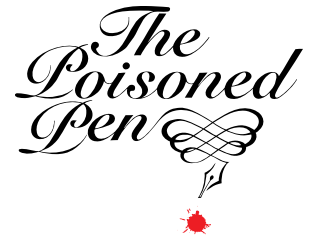


BOOKNEWS from

ISSN 1056-5655, © The Poisoned Pen, Ltd.
Volume 35, Number 3
March Booknews 2023
sales@poisonedpen.com tel (888)560-9919
http://poisonedpen.com

4014 N. Goldwater Blvd.
Scottsdale, AZ 85251
480-947-2974



MARCH MADNESS AND MYSTERY...

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.

Keep an eye peeled for a series of recorded chats, mostly with John Charles, that post on FB and YT and in podcasts and often on our home page.

WEDNESDAY MARCH 1 2:00 PM

Karen Rose with Hank Phillippi Ryan

Rose discusses [Cold-Blooded Liar](#) (Berkley \$27)

Signed books available

WEDNESDAY MARCH 1 5:00 PM

Sean Doolittle with Eli Cranor

Doolittle discusses [Device Free Weekend](#) (Grand Central \$28)

THURSDAY MARCH 2 5:00 PM

Filmmaker John Sayles with Diana Gabaldon

Sayles discusses [Jamie MacGillivray: The Renegade's Journey](#)

(Melville House \$32)

Catnip for *Outlander* fans. The story begins in 1746 at the Battle of Culloden

THURSDAY MARCH 2 7:00 PM Live

Rachel Koller Croft with Olivia Fierro from *Good Morning, Arizona*

Koller Croft discusses [Stone Cold Fox](#) (Penguin \$27)

Very very buzzy wicked woman debut

FRIDAY MARCH 3 2:00 PM Afternoon Tea Live

Ellery Adams and Jennifer Robson with John

Adams discusses [The Vanishing Type](#) (Kensington \$26 or \$16.95)

Robson discusses [The Gown](#) (\$16.99) and previews April's [Coronation Year](#)

MONDAY MARCH 6 7:00 PM Live

David Rosenfelt discusses [Good Dog, Bad Cop](#) (St Martins \$27.99)

A K-Team canine mystery

TUESDAY MARCH 7 3:00 PM

Owen Matthews discusses [White Fox](#) (Knopf \$28)

A Soviet era assassination plot

TUESDAY MARCH 7 5:00 PM

Deanna Raybourn [A Sinister Revenge](#) (Berkley \$27)

Veronica Speedwell... Excelsior!

Signed books available

WEDNESDAY MARCH 8 7:00 PM Live

AG Riddle and debut author **Jessa Maxwell**

Maxwell discusses [The Golden Spoon](#) (Atria \$27)

Our March First Mystery Book of the Month

A Bake Week thriller

Riddle discusses [Quantum Radio](#) (Head of Zeus \$24.95)

A science-based thriller

THURSDAY MARCH 9 4:00 PM

Peter Swanson discusses [The Kind Worth Saving](#) (Morrow \$29.99)

A twisty Private Eye investigation

Signed books available

THURSDAY MARCH 9 7:00 PM Live

Rupert Holmes discusses [Murder Your Employer: The](#)

[McMasters Guide to Homicide](#) (Avid Reader Press \$28)

Our March Crime Collectors Book of the Month

SATURDAY MARCH 11 2:00 PM Live

Clare Broyles and Rhys Bowen discuss [All That is Hidden](#) (St Martins \$26.99)

Molly Murphy

SATURDAY MARCH 11 3:30 PM Live

Cara Black with Rhys Bowen

Black discusses [Night Flight to Paris](#) (Soho \$27.95)

The follow up to [Three Hours in Paris](#) with WWII American sharpshooter Kate Rees

Our March Historical Book of the Month

SUNDAY MARCH 12 2:00 PM Live

Christina Dodd and Alma Katsu

Dodd discusses [Forget What You Know](#) (Harlequin \$29.99)

Katsu discusses [Red London](#) (Putnam \$28)

CIA Agent Lyndsey Duncan

TUESDAY MARCH 14 1:00 PM

Donna Leon discusses [So Shall You Reap](#) (Grove \$27)

Commissario Guido Brunetti

A bookish Venetian plot line

Signed books available

TUESDAY MARCH 14 7:00 PM Live

JA Jance discusses [Collateral Damage](#) (Gallery \$27.99)

Ali Reynolds of Sedona area's High Noon Enterprises

WEDNESDAY MARCH 15 4:00 PM

James R. Benn discusses [The Refusal Camp](#) (Soho \$26.95)

A story collection

Signed books available

WEDNESDAY MARCH 15 7:00 PM Live

Connor Sullivan with dad Mark Sullivan

Connor discusses [Wolf Trap](#) (Atria \$28.99)

A CIA Ground Branch thriller

Father Mark signs his bestseller [Beneath a Scarlet Sky](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$27.95)

THURSDAY MARCH 16 6:00 PM

Jesse Q. Sutanto with John

Indonesia's Sutanto discusses [Vera Wong's Unsolicited Advice for Murderers](#) (Berkley \$17)

HC edition: [Vera Wong's Unsolicited Advice for Murderers](#) (Berkley \$27)

FRIDAY MARCH 17 7:00 PM

SciFi Friday discusses Travis Baldree's [Legends & Lattes](#) (\$17/99)

A cozy wherein an Orc opens a coffee shop

SATURDAY MARCH 18 10:30 AM

Croak & Dagger discusses Susan Spann's [Claws of the Cat](#) (\$15.95)

Shinobi Mystery #1 Medieval Kyoto

SATURDAY MARCH 18 5:00 PM

Harlan Coben discusses [I Will Find You](#) (Grand Central \$30)

Signed books available

MONDAY MARCH 20 7:00 PM Live

Liam Callanan discusses [When in Rome](#) (Dutton \$27)

Can a struggling community of nuns be saved along with a 50-something American?

TUESDAY MARCH 21 7:00 PM Live

Jacqueline Winspear discusses [The White Lady](#) (Harper \$29.99)

New: ex spy Elinor in 1947 Britain

WEDNESDAY MARCH 22 1:00 PM

Julie Carrick Dalton discusses [The Last Beekeeper](#) (Forge \$27.99)

For fans of Delia Owens

Signed books available

WEDNESDAY MARCH 22 5:00 PM

Joe R. Lansdale discusses [The Donut Legion](#) (Mulholland \$28)

An East Texas town in the grip of a conspiracy

Signed books available

THURSDAY MARCH 23 5:00 PM

Ren DeStefano discusses [How I'll Kill You](#) (Berkley \$27)

Serial killer triplets, with Arizona scenes

Signed books available

THURSDAY MARCH 23 7:00 PM

Hardboiled Crime discusses Erle Stanley Gardner's [The Bigger They Come](#) (\$15.95)

SATURDAY MARCH 25 2:00 PM Live

Lauren Willig discusses [Two Wars and a Wedding](#) (Morrow \$29.99) List price is \$32)

Not either World War but the 1896 Greco/Turkish and 1898

Spanish American ones

SUNDAY MARCH 26 11:00 AM

Lisa Scottoline with Hank Phillippi Ryan

Scottoline discusses [Loyalty](#) (Putnam \$28)

An epic of the rise of the Mafia in Sicily

Signed books available

MONDAY MARCH 27 6:00 PM

Gigi Pandian discusses [The Raven Thief](#) (St Martins \$26.99)

A Secret Staircase cozy crime

Signed books available

TUESDAY MARCH 28 7:00 PM Live

Robert Dugoni discusses [Her Deadly Game](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$28.99)

Paperback: [Her Deadly Game](#) (\$16.99)

A chess prodigy criminal defense lawyer hits the big leagues

FRIDAY MARCH 31 6:00 PM Live

AJ Tata discusses [Total Empire](#) (St Martins \$28.99)

General Garrett Sinclair's rogue mission in the deadly Sahara

OUR MARCH BOOKS OF THE MONTH

British Crime Club One Unsigned hardcover or paperback per month

Kelly, Erin. [The Skeleton Key](#)

Cozy Crimes Club One Unsigned hardcover or paperback per month

Brannigan, Ellie. [Murder at an Irish Castle](#)

First Mystery Club One Signed First Printing per month

Maxwell, Jessa. [The Golden Spoon](#)

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

Holmes, Rupert. [Murder Your Employer](#)

History/Mystery Club One First Printing per month
Black, Cara. [Night Flight to Paris](#)

Notable New Fiction One Signed First Printing per month
Jones, Stephen Graham. [Don't Fear the Reaper](#)

International Crime One Unsigned Hardcover or paperback per month

Catton, Eleanor. [Birnham Wood](#)

Romance & Relationships One Unsigned Hardcover or 2 paperbacks per month

Christie, Annette. [For Twice in My Life](#)

SOME SIGNED BOOKS FOR MARCH

Adams, Ellery. [The Vanishing Type](#) (Kensington \$26). We have a few copies of this entry in the cozy Secret Book & Scone Society. Bookshop owner, bibliotherapist, and occasional sleuth Nora Pennington must enlist the help of her brilliant, brassy librarian friend to unravel the connection between *The Scarlet Letter*, an obscure 19th century writer, and a dead hiker...

Benn, James R. [The Refusal Camp: Stories](#) (Soho \$26.95). In his first-ever collection, the award-winning author of the Billy Boyle World War II mysteries presents an eclectic mix of new and previously published mystery stories rife with historical detail and riveting wartime storytelling. "The Horse Chestnut Tree" explores betrayal and murder during the American Revolution. In the speculative work "Glass," an atomic supercollider and the breakdown of the time-space continuum change the lives of two cousins devoured by greed. "Vengeance Weapon," a historical thriller about an enslaved Jewish laborer working at the Dora concentration camp, looks at how far someone will go to get revenge. **And for his Billy Boyle fans**, one of our most popular series, Benn delivers "Irish Tommy," a police procedural set in 1944 Boston featuring Billy's father and uncle.

Black, Cara. [Night Flight to Paris](#) (Soho \$27.95). Set in 1942, bestseller Black's stirring sequel to 2020's [Three Hours in Paris](#) (\$16.95) finds American markswoman Kate Rees in the Scottish Highlands, serving as a rifle/sniper instructor. Kate, who learned her sharpshooting skills growing up in Oregon, receives orders to travel to London, where British intelligence demands she undertake a dangerous mission to Paris. She must disguise herself as a Red Cross nurse, as her face is well known to the German occupiers who hunted her after her failed attempt to assassinate Hitler in Paris in the previous book. Kate knows only a fraction of the plans at first, but eventually learns that she must assassinate a high-ranking German official and rescue a British agent who once saved her life. Meanwhile, Kate still obsesses about killing Hitler and mourns her husband and daughter, who were killed during a German U-boat attack in the Orkneys early in the war. And also about a lover who may have been concealing a secret. Black vividly evokes the sights, sounds, and smells of Paris under Nazi occupation. The gritty, determined Kate is a heroine for the ages and powers our **March Historical Fiction Book of the Month**.

Bowen, Rhys/Clare Broyles. [All That is Hidden](#) (St Martins \$26.99). **Signed by both authors.** It's 1907 and Molly Murphys' police captain husband, Daniel Sullivan, has some shocking news for her. Despite Daniel's previous clashes with Tammany Hall, he's accepted their offer to serve as the city's sheriff. Plus, he's agreed to move his family into a fancy Fifth Avenue home that's a perk of the position. Molly eventually overcomes her anger at not being consulted before her spouse made these decisions, as they lead to multiple mysteries for her to probe. She's a passenger on a tour boat belonging to Daniel's corrupt patron, Big Bill McCormick, when a fire breaks out, the second such conflagration on one of McCormick's vessels, leading her to suspect arson. The authors also toss in a fatal stabbing in a locked room...

Callanan, Liam. [When in Rome](#) (Dutton \$27). If *Eat, Pray, Love* was organized in a different order, it might feel a bit like Callanan's introspective and genuine exploration of the sacrifices and opportunities that come with a new outlook on life. Taking a wide view of love of all types—platonic, spiritual, romantic, geographic—*When in Rome* should appeal to fans of Kate Atkinson, Kate Weinberg, and Emma Straub."—*Booklist* Starred Review. Cancel that Alitalia flight. All the fun of a trip to Italy—and a Yale education, for that matter—can be found for a fraction of the price in Liam Callanan's delightful novel. With breathtaking descriptions of secret corners of the Eternal City and New Haven, this novel introduces us to Claire, who, at 52, is ready to resolve issues of faith, passion, and obligation that have dogged her since she was 22. Only she has to think about things a little longer. So hold on. And while you wait, prepare to be charmed by this clever, engaging book, which is our **April Notable New Fiction Book of the Month**. While I grew impatient with Claire—grow up, already!—I fell completely in love with the Rome Callanan depicts with the same love as he did Paris in his last novel, [Paris by the Book](#) (\$16), also recommended. I have visited many of the same glories of the Eternal City just as I have been charmed by Donna Leon's Venice and my time spent there.

Catton, Eleanor. [Birnham Wood](#) (Farrar \$28). **Tip-ins.** Booker Prize winner Catton of NZ returns with a tragic eco-thriller of betrayed ideals and compromised loyalties involving a collective

of guerilla gardeners in her home country. The group, Birnam Wood, sets its sights on a farm in Korowai National Park after a landslide maroons the isolated township of Thorndike, and three personalities vie for control. As matriarch Mira Bunting, 29, uses a series of aliases to scout and buy the land, her duplicity brings her into conflict with the younger Shelley Noakes, whose own beliefs are further strained by the return of ex-member Tony Gallo, a would-be journalist with an ax to grind regarding some of Birnam's rhetoric (in a scene of stellar dialogue, a group of members, all white and economically privileged, object to Tony's claims that intersectionality and polyamory are capitalist concepts). Mira's and Shelly's designs on the farm are complicated as they run afoul of Robert Lemoine, an amoral American billionaire suspected of murdering his wife, who has secretly purchased the land and agrees to fund Birnam Wood's occupation as a cover for his mining operation (Robert's work had caused the landslide, a detail he's trying to keep under wraps). As Mira plays into Robert's hands, Tony goes on the warpath, and their various schemes collide in a shocking crime. Catton injects granular details into her depiction of mining's impact on the land and those who tend to it, and she pulls a taut, suspenseful story from the tangle of vivid characters. Thanks to a convincing backdrop of ecological peril, Catton's human drama is made even more acute. And is our **March International Crime Book of the Month selection.**

Chakraborty, SA. [The Adventures of Amina al-Sirafi](#) (Harper \$32) spins a new trilogy of magic and mayhem on the high seas in this tale of pirates and sorcerers, forbidden artifacts and ancient mysteries, in one woman's determined quest to seize a final chance at glory—and write her own legend. The March Indie Next Pick: "I didn't know I could love a book so much. Chakraborty gives us a pirate adventure with a charming and sarcastic female lead, the most lovable crew, and ancient magic. Sheer perfection from start to finish — this is a guaranteed five star read!" From the author of *Gold, Silver, and Brass* fantasies.

Coben, Harlan. [I Will Find You](#) (Grand Central \$29.99). David Burroughs was once a devoted father to his three-year-old son Matthew, living a dream life just a short drive away from the working-class suburb where he and his wife, Cheryl, first fell in love—until one night he discovers Matthew brutally murdered in his bed and is convicted in his killing. His wife divorces him, and he goes to prison for life. He hardly cares whether he lives or dies because his family is gone. That is, until one day five years later, his ex-sister-in-law Rachel becomes his first visitor in prison and shows him a recent photograph she's found of Matthew at an amusement park. David can hardly believe his eyes. He plans a harrowing escape from prison to do what he must—find his son, clear his name, and find out what really happened at his home on that devastating night. With his life on the line and the FBI following his every move, can David evade capture long enough to reveal the shocking truth?

Croft, Rachel Koller. [Stone Cold Fox](#) (Penguin \$27). Koller Croft takes the art of the hustle to a luxuriously opulent level, with readers catapulted into the scheming mind of a swindler whose been groomed for the grift by her own mother. Now Bea, a senior business development director at a major New York City ad agency, has found the perfect mark in a client: the Case family's wealth is old money on steroids. But she doesn't plan to love Collin and leave him, as her mother had always done. Bea

is in this for the long haul, with grandeur and financial security the endgame. As she admits, "Opulence soothed me. That feeling of undeniable security was intoxicating." One jaw-dropping bombshell after another emerges during luxurious family gatherings in Greenwich, Connecticut: an over-the-top lobster-stuffed and liquor-drenched weekend marriage proposal party at Newport, R.I.; a French-themed bridal shower with "this little perverse sect of society"; and the extravagant Rainbow Room wedding itself, culminating in totally unexpected revelations from the past.

