

BOOKNEWS from

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APRIL IS NATIONAL POETRY MONTH

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

Note: Event times are in Pacific Daylight 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.

And no fooling, new Poisoned Pen Designs at Bonfire are fun to wear and help support our free programming.

For a spring look, wear [these](#)

And to encourage reading, wear [these](#)

[The Poisoned Pen mugs](#) are cool too

SATURDAY APRIL 1 2:00 PM Live

Eric Ruth Neubauer discusses [Intrigue in Istanbul](#) (Kensington \$27)
1926 investigation for Jane Wunderly and Revers

MONDAY APRIL 3 1:00 PM British Historical Mysteries

Sarah Penner and Susan Stokes-Chapman
Penner discusses [The London Séance Society](#) (Park Row \$29.99)
Victorian mystery
Signed books in stock
Stokes-Chapman discusses [Pandora](#) (Harper \$17)
1799 London in a kind of Amelia Peabody story

MONDAY APRIL 3 4:00 PM

Joshua Hood with Don Bentley
Hood discusses [Robert Ludlum's the Treadstone Rendition](#)
(Putnam \$29)
Signed books available

TUESDAY APRIL 4 5:00 PM

Alex Finlay discusses [What Have We Done?](#) (St Martins \$27.99)
For fans of Gregg Hurwitz's Orphan X
Signed books in stock

WEDNESDAY APRIL 5 5:00 PM

Eli Cranor with Patrick
Cranor discusses [Ozark Dogs](#) (Soho \$26.95)
Arkansas noir
Signed books in stock

THURSDAY APRIL 6 6:00 PM

Oline Cogdill hosts the 2023 *LA Times* Book Prize Nominees
Rachel Howzell Hall, Laurie R. King, Tracy Lien, Alex Segura,
Peng Shepherd

SATURDAY APRIL 8 2:00 PM Live A Western duo

Scott Graham discusses [Saguaro Sanction](#) (Torrey House \$16.96)
His latest National Park Mystery
Margaret Mizushima discusses [Standing Dead](#) (Crooked Lane \$28.99)
A Timber Creek K-9 mystery

SATURDAY APRIL 8 4:00 PM Live

Betty Webb discusses [Lost in Paris](#) (Poisoned Pen \$16.99)
Start of a 1920s series

CLOSED FOR EASTER SUNDAY

TUESDAY APRIL 11 7:00 PM Live

Double Book Launches for John Sandford and Dana Stabenow
Sandford discusses [Dark Angel](#) (Putnam \$29.95)
Letty Davenport
Stabenow discusses [Not the Ones Dead](#) (Zeus \$29.99)
Kate Shugak

WEDNESDAY APRIL 12 5:00 PM

Will Thomas discusses [Heart of the Nile](#) (St Martins \$27.99)
Mummies and a valuable ruby roil Victorian London
Signed books available

THURSDAY APRIL 13 7:00 PM Live

Australian Sally Hepworth discusses [Soulmate](#) (St Martins \$28.99)
Australian seaside suspense

FRIDAY APRIL 14 4:00 PM Live

Kristen Ashley, Allison Brennan, Brenda Novak with John Ashley discusses [The Girl in the Woods](#) (\$23.99) and her *Dream* series
Brennan discusses [Don't Open the Door](#) (Mira \$28/\$9.99)
Novak discusses [The Seaside Library](#) (Mira \$29.99)

SATURDAY APRIL 15 10:30 AM

Croak and Dagger discusses Terry Hayes, [I Am Pilgrim](#) (\$18.99)
A sensational debut chase thriller!

SATURDAY APRIL 15 4:00 PM Live

Megan Miranda discusses [The Only Survivors](#) (Scribner \$28)
And their number is dwindling....

MONDAY APRIL 17 4:00 PM

CS Harris discusses [Who Cries for the Lost](#) (Berkley \$27)
Regency's Sebastian St. Cyr
Signed books available

MONDAY APRIL 17 7:00 PM Live Book Launch

Don Winslow discusses [City of Dreams](#) (Harper \$29.99)
Book Two in his "Godfather" trilogy

THURSDAY APRIL 20 7:00 PM

Hardboiled Crime discusses Georges Simenon's [Maigret at the Coroner's](#) (\$12)

FRIDAY APRIL 21 7:00 PM

SciFi Friday discusses SB Divya's [Machinehood](#) (\$17.99)

SATURDAY APRIL 22 4:00 PM Live

Gillian Flynn presents **Margo Douaihy**
They discuss [Scorched Grace](#) (Zando \$27.95)
Our May First Mystery Book of the Month and the first book to publish under Flynn's imprint at Zando Press

MONDAY APRIL 24 1:00 PM

Michael Farris Smith with Patrick
Smith discusses [Salvage This World](#) (LittleBrown \$28)
Southern noir
Signed books available

MONDAY APRIL 24 3:00 PM

Victoria Thompson with **John Thompson** discusses [Murder on Bedford Street](#) (Berkley \$28)
A NY Gaslight era mystery

MONDAY APRIL 24 7:00 PM Live Book Launch

Anne Hillerman discusses [The Way of the Bear](#) (Harper \$29.99)
Bernie Manuelito, Jim Chee et al at Bear Ears National Monument

TUESDAY APRIL 25 1:00 PM

Elly Griffiths discusses [The Last Remains](#) (Houghton \$29.99)
UK archaeologist Ruth Galloway

TUESDAY APRIL 25 5:00 PM

Taylor Adams discusses [The Last Word](#) (Harper \$29.99)
An exciting and bookish thriller
Our April Crime Book of the Month
Signed books available

WEDNESDAY APRIL 26 5:00 PM

Meagan Jennett discusses her debut [You Know Her](#) (MCD FSG \$28)
Killing Eve meets *Sharp Objects* in this savage Southern Gothic
Signed books available

THURSDAY APRIL 27 7:00 PM Live

Don Bentley and **T Jefferson Parker**
Bentley discusses [The Forgotten War](#) (Putnam \$27)
Matt Drake
Parker discusses [Rescue](#) (Forge \$28.99)
Tijuana, drugs, and a fabulous dog

SATURDAY APRIL 29 10:00 AM-6:00 PM
Independent Bookstore Day and Spring Sale



SUNDAY APRIL 30 5:00 PM

Dennis Lehane with **Michael Koryta**
Lehane discusses [Small Mercies](#) (Harper \$29.99)
1970s Boston
Signed books available

AND TUESDAY MAY 2 5:00 PM

Amanda Quick discusses [The Bride Wore White](#) (Berkley \$28).

OUR APRIL BOOKS OF THE MONTH

British Crime Club One Unsigned hardcover or paperback per month
Robinson, Peter. [Standing in the Shadows](#)

Cozy Crimes Club One Unsigned hardcover or paperback per month
Adams, Ellery. [Paper Cuts](#)

First Mystery Club One Signed First Printing per month
DeStefano, Ren. [How I'll Kill You](#)
Douaihy, Margot. [Scorched Grace](#) is postponed to the May Pick

The Crime Collectors Book of the Month Club One Signed First Printing per month
Adams, Taylor. [The Last Word](#)

History/Mystery Club One First Printing per month
Lumsden, Katie. [The Secrets of Hartwood Hall](#)

Notable New Fiction One Signed First Printing per month
Callanan, Liam. [When in Rome](#)

International Crime One Unsigned Hardcover or paperback per month
Bannalec, Jean-Luc. [The Body by the Sea](#)

Romance & Relationships One Unsigned Hardcover or 2 paperbacks per month
De La Rosa, Liana. [Ana Maria and the Fox](#) & Robson, Jennifer. [Coronation Year](#)

SIGNED BOOKS

Adams, Taylor. [The Last Word](#) (Harper \$29.99) Emma Carpenter lives in isolation with her golden retriever Laika, house-sitting an old beachfront home on the rainy Washington coast. Her only human contact is her enigmatic old neighbor, Deek, and (via text) the house's owner, Jules. One day, she reads a poorly written—but gruesome—horror novel by the author H. G. Kane, that Deek has recommended to her. And then unwisely posts a one-star review only to find herself stalked by the outraged author. (It's true that the relationship between author and a fan can be fraught. But murderous?) Indeed, H. G. Kane takes the bad review as a personal attack, and therefore has to set things straight—but there is much more at stake for Emma who is living a dead-end life by the ocean as we gradually learn, and learn why. *PW's* Stared Review praises this new thriller by rising star Taylor for its "spectacular plot twists." Those who enjoyed Korelitz's fabulous somewhat bookish thriller [The Plot](#) (\$17.99), which I can't recommend highly enough, will relish this our **April Crime Collectors Book of the Month**. One early reader writes, "Here is a story within a story, unreliable narrators, unbelievable heroes, and the roughest most stressful rollercoaster ride I have ever encountered. Reminiscent of the slasher films of the 80's, *The Last Word* will definitely give you nightmares. And, because of this book I will never give a book a one star review."

Baez, Joan. [Am I Pretty When I Fly? An Album of Upside Down](#) (David R. Godine \$45). Tip-ins. Since retiring from active performing, Baez has focused her formidable talents on painting and drawing. This collection of drawings shows another side of Baez: lovingly loose and charming sketches on reoccurring themes such as politics, relationships, women, animals, and family. Each section, organized thematically, includes an introductory piece by the artist. Baez approaches her line drawings as exercises in freedom: she begins drawing upside down—often using her non-dominant hand—without any preconceived notion of where the lines might lead her. Beginning with her seminal debut album in 1960, Baez has been a musical force of nature of incalculable influence whose earliest recordings fed a host of traditional ballads into the rock vernacular. In 1963, she introduced Bob Dylan to the world, beginning a tradition of mutual mentoring that continued across her many recordings where she has for a lifetime advocated for non-violent social change.

Baldacci, David. [Simply Lies](#) (Grand Central \$29.99). Mickey Gibson, single mother and former detective, leads a hectic life similar to that of many moms: juggling the demands of her two small children with the tasks of her job working remotely for ProEye, a global investigation company that hunts down wealthy tax and credit cheats. When Mickey gets a call from a colleague named Arlene Robinson, she thinks nothing of Arlene's unusual request for her to go inventory the vacant home of an arms dealer who cheated ProEye's clients and fled. That is, until she arrives at the mansion to discover a dead body in a secret room—and that nothing is as it seems. Not only does the arms dealer not exist but the murder victim turns out to be Harry Langhorne, a man with mob ties who used to be in Witness Protection. What's more, no one named Arlene Robinson works at ProEye....

Banville, John. [The Lock-Up](#) (Faber UK \$39). Abandoning his crime pen name of Benjamin Black, Irish Booker Prize winner

Banville brings us a new Quirke mystery set in 1950s Dublin. In a lock-up garage in the city, the body of a young woman is discovered, an apparent suicide. But pathologist Dr Quirke and Detective Inspector Trafford soon suspect foul play. The victim's sister, a newspaper reporter from London, returns to Dublin to join the two men in their quest to uncover the truth. But, as they explore her links to a wealthy German family in County Wicklow, and to investigative work she may have been doing in Israel, they are confronted with an ever-deepening mystery. With relations between the two men increasingly strained, and their investigation taking them back to the final days of the Second World War, can they join the pieces of a hidden puzzle?

Bentley, Don. [Forgotten War](#) (Putnam \$27). As a team, Matt Drake and his partner, Frodo, have watched each other's backs through some very dark days. But one thing they've never doubted was their commitment to each other...until now. Frodo has been accused of a war crime ten years after leaving Afghanistan. Matt is determined to prove his friend innocent, but what will he do when he finds that his closest friend has secrets he won't share? "Don Bentley does it again and does it well with his fourth Matt Drake novel that ripsaws between war and peace and everything in between. Bentley, an Afghanistan vet, Apache pilot, and former FBI agent, brings all this to the table for a word feast that few writers can match. There's a lot going on in this fast-paced and well-plotted tale, and the bonus is the sharply drawn characters who you may—or may not—want to meet in a bar or on the battlefield. *Forgotten War* is an unforgettable read." —Nelson DeMille

Brennan, Allison. [Seven Girls Gone](#) (Mira \$29.99). John writes, Arriving in St. Augustine, Louisiana, to quietly assist police detective Beau Hebert, who is investigating the disappearance and deaths of seven women, LAPD detective Kara Quinn and team leader Matt Costa must not only solve multiple murders but expose deep-seated corruption that extends far beyond this small bayou town's borders. The latest in Brennan's Quinn and Costa suspense series sends the Mobil Response Team to steamy summertime Louisiana, where no shortage of suspects and angry alligators are just a few of the obstacles they will encounter in their search for a killer.

Callanan, Liam. [When in Rome](#) (Dutton \$27). Callanan builds a charming story from a woman's midlife crisis. Claire Murphy, 52, has made a career helping religious institutions sell buildings they can no longer afford. In 2019, she travels to Rome, where her clients, the American Sisters of Saint Gertrude, are debating whether to sell their convent. Claire, who lost her mother as a young girl and was raised by nuns in Milwaukee, had planned to become a nun herself after finishing Yale, but she changed her plans after getting pregnant from a one-night stand and having a daughter, Dorothy. Now, surrounded at the peaceful Rome convent by the vibrant Gertrudans, she again considers joining. In a parallel narrative, Claire's college friend Marcus Sardeson travels to Rome, intending to propose to Claire, having spent decades as a surrogate father figure to Dorothy. As Marcus builds up his nerve, he teams with Dorothy, now age 29, and Claire's business partner to stop Claire from becoming a nun. Think of this as a cross between *Under a Tuscan Son* and *Eat, Pray, Love*. And a love letter to Rome and its many ancient and modern facets.

Cambridge, Colleen. [Mastering the Art of French Murder](#) (Kensington \$26). Signed on May 6 at our Cozy Con. Thanks to Tabitha Knight's grand-père and uncle, she has a free place to stay in the best city in the world, Paris. Even better, her best friend, Julia Child, lives across the street. Thank heavens, because Julia is teaching her how to cook the most basic of dishes, much to the relief of her messieurs. After a beautiful morning spent gossiping and shopping at the market, Julia and Tabitha walk into Julia's apartment building and hear Mathilde, one of the other tenants, scream. Quick to investigate, Tabitha is determined to discover who has killed Therese Lognon, before Inspector Etienne Merveille, pins the murder on her best friend. It doesn't help that the weapon was one of Julia's prized knives or that Tabitha rode in the elevator to the lobby with Therese at 2 a.m. Even worse, the party was in Julia's apartment, so one of the attendees must be the murderer. Much to the inspector's consternation, Tabitha gathers clues until another murder occurs. Agatha Christie meets cozy mystery in, one hopes, the start of a series.

Catton, Eleanor. [Birnam Wood](#) (Farrar \$28). Tip-ins from the NZ author. I love the headline for the *NY Times Book Review* lead: "Guerrilla Gardeners Meet Billionaire Doomsayer: Hurly Burly Ensures." It continues: "*Birnam Wood* is a big book, a sophisticated page-turner, that does something improbable: It filters anarchist, monkey-wrenching environmental politics, a generational (anti-baby boomer) *cri de coeur* and a downhill-racing plot through a Stoppardian sense of humor. The result is thrilling and nearly made me laugh with pleasure. The whole thing crackles, like hair drawn through a pocket comb." An eco-activist group in New Zealand becomes entangled with an American billionaire in Catton's first novel since the 2013 Booker Prize-winning [The Luminaries](#) (\$19.99), a billionaire who needs a boost to his quest for entry into NZ, a quest raised if you recall the real life saga of Peter Thiel. It's April but think ahead to making this your Big Summer Read. Read the whole [NYT review](#) here. And think about this paragraph therein: Like a refreshed *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo*, it's all laptops and cycle helmets. You will learn more here about thermal imaging, drone evasion, burner applications and the raiding of other people's browser histories, to name but four things, than you thought possible. This is also an intimate novel about female friendship that dips into the things that keep one up at night, the national character of New Zealand, hangovers and dinner parties and microdosing. At a few moments you sense the clanking of plot. Some late scenarios are implausible. But the pop novel that lurks inside this wise work already has you on the hook."

Cranor, Eli. [Ozark Dogs](#) (Soho \$26.95). Patrick is excited to host Cranor's virtual event and says, "Cranor came out of the gate swinging with his debut, [Don't Know Tough](#) (\$16.95), and he's quickly established himself as one of the brightest lights in a new generation of crime writers. If you like writers such as Daniel Woodrell, David Joy and Willy Vlautin, you owe it to yourself to check out Eli Cranor. He's the real deal and *Ozark Dogs* is one of the finest things I've read in a long time."

A dispute over a woman led Tom Fitzjurls to kill Rudnick Ledford by shooting him in the back. The open-and-shut case landed Tom in prison, sentenced to life without parole. That left his father, Jeremiah, a Vietnam vet who operates a car junkyard in Taggard, Ark., to raise Tom's infant daughter,

Jo, after she was abandoned by her mother. Now a high school senior, Jo is chafing to escape her guardian's tight restrictions on her social life, even as Jeremiah struggles with accepting that she'll be moving on. Meanwhile, Rud's brother, Evail, a meth dealer, ex-con, and white supremacist who narrowly avoided being killed at the same time as his sibling, believes he's found the perfect way to get revenge on the Fitzjurls family. Evail's threat to Jo forces Jeremiah, who was nicknamed the Judge during his tour of duty for his marksmanship, to team up with several allies he doesn't fully trust to protect her. The author has a superior gift for capturing the cadences and feel of Southern small towns. Greg Iles fans will be eager for Cranor's next. Speaking of Greg, no new book is yet in sight.

Davis, Lindsey. [Fatal Legacy](#) (Hodder \$39). An unpaid bar bill leads Flavia Albia to her most bitter and complex case yet. Decades earlier Appius Tranquillus Surus wrote his will: it freed his slaves and bequeathed his businesses to them. He left an orchard to the Prisci, a family he was friendly with, on the condition that his freedmen could still take its harvest. The convoluted arrangement has led to a feud between the two families, each of which has its own internal strife. Endless claims and counterclaims lead to violence and even death. Lawyers have given up in exasperation as the case limps on. The original will has disappeared, along with a falsified codicil—and might there be another one? But is there a solution? Two youngsters from each side of the divide, Gaius Venuleius and Cosca Sabatina, have fallen in love, which could unite the feuding families. There is only one problem: were Sabatina's grandmother and father really liberated in the Surus will?

DeStefano, Ren. [How I'll Kill You](#) (Berkley \$27). Our **April First Mystery Book of the Month** turns on the perils of falling in love with a psychopath, the perils of falling love when you *are* a psychopath, the bonds between sisters—three of them, identical triplets. It has garnered 4 Starred Reviews. And much of it is rooted in Arizona as the author finds the desert the most suitable backdrop. I recommend you [watch our video event with the author](#), it's really spirited and fascinating. Serial killer thrillers have had short shrift for some time but they are back in force this year, and most often powered by female rage.

Douaihy, Margot. [Scorched Grace](#) (Zando \$27.95). The cursing, chain-smoking queer nun Sister Holiday Walsh, who wears gloves and a heavy scarf to hide her tattoos, is unlike any nun encountered on the page or in real life. Yet Holiday is most sincere about her faith in God, her devotion to the Catholic Church, and finding a home among the Sisters of the Sublime Blood in New Orleans. When Saint Sebastian's School where she teaches is targeted by an arson attack in which a beloved janitor dies, Holiday turns sleuth to find the attacker and save the school, which is in danger of being closed by the diocese. More fires—and deaths—occur as Holiday's investigation heats up, pitting her against her fellow sisters and staff. This briskly plotted master class in character development makes the most of its New Orleans setting, "the crucible... of miracles and curses." And is our **May First Mystery Book of the Month**, moved to May since I could not resist the DeStefano thriller. It is also the first book published under Gillian Flynn's imprint and Gillian joins Margot on April 22 to discuss it all.

Here's a bit of background: Margot Douaihy grew up in Scranton, Pennsylvania. She came from a religious family and a

long line of clergy. She went to Catholic school, but as she got older, Douaihy felt distanced from the church. She was queer and in the closet. She moved to Massachusetts and became a poet. Several years ago, when she decided to tiptoe toward her love of mystery novels, she came up with a kind of homage to the hard-boiled detective thriller, with a twist: Her amateur sleuth was a queer badass nun. The book critiqued institutions, foregrounded sexuality and retained some lyricism, without losing the compulsive page-turning playfulness of a breezy read. Its title, “Scorched Grace,” carried a dime-rack luridness, and its prose would set Dashiell Hammett’s Sam Spade or Robert B. Parker’s Spenser at ease.

