out of his older brother's shadow, and a thief who uncovers an artifact that could change the world. The Indie Next Pick: "A captivating page-turner of impressive world-building and layered characters pits religious extremism against science; morally gray heroes against youthful innocence; and a mismatched squad trying to stop the end of their world." Rollins signs the second book in this series, [The Cradle of Ice](#) (Forge \$28.99), here on February 6.

Wegert, Tessa. [Dead Wind](#) (\$17.95). The body is discovered on Wolfe Island, under the shadow of an enormous wind turbine. Senior Investigator Shana Merchant, arriving on the scene with fellow investigator Tim Wellington, can't shake the feeling that she knows the victim. The subsequent identification sends shockwaves through their community in the Thousand Islands of Upstate New York. Politics, power, passion—there are dark undercurrents in Shana's new home, and finding the killer means dredging up her new friends and neighbors' old grudges and long-kept secrets. That is, if the killer is from the community at all. For Shana's keeping a terrible secret of her own: eighteen months ago she escaped from serial killer Blake Bram's clutches. But has he followed her? The landscape of Wegert's series is especially appealing.

✂Willberg, TA. [Marion Lane and the Deadly Rose](#) (\$17.99). It's 1959 and a new killer haunts the streets of London, having baffled Scotland Yard. The newspapers call him The Florist because of the rose he brands on his victims. The police have turned yet again to the Inquirers at Miss Brickett's for assistance, and second-year Marion Lane is assigned the case. But she's already dealing with a mystery of her own, having received an unsigned letter warning her that one of the three new recruits should not be trusted. She dismisses the letter at first, focusing on The Florist case, but her informer seems to be one step ahead, predicting what will happen before it does. But when a fellow second-year Inquirer is murdered, Marion takes matters into her own hands and must come face-to-face with her informer—who predicted the murder—to find out everything they know. Until then, no one at Miss Brickett's is safe and everyone is a suspect. "This is the most fun I've had with a book this year. Every page is a delight, the worldbuilding is wonderful, and the mystery

got its hooks into me from the first chapter. This is what would happen if a trainee James Bond was asked to solve an Agatha Christie mystery, and it's brilliant." – Stuart Turton. Start with [Marion Lane and the Midnight Murder](#) \$16.99).

Winslow, Don. [A Cool Breeze on the Underground](#) (\$16.99). This is the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary reissue of Winslow's first novel, the book that he brought to The Pen back then, forming our decades-long friendship. Don has written a new introduction to the story that first presents University graduate student Neal Carey. Unlikely scholar Carey grew up on Manhattan's streets, usually the wrong side. Then he met a PI who introduced him to the Bank, an exclusive institution with a sideline in keeping its wealthy clients happy and out of trouble. They pay Neal's college tuition, and Neal gets an education that can't be found in any textbook, from learning how to trail a suspect to mastering the proper way to search a room. Now it's payback time. The Bank wants Neal to put his skills to work in finding Allie Chase, the rebellious teenage daughter of a prominent senator. The problem is that she's gone underground in the London punk scene. To get her back, Neal has to follow her into a violent netherworld where drugs run rampant and rage is the name of the game.

#### ALSO NEW IN TRADE PAPERBACK

Allende, Isabel. [Violeta](#) (\$18). Born during the Spanish Flu Epidemic, Violeta begins her life in a large extended family with great wealth, largely because her father believes economic success grows naturally out of a willingness to take great risk. Not surprisingly, the 1930s Depression hits the family hard. A dramatic change in circumstance propels Violeta into a much wider, and far less protected world. As years pass, she experiences poverty, violence, marriage, passion, children, love affairs, tragedy, and successes and failures. All against the unfolding history of a South American country enduring repeated political repression and revolution. World War II, gangsters, drugs and hippies, addiction, abuse, and more reach into Violeta's orbit. Her priorities shift multiple times as she comes in contact with a wider variety of perspectives (Spanish-speaking elite, indigenous people, and ex-pats) and understands more about other realities. Violeta's story is as challenging as the profound historical events impacting her loved ones, but also as dramatic and universal as the day-to-day experiences impacting every woman.