"This clever tale of jealousy, revenge, deception, and betrayal propels Universal Television to develop a TV adaptation of the novel; Koller Croft will write the series," *Deadline* reports. Julie Plec and Emily Cummins are executive producing through Plec's production banner, My So-Called Company. "As a long-time fan of their work, I am beyond thrilled to be partnering with Julie and Emily at My So-Called Company alongside Universal Television," says Croft. "The women of *Stone Cold Fox* are ambitious, complex and above all, entertaining, so I know this is a perfect match." Plec adds: "Rachel's unique ability to tell this story of calculated deceit in such a breezy and captivating way made us jump at the opportunity to shepherd this story about women, men, sex, money and the lengths people will go to have it all."

Dalton, Julie Carrick. [The Last Beekeeper](#) (Forge \$27.99). The disappearance of the world's bees, along with the other pollinating insects, in an ecological disaster dubbed the Great Collapse provides the backdrop for this moving postapocalyptic thriller. Sasha Butler, 22, changed her name from Alexandra Severn to hide that her father is Lawrence Severn, a bee researcher thought to have been the world's last beekeeper. With humanity desperate for information about bee survival, Lawrence went to prison rather than reveal that he had kept invaluable data about bees. Sasha knows he hid records at their rural home that could provide a basis for hope, but retrieving them is hampered by the presence of squatters on the property. She's also haunted by visions of bees, which she tells herself are just wishful hallucinations, but which also allow her to speculate that the Great Collapse could be reversed. Dalton does a fine job imbuing all the characters with plausible emotions and reactions to their grim reality. Superior worldbuilding (hysteria about bees has led Congress to criminalize "reporting bee sightings without evidence") elevates this above similar books. I thought her first, [Waiting for the Night Song](#) (\$17.99), a 2021 First Mystery Book of the Month, was terrific—and pleasingly different.

DeStefano, Ren. [How I'll Kill You](#) (Berkley \$27). **This debut is a First Mystery Book of the Month selection, either for April or May. Club members, please do not order it. It will automatically come to you.**

Three murderers are better than one, especially when they're psychopathic identical triplets, as shown in this outstanding serial killer thriller from DeStefano in her first adult thriller. Abandoned in childhood and raised in foster homes, 25-year-old sisters Sissy, Moody, and Iris (not their legal names) have maintained a "clean streak" of messy crimes across several states before settling in Rainwood, Arizona, where "nothing ever happens," until Sissy tells the story of targeting a grieving, church-going 29-year-old widower, Edison. The only rule the three have always had is that they seduce their marks, "live out

every fantasy” they desire, and then finish them off. Garroting, skewering, bludgeoning, and burying their victims is like “assembling a new bookshelf.” The only problem is that this time Sissy’s dispassionate routine turns to passion when she takes a liking to Edison and has to decide where her loyalties or betrayals lie. Several bombshell revelations make that easier than it might seem in this dark scenario. DeStefano does a superior job delving into the disturbed minds of the twisted sisters. This devilishly clever textbook of malicious mayhem is a must for Dexter fans.

In its Starred Review, *Booklist* adds, “This deceptive thriller opens as a chilling, dispassionate chronicle of murderous triplets devoted to their chosen craft and each other, but it evolves into a twisted love story as layers of loneliness, self-sacrifice, and competing loyalties surface. Readers will find that this sneakily heart-wrenching story lingers with them after Sissy’s final words.” Echoed by *LJ* in its Starred Review: “When it comes to carefully concealed sociopathy, the fascinating protagonist in DeStefano’s adult debut gives *Gone Girl*’s Amy Elliott a run for her money. Combine this with a cleverly crafted plot that delivers ingenious twists, and you have a novel that will stun readers.”

Dodd, Christina. [Forget What You Know](#) (Harlequin \$29.99). John reviews: Even though their marriage ended in a bitter divorce, Zoey Phoenix is certain that her ex-husband Luca Damezas isn’t trying to kill her. After all, why would Luca volunteer as Zoey’s bodyguard if he really wanted her dead? That still leaves someone out there who seems determined not to stop until Zoey is out of the picture. Could the answer to who is stalking Zoey be buried in her early past, of which Zoey can remember next to nothing? Or, would it just be safer for Zoey if she simply forgets whatever it is she may know? A protagonist who propagates flowers for a living, an ex-husband who used to be a professional wrestler, a legendary ruby gone missing, and a small town California coastal town filled to the brim with quirky characters might seem like a lot for an author to juggle, but Dodd does it all effortlessly deftly integrating all of these literary ingredients into a perfectly paced plot that is expertly punctuated with plenty of moments of white-knuckle suspense and spiked with a generous dose of Dodd’s dry sense of wit.

Dugoni, Robert. [Her Deadly Game](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$28.99). How I enjoy a legal thriller. Keera Duggan, the protagonist of this twist-filled standalone, works as a criminal defense attorney in her father’s Seattle law firm. She was once a prosecutor, until she ended her romantic relationship with her supervisor, Miller Ambrose, because of his alcoholism, and he demoted her, leading to her departure. Keera now finds herself on the opposite side of the courtroom from Ambrose defending Vince LaRussa, the owner of a wealth-management and investment firm. A noted philanthropist, LaRussa is the prime suspect in the shooting murder of his wife. Despite an apparently solid alibi, the politically ambitious Ambrose charges LaRussa, setting up a high-stakes trial showdown. Keera, a well-developed and nuanced lead, has an additional complication to deal with: a stranger, who knows she’s an accomplished chess player, emails her: “You’re in the game of your life, so play like your life depends on it... because it very well might.” Dugoni’s own litigation experience is put to good use in trial scenes that feel true-to-life. A must read for John Grisham fans.

Finlay, Alex. [What Have We Done?](#) (St Martins \$27.99). **On Sale now but our Zoom with Alex is April 4.** In the prologue

of this top-notch mystery thriller from Finlay of [The Night Shift](#) (\$9.99), five kids from Savior House, a group home for troubled teens—Jenna, Nico, Donnie, Benny, and Arty—take turns firing a gun into a shallow grave. Twenty-five years later, aging rocker Donnie is forced over the side of a cruise ship at gunpoint; an explosion traps gambling addict and reality show producer Nico in a coal mine shaft; and ex-assassin Jenna, the book’s action hero, is activated again to hit Arty, now a tech billionaire. Benny, a federal judge, has already been murdered in Chestertown, Pa., near the now-abandoned Savior House. The person who gave Jenna her assignment turns on her when Jenna intentionally botches the job. Eventually, Jenna, Nico, and Donnie—each a distinct, original character despite drawing on genre tropes—reunite to discover who’s trying to kill them and why. Amid multiple red herrings, Finlay slowly reels out his protagonists’ combined backstories. Readers will eagerly follow the maze-like plot, with its many twists and turns, to the exciting conclusion.

Griffiths, Elly. [The Last Remains](#) (Quercus \$40). This is the last Ruth Galloway for awhile so grab it. When builders renovating a café in King’s Lynn find a human skeleton behind a wall, they call for DCI Harry Nelson and Dr. Ruth Galloway, Head of Archaeology at the nearby University of North Norfolk. Ruth is preoccupied with the threatened closure of her department and by her ever-complicated relationship with Nelson, the father of her child. However, she agrees to look at the case. Ruth sees at once that the bones are modern. They are identified as the remains of Emily Pickering, a young archaeology student who went missing in the 1990s. Emily attended a course run by her Cambridge tutor. Suspicion falls on him and also on another course member, Ruth’s friend Cathbad, who is still frail following his near death from Covid. As they investigate, Nelson and his team uncover a tangled web of relationships within the student group and the adults leading them. What was the link between the group and the King’s Lynn café where Emily’s bones were found? Then, just when the team seems to be making progress, Cathbad disappears! I will be zooming with Elly on April 25th to discuss this book and the whole [Ruth Galloway series](#) which is among my very favorites.

Heughan, Sam. [Waypoints](#) (Random \$60). Special Pricing for the UK edition signed for us in London by Sam on the title page and in Scottsdale by Diana on the title page too. Here is Sam on the West Highland Way. **PLUS each of our copies comes with a charming little book from a Nova Scotia Press called *Iain of Scotland*.** Signed by Diana who wrote the Introduction. It comes with a glossary of terms and tells the story of a boy. It’s September 1773, and Iain has just arrived in Nova Scotia with his parents and little sister after the long, disastrous, Atlantic voyage of the ship *Hector*. They wanted a new life in New Scotland—but the land agent lied to them. With no money, no food, no shelter, and winter fast approaching, how will they survive?

Holmes, Rupert. [Murder Your Employer](#) (Avid Reader Press \$28). Holmes has a play opening in Phoenix on March 10. **This new book, a March Indie Next Pick, is our March Crime Collectors Book of the Month.**

Maybe you’ve been part of *The Thursday Murder Club* (by Richard Osman) or enjoyed the literary Easter-eggs in Anthony Horowitz’s mystery *Magpie Murders*. If so! It’s time to join The McMasters Conservatory for the Applied Arts as designed by Rupert Holmes. It’s the diabolical lessons they

never taught you in school! Opening to the first page is your admission to a delightful read. Where you learn that Holmes has pulled off the feat of creating aspiring murderers who are goodhearted and morally decent. Motivated by a desire to protect not just themselves but their fellow employees. Think altruists with a dark bent. The school has a wondrous campus that rivals Hogwarts. Illustrations and maps created by Anna Luizos help readers visualize a landscape that includes a great hall, a stately manor, a playing field, a ravine and a forest. The cuisine has a three-star (but unpublished) Michelin rating. One can get lost in this immersive world, which begs for a screen adaptation

Who hasn't wondered for a split second what the world would be like if a person who is the object of your affliction ceased to exist? But then you've probably never heard of The McMasters Conservatory, dedicated to the consummate execution of the homicidal arts. To gain admission, a student must have an ethical reason for erasing someone who deeply deserves a fate no worse (nor better) than death. The campus of this 'Poison Ivy League' college—its location unknown to even those who study there—is where you might find yourself the practice target of a classmate...and where one's mandatory graduation thesis is getting away with the perfect murder of someone whose death will make the world a much better place to live. A delightful mix of witty wordplay, breathtaking twists and genuine intrigue, *Murder Your Employer* will gain you admission into a wholly original world. I am a mad fan of Holmes' books and plays and am delighted he is returning to The Pen after a long absence.

Jance, JA. [Collateral Damage](#) (Gallery \$28.99). Jance cuts straight to the chase and handles the various points of view and plot lines with brisk aplomb. JA, Lifetime Achievement honoree at Left Coast Crime in Tucson where I interview her for it on March 17, revs the action in her 17th thriller for Ali Reynolds and her Arizona colleagues. While Sedona/Cottonwood is the home of Ali and her husband B's flourishing cybersecurity operation, we find ourselves roadside on I-17, in London (UK), California, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, and Minnesota as a police procedural with robotic research in a tale of vigilante vengeance on overdrive unfolds. For disgraced cop-turned-convict Frank Muñoz, the dream of retribution allowed him to survive his 20-year prison term. Now out, he has plans for those who deserted him: his girlfriend Danielle, his ex-wife Sylvia, and the two Pasadena police officers who put him behind bars. One of those former officers, Hal Holden, is now a chauffeur. As he drives passenger B. Simpson to Phoenix's Sky Harbor airport, someone runs them off the road. The police, knowing nothing of Frank's scheme, think the target B. Simpson, and Ali the perp. As police in multiple jurisdictions work to solve the crime, High Noon uses its AI software, lovingly called Frigg, to analyze the moving puzzle pieces. What they discover is a multi-state murder spree, but they have to figure out how to use Frigg's info, which was gathered through illegal hacking, itself a crime, to nail Frank. Jance is good at villains, avoiding making them one-dimensional. I can't help but have some sympathy for Frank and the path his life was forced into.

Jones, Stephen Graham. [Don't Fear the Reaper](#) (Gallery \$27.99). Our **March Notable New Fiction Book of the Month**. In the long-awaited sequel to [My Heart Is a Chainsaw](#) (best-selling author Jones's first novel to feature protagonist Jade Daniels), Jade has to contend with serial killer Dark Mill South, who has

escaped from his prison transfer just outside of Proofrock, Idaho. It's a delicate balance to portray a serial killer like Dark Mill, something that Jones does with great aplomb. This villain has been known by many different names, including the Ninety-Eye Slasher and Bowman Butcher. He claims to want to avenge 38 Dakota men, who were hanged in 1862 in his home state of Minnesota in the largest mass execution in U.S. history. Told through alternating points of view, including Dark Mill South's, the novel takes its time building up steam until readers can reunite with Jade, but in the meantime, the narrative is full of pulse-pounding scares and epic slasher scenes that build intensity as the chapters go on. Adrenaline-filled with plenty of shocking moments, the latest from master of horror Jones is an intense, highly entertaining, and deeply personal novel."—*Library Journal* Starred Review

And consider this: "A sequel is rarely ever as good as the original, especially when it comes to horror—and especially when it comes to horror slashers. But leave it to genre master Stephen Graham Jones to once again take your expectations and trope-awareness and kindly slash them in half with a chainsaw.

Katsu, Alma. [Red London](#) (Penguin \$27). The intelligence community isn't noted for its transparency, and Katsu's writing went on the back burner as she worked as a senior analyst at several federal agencies, advising policymakers and military commanders on issues of national security. It was only after she was struck by "a mysterious illness" in her forties that Katsu started writing fiction again. And produced [Red Widow](#) (\$17), her first spy novel and what she calls "the logical marriage of her love of storytelling with her 30-plus-year career in intelligence." Red Widow introduced Lindsey Duncan—smart, strong, capable...and immensely human. "Both of the issues in *Red London*—the Russian oligarchs and the rise of private intelligence—are about ambition, and ambition is a very revealing emotion," Katsu says. "I remember what it was like when the Soviet Union disintegrated. It was a scary, lawless time. The men who grabbed as many state resources as possible eventually became the oligarchs with the blessing of the new regime. It made me wonder what it would be like to be married to one of them, what these women would do to remain in their sphere of power. "As for the second topic, private intelligence has been hiring away people like myself—trained in state-level spy tradecraft—to work for wealthy individuals, private companies, even foreign governments. It appeals to intelligence professionals who feel they're not getting the opportunities they deserve, but then they find themselves in this new world where they may be asked to do something unethical or perhaps illegal. Again, a great dilemma for a character." It's these ethical and moral implications that make the book memorable.

"Katsu paints a vivid picture of modern London at the intersection of a vast geopolitical game between Russia, its moneyed exiles, the British upper classes, and American intelligence."—CrimeReads. So true; this excellent novel unveils many things as it explores whether empowerment is a thing that any woman can achieve.

King, Owen. [The Curator](#) (Scribner \$28.99). **Signed bookplates**. King expands his 2014 short story of the same name with arresting results in this Dickensian fantasy that contains moments of both horror and humor. The offbeat tone is evident from the outset. The Fairest, an unnamed city, is in turmoil

following a popular revolt, sparked, in part, by the callous shooting of a businessman by a government minister. In the wake of the government's collapse, Dora, a domestic former servant at the university, seeks to understand the meaning of her beloved brother's cryptic last words before he'd died of cholera: "Yes. I see you. Your... face." To that end, she obtains a position in an occult research hub, The Museum of Psykical Research, with the aid of her lover, Robert Barnes, an officer in the rebels' civil defense force. Her increasingly desperate efforts to ascertain what her brother meant play out against the ongoing upheavals. King's creative worldbuilding is admirable and he makes even walk-on characters feel fully realized. Fans of *Jonathan Strange & Mr. Norrell* will be especially enchanted.

Lansdale, Joe R. [The Donut Legion](#) (Mulholland \$28). In this wildly funny crime yarn from Edgar winner Lansdale, PI-turned-novelist Charlie Garner is confronted by an apparition of his ex-wife, Meg, at his home in east Texas, who warns him to "beware the great mound within the circle." Unnerved by this ghostly visitation and still holding feelings for his former spouse, he stops by her apartment complex in nearby May Town, but discovers that she and her new husband have mysteriously disappeared. With the aid of his brawny older brother, Felix, who runs a private detective agency, Charlie explores Meg's connection to the doughnut store where she worked and to UFO fanatics who worship a local site where it's believed a flying saucer is buried. Shocking revelations and a spate of grisly deaths spur Charlie to get to the bottom of Meg's disappearance, no matter how hazardous the quest. Though sluggish in places, sharp dialogue and outlandish characters, like the dastardly Cowboy and his flamboyantly dressed chimpanzee, Mr. Biggs, make this high-spirited conspiracy especially enjoyable.