Estleman, Loren D. [City Walls](#) (Forge \$26.99). Early in Estleman’s super 31st whodunit featuring old-school Detroit PI Amos Walker), Emmett Yale, a millionaire automobile manufacturer, spots the gumshoe at an Indians-Tigers baseball game (“one of Cleveland’s last games under its century-old name; after that, Custer’s job would be finished”). Yale, who’s under federal scrutiny after his self-driving cars crashed during test runs, hires Walker to look into the murder of his 42-year-old stepson, Lloyd Lipton. Lipton was driving home from a vintage auto event in a sports car when he was fatally shot from an overpass. The crime appeared to fit a recent pattern of snipers shooting at random motorists from similar locations, and an ex-con was charged with manslaughter, because the authorities theorize Lipton’s distinctive vehicle drew his killer’s attention. Yale believes the killing was intentional and is possibly connected with his business, as Lipton may have been involved in insider trading with a former executive of Yale’s company. Walker agrees to investigate, only to encounter more corpses, which muddy the waters. Decades after his debut, Walker remains as vigorous as ever. Fans of Chandler and Hammett will be thrilled.

Finlay, Alex. [What Have We Done?](#) (St Martins \$27.99). 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, Pennsylvania, 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.

Jon Land adds, “Count me as a reader who revels in the secrets of the past returning to haunt characters in the present. In this case, Donnie, Jenna and Nico share the unlikely bond of growing up in the same group home. Orphans all, their childhoods were basically nonexistent and they carry the scars of that to this day. Then they went their separate ways until circumstances force them to reunite — specifically, when a killer

targets them all for something in their past. Figuring out what, and who, is the only way they can survive. *What Have We Done* echoes a bit of Lorenzo Carcaterra’s *Sleepers*, equally personal but considerably tenser. This is a flat-out, fantastic psychological noir tale with heroes plagued by an angst-riddled past they can’t escape.”

Franklin, Emily. [The Lioness of Boston](#) (Godine \$28.95). Our **May Notable New Fiction Book of the Month** is, I admit, a reflection of my fascination with the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston, in the daring and unsolved theft of some of its iconic paintings. So now in this novel based on her life we get to know the woman who put the collection and the museum together. Also I like offering a book from the excellent, also eccentric, and high quality small publisher David R. Godine—March was not just National Reading Month but Small Press Month so I am keeping it going all Spring.

I am not alone in relishing this book. Here’s the *PW* review: “... Franklin offers a vivid narrative of Isabella Stewart Gardner’s evolution into a pioneering art collector and museum founder. New Yorker Isabella marries wealthy Boston Brahmin Jack Gardner in 1860 at age 19. The straitlaced Jack appreciates his unpredictable wife’s intellect and creativity, though she gets a cold reception from Boston’s well-heeled matrons. A year later, Isabella considers the ‘sad magic to being female, a disappearing of the self,’ and hopes that motherhood will win her social acceptance and help provide the sense of purpose she craves. Instead, her only child dies of pneumonia before he turns two, and a subsequent miscarriage leaves her unable to conceive again. During a lengthy stay in Europe, Jack hopes to ease her paralyzing grief. There, she meets Henry James, Oscar Wilde, and other luminaries who encourage her love of learning and passion for the arts. Isabella’s confidence deepens—and her reputation for eccentricity grows—as she begins to acquire artworks for the museum she opens in 1903. The novel brims with pitch-perfect period details, such as Isabella’s ability to shock New England society merely by wearing blue shoes, and Franklin cannily captures Gardner’s ambition, independence, and quirks. Fans of strong female protagonists and Gilded Age historicals will enjoy this.”

Graham, Scott. [Saguaro Sanction](#) (Torrey House \$16.95). We here have been fans of Graham’s National Park Mysteries published by the very fine small press Torrey House from the beginning. I’m especially pleased that here his archaeologist protagonist Chuck Bender pursues his 8th investigation in southern Arizona’s Sonoran Desert. It begins when Janelle Ortega’s cousin from Mexico is found brutally murdered at a remote petroglyphs site in Saguaro National Park. Janelle is Chuck’s wife so he and her daughters travel 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. The team is drawn deep into a threatening web of hostility and deceit stretching south across the US-Mexico border and back in time a thousand years, to when the Hohokam people thrived in the Sonoran Desert. Graham’s friend author Margaret Mizushima, with whom he appears at The Pen this month, says, “A masterful novelist, Scott Graham weaves environmental and historical

details together with stunning backcountry landscapes in each of his National Park Mysteries.” You can visit 7 National Parks in Graham’s earlier mysteries to be found [HERE](#).

Grann, David. [The Wager](#) (Knopf \$30). Tip-ins we suspect for a page-turning story of a 1742 shipwreck, survival, and savagery, culminating in a court martial that reveals a shocking truth. Marooned on an island off the coast of Patagonia in 1741, crewmembers of the *HMS Wager* scavenged for shellfish, drank barrels of wine, and built cabins on the beach. Sounds like paradise? Not quite—they were starving, scurvy-ridden, and mutinous. Miraculously, two separate groups of survivors made it back to England—where they were court-martialed to determine which one was telling the truth about what happened. Brisk enough to read on a lazy summer afternoon, Grann’s swashbuckling saga will have you praising the lord for lounge chairs and mai tais.

✚Harris, CS. [Who Cries for the Lost](#) (Berkley \$27). This is one of my favorite series ever. So I agree with this Starred Review: “Set in June, 1815, Harris’s outstanding 18th mystery featuring aristocratic sleuth Sebastian St. Cyr opens with ex-Army surgeon Paul Gibson, a close friend of the detective, examining a corpse recovered from the Thames. The dead man’s features have been destroyed, possibly by a gunshot fired at close range, and he’s been ‘emasculated.’ Those horrors take on added importance when Alexi Sauvage, the French expat physician who’s become Gibson’s lover, recognizes the murder victim as her husband, Major Miles Sedgewick, based on a pattern of saber scars on his chest, neck, and left arm. Sedgewick once served on Wellington’s staff, but St. Cyr, who knew him, considered the officer a treacherous bastard. The search for Sedgewick’s killer takes on a different dimension after St. Cyr learns that his Machiavellian father-in-law, Lord Jarvis, may have employed the major on an espionage mission. The pressure to solve the case ratchets up when another mutilated corpse is dragged from the river. Harris does her usual superior job of combining a page-turning fair-play plot with plausible period detail. Both series fans and newcomers will be captivated.”

Hepworth, Sally. [The Soulmate](#) (St Martins \$28.99). We are in Portsea, a sleepy coastal town a couple of hours outside of Melbourne, Australia, with a surprising story by an Aussie author highly recommended to us by Jane Harper. In the year since Gabe and Pippa Gerard, the couple at the center of this twisty psychological thriller, moved to their dream house, cliffside in Portsea, a sleepy coastal town a couple of hours outside of Melbourne, they have become aware that the breathtaking view from the cliff behind their house attracts not only lovers of spectacular sunsets but also the suicidal. So far seven people have come to The Spot to die, and charismatic and caring Gabe—who is super hot too—has been able to talk them all out of jumping. When Amanda Cameron, the wife of Gabe’s former boss, shows up near the cliff, Gabe goes out to work his magic. But this time the woman goes over the edge to her death. Suicide? The layers of this story have to be peeled away to get to the answer.

Hillerman, Anne. [The Way of the Bear](#) (Harper \$29.99) takes Navajo police officer Bernadette “Bernie” Manuelito and her policeman husband, Lt. Jim Chee, to Bears Ears National Monument in Utah. Chee is there to meet with Chapman Dulles, a rich paleontologist who has decided to donate to the Navajo

Nation’s Fallen Officers Memorial Fund. Bernie has taken time off from work and joined Chee to contemplate her future after being passed over for a promotion to detective. While hiking on a cold winter’s day, she comes across what looks at first glance to be an archaeological dig. Bernie begins to suspect that the excavation may really be connected with the robbing of grave sites or the illegal collection of fossils. Her suspicions seem to be confirmed when she’s chased and shot at. Meanwhile, Chee shows up at Dulles’s home to find an unidentified dead man sprawled on the driveway. Dulles is nowhere to be found. An intriguing plot matches the well-developed, reflective leads. As always, the real strength of this series lies in its authentic atmosphere, evocative descriptions of the landscape, and fascinating details of Navajo life. *Booklist* in its Starred Review says, “Besides offering an involving mystery, Hillerman delivers meaty insights on the natural world, paleontology, ancient and enduring Navajo customs and traditions, and the role of Indigenous people in preserving the land and nature’s bounty.”

This is the book launch so you can ask for your copy to be dated too. And if you are new to Anne’s continuation of her father Tony’s marvelous series, [here is a link](#) to buy them all.

Hood, Joshua. [Robert Ludlum’s The Treadstone Rendition](#) (Putnam \$29). The final days of the American presence in Afghanistan bring Adam Hayes a summons he can’t ignore. No longer an operative for the CIA unit Treadstone, working as a private security contractor in Mumbai, he gets a call from Abdul Nassim, the Afghan army captain who saved his life 10 years earlier. Nassim has evidence—a photograph and a thumb drive—that an American CIA paramilitary officer, Dominic Porter, has been selling American weapons to the Taliban, but Porter is on to Nassim and will kill him and his wife and three children if Hayes can’t get them all out of Afghanistan fast. Hayes heads into the chaos of the Afghanistan war’s final days on an against-all-odds rescue mission. Because he’s no longer allied with Treadstone, he’s on his own, and it’s a long grueling battle from beginning to end as he’s pitted against the treasonous Porter as well as the deadly commander of the Taliban elite Blood Unit. Treadstone fans will get their money’s worth in this 4th Ludlumverse thriller by Hood.

Jennett, Meagan. [You Know Her](#) (MCD FSG \$28). Here’s a debut where a subversive serial-killer thriller dives headfirst into a furious mind. In this cat-and-mouse plot, we meet Sophie Braam, a bartender in small town Virginia, where the unfortunately all-too-common harassment of women in the service industry prompts a very atypical response. At the end of her patience, Sophie snaps. And that’s when things get bloody. Enter officer Nora Martin—new to the Bellair Police Department and battling her own harassment issues as a woman on a male-dominated force. When her path crosses with Sophie’s, they forge a connection based on their shared frustrations. But when the bodies start piling up, Nora begins to suspect that perhaps Sophie knows a little more about the serial killer hunting their small town than she’s letting on. To say this puts their burgeoning friendship on shaky ground is a gross understatement...

Jennett, with years of bartending experience, says that she doesn’t believe every villain needs an origin story. “I know Sophie’s backstory, but I chose not to divulge it to break the expectation that’s arisen in media that every villain needs an origin. I bristle against that idea, actually. The truth is, that

Sophie's just a woman. She has some difficult things going on in her background. Her relationship to her father is not good. She got a little spiky if I pushed about her mother, and there is some history there that was inspired by that story my friend told me at the bar. Overall though, she's living a pretty nice life. That's what made her so interesting to me."

I am often asked about trends...or the Next New Thing. And I see a comeback of the serial killer tale but where the SK is female and powered not by insanity (at first) but by rage—as shown in examples this month.

King, Owen. [The Curator](#) (Scribner \$28.99). Signed Bookplates for a Dickensian fantasy of illusion and charm where cats are revered as religious figures, thieves are noble, scholars are revolutionaries, and conjurers are the most wonderful criminals you can imagine. "King's strange, terrifying novel is part gothic thriller and part absurd, Bulgakovesque government satire. Wildly creative, this novel weaves and dips into class struggle and resentment, dark comedy, and bittersweet romance that will delight fans of twisty dark fantasies."—*Booklist*Klune, TJ. [In the Lives of Puppets](#) (Tor \$28.99). Tip ins. From the author of [The House in the Cerulean Sea](#) (\$18.99), this intriguing cross-genre tale plays in the waters of fantasy and sci-fi both, with damaged humans and conflicted androids questing through otherworldly domains to the City of Electric Dreams. Klune's standalone story is inspired in part by Pinocchio, and you might find echoes of classic adventure tales and modern mythology like, say, WALL-E. Library Reads adds, "Clearly if you need a book about a robot that's guaranteed to have you break out into heaving sobs, this is the novel for you. Klune's masterful retelling of Pinocchio—a little bit science fiction, a little bit dystopian, and a little bit book-clubby—is a sure-fire winner with so much appeal on so many levels it should prompt readers of all genres to step into something new and original. For fans of *The Maker of Swans* and *The Night Circus*."

Lehane, Dennis. [Small Mercies](#) (Harper \$29.99). **Actual signed books, not tip-ins.** Set during the summer of 1974, while the community primes for a series of rallies organized by mob boss Marty Butler against school desegregation, 42-year-old single mother Mary Pat Fennessy is preoccupied with the disappearance of her rebellious, 17-year-old daughter, Jules. Mary Pat is a Southie resident, Irish, a mother, and a racist, and a mother grieving her late son's overdose death as well. The investigation she launches into what happened to Jules attracts the interest of two detectives who are investigating the mysterious death of a Black man on the Columbia Station train tracks on the same night that Jules disappeared. The unwanted attention Mary Pat draws to the neighborhood threatens Butler's business dealings, making him and his close-knit crew keen to put an end to her search.... "This is a tale of racism and hatred, of family and parental love, of violence and the blind eye we turn towards the evil men can do if they are 'one of our own.' And you cannot put it down! The final half simply took my breath away with its action and its lucid, clear-eyed view of our clouded world. The writing is the kind you stop people and read passages aloud to them, but this never slows down this perfectly paced novel," says one early reader. I can't wait for the discussion between Lehane and Koryta.

There are and will be many reviews of this new Lehane. One I like is by Tom Nolan in the [Wall Street Journal](#), a piece that also includes excellent commentary on new books by Eleanor Catton and Peter Swanson also listed here in April Signed books.

Makkai, Rebecca. [I Have Some Questions for You](#) (Penguin \$28). We have some surprise signed firsts of this No. 1 Indie Next Pick and *NY Times* bestseller. A successful film professor and podcaster, Bodie Kane is content to forget her past—the family tragedy that marred her adolescence, her four largely miserable years at a New Hampshire boarding school, and the murder of her former roommate, Thalia Keith, in the spring of their senior year. Though the circumstances surrounding Thalia's death and the conviction of the school's athletic trainer, Omar Evans, are hotly debated online, Bodie prefers — needs — to let sleeping dogs lie. But when the Granby School invites her back to teach a course, Bodie is inexorably drawn to the case and its increasingly apparent flaws. In their rush to convict Omar, did the school and the police overlook other suspects? Is the real killer still out there? As she falls down the very rabbit hole she was so determined to avoid, Bodie begins to wonder if she wasn't as much of an outsider at Granby as she'd thought—if, perhaps, back in 1995, she knew something that might have held the key to solving the case.

⌘Marston, Edward. [Death at the Terminus](#) (Allison & Busby UK \$40). York, 1865. A passenger train stands in the station. Jack Follis, the guard, patrols the platform to make sure that everyone is safely aboard. He returns to the brake van to load a box into it. Before the train can depart, Follis is alarmed by a smell of burning. Before he can find out the cause, there is an explosion and the whole van is engulfed in flames. In response to a summons from the North Eastern Railway, Railway Detectives Robert Colbeck and Victor Leeming are sent to investigate. Leeming is not convinced that a crime has taken place, but Colbeck disagrees. Although the information they received was scant, he is convinced that it is a murder case. The longer the investigation goes on, the more complex it becomes. Guilt shifts to and fro at a bewildering speed. It takes the combined skills of the detectives to crack this one.

Maxwell, Jessa. Maxwell, Jessa. [The Golden Spoon](#) (Atria \$27). I repeat our recommendation for *Only Murders in the Building* meets *The Maid* in this darkly beguiling debut where someone turns up dead on the set of TV's hottest baking competition—a perfect novel for fans of Nita Prose, Richard Osman, and Anthony Horowitz. Every summer for the past ten years, six awe-struck bakers have descended on the grounds of Grafton, the leafy and imposing Vermont estate that is not only the filming site for "Bake Week" but also the childhood home of the show's famous host, celebrated baker Betsy Martin. The author of numerous bestselling cookbooks and hailed as "America's Grandmother," Betsy Martin isn't as warm off-screen as on, though no one needs to know that but her. She has always demanded perfection, and gotten it with a smile, but this year something is off. As the baking competition commences, things begin to go awry. At first, it's merely sabotage—sugar replaced with salt, a burner turned to high—but when a body is discovered, we enter thriller territory with a bang.

In fact, this is not a locked-room story where the how of it is the question; it's a Christie-style Vermont country-house murder where the questions are who and why-dunnit? As the story progresses into a thriller it delivers some nifty surprises.

Miranda, Megan. [The Only Survivors](#) (Scribner \$28). It would be hard to concoct a more promisingly sinister setting [that] affords plenty of hiding places for predators and plenty of opportunities for the weather itself to turn villainous. Miranda uses this setting to maximum effect, both as a plot device and as a way to inject steady droplets of terror into the narrative. Masterfully suspenseful.”v—*Booklist* Starred Review. Once again Miranda uses landscape to gripping effect. A group of former classmates who reunite to mark the tenth anniversary of a tragic accident—only to have one of the survivors disappear,

Mizushima, Margaret. [Standing Dead](#) (Crooked Lane \$28.99). Our Lesa Holstine reviews: After her father was killed, Mattie Wray, her mother, and her brother were kidnapped when Mattie was only two. Now in her 30s, Mattie is still trying to put her family together, locate a sister she never knew about, and reunite with her mother. But when Mattie and her sister Julia travel to Pueblo del Sol, Mexico, they learn their mother and her second husband, Juan Martinez, have left town abruptly. Mattie returns home to her job as a deputy sheriff and K-9 handler in Timber Creek, CO, and finds a note on her door: “You’ll find him among the standing dead,” signed “A friend of your father’s.” When the sheriff’s department mounts a search, they find the body of Juan Martinez. Now Mattie is forced to reveal her mother’s story. Notes continue to appear, and Mattie’s friends are threatened and even shot. Pressure mounts quickly, and she and the supportive law enforcement team know Mattie is the ultimate target for someone who has terrorized her family for 30 years. Readers who have followed the story of Mattie’s family through [Mizushima’s other “Timber Creek K-9” mysteries](#) will enjoy this fast-paced, relentlessly tense installment. I add that a bonus is the puppies.

Morris, Wanda M. [Anywhere You Run](#) (Harper \$28.99). Yay, we snagged firsts of this winner of the 2023 Lefty for Best Historical Mystery and recipient of this Starred Review: “The notorious 1964 murder of three civil rights activists in Mississippi provides the backdrop for Morris’s stunning sophomore novel after 2021’s [All Her Little Secrets](#) (\$16.99), which revolves around two Black sisters’ relationship while exploring racism, family, and small-town sensibilities. The quiet life of Violet Richards and her older sister, Marigold, ends when Violet kills the white man who raped her. Knowing that as a Black woman in the Jim Crow South she won’t be treated fairly, Violet sneaks out of Jackson, Miss., with her wealthy white boyfriend before abandoning him in Alabama to catch a Greyhound bus that takes her to Chillicothe, Ga. Meanwhile, Marigold, who dreams of becoming a lawyer, works for the Mississippi Summer Project to help Blacks register to vote. She ends up in Ohio after quickly marrying her dim-witted boyfriend, having become pregnant by another man. The suspense ramps up as powerful forces target each sister because she unwittingly possesses damaging evidence. Meticulous research about the era informs the gripping plot, which alternates between each sister’s point of view. Finely sculpted characters and crisp dialogue help make this a standout.”