Armstrong, Kelley. [A Rip Through Time](#) (\$17.99). "When police officer Mallory wakes up wearing a corset, she knows something's gone seriously sideways. Trapped in the body of a Victorian housemaid, Mallory must struggle to keep her secret and find a way home. Watching Mallory—and the talented Kelley Armstrong—juggle all these balls at one time makes a great read." —Charlaine Harris

Berry, Lucinda. [Off the Deep End](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$16.99). Suburban Minneapolis therapist Jules Hart, the protagonist of this gripping psychological thriller, plunges her car into an icy lake while trying to avoid hitting a deer. Trapped in the car are Gabe, her teenage son, and his friend Isaac Greer. When Jules tries to rescue Gabe, she pulls Isaac free instead, and Gabe drowns. The guilt-ridden Jules, her marriage broken, ends up at a psychiatric facility. After Jules leaves the facility, where she spends more than a month, Isaac goes missing and the police fear he's the latest victim of a serial killer targeting teenage boys; Isaac's mother thinks Jules is responsible, given her insistence in the

accident's aftermath on seeing and talking to Isaac and bonding with him over their shared near-death experience. Jules's efforts to answer her therapist's questions without revealing Isaac's confidences are complicated by her struggles with guilt. No one seems above suspicion in Isaac's disappearance, and everyone seems to have something to hide. As the suspense mounts, the action drives to a harrowing conclusion

Biswas, Damyanti. [The Blue Bar](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$15.95). On the dark streets of Mumbai, the paths of a missing dancer, a serial killer, and an inspector with a haunted past converge in an evocative thriller about lost love and murderous obsession. After years of dancing in Mumbai's bars, Tara Mondal was desperate for a new start. So when a client offered her a life-changing payout to indulge a harmless, if odd, fantasy, she accepted. The setup was simple: wear a blue-sequined sari, enter a crowded railway station, and escape from view in less than three minutes. It was the last time anyone saw Tara. Thirteen years later, Tara's lover, Inspector Arnav Singh Rajput, is still grappling with her disappearance as he faces a horrifying new crisis: on the city's outskirts, women's dismembered bodies are being unearthed from shallow graves. Very little links the murders, except a scattering of blue sequins and a decade's worth of missing persons reports that correspond with major festivals. Past and present blur as Arnav realizes he's on the trail of a serial killer, whose identity may be hidden in one of his cold cases.

Burges, Audrey. [The Minuscule Mansion of Myra Malone](#) (Penguin \$17). When Myra Malone was 5 years old, a serious car accident killed her beloved stepgrandmother, Trixie, and injured Myra herself. The trauma—both from spending months in the hospital recovering and from losing Trixie—caused Myra to retreat into her home, attending school on her computer and only talking to her parents and her best friend, Gwen. But Trixie didn't leave Myra completely alone. She left behind a beautifully ornate dollhouse called the Mansion—although Myra would argue that it isn't a dollhouse, since it's not a home for dolls. Now, in her 30s, Myra spends her days up in the attic where she decorates the tiny rooms, fills them with handmade furniture, and shares the results on her popular website. Myra's life is small and contained, but that's exactly how she likes it—until she discovers that her mother has been running up debt that may cause them to lose their home. In a desperate scheme to make enough money to save the house, Gwen convinces Myra to run an essay contest where, for a fee, her fans can win the chance to meet her. Even though Myra has no interest in anyone coming into her home, she agrees. What she doesn't expect, though, is an email from a man named Alex Rakes who claims to live in a real-life, full-size version of her miniature, magical house... If you have never visited the Thorne Rooms at the Phoenix Art Museum or Chicago Art Institute, etc., schedule one.