Leon, Donna. [So Shall You Reap](#) (Grove \$27). **Tip-ins as Leon lives in Europe.** Book lovers will relish discovering how Venice's Commissario Guido Brunetti organizes his books, and which ones he's culling on a Saturday evening. And how he shares space in his family's apartment, especially with his professorial wife Paola, who hails from one of Venice's aristocratic families while he is from the working class. Theirs is a very happy marriage. His book work is interrupted by a phone call from Ispettore Vianello, who says a fellow officer has been arrested at a gay pride parade for "resisting arrest." Then, the body of an undocumented immigrant from Sri Lanka—with whom Brunetti had a brief exchange the day before—turns up in a canal. Brunetti, Vianello, Commissario Griffoni and Signorina Elettra go in search of answers. The taut plot builds as the team pieces together seemingly disparate clues: the victim's interest in Buddhism, the revolutionary Tamil Tigers and a group of 1980s Italian leftist political terrorists. The team's investigation leads them to details of real estate and land use, and Brunetti to clues from his past as a university student. The whole gives Leon plenty of space to ponder in her elegant way ethics and political issues and how we change with aging. A top notch narrative although the astute mystery fan will anticipate the plot's resolution. I add that I really like the ancient nun and her garden.

[The UK edition](#) (\$42) also publishes March 14 but it will take some time to get it here. I have collected the UKs from the beginning so I have ordered a few and look forward to zooming with Leon on her pub date at 1:00 PM PDT.

Loftis, Larry. [The Watchmaker's Daughter](#) (Harper \$29.99). **Note the special discounted price.** *New York Times* bestselling author and master of nonfiction spy thrillers Larry Loftis writes the first major biography of Corrie ten Boom, a Dutch watchmaker who saved the lives of hundreds of Jews during WWII—at the cost of losing her family and being sent to a concentration camp, only to survive, forgive her captors, and live the rest of her life as a Christian missionary. **Preorder and you will get a 6x9 inch black and white signed art print by artist Dee Deloy, which is being custom drawn to represent Corrie ten Boom and her father in their watch shop.** It includes a poem warning everyone to get their spiritual house in order while there is still time on the clock (the Dutch is translated in the book). This etching, poem, and the top left photo of Casper appear in the book on pages 5-6, with explanation and translation. This artwork and poem was very special to Corrie and she included it in her book about Casper, *Father ten Boom: God's Man*. On the bottom right is the Beje, home of the ten Boom shop and residence.

Makkai, Rebecca. [I Have Some Questions for You](#) (Penguin \$28). When Bodie Kane began attending New Hampshire's Granby School in 1991, she was determined to leave her checkered family history back in small-town Indiana. At Granby, Bodie was a theater kid, which turned out to be a solid grounding for her later work as a Los Angeles podcaster preoccupied with the underappreciated women of early Hollywood. Bodie finds herself back at Granby in 2018 for a two-week teaching gig: she's helming a class on film and another on podcasting. Like her Granby peers, Bodie can't forget the 1995 murder of Thalia Keith, a fellow theater kid who was found dead in the campus swimming pool during their senior year. Thalia's body showed signs of injury that suggested more than an accidental drowning, and DNA evidence ultimately sent Granby's Black athletic trainer to jail, where he's serving a 60-year sentence. The details of the case continue to transfix the public and spark heated debate online — especially when it comes to Omar Evans, the school's athletic trainer, who was convicted of Keith's slaying. Years later, when Kane is invited back to the boarding school to teach, she inevitably slides down the rabbit hole of the true crime case, reexamining the death of her roommate, the guilt or innocence of Omar Evans, and whether she knew something all those years ago that could unlock the truth about the slaying. If you enjoyed Kate Alice Marshall's [What Lies in the Woods](#) (\$28.99 Signed), our January Crime Collectors Book of the Month, this new novel by Makkai is for you. Again, note the central role of podcasting in the investigation.

Library Reads adds: "Engaging story of a boarding school murder being solved 20 years later by true-crime podcast enthusiasts. Or is it a story of memories and how you interact with them, depending on your stage in life and your biases, or one about how as a teen you simultaneously know everything and nothing? Or is it all three? For fans of Jean Hanff Korelitz."

Maxwell, Jessa. [The Golden Spoon](#) (Atria \$27). Our **March First Mystery Book of the Month** appears to be a culinary cozy at the outset but as it cooks it turns into a real thriller set within a Christie-like closed circle: A mansion where hit TV show *Bake Week* is produced and where the contestants live while, well, baking. The March Indie Next Pick says, "Imagine *The Great British Baking Show* with a splash of Agatha Christie murder mystique. Interesting characters, intriguing subplots, and a fun

setting kept me turning the pages.” Here’s a rave review which I echo:

Byzantine chicanery seasoned with a dash of revenge greets six contestants gathered for Bake Week on the property of a crumbling Vermont manse, in Maxwell’s outstanding debut. Tantalizing backstage backstories include those of an ex-journalist from Brooklyn, a pie prodigy from Minnesota, a Bronx math teacher, a wealthy former CEO tech from Boston, a retired Rhode Island registered nurse, and a restorer of old buildings from New Hampshire. Hosting the competition’s 10th season is the heir to the manor, Betsy Martin, joined for the first time by an award-winning baker, Archie Morris, along with regular lead coordinator, Melanie Blair. Sabotage starts slow but early. A refrigerator door is left open; salt is replaced with sugar; a burner is turned up to high; gasoline replaces orange essence in a pie. By day three, it’s clear someone isn’t playing by the rules laid out in a “behemoth spiralbound packet.” Everything escalates to an extremely dark and stormy night (including a blackout), leading to startling revelations and a jaw-dropping confession. Sweet and savory turn deadly sour in this fast-paced, entertaining romp scheduled for a Hulu miniseries.

Neubauer, Erica Ruth. [Intrigue in Istanbul](#) (Kensington \$27). In Agatha Award-winning author Neubauer’s fourth wanderlust-inspiring historical mystery, **out March 28, Signed here April 1**, it is 1926 and the adventures of vibrant, young American widow Jane Wunderly send her to Istanbul, Turkey, where the search for her archeologist father unravels secrets tied to a mysterious relic from the Ottoman Empire... After her historian father makes a clandestine journey abroad, Jane and the dapper Mr. Redvers trace his footsteps while signs of danger loom back home in the United States. They’re greeted at their destination by Aunt Millie and unsettling news: Professor Wunderly was on a mission to locate the lost heart of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent—a legendary relic from the Ottoman Empire said to possess potent mystical powers—then vanished completely, leaving behind his unpacked luggage, a perplexing riddle, and an eerie mystery Jane must solve to keep her loved ones safe. What starts off as a clear-cut investigation becomes an intercontinental game of cat and mouse as Jane realizes a gang of nameless figures have been stalking her every move from Turkey to Hungary. And it seems even helpful friends can’t be trusted for long when a man is stabbed to death on the Orient Express to Budapest. With Redvers by her side and few clues to rely on, Jane’s desperate search for her father leads to centuries-old secrets and an unidentified enemy.

O’Brien, JD. [Zig Zag](#) (Schaffner Press \$26.99). **Signed here May 3 but available now.** It’s up to modern-day cowboy turned bail bondsman Harry Robatore to bring home the wayward son of a good friend who’s skipped out on a court date. Harry is “tumbleweeding” toward age 70. Still spry and up for most things his girlfriend might also be up for, his interest in life as a bail bondsman is waning. But when one of his closest friends, Fuzzy, turns to him for help keeping Ted, his ne’er-do-well son, out of jail for robbing a medical marijuana dispensary, Harry pulls on his boots and steps up to the challenge. A deal is made with Fuzzy to guarantee Fuzzy’s bar for Ted’s bail. The problem is Ted has no intention of showing up for his court date. Instead, Ted and his girlfriend, Capri, skip town with the cash and a huge quantity of Acapulco Gold marijuana taken from the dispensary

safe. If Harry fails to catch Ted, Fuzzy will lose his bar and Ted will go to prison. Meanwhile, the dispensary owner sends a wannabe mercenary to retrieve their product—and bringing back Ted and Capri alive is optional. Harry and the mercenary are on a collision course, and it’s inevitable someone will end up dead. This is his debut novel—but the author comes off as a seasoned pro in *Zig Zag*.”—Paul Dinh-McCrillis

O’Connor, Carlene. [Murder at an Irish Bakery](#) (Kensington \$27). At the start of O’Connor’s excellent ninth Irish Village mystery, a protester shouts, “Join the health revolution. Sugar is not your friend,” outside Pie Pie Love, “Kilbane’s best bakery housed in a historic flour mill,” where a reality baking show is about to be filmed over the coming week. “Neither is noise-pollution before coffee,” thinks Gardai Siobhán O’Sullivan, who’s part of the security team for the show. The anti-sugar protester collapses, possibly from an allergic reaction, after one of the contestants, Aoife McBride (aka “the Queen baker of Ireland”), puts makeup on his face for the camera. Later, a representative of the show’s anonymous sponsor creates complications by providing the contestants with what he calls “secret weapons,” which could be “a special ingredient, a new piece of equipment, or a coveted recipe.” When one of the contestants dies under mysterious circumstances, Siobhán investigates, even as the show must go on. Distinctive, captivating characters match a gripping plot full of surprises. O’Connor reinforces her place among the top rank of cozy writers. See Cozy Crimes below for a link to the first eight of her Irish Village Mysteries.

Pandian, Gigi. [The Raven Thief](#) (St Martins \$26.99). The charms of this cozy, the second in the Secret Staircase Mysteries, lie in the marvelous, magical constructions in buildings and objects—such as sliding bookcases, trick tables, and hidden reading nooks—and in all the mystery novel references. Pandian clearly has a glorious time conjuring up both. Also some excellent food. Secret Staircase Construction just finished their first project with Tempest Raj officially a part of the team—a classic mystery novel-themed home interior. Their client is now ready to celebrate her new life without her cheating ex-husband, famous mystery author Corbin Colt. First up, a party, and Tempest and Grandpa Ash are invited to the exclusive mock séance to remove any trace of Corbin from the property—for good. It’s all lighthearted fun until Corbin’s dead body crashes the party. The only possible suspects are the eight people around the séance table—a circle of clasped hands that wasn’t broken. Suspicion quickly falls on Grandpa Ash, the only one with actual blood on him. To prove her beloved grandfather’s innocence, Tempest must figure out what really happened—and how. If you missed the series first, [Under Lock and Skeleton Key](#) (\$9.99), grab it now for a double treat.

Penner, Sarah. [The London Séance Society](#) (Park Row \$29.99) proves that the sophomore novel can be just as explosive as the first! Penner weaves readers through the dark, mysterious streets of Paris and London in a fast-paced thrill ride. This book is a perfect escape!”—March Indie Next Pick. Library Reads adds: “Lenna Wickes came to Paris in 1873 to apprentice for Vaudeline D’Allaire, a renowned spiritualist. Vaudeline is called back to the London Séance Society. Lenna joins her to find out who murdered her sister Evie. Can they figure out what happened before they wind up dead too? Penner clearly researched the spiritualism movement of the Victorian era and spun a

suspenseful tale.” Out in early March when she ships books to us. Our zoom event is April 3.

“At turns spooky and sexy, sly and subversive, *The London Séance Society* fully immerses the reader in nineteenth-century Paris and London, a time when loved ones would suspend all manner of disbelief in the hope of communicating with the dead. With her skill at conjuring atmosphere and conveying both deceit and desire, Penner has crafted another blockbuster novel that is magically even better than her first, [The Lost Apothecary](#).” —Natalie Jenner. |The story of this feminist Gothic begins with a midnight séance in 1873 Paris, hosted by Vaudeline D’Allaire, a celebrated medium known for getting murder victims to pinpoint their killers. Vaudeline has fled London under mysterious circumstances, in the company of skeptical Lenna Wickes, who’s convinced the other woman to let her be an apprentice. Lenna’s true motivation is to unravel the sudden death of her sister, Evie, a burgeoning medium and student of D’Allaire’s, which occurred on All Hallows Eve. In a parallel narrative, Mr. Morley, director of the London Séance Society, is occupied with another puzzling death that also occurred that night—that of society president Mr. Volckman. Under the pretense of hosting a séance to ascertain the identity of Mr. Volckman’s killer, Mr. Morley offers Lenna and Vaudeline a chance to return to London, by inviting them into the Séance Society’s all-male club. The two accept with the hopes of conjuring up details of Evie’s murder. As the well-paced adventure reaches an explosive climax, Lenna uncovers more about the London Séance Society’s illusions and comes to terms with her sexuality.

✂Raybourn, Deanna. [A Sinister Revenge](#) (Penguin \$27). Set in 1889, unconventional lepidopterist Veronica Speedwell has been traveling with Viscount Tiberius Templeton-Vane for the summer—she’s estranged from her lover the Viscount’s brother, Revelstoke “Stoker” Templeton-Vane. When they reach Bavaria where sightings of a monstrous wolf man burgeon, she knows they have found Stoker. He’s still sulking. Meanwhile Tiberius has recently received two newspaper clippings in the mail describing the deaths of a German fossil hunter and a French *bon vivant*; in the margin of the second, someone has written: “You will be next. Prepare your soul. VENGEANCE FOR LORENZO.” The two dead men were part of a group, the Seven Sinners, which Tiberius belonged to at Cambridge University. One of the seven, Lorenzo d’Ambrogio, died years ago in a storm after uncovering the complete fossilized skeleton of a new species of dinosaur at the Templeton-Vane Cliffside estate. Though Tiberius believed the death an accident, the murders of the two colleagues, and the threat, have led him to reconsider. Veronica and a reluctant Stoker return with Tiberius to England to protect him and discover what is really going on. As ever in the fabulous series, superior prose matches the clever plot and a deep dive into female empowerment, or its lack. I found the solution to this one wrenching. Excelsior!

Riddle, A G. [Quantum Radio](#) (Head of Zeus \$24.95). *LJ* reviews: Tyson Klein, a brilliant physicist at CERN, discovers a groundbreaking pattern among the subatomic particles in the Large Hadron Collider, which turns out to be a data stream transmitted from a quantum radio outside of space and time. Hard on the heels of presenting his discovery, there’s an explosion in Ty’s apartment, and he flees to his family for help. Ultimately, he’s seized by DARPA, who translate his cryptic data and

consequently initiate a race against the clock to locate the central players involved in the mind-boggling mayhem that ensues. The expert multiverse manipulation morphs into an enthralling alternate history that is both immersive and intelligent. This is a long book with quick chapters that cover an impressive amount of ground. It’s as much about solving the universe’s biggest mysteries as it is about families and friends finding their way back to each other. While remarkable all on its own, the enticing ending suggests that the series will get even better from here. Eclectic author Riddle combines science and history to create a riveting thriller.

Rose, Karen. [Cold-Blooded Liar](#) (Penguin \$27). John reviews: After one of his patients—a pathological liar—starts revealing plausible new details from a long-unsolved serial murder case, psychologist Sam Reeves is compelled to report this anonymously to the SDPD tip line, though his attempts to respect patient confidentiality land him facedown and cuffed by the aggressive (and cute) San Diego homicide detective Kit McKittrick. Sam is soon released but goes home with both a newfound distaste for the SDPD and a resolve—not unlike Kit’s—to uncover the truth. The question now is whether the two of them can work together to find one of the deadliest serial killers the city has faced in years. Rose launches her new San Diego Case Files series with another superior suspense novel that makes the most of her flair for crafting compelling characters (including a particularly nasty piece of work villain) and a plot packed with plenty of red herrings and surprising twists.