Morton, Kate. [Homecoming](#) (Macmillan UK \$40) delivers an eerie epic involving a wealthy family’s mysterious deaths in Adelaide Hills, South Australia. It’s Christmas Eve 1959, and patriarch Frank Turner is abroad on business, leaving behind his wife, Isabel, and their four children. At the end of a scorching hot day, beside a creek on the grounds of the grand and mysterious

mansion, a neighbor riding his horse makes a terrible discovery. At first, it appears they’re resting on blankets after a swim, but upon closer inspection, Percy realizes the bodies are dead and that baby Thea Turner is missing from her basket. A painstaking investigation begins, and Percy is grilled by a detective who was brought in from out of town. Sixty years later, Jess is a journalist in search of a story. Having lived and worked in London for almost twenty years, she now finds herself laid off from her full-time job and struggling to make ends meet. A phone call out of nowhere summons her back to Sydney, where her beloved grandmother, Nora, who raised Jess when her mother could not, has suffered a fall and been raced to the hospital. When Jess visits, she is alarmed to find her grandmother frail and confused. It’s even more alarming to hear from Nora’s housekeeper that Nora had been distracted in the weeks before her accident and had fallen on the steps to the attic—the one place Jess was forbidden from playing in when she was small. At loose ends in Nora’s house, Jess does some digging of her own. In Nora’s bedroom, she discovers a true crime book, chronicling the police investigation into a long-buried tragedy: the Turner Family Tragedy of Christmas Eve, 1959. It is only when Jess skims through the book that she finds a shocking connection between her own family and this once-infamous crime—a crime that has never been resolved satisfactorily. And for a journalist without a story, a cold case might be the best distraction she can find.... Along the investigation’s way, there are beautiful descriptions of the region’s landscape and canny insights into the neighborhood’s tight-knit community. This is Morton’s best yet, a well-crafted blend of plot precision and character depth.

Neubauer, Erica Ruth. [Intrigue in Istanbul](#) (Kensington \$27). In Agatha Award-winning author Neubauer’s fourth “wanderlust-inspiring historical mystery,” 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. Snap up the [first three Jane Wunderlys](#) as well.

Novak, Brenda. [The Seaside Library](#) (Mira \$29.99/\$18.99). John writes, Mariners Island was Ivy, Ariana, and Cam’s whole world. But when a young girl goes missing, Cam becomes the prime suspect in the case. Ariana and Ivy know their best friend is incapable of hurting anyone, so they both lie to protect

Cam. Haunted by the tragedy, Ariana leaves Mariners while Ivy remains behind tied to the old library that belongs to her family. Twenty years later, Ariana returns to Mariners just as new evidence on that old case of the missing teen emerges. Now over the course of one eventful summer, Ariana, Ivy, and Cam will discover the truth about their pasts, their futures, and the ties that still bind the three together. It wouldn't be summer reading season without another of Novak's seductive, intrigue-tinged novels of sun, sand, secrets, and scandal so get an early start with this novel.

O'Brien, JD. [Zig Zag](#) (Schaffner Press \$26.99). 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

Parker, T. Jefferson. [The Rescue](#) (Forge \$28.99). At a Tijuana animal shelter, journalist Bettina comes across what seems to be a Mexican street dog slated for extermination. She's not sure why, but she takes him. She bonds with him immediately, naming him Felix. Alas, Felix had a different name in a former, shadier life. It was Joe then. The story of Joe's past unfolds: early years with a boy, Teddy, who loves him still; training and working as a sniffer dog for the DEA; then his acquisition by Dan, owner of a self-defense school, who hires him out to a Mexican drug cartel in Tijuana seeking to wrest control from another cartel. Joe was shot in a drug heist gone bad, but a veterinarian saved him, then Bettina found him in the vet's clinic. When Bettina writes about Felix's rescue online, the cartel that lost money (a million and a half in cash, five kilos of fentanyl, uncut) learns he's still alive. They take vengeance very seriously. Readers see the story unfold from the dog's perspective—very well done, as well as from Bettina's, Teddy's, and Dan's viewpoints. Readers will love Joe; he's a great character. The story ends in violence, but good things happen too. For lovers of quality crime fiction; Parker, winner of 3 Edgar Awards, never disappoints. I especially like the dog being called "Joe" since Parker's Edgar-winner *Silent Joe* is my favorite of his fabulous books.

✧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." It finds the sweet spot of historical mystery with a tale of Victorian spiritualism, Parisian alleyways, and murder most foul. World-famous spiritualist Vaudeline D'Allaire can conjure the spirits of murder victims, it's said. It's good clean occult fun from the author of the [The Lost Apothecary](#) (\$17.95).

Quick, Amanda. [The Bride Wore White](#) (Berkley \$28). Prudence Ryland has been making a reluctant living as psychic dream consultant Madame Ariadne, a job she inherited from her grandmother, but after a client tries to kill her, she hightails it out of San Francisco to Los Angeles. Content to start anew as a librarian in the newly formed paranormal department of the local college, Prudence is forced on the run again after escaping a kidnapping attempt. Since she's already acquainted with Luther Pell, who runs the local nightclub in the paranormal hub of Burning Cove, she turns to him for help. Luther connects her to the remarkably intuitive Jack Wingate, who's intrigued by her close calls and wants to use her experiences to inform the book he's writing on psychically interpreting crime scenes. Together, they hatch a plan to lure Prudence's enemy into the open—and, of course, they fall in love. John adds, "Mystery meets romance meets the paranormal in this glossy, golden age of Hollywood thriller. This is quintessential Quick, who once again deftly combines danger, deception, and desire into an addictively readable mix."

Rose, Jeneva. [You Shouldn't Have Come Here](#) (Blackstone \$26.99). Grace Evans, an overworked New Yorker looking for a total escape from her busy life, books an Airbnb on a ranch in the middle of Wyoming. When she arrives at the idyllic getaway, she's pleased to find that the owner is a handsome man by the name of Calvin Wells—and he's eager to introduce her to his easygoing way of life. But there are things Grace discovers that she's not too pleased about: A lack of cell phone service. A missing woman. And a feeling that something isn't right with the ranch. A sinister undercurrent runs throughout, and while the reader is privy to each narrator's thoughts, there are a few land mines buried along the way to the surprise ending. Hmmm. Rage! A cat and mouse thriller set in Wyoming ... at an Airbnb ranch and told by Jeneva Rose? Yes please! This is the vacation we're too nervous to go on but truly excited to read! Um. Do you have any internet access here?

Colleen Hoover is a fan! "Everything I want in a thriller. Sexy, shocking, and tense with an ending I never saw coming. Jeneva Rose is the queen of twists." Jeneva Rose is a social media sensation, with 650k followers on TikTok. I really must enter fully into 21st Century bookselling.

And should mention her big selling older title; [The Perfect Marriage](#) (\$15.95 not Signed). Sarah Morgan is a successful and powerful defense attorney in Washington D.C. As a named partner at her firm, life is going exactly how she planned. The same cannot be said for her husband, Adam. He's a struggling writer who has had little success in his career and he tires of his and Sarah's relationship as she is constantly working. Out in the secluded woods, at the couple's lake house, Adam engages in a passionate affair with Kelly Summers. But one morning everything changes. Kelly is found brutally stabbed

to death and now, Sarah must take on her hardest case yet, defending her own husband, a man accused of murdering his mistress.

Sandford, John. [Dark Angel](#) (Putnam \$29.95). Joy, writing about 25-year-old Letty Davenport, is like having the younger Lucas back full of vim, confidence, a plunger into reckless if effective action. I loved this. Letty though adopted, is Lucas in spades! And by now her days working a desk job at are behind her. Her previous actions at a gunfight in Texas, in [The Investigator](#) (\$29)—and her incredible skills with firearms—draw the attention of several branches of the US government, and make her a perfect fit for even more dangerous work. The Department of Homeland Security and the NSA have tasked her with infiltrating a hacker group, known only as Ordinary People, that is intent on wreaking havoc. Letty and her reluctant partner from the NSA pose as free-spirited programmers for hire and embark on a cross country road trip to the group's California headquarters. While the two work to make inroads with Ordinary People and uncover their plans, they begin to suspect that the hackers are not their only enemy. Longtime Sandford fans who have missed Kidd will love this book. And the plot is linked up to contemporary headline events that add relevance to a kick-ass story.

Scottoline, Lisa. [Loyalty](#) (Penguin \$28). “There’s no shortage of mob tales on the market, headed by Mario Puzo’s *The Godfather*. But even that pop culture classic failed to explore into the actual birth of the Sicilian mafia. In fact, those origins have long been ignored by crime and thriller writers until Scottoline daringly delves into the little-known history that dates back to the early 1800’s. She centers the action around the kidnapping of a young boy and the idealistic lawyer committed to finding him amid a Palermo riddled with corruption. Gaetano Catalano finds something else along his quest as well, left to face an emerging power no one else dares confront. *Loyalty* is historical fiction of the absolute highest order, a true masterpiece from a visionary author exploring her own roots. Brilliant in all respects.”—Jon Land

Shelton, Paige. [Fateful Words: A Scottish Bookshop Mystery](#) (St Martins \$26.99). Out in early April, Signed May 6 at Cozy Con here at The Pen. But Paige can drop by and sign copies in April if you request.

When Edwin, Delaney’s boss at Edinburgh’s Cracked Spine bookstore, leaves town on secret business, Delaney is called upon to guide his yearly literary tour around Edinburgh. But on the first night of the tour, at the inn where the tour group is staying, the inn manager falls—or is pushed—off the roof of the inn, and killed. Then, one of the tour members disappears, leaving a trail of puzzles in her wake. “Delaney gamely carries on as she leads the group to places with literary ties, including the Writers Museum and Deacon Brodie’s Tavern, and the danger mounts. With the help of her husband, Tom, Delaney discovers a trail of false identities, fraud, and a killer intent on destroying Edwin. This is armchair tourism at its best, with a dash of murder for spice. Bibliophiles and cozy fans alike will be enchanted.” Try the whole [Scottish Bookshop Mystery](#) series.

Slocumb, Brendan. [Symphony of Secrets](#) (Knopf \$28). **Out mid April, Signed here May 9.** In 1936, composer Frederick Delaney’s reputation is in tatters after the premiere of RED, last in a cycle of operas inspired by the five colored circles in

the Olympics flag. Why were his earlier pieces so eloquent and this one so bad? A lifetime later, musicologist Bern Hendricks receives an email from the Delaney Foundation (which has supported hundreds of poor children with musical talent, including him), asking Bern to work on a newly discovered manuscript of RED, richer and fuller than the hack version presented in 1936. He is to prepare it for performance. But Delaney’s notation system is indecipherable. (Devotees call the symbols Delaney Doodles.) On top of pages are letters as well: JaR. What do they stand for? Aided by computer whiz Eboni, Bern cracks the code, and they’re off on a wild ride. By the end, it’s a case of murder and the systematic erasure of the musical contribution of a Black woman who almost certainly authored the music Delaney claimed as his. “Slocumb’s second novel is an improbable but fun mystery that will attract fans of Dan Brown’s *The DaVinci Code*.”—LJ. His debut [The Violin Conspiracy](#) (\$17) was a 2022 First Mystery Book of the Month.

Smith, Michael Farris. [Salvage This World](#) (LittleBrown \$28). “An exceptional storyteller in top form, Smith’s last outing, *Nick* (2021), was an audacious prequel to *The Great Gatsby* with a harrowing section in New Orleans. But five of his six novels are closely related in themes, blue-collar cast, and settings in Louisiana and Mississippi. This new work suggests a prequel to his first novel, *Rivers* (2013), a tale of greed and desperation set in a Gulf Coast region so storm-ravaged that Washington calls for permanent evacuation. In *Blackwood* (2020), Smith revisited characters from *The Fighter* (2018). Maybe he’s building his own Faulkner-esque universe around his hometown of Oxford, Mississippi. So far it looks to be a grim corpus in which bad luck and bad choices—and the exceptionally foul weather of *Rivers* and this book—erode lives to a raw minimum. Yet Smith’s tense, brooding narratives also reveal a terrible beauty in his characters’ struggles to flee or defeat the cruelty and violence they face, to find moments in which hope and love are more than memories,” says *Kirkus Reviews*.

Here Smith melds fire and brimstone with the ravages of hurricanes in this evocative noir of the Mississippi Delta. Jessie raises her young son Jace with Holt, who works as a roustabout for a traveling revival meeting, the Temple of Pain and Glory. The temple’s sinister minister, Elser, goes on a tear after a set of keys goes missing, claiming they were linked to a divine revelation. Elser suspects Holt of the theft, prompting her shotgun-toting disciples to chase Jessie out, and Jessie flees with Jace to her childhood home in Louisiana. There, she reconnects with her estranged but caring father, Wade, an offshore driller who is out of work due to frequent storms. Before it’s all over, the bloody chain of events drags all involved to “the Bottom,” a gothic hinterland of local legend. Smith perfectly depicts a landscape of dwindling resources and limited prospects, where crime turns out to be the most expedient solution. Here’s a book clearly for fans of Wiley Cash and Daniel Woodrell (who is much missed... where is he?). Patrick, Smith’s host for the virtual event, is a true fan and says, “*Salvage This World* will restore your faith in the power of language as it takes you on a fevered trip down into a dark world that is intoxicating. Do not miss this one, folks.”

Stabenow, Dana. [Not the Ones Dead](#) (Zeus \$29.99). A mid-air collision in the Alaskan wilderness between two small aircraft leaves ten people dead. Was it a bird strike, pilot error... or...?

Then an eleventh body is found in the wreckage: a man shot gangland style, twice in the chest and once in the head. Alaska's Kate Shugak recruits unusual allies including a longtime Park Ranger against unsavory new residents of the Park and treats us to its broad landscape as the investigation proceeds as well. And in a story inspired by a drone sighting over her own home, Dana once again paints a vivid picture of Alaska as a state that attracts the extremes: the radical right and the left....

Good news! You can order large paperback new editions of the [first 9 Kate Shugaks](#) now that Dana can sign along with her new hardcover. And for more of Alaska from Dana, the [Liam Campbell series](#) is a real winner.

Also available: [Theft of an Idol](#) (Zeus \$29.95), a sexy case of tomb robbing and worse in Cleopatra's Egypt where her very own Eye of Isis investigates. You can find paperback backlist for the [Eye of Isis Series](#) to order as well as the Shugaks.

Swanson, Peter. [The Kind Worth Saving](#) (Harper \$29.99) plays with genre conventions in this twist-filled mystery. The *NYTBR* says, "Peter Swanson has a clear, conversational writing style that makes even his most preposterous plots seem reasonable. His latest book seems straightforward enough, at least in the beginning. Henry Kimball, a high school teacher turned private investigator in Massachusetts, finds himself with a new client: a former student, Joan Whalen, who hires him to find out whether her husband, Richard, is cheating on her. Alas, when Kimball follows Richard and his lover to the scene of a tryst, he finds them dead — an apparent murder-suicide straight out of classic film noir. From there, the book unfolds into a complex tale of multiple killings over many years involving at least one, and possibly more, murderous psychopaths. The story is told in alternating timelines. One follows the investigation into the death of the adulterous couple. The other takes place many years earlier, when Joan was a winsome teenager contending with the unwelcome attention of an older boy named Duane, a villain with 'bad posture and a low hairline that made him look a little like a cave man.' How those two stories converge, and the shocking sleight-of-hand twist that is, trust me, impossible to predict, are just two of the many balls that Swanson juggles in this entertaining story. Mostly he catches them all." [Watch our virtual event with Peter](#) for more.

✎Thomas, Will. [Heart of the Nile](#) (St Martins \$27.99). Love this Starred Review for a Victorian series I find fascinating: "In Thomas's superlative 14th mystery featuring Victorian inquiry agents Cyrus Barker and Thomas Llewelyn, grammar school teacher Phillip Addison has volunteered to work at night to help the British Museum catalog its enormous collection of Egyptian mummies. In the process, Addison hopes to further his own research and devise a formula to determine a mummy's original weight. But when he looks at a female mummy that has languished for years unexamined, he discovers it's surprisingly heavy—and that its chest contains a giant heart-shaped ruby. Addison hurries to inform his superior, Clive Hennings, of the treasure, but disappears after doing so. Addison's wife asks Barker and Llewelyn to find him, a task complicated when Hennings shares that the mummy containing the jewel may be Cleopatra herself. The missing person case becomes a homicide inquiry when someone linked to the mummy is found floating in the Thames, the victim of a fatal stabbing. The author does a terrific job playing a variation on the classic brilliant sleuth and capable sidekick duo."

Webb, Betty. [Lost in Paris](#) (Poisoned Pen \$16.99). Our blogger Lesa writes, "In December, 1922, Hadley Hemingway left a valise filled with Ernest's manuscripts on a train, and someone stole it. Although Alabama-born artist Zoe Barlow dislikes Ernest, Hadley is a friend, so Zoe attempts to find the case. She asks enough questions at the train station to track the thief to a village, and hires an Armenian driver to take her there. Although she finds the shack with two Russians in it, they've been shot dead, and some of Hemingway's pages are burning in the fireplace. After being questioned by Inspector Henri Challiot, Zoe becomes even more popular with her inquisitive friends in the artist community. Now, she's determined to find the rest of the author's papers, but also wants to find a killer. When several of Zoe's friends are killed, and she finds the bodies, Challiot warns her that she's become a target. The compelling story, filled with actual artists, models and writers, will appeal to readers who enjoy fact-based mysteries involving history, racism, and conditions in post-war Paris." And it's a different view of Hadley and Hemingway than in Paula McLain's *The Paris Wife*.

Winslow, Don. [City of Dreams](#) (Harper \$29.99). The second in a "mob fiction" trilogy gets this *PW* review: "In 1988, Chris Calumbo, a lieutenant in the Providence, R.I., Italian mob, sets in motion a risky plan, in bestseller Winslow's powerful sequel to 2022's [City on Fire](#). He brokers a deal with the Baja cartel for 40 kilos of heroin; gets his boss, Peter Moretti, and several other New England wiseguys to invest; and arranges for Danny Ryan, the Irish mob's leader, to hijack the shipment. Calumbo tips the feds, who will bust Ryan and return the dope to the Italians (minus a cut, of course). What could go wrong? Ryan, a recent widower, winds up fleeing Providence and landing in San Diego with his 18-month-old son and elderly father. Ryan and his crew spread out and work anonymous jobs, keeping their heads down until they hear that their nemesis, Moretti, has been killed. In a surreal twist of fate, Ryan ends up in Hollywood, where he finds himself investing in a movie called Providence based on the war between Italian and Irish mobs, and he falls in love with the film's beautiful, doomed starlet. This classically inspired mob story will please fans of Dennis Lehane and Richard Price."

UNSIGNED EVENT BOOKS

Cameron, Marc. [Breakneck](#) (Kensington \$27). A train ride through the austere beauty of Alaska's icy wilderness becomes a harrowing fight for survival at the Gateway to the Arctic. In Washington, DC, Supreme Court Justice Charlotte Morehouse prepares for a trip to Alaska, unaware that a killer is waiting to take his revenge—by livestreaming her death to the world. In Anchorage, Deputy US Marshals Arliss Cutter and Lola Teariki are assigned to security detail at a judicial conference in Fairbanks. Lola is tasked with guarding Justice Morehouse's teenaged daughter while Cutter provides counter-surveillance. It's a simple, routine assignment—until the mother and daughter decide to explore the Alaskan wilderness on the famous Glacier Discovery train. Hiding onboard are the Chechen terrorists....

✎Griffiths, Elly. [The Last Remains](#) (Houghton \$29.99). 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!

✂Stokes-Chapman, Susan. [Pandora](#) (Harper \$17). Wow, how I love this novel which combines some of the fun elements of an Elizabeth Peters' Amelia Peabody archaeology mystery with a 1799 London antiques/jewelry shop on the decline from its former fame under the management of now-orphaned Dora Blake's adventurous and scholarly parents. Novice jewelry designer Dora hopes to learn her craft well enough to restore the shop and her fortune. But then Dora's odious uncle, Hezekiah, perforce her guardian who runs the business, behaves suspiciously when a mysterious Greek vase is delivered. In fact he locks it away in the shop's basement. Intrigued, the hitherto passive Dora turns to an encounter with an ambitious antiquities scholar, Edward Lawrence, who is equally curious about the vase. They each see it as a rare chance towards academic and commercial validation. As they pursue their investigation they turn Dora's world upside down and deliver a lot of fun along with the surprises. You fans of historical mysteries will love this. Sarah Penner, a fan, has invited Stokes-Chapman into her virtual event April 3. Do join us.