Burke, Alafair. [Find Me](#) (\$17.99). She calls herself Hope Miller, but she has no idea who she actually is. Fifteen years ago, she was found in a small New Jersey town thrown from an overturned vehicle, with no clue to her identity. Doctors assumed her amnesia was a temporary side effect of her injuries, but she never regained her memory. Hope eventually started a new life with a new name in a new town that welcomed her. Now, she's leaving New Jersey to start over once again. Manhattan defense lawyer Lindsay Kelly, Hope's best friend and the one who found her after the accident, understands why Hope wants a new beginning. But she worries

how her friend will fare in her new East Hampton home, far away from everything familiar. Lindsay's worst fears are confirmed when she discovers Hope has vanished without a trace—the only lead a drop of blood found where she was last seen. Even more ominously, the blood matches a DNA sample with a connection to a notorious Kansas murderer....

Carey, Ella. [From a Paris Balcony](#) (Grand Central \$12.99). England, 1895. Louisa West, a young beauty from Boston, looks like she has it all: a handsome husband, she is lady of Ashworth Manor and one day she'll be a duchess. But in truth, her life is falling apart. Louisa's honeymoon is barely over when her husband deserts her, leaving her devastated and alone. She flees to Paris, longing to escape her grief, but finds only tragedy... Boston, 2015. Life hasn't been kind to Sarah West. In one year, she has lost both her parents and her marriage. After her father's death, Sarah is sorting through his belongings when she finds a letter about her mysterious ancestor, Louisa. There have always been whispers in the family about Louisa's suicide—from a high balcony in Paris—but as Sarah reads, she starts to question everything she was told. Desperate to leave her broken heart behind, she books a trip to Paris to find out more. When Sarah arrives in the city of lights, the cobbled streets of Montmartre and the river Seine at twilight make her heart sing. Then, on the bookshelf of a beautiful Paris apartment, hidden inside the yellowing pages of an old novel, she finds a note about Louisa which shatters Sarah's understanding of her family's past. Did Louisa really throw herself from a Paris balcony?

Chamberlain, Diane. [The Last House on the Street](#) (\$17.99) delivers the goods with this affecting and spellbinding account of a community's buried secrets. "In 2010, North Carolina architect Kayla Carter reluctantly prepares to move into her dream home with her three-year-old daughter, Rainie, after her husband, Jackson, died in a freak accident while building the house. Kayla is approached at her office by a woman named Ann Smith, who claims to be a potential client but unnerves Kayla by talking about Jackson's death, and by telling her she is thinking about killing someone. After moving into the new house, Kayla and Rainie meet neighbor Ellie Hockley, who recently returned to the area to care for her aging mother and ill brother. In a parallel narrative set in 1965, Ellie joins a student group to help register Black voters. She faces danger from the KKK while working alongside other students from Northern colleges and the members of her local Black community in N.C., all of which is exacerbated by her attraction to a Black civil rights activist. As Kayla learns Ellie was once in a romantic relationship with Kayla's father, she uncovers a series of terrible events that occurred in the woods surrounding Kayla's property. Chamberlain ratchets up the tension with the ever-present mystery of what Ann might be up to, and the dual narratives merge beautifully before an explosive conclusion."—*PW* Starred Review

Clark, Tracy. [Hide](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$16.99). Detective Harriet Foster is on the case, even though she's still grieving the sudden death of her partner. As a Black woman in a male-dominated department, Foster anticipates a rocky road ahead acclimating to a new team—and building trust with her new partner isn't coming easily. After another victim turns up with the same lipstick markings, Foster suspects she's looking for a serial killer. Through a tip from a psychiatrist, Foster learns about Bodie Morgan: a troubled man with a twisted past and a penchant for

pretty young redheads with the bluest eyes. As Foster wades into Morgan's sinister history of targeting redheads, the killer continues a gruesome assault on Chicago's streets.