Rosenfelt, David. [Good Dog, Bad Cop](#) (St Martins \$27.99). This is just so much fun—and with a very clever plot to boot. I love both Marcus and Simon the retiree K-9 who function much like Spenser’s Hawk or Dennis Lehane’s Bubbs to keep the K Team safe despite dire perils. This team—retired police detective Corey Douglas and other PIs who consult on cold cases for the Paterson, N.J., PD—look into the execution-style murder of police detective Danny Avery. Despite a lack of evidence, Corey is certain there’s a link between this case and the subsequent deaths of Danny’s mentor, former detective Jimmy Dietrich, and Danny’s wife, who were both killed on Jimmy’s boat. No one was ever arrested for this latter case, and cop gossip put the deaths down to a murder suicide, with Jimmy pulling the trigger. The K Team’s investigations lead Corey down a rabbit hole as the list of deaths and suspects grows, and no one is who they claim to be. The complicated, fair play mystery presents just the right amount of difficulty for the keen-eyed reader to solve. Corey’s musings and digressions on such topics as marriage and dogs add to the charm, as does Corey’s German shepherd partner, Simon Garfinkle (also retired), who acts like a real dog and only once jumps at someone threatening his master’s life. Of course lawyer Andy Carpenter of Rosenfelt’s other long-running delightful series, is behind the scene in this series along with his former-cop wife Laurie.

Roth, Veronica. [Arch-Conspirator](#) (Tor \$19.99). On trend with reimagining heroic women of the Classical Age, here we get the legendary Antigone, daughter of Oedipus in Sophocles’ Athenian tragedy. Outside the last city on Earth, the planet is a wasteland. Without the Archive, where the genes of the dead are stored, humanity will end. Passing into the Archive should be cause for celebration, but Antigone’s parents were murdered, leaving her father’s throne vacant. As her militant uncle Kreon rises to claim

it, all Antigone feels is rage. When he welcomes her and her siblings into his mansion, Antigone sees it for what it really is: a gilded cage, where she is a captive as well as a guest. But her uncle will soon learn that no cage is unbreakable. And neither is he.

Scottoline, Lisa. [Loyalty](#) (Penguin \$28). In another deep dive into her Italian roots, although is Sicilian really Italian?, Scottoline researches her story and embeds some surprising facts. “Nineteenth-century Sicily springs to vivid, unforgettable life in a passionate epic of the Mafia’s origins among the fragrant lemon groves of Palermo. A kidnapped child confined to a madhouse, a castoff wife raising her daughter in the wild, an upright lawyer on a crusade for justice, and twin brothers determined to rise to power—their lives entwine across Lisa Scottoline’s gorgeous tapestry of Sicilian history.” —Kate Quinn

Shannon, Samantha. [Day of Fallen Night](#) (Bloomsbury \$35). A prequel to [The Priory of the Orange Tree](#) (\$20) filled with even more dragons, magic, and lore. An epic feminist fantasy series that’s a master class in world-building, 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 Seikinese mountain temple, trying to wake the gods from their long slumber. Now someone from her mother’s past is coming to upend her fate. Then the Dreadmount erupts, bringing with it an age of terror and violence.... Shannon skillfully grounds high-stakes fantasy action in human emotion and a mature exploration of duty, bodily autonomy, identity, and motherhood.

Library Reads says: “Fans of *The Priory of the Orange Tree* will be thrilled to revisit the intricately detailed world Shannon has created. In this standalone prequel, the stories of four women are spun out as the Dreadmount erupts and civilizations crumble. The large cast of characters is deftly handled, and readers will enjoy the fascinating mythology.” The March Indie Next Pick adds, “An unstoppable feminist force of magic and might. *A Day of Fallen Night* will have you burning through the pages like wyvern fire, leaving you wishing there was another 500 pages to devour.”

Sullivan, Connor. [Wolf Trap](#) (Atria \$28.99). I’m so delighted that young Sullivan, author of 2021’s exciting [Sleeping Bear](#) (\$9.99), gets this Starred Review: In this exhilarating thriller, U.S. President Angela Buchanan is on the brink of a major political victory with the imminent signing of a sweeping international climate-change agreement. But when “the world’s seven experimental ‘clean energy’ thorium molten salt reactors” simultaneously melt down, a special group of U.S. intelligence officials and operatives from multiple agencies and departments must try to find the conspirators responsible before the nations assemble in Davos, Switzerland, to finalize the treaty. Brian “Lobo” Rhome, once a paramilitary officer with Ground Branch, the CIA’s most elite covert ops force, and the haunted lone survivor of an al-Qaeda ambush in Pakistan, now hides in the Montana backcountry, trying to leave his military past behind.

Drawn back into the fold to enact revenge on the terrorist who slaughtered his comrades, Rhome finds himself in the center of the battle to save Buchanan and prevent a global war over fossil fuels. Sullivan’s clever rhetorical tricks will keep even savvy readers in the dark while he ratchets the tension ever higher. By the end, readers will be exhausted, breathless, and eager for further Ground Branch adventures.

Joining Connor is his dad Mark so we will have some copies of [Beneath a Scarlet Sky](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$27.95) for Mark to sign.

Swanson, Peter. [The Kind Worth Saving](#) (Harper \$29.99) plays with genre conventions in this twist-filled mystery. Private investigator and former poet Henry Kimball is tasked with the job of getting proof of infidelity from Joan Whalen’s husband, Richard. Always an uncomfortable job, it’s compounded by the fact that Henry knows Joan from his previous life as a school teacher, his teacher. The young Joan made him feel unease in school, and the feeling stayed when he met adult Joan. What should have been a simple case becomes much more complicated when Kimball finds two bodies in an uninhabited suburban home with a FOR SALE sign out front. I’m calling it a semi-sequel. Both Henry Kimball and Lily Kintner carry over from [The Kind Worth Killing](#) (\$18.99), but they’re dropped into a new story. A reader doesn’t really need to know what happened in *The Kind Worth Killing* to read this book. Its plot originated with the characters of Joan and Richard, and also the idea of bored teenagers at a resort hotel. It might be the kind of place where two teens who wouldn’t normally be friends, like a popular girl and a nerdy boy, might connect, and do some devilish things that carry into their adult lives where they can’t move past the adrenaline rush. I’m looking forward to connecting with Swanson once again on a March zoom.

Tata, AJ. [Total Empire](#) (St Martins \$28.99). When Sergeant Major Sylvester “Sly” Morgan is killed on a mission, his daughter, Zoey, tells General Garrett Sinclair that her father’s death wasn’t random. Morgan had recorded a high-level meeting between Chinese, American, and French diplomats as they spoke about a plan for a new global government. The “Chinese-U.S. Partnership”, or CUSP, intends to combine the world’s two largest economies and militaries to usher in a new era of partnership and leadership. But China’s offer has a deadline and penalties for noncompliance. As a safeguard, China has five high-tech hypersonic glide vehicles armed with nuclear weapons orbiting the Earth ready to strike. When Zoey disappears in Africa, seemingly while in pursuit of her father’s killer, Sinclair and Dagger Team are caught off-guard as they scramble to catch up. Without authorization, Sinclair takes Dagger Team into Dakhla, Morocco as he attempts to save his goddaughter’s life. With too many missions to complete and not enough information, Sinclair and team discover that the Chinese plan is nearly complete. As one nuclear glide vehicle misses Washington, DC but hits Loudoun County, Virginia, Sinclair’s mission in the Sahara is to stop the Chinese from using its ground based laser targeting system before they can more accurately launch the remaining four. Over the top military fiction...

Walker, Joss. [Master of Shadows](#) (Two Tales Press \$20). Now that JT Ellison has been to The Pen, for it is she who writes as “Joss Walker,” we have signed copies of Book Two in the

adventures of Jane Thorne, CIA Librarian, who operates out of the vault in the Vanderbilt University Library. These are great fun featuring magic and grimoires and spying and a change in the world order. Delightful, empowered women. We have a few of Jayne's debut in [Tomb of the Queen](#) (\$18.99), also signed, and 2 in [hardcover](#) (\$29.99).

Willig, Lauren. [Two Wars and a Wedding](#) (Harper \$29.99). Willig delivers a winning epic of war and friendship in the late 19th century. The nonlinear timeline begins with Betsy Hayes, a Smith College graduate and aspiring archaeologist, boarding a boat for Cuba in 1898, determined to stop her estranged friend, Ava, from taking a dangerous nursing post during the Spanish American War. Betsy had already witnessed the horror of the Greco-Turkish War, and though the details don't come out until later, Betsy believes her own life is of little value. In flashbacks to Athens, where Betsy had traveled two years earlier hoping to work on a dig, she meets Charles de Robecourt, a charming married archeologist who gives her a leg up (they also have an affair, and she falls in love with him). But Betsy's choice to become a nurse when war breaks out in Greece drives a wedge between her and Ava, who doesn't think Betsy is cut out for the work, and she faces further heartache involving Charles. Willig's strong character work and extensive research on the Smith College Relief Unit brings Betsy to vivid life. The harrowing battle details, too, are spot on, from the Spaniards' smokeless gunpowder to the menacing whine of a Mauser bullet. Readers will devour this riveting tale.

Winspear, Jacqueline. [The White Lady](#) (Harper \$29.99). In 1917, Elinor White, the heroine of this smart, nuanced mystery which has much in common with the Maisie Dobbs series, was working in a resistance network in German-occupied Belgium, where she, then 13, was living with her 15-year-old sister and British mother. Elinor later emigrated to England and served as a British intelligence agent. Now, in 1947, she lives quietly in Kent, staying aloof from the inhabitants of the tiny village of Shackleford until the arrival of Jim Mackie with his wife, Rose; and their three-year-old daughter, Susie. Jim has left London and taken work as a farmhand to break away from the crime family into which he was born. His brothers are now pressuring him to help them pull off their latest criminal operation. Trauma in Elinor's past has made her acutely sensitive to children in peril, and she can't resist trying to protect Susie and her parents from the Mackies. As Elinor uses her undercover skills and former intelligence contacts to try to foil the Mackie brothers' plans, her sleuthing has unexpected personal repercussions. The chapters illuminating Elinor's dramatic backstory add vulnerability to her characterization, enriching the suspenseful main narrative. As ever Winspear is comfortably at home in Southern England's countryside.

UNSIGNED EVENT BOOKS

Doolittle, Sean. [Device Free Weekend](#) (Grand Central \$28). A social media mogul invites six old college friends to his private island for a tech-free reunion. What could go wrong? Stephen Rollins is puzzled when he receives a fancy invitation from Ryan Cloverhill, his awkward Bardsley College ex-roommate and now founder and CEO of a popular Facebook-like social networking platform. It's been almost 20 years since any of the seven friends have seen each other. Why has Ryan now asked them—Stephen, who's never been married; his former love Emma,

who's divorced; straight, married social media influencers Beau and Lainie; and gay married couple Will and Perry—to spend an all-expenses-paid Labor Day weekend with him on remote Sham Rock near Puget Sound? After a joyous first evening of reminiscing over dinner and drinks, the group members wake up, hungover, to find the host gone. Also missing are the phones that they handed to Ryan before entering his house. Left in their place is a tablet with the words “Unlock Me!” on the screen. Think *The Glass Onion* with higher tech and a fuzzier resolution.

Matthews, Owen. [White Fox](#) (Knopf \$28). Alexander Vasin returns for the last installment of the trilogy that began with *Black Sun* (2019). Having stepped on some powerful toes in his previous adventure, *Red Traitor*(), Vasin has been assigned the command of a vestigial prison camp in the deep reaches of Siberia, where, insufficiently brutal by nature, he coexists uneasily with his more effective second-in-command. Then his KGB boss, General Orlov, saddles him with Andrei Fyodorov, a special-status prisoner to be kept secret and alive at any cost. When a gang of Chechen prisoners riots and takes over most of the camp, Vasin, Fyodorov, and a small group manage a tricky escape during which Vasin learns what is special about his prisoner. Fyodorov claims to have been ordered to recruit Lee Harvey Oswald to assassinate President John F. Kennedy and to have documentation proving it. Though he refused, feeling Oswald was too unstable, the assassination took place. The documentation is of interest to many people: Fyodorov wants to leverage an escape from the Soviet Union, a KGB faction wants to suppress it and kill Fyodorov, and Vasin sees in it an opportunity to get back to Moscow and possibly topple Orlov. After the escape from the Chechens, Vasin and Fyodorov conduct a cross-country hide-and-seek dance. “The adventure elements of the story, especially the riot and the Siberia trek, are riveting, sort of *Brute Force* meets *The Perfect Storm*.”

Sayles, John. [Jamie McGillivray: The Renegade's Journey](#) (Melville House \$29). **Our Signed copies sold out in a flash so we offer this at 10% discount!** Film director and novelist Sayles creates this strong outing the parallel stories of a Scottish rebel and a young Scottish woman. It opens with the 1745 Battle of Culloden. On one side, there's “pretender” Bonnie Prince Charlie and his motley army of Highlanders, Irish, Scots, and English deserters. They face off with the infamous Duke of Cumberland and his government forces. Jamie MacGillivray of Dunmaglas—rebel to the core—is captured by the redcoats, imprisoned in a squalid London jail, and transported to Maryland to clear land for his master under the gaze of a man enslaved from Africa. Meanwhile, Jenny Ferguson winds up in the Caribbean after she was falsely accused of helping the rebels, where she's forced to work as a cook. She eventually learns French and makes her way to Quebec, where Sayles sets more exciting battle scenes at the 1759 Battle of Quebec between French and (the victorious) British forces. Sayles has a knack for bringing his many characters to life, and he makes palpable the raw violence of war and the uncompromising inequality of the period. It's a worthy epic.” — *Publishers Weekly*. “Acclaimed screenwriter, director, and novelist Sayles blends his wide ranging narrative skills to great effect in this sprawling historical epic...Sayles' grand vision yields a rollicking yarn that will satisfy the discerning historical adventure reader.” — *Booklist*. And this 700 page delight is catnip for *Outlander* fans.

Sutanto, Jesse Q. [Vera Wong's Unsolicited Advice for Murderers](#) (Berkley \$17). Vera Wong's tea shop in San Francisco's Chinatown may have lost most of its customers and her Gen-Z son rarely returns her texts, but she manages to thrive on her own. After finding a dead body in her tea shop and stealing a piece of evidence from the crime scene, Vera uses her detective skills to try to solve the murder. Using tea and home-cooked meals, Vera draws close her four suspects. Each of them has a secret that connects them to the victim and might tear their newfound family apart. "Sutanto excels at creating lovably flawed characters, the mystery has plenty of twists to keep readers guessing, and Vera's case notes at the end of some chapters add humor to the deductive process. A mystery with warmth, humor, and many descriptions of delicious teas and foods. Recommended for fans of Sutanto and of character-driven cozy mysteries," says *LJ*. There is a hardcover edition as well: [Vera Wong's Unsolicited Advice for Murders](#) (Penguin \$27)

CLASSICS

Davis, Dorothy Salisbury. [A Gentle Murder](#) (Poisoned Pen \$14.99). First published in 1951 by MWA Grand Master Davis (1916–2014), now a Library of Congress Crime Classic annotated by Leslie S. Klinger, it opens on a sweltering August evening in New York City. Father Duffy, assistant pastor of St. Timothy's, one of Manhattan's largest Catholic parishes, is winding up his stint in the confessional when a final parishioner comes in, a hammer in his hand. "I think I killed someone," he tells the priest, and goes on to reveal clues to his identity and that of his victim. Duffy believes he has persuaded the young man to go to the police. When, the next day, the body of a young woman is discovered and no one comes forward to confess to the murder, Duffy decides to find the killer himself. His investigations run parallel to those of NYPD Det. Sgt. Ben Goldsmith, and eventually the two converge. A third strand of the story follows the murderer.

✎Farmer, Ben. [Death of a Bookseller](#) (Poisoned Pen \$14.99). First published in 1956, this outstanding bibliomystery from Farmer (1902–1964) opens with a chance encounter on a Middlesex road between Sgt. Jack Wigan, a policeman, and Michael Fisk, a rare bookseller. The inebriated Fisk has been celebrating the find of a lifetime: John Keats's own inscribed copy of his poem "Endymion." Fisk disabuses the sergeant of the idea that book collecting is a placid occupation, observing, "There are men and even women who would cheerfully kill me to get what I have found today." The two become friends, and Fisk instructs Wigan, who's looking for a new hobby, on the fine points of book collecting. Then Wigan arrives at Fisk's house one day to discover that he has been fatally stabbed in his library, a blood-spattered book about raising the dead beside him; the Keats volume has disappeared. Wigan plunges into investigating the murder, exploring whether the occult tome's presence next to the corpse was just coincidence. Farmer vividly evokes the rare book trade without sidetracking the central question of whodunit. Those who treasure books won't want to miss this reissue in the British Library Crime Classics series.