Thompson, Victoria. [Murder on Bedford Street](#) (Penguin \$28). "Gaslight" has taken on a whole new meaning in our virtual age but it also describes a period at the turn of the 20th Century New York in a long-running series by Thompson. Here investment banker Hugh Breedlove consults Frank Malloy, an ex-cop who still works as a PI despite coming into a fortune, and his capable wife, Sarah, a midwife, because he's concerned about his teenage daughter, Ruth. Julia, Ruth's cousin and Hugh's niece, has been committed to an asylum by Julia's husband, Chet Longly, whom she was forced to marry by her parents. Hugh regards Chet as a libertine, and doubts that Julia has any mental illness, but fears that her status as an involuntary patient will cast a pall on Ruth's reputation. Despite Hugh's self-serving motives, Frank takes the case, and Sarah joins him in interviewing Julia at the Manhattan State Hospital on Ward's Island. They emerge convinced of her sanity, and their inquiry into Chet leads them to probe a maid's suspicious death at the Longly residence. The unexplained disappearance of one of his servants raises the stakes. The loving relationship between Frank and Sarah bolsters the clever plot.

APRIL MEANS...

Poetry: April is Poetry Month

From our curated collection, a few titles:

Gorman, Amanda. [The Hill We Climb](#) (\$15.99)
Harjo, Joy. [Weaving Sundown in a Scarlet Light: 50 Poems for 50 Years](#) (\$25) from our former Poet Laureate
Lehman, David. [The Best American Poetry](#) 2022 (\$35)

Kaur, Rupi. [Milk and Honey](#) (\$14.99)
Olivarez, Jose. [Por Siempre](#) (\$19.95)
Poe, Edgar Allan. [The Complete Poetry](#) (\$4.95)
Smith, Clint. [Above Ground](#) (\$27)
Tuama, Padraig O. [Poetry Unbound: 50 poems to open your world](#) (\$17.95)

And for more, read this on [new poetry](#) from the *NYTBR*

This April means Easter

Along with, or instead of, those chocolate rabbits put a little book in a little one's Easter Basket

Baker, Laura. [The Easter Egg Hunt in Arizona](#) (\$10.99)
Boynton, Sandra. [Happy Easter, Little Pookie](#) (\$6.99)
Dean, James. [Pete the Cat: Big Easter Adventure](#) (\$10.99)
Hills, Tad. [Duck and Goose: Here Comes the Easter Bunny](#) (\$7.99)
James, Eric. [The Easter Bunny Is Coming to Arizona](#) (\$9.99)
Potter, Beatrix. [Peter Rabbit Touch and Feel](#) (\$12.99)
Wallace, Adam. [How to Catch the Easter Bunny](#) (\$10.99)
Williams, Margery. [The Velveteen Rabbit 100th Anniversary Edition](#) (\$24.95)

This April means Passover:

Loftis, Larry. [The Watchmaker's Daughter](#) (\$29.99 signed). The incredible true WWII story of a Christian Dutchwoman who saved countless Jews

O'Connor, Joseph. [My Father's House](#) (Europa \$27) is a stirring tale inspired by the true story of an Irish priest assigned to the Vatican who, together with his unlikely accomplices, risked his life to smuggle Jews and escaped Allied prisoners out of Italy right under the nose of his Nazi nemesis, Gestapo officer Paul Hauptmann.

Every April means Paris

In addition to Betty Webb's 1926 [Lost in Paris](#) (\$16.99) reviewed in Signed Books, and Colleen Cambridge's mystery featuring Julia Child learning to cook in Paris in [Mastering the Art of French Murder](#), signed here May 6, also reviewed in Signed Books, varied suggestions are:

First: food!

Baxter, John. [Immoveable Feast: A Paris Christmas](#) (Harper \$15.95). Ok, jumping the season here, but the anecdotes interspersed with travel and scenes of life and foods for celebrating can be savored all year long.

Henaut, Stephane. [A Bite-Sized History of France: Gastronomic Tales of Revolution, War, and Enlightenment](#) (New Press \$17.99) is a great introduction to the history of the country told through its iconic cuisine and that also demonstrates how history influences how and what we eat. "A very cool book about the intersections of food and history."—Michael Pollan.

Also for recipes: Adrian Barron, [Sweet Paris, Seasonal Recipes](#) (\$29.99).

Then a few selected books from our shelves!

Benjamin, Melanie. [Mistress of the Ritz](#) (\$17)
Black, Cara. [Murder in the Marais](#) (\$9.99) and the entire [Aimee LeDuc series](#)
Bowen, Rhys. [Peril in Paris](#) (\$27 Signed)
Callanan, Liam. [Paris by the Book](#) (\$16)

Charles, Janet Skeslien. [The Paris Library](#) (\$17.99)
 Colgan, Jenny. [The Loveliest Chocolate Shop in Paris](#) (\$15.99)
 Diliberto, Gioia. [Coco at the Ritz](#) (\$25.95)
 Foley, Lucy. [The Paris Apartment](#) (\$18.99)
 Maher, Kerri. [The Paris Bookseller](#) (\$17)
 McKinlay, Jenn. [Paris Is Always a Good Idea](#) (\$16)
 McLain, Paula. [The Paris Wife](#) (\$17)
 Pryor, Mark. [The Paris Librarian](#) (\$19.95) and the [Hugo Marston Mysteries](#) starting with [The Bookseller](#)
 Sciolino, Elaine. [The Seine](#) (\$26.95)
 Williams, Willig, White. [All the Ways We Said Goodbye](#) (\$16.99)
 Wood, Daisy. [The Forgotten Bookshop in Paris](#) (\$16.99)

And for young readers, two classics with brilliant illustrations:

Bemelmans, Ludwig. [Madeleine](#) (\$18.99)
 Thompson, Kay. [Eloise in Paris](#) (\$19.99)

CLASSICS

We have an ever increasing collection of classics of all sorts—fiction, poetry—nonfiction, etc—but I can't list it all here so I focus on the crime classics. For more info please call the store at 888-560-9919

Brand, Christianna. [Green for Danger](#) (Poisoned Pen \$14.99). If you enjoy hospital mysteries this famed Golden Age Classic from the British Library series is for you. The late Robert Barnard often praised it. A master class of red herrings and tricky twists, it first published in 1944 and features a tense and claustrophobic investigation with a close-knit cast of suspects. It is 1942, and struggling up the hill to the new Kent military hospital Heron's Park, postman Joseph Higgins is soon to deliver seven letters of acceptance for roles at the infirmary. He has no idea that the sender of one of the letters will be the cause of his demise in just one year's time. When Higgins returns to Heron's Park with injuries from a bombing raid in 1943, his inexplicable death by asphyxiation in the operating theatre casts four nurses and three doctors under suspicion, and a second death in quick succession invites the presence of the irascible—yet uncommonly shrewd—Inspector Cockrill to the hospital. As an air raid detains the inspector for the night, the stage is set for... “Hands down one of the best formal detective stories ever written.”—*Kirkus* Starred Review

Hitchens, Dolores. [The Alarm of the Black Cat](#) (American Mystery Classics \$15.95). A strange encounter with a little girl named Claudia and a dead toad sparks elderly detective fiction fan Rachel Murdock's obsessive curiosity, and she winds up renting the house next door just to see how things play out. But soon after she and her cat Samantha move in, Rachel realizes they've landed right in the middle of a deadly love triangle that's created animosity among the three families who now surround her. When Rachel finds Claudia's great-grandmother dead in her basement, she reaches out to a friend in the LAPD to solve the crime. They soon learn the three households have been torn apart by one husband's infidelity and a complicated will that could lead to a fortune. In a house plagued by forbidden love, regret, and greed, Rachel will have to trust her intuition, as well as Samantha's instincts, to survive—and keep Claudia out of the hands of a killer....

Starrett, Vincent. [Dead Man Inside](#) (American Mystery Classics \$15.95). In this cozy mystery by Vincent Starrett, former intelligence officer Walter Ghost follows a trail of bizarre murders, beginning with a corpse posed as a mannequin in a haberdashery's window display. Scientist, explorer, and former intelligence

officer Walter Ghost has come to Chicago to research some history but, after a stint in the hospital due to appendicitis, he quickly finds himself investigating a string of puzzling murders. Ghost is certainly no stranger to playing detective but, if he's not careful, he's about to get more familiar with the hospital.

COZIES

Adams, Ellery. [Paper Cuts](#) (Kensington \$27). In this entry into the [Secret Book and Scone Society series](#), red herrings abound along with plenty of tips on choosing books. It's perfect for our **April Cozy Crimes Book of the Month**. Nora Pennington, who owns Miracle Books in Miracle Springs, North Carolina, has a supportive circle of friends calling themselves The Secret, Book, and Scone Society. Her relationship with Sheriff Grant McCabe provides both strength and complications when she has a run-in with Kelly Walsh, her ex-husband Lawrence's second wife. When Nora and her friends visit a new cafe in town, they meet owners Kirk and Val Walsh, who have an odd reaction to her, perhaps because of the burn scars she got in a car accident that still haunts her. But it turns out that they recognize her as Lawrence's first wife; his current wife, Kelly, is Kirk's sister, and they've come to town to help her since she's dying of cancer. Kelly has a son, Tucker, who's neurodivergent. When Nora discovers that Kelly was the pregnant other woman she briefly met before she left Lawrence and that Tucker is Lawrence's son, she loses it, pushing Kelly aside just to get away. When Kelly is found dead of asphyxiation shortly afterward, Nora's friends insist that she get a lawyer...Kirk's request that Nora evaluate some books that Tucker's grandmother has left him adds still more complications when they turn out to be worth a small fortune. Through it all, Nora remains on the hook, and her continuing investigations put her in the sights of both the law and the killer.

Bolton, Ginger. [Cinnamon Twisted](#) (Kensington \$16.95). Weeks before summer begins, Deputy Donut Café owner Emily Westhill has it all—a tabby cat by her side, cinnamon twists powdered to perfection, and a murderer on her case. Why did the murdered customer grab her cinnamon twists and flee Deputy Donut? With the detective eyeing Emily as a prime suspect, Emily is determined to find out. But once a donut-shaped murder weapon is discovered in her own backyard, Emily has no time to lose as she pulls apart the connection between the victim and the strange history of her property....

Cahoon, Lynn. [A Basketful of Murder](#) (Kensington \$16.95). Angie Turner's Idaho restaurant, the County Seat, owes its success not only to its farm-fresh fare, but also to its devoted and passionate staff. It's a good thing they are devoted as here they have three separate murders to investigate.

Connelly, Lucy. [An American in Scotland](#) (Crooked Lane \$26.99). Seattle ER doctor Emilia McRoy makes a leap of faith by accepting a position as the sole practitioner in the town of Sea Isle, Scotland, where she has family roots according to a DNA test. Emilia warms to Sea Isle's quirky residents, except high-handed Ewan Campbell, “constable, mayor, and laird of Sea Isle,” who has a knack for getting under her skin. Then a corpse appears in her office, only to disappear overnight before her other duty as coroner can begin. No body, no autopsy, no crime? After threatening letters arrive, she must work with Ewan to discover what's going on. As the tension rises, Emilia's ER experiences become crucial to saving not only her own life but others' as well.

There is much to love about this series start, especially its wealth of Scottish scenery and lore, and village life. But I had some difficulty warming up to Emilia and found the narrative jerky in spots. Perhaps it will smooth out in the sequel.

Copperman, E J. [Ukulele of Death](#) (Seyern \$31.99) is the first in a new series of light-hearted, paranormal tinged mysteries. After losing their parents when they were just babies, private investigators Fran and Ken Stein now specialize in helping adoptees find their birth parents. So when a client asks them for help finding her father, with her only clue a rare ukulele, the case is a little weird, sure, but it's nothing they can't handle. All Fran wants to do is find the ukulele and collect their fee, but it's hard to keep your focus when you're stumbling over corpses and receiving messages that suggest your (dead) parents are very much alive. Ukuleles aside, it's becoming clear that someone knows something they shouldn't—that Fran and Ken Stein weren't so much born, as built.... **Ordered Upon Request**

Esden, Trish. [A Wealth of Deception](#) (Crooked Lane \$29.99). In Esden's second Scandal Mountain Antiques Mystery after [The Art of the Decoy](#) (\$26.99 and hard to get), Vermont dealer Edie Brown agrees to do a charitable evaluation for an estate. Amidst the mostly hoarded junk she is stunned by a dark collage, obscurely displayed, she believes must be the work of "outsider" artist Vespa. No one knows who Vespa is. This touches off a quest that leads into an art underground where murder is employed to keep secrets. This is another interesting corner of the antiques and art world for fans of say Jane Cleland to explore with Esden.

Graves, Sarah. [Death by Chocolate Marshmallow Pie](#) (Kensington \$27). I loved the Jacobia Tiptree series when it began back in 1998 with [The Dead Cat Bounce](#) (\$7.99), a book I still highly recommend, with its much darker crime line even though it's been repackaged to a cozy brand under Home Repair and Homicide. The difficult relationships and Jake's old house were key. Jake has since become a chocolatier and her investigations morphed into a cozy series where chocolate rather than home renovation takes center stage. Candy store owner Brad Fairway's unsavory business tactics leave a bitter taste in the mouths of chocolatiers Jacobia "Jake" Tiptree and Ellie White. Brad's new shop is competing with Jake and Ellie's longtime local favorite for summer tourist dollars in the small village of Eastport, Maine, with Brad undercutting Jake and Ellie's prices and bad-mouthing their baked goods at the annual art fair. To complicate matters, Brad knows about Jake's past laundering money for the New York mob, which she'd prefer to keep under wraps. When Brad is found dead after a confrontation with Ellie, and the murder weapon is Ellie's gun, Jake sets out to find the killer and defend the life she's built for herself in Maine. Before long, she starts to worry she or Ellie could be next. "A bevy of memorable characters complement the breezy, intriguing plot."

☞Hall, J M. [Spoonful of Murder](#) (Harper \$16.99). Joining the vogue for senior sleuths is this British import that may or may not arrive on time this month. Every Thursday, three retired school teachers have their 'coffee o'clock' sessions at the Thirsk Garden Centre café. But one fateful week, as they are catching up with a slice of cake, they bump into their ex-colleague, Topsy. By the next Thursday, Topsy's dead. The last thing Liz, Thelma and Pat imagined was that they would become involved in a murder. But they know there's more to Topsy's death than meets the eye....

Meier, Leslie. [Mother of the Bride Murder](#) (Kensington \$27). When Maine reporter Lucy Stone arrives at a sprawling French chateau with the whole family, it should be the trip of a lifetime—especially because she's about to watch her oldest daughter, Elizabeth, marry the handsome, successful man of her dreams. But while navigating the vast countryside estate owned by her impenetrably wealthy in-laws-to-be, the jet-lagged mother of the bride has a creeping feeling that Elizabeth's fairytale nuptials to Jean-Luc Schoen-Rene are destined to become a nightmare. Maternal instincts are validated the moment a body is pulled from a centuries-old moat on the property. A young woman has dropped dead under mysterious circumstances—possibly at the hands of someone at the chateau—and unflattering rumors about the Schoen-Rene line and their inner circle flow like champagne. Then there's the matter of Elizabeth's hunky ex beau showing up on the scene as she prepares to walk down the aisle. With tensions building, personalities clashing, and real dangers emerging at the chateau, Lucy is determined to protect her family, together for the first time in years, and expose the killer. 29th in the Tinker's Cove cozy series.

APRIL IS RICH IN HISTORICAL FICTION

And many of the books below will make terrific Mother's Day Gifts....

☞Beaton, MC. [Emily Goes to Exeter](#) (Blackstone \$12.99). The late MC Beaton of Agatha Raisin and Hamish Macbeth fame, also wrote a bushel of Regency novels, often as Marion Chesney. I'm delighted that Blackstone, a small publisher on the rise, has reissued this volume in her Traveling Matchmaker series. It's brisk, amusing with lively characters, and a load of fun. What we have is the spinster Hannah Pym who has earned her way up the servants ranks to that of housekeeper for the elderly eccentric master of Thornton Hall. Hannah's yearning for adventure leads her to watch the stagecoaches rattling by this country estate and wish herself aboard. When her employer dies and, amazingly leaves her the enormous sum of 5000 pounds, she elects to travel by coach to Exeter. Little does she expect the adventure that her fellow travelers create who include a young beauty fleeing a marriage arranged by tyrannical parents, a widow in the hands of a cad, and more. Hannah it turns out is no mean hand at matchmaking as well as bringing men to heel. I hope Blackstone intends to republish more of this delightful series.

Beanland, Rachel. [The House Is on Fire](#) (SimonSchuster \$27.99). Novelists are more than ever mining real events to spark their fiction. Here we begin in Richmond, Virginia 1811. It's the height of the winter social season. The General Assembly is in session, and many of Virginia's gentleman planters, along with their wives and children, have made the long and arduous journey to the capital in hopes of whiling away the darkest days of the year. At the city's only theater, the Charleston-based Placide & Green Company puts on two plays a night to meet the demand of a populace that's done looking for enlightenment in a church. On the night after Christmas, the theater is packed with more than six hundred holiday revelers. In the third-floor boxes, sits newly widowed Sally Henry Campbell, who is glad for any opportunity to relive the happy times she shared with her husband. One floor away, in the colored gallery, Cecily Patterson doesn't give a whit about the play but is grateful for a four-hour reprieve from a life that has recently gone from bad to worse. Backstage, young

stagehand Jack Gibson hopes that, if he can impress the theater's managers, he'll be offered a permanent job with the company. And on the other side of town, blacksmith Gilbert Hunt dreams of one day being able to bring his wife to the theater, but he'll have to buy her freedom first. When the theater goes up in flames in the middle of the performance, Sally, Cecily, Jack, and Gilbert make a series of split-second decisions that will not only affect their own lives but those of countless others. And in the days following the fire, as news of the disaster spreads across the United States.

Billier, Diana. [Hotel of Secrets](#) (St Martins Griffin \$17.99). What a delightful romp this is, full of shenanigans by Viennese aristocrats, spies (one of them American), frauds, family secrets including royal bastards, waltzes, and the running of a high class Victorian era hotel by a family down on its luck (maybe the luck is not just unlucky) but set under the very determined young hotelkeeper Maria Wallner to restore its grandeur. The characters are so vividly drawn you can't turn away. The grumpy American Eli Whittaker of Treasury, sent to expose whoever is selling American secret codes and following his only lead, a letter dispatched from the Hotel Wallner, is stunned by the turbulence (and by Maria) as he is swept into the chaotic whirlwind. But he finds his footing in Vienna and in the generations of Wallner women. Love this.

Cleeton, Chanel. [The Cuban Heiress](#) (Berkley \$17) is inspired by the true story of the *SS Morro Castle* and a 1934 round trip voyage from New York to Havana. New York heiress Catherine Dohan seemingly has it all. There's only one problem. It's a lie. As soon as the *Morro Castle* leaves port, Catherine's past returns with a vengeance and threatens her life. Joining forces with a charismatic jewel thief, Catherine must discover who wants her dead—and why. Elena Palacio is a dead woman. Or so everyone thinks. After a devastating betrayal left her penniless and on the run, Elena's journey on the *Morro Castle* is her last hope. Steeped in secrecy and a burning desire for revenge, her return to Havana is a chance to right the wrong that has been done to her—and her prey is on the ship.... This is clearly a book for fans of Beatriz Williams and Lauren Willig.

✠Cowan-Erskine, Beth. [Loch Down Abbey](#) (Hodder \$15.95). I give this a repeat rave because, as a British import, stock is running out. It's a hilarious though sardonic variation on an Agatha Christie, or maybe a Margery Allingham, country house murder. Think an isolated Abbey full of suspects where the cantankerous head of the family, Lord Inverkillen, is found dead. A mysterious plague has caused a lock down, no one is allowed in or out of the Abbey, so Mrs. MacBain, the housekeeper, takes it on herself to investigate. Nothing is as it seems, Upstairs or Downstairs, in this "entertaining romp and a fascinating insight into the weird and wonderful ways of the British aristocracy."—S.J. Bennett,

Dallas, Sandra. [Where Coyotes Howl](#) (St Martins \$26.99) is a great title for a sprawling and immersive story of homesteaders carving out a life in Wyoming. Seeking adventure, 23-year-old Ellen Webster leaves her Iowa home in 1916 to teach in a one-room schoolhouse in the small town of Wallace, imagining a Wild West adventure of bronco riding, cowboys, and pine-covered mountains. Though the brown, flat plains are a disappointment to her, rancher Charlie Bacon is not. The two are smitten at first sight, and after they marry and settle on a small ranch, Ellen tends

to the batten-and-board house and garden and Charlie oversees a neighbor's cattle and a few of their own. Soon a baby is on the way, though prairie life proves difficult, with blizzards, scorching summers, drought, and disease. Ellen and Charlie's relationship, meanwhile, is tested by a series of losses, but their love is strong. So are Ellen's bonds with other prairie women... "Well-rounded characters, convincing period details, and a sumptuous setting make this sing."