Dorsey, Tim. [Mermaid Confidential](#) (\$17.99). Vigilante serial killer Serge and his stoner pal, Coleman, take a break from road trips and criminal pursuits to become responsible tenants at Pelican Bay, a bustling condominium complex in the Florida Keys. But, alas, the condo's fun-loving community spirit has given way to petty squabbles, drunk and disorderly behavior, gun violence, and malicious prank calls to police, with boisterous, disruptive renters causing havoc. Finding themselves in the thick of things, Serge and Coleman are encouraged to take suitable action against troublesome occupants on behalf of their friendly neighbors. Meanwhile, a blast across from Pelican Bay on a neighboring key, which injures dozens, including members of the infamous Millan cartel, heralds the onset of a turf war between the cartel and the Benzappa family, and a gang of murderous drug smugglers with a treasure map head for the Keys to unearth a hoard of buried cash. "Dorsey has used his novels to showcase Florida, to embrace its eccentricities, its residents' bizarre behavior and its unusual history. Dorsey ladles each novel with wide swaths of humor that is more guttural yet still funny. Like [Carl] Hiaasen, Dorsey's humor is grounded in reality...*Mermaid Confidential* is more Keys-centric as he adds trivia and history that is 'so nectar-of-Florida.'"—*Sun-Sentinel*

✚Elias, Gerald. [Murder at the Royal Albert](#) (Elias \$16.95). . A cleverly-constructed mystery, a delicious peek behind the scenes of a world-class orchestra, delightful settings that capture the vibrancy of London and the quaintness of small English villages—an irresistibly entertaining trio!

Gillham, David R. [Shadows of Berlin](#) (\$16.99). "David Gillham has written a deeply moving story about an aspect of the Holocaust that few people know about—how thousands of survivors came to New York City to restart their lives and escape demons from the past. But some have a hard time dealing with the guilt, shame, and anger caused by the terrible experience. Gillham paints a vivid picture of their life in post-war New York while imaginatively linking it to their ordeal in wartime Berlin." — Charles Belfoure

✚Harrison, Cora. [Summer of Secrets](#) (\$17.95). August, 1856. Wilkie Collins and Charles Dickens are spending the summer at Knebworth House, the magnificent Hertfordshire home of fellow writer Lord Edward Bulwer-Lytton, where they are putting on a charity performance of one of Lord Edward's most successful plays, *The Lady of Lyon*. But the dress rehearsal is disrupted by the discovery of a body lying in the centre of the stage, shot to death. With everyone involved in the play coming under suspicion, the two writer-sleuths feel compelled to investigate. Their enquiries unearth a number of scandalous secrets lurking among the writers, artists and actors assembled at Knebworth. Secrets that stretch back more than twenty years. Secrets that will have devastating repercussions for the present.

Hendricks, Greer/Sarah Pekkanen. [The Golden Couple](#) (\$17.99). Never mind that Avery Chambers's approach to therapy is so controversial that she's lost her license. Marissa Bishop willingly signs up herself and her husband because Avery says she'll take on only clients whose problems she can mend in ten sessions. Marissa intends to confess her infidelity, but far more dangerous

secrets sneak into the room when the "golden" Bishops join their new therapist to talk. I mention this book as the bestsellers have fans but do not recommend it.

Koontz, Dean. [The Big Dark Sky](#) (\$16.99). As a girl, Joanna Chase thrived on Rustling Willows Ranch in Montana until tragedy upended her life. Now thirty-four and living in Santa Fe with only misty memories of the past, she begins to receive pleas—by phone, through her TV, in her dreams: I am in a dark place, Jojo. Please come and help me. Heeding the disturbing appeals, Joanna is compelled to return to Montana, and to a strange childhood companion she had long forgotten. She isn't the only one drawn to the Montana farmstead. People from all walks of life have converged at the remote ranch. They are haunted, on the run, obsessed, and seeking answers to the same omniscient danger Joanna came to confront. All the while, on the outskirts of Rustling Willows, a madman lurks with a vision to save the future. Mass murder is the only way to see his frightening manifesto come to pass. Through a bizarre twist of seemingly coincidental circumstances, a band of strangers now find themselves under Montana's big dark sky. Their lives entwined, they face an encroaching horror.