Among Kirkus Reviews Best Books of 2022:

✎Berkeley, Anthony. [Murder in the Basement](#) (Poisoned Pen \$14.99). Berkeley's tale of petty rivalries, affairs, and revenge plots is so deliciously entertaining... a pioneering example of the 'whowasdunin' that, like that corpse in the basement, richly

deserves exhumation." When two newlyweds discover that a corpse has been buried in the basement of their new home, a grueling case begins to trace the identity of the victim. With all avenues of investigation approaching exhaustion, a tenuous piece of evidence offers a chance for Chief Inspector Moresby and leads him to the amateur sleuth Roger Sheringham, who has recently been providing cover work in a school south of London. Desperate for evidence of any kind in the basement case, Moresby begins to sift through the manuscript of a satirical novel Sheringham has been writing about his colleagues at the school, convinced that amongst the colorful cast of teachers hides the victim—and perhaps their murderer. A novel pairing dark humor and intelligent detection work, this 1932 mystery is an example of a celebrated Golden Age author's most inventive work. This edition includes an introduction by CWA Diamond Dagger Award-winning author Martin Edwards.

✎Edwards. [Murder by the Book](#) (Poisoned Pen \$14.99). With Martin Edwards as librarian and guide to another British Library Crime Classic, delve into an irresistible stack of bibliomysteries, where "golden age-inspired puzzle masters [are] doing what they do best: bringing together readers, books, and felonies [in] perhaps the single best collection yet in this blue-chip series (Kirkus, Starred Review)." There is no better hiding place for clues—or red herrings—than inside the pages of a book. But in this world of resentful ghost writers, indiscreet playwrights, and unscrupulous book collectors, literary prowess is often a prologue to disaster. Readers should be warned that the most riveting tales often conceal the deadliest of secrets. Featuring much-loved Golden Age detectives Nigel Strangeways, Philip Trent, Detective Chief Inspector Roderick Alleyn, and others, a bookish puzzle threatens an eagerly awaited inheritance; a submission to a publisher recounts a murder that seems increasingly to be a work of nonfiction; an irate novelist puts a grisly end to the source of his writer's block.

COZY CRIMES

Adams, Ellery. [The Vanishing Type](#) (\$16.95). Not out until the end of March but for content see Signed Books for the hardcover.

Brannigan, Ellie. [Murder at an Irish Castle](#) (Crooked Lane \$18.99). What better for our **March Cozy Crimes Book of the Month** than a tale set in Ireland? Carlene O'Connor's delightful series has been a staple, as has Rhys Bowens' Molly Murphys, but here we have a series start. I like our heroine Rayne McGrath who hits her 30th birthday thinking her bridal wear designer business on Rodeo Drive and her engagement promise a secure future, one she'll love. And then boom, it all goes bust. Bust just in time for her to be pressured into flying to Ireland where her Uncle Nevin's will comes as a new surprise. He's left her the run-down family castle and worse, if she can't turn its finances around the whole village will go under too. And wait—maybe Uncle Nevin was murdered. It's not the set up that's wildly original, it's the solutions to the various vexing problems including his death that make this a standout. Also the characters such as Rayne's soap opera star mother, as well as some sound business details. I truly hope for sequels.

✎Brody, Frances. [A Mansion for Murder](#) (Crooked Lane \$28.99). Can it be #13 for this charming and engrossing historical series? Well, it's luck 13 as this is a superior entry. Ronnie Creswell—a maintenance worker at Yorkshire's Salts Mill—urges Kate in a

July 1930 letter to travel to the village of Saltaire so he can tell her a story about the past. But Ronnie dies in the mill's reservoir before her arrival, and Kate discovers that the mill's board chair Arnold Whitaker fears that it may not have been an accident, as Ronnie, who wished to marry Whitaker's daughter, appears to have been looking into skullduggery threatening Whitaker's livelihood. With the help of her associate, Jim Sykes, and housekeeper, Mrs. Sugden, Kate learns about potential industrial espionage, the disappearance of valuable silver and of a servant from the reputedly cursed Whitaker mansion, as well as the presence of some mysterious strangers at the mill. The melding of past and present, multifaceted characters, and a winning investigative team combine into a gripping and moving case.

Childs, Laura. [Lemon Curd Killer](#) (Penguin \$27). Genteel murder with recipes and with a charming Charleston setting are the hallmark of this series. Theodosia Browning, owner of the Indigo Tea Shop, doesn't seek out trouble, but it seems to find her. She and her colleagues are doing a lemon-themed tea at a local B&B featuring a rollout for Lemon Squeeze Couture, a project of Theodosia's friend Delaine Dish's sister, Nadine; both sisters are high-strung divas in the fashion world. When Theodosia finds Nadine dead in a bowl of lemon curd, she adds another investigation to a long list. Nadine, who was unpopular with the entire film and fashion crew, hadn't been getting on with her partners lately, either, and she'd had a big fight that very day with film director Eddie Fox. Theodosia's main man, homicide detective Pete Riley, fails once again to get her to ignore the latest murder. Promising Nadine's daughter that she'll look into the death, Theodosia sets out to learn more about the key players in the clothing business and figure out who might want Nadine dead....

Gerber, Daryl Wood. [A Flicker of a Doubt](#) (Kensington \$16.95). Making fairy gardens, and teaching crafters how to do the same, keeps Carmel-by-the-Sea shop owner Courtney Kelly busy—but sometimes she has to make time for a wee bit of detective work. With a theater foundation tea and an art show planned at Violet Vickers's estate, Courtney is hired to create charming fairy gardens for the event. It's not so charming, however, when her best friend Meaghan's ex-boyfriend turns out to be Violet's latest artistic protégé. Even worse, not long after Meaghan locks horns with him, his body is found in her yard, bludgeoned with an *objet d'*murder. There's a gallery of suspects, from an unstable former flame to an arts and crafts teacher with a sketchy past. But when the cops focus on Meaghan's business partner, who's like a protective older brother to her, and discover he also has a secret financial motive, Courtney decides to draw her own conclusions.

Kincaid, Harper. [A Midsummer Night's Scheme](#) (Crooked Lane \$26.99). Stepping into Kate Carlisle territory is this Book Binding Mystery series set in the small town of Vienna, Virginia. It may be curtains for bookbinder Quinn Caine's brother if she can't bring the lights down on the killer of Broadway star Chad Frivole, Vienna's prodigal son, who's found dead in his car with a sack full of snakes.

Meier, Leslie. [Irish Coffee Murder](#) (Kensington \$27). A trio of coffee-themed murders celebrates the wearing of the green. The novellas include step dancing and a ghost story.

☞ Moore, Ian. [Death and Croissants](#) (Sourcebooks \$16.99). Lesa writes of this debut, At 53, Richard Ainsworth, a former film

historian, only wants to lead a quiet life running his bed-and-breakfast in France's Loire Valley. His daughter is married, and he and his wife are separated. When his housekeeper informs him Monsieur Vincent Grandchamps, a guest, is missing, and there is a bloody handprint on the wall, Richard moans that these kind of things are not supposed to happen to him. But, another guest, Valerie d'Orcaay, is excited. The widowed Valerie is bored and looking for excitement, so she's eager to search for the missing man. She enlists a hesitant Richard to help search. When they learn the missing man is the brother of a local judge, and Vincent has a price on his head with a dangerous couple searching for him, the investigation takes an intriguing turn. Richard is reluctantly caught up in Valerie's drama, until someone kills Ava Gardner, his hen. Now, even the timid Richard is willing to launch a dangerous search for the missing man, because no one messes with his beloved chickens. The charming mystery, released in 2021 in the UK, is a fast-paced, witty story for those who enjoy dry British humor. "Richard Osman meets Sherlock Holmes rampaging through the charming Loire Valley in this amusing book."

Nagendra, Harini. [Murder Under a Red Moon](#) (Pegasus \$26.95). Nagendra's debut, [The Bangalore Detectives Club](#) (\$16.95), a 2022 Cozy Crimes Book of the Month, was named a Best Book of the Year by the *NY Times*. This superb sequel, set in 1921 Bangalore, "plunges amateur sleuth Kaveri Murthy, a student of mathematics and admirer of Sherlock Holmes, into a case involving the family of her physician husband, Ramu. Kaveri's mother-in-law, Bhargavi, beseeches her to use her skills to help a cousin of Bhargavi's, Shanthi Sharma. Shanthi's husband's factory, Sampangi Mills, is facing unexpected financial problems, and Shanthi suspects her daughter's fiancé of embezzling from the business. Kaveri reluctantly agrees to review the accounts to see if she can validate Shanthi's suspicion, only to wind up probing the shooting murder of a person connected with Sampangi Mills, on whose corpse is mysteriously found Kaveri's magnifying glass chain that went missing earlier. Ramu assists in the digging, along with a motley group of allies, including a Muslim policeman's wife. Assured pacing matches equally assured prose, and Nagendra brings the political tensions of India's colonial period to life without overwhelming the crafty whodunit plot. Fans of Abir Mukherjee's Wyndham and Banerjee novels will find much to like."—*PW* Starred Review

Neubauer, Erica Ruth. [Intrigue in Istanbul](#) (Kensington \$27). Signed April 1. See Signed books for this delightful historical cozy.

O'Connor, Carlene. [Murder at an Irish Bakery](#) (Kensington \$27 SIGNED). At the start of O'Connor's excellent ninth Irish Village mystery, a protester shouts, "Join the health revolution. Sugar is not your friend," outside Pie Pie Love, "Kilbane's best bakery housed in a historic flour mill," where a reality baking show is about to be filmed over the coming week. "Neither is noise-pollution before coffee," thinks Gardaí Siobhán O'Sullivan, who's part of the security team for the show. The anti-sugar protestor collapses, possibly from an allergic reaction, after one of the contestants, Aoife McBride (aka "the Queen baker of Ireland"), puts makeup on his face for the camera. Later, a representative of the show's anonymous sponsor creates complications by providing the contestants with what he calls "secret weapons," which could be "a special

ingredient, a new piece of equipment, or a coveted recipe.” When one of the contestants dies under mysterious circumstances, Siobhán investigates, even as the show must go on. Distinctive, captivating characters match a gripping plot full of surprises. O’Connor reinforces her place among the top rank of cozy writers. Here is a link to all the [Irish Village Mysteries](#) by O’Connor so far—perfect for a March reading binge.

Sutanto, Jesse Q. [Vera Wong’s Unsolicited Advice for Murder](#) (Penguin \$17). See [Unsigned Event Books](#) for a review.

Tector, Amy. [Speak for the Dead: A Dominion Archives Mystery](#) (Turner \$30.99). Tector’s strong sequel to 2022’s [The Foulest Things](#) (\$15.99), a 2022 Cozy Crimes Book of the Month, opens at Canada’s historic Dominion Archives, where Ontario coroner Cate Spencer has been called to the scene of an apparent suicide. Hanging from a ceiling pipe in a nitrate film storage facility is the body of 23-year-old Molly Johnson, an archives employee. The police are eager for Cate to rule the death a suicide, thus relieving them of the responsibility to investigate, but she’s troubled by some anomalies, including the lack of signs that Molly struggled before dying. Beset by doubts about her own objectivity, Cate worries that she wants a murder to probe to avoid dealing with her emotional challenges after the recent death of her physician brother in a plane crash while working for Medical Aid International in the Congo. Indications that foul play, linked to the “biggest land deal in Ottawa history,” may have led to Molly’s death thicken the plot. Tector smoothly balances her lead’s struggles with alcohol in the wake of her brother’s death with developments in the well-crafted mystery. Temperance Brennan fans will be pleased.

✦Winters, Mary. [Murder in Postscript](#) (Penguin \$17). Here’s Lesa on another debut: In 1860 London, Amelia Amesbury secretly longs for adventure. The daughter of an innkeeper, she married a man with a degenerative disease, and was widowed after just two years. It was only after she accepted his marriage proposal that she learned he was an Earl from one of the wealthiest families in London. To alleviate her boredom, the Countess Amesbury answers letters addressed to “Lady Agony,” her secret alter ego, providing advice about love and life. Then one of her readers asks to meet, saying she’s a maid who witnessed the murder of her mistress. Amelia sneaks out, but she’s followed by her late husband’s friend, Simon, the Marquis of Bainbridge. When she finds a woman’s body, she can’t reveal her identity, so Simon calls the police. Now, Amelia is stuck with a partner in her investigation. She’s convinced the woman was murdered because of her knowledge and letter to Lady Agony. Amelia won’t give up until she learns the identity of the maid and her mistress, and whether their deaths were murder. The atmosphere of Victorian London with its class differences are essential elements in this delightful character-driven historical mystery for fans of Katharine Schellman or Dianne Freeman.

NEW IN HARDCOVER

There is a tsunami of hardcovers, fiction and non, out in March. I have covered our Event books and some categories like Classics and Cozies. Also pulled our Paperback Picks together. If I can read more volumes during the month I will do an extra Booknews or include some in April. I also drew upon some Indie Next nominations by other booksellers, and some Library Reads by librarians, as they are often the most visible books for the month.

Atwood, Margaret. [Old Babes in the Wood: Stories](#) (Knopf \$30). Atwood is, of course, one of the most celebrated Anglophone writers working today. She has been nominated for the Booker Prize six times and has won it twice—for *The Blind Assassin* (2000) and *The Testaments* (2019). *The Handmaid’s Tale* (1985) is a groundbreaking work of science fiction and major television. Her new collection of short stories is the first since *Stone Mattress* (2014)

Barker, Brooke. [How Do Meerkats Order Pizza?](#) (Simon & Schuster \$19.99). Karen recommends this book for Young Readers: It is said to be «Wild Facts about Animals and the Scientists Who Study Them. Did you know that crows never forget a face? Or that Jaguars have a favorite cologne? Have you ever wondered how to pet a yeti crab? Or whether dogs can tell if you’re smiling? And just what is a burrowing bettong?” It’s a combination of education with a humorous presentation that would appeal to both children and adults,

Casati, Costanza. [Clytemnestra](#) (Sourcebooks \$26.99). “This triumphant retelling of Greek legend traces Clytemnestra’s life through her childhood in warring Sparta to her marriage and the end of the Trojan War. Casati fully fleshes out the mythical queen’s character—fierce and unyielding but also soft and mournful. For readers of Madeline Miller’s historical fiction.”—Library Reads

Chang, Janie. [The Porcelain Moon](#) (Harper \$27.99). France, 1918. In the final days of the First World War, a young Chinese woman, Pauline Deng, runs away from her uncle’s home in Paris to evade a marriage being arranged for her in Shanghai. To prevent the union, she needs the help of her cousin Theo, who is working as a translator for the Chinese Labor Corps in the French countryside. In the town of Noyelles-sur-Mer, Camille Roussel is planning her escape from an abusive marriage, and to end a love affair that can no longer continue. When Camille offers Pauline a room for her stay, the two women become friends. But it’s not long before Pauline uncovers a perilous secret that Camille has been hiding from her. As their dangerous situation escalates, the two women are forced to make a terrible decision that will bind them together for the rest of their lives. Set against the little-known history of the 140,000 Chinese workers brought to Europe as non-combatant labor during WWI, *The Porcelain Moon* is a tale of forbidden love, identity and belonging and an excellent choice to read during Women’s History Month. Plus, ta da, it’s not a WWII story!

✦Clements, Oliver. [All the Queen’s Spies](#) (Atria \$27.99). Set in 1583, Clements’s strong third Agents of the Crown thriller featuring real-life mathematician, occultist, and alchemist John Dee opens with an arresting sentence: “When John Dee thinks about it later, when he is crouched covered in blood in the stern of a fluyt and watching the coast of Kent disappear forever into the sea mist, he wonders again why he had ever supposed, even for a solitary instant, that this could or would have ever ended otherwise.” Flashbacks reveal the mission that put Dee in this situation. Spymaster Francis Walsingham wants Dee to befriend Count Olbrecht Laski, a confidante of Rudolf, the Holy Roman Emperor, who’s an admirer of Dee’s. That relationship is hoped to lead to the count serving as Walsingham’s eyes and ears in the emperor’s court, as England remains under threat from an ally of the Holy Roman Empire. Dee’s efforts take him to Prague

and place his life in peril. Clements's version of a vulnerable Dee contrasts nicely with fictional heroes of this period, and he maintains a high level of tension throughout. For fans of S.J. Parris, PF Chisholm, maybe CJ Samson readers.