Frazier, Charles. [The Trackers](#) (Harper \$29.99). Hurling past the downtrodden communities of Depression-era America, painter Val Welch travels westward to the rural town of Dawes, Wyoming. Through a stroke of luck, he's landed a New Deal assignment to create a mural representing the region for their new Post Office. A wealthy art lover named John Long and his wife Eve have agreed to host Val at their sprawling ranch. Soon rumors and intrigue surround the couple...

✠Harris, Robert J. [The Devil's Blaze](#) (Pegasus \$26). Here's another lively romp, this one in the world of Holmes and Watson updated to London, 1943. It's terrific fun, a sort of homage but with a strong 20th Century kick. It kicks off when several prominent Londoners burst spontaneously into flames. The victims are key to wartime so the authorities, suspecting Germany is deploying some fiendish secret weapon, turn to the one man they believe can defeat the menace. Is Holmes actually forming an alliance with scientific genius Professor James Moriarty for this purpose—or is he gaming Moriarty as Moriarty is perhaps gaming him? Actually Harris began with [A Study in Crimson](#) (\$16.55), Sherlock Holmes 1942, which I am ordering to read as quickly as I can I had so much fun with *The Devil's Blaze*.

Kelly, Martha Hall. [The Golden Doves](#) (Ballantine \$28.99). WWII is the gift that keeps on giving to novelists. The author of [Lilac Girls](#) (\$17) now turns to two women. American Josie Anderson and Parisian Arlette LaRue are thrilled to be working in the French resistance, stealing so many Nazi secrets that they become known as the Golden Doves, renowned across France and hunted by the Gestapo. Their courage will cost them everything. When they are finally arrested and taken to the Ravensbrück concentration camp, along with their loved ones, a reclusive Nazi doctor does unspeakable things to Josie's mother, a celebrated Jewish singer who joined her daughter in Paris when the world seemed bright. And Arlette's son is stolen from her, never to be seen again. A decade later the Doves fall headlong into a dangerous dual mission: Josie is working for U.S. Army intelligence and accepts an assignment to hunt down the infamous doctor, while a mysterious man tells Arlette he may have found her son. The Golden Doves embark on a quest across Europe and ultimately to French Guiana, discovering a web of terrible secrets, and must put themselves in grave danger to finally secure justice.

LaValle, Victor. [Lone Women](#) (One World, \$27.) follows a homesteading woman with a mysterious locked trunk. The year is 1915, and Adelaide Henry is in trouble. Her secret sin killed her parents, forcing her to flee California in a hellfire rush and make her way to Montana as a homesteader. Dragging the trunk with her at every stop, she will become one of the "lone women" taking advantage of the government's offer of free land for those who can tame it—except that Adelaide isn't alone. And the secret she's tried so desperately to lock away might be the only thing that will

help her survive the harsh territory. Crafted by a modern master of magical suspense, *Lone Women* blends shimmering prose, an unforgettable cast of adventurers who find horror and sisterhood in a brutal landscape, and a portrait of early-twentieth-century America like you've never seen. And at its heart is the gripping story of a woman desperate to bury her past—or redeem it. Read his essay in the *NYTBR* about "[Horror and Lone Women](#)."

Loesch, Kristen. [The Last Russian Doll](#) (Berkley \$27). "A gorgeous saga, filled with mystery and Russian fairytales...a perfect tapestry of tragedy, romance, and survival...an absolutely mesmerizing read." —Historical Novel Society. Echoed by BookPage: "*The Last Russian Doll* blends the best of two genres by embedding a riveting mystery within a masterfully researched historical narrative...History enthusiasts will enjoy piecing together this fresh perspective on 20th-century Russia, while fans of contemporary whodunits will relish the ever-increasing drama. ... a deeply emotional and irresistible story of what it takes to find one's way through a country with a story like none other." So we begin with a young woman living happily in Moscow with her family including an eccentric mother who lied to tell fairy tales and collect porcelain dolls. One summer night ended with only the girl and her mother surviving. In the dual timeline, Rosie has an English name, a fiancé, is studying at Oxford with a promising future. When she uncovers the devastating family history spanning the 1917 revolution, the siege of Leningrad, Stalin's purges and events up to the fall of the Soviet Union, Rosie connects back to the young noblewoman Tonya and her actions.

Olson, Lynn. [Empress of the Nile](#) (Random \$32). Talk about women developing agency! This biography—not fiction—is catnip for fans of Elizabeth Peters and her Amelia Peabody mysteries but it's also an important document of the French Resistance to the Nazis, to standing up to power (Nasser, De Gaulle) in saving the temple of Abu Simbel from the waters created by the Aswan Dam project, and to carving one's own space in a tightly enclosed profession. What an extraordinary and inspiring life led by Christiane Desroches-Noblecourt led across the 20th Century. I love how this review in the [NY Times](#) begins: "Egyptian archaeology has never been regarded as an equal-opportunity profession. Charismatic males have dominated the field since its inception, from Giovanni Belzoni, a onetime circus strongman who located the hidden entrance to the second Pyramid at Giza in 1818, to Howard Carter, the Briton who shot to global fame after uncovering Tutankhamen's tomb. Then there's Zahi Hawass, the self-styled Indiana Jones who ruled over Egypt's antiquities for years. Driven out by allegations of corruption during the Arab Spring, Hawass resurrected himself, Osiris-style, under the current dictatorship." Christiane more than held her own.

Penner, Sarah. [The London Séance Society](#) (Park Row \$29.99 SIGNED) 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."

Perry, Anne. [The Fourth Enemy](#) (Random \$28.99). I am sad to report that a health crisis for our longtime friend Anne Perry means we will not have Signed copies of this new mystery for Daniel Pitt. Set in 1912, bestseller Perry's strong sixth for Daniel novel finds the London barrister facing major changes in his professional life. The head of chambers, Daniel's father-in-law, has decided to retire, and a newcomer, Gideon Hunter, is brought onboard to add a veteran attorney to the firm. Hunter accepts a high-profile case: the prosecution of wealthy newspaper owner Malcolm Vayne, a philanthropist and vocal supporter of women's suffrage. Insp. Ian Frobisher, a friend of Daniel's, recently shared his suspicions that Vayne was bilking hundreds of people through a pyramid scheme, but added that he lacked conclusive proof. Despite those misgivings, Vayne was arrested and charged, leaving Daniel, who's assisting Hunter, to scramble to find enough evidence for a conviction. The stakes rise when Vayne's financial dealings attract the attention of Daniel's father, Thomas, now the head of Special Branch. The author cleverly makes the most of a plotline not centered on a crime of violence. *Booklist* adds, "The richly atmospheric tale brings the summer of 1912 to detail-rich life, from Titanic headlines to Miriam's bright-red Speedster."

Spence-Ash, Laura. [Beyond That, The Sea](#) (Celadon \$28) weaves a tapestry of intimate relationships that span the Atlantic in the decades after World War II. At the 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. "Spence-Ash gives voice to multiple main characters, writing in brief chapters told from their perspectives: This is a moving, brilliant WWII story, not of crime but of loss, family, and the complexity of love."

Stokes-Chapman, Susan. [Pandora](#) (Harper \$17). Wow, how I love this novel which combines some of the fun elements of an Elizabeth Peters' Amelia Peabody archaeology mystery with a 1799 London antiques/jewelry shop on the decline from its former fame under the management of now-orphaned Dora Blake's adventurous and scholarly parents. Novice jewelry designer Dora hopes to learn her craft well enough to restore the shop and her fortune. But then Dora's odious uncle, Hezekiah, perforce her guardian who runs the business, behaves suspiciously when a mysterious Greek vase is delivered. Don't miss this one.

Winters, Mary. [Murder in Postscript](#) (Berkley \$17). Anyone who has watched *Bridgerton* will see the inspiration here for the widowed Countess Amelia Amesbury, aka Lady Agony, advice columnist for 1860 London's popular penny weekly. Under this pen name Lady Amesbury dishes on fashion, relationships, manners, and well, gossip, although she has a sound moral compass. When a lady's maid writes to ask Lady Agony's advice whether to air her belief that her late mistress has been murdered rather than died while sleepwalking (or suicide?), and then is found dead at their appointed rendezvous, the countess resolves to solve the case (both cases) herself. To her aid come both her best friend and (naturally) a handsome (and single) Marquis. So, mystery, murder, investigation, romance...

AND IN NONFICTION

There are real thrillers in this curated collection for April. We don't shelve a big nonfiction section, but we can order anything you wish. And, as March, Women's History Month, ends we still feature titles where women do amazing things, not just in the nonfiction below but in the rich History list above and in Signed books like Birnam Woods.

Brooks, Adam. [Fragile Cargo: The WWII Race to Save the Treasures of China's Forbidden City](#) (Atria \$28.99). As tensions with China increase this thoroughly researched look at what happened in 1933 through WWII and the Communist war with the Chinese Republic led by Chiang Kai-shek is illuminating. In a maelstrom of war, famine, occupation, destruction, and revolution where Chinese fought one another, it might seem of secondary importance to implement saving the Imperial art collections housed in the Forbidden City, but we're talking cultural heritage in the same way we are over the heritages of Iraq, Syria, the Ukraine, etc, and also repatriation of cultural treasures to their places of creation. Journalist Brooks does a brilliant job outlining how the curators in Beijing debated, then acted upon, their mission, and about the severe consequences visited upon them. Some of the collections ended up in Taiwan where the reception was shaky. Some were destroyed, others lost, some ended up in the CP's hands. While this also serves as a biography of the brave museum director Ma Heng, it's most important aspect for me is Brooks' analysis and descriptions of what happened in post-war China. Those who were fascinated by how the French acted to preserve their treasures as portrayed in Anthony Doerr's bestselling novel [All the Light We Cannot See](#) (\$18.99) will relish *Fragile Cargo*. I add that the British preserved much of its collections in Welsh coal mines and at country estates.

For a companion read pickup James M. Zimmerman's [The Peking Express](#) (Public Affairs \$29.99) which opens in May, 1923, when a bandit gang and rabble rouser leader descended upon the luxury train running from Shanghai to Peking. They took hostages, humiliated the Peking government, and conducted a five-week siege at their mountain stronghold. Zimmerman believes that this clash, in its way a Murder on the Orient Express story, became so celebrated that it broke the nascent Republic of China and set the course for the two-decade and more civil war that followed. Zimmerman is a Beijing-based lawyer of over 25 years.

Clavin, Tom. [Follow Me to Hell](#) (St Martins \$29.99) is the explosive true story of how legendary Ranger Leander McNelly and his men brought justice to a lawless Texan frontier. In turbulent 1870s Texas, the revered and fearless Ranger Leander McNelly led his men in one dramatic campaign after another, throwing cattle thieves, desperadoes, border ruffians, and other dangerous criminals into jail or, if that's how they wanted it, six feet under. They would stop at nothing in pursuit of justice, even sending 26 Rangers across the border to retrieve stolen cattle—taking on hundreds of Mexican troops with nothing but their Sharps rifles and six-guns. The nation came to call them “McNelly's Rangers.” Set against the backdrop of 200 years of thrilling Texas Rangers history, this page-turner takes readers into the tough life along the Texas border.

Egan, Timothy. [A Fever in the Heartland: The Ku Klux Klan's Plot to Take Over America and the Woman Who Stopped Them](#)

(Penguin \$30). “With meticulous detective work, Timothy Egan shines a light on one of the most sinister chapters in American history—how a viciously racist movement, led by a murderous conman, rose to power in the early twentieth century. *A Fever in the Heartland* is compelling, powerful, and profoundly resonant today.” — David Grann

Frankopan, Peter. [The Earth Transformed](#) (Knopf \$40). Here we have brilliant historical writing and research that serves as a real geopolitical warning. In a bold narrative that spans centuries and continents, Frankopan argues that nature has always played a fundamental role in the writing of history. From the fall of the Moche civilization in South America that came about because of the cyclical pressures of El Niño to volcanic eruptions in Iceland that affected Egypt and helped bring the Ottoman Empire to its knees, climate change and its influences have always been with us. Frankopan explains how the Vikings emerged thanks to catastrophic crop failure, why the roots of regime change in Eleventh-Century Baghdad lay in the collapse of cotton prices resulting from unusual climate patterns, and why the western expansion of the frontiers in North America was directly affected by solar flare activity in the eighteenth century. Again and again, Frankopan shows that when past empires have failed to act sustainably, they have been met with catastrophe.

Graeber, David/DavidWengrow. [The Dawn of Everything. A New History of Humanity](#) (\$25). Shortlisted for the Orwell Prize, NPR's Best book of the Year, and more, the authors challenge our most fundamental assumptions about social evolution—from the development of agriculture and cities to the origins of the state, democracy, and inequality—and revealing new possibilities for human emancipation.

Katwala, Amit. [Tremors in the Blood](#) (Crooked Lane (\$18.99)). A senior writer at WIRED based in London writes about the creation of the “lie detector” by exploring murders and trials to uncover how the polygraph works, or does not. He begins in summer 1922 in California where the San Francisco PD turned to the invention in Berkeley by a rookie detective, a police chief, and a teenage magician of a machine designed to enhance the justice system. But the device intended to detect lies had many dangerous unintended defects. “As Katwala shows, it led to significant false conclusions, as there ‘is no way for an examiner to be sure whether a change in blood pressure is due to fear of getting caught or anxiety about being falsely accused.’ More recently, lie detection technology has expanded to include processes ‘powered by brain scans and artificial intelligence’ that have been ‘greedily adopted by police forces and governments, drawn in by the false promise of a machine that tells the truth.’ Katwala has real storytelling chops, and the chilling conclusion about the flawed nature of polygraphs truly hits home.” —*PW* Starred Review. Lie detection be a plot device as you can see in the Netflix hit *The Night Agent* from the thriller by our wonderful friend Matthew Quirk where the Vice President determines that his injured daughter is lying through spikes in her monitoring devices....

Magsamen, Susan/ Ivy Rose. [Your Brain on Art: How the Arts Transform Us](#) (Random \$29.99). Speaking of neuroscience and even neuroaesthetics, the authors postulate that regularly engaging with the arts can make you live longer, and this absorbing book explains how. That's the thesis of this bestseller which is somewhat speculative but worth considering. We're on the verge

of a cultural shift in which the arts can deliver potent, accessible, and proven solutions for the well-being of everyone. Magsamen and Ross offer compelling research that shows how engaging in an art project for as little as forty-five minutes reduces the stress hormone cortisol, no matter your skill level, and just one art experience per month can extend your life by ten years. They expand our understanding of how playing music builds cognitive skills and enhances learning; the vibrations of a tuning fork create sound waves to counteract stress; virtual reality can provide cutting-edge therapeutic benefit; and interactive exhibits dissolve the boundaries between art and viewers, engaging all of our senses and strengthening memory. Doctors have even been prescribing museum visits to address loneliness, dementia, and many other physical and mental health concerns. Whenever I am asked why don't I retire, I reply that staying engaged will keep me living meaningfully longer. Plenty of color illustrations enhance the text. With the debates on AI raging, this work is of great value.

Malby-Anthony, Françoise. [The Elephants of Thula Thula](#) (St Martins \$29.99). In the volume *Elephant Whisperer #3*, Malby-Anthony, the owner of a game reserve in South Africa with a remarkable family of elephants whose adventures have touched hearts around the world, pens a gripping story about the herd and her dedication to keeping them safe. The herd's feisty matriarch Frankie knows who's in charge at Thula Thula, and it's not Françoise. But when Frankie becomes ill, and the authorities threaten to remove or cull some of the herd if the reserve doesn't expand, Françoise is in a race against time to save her beloved elephants. As well, the search is on to get a girlfriend for orphaned rhino Thabo – and then, as his behaviour becomes increasingly boisterous, a big brother to teach him manners. Françoise realizes a dream with the arrival of Savannah the cheetah – an endangered species not seen in the area since the 1940s – and finds herself rescuing meerkats kept as pets. But will Thula Thula survive the pandemic, an invasion from poachers and the threat from a mining company wanting access to its land?

Warner, Joel. [The Curse of the Marquis de Sade](#) (Crown \$28.99). While in part a biography of the notorious French nobleman, in part an exploration of cruelty and unhinged sex and “erotic obsessed dermatologists” not to mention Victorians, this is really the story of a manuscript hidden by the Marquis in the Bastille, its discovery, and most recently how it was exploited in a modern Ponzi scheme and the sabotage of rare manuscript sales. Warner has produced, with admirable and extensive research, a literary detective story as well as a tale for “admirers of the absurd and anyone who enjoys a great scandal.” I skipped over the bizarre sex and awful cruelties—the Marquis' behavior gave rise to the word *sadist*, and focused on the “allegory about what and why and how we choose to value....stuff.”

Winchester, Simon. [Knowing What We Know](#) (Harper \$25). From the creation of the first encyclopedia to Wikipedia, from ancient museums to modern kindergarten classes—this is a look at how humans acquire, retain, and pass on information and data, and how technology continues to change our lives and our minds. With the advent of the internet, with so much knowledge at our fingertips, what is there left for our brains to do? At a time when we seem to be stripping all value from the idea of knowing things—no need for math, no need for map-reading, no need for memorization—are we risking our ability to think? As we empty our minds, will we one day be incapable of thoughtfulness? Win-

chester explores how humans have attained, stored, and disseminated knowledge. Examining such disciplines as education, journalism, encyclopedia creation, museum curation, photography, and broadcasting, he looks at a whole range of knowledge diffusion—from the cuneiform writings of Babylon to the machine-made genius of artificial intelligence, by way of Gutenberg, Google, and Wikipedia to the huge Victorian assemblage of the Mundanaeum, the collection of everything ever known, currently stored in a damp basement in northern Belgium. Throughout this tour, Winchester forces us to ponder what rational humans are becoming. What good is all this knowledge if it leads to lack of thought? What is information without wisdom? And what will the world be like if no one in it is wise?

SOME NEW HARDCOVER FICTION

I am overwhelmed by the number of new releases in April. Here are some. If I have the time I will cover more in an extra Booknews either in April or May when I have a chance to read more.

Abramson, Leigh McMullan. [A Likely Story](#) (Atria \$27.99). “In Abramson's clever debut, the daughter of a famous novelist wants to be a writer, too. Isabelle Manning grows up in Manhattan idolizing her narcissistic father, Ward. But when her mother dies, she's still floundering at 34, both professionally and in her personal life. Her own novels have been rejected by publishers, and she won't allow her friendship with college classmate Brian to develop into romance. Ward is equally at sea: each of his recent books has sold fewer copies than the last, his current project is stalled, and he's beginning to worry he might have dementia. Abramson periodically interrupts her stories of the frustrated writers with passages from a manuscript about a woman who forges her artist husband's work after his death. Before Abramson reveals the author of this manuscript along with the source of its inspiration, Isabelle makes her way into the city's literary scene, then wonders if it's where she belongs after all. Though the tone shifts vertiginously from acerbic wit to heightened sentiment, the inventive structure keeps readers guessing about what the manuscript will reveal about the Mannings. It lands as a thought-provoking meditation on family,” says *PW* in its review.

Bannalec, Jean-Luc. [The Body by the Sea](#) (St Martins \$26.99). The joys of this series set in Brittany led by the prickly displaced Parisian cop Commissaire Georges Dupin who has over the course of the books settled comfortably into his provincial beat are many and detailed in Our April Large Paperback Picks with the latest release. His home base is the town of Concarneau on the coast with three harbors at its center, easy access to the sea and its many delicious foods, and a home-base restaurant l'Amiral which suits Dupin perfectly...although curiously in this latest investigation he has abandoned Steak Frites for seafood. The crime begins shockingly with the defenestration of Doctor Chaboseau from his home above the restaurant. Was it murder? *Oui*. It being the Pentecost long weekend holiday, Dupin, whose in-laws are arriving, is consumed with assembling his usual team as well as with sorting out the murder. The doctor was also a business man and investor, widening the field of suspects and taking readers into the local wine/beer community and real estate, and giving him endless opportunities to enjoy the local cuisine. “The action takes place over two very busy days, which

includes an explosion in the harbor, another murder, and Dupin frequently indulging his penchant for sampling food and drink. Bannalec smoothly blends the beauty and charm of the region into the whodunit plot. Readers will be ready to pack their bags and head to Brittany by the end of this one.”—says *PW* in its Starred Review for this our **April International Crime Book of the Month**—for who doesn’t want to visit France in April? (assuming the rioting dies down).