Kovacic, Katherine. [Just Murdered](#) (Poisoned Pen \$16.99). The publisher who brought you Miss Phryne Fisher now introduces her niece Peregrine Fisher, who will be familiar to those who watched the Australian TV series Miss Fisher's Modern Murder Mysteries on Netflix. Here we see Peregrine breaking into the Adventurers' Club in Melbourne, learning of her aunt's legacy, and embarking on detection. It's good fun.

Kukafka, Danya. [Notes on an Execution](#) (\$17.99). Ansel Packer is scheduled to die in twelve hours. He knows what he's done, and now awaits execution, the same chilling fate he forced on those girls, years ago. But Ansel doesn't want to die; he wants to be celebrated, understood. Through a kaleidoscope of women—a mother, a sister, a homicide detective—we learn the story of Ansel's life. We meet his mother, Lavender, a seventeen-year-old girl pushed to desperation; Hazel, twin sister to Ansel's wife, inseparable since birth, forced to watch helplessly as her sister's relationship threatens to devour them all; and finally, Saffy, the detective hot on his trail, who has devoted herself to bringing bad men to justice but struggles to see her own life clearly. As the clock ticks down, these three women sift through the choices that culminate in tragedy.

Lippman, Laura. [Seasonal Work: Stories](#) (\$17.99). This collection of a dozen delightful stories from Lippman feature resourceful women from many walks of life. In the title story, a 14-year-old relates her grifter stepfather's cunning Christmas con; the early 1960s-set 'The Everyday Housewife' has Tess Monaghan's mother evading ennui by observing her neighbors; a Cougar mom contends with her meth-dealing, freeloading son and his girlfriend; a girl trapped in the "Ice" of a skating pond contemplates the real events of her drowning death while another girl skates on thin ice above. Lippman's heroines are not easily scorned or fooled, except occasionally by themselves. This is evident in the only new novella in the collection, the COVID-tinged 'Just One More,' with a couple in lockdown trying to revive their marriage. Even when readers see the punch line coming, they will enjoy the intricate characterizations, excellent sense of place, and eagle-eyed cultural references...."—*LJ Starred Review*



Newman, Jay. [Undermoney](#) (Scribner \$17.99). When a US airdrop of billions of dollars disappears in the desert sands of Syria, only a small group of military operatives knows its ultimate destination or why it has been stolen. Their goal is no less than the restoration of America's geopolitical dominance on the global stage. Essential to this scheme are Greta Webb, a sophisticated CIA operative who is an expert on dark money, not to mention lethally skilled in hand-to-hand combat, and Elias Vicker, the damaged, dangerous soul who runs the world's largest hedge fund, all making "a gripping thriller that takes you into the world of New York hedge funds, Russian money launderers, and DC power politics [that] makes you feel like you're actually there."

Patterson, James/Nancy Allen. [The Jailhouse Lawyer](#) (\$18.99). A young lawyer takes on the judge who is destroying her hometown of Erva, Alabama—and ends up in jail herself.

Stokes-Chapman, Susan. [Pandora](#) (Harper \$17). London, 1799. Dora Blake, an aspiring jewelry artist, lives with her odious uncle atop her late parents' once-famed shop of antiquities. After a mysterious Greek vase is delivered, her uncle begins to act suspiciously, keeping the vase locked in the store's basement, away from prying eyes—including Dora's. Intrigued by her uncle's peculiar behavior, Dora turns to young, ambitious antiquarian scholar Edward Lawrence who eagerly agrees to help. Edward believes the ancient vase is the key that will unlock his academic future; Dora sees it as a chance to establish her own name. But what Edward discovers about the vase has Dora questioning everything she has believed about her life, her family, and the world as she knows it. As Dora uncovers the truth, she comes to understand that some doors are locked and some mysteries are buried for a reason. Steeped in mystery and rich in imagination, an exhilarating historical novel set in Georgian London where the discovery of a mysterious ancient Greek vase sets in motion conspiracies, revelations, and romance.