☞Doherty, Paul. [Dark Queen Wary](#) (Severn \$20.99). Set in 1472, Doherty's strong fourth Margaret Beaufort finds Margaret Beaufort at the Moor, a beautiful palace with an eerie maze and a sinister history, where people associated with the victorious Yorkist side are starting to get murdered. With the Lancaster faction crushed at the recent Battle of Barnet, Margaret, the mother of the last Lancaster heir, Henry Tudor, is in a vulnerable position, made even worse when an imposter shows up, claiming to be her son returned from exile, and the king, Edward IV, insists that she house him. Beaufort's trusted clerk, Christopher Urswicke, counsels her on how to avoid incurring the king's wrath while investigating the murders at the Moor, which began with a Yorkist mercenary and are now moving on to the members of the personal guard of Richard Neville, who switched from York to Lancaster and died at the Battle of Barnet because his guards failed to protect him. Doherty does a fine job evoking the brutal atmosphere of the era, in both rich palaces and crime-infested London streets. Those familiar with the players in the Wars of the Roses and all the dynastic plotting, or who just love medieval mysteries, should grab this. I add that the history of the Beauforts (hence Lancastrians, then Tudors) is dramatically painted in Anya Seton's brilliant novel [Katherine](#) (\$17.99) which I cannot recommend highly enough!

☞Fawcett, Heather. [Emily Wilde's Encyclopaedia of Faeries](#) (Del Rey \$28). A prickly professor travels to a Scandinavian village to study the faerie but finds adventure instead in the whimsical, romantic fantasy *Emily Wilde's Encyclopaedia of Faeries*, the first adult novel from Canadian author Fawcett. Cambridge professor Emily Wilde has devoted herself to compiling a comprehensive encyclopaedia of all known species of faerie. She plans to spend her time in tiny, far-flung Hrafnsvik collecting stories about the local faerie folk from the townsfolk. She is soon joined by uninvited coworker Wendell Bumbleby, "my dearest friend, which is only true in the sense that he is my sole friend." Emily is a brilliant and thorough researcher, but her indifference to social cues offends the locals, while handsome, lazy Bumbleby charms them. As Emily gathers sources, she makes a deal with a brownie, becomes embroiled in the misfortunes of a family with a changeling child and sets a dangerous enchantment in motion when she finds a fairy tree. The mysteries pile up, but the greatest secret of all belongs to irritating, beguiling Bumbleby, whose true motivation for following Emily will upend her life. This funny, imaginative romp presents a fairy realm filled with wonder and delight, and Fawcett avoids making her subject too twee. The fairy creatures here display the blend of nonsensical logic and cruelty that is endemic to older, unsanitized folklore.

☞Ferguson, Sarah. [A Most Intriguing Lady](#) (Harper \$29.99). Yes, this is Fergie, and I am skeptical it isn't ghost written, or collaboratively authored. I am not endorsing it but regardless it gets this Starred Review: "This superior blend of mystery and romance from the Duchess of York introduces Lady Mary Montagu Douglas Scott, the younger daughter of close friends of Queen Victoria, who chafes at being expected to adhere to her era's rigid restrictions on women. She gets an opportunity to exercise her intellect and knowledge of human nature in

1872 when her parents host a party at a family home on the Scottish Borders. When a guest is distraught by the theft of her jewel-festooned brooch, Lady Mary solves the mystery, and this personally rewarding experience leads to other cases. By 1875, her reputation for handling sensitive inquiries discreetly—including probing the theft of charitable funds and the burglary of an aristocrat's safe concealed in her sitting room—has led to a secret life as a problem-solver for high society. Her detective work coincides with her growing interest in Colonel Walter Trefusis, a 34-year-old war veteran who leads a covert life of his own. The author never lets the romantic plotline dominate and plausibly depicts the struggles of a capable woman who empowers herself to achieve her own potential. Claudia Gray fans will welcome a sequel."

Gomez-Jurado, Juan. [Red Queen](#) (St Martins\$27.99). At the start of this nail-biting thriller, the first in a trilogy, Spanish author Gómez-Jurado, hooks the reader with the tantalizing opening sentence: "Antonia Scott allows herself to think of suicide no more than three minutes a day. Beleaguered by crime, the European Union has created the secret Red Queen project, the name inspired by Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, designed to "adapt continually to keep up with the bad guys." One of their tools is Antonia Scott, a non-cop who has a history of providing insights into the criminal mind. She is the smartest person in the world, and she never forgets anything. Her husband is in a coma for which she wrongly blames herself. Police pair her up with Inspector Jon Gutiérrez, an overweight gay cop whose career is in a peck of trouble for planting heroin to gain a conviction. Despite a chasm of differences, they quickly accept each other and work together to track down a criminal named Ezekiel who has slowly drained the blood from a young man's carotid artery. Then Ezekiel kidnaps Carla Ortiz, the daughter of the world's richest man. Ransom is out of the question because he just wants to teach the mogul a lesson. Antonia believes that Ezekiel kidnaps and kills for a very specific reason, probably for power.... The next two in the trilogy are not yet scheduled as they need to be translated from the Spanish.

Gopnik, Adam. [The Real Work: On the Mystery of Mastery](#) (Norton \$30). Here's a different kind of mystery to explore. The longtime *New Yorker* writer investigates how people master a craft, something he tries in areas he had always thought beyond his abilities. He finds that mastering a skill is a process of methodically breaking down and building up, piece by piece—and that true mastery, in any field, requires mastering other people's minds.

Hamilton, Laurell K. [Smolder](#) (Penguin \$28). Vampire hunter Anita Blake is no stranger to killing monsters. It's part of her job as a Preternatural U.S. Marshal. Anita is engaged to Jean-Claude, the new vampire king of America. Humans think she's gone over to the side of the monsters. The vampires fear that their new king has fallen under the spell of the most powerful necromancer in a thousand years. In the midst of wedding preparations—including getting Edward, aka U.S. Marshal Ted Forrester, fitted as best man—Anita gets a call that the local police need her expertise at a brutal murder scene linked to a nationwide slaughter of vampires and humans, dubbed the Sunshine Murders. But there is more than just a murderer to catch: an ancient evil has arrived in St. Louis....

Hart, Emilia. [Weyward](#) (St. Martins \$27.99). “Men are always trying to dominate the Weyward women, but they always fail, because the Weyward women can call birds to their aid. This matriarchal clan of witches is almost broken until Kate, who stars in the most recent of the three timelines. *Practical Magic* meets Margaret Atwood in an unflinching feminist fantasy that is boiling over with rage and loaded with empowerment.”

Jiménez, Claire. [What Happened to Ruthy Ramirez?](#) (Grand Central \$28). “Jiménez’s debut is funny and moving. A Puerto Rican girl living in Staten Island, Ruthy, disappeared on the way home from school. Years later, her sisters think their long missing sister is potentially alive and cast on a reality TV show, and they set out to bring her home.

Johnston, Sarah Iles, [Gods & Mortals](#) (Princeton University \$35). Compare to Rick Riordan’s work for kids. Some of the mortals in these stories are cursed by the gods, while luckier ones are blessed with resourcefulness and resilience. Gods transform themselves into animals, humans, and shimmering gold to visit the earth in disguise—where they sometimes transform offending mortals into new forms, too: a wolf, a spider, a craggy rock. Other mortals—both women and men—use their wits and strength to conquer the monsters created by the gods—gorgons, dragons, harpies, fire-breathing bulls. Featuring captivating original illustrations by Tristan Johnston, *Gods and Mortals* highlights the rich connections between the different characters and stories, draws attention to the often-overlooked perspectives of female characters, and stays true both to the tales and to the world in which ancient people lived. The result is an engaging and entertaining new take on the Greek myths. “This book is a triumph! . . . [A] magnificent retelling of the Greek myths.”—Alexander McCall Smith

Jones, Dan. [Essex Dogs](#) (Viking \$28). What with war now, and World War I and II stories so prevalent, let’s look back at medieval conflict. July 1346. Ten men land on the beaches of Normandy. They call themselves the Essex Dogs: an unruly platoon of archers and men-at-arms led by a battle-scarred captain whose best days are behind him. The fight for the throne of the largest kingdom in Western Europe has begun. Heading ever deeper into enemy territory toward Crécy, this band of brothers knows they are off to fight a battle that will forge nations, and shape the very fabric of human lives. But first they must survive a bloody war in which rules are abandoned and chivalry itself is slaughtered. Rooted in historical accuracy and told through an unforgettable cast, *Essex Dogs* delivers the stark reality of medieval war on the ground—and shines a light on the fighters and ordinary people caught in the storm just as the Ukrainians are caught as I write this.

☞ Kelly, Erin. [The Skeleton Key](#) (Hodder UK \$28). I absolutely love this enchanting novel, thus our **March British Crime Book of the Month**. It’s intriguing, original, and beautifully crafted by an author who sells well in the UK but has never quite caught on here. This may be her breakout book. So I absolutely agree with this Starred Review that emphasizes its treasure hunt and bookish aspects: Exquisite prose and multilayered characters lift this exceptional novel from British author Kelly. Frank Churcher is bringing out a new edition of the illustrated book that made him rich and famous: *The Golden Bones*, “a collision of pretty pictures, mythology and logic puzzles,” is about a murdered

woman whose bones are scattered across England and contains clues to the location of small gold replicas of the woman’s bones. A bestseller since its first publication 50 years earlier, it has become an obsession for legions of fanatics who call themselves Bonehunters. Frank has asked his middle-aged daughter, Nell, to return home to London to be part of a documentary film to kick off publicity for the new edition. Things don’t go as planned, and the police are soon investigating a murder. Flashbacks add depth and raise intriguing questions as the present-day action builds to a complex and satisfying resolution. Full of reflections on ego and art, love and loss, this atypical thriller shows Kelly writing at the top of her game. I can compare this to the work of Janice Hallett.

Kingfisher, T. [A House with Good Bones](#) (Forge \$26.99). *PW* gives this a Star: “Hugo and Nebula Award winner Kingfisher goes Southern gothic (Waffle House visits included) in this hilarious and gruesome contemporary horror novel. After archaeoentomologist Sam Montgomery’s dig gets put on hold, she drives to her deceased grandmother’s house in rural North Carolina to spend some time with her mom. The vulture waiting for her on the mailbox doesn’t seem like a good omen, nor does the strange absence of insect life; her mother’s anxious, odd behavior; or Sam’s new, mysterious bouts of sleep paralysis. Sam digs into her family history in the hopes of discovering medical information and scientific explanations for the weirdness—but when Sam steps out for a breather, she finds a jar of teeth hidden beneath bushes and cultures circling the garden. She will need to go digging for the truth to find out what’s frightening her mom in her own home. Sam makes a charmingly kooky narrator, and Kingfisher remains the best in the business at using horror and fantasy to explore abusive relationships and how to escape them. Horror fans who like a little whimsy on the way to a chilling climax won’t want to miss this.”

Library Reads adds: It’s deliciously creepy with a shocking twist, but also has incredibly sweet family dynamics (not including the haunting grandmother), an excellent level of humor to balance the tension, and, as a former archaeologist, I can say it has one of the best fictional portrayals of an archaeologist that I’ve come across.”

Kotzwinkle, William. [Bloody Martini](#) (Blackstone \$26.99). Tommy Martini receives a voicemail that sends him racing home from the monastery. His best friend is murdered while leaving a message: “Take care of Bridget. My heart is in your hands.” In this dynamic mystery thriller and standalone sequel to [Felonious Monk](#) (\$18.99), the newly committed monk is about to learn the hard way that you can’t go home again. Tommy may have found peace at a Mexican monastery after killing someone in a bar fight, but hearing someone shoot Finn changes all that. Tommy can no longer help Finn, but he might be able to help Bridget, Finn’s wife, and unravel the who and why behind Finn’s demise. But avenging Finn means returning to the Rust Belt town of Coalville, the scene of his own crime and where the family of the guy Tommy sent to the morgue seeks payback. Making matters worse, the bullies of his youth are now running Coalville. One such bully is a district attorney who enlists local police to test the monk’s vow of nonviolence. Tommy’s temper gets a little out of control and bodies start to pile up long before he’s able to find Bridget or Finn’s murderer. Kotzwinkle’s second visitation with our tough guy turned monk is more nuanced. Tommy still wrestles with his violent past, but the author makes the character

face his current predicament and acknowledge the need for smarter choices to ensure his own survival. Luckily, none of the dark humor is sacrificed during the navel-gazing.

Landay, William. [All That is Mine I Carry with Me](#) (Random \$28.99). Part crime drama, part psychological suspense, Landay's new novel, long-awaited since 2012's [Defending Jacob](#) (\$17.99), has an ingenious plot and a cast of comprehensive, accurately depicted characters. Library Reads: "The Larkin siblings face years of sadness and questions after their mother disappears. Many speculate their father killed her, but he's always maintained his innocence. What is the truth? The story spans several decades and features multiple narrators, including the mother. The characters are deftly explored and are very raw and real. And Indie Next: "Fans of Megan Goldin and Hank Phillippi Ryan and those who like open endings, complex plots, stories about family dynamics, and convoluted whodunits will devour this novel."

LaValle, Victor. [Lone Women](#) (One World \$27). Blue skies, empty land—and enough wide-open space to hide a horrifying secret. A woman with a past, a mysterious trunk, a town on the edge of nowhere, and a bracing new vision of the American West. Library Reads: "A homestead far from prying eyes offers Adelaide a fresh start in 1915 Montana. She makes a few female friends—after all, lone women need to stick together. But a secret that won't be contained or silenced soon threatens her new life. Horror mixed with resilient characters in complex relationships make this a must-read for fans of *A Dangerous Business* and *When Women Were Dragons*."

Lowry, Lois. [The Windeby Puzzle](#) (Harper \$16.99). This is targeted to ages 10+ but I think there is much adult readers, especially you who like historical fiction, will like/learn too. A venerated author interweaves an archaeological mystery—the 1952 discovery in Germany of an adolescent mummified in a peat bog two millennia ago—with the stories it inspired her to write. The book opens by providing scientific and historical context from similar finds elsewhere and explaining how peat bogs preserve bodies and the way radiocarbon dating works. Lowry describes how she felt inspired to create a story for the Windeby Girl, whom she names Estrild, and whose tale follows, told in two linked stories. Estrild persuades Varick, a sickly boy, to teach her warrior skills forbidden to girls. When the druid priests next select the boys who will become warriors, Estrild's determined she will stand with them. A middle section describes how recent scientific discoveries changed theories about the Windeby Girl, leading Lowry to write the second iteration centering Varick. In the final part of the book, Lowry explains how it felt to tell the stories of these young protagonists and why she was compelled to do so. While both stories feature vintage Lowry strengths—strong worldbuilding, compassionate characters—it's the sections explaining her authorial decisions that stand out and will encourage readers to reflect upon how history is told and about whom.

⌘Lumsden, Katie. [The Secrets of Hartwood Hall](#) (Dutton \$27). Wow, this is a classic Agatha Christie country house mystery set in Victorian England with Gothic overtones (a crumbling and remote country estate) and a pleasingly feminist slant. I read every word. **The Signed UK edition will be our April Historical Fiction Book of the Month so club members should not order this US edition. There are only enough UK editions for club members.**

It's 1852 and Margaret Lennox, a young widow, is offered a position as governess at Hartwood Hall. She quickly accepts, hoping this isolated country house will allow her to leave her difficult past behind although she herself obsesses over it. Cut off from the village, Margaret soon starts to feel there's something odd about her new home, despite her growing fondness for her bright, affectionate pupil, Louis. There are strange figures in the dark, tensions between servants and an abandoned, forbidden east wing to the Hall. Even stranger is the local gossip surrounding Mrs. Eversham, Louis's widowed mother, who is deeply distrusted in the village as visits to Sunday church underline. Margaret finds distraction in a forbidden relationship with the gardener, Paul. But despite his efforts to reassure her, she is certain that everyone here has something to hide besides herself...and she is right.

Penaluna, Regan. [How to Think Like a Woman](#) (Grove \$28). In honor of March's Women's History Month, this: a young philosopher examines her own internalized misogyny and slowness to question why there were no "great" women philosophers and led to her discovery that indeed there were many women great thinkers, such as Mary Wollstonecraft and her predecessors, whose work was silenced, pushed aside, or ignored by the patriarchal academy.