Beagle, Peter S. [The Way Home: Two Novellas from the World of The Last Unicorn](#) (Penguin \$27). SFWA Grand Master Beagle returns to the magical landscape of his most famous work with two breathtaking novellas, “Two Hearts,” a Hugo Award winner originally published in 2006, and its heartbreaking sequel “Sooz,” which is original to this volume. Narrator Sooz is nine in “Two Hearts” when a malignant griffin lands and nests in Midnight Wood near her home. Sooz sets out to ask King Lir for help defeating the beast, aided by two mysterious riders familiar to Beagle’s fans: Schmendrick the magician and his companion Molly Grue. Together they find Lir, and poignantly rouse him from old age and fatigue, recruiting both him and his beloved Unicorn to slay the griffin. Eight years later, in “Sooz,” the now 17-year-old heroine seeks the sister she never knew she had who was kidnapped by the fairies as a baby....With beautiful worldbuilding and tons of heart, these tender fantasies are sure to delight as [The Last Unicorn](#) (\$17) did me when I was young, and does still.

Bose, Disha. [Dirty Laundry](#) (Ballantine \$27). “Ciara is a perfect mom and influencer who knows what to do, buy, and promote in her small Irish town. Ciara also is an irresponsible woman who plays friends against each other, eats up and spits out all the town husbands, and seals her own fate with her reprehensible behavior. An *Orient Express*-like cast shines in this twisty domestic thriller about secrets and lies.”

Clark, Mary Higgins/Alafair Burke. [Where Are the Children Now?](#) (Simon Schuster \$26.99). The legacy of the “Queen of Suspense” continues with the highly anticipated follow-up to Mary Higgins Clark’s iconic novel *Where Are The Children?*, featuring the children of Nancy Harmon, facing peril once again as adults. In that story, a young California mother named Nancy Harmon was convicted of murdering her two children. Though released on a technicality, she was abandoned by her husband and became such a pariah in the media that she was forced to move across the country to Cape Cod, change her identity and appearance, and start a new life. Years later her two children from a second marriage, Mike and Melissa, would go missing, and Nancy yet again became the prime suspect—but this time, Nancy was able to confront the secrets buried in her past and rescue her kids from a dangerous predator. Now, more than four decades since readers first met Nancy and her children, comes the thrilling sequel to the groundbreaking book that set the stage for future generations of psychological suspense novels. A lawyer turned successful podcaster, Melissa has recently married a man whose first wife died tragically, leaving him and their young daughter, Riley, behind. While Melissa and her brother, Mike, help their mom, Nancy, relocate from Cape Cod to the equally idyllic Hamptons, Melissa’s new stepdaughter goes missing. Drawing on the experience of their own abduction, Melissa and Mike race to find Riley to save her from the trauma they still struggle with—or worse.

Donlea, Charlie. [Those Empty Eyes](#) (Kensington \$27). I have not read Donlea, but he’s been recommended so here’s why. Alex Armstrong has changed everything about herself—her name, her appearance, her backstory. She’s no longer the terrified teenager a rapt audience saw on television, emerging in handcuffs from the quiet suburban home the night her family was massacred. That girl, Alexandra Quinlan, nicknamed Empty Eyes by the media, was accused of the killings, fought to clear her name, and later took the stand during her highly publicized defamation lawsuit that captured the attention of the nation. It’s been ten years since, and Alex hasn’t stopped searching for answers about the night her family was killed, even as she continues to hide her real identity from true crime fanatics and grasping reporters still desperate to locate her. As a legal investigator, she works tirelessly to secure justice for others, too. People like Matthew Claymore, who’s under suspicion in the disappearance of his girlfriend, a student journalist named Laura McAllister. Laura was about to break a major story about rape and cover-ups on her college campus. Alex believes Matthew is innocent, and unearths stunning revelations about the university’s faculty, fraternity members, and powerful parents willing to do anything to protect their children. Most shocking of all—as Alex digs into Laura’s disappearance, she realizes there are unexpected connections to the murder of her own family. For as different as the crimes may seem, they each hinge on one sinister truth: no one is quite who they seem to be....

Frazier, Charles. [The Trackers](#) (Harper \$29.99). Hurling past the downtrodden communities of Depression-era America, painter Val Welch travels westward to the rural town of Dawes, Wyoming. Through a stroke of luck, he’s landed a New Deal assignment to create a mural representing the region for their new Post Office. A wealthy art lover named John Long and his wife Eve have agreed to host Val at their sprawling ranch. Rumors and intrigue surround the couple: Eve left behind an itinerant life riding the rails and singing in a western swing band. Long holds shady political aspirations, but was once a WWI sniper—and his right hand is a mysterious elder cowboy, a vestige of the violent old west. Val quickly finds himself entranced by their lives. One day, Eve flees home with a valuable painting in tow, and Long recruits Val to hit the road with a mission of tracking her down. Journeying from ramshackle Hooverilles to San Francisco nightclubs to the swamps of Florida, Val’s search for Eve narrows, and he soon turns up secrets that could spark formidable changes for all of them. Expect finely drawn characters, state-of-the-art storytelling, and maybe some contemporary relevance.

Gerhrman, Jody. [The Protégé](#) (Crooked Lane \$29.99). Here’s a terrific Dark Academic revenge thriller for you. Renowned forensics expert and professor Hannah Bryers destroyed Winter Jones’s life when she was 13. Now Winter is Hannah’s new teaching assistant and plans to return the favor. Hannah’s degree in anthropology bolsters her skills as a forensic expert; law enforcement and her employer, California’s Mad River University, revere her opinions. Although her laser-focused analyses are much lauded, her introversion and general social ineptitude result in much side-eye at faculty parties and functions. Amy and Joe, her close friends, view Hannah as endearingly vulnerable, but Winter sees this as the perfect way to destroy the professor’s life and ultimately kill her—as payback. Soon, authorities blame baffled Hannah for destroying evidence and for

a nearly fatal lab explosion; she also faces murder accusations. A distraught Hannah, ostracized by the community and not knowing whom she can trust, mistakenly confides in Winter. Gehrman slowly paces Winter's diabolical plot to destroy Hannah in chapters that alternate between the two women's perspectives, and the villain's identity is obvious from the beginning. Still, the novel retains its nail-biting suspense as we race to understand how—even if—Winter will succeed with her plan. Bonus: an unlikely romance between two prickly academics.

Gómez-Hurado. [Red Queen](#) (St Martins \$27.99). Antonia Scott—the daughter of a British diplomat and a Spanish mother—has a gifted forensic mind, whose ability to reconstruct crimes and solve baffling murders is legendary. But after a personal trauma, she's refused to continue her work or even leave her apartment. Jon Gutierrez, a police officer in Bilbao—disgraced, suspended, and about to face criminal charges—is offered a chance to salvage his career by a secretive organization that works in the shadows to direct criminal investigations of a highly sensitive nature. All he has to do is succeed is bring in Antonia.

The *NY Times Book Review* finds that “Stunning beauty, brilliant mind, innovative detection, cascading traumas: all present and accounted for. As the novel begins, the half-Spanish, half-British Antonia, who “has a black belt in self-deception,” has secluded herself in her residence, refusing to accept new cases as a consulting detective, and generally withdrawn from society. Enter Jon Gutiérrez, a policeman carrying the weight of multiple personal and professional disgraces, who's inexplicably been given a chance at redemption. The catch: He has to coax Antonia out of retirement to work with him on a series of especially heinous murders. It's a slightly banal setup, but no matter. What Gómez-Jurado excels at, as conveyed in Nick Caistor's brisk translation, is pacing of the breakneck variety. Short chapters, funny asides, lethally potent descriptions: They all contribute to a frenetic page-turning momentum that overrides the lack of character development. If you don't take *Red Queen* too seriously, you'll have great fun reading it.”

Graham, Heather. [Shadow of Death](#) (Mira \$29.99). When two hikers go missing within a series of daunting caves outside of Denver, Colorado, FDLE special agent Amy Larson and her partner, FBI special agent Hunter Forrest, have good reason to suspect foul play. The pair of hikers is only the latest to vanish after a rash of disappearances that's left local law enforcement stumped. But in searching the dank caverns near the Arkansas River, the agents aren't prepared for the horror they uncover: a muddy pit littered with corpses. Covered in bite marks. Made by human teeth. When a tiny toy horse is found on the scene, Amy and Hunter recognize the calling card. They'll have to move quickly....

Hendricks, T R. [The Instructor](#) (Forge \$27.99). Former Marine trainer Derek Harrington has been offered \$50,000 by Marshal, the evangelical leader of Sanctuary, a mysterious religious group in the wilderness of Upstate New York, to teach its members the strategy of SERE (survival, evasion, resistance, and escape). Since retiring from the Marines, Derek's struggling bushcraft school has barely made enough to keep him alive, let alone pay for child support and his ailing father's care facility. After seeing how much weaponry Sanctuary has amassed at its backwoods compound, Derek touches base with the FBI, which agrees to use him as an undercover agent investigating domestic terrorism.

Once on the job, Derek gains the grudging respect of his trainees, but as an outsider, he's never free from suspicion. As the brutal training progresses, Derek slips up one too many times, revealing his true purpose, and he has to scramble for his life. Hendricks, a former Army captain and intelligence officer, brings authenticity to this dip into the world of survivalist fringe culture and nature as an enemy, good for military thriller fans who relish action.

Holland, Jacqueline. [The God of Endings](#) (Flatiron \$29.99). Beginning with her conversion from dying young girl to immortal vampire in 1830s New York State, the story presents alternating chapters of past and present that follow Anna across the Atlantic to Europe and back again to the United States. In Eastern Europe, she learns about Czernobog, the god of endings, whose scent of smoke pursues her, warning her each time he appears to wrench away any goodness she's managed to claim for herself. She also learns about prejudice and humanity's expansive capacity for evil. Back in the home where she was reborn as a vampire, Anna—now known as Collette—runs an art school for young children and tries to ignore the disorder in her life as Czernobog seems to be closing in again; at the same time, a deepening relationship with one of her students has her questioning her long-held beliefs. Holland's novel captures the existential angst of an immortal creature who aches for release from a world filled with endings and death.

Jackson, Joshilyn. [With My Little Eye](#) (Harper \$29.99). “Jackson mercilessly exploits the rapid gentrification of Atlanta and the explosion of the film industry here to create a familiar yet fresh setting for her story. She also uses our constant nostalgia for the pop culture of our past to weave her tale of a former teen (well, maybe not so much) second tier star with a stalker who follows her across the country. Huge props to Jackson in her work crafting Honor, an incredibly realistic tween on the spectrum. Honor all but leaps off the page.”

Kepnes, Caroline. [For You and Only You](#) (Random \$28). Has serial killer Joe Goldberg finally met his match—in a creative writing class? “In the previous three books in this series, beginning with *You* (2014), hopeless romantic and occasional murderer Joe has found himself in perilous situations. But who knew the most terrifying yet would be a creative writing fellowship at Harvard? Joe has written a novel, titled—what else?—*Me*, and has finagled himself into a workshop headed by Glenn Shoddy, author of a critically acclaimed novel called *Scabies for Breakfast*. Joe discovers that most of his fellows in the workshop are real writers, not just aspiring... But, of course, Joe finds a soul mate in the lovely Wonder Parish, who's just as insecure about her place in the seminar as Joe is. She still lives with her blue-collar family, caring for her wounded veteran dad and managing a Dunkin'. And she is, as Joe sees when he starts reading her manuscript, *Faithful*, a truly gifted writer. He is soon madly in love with her, and she responds, although their affair doesn't go smoothly. Joe has other things to worry about, too. One is a podcast that's the topic of lively discussion in the seminar: The Body on Bainbridge—a body Joe knows too much about. When you leave as many unsolved murders in your wake as he has, someone is bound to do a true-crime show about one of them. Another is Shoddy's wife, the aptly named Sly, who has her own secrets. When the bodies start dropping, Joe has to wonder if he's the only killer in class. Kepnes gleefully portrays the most back-stabbing seminar yet, dropping literary names with abandon

as she twists the plot.”—*Kirkus*. Fans of the TV show will be pleased with a new look at narcissistic, manipulative, murderous, utterly unreliable narrator Joe.

Kingfisher, T. [A House with Good Bones](#) (Nightfire \$26.99). 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 instead she finds deeply buried horrors that are out to destroy Sam; her mother; her grandmother’s rival, wildlife rehabilitator Gail; and even the local handyman, Phil. 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.

Oates, Nathan. [A Flaw in the Design](#) (Random \$28). In this gripping psychological thriller, 17-year-old Matthew’s wealthy Manhattanite parents have died in a suspicious car accident, and the newly orphaned high school senior goes to live with his uncle Gil and Gil’s family in Vermont. Gil is uneasy about this arrangement: as a boy, Matthew stood by as Gil’s daughter nearly drowned in a pool; Matthew cursed viciously at his French nanny; and even his mother admitted Matthew had difficulties. However, Gil, a creative writing professor, has stalled in his career, is badly in debt, and has reasons to be jealous of this handsome, often charming young man with a multimillion-dollar trust fund. So the question that drives the narrative is whether Gil projects his own hostility onto Matthew, or whether Matthew is a sociopath who has killed his parents for the inheritance. Meanwhile, Matthew writes disturbing stories about his family for Gil’s class, setting Matthew and Gil on a collision course. This immersive page-turner cleverly juxtaposes the writing of short fiction with the production of stories in people’s minds.

Lawton, John. [Moscow Exile: A Joe Wilderness Novel](#) (Grove \$27). Russia and the Cold War have come back to heated life for thrillers. In a new spy novel for series lead Joe, a MI6 agent, we’re in 1969 on the “bridge of spies” called Glienicke Bridge where East and West met to exchange prisoners, etc. On this night British agents have a covert midnight rendezvous with Russians who never show. Before long Joe is entangled with two with two Brits in DC who spy for Russia. The why is not clear. But enjoy this for Lawson’s deep knowledge of the geopolitical and social history of the era and his ability to “bring a Technicolor sheen to the moral ambiguity of the Cold War.”—*Booklist* (starred review)

Lyon, Annette. [Just One More](#) (Penzler \$26.95). Becca’s life is turned upside down when she finds Jenn dead in the bathtub. Soon she begins to unspool the secrets Jenn kept in life, including a troubled marriage to Rick and two dead wives in his past. The more Becca learns, the more determined she becomes to get justice for Jenn, even if the clues surrounding her death aren’t quite adding up.... Over a year before her death, Jenn begins to notice

her husband acting strangely. Using her skills as a librarian, she digs into Rick’s past—and falls down a rabbit hole far deeper and darker than she bargained for. She’s already beaten the odds by living longer than his other dead wives. But now she fears her time is up

Morton Kate. [Homecoming](#) (Harper \$32). A sweeping and generous novel from Australia’s Morton that is reviewed with enthusiasm in Signed Books.

✠Robinson, Peter. [Standing in the Shadows](#) (Morrow \$29.99). The late and much missed Robinson’s excellent 28th novel featuring DS Alan Banks interweaves the 1980 murder of college student Alice Poole with the discovery in 2019 of a man’s body buried in an old farm about to be razed for a shopping center in Eastvale, Yorkshire. The earlier crime is related through the eyes of Poole’s ex-boyfriend, Nicholas Hartley, who’s haunted by the fact that no one was charged with Poole’s murder—and the obvious suspect, her then boyfriend, Mark Woodcroft, who disappeared without a trace. The narrative alternates between Hartley’s lifelong interest in the case while he becomes a successful journalist and Banks leading his team, including DS Winsome Jackman and other regulars, in the dogged, needle-in-a-haystack search for the identity of the man buried on the farm and, ultimately, his killer. The story enables Robinson to delve deeply into Banks’ backstory, including a stint undercover in London early in his career, along with policing and corruption from Thatcherite England to the present. As always in the Banks novels, readers will enjoy the details of pop culture and social history. This is an intelligent and satisfying procedural. We here will really miss Peter, an author whose work we admired from the very beginning and who often came to see us. And in a final tribute to him, **here is our April British Crime Book of the Month (this is a nifty club, unsigned but excellent books, one excellent to join!)**.

Sanderson, Brandon. [Tress of the Emerald Sea](#) (Tor \$29.99). Sanderson expands his Cosmere universe shared by The Stormlight Archive and Mistborn with a new standalone novel for everyone who loved The Princess Bride. The only life Tress has known on her island home in an emerald-green ocean has been a simple one, with the simple pleasures of collecting cups brought by sailors from faraway lands and listening to stories told by her friend Charlie. But when his father takes him on a voyage to find a bride and disaster strikes, Tress must stow away on a ship and seek the Sorceress of the deadly Midnight Sea. Amid the spore oceans where pirates abound, can Tress leave her simple life behind and make her own place sailing a sea where a single drop of water can mean instant death?

✠Sherwood, Kim. [Double or Nothing: A Double O Novel](#) (Harper \$28.99) Here is the first book in a James Bond trilogy—and written by a woman for the first time. James Bond is missing—and only the elite team of MI6 agents he trained can find him and thwart a nefarious scheme to expand worldwide terrorism—in this breakneck adventure with all the decadence of a classic James Bond novel and the smarts of a modern spy thriller.

Sternbergh, Adam. [The Eden Test](#) (Flatiron \$27.99). With no ARC at hand I quote the Starred Reviews: “At the start of this outstanding psychological thriller from Edgar finalist Sternbergh, seemingly picture-perfect Gotham pair Daisy, an actor, and Craig, a frustrated writer moldering as a ‘brand advocate,’ are observing

their second anniversary by heading to a remote cabin in Upstate New York to participate in a weeklong device-free program designed to help troubled couples repair their relationships. The premise of the so-called Eden Test program—Seven Days, Seven Questions, Forever Changed—couldn't be simpler, though Craig and Daisy's experience veers off-script almost immediately. Which may hardly be surprising since one of them has essentially been hoodwinked into participating, both are surreptitiously texting on forbidden phones—and neither has been anything approaching honest with the other concerning some explosive secrets, which the author skillfully teases to fan suspense. Toss in menacing locals none too fond of 'citiots' (short for 'city idiots'), firearms, a game-changer third-act curveball, and *Gone Girl*-level deception, and the result is one masterfully manipulative chiller just waiting for its close-up." In darkly funny domestic Gothics like this, false leads, red herrings, and jolting change-ups are part of the narrative decor...in this wry, sly chiller.

Stradal, J Ryan. [Saturday Night at the Lakeside Supper CL](#) (Penguin \$27). Stradal's novels set in Minnesota always resonate with this Minnesotan. There's a strong sense of place, quirky characters who remind me of people I know, and dives into regional peculiarities like supper clubs. While Stradal's voice is firmly an Upper Midwestern one, he explores universal themes: love, loss, regrets for one's past mistakes, and longings for what might have been— plus, of course, the importance of family.

Whitten, Hannah. [The Foxglove King](#) (Orbit \$29). "The line between death and ecstasy is thin, an enthralling fantasy novel of court intrigue, forbidden romance and necromancy. Twenty-three-year-old Lore is doubly hunted in the city of Delleire: she has worked in the illegal poison trade for a decade and possesses the ability to manipulate Mortem. Though it leaks steadily from the catacombs beneath the city, the use of Mortem, the magic from death, is forbidden to all but the Presque Mort, an elite group of religious warriors tasked with dispelling it. When a drop goes wrong and Lore resurrects a horse in the middle of a street full of guards, the Sainted King and his brother, the Priest Exalted, seize the opportunity to compel her to use her gifts for their ends. As with her Wilderwood duology, Whitten excels at building a dark and unique magic system and complex characters. Whitten's royal court is poisonous in the expected social and political ways, but poison in her world is also the path to temporary ecstasy and even prolonged life. Risk death—and reap the rewards. Lore must work with brooding Presque Mort Gabriel to spy on the power-mad king's dashing son, pretend to be part of the treacherous Citadel society and defend her people from a conquering empire." Orbit and Tor are on the uptick with science fiction and fantasy novels so I try to highlight a few for those wishing to explore other worlds which I think is an excellent idea right now.