#### OUR JANUARY SMALL PAPERBACK PICKS

Box, CJ. [Shadows Reel](#) (\$9.99). Joe Pickett #22. Game warden Joe Pickett, while dealing with the brutal murder of a fishing guide, must help his wife solve a mystery involving a photo album that belonged to an infamous Nazi officer, placing them in the crosshairs of a killer.

Brennan, Allison. [Don't Open the Door](#) (Mira \$9.99). Regan Merritt #2. Quitting her job and moving in the wake of the shocking murder of her son, Marshal Regan Merritt returns to Virginia to look into her former boss's death.

Dodd, Christina. [Point Last Seen](#) (\$8.99). After Adam Ramsdell saves her life, Elle, with no memory of who she is, finds refuge in his home where she faces a terrible truth—buried in her mind lurks a dark secret that could get her killed by the one person she trusts.

Kellerman, Jonathan. [City of the Dead](#) (\$9.99). Alex Delaware #37. Court-consulting child psychologist Alex Delaware and homicide detective Milo Sturgis unravel a baffling mystery after a naked corpse in the street leads to the discovery of another murder.

McKinlay, Jenn. [Fatal Fascinator](#) (Berkley \$8.99 SIGNED). Hat Shop #7. Hat-making pair Viv and Scarlett, hired to design the headpieces for a frenemy's "wedding of the year," arrive

at a castle in Sussex for the festivities, but when the groom is murdered before he can say "I do" and another life is claimed, they vow to unveil the killer's identity.

Preston, Douglas/Lincoln Child. [Bloodless](#) (\$9.99). Pendergast #20. When completely exsanguinated bodies are found in Savannah, Georgia, FBI Agent Pendergast investigates amid growing panic and whispers of an infamous local vampire. But it also has a plot thread attached to the infamous DB Cooper which is fun and surprising.

Rose, Karen. [Quarter to Midnight](#) (\$8.99). New Orleans #1. Joining a private investigative service for people who can't find justice elsewhere in the crime-ridden city of New Orleans, Molly takes the case of a hot young chef who wants to prove that his NOPD father didn't kill himself but was murdered.

Unger, Lisa. [Confessions on the 7: 45](#) (\$9.99). Befriending a stranger in an accompanying seat when their commuter train stalls, Selena confesses a personal grievance before her life is upended by her nanny's disappearance and growing fractures in her marriage. This is an excellent story, one of the author's best and reminiscent of *Girl on a Train*.

#### JANUARY SMALL PAPERBACKS

Beaton, M C. [Death of a Green-Eyed Monster](#) (\$8.99). Hamish Macbeth #34. Sergeant Hamish Macbeth's wedding plans with Constable Dorothy McIver are suddenly at risk when a murder is uncovered in the Scottish town of Lochdubh.

Brown, Dale. [Countdown to Midnight](#) (\$10.99). Nick Flynn #2. Working for a shadowy intelligence outfit with Cold War roots, former U.S. Air Force officer Nick Flynn must uncover a mysterious collaboration between Iran and Russia  
Moved to Feb

Collins, Kate. [Gone But Not for Garden](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Goddess of Green Street #4. When her cousin, an emcee at a local fashion show, is accused of murder, flower-shop owner Abby Knight teams up with Athena Spencer, whose family owns a garden center, to dig up the dirt on a growing list of suspects.

Day, Maddie. [Four Leaf Cleaver](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Country Store #11. When a televised St. Patrick's Day cooking competition at Pans 'N Pancakes ends in murder for one unlucky person, owner Robbie, with a store full of both festive decorations and suspects, must expose a killer in their midst.

Doyle, Carrie. [The Girl with the Dragonfruit Tattoo](#) (Sourcebooks \$8.99). Trouble in Paradise #3. When a server from the yacht she was on two days earlier washes up dead, Plum Lockhart, going undercover to investigate the case, rocks the boat as she tries to find the killer among a wealth of suspects.

Evanovich, Janet. [Game On: Tempting Twenty Eight](#) (\$9.99). Plum #28. Unsure if he is her partner or her competition, Stephanie Plum and Oswald Wednesday try to hunt down a master cyber criminal in Trenton.