Spence-Ash, Laura. [Beyond That, the Sea](#) (Celadon \$28). Quietly stunning, with finely drawn characters and vivid descriptions, *Beyond That, the Sea* is a gorgeous, elegiac, novel that follows a young woman whose life and love take her across the Atlantic during World War II. At this debut novel's center is Beatrix Thompson, whose parents, Millie and Reg, make the heart-wrenching decision to send her, at age 11, across the ocean to escape the Blitz in London. Bea lands with a well-off family, the Gregorys, who live near Boston and spend summers on a private island in Maine. She becomes close to the two boys, William and Gerald, and her bond with them and their parents—deep and complicated—will endure. The war itself lives in the novel's background; its carnage is the catalyst for Bea's time in the U.S., but its details are emphasized less than the characters' day-to-day experiences. In later years, Bea and the others build new relationships and discover new passions, but are still bound by those years spent together during the war. When Bea finally returns to Boston, she finds both the reliable love of a family who consider her theirs, and some unexpected insights into her formative years with them.

Walls, Jeanette. [Hang the Moon](#) (Scribner \$28). *Most folk thought Sallie Kincaid was a nobody who'd amount to nothing. Sallie had other plans.* Sallie Kincaid is the daughter of the biggest man in a small town, the charismatic Duke Kincaid. Born at the turn of the 20th century into a life of comfort and privilege, Sallie remembers little about her mother who died in a violent argument with the Duke. By the time she is just eight years old, the Duke has remarried and had a son, Eddie. While Sallie is her father's daughter, sharp-witted and resourceful, Eddie is his mother's son, timid and cerebral. When Sallie tries to teach young Eddie to be more like their father, her daredevil coaching leads to an accident, and Sallie is cast out. Nine years later, she returns, determined to reclaim her place in the family. That's a lot more complicated than Sallie expected, and she enters a world of conflict and lawlessness. Per Library Reads: "Walls' latest coming-of-age

novel about love, loss, and the grey areas of the law is set in Prohibition-era small-town Virginia. This is a must-read for anyone who craves fiction that has unforgettable characters, a relatively quick pace for literary fiction, and a well-researched background. For fans of Sue Monk Kidd and Kaye Gibbons.”

Winslow, De’Shawn Charles. [Decent People](#) (Bloomsbury \$28). As far as endearing, small-town amateur elder sleuths go, Agatha Christie’s Miss Marple has some competition in Josephine “Jo” Wright, who features in Winslow’s splendid second novel, a mystery in which there’s a lot more at stake than finding a murderer. It’s March 1976 as the novel begins, and 60-year-old Jo has just returned to her home on the “Black side” of West Mills, N.C., after two weeks away. There’s news, and not the good kind: her fiancé, Olympus “Lymp” Seymore, is suspected of fatally shooting his three half-siblings—the Harmons, as they’re known—in the stately home the three of them share. Unfortunately for Lymp, someone overheard the heated remarks he made about his half-siblings just prior to the murders. While Jo’s hunger for justice compels her to look for the killer, she privately concedes another motive: finding the perpetrator would reassure her that it’s not Lymp. *Decent People* revisits the turf and several characters that Winslow introduced in his debut novel, *In West Mills*. This time around, he hands off the novel’s point of view to various characters, white and Black, who—for reasons of their own—had issues with the Harmons. In so doing, he both fortifies his mystery and tells these characters’ stories, all of which intersect and are tainted by the triple scourge of racism, classism and homophobia. It’s fair to say that in West Mills, the canal, which acts as a color line, courses with bad blood in both directions.

OUR MARCH LARGE PAPERBACK PICKS

Clark, Julie. [The Lies I Tell](#) (\$16.99). *Meg Williams. Maggie Littleton. Melody Wilde*. Different names for the same person, depending on the town, depending on the job. She’s a con artist who erases herself to become whoever you need her to be—a college student. A life coach. A real estate agent. Nothing about her is real. She slides alongside you and tells you exactly what you need to hear, and by the time she’s done, you’ve likely lost everything. Kat Roberts has been waiting ten years for the woman who upended her life to return. And now that she has, Kat is determined to be the one to expose her. But as the two women grow closer, Kat’s long-held assumptions begin to crumble, leaving Kat to wonder who Meg’s true target is. Clark pens a twisted domestic thriller that dives deep into the psyches and motivations of these two women. Her debut, [The Last Flight](#) (\$16.99), was a 2020 First Mystery Club Book of the Month and both are good reads for fans of Mary Kubica, Clare Mackintosh.

Dave, Laura. [The Last Thing He Told Me](#) (\$17.99). Every once in awhile I miss something and here, I was impressed but not enough to dig in for Signed copies. Sigh. Anyway it’s been a huge bestseller in hardcover and now finally we get a paperback. “Dave pulls off something that feels both new and familiar: a novel of domestic suspense that unnerves, then reassures. This is the antithesis of the way novels like *Gone Girl* or *My Lovely Wife* are constructed; the surface is ugly, the situation disturbing, but almost everyone involved is basically good underneath it all. Dave has given readers what many people crave right now—a thoroughly engrossing yet comforting distraction.”—BookPage

Egan, Jennifer. [The Candy House](#) (\$17.99). Egan returns to the interlocking narrative structure of *A Visit from the Goon Squad*, once again embracing the distilled power of short fiction in individual chapters while subtly allowing the distinct, imaginative parts to crescendo into a sterling sum. “A fast-paced polyvoiced romp thru America in the grip of a sinister tech that allows others into your mind. EEK!” —Margaret Atwood on a 2022 Notable New Fiction Book of the Month.

Griffiths, Elly. [The Locked Room](#) (\$18.99). Three years after her mother’s death, forensic archaeologist Ruth Galloway is finally sorting through her things when she finds a curious relic: a decades-old photograph of her own Norfolk cottage—taken before she lived there—with a peculiar inscription on the back. The only clue is written on the back of the photo: Dawn, 1963. Ruth returns to Norfolk determined to solve the mystery, but then Covid rears its ugly head. Ruth and her daughter are locked down in their cottage, attempting to continue with work and home-schooling. Happily, the house next door is rented by a nice woman called Zoe, who they become friendly with while standing on their doorsteps clapping for caregivers. Nelson, meanwhile, is investigating a series of deaths of women that may or may not be suicide. When he links the deaths to an archaeological discovery, he breaks curfew to visit the cottage where he finds Ruth chatting to her neighbor whom he remembers as a caregiver who was once tried for murdering her employer. Only then her name wasn’t Zoe—it was Dawn! See Signed books for the latest Ruth Galloway.

Ide, Joe. [The Goodbye Coast](#) (\$17.99). Ide brings Philip Marlowe to modern-day LA in this hard-boiled noir PI yarn. Marlowe is a private investigator in modern-day Los Angeles. His father, Emmet, is an alcoholic cop still mourning the loss of his beloved wife and wishing his son had become a cop. The famous but fast-fading movie star Kendra James reluctantly hires Marlowe to find her 17-year-old runaway stepdaughter, Cody. That’s not a hard task, but the two women hate each other, and both deserve it. Kendra’s husband, Terry, had been shot to death two weeks earlier, and she hardly cares one bit. The guy was just a washed-up moviemaker anyway. And Cody won’t come home, accusing Kendra of killing her dad. Emmet and Marlowe have serious father-son issues, but Dad gives him critical help, especially by sheltering and protecting Cody. Then Marlowe unsuccessfully tries to turn down a second case: Englishwoman Ren Stewart’s young son, Jeremy, has been kidnapped by his father, and Ren is desperate to bring him back to London. “The tension builds as the two plotlines intersect with the aid of Russian and Armenian gangsters. Every character has great lines, and the descriptions alone make the story worth reading,” says Kirkus in its Starred Review. Ide will bring us [Fixit](#) (\$28 Signed), an IQ novel, in mid May.

Kanon, Joseph. [The Berlin Exchange](#) (\$17.99). American physicist Martin Keller was one of the scientists entrusted with the secrets of the Manhattan Project, but he later betrayed that trust by sharing top-secret plans and drawings he memorized with East German intelligence. Keller continued his spying at Harwell, England’s analogue to Los Alamos, until he was found out and imprisoned in 1953. Out of the blue in 1963, Keller’s freed in Berlin as part of a British–East German spy swap, but a gunman almost takes him out at Checkpoint Charlie. Once safe in East Berlin, he reunites with his ex-wife, Sabine, and their 11-year-

old son, but he's dismayed to learn Sabine has a terminal illness. Meanwhile, Keller wonders why he was set free and why an assassin tried to kill him. Kanon balances a convincing portrayal of spycraft with fleshed-out characters, while vividly depicting the impact of secret lives on the loved ones of those engaged in espionage. Fans of Len Deighton's Bernard Samson series will be pleased.

Miranda, Megan. [The Last to Vanish](#) (\$17.99). Cutter's Pass, known as "the most dangerous town in North Carolina" because of a string of missing persons cases over the years, has been a refuge for the past decade for Abby Lovett. Abby loves her position as manager of the upscale Passage Inn, though the mountain resort town's permanent residents still treat her as an outsider. She has never been frightened by the urban legend surrounding the disappearances, the most recent being that of journalist Landon West, who came to Cutter's Pass to write about those who were lost without a trace before vanishing himself. Four months later, Landon's brother, Trey, arrives, determined to get some answers. Trey's questions stir up the town sheriff, the local tavern's owners, and a young man who leads ghost tours, making Abby feel even more like an outsider because she's constantly left out of conversations and others don't take her questions seriously. The tension rises after Abby discovers what may be a key piece of evidence. Evocative descriptions of such activities as hiking and rafting contain an underlying sense of dread, and realistic characters match the tight plotting."—*PW Starred Review*.

Nagendra, Harini. [The Bangalore Detectives Club](#) (\$16.95). See *Cozy Crimes* for this delightful 2nd in series.

Shepherd, Peng. [The Cartographers](#) (\$17.99). From the author of [The Book of M](#) (\$16.99), a highly imaginative thriller about a young woman who discovers that a strange map in her deceased father's belongings holds an incredible, deadly secret—one that will lead her on an extraordinary adventure and to the truth about her family's dark history. "Disgraced cartographer Nell Young, the protagonist of this extraordinary mystery, was fired by her father, Daniel Young, a cartographic scholar in the New York Public Library's map division, after they argued over a map. Seven years later, Daniel dies in his office, apparently of natural causes. In a hidden compartment in his desk, Nell finds the map they argued over, a decades-old gas station road map of New York. She suspects the map is somehow related to his death, which she's sure is a case of foul play. She seeks help from her ex, who now works for the tech giant Haberson, whose eccentric leader, William Haberson, wishes to map the entire world and all knowledge within it. Gradually, Nell connects with the talented cartographers who were friends of her father and long-dead mother years before. They tell her of their last summer together and warn her of the threat from a member of their group obsessed with Nell's mother, who died in a house fire. Possessed of a questing intellect and a determined stubbornness, Nell proves smart enough to solve the various riddles she faces. Shepherd's convincing blend of magic from old maps with the modern online world both delights and thrills."

If you are a fan of Fiona Davis' [The Lions of Fifth Avenue](#) (\$17), this deep dive into another department of the NY Public Library on Fifth will delight you.

Ware, Ruth. [The It Girl](#) (\$18.99). *LJ* writes, "Ware once again demonstrates her literary claim as the 21st century's answer to Agatha Christie with this ingeniously crafted puzzler... Fans of Golden Age mysteries like Dorothy Sayers's [Gaudy Night](#) (\$16.99), a must read, will love the book's Oxford setting, while readers of trendy dark academia suspense novels, in the manner of Alex Michaelides's [The Maidens](#) (17.99), will feel right at home. Author Sarah Pinborough adds, "Ruth Ware's richly-textured *The IT Girl* is at once an engrossing murder mystery while also a perfectly crafted and haunting examination of lost youth and the compromises of adulthood, as a woman unpicks the past secrets of her university friends to finally lay to rest her murdered best friend, the dazzling April. Reminiscent of Donna Tartt's [The Secret History](#) (\$18) and more recently, of Lexie Elliott's [Bright and Deadly Things](#) (Berkley \$28).

Winspear, Jacqueline. [A Sunlit Weapon](#) (\$17). In 1942, ferry pilot Jo Hardy is delivering a Spitfire to Biggin Hill Aerodrome in southeastern England. In a moment of high spirits, Jo decides to bend the rules with a little stunt flying. Her joyful moment is interrupted by a bullet striking the plane, fired by a civilian below. She later learns that another ferry pilot has also died flying the same route, and her fiancé was killed in the area a year previously. When she discovers coded material in a nearby barn, she heads straight to Maisie Dobbs. They learn that the unidentified shooter was firing from a farm, and when Jo visits the scene, she finds a Black American private, Matthias Crittenden, bound and gagged in one of the buildings. Despite that condition, Crittenden is suspected of being involved in the disappearance of a fellow private and is taken into military custody. Maisie's probing uncovers some coded messages at the spot where Crittenden was held captive, which her husband, Mark Scott, an American political attaché, discloses these events may have compromised First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt's upcoming diplomatic mission to the UK. For Winspear's March book, not a Maisie Dobbs but one Maisie fans will love, see *Signed Books*.

Winslow, Don. [City on Fire](#) (\$17.99). A masterwork of mob fiction... *City on Fire* does for Rhode Island what David Chase's *The Sopranos* did for New Jersey. . . It's Winslow's ways with character, as well as his fluid narrative and highly visual scene-setting, that suggest this novel, the first in a planned trilogy, could well end up in the American-mob canon along with the works of Puzo, Scorsese and Chase." — *Washington Post*. The 2022 Indie Next Pick found that "Winslow's latest lights a fuse on what is sure to be a stand out trilogy in modern crime writing. That he goes back to the classics gives it a strong foundation, but this is vintage Winslow through and through."

Winslow brings us Part II of this trilogy at his book launch here on April 17: [City of Dreams](#) (Morrow \$29.99).

NEW IN LARGE PAPERBACKS

Billar, Diana. [Hotel of Secrets](#) (St Martins \$17.99) transports readers to sparkling 19th century Vienna for a unique and wonderful tale of intrigue and espionage. Maria Wallner, manager and jack-of-all-trades at her family's Hotel Wallner, is thrilled when the Wallner is chosen to host the famed Hotelkeepers' Ball, hoping to use the event to restore the financially strapped hotel to its former glory. Meanwhile, American secret service agent

Eli Whittaker is in Vienna on a tip about American codes being stolen and sold—and Maria is among his suspects. When Maria is repeatedly targeted by a mysterious attacker, however, Eli’s first instinct is to keep her safe and catch her assailant, throwing his carefully ordered investigation into chaos. As the pair grows closer in the dramatic run-up to the ball, Eli wrestles with the possibility of Maria’s involvement in code stealing—until his heart takes over, and his primary focus becomes their mutual attraction. Biller’s eclectic cast brings the refreshing setting to vibrant life while the intriguing mystery and mounting passion between the leads unite to keep the pages turning. Historical romance readers—especially those looking for a break from Regency England.

Brown, Sandra. [Overkill](#) (\$18.99). Wow! Just wow! The premise of this gut-grabbing thriller is exceptional. Former Super Bowl MVP quarterback Zach Bridger hasn’t seen his ex-wife, Rebecca Pratt, for some time—not since their volatile marriage imploded—so he’s shocked to receive a life-altering call about her. Rebecca has been placed on life support after a violent assault, and he—despite their divorce—has medical power-of-attorney. Zach is asked to make an impossible choice: keep her on life support or take her off of it. Buckling under the weight of the responsibility and the glare of public scrutiny, Zach ultimately walks away, letting Rebecca’s parents have the final say. Four years later, Rebecca’s attacker, Eban—the scion of a wealthy family in Atlanta—gets an early release from prison. The ludicrous miscarriage of justice reeks of favoritism, and Kate Lennon, a brilliant state prosecutor, is determined to put him back behind bars. Rebecca’s parents have kept her alive all these years, but if her condition were to change—if she were to die—Eban could be retried on a new charge: murder. It isn’t lost on Zach that in order for Eban to be charged with Rebecca’s murder, Zach must actually be the one to kill her. To stay free, Eban must prevent him. But, there’s more...