OUR APRIL PAPERBACK PICKS

You can see from this section and the next that April is huge stage for paperbacks. Partly because Mother's Day is right around the corner in May. I have selected more than usual but could have included more.

Bannalec, Jean Luc. [The King Arthur Case](#) (\$17.99). This somewhat eccentric but always colorful series set in Brittany—I should mention the Food! And Coffee!—is a real favorite with me and our staff. Over time the exiled Parisian detective Commissaire Dupin has mellowed, growing fond of his staff,

key players in this series, and in the glories of the region which includes, besides its restaurants, beaches, music, legends, ruins, villages, salt flats and oysters...and criminals. The new hardcover, [The Body by the Sea](#) (\$St. Martins \$26.99), makes our **April International Mystery of the Month** with its real uptick in regional food.

This paperback is heavier on the King Arthur legends than on plot, and in the atmospheric Breton forest. It was only supposed to be an interview for a friend in the Paris police department. Commissaire Georges Dupin and his small team, two inspectors and his invaluable assistant, were going to make an overnight office trip to Brittany's Paimpont village, and Dupin was to interview Fabian Cadiou, a leading Arthurian expert. But Dupin finds Cadiou fatally shot. When he calls his friend in Paris, he's informed the minister of the interior has a special interest in the matter, and Dupin is to be the special investigator in charge of the case. Before he can even organize his team, another expert on King Arthur is found murdered. In the span of 24 hours, three people are killed. The victims are all Arthurian experts attending a conference, so in its way this is a Dark Academic story. But the Breton landscape is the star of the show. I recommend reading the [Brittany Mysteries](#) from the beginning, with a glass of wine in hand, and as I do, a map of Brittany queued up on your phone.

Barclay, Linwood. [Take Your Breath Away](#) (\$17.99). The disappearance of Andy Mason's wife, Brie, from their home in Milford, Connecticut, is the instigating incident in a standalone by Toronto's Barclay, an ingenious plotter. Andy was on a fishing trip with a friend at the time, but Milford police detective Marissa Hardy decides that Andy was involved, yet try as she might, she can find no hard evidence. Meanwhile, Andy becomes "a public spectacle, fodder for true crime shows and social media speculation." Needing a fresh start, he changes his last name and moves to the nearby town of Stratford. Now, six years after Brie went missing, Andy is living happily with his girlfriend. Then, a woman shows up at Andy's former address in Milford. She seems frightened and leaves before the police can be summoned. Surveillance footage shows she looks like Brie. Barclay shifts among multiple viewpoints to keep the tension high, including the original witness statements taken by Hardy. Everyone is a plausible suspect, and the disparate plot pieces eventually fit together with the precision of a Chinese puzzle box. I will zoom with Linwood on May 17 to discuss his new thriller [The Lie Maker](#) (\$29.99).

Child, Lee/Andrew. [No Plan B: A Jack Reacher Novel](#) (\$18). Jack Reacher comes to Arizona, hoofing it into a small town in the state's south after he witnesses a woman crushed under a bus back in Gerrardsville, Colorado. It looks like she leaped but Reacher knows she was pushed. So he creates a trail to follow.... This almost Western has "all the staples we've come to appreciate: a small town where he arrives seemingly at random, but soon Reacher finds a conspiracy unfolding, as a series of 'accidental' deaths have something more sinister behind them. Reacher, naturally, will apply brutal reason (and other brutal forces) to find his way into the depths of this small town's corrupt soul."—CrimeReads

⌘Cumming, Charles. [Box 88](#) (\$17.95). "Few writers today can create realistic and cutting espionage fiction like Charles Cumming. *BOX 88* is a long novel, but it is never dull and will make readers recall the work of John le Carré and Ken Follett. It

is nice to see a writer who respects such legends and continues to do his best to keep the fire burning for the genre's future." So here is Cummings starting a series. Lachlan Kite is a career man at Box 88, a joint British-U.S. black ops outfit so secretive that not even the CIA and MI5 are sure it exists. While attending a funeral outside London for an old prep school friend who died by suicide, Kite lets down his guard and is kidnapped by an Iranian team that wants information on a case he was involved in 30 years earlier. His pregnant wife is also abducted as part of the plot to pressure Kite into revealing his secrets. Flashbacks to 1989 show Kite as a green operative prone to professional insecurity, missteps, and major flubs. In the present, Kite's decades of experience as a spy provide him with the skills to turn the tables on his kidnappers during his interrogation. Between the two time frames, a thorough portrait of Kite emerges. Well-timed action scenes match focused glimpses into the world of spycraft. And, good news, it continues in [Judas 62](#) (\$27.95 SIGNED).

Emerson, Ramona. [Shutter](#) (\$16.95). The winner of the 2023 Lefty for Best Debut was a 2022 First Mystery Club selection here at The Pen. For those who read the Hillermans this is a different look at Navajo culture and values and is set in Albuquerque where Rita Todacheene is a forensic photographer working for the police force. Her excellent photography skills have cracked many cases—she is almost supernaturally good at capturing details. In fact, Rita has been hiding a secret: she sees the ghosts of crime victims who point her toward the clues that other investigators overlook. And here after a young Navajo woman is deemed a bridge jumping suicide, her raging ghost latches onto Rita, forcing her on a quest for revenge against her killers, and Rita finds herself in the crosshairs of one of Albuquerque's most dangerous cartels.

ÆHerron, Mick. [Bad Actors](#) (\$16.95). "The disappearance of Sophie de Greer, a "superforecaster" who predicts voter reactions to British government policies, drives Herron's terrific eighth Slough House novel. Since de Greer might be a Russian plant, two important people want her found: Anthony Sparrow, the prime minister's slimy enforcer, because he hired de Greer and wants to spare the government humiliation, and Diane Taverner, MI5's ruthless chief, because she knows Sparrow will blame her if de Greer turns out to be a spy. The actual work of finding de Greer falls to the so-called slow horses of Slough House, "the fleapit to which Regent's Park consigns failures, and where would-be stars of the British security service are living out the aftermath of their professional errors." Every piece counts in the intricate jigsaw puzzle of a plot, but the book's main strength is its dry, acerbic wit (Sparrow is "a homegrown Napoleon: nasty, British and short"). The result is an outstanding mix of arch humor, superb characterizations, and trenchant political observations."—*PW* Starred Review. Check out the Slow Horses adaptation into a series on Apple TV

Hillerman, Anne. [The Sacred Bridge](#) (\$17.99). Anne, continuing to keep her father Tony's beloved characters Joe Leaphorn and Jim Chee alive for us through the viewpoint of Chee's wife Bernie Manuelito, heads to Lake Powell and Antelope Canyon, more particularly to the Rainbow Bridge, sacred to the Navajo. And there Chee spots a body floating in the lake. The dead man, a Navajo with a passion for the canyon's ancient rock art, lived a life filled with many secrets. Discovering why he died and who

was responsible involves Chee in an investigation that has him clashing with other law enforcement and puts his own life at risk. Back in Shiprock, Officer Bernadette Manuelito is driving home when she witnesses an expensive sedan purposely kill a hitchhiker. The search to find the killer leads her to uncover a dangerous chain of interconnected revelations involving a Navajo Nation cannabis enterprise. But the evil that is unleashed also jeopardizes her mother and sister Darleen.... See Signed Books for the April 24 launch of the next in this much loved series in [The Way of the Bear](#) (\$29.99).

Li, Grace D. [Portrait of a Thief](#) (\$17). Li's debut is lush, lyrical heist novel inspired by the true story of Chinese art vanishing from Western museums. The poetic prose is elegant and themes along with thrills include diaspora, the colonization of art, and the complexity of the Chinese American identity. Across the Western world, museums display priceless pieces of art looted from other countries. Will Chen plans to steal them back. A senior at Harvard, Will fits comfortably in his carefully curated roles: a perfect student, an art history major and sometimes artist, the eldest son that has always been his parents' American Dream. But when a shadowy Chinese corporation reaches out with an impossible—and illegal—job offer, Will finds himself something else as well: the leader of a heist to steal back five priceless Chinese sculptures, looted from Beijing centuries ago. His crew is every heist archetype one can imagine—or at least, the closest he can get. Plus each has their own complicated relationship with China and the identity they've cultivated as Chinese Americans, yet when Will asks them to join in, none of them can turn him down. Because if they succeed? They earn fifty million dollars—and a chance to make history. But if they fail, it will mean not just the loss of everything they've dreamed for themselves, and for their families, but yet another thwarted attempt to take back what colonialism has stolen. I wish I could discuss here how this plays out but it's brilliantly done. And you get to spend time in some great museums (remember *Topkapi?*).v

Meltzer, Brad. [The Lightning Rod](#) (\$17.99). "At the start of bestseller Meltzer's exciting sequel to 2018's [The Escape Artist](#) (\$15.99), a masked gunman fatally shoots Lt. Colonel Archie Mint along with the thief who by chance was trying to rob Mint's house in Elmswood, Pennsylvania. Mortician Jim "Zig" Zigarowski, who's still grieving for his 12-year-old daughter who died in an accident years earlier, has left the Air Force to work privately in Pennsylvania. A former colleague from Dover Air Force Base persuades him to prepare Mint's body for an open casket funeral. Zig is surprised on meeting the widow that she was unaware her husband worked at Dover. Zig later learns Mint was involved in a top-secret military unit, and maybe wasn't all hero. Zig's search for answers reunites him with Nola Brown, who was once the Army's artist-in-residence and whose resourcefulness and kick-ass style help the pair decipher the links between the murders and dark government secrets. Not to overlook the fact that Nola, survivor of a traumatic childhood whose estranged twin brother has a big role here, has secrets of her own. "Zig Zigarowski and Nola Brown are quirky, stubborn, daring, and above all seem real. Brad Meltzer has done an exceptional job of building a twisting, turning non-stop thriller with two of the most unique characters in modern fiction."

✎Raybourn, Deanna. [An Impossible Impostor](#) (\$17). In 1883, Veronica Speedwell was visiting Sumatra with fellow lepidopterist Jonathan Hathaway when Krakatoa erupted. Jonathan was presumed killed and his younger brother, Charles, inherited the Hathaway estate. In 1889, an amnesiac man carrying Jonathan's passport arrives at Hathaway Hall. He says he wants nothing, but if he proves to be the original heir, Charles and his ambitious wife could lose their home and possessions, including the Eye of the Dawn, a priceless ruby acquired, perhaps illegally, from an Indian maharani. Veronica must confront a part of her past she has hidden even from her lover, natural historian Revelstoke "Stoker" Templeton-Vane, after she and Stoker come to the Hathaways' Dartmoor mansion to investigate the impossible impostor's claim. The man disappears just as the Eye of the Dawn vanishes and a ghostly orb is seen flickering on the moors. Raybourn does a fine job in this sparkling adventure marrying acerbic wit, convincing emotional struggles, and fun glimpses of Victorian science. We highly recommend the whole [Veronica Speedwell series](#) to readers of all stripes.

Reich, Christopher. [Once a Thief](#) (\$17.99). London spy Simon Riske's talent for restoring vintage Ferraris puts him in harm's way. The 1963 Ferrari that his client just sold for \$102 million didn't have the original gearbox, and the buyer's representative, Sylvie Bettencourt, demands that Riske present her with the gearbox or be charged a \$10 million fee with the violent "or else" supplied by her thuggish assistant. A consultation with a friend at Lloyd's of London reveals that Bettencourt has a reputation for buying up valuable items, from art to real estate, with money that's unlikely to be legitimate. Riske has little choice but to try to recover the gearbox. Meanwhile, a bank manager in Switzerland has been killed with a car bomb, and his daughter, Anna Bildt, sets out to find his killer. Some scenic locales, including Mediterranean islands, serve as backdrops to the linked quests of Riske and Bildt. Reich combines great action with surprises readers won't see coming. One doesn't have to care much about cars or high finance to enjoy this cinematic thriller. Or the earlier [Simon Riskes](#), also great fun.

Rozan, SJ. [Family Business](#) (\$16.95). I've been delighted by the entire Edgar-winning Lydia Chin/Bill Smith series since its inception. And am pleased to finally get a paperback of the latest entry. The death of a powerful Chinatown crime boss thrusts private eye Lydia Chin and her partner Bill Smith into a world of double-dealing, subterfuge, murder, and—because this is New York City—real estate. Rozan, an architect, traces the declines of NY City neighborhoods and the concomitant ruthless rise of developments with an expert hand while she explores the characters of her leads and new players. And the nature of Tongs and their role in Chinatown.

Slocumb, Brendan. [The Violin Conspiracy](#) (\$17). Ray McMillian is a Black classical musician on the rise—undeterred by the pressure and prejudice of the classical music world—when a shocking theft of his priceless Stradivarius sends him on a desperate quest to recover his great-great-grandfather's heirloom violin on the eve of the most prestigious musical competition in the world. "I loved *The Violin Conspiracy* for exactly the same reasons I loved *The Queen's Gambit*: a surprising, beautifully rendered underdog hero I cared about deeply and a fascinating, cutthroat world I knew nothing about—in this case, classical music." —Chris Bohjalian. This debut was a 2022 First Mystery

selection and Slocumb visits us in person on May 9 with his second, [A Symphony of Secrets](#) (\$28).

✎Stokes-Chapman, Susan. [Pandora](#) (Harper \$17). Wow, how I love this novel which combines some of the fun elements of an Elizabeth Peters' Amelia Peabody archaeology mystery with a 1799 London antiques/jewelry shop on the decline. See Unsigned Event Books for a further rave review.

✎Thomas, Will. [Fierce Poison: A Barker & Llewelyn Novel](#) (\$17.99). This may be set in 1893 but you can't beat it for an insightful, genial, enjoyable tour of London. And for the freshness of an unusual story by Shamus Award-nominated librarian Thomas for the series characters, private enquiry agents Cyrus Barker and Thomas Llewellyn. Among its other joys it riffs on both Agatha Christie and Arthur Conan Doyle. I add that there is no need to read any of the preceding Barker/Llewellyn investigations to enjoy this to the full. And check Signed Books for the 14th in series: [Heart of the Nile](#) (\$27.99), featuring mummies, the British Museum, theft and murder.

Here's a Starred Review: "Thomas's superb 13th whodunit centers on multiple poisonings while riffing on Agatha Christie's *And Then There Were None*. The PIs are shocked when a stranger appears at their London office, requests water, and then dies after having difficulty breathing. A business card on the body identifies the man as Roland Fitzhugh, a Liberal MP. After the death is reported to Scotland Yard, Barker and Llewellyn learn that Fitzhugh visited there half an hour before his demise to report that he suspected someone had tried to poison him on two occasions. Barker insists on justice for Fitzhugh and gains a paying client in the form of former Prime Minister William Gladstone, who funds the search for the killer. Another poisoning follows soon after, this time claiming the lives of almost an entire East End family. The leads' friendship enriches a gripping plot that builds to a clever and satisfying resolution. Pastiche-averse Sherlockians looking for a baffling puzzle set in their favorite period will be rewarded."

Walker, Martin. [Bruno's Challenge](#) (\$17). Fans of Walker's novels set in the little French market town of St. Denis will savor this inviting story collection featuring Bruno Courrèges, the town's genial chief of police whose career is moving up. As St. Denis is in the Périgord, the culinary heartland of France, a thread of gastronomy and bonhomie plays a significant part in all 14 tales. Walker smoothly integrates recipes into the text, beginning with the title story, which finds Bruno throwing together a golden wedding anniversary feast for friends on short notice and includes easy to follow instructions on how to prepare *Poulet à l'estragon*. Prehistoric cooking methods figure in "Boeuf Neanderthal," as Bruno prepares a menu for the *Société Historique et Archéologique du Périgord*. "The Green Army" describes biodynamic viticultural techniques, and "Sugar Lumps" reveals the proper way to drink absinthe. The area's rich history and traditions are explored at every turn. Any crimes are relatively minor—nasty anonymous letters, spates of vandalism—and are resolved by cooperation, conviviality, and Bruno's clever intervention. Featured meals in the collection include a fatty Christmas goose, a savory nettle soup with *crème fraîche*, and a fluffy quiche Lorraine.

NEW IN LARGE PAPERBACKS

☞ Bennett, SJ. [All The Queen's Men](#) (\$17.99). It's difficult to present this second book by Bennett where Elizabeth II is the sleuth now that the queen has died. One could almost imagine it were true before.... Following [The Windsor Knot](#) (\$16.99), Elizabeth II returns to sleuth again with the help of Assistant Private Secretary Rozie Oshodi. As the queen worries about a missing painting, Rozie does not immediately share news of the troublesome letters received by some of the staff. Then a staffer winds up dead in the pool house at Buckingham Palace, and it's time to act.

Biswas, Damyanti. [The Blue Bar](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$15.95). India as a landscape for good crime fiction is on the rise. Here we are in Mumbai where Tara Mondal hopes to make a new start when a client—she's a dancer at the city's bars, etc—offers her a big payout if she will indulge an odd fantasy. She accepts. The set up: wear a blue-sequined saree to a crowded railway station, and escape from view in under three minutes. And her escape is the last time anyone sees her. Thirteen years later, Inspector Arnav Singh Rajput, who loved her, is still grappling with her disappearance when the dismembered bodies of women are unearthed from shallow graves on the city's outskirts. The only link to their murders—a scattering of blue sequins as well as MissPers reports corresponding with major festivals. Is what happened to Tara linked to these cold cases he's investigating?

Bessette, Alicia. [Smile Beach Murder](#) (\$17). Mass layoffs at the *Charlotte Times* hit Callie Padget hard. Her childhood home on Cattail Island seems as good a place as any to escape. Not that there's much of her family there. Her father left before she was born, and her mother died when she was 12. Her Uncle Hudson is a cantankerous old coot, but he's kept her old bedroom in his loft waiting for her. Hudson prods Callie into working part time for Antoinette Redfield at MotherVine bookshop, where she encounters Eva Meeks, who runs Meeks Hardware with her sister, Georgia. Eva, who's all atwitter with hopes of finding the pirate treasure long rumored to be buried near Cattail, consults every treasure-hunting volume that MotherVine stocks. But her dreams of rubies and pearls crash when she falls from the top of Cattail Lighthouse. Though the police rule her death a suicide, Callie has doubts... JT Ellison, echoed by Jenn McKinlay, calls this 2022 Cozy Crimes Book of the Month "A perfectly plotted mystery from a wonderful writer, with everything I want from a cozy—barrier-island beaches, a welcoming bookshop, a quaint small town—all balanced against deep secrets and complicated deaths. Callie Padget is a sharp and compassionate amateur sleuth with a compelling backstory, and a quirky cast of characters, family and townspeople alike, round out the story,"

Collins, Max Allan. [Mad Money](#) (Hard Case Crime \$13.95). Hard Case Crime completes its cycle of Collins' novels about not-quite-reformed thief Nolan with his first appearance and one of his last. In *Spree*, the later, longer, and more polished of the pair, Nolan's live-in lover, Sherry, is kidnapped to pressure him into masterminding a grandly scaled robbery of the most tempting targets among the 50 stores in Missouri's Brady Eighty mall. Coleman Comfort, the paterfamilias behind the scheme, already has a grudge against Nolan for killing his brother Sam and Sam's two sons in an earlier plot that went violently off the rails, and it seems obvious that as soon as the heist is history, he plans to kill

Sherry and Nolan anyway. In fact, his homicidal plans are even more extensive than that, though not if Nolan and his frequent accomplice Jon Ross have anything to say about it. *Mourn the Living*, the first story Collins wrote about Nolan, though not the first he published, is an informal homage to Richard Stark's adventures of one-named criminal Parker. Owing a big favor to mobbed-up pencil pusher Sid Tisor, Nolan reluctantly agrees to look into the death of Tisor's daughter, Irene, a Chelsey University student who fell 10 stories to her death, even though it's going to bring him uncomfortably close to Chicago's Franco crime family, who've already put a \$250,000 bounty on his head....