Fluke, Joanne. [Caramel Pecan Roll Murder](#) (\$9.99). Hannah Swensen #28. Baker Hannah Swensen agrees to help bake pastries at a local inn during a flashy fishing competition but investigates when the event's celebrity spokesperson is found dead.

Fox, Candice. [The Chase](#) (\$9.99). Escaping prison along with 650 of the world's most violent criminals, John Kradle uses this

opportunity to prove his innocence in the murder of his wife and daughter, going up against a death row supervisor turned fugitive hunter who has personal reasons for hating him.

Hart, John. [The Unwilling](#) (\$9.99). The younger brother of a wrongly implicated Vietnam veteran and ex-con races to uncover the truth about a young woman's murder and the brutal realities of war that shaped his brother's darker nature.

Hendricks, Greer. [You Are Not Alone](#) (\$9.99). A lonely misfit with a dead-end job quietly envies a circle of popular sisters who hide dangerous vengeful truths beneath a veneer of friendship, glamour and accomplishments.

Jackson, Lisa. [Absolute Fear](#) (\$9.99). Reissue. When a series of brutal ritual slayings is linked to Our Lady of Virtues Hospital, Eve Renner, whose past is tied to this old asylum, must learn to trust her former lover Cole Dennis when she becomes the killer's next target.

Johansen, Iris. [A Face to Die For](#) (\$9.99). Eve Duncan #28. An archaeologist who lost her father to tomb raiders after discovering Helen of Troy's burial spot teams up with a forensic sculptor to recreate Helen's ship-launching face.

Johnstone, Carole. [Mirrorland](#) (\$9.99). Returning to her gothic childhood home in Edinburgh in the wake of her estranged twin's disappearance, Cat uncovers long-held secrets involving her sister's left-behind clues and a mysterious treasure hunt.

Larsen, Ward. [Assassin's Edge](#) (\$9.99). David Slaton #9. David Slaton and his team investigate aircraft wreckage found on a remote Arctic Island and uncover proof the crash is related to a Mossad operative abducted in Kazakhstan.

Lynch, Rachel. [Dark Game](#) (Canel \$9.99). After a scandal forces Detective Inspector Kelly Porter out of London's Metropolitan Police, she returns to her home turf in the Lake District. There, she begins work on a cold case that shocked the local community and on an investigation of two seemingly straightforward crimes.

Martin, Kat. [The Last Mile](#) (\$8.99). Blood Ties The Logans #2. With a killer hot on her heels and no one left to trust, Abigail Holland, armed with a map leading to the location of a priceless treasure, convinces renowned explorer Gage Logan to help her.

Matthews, Olivia. [Against the Currant: A Spice Isle Bakery](#) (St Martins \$8.99). Spice Island Bakery #1. When the disgruntled owner of a rival bakery is murdered after getting a rise out of her, Lyndsay Murray, the owner of Spice Isle Bakery, falls under suspicion and must prove her innocence while dealing with her overprotective and meddling family.

O'Connor, Carlene. [Murder on an Irish Farm](#) (\$8.99). Irish Village #8. Putting their wedding on hold due to the discovery of a human skeleton at a farmhouse near the church, Garda Siobhán and Macdara must solve a 50-year-old cold case of a missing groom, which heats up when a fresh corpse appears.

Oliver, Katie. [A Murderous Persuasion](#) (Berkley \$8.99). Jane Austen Tea Society #2. Hosting an immersive Persuasion-themed murder-mystery weekend in hopes of saving her aunt's inn, Phaedra Brighton, when one of the participants is found dead, goes on the hunt for a killer.

Reilly, Linda. [Cheddar Late Than Dead](#) (Sourcebooks \$8.99). Grilled Cheese #3. While catering the extravagant bridal shower

of Klarissa Taddeo, a former classmate, grilled cheese shop owner Carly finds murder on the menu when the groom-to-be is poisoned and must find the real killer to save Klarissa from getting burned by false accusations.