Graham, Scott. [Saguaro Sanction](#) (Torrey House \$16.95). **Signed here April 8.** Archaeologist Chuck Bender is deep in Arizona’s Sonoran Desert with his wife, Janelle Ortega, and teenage stepdaughters Rosie and Carmelita, along with a team of researchers. The family has traveled to Saguaro National Park ostensibly for a hike and to study ancient petroglyphs, but the real plan is to meet Janelle’s cousins Francisco and Carlos, who are making the difficult journey across the border from Mexico. At the rendezvous point with the cousins, Chuck and company discover Francisco murdered, along with a critically injured young man, but Carlos is nowhere to be found. Chuck and Janelle’s ensuing efforts to locate Carlos follow a predictable course, and it can be hard to keep track of the large cast. Rich descriptions of the landscape and the history of the Hohokam people who once thrived in the area, such as Carmelita’s discovery of a rare sun dagger carved into a rock face, are catnip for those interested in the terrain and the native peoples of the Southwest. For Graham’s previous National Park Mysteries, all now available, click [HERE](#)

Hannah, Kristin. [The Four Winds](#) (\$18.99). “A brilliantly woven story of survival set during the Dust Bowl years on the High Plains of Texas that inspires us to persist. Hannah extensively researched this agricultural phenomenon and its toll on communities.”

Hauty, Chris. [Deep State](#) (\$17.99). In her debut thriller, “The bodies pile up, as do the wry asides about what is and what is not good for the country for Hayley Chill. She is one of those preternaturally talented solo operatives skilled in every endeavor, from her physical stamina to her administrative competence to her Jason Bourne-like cool in the face of near-death experiences. She also figures in one of the more surprising double-reverse plot twists I have seen in some time.” –*NY Times Book Review*. Also now available in a large paperback, Chill’s second thriller, [Savage Road](#) (\$17.99)

Maher, Kerri. [The Paris Bookseller](#) (\$17). “*Midnight in Paris* meets *A Moveable Feast* in this intimate, in-depth look at the brave and visionary woman who founded one of the world’s most iconic bookstores, Shakespeare and Company, on Paris’s Left Bank. Studded with appearances from the likes of James Joyce, Ezra Pound, Gertrude Stein, and Ernest Hemingway, *The Paris Bookseller* brings alive not only interwar Paris, but also the complicated friendship that led to the publication of Joyce’s epic *Ulysses* and helped pave the way for Paris’s enduring English-language literary legacy. If you’ve ever fallen in love with a bookstore, you’ll love this ode to booksellers and to the power and magic of the written word.” —Kristin Harmel

Marr, Elle. [The Family Bones](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$16.99). Psychology student Olivia Eriksen’s family is notorious among true-crime buffs. Faced with a legacy of psychopathy that spans generations, Olivia has spent much of her academic life trying to answer one chilling question: Nature or nurture? Although she’s kept a safe distance from her blood relatives for years, Olivia agrees to attend a weekend reunion. After all, her fiancé is eager to meet his future in-laws, and the gathering may give her a chance to interview her elusive grandfather about the family traits. But nothing is ever peaceful among the Eriksens for long. Olivia’s favorite cousin is found dead in a nearby lake. Then another family member disappears. As a violent storm isolates the group further, Olivia’s fears rise faster than the river. And an uninvited guest is about to join the party. True-crime podcaster Birdie Tan has uncovered a disturbing mystery in her latest investigation—and she’s following it right to the Eriksens’ mountain resort. There’s a deadly twist in the family plot

Natsukawa, Sosuke. [The Cat Who Saved Books](#) (\$18.99). A staff favorite here at The Pen and an Indie Next Pick “is a love letter to book lovers, championing the emotional impact that stories have in the hearts and lives of readers. Tiger adds a bonus charming and Ghibli-esque aesthetic to this thoughtful, tender novel.”

Phillips, Gary. [One-Shot Harry](#) (\$16.95). Patrick writes, “Set in 1963 Los Angeles, this terrific novel from Phillips centers on freelance photographer and occasional process server Harry Ingram. Ingram, a Korean War vet, sells his photos to local newspapers and magazines, many serving the Black community. Ingram also listens to a police scanner, poised to capture moments of conflict and racial injustice. One day he catches a call to the scene of a fatal car accident. Ingram recognizes the car described as belonging to an old army buddy, Ben Kinslow. A well-known figure in town, Kinslow was a jazz trumpeter and had just recently reconnected with Ingram. Something about the scene doesn’t feel right to Ingram. Was his friend’s death really an accident, or was he being targeted? Ingram turns gumshoe and embarks on an investigation that leads to old guard lefties, rogue

cops, Nation of Islam activists, and politicians on the make. The forthcoming visit of Martin Luther King Jr. adds to the drama. With close attention to period detail and precise prose, Phillips brings the era vividly to life.”

✦Pinborough, Sarah. [Insomnia](#) (\$17.99). Emma Averell loves her life—her high-powered legal career, her two beautiful children, and her wonderful stay-at-home husband—but it wasn’t always so perfect. When she was just five years old, Emma and her older sister went into foster care because of a deeply disturbing incident with their mother. Her sister can remember a time when their mother was loving and “normal,” but Emma can only remember her as one thing—a monster. And that monster emerged right around their mother’s fortieth birthday, the same milestone Emma is approaching now. Emma desperately wants to keep her childhood trauma in the past, but as she stops being able to sleep, she also can’t stop thinking about what happened all those years ago. Is the madness in her blood? Could she end up hurting her family in her foggy, half-awake state, just like her mother? Or is there another explanation for the strange things that keep happening around her? “As [Emma] struggles with intergenerational trauma and balancing her work life with her family life, her situation spirals into a dangerous and daunting tale... *Insomnia* is a natural follow up to [Pinborough’s] bestselling thriller *Behind Her Eyes*.” — *Entertainment Weekly*

Pitoniak, Anna. [Our American Friend](#) (Simon & Schuster \$17.99). To read with the new Alma Katsu spy novel in Signed Books, and perhaps the Kate Quinn paperback just below, this. Paris, 1974. Lara Orlov and her family arrive from Moscow at the height of the Cold War, thanks to her father’s position as a diplomat. The years pass, and Lara becomes more and more enamored with the City of Lights. As a teenager in Paris, she falls deeply in love with a fellow Russian expat: the passionate, intellectual Sasha, who opens her eyes to the ills of the Soviet Union. Decades later and across the globe, journalist Sofie Morse is taking some much-needed time off after several chaotic years covering Washington politics. But when she gets a call from the office of First Lady Lara Caine, her curiosity is piqued. Sofie, like the rest of the world, knows little about Lara—only that she was born in Soviet Russia and raised in Paris before marrying Henry Caine, the brash future president. After decades of silence, Lara is finally ready to speak candidly about her past: about her father’s work for the KGB and about her ill-fated relationship with Sasha—which may be long in the past, but which could have explosive ramifications for the future. As Sofie begins to write Lara’s biography, she can’t help but wonder: Why is Lara revealing such sensitive information? And why now? Caught in a dangerous game of cat-and-mouse, both Lara and Sofie must ask themselves what really matters—and confront their own power to upend the global political order.

Quinn, Kate. [The Diamond Eye](#) (\$17.99). Talk about apt! In 1937 in the snowbound city of Kyiv, wry and bookish history student Mila Pavlichenko organizes her life around her library job and her young son—but Hitler’s invasion of Ukraine and Russia sends her on a different path. Given a rifle and sent to join the fight, Mila must forge herself from studious girl to deadly sniper—a lethal hunter of Nazis known as Lady Death. When news of her three hundredth kill makes her a national heroine, Mila finds herself torn from the bloody battlefields of the eastern

front and sent to America on a goodwill tour. Still reeling from war wounds and devastated by loss, Mila finds herself isolated and lonely in the glittering world of Washington, DC—until an unexpected friendship with First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt and an even more unexpected connection with a silent fellow sniper offer the possibility of happiness. And then....

Serle, Rebecca. [One Italian Summer](#) (\$17.99). When Katy’s mother dies, she is left reeling. Carol wasn’t just Katy’s mom, but her best friend and first phone call. She had all the answers and now, when Katy needs her the most, she is gone. To make matters worse, their planned mother-daughter trip of a lifetime looms: to Positano, the magical town where Carol spent the summer right before she met Katy’s father. Katy has been waiting years for Carol to take her, and now she is faced with embarking on the adventure alone. But as soon as she steps foot on the Amalfi Coast, Katy begins to feel her mother’s spirit. Buoyed by the stunning waters, beautiful cliff sides, delightful residents, and, of course, delectable food, Katy feels herself coming back to life. Here is “pure magic. Rebecca Serle marvelously creates a literary world that feels full and alive, like I can catch a flight with Katy and experience Italy alongside her. This treasure of a book is sure to delight readers.”—Indie Next

Stage, Zoje. [Mothered](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$16.99) is a claustrophobic psychological thriller about one woman’s nightmarish spiral while quarantined with her mother. Grace isn’t exactly thrilled when her newly widowed mother, Jackie, asks to move in with her. They’ve never had a great relationship, and Grace likes her space—especially now that she’s stuck at home during a pandemic. Then again, she needs help with the mortgage after losing her job. And maybe it’ll be a chance for them to bond—or at least give each other a hand. But living with Mother isn’t for everyone. Good intentions turn bad soon after Jackie moves in. Old wounds fester; new ones open. Grace starts having nightmares about her disabled twin sister, who died when they were kids. And Jackie discovers that Grace secretly catfishes people online—a hobby Jackie thinks is unforgivable.

When Jackie makes an earth-shattering accusation against her, Grace sees it as an act of revenge, and it sends her spiraling into a sleep-deprived madness. As the walls close in, the ghosts of Grace’s past collide with a new but familiar threat: Mom.

Sten, Camilla. [The Resting Place](#) (\$17.99). Here’s more from the author of the nerve-scraping Nordic Noir debut [The Lost Village](#) (\$17.99, a LibraryReads pick that sold to 17 countries). Eleanor walks in on her grandmother’s murder but won’t be able to identify who did it; she suffers from prosopagnosia, the inability to recognize faces. Obviously, she’s worried about what she doesn’t know—the assailant could be sitting right next to her—and her fears intensify when she inherits a house from her grandmother. It’s chilly, remote, and the place her grandfather died unexpectedly.

✦Thomas, Sherry. [A Tempest at Sea](#) (Berkley \$17). After feigning her own death in Cornwall to escape from Moriarty’s perilous attention, Charlotte Holmes goes into hiding. But then she receives a tempting offer: Find a dossier the crown is desperately seeking, and she might be able to go back to a normal life. Her search leads her aboard the RMS Provence. But on the night Charlotte makes her move to retrieve the dossier, in the midst of a terrifying storm in the Bay of Biscay, a brutal murder takes place

on the ship. Instead of solving the crime, as she is accustomed to doing, Charlotte must take care not to be embroiled in this investigation, lest it become known she, in fact Sherlock Holmes, is still very much alive. John recommends this whole Victorian/Holmes series. [Order them all](#) for a binge read.

OUR MARCH SMALL PAPERBACK PICKS

Bentley, Don. [Hostile Intent](#) (\$9.99), Matt Drake #3. When a mysterious walk-in to the US embassy in Vienna claims to have critical information about a Russian intelligence operation, he raises eyebrows. But when he asks for Matt Drake by name and calls himself the Irishman, he gets the DIA's premier case officer on a one-way flight to the city of spies.

Cameron, Marc. [Cold Snap](#) (\$9.99), Arliss Cutter #4. While transporting four dangerous criminals on a small flight to Fairbanks, Alaska, Supervisory Deputy US Marshal Arliss Cutter is stranded when their plane goes down in the wilderness.

Lupica, Mike. [Robert B Parker's Revenge Tour](#) (\$9.99), Sunny Randall #10. Owing her landlord and former client a favor, PI Sunny Randall sets out to find Melanie Joan's stalker, but makes a discovery that challenges her loyalty to her old friend, while her aging ex-cop father is threatened by a sleazy lawyer with a desire to settle an old score.

Miranda, Megan. [The Last House Guest](#) (\$9.99). When her longtime best friend is found murdered, Avery Greer combs through her idyllic Maine tourist community to uncover local secrets and clear her name of suspicion.

Paris, BA. [The Therapist](#) (\$9.99). When a mysterious man turns up on her doorstep, claiming that a murder took place 18 months before in her new home, Alice becomes obsessed with finding the truth.

Shelton, Paige. [The Burning Pages](#) (\$8.99), Scottish Bookshop #7. While attending a traditional Scottish celebration of the poet Robert Burns, bookseller Delaney Nichols finds everything going up in smoke when Burns House is burned to the ground, leaving a body in its ashes, and a coworker accused of the crime.

MARCH SMALL PAPERBACKS

Baker, Chandler. [The Husbands](#) (\$9.99). When Nora meets a group of high-powered women whose husbands' are supportive unlike her own, she discovers that the women use an unorthodox method of couples' therapy that has transformed their lives — one that is worth killing for.

Brown, Sandra. [Two Alone](#) (\$9.99). Reissue. When their plane crashes in the remote reaches of the Northwest Territories, confident businesswoman Rusty Carlson finds herself hurt and alone with Vietnam vet Cooper Landry, a man she can't stand to be around.

Cahoon, Lynn. [Four Charming Spells](#) (Kensington \$8.99), Kitchen Witch #4. When tea shop owner and local coven member Mahogany Medford asks her to look into her mother's untimely death, caterer and witchcraft trainee Mia stirs the pot as she, with Gran's protective stone and a circle of trust confidants, seeks to find the truth.

Conte, Cate. [Witch Way Out](#) (Kensington \$8.99), Full Moon #3. While struggling to learn more about her craft and her magical ancestry, crystal shop owner Violet Mooney must conjure up the clues when her personal hero is murdered during the Spring

Equinox Fair, wreaking havoc on both the mortal and magical worlds.

Deaver, Jeffery. [The Devil's Teardrop](#) (\$9.99). Reissue. After a machine gun attack in the Washington, D.C., subway system leaves dozens of people dead, retired FBI document examiner Parker Kincaid must track down the assassin with the aid of only one clue—a ransom note demanding twenty million dollars to stop further massacres.

Dirico, Maria. [Four Parties and a Funeral](#) (Kensington \$8.99), Catering Hall #4. When her Italian-American family's catering hall hosts a casting call for a cheesy reality show, Mia Carina finds herself surrounded by wanna-be goombahs, phony girlfriends and a real-life murder, sending her on a mission to make sure the killer gets jail time, not air time.

Hamilton, Karen. [The Ex Husband](#) (\$8.99). Taking a personal assistant position for an extravagant—and mysterious—engagement party on board a super yacht, former con artist Charlotte becomes trapped with someone who knows her past and is hell-bent on making her pay for it.

Kellerman, Faye. [The Hunt](#) (\$10.99). Peter Decker and Rina Lazarus #27. When the biological mother of Peter and his wife Rina's foster son is brutally beaten and her children taken, Peter, Rina and Gabe's biological father, a former hitman-turned-millionaire, race against time to rescue them.

King, Stephen. [Christine](#) (\$10.99). Reissue. Evil is alive in Libertyville. It inhabits a custom-painted red and white 1958 Plymouth Fury named Christine and young Arnold Cunningham, who buys it. Along with Arnold's girlfriend, Leigh Cabot, Dennis Guilder attempts to find out the real truth behind Christine and finds more than he bargained for: from murder to suicide.

Moss, Korina. [Curds of Prey: A Cheese Shop Mystery](#) (St Martin's \$8.99), Cheese Shop #3. When the mayor's nephew, and Summer Harrington's husband-to-be, meets his demise during the wedding shower, cheesemonger Willa Bauer, on the behest of the mayor, must follow the clues to catch a killer.

Murphy, Catie. [Death in Irish Accents](#) (Kensington \$8.99), Dublin Driver #4. Unable to stay out of trouble for too long, Dublin limo driver Megan Malone helps her latest client, a world-renowned romance novelist, look into the death of her protégé, leading her to the victim's writing group and to a killer who wants to write her out of the story — permanently.

Picoult, Jodi. [Change of Heart](#) (\$9.99). Reissue. Her life shattered by a devastating act of violence, June Neelson is forced to make a pivotal choice that involves her twelve-year-old daughter and a salvation-seeking criminal.

Scott, Kieran. [Wish You Were Gone](#) (\$9.99). When her husband James, prone to alcoholic rages and blackouts, dies in a tragic accident, Emma Walsh finds her and her children's grief complicated by the mysterious details of his last day of life, which slowly come to light.

Thompson, Victoria. [Murder on Madison Square](#) (\$8.99), Gaslight #25. When Alfred Bing, whose wife wanted Frank to manufacture evidence so she could end their marriage, winds up dead, pinned beneath one the wheels of his very own motorcar, the former policeman and his wife find nothing is what it seems as they search for the truth.