Downes, Anna. [The Shadow House](#) (\$17.99). After debuting with [The Safe Place](#) (\$16.99), which received more than a half-dozen "best-of-summer" or "most-anticipated" recommendations, Australian author Downes returns with the story of single mom Alex, who flees an abusive relationship for what she assumes is the peace and old-fashioned quiet of a remote, pine-skirted eco village. Pine Ridge is a far cry from urban Australia and they feel instantly at home in the countryside. Alas, eerie events start unfolding when she and her children arrive, even as the town's buried secrets will out. The distinctive setting presents a welcome variation on a typical village mystery.

Druart, Ruth. [The Last Hours in Paris](#) (\$18.99). Druart's second novel unfolds in two timelines, taking place in the 1940s and 1960s. At the book's outset, in 1963, Élise has been living in apparent exile from her Paris roots, in a remote Breton village with a mysterious old woman named Soizic. Joséphine, Élise's 18-year-old daughter, unearths her birth certificate and learns what her mother had postponed telling her: A man with a German surname is her father, not, as she had been told, her mother's fiancé who died fighting for France. Not understanding that her parentage was not only a source of disgrace, but of danger, Joséphine is angered by the deception and vows to track down her father. By 1944, Élise, her mother, and sister have endured four years of Nazi occupation. The way in which Paris has been devastated on so many fronts is viscerally evoked. Élise is part of a clandestine operation that arranges passage to Switzerland for Jewish children. At a bookshop, Élise meets Sébastien, a bilingual German soldier whose mother was French and who, with the glaring exception of his uniform, can pass as French. Sébastien finds the duties of his posting repugnant—acting as interpreter during Gestapo interrogation sessions and translating denunciation letters in which Parisians turn in their Jewish neighbors. Sébastien interferes when French police harass Élise in the bookshop, where he is an unwelcome customer. He takes escalating risks to win Élise's trust and, ultimately, her love—rescuing her from the Gestapo and helping to save several children from deportation. Joséphine's journey of discovery uncovers a tragedy of errors."—*Kirkus*

De Castrique, Mark. [Secret of FBI File 1003116](#) (Broadway \$17.95). I am so pleased that a new Sam Blackman investigation is publishing albeit no longer under the Poisoned Pen Press imprint. It is the summer of 2020. COVID-19 is spreading like wildfire. Racial reckoning and Confederate monuments fuel nationwide protests. And Asheville, North Carolina, is not immune. When Sam Blackman and Nakayla Robertson see an elderly man knocked to the pavement by a Confederate sympathizer, they rush to his aid. The assailant runs away and

the fatally injured man struggles to say, “I’m so sorry, Nakayla. Can you forgive me?” Nakayla has never seen him before. Why does he want her forgiveness? Nakayla learns the man, Henry Nelson, was a retired homicide detective who had investigated her father’s death fifteen years earlier. He’d closed the case as a suicide. But when Nelson’s widow brings Nakayla the case files her husband stole from police records, she and Sam realize the old man had been reviewing the investigation, evidently questioning his earlier conclusions. But then the detective’s widow is murdered and Sam and Nakayla find themselves confronting a killer who will stop at nothing to keep a crime from the past buried in the past. Their only clue, a declassified FBI file that J. Edgar Hoover kept on Martin Luther King, Jr.

Easley, Warren C. [Fatal Flaw](#) (Lucasian \$18.99). In my view this is a Poisoned Pen book as I have been Easley’s longtime editor and love the series. Do support him as he’s continuing it on an independent platform. It’s winter in the Oregon wine country, and small-town lawyer Cal Claxton deserves a respite after his last grueling case. But just as the world learns about a threatening new virus variant, a woman named Willow Daniels shows up at his office, asking Cal to represent her in the settlement of her uncle’s estate. The uncle’s death was ruled a suicide, but Willow isn’t buying it. Getting involved is against Cal’s better judgment, but how can he resist this single mother who tows her young daughter in a trailer behind her bike, takes gorgeous photos of Portland’s bridges, and serves delicious French cuisine from her Portland food cart? Cal soon learns that the uncle, a brilliant scientist, recently came up with an innovative device to detect viruses. The expected payoff is huge, and the list of those who stand to gain from his death gets longer and longer. Cal finds himself immersed in one of the most complex and dangerous cases he’s ever investigated. When a key witness is brutally murdered, and the woman Cal loves falls ill, he realizes he’s up against two ruthless killers. I love this series and we have some handsome backlist titles in hardcover for you at \$25 each which we need to add to inventory but you can search for the earlier [Cal Claxton Mysteries here](#).

Gaiman, Neil. [Twice Cursed: An Anthology](#) (\$16.95). From the fun of the fair to the depths of hell, experience sixteen more curses in a blend of traditional and reimagined ones from fairy-tales to Snow White, from some of the best names in fantasy include Joanne Harris, Joe Hill, M. R. Carey, Sarah Pinborough, and Neil himself.

Hartman, Virginia. [The Marsh Queen](#) (\$17.99). “Subtle and complex, Hartman’s debut navigates the currents and backwaters of family relationships, the Florida swamplands, and a mysterious death that occurred twenty-five years before. Like Barbara Kingsolver, Hartman delves deep into the natural world to explore her characters, and in this case, the connections between one haunted woman and the waters that took her father’s life. Fans of Delia Owens and Lauren Groff will find this a wonderful and absorbing read.”

Mandel, Emily St. John. [Sea of Tranquility](#) (\$17). The award-winning, best-selling author of *Station Eleven* and *The Glass Hotel* returns with a novel of art, time travel, love, and plague that takes the reader from Vancouver Island in 1912 to a dark colony on the moon five hundred years later, unfurling a story of humanity across centuries and space

Moore, Christopher. [Razzmatazz](#) (\$17.99). Moore returns to the 1947 San Francisco setting of [Noir](#) (\$16.99, where bartender and amateur problem-solver Sammy Tiffin is faced with several requests for assistance. Jimmy Vasco, proprietress of a lesbian bar, asks Sammy to find the killer targeting her community; Eddie Shu wants Sammy to recover a dragon statue for his Uncle Ho; and Mabel, ‘the preeminent nookie bookie in Fog City,’ needs help smuggling her girls out of town to a Christmas party. Meanwhile, Sammy’s squeeze, Tilly Stilton, uses her considerable welding skills on a mystery project at the telepathic behest of Scooter, the ‘moonman’ from the previous volume. And in flashbacks to 1906, a younger Ho contends with a very real and terrifying dragon. Moore, entirely in his element and with tongue firmly in cheek, has his characters speak in gumshoe-esque vernacular, while warning in an author’s note that ‘the language and attitudes portrayed herein regarding race, culture, and gender are contemporary to that time and, sadly, all too real.’ Indeed, punctuating all the spoofy amateur sleuthing are more serious depictions of the maltreatment of the Chinese and LGBTQ communities.”—*PW*

Murray, Sabina. [Muckcross Abbey](#) (Grove \$18). Filipina American novelist Sabina Murray offers 10 gothic-inspired literary gems in this collection. In “The Long Story,” a stranded traveler spends the night in a cottage haunted by an artist who sacrificed himself to be a conduit for his art. But the ghosts of the past in Murray’s stories aren’t always so far from home: in “Harm,” a young man who recently learned the truth of his parentage is drawn to a mysterious woman in the woods behind his house. Meanwhile, the new resident in “Apartment 4D” can’t escape the eerie mother and daughter who live next door, nor can she shake the feeling that something isn’t quite right about their relationship. In the titular “Muckcross Abbey,” a young woman reluctantly becomes involved in the investigation into the mysterious disappearance of her college friend Simone, only to discover that only she can see the truth of what really happened. All of Murray’s stories succeed in capturing the skin-prickling, shiver-inducing atmosphere of the best gothic tales. Remember I have said that Gothic is the new Big Thing.

Patterson, James/Dolly Parton. [Run, Rose, Run](#) (\$18.99). Country music legend Parton’s strong debut, an exhilarating rags-to-riches story coauthored with bestseller Patterson, revolves around the troubled past of plucky singer/songwriter AnnieLee Keyes. AnnieLee’s plan is to “get the hell out of Texas” and hitchhike to Nashville, where she hopes to start her career as a performer. There AnnieLee encounters ruthless, predatory agents and managers, but she also meets positive role models, notably Ruthanna Ryder, “one of country music’s grandest queens,” who takes AnnieLee under her wing. Ruthanna tells her, “Being talented is just one little tiny part of the battle. Fearlessness is mandatory. And shamelessness sure as hell don’t hurt.” Her other ally is guitarist Ethan Blake, who brings her to Ruthanna’s attention. When AnnieLee’s life is threatened, she needs the help of her new friends to survive.

Schwab, V E. [The Invisible Life of Addie Larue](#) (\$19.99). In 1714 France, desiring a life lived by her own rules, Adeline prays the night before her wedding for freedom. That night her prayers are answered, except the price of her freedom is her name, her life, and her soul. She will live forever, but everyone she meets will forget her moments after the encounter. Living

eternally with no presence, teased by a demon to give in and give up, Addie LaRue spends the next 300 years surviving, thieving, and hiding, creating moments that will find expression in art and inspiration, until the day she tries to return a book she stole from a New York City bookstore, and the young man behind the counter remembers her. As Addie learns the truth about Henry's knowledge, they both face choices that will determine the course of their lives—however long they last.... All Stars and Raves for this one. Enjoy.

Slaughter, Karin. [Girl, Forgotten](#) (\$19.99). Andrea Oliver, a newly minted U.S. marshal, and her partner, Deputy Leonard Bible, to Longbill Beach, Delaware, to protect federal judge Esther Vaughn, who has received a series of threatening letters. Longbill Beach happens to have been the childhood hometown of Andrea's psychopathic father, Clayton Morrow, who was convicted of domestic terrorism and is now up for parole. Andrea believes Clayton poses a threat to her mother's safety if he's released from prison. In 1982, Clayton was a suspect in the murder of Judge Vaughn's 18-year-old daughter, Emily. If Andrea can prove Clayton guilty of this crime, he will remain behind bars. Deputy Bible, too, has a private agenda and is looking into a series of suicides that have occurred in the area. Captivating flashbacks follow Emily in the period leading up to her death as she engages in a Columbo-inspired investigation of her own.

Smith, Alexander McCall. [The Enigma of Garlic](#) (\$16). It's the most anticipated event of the decade—Big Lou and Fat Bob's wedding—and everyone is invited! But the relative peace and tranquility of 44 Scotland Street is about to be disrupted. Domineering Irene is set to return for a two-month stay, consigning young Bertie to a summer camp. Not content with that, she somehow manages to come between the enigmatic nun, Sister Maria-Fiore dei Fiori di Montagna, and her friend, the hagiographer, Antonia Collie. And can a person really change, even after being struck by lightning? Bruce Anderson's metamorphosis and new-found outlook on life is put to the test as he prepares to leave his creature comforts for the monastic simplicity of Pluscarden Abbey.

Strohmeier, Sarah. [We Love to Entertain](#) (Harper \$21.99). Charismatic real estate investor Robert Barron and his fiancée, Holly Simmons, are one of three couples vying for grand prize on the property rehab show *To the Manor Build* with their environmentally visionary hilltop estate nearing completion in tiny Snowden, Vt. Then, only hours after the pair's livestreamed wedding—and just days before the show's final reveal—the newlyweds vanish. Though the hard-charging self-proclaimed "Robber Barron" has plenty of enemies, the local cops seem quite happy to home in on outcast Erika Turnbull, Robert's assistant, who's not so secretly smitten with him, as their prime suspect. Which leaves it to Erika's brook-no-bull mother, Kim, the town clerk, to turn sleuth to try to save the day—with some assistance from Tammy, Holly's own freshly arrived from Florida steel magnolia mom.

Valdes, Alisa Lynn. [Hollow Beasts](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$16.99). An intriguing premise: After her husband dies in a climbing accident, Jodi Luna decides to leave Boston and her life in academia to return to her familial roots and raise her teenage daughter. She even arranges to take her Uncle Eloy Atencio's position as Rio Truchas County's game warden as he prepares

to retire. So, CJ Box meets Michael McGarrity. Jodi's family has lived in the wildlands for generations so she is no stranger to their homeland. And then right at the start she nabs a poacher who gives a hard time about her use of Spanish. But then, what do you expect from gringos? While Jodi is smart enough to educate Travis Lee on the ways New Mexico laws support the use of Spanish, she is blind to the consequences. He is more dangerously part of a white supremacist group operating deep in the mountains. New recruits to this band are kidnapping women of color to prove their mettle to their leaders. The local sheriff refuses to assist so Jody teams up with young deputy Ashley Romero for the cat and mouse game being played. This series start is great on local color. I like what Valdes says about Jodi: "Jodi Luna is a protector of the wild things and places. I felt she was the hero I needed right now. She's a hero we all need. Game wardens are the only cops whose job is to protect wild animals from exploitation by human beings. That's powerful. We need many more Jodi Lunas in the world."

Wellington, David. [Paradise-1](#) (Orbit \$18.99). I've always thought Wellington wrote superior Science Fiction and this review shows that at least one critic agrees with me: "Wellington skillfully combines hard sci-fi worldbuilding with tense mystery for a superior space thriller that never flags despite its length. United Earth Government Lt. Alexandra Petrova is introduced in the human colony of Jupiter's moon Ganymede as she closes in on Jason Schmidt, the worst serial killer in Ganymede's 100 year history. Her efforts are unexpectedly stymied by her superiors, and in the wake of her investigation's untimely end, she's exiled to Paradise-1, a fledgling human outpost 100 light years away, ostensibly to conduct a security analysis, and ensure that it's 'happy and productive.' En route, she and her two companions—Sam Parker, the commander of their transport, and doctor Zhang Lei—come under attack by an empty ship from the mysteriously abandoned Paradise-1, leading to a frantic struggle both to survive the assault and to understand what's happened to the colony. Wellington excels at vivid descriptions."

White, Loreth Anne. [The Maid's Diary](#) (Montlake \$16.95). Kit Darling is a maid with a snooping problem. She's the "invisible girl," compelled to poke into her wealthy clients' closely guarded lives. It's a harmless hobby until Kit sees something she can't unsee in the home of her brand-new clients: a secret so dark it could destroy the privileged couple expecting their first child. This makes Kit dangerous to the couple. In turn, it makes the couple—who might kill to keep their secret—dangerous to Kit. When homicide cop Mallory Van Alst is called to a scene at a luxury waterfront home known as the Glass House, she's confronted with evidence of a violent attack so bloody it's improbable the victim is alive. But there's no body. The homeowners are gone. And their maid is missing. When a bestseller hits, like Nita Prose's wonderful [The Maid](#) (\$18), which I recommend to everyone, it can inspire.

Winstead, Ashley. [The Last Housewife](#) (\$16.99). "Shay Deroy leads a life of ease as a posh housewife in a Texas suburb. But her comfortable existence is jolted when she listens to a true-crime podcast hosted by her childhood friend Jamie. He's investigating the death of Laurel, one of Shay's college roommates, and Shay must help him. The police declare it a suicide, but Jamie and Shay have doubts. Laurel's death is eerily similar to the hanging suicide of their other roommate, Clem, during senior year. Jamie

doesn't know about the friends' dark history with the father of their fourth roommate, Rachel. He'd lured them with attention and adoration, and soon they blindly obeyed. Shay and Jamie follow Laurel's trail into the dark world of sex clubs and abusive manipulation as Shay struggles against being brainwashed into submission again. This explosive cautionary tale of a "podcast meets sex cult meets murder" will captivate fans of twisted psychological suspense," says *LJ* in its Starred Review. I'm a fan of Winstead whose debut in [In My Dreams I Hold a Knife](#) (\$16.99) was a 2021 First Mystery Book of the Month.

OUR APRIL SMALL PAPERBACK PICKS

Brown, Graham. [Clive Cussler's Dark Vector](#) (\$9.99). NUMA Files # 19. Kurt Austin must find a vanished ship and stave off a global catastrophe when a freighter carrying top-secret computers of unparalleled capability disappears in the Western Pacific.

Byrne, James. [The Gatekeeper](#) (\$9.99). Dez Limerick #1. After foiling an attack at the hotel where he's staying, Dez, a retired mercenary, musician and gatekeeper, is back in action and drawn into a dangerous conspiracy involving media manipulation, militias, and an armed coup.

Carlisle, Kate. [Dressed to Drill](#) (Penguin \$8.99). Fixer Upper #9. When a dead body halts her renovation of an old Victorian church, Shannon Hammer discovers the church is hiding a century of secrets and must figure out which one someone with a screw loose would kill to protect.

Greaney, Mark. [Armored](#) (\$9.99). After losing part of his left leg, a former Close Protection Agent takes a job as a mall cop in Virginia to support his family, but runs into an old friend who has a much more intriguing job offer.

Newman, T J. [Falling](#) (\$9.99). Thirty minutes before a flight to New York, the family of the pilot is kidnapped and in order for them to live, all 143 passengers onboard must die.

Rozan, SJ, ed. [Crime Hits Home: A Collection of Stories](#) (\$9.99). The newest anthology from Mystery Writers of America explores the theme of home and the crimes that endanger it, with stories by Ellen Hart, Naomi Hirahara, Walter Mosley, Sara Paretsky and more.

Thor, Brad. [Rising Tiger](#) (\$9.99). Scot Harvath #21. America's top spy, Scot Harvath, with democracy itself hanging in the balance, is thrust into a completely unfamiliar culture where he can trust no one as he fights to take down the country's most powerful enemy—and for his life. So, just another day at the office for Scott!

MORE APRIL SMALL PAPERBACKS

Andrews, Mary Kay. [The Newcomer](#) (\$9.99). After her sister is murdered, Letty Carnahan goes on the run with her 4-year-old niece to Florida's Gulf Coast, where she is taken in by a hotel owner and her cynical son, a police detective.

Elliott, Lauren. [Dedication to Murder](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Beyond the Page #9. While preparing for her upcoming nuptials, bookstore owner and rare books expert Addie Greybourne makes a startling discovery in her attic that provides clues to unraveling a complex mystery in her family, setting in motion a shocking chain of events that leads to a suspicious death.

Erickson, Alex. [Death by Iced Coffee](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Bookstore Café #11. Stumbling upon the dead body of a fellow marathoner—and serial cheater, both personally and professionally—bookstore-cafe owner Krissy Hancock races against time to find the killer before another Pine Hills resident gets iced.

Griffin, Laura. [Deep Tide](#) (Penguin \$8.99). When one of her employees is murdered, Leyla Breda joins forces with undercover FBI agent Sean Moran, garnering the attention of several crime syndicates and plunging them into something darker than they ever could've imagined.

Grisham, John. [Sparring Partners](#) (\$9.99). The #1 *New York Times* best-selling author—and master of the legal thriller—presents his first collection of novellas, including the title story in which two successful young lawyers—and brothers—who hate each other engage in a battle to run their firm into the ground.

Gudenkauf, Heather. [Missing Pieces](#) (\$8.99). Reissue. Haunted by the unsolved murder of his mother in his teens, Sarah Quinlan's husband, Jack, is forced to confront the past in the wake of a devastating accident and disturbing family questions.

Hillier, Jennifer. [Wonderland](#) (\$9.99). An atmospheric and edgy thriller that combines *Heartsick* with *Please See Us*, this novel from the author of the "truly frightening" (*Suspense Magazine*) *Creep* follows a police officer investigating a string of disappearances at a mysterious amusement park.

Hollis, Lee. [Poppy Harmon and the Backstabbing Bachelor](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Desert Flowers #4. Poppy and the Desert Flowers Detective Agency meet their match when they go up against a killer posing as one of several bachelors on a reality series, prompting Poppy to go undercover to reveal his true identity on set.

Jackson, Lisa. [Million Dollar Baby](#) (Houghton \$9.99). Reissue. When Chandra Hill is awakened by a cry in the night, she is shocked to discover an abandoned newborn in her barn. She rushes him to the hospital, but before she knows it, she's discussing options for the baby with emergency room doctor Dallas O'Rourke, who finds himself bonding instantly with the baby—and with the intriguing woman who brought him in.

Jones, Sandie. [The Guilt Trip](#) (\$9.99). While in Portugal for her brother-in-law's wedding to Ali, who rubs everyone wrong way, Rachel discovers something about Ali that changes everything and threatens to unravel friendships and marriages in a place where jumping to conclusions becomes the difference between life and death.

Kelly, Diane. [Fiddling with Fate](#) (Penguin \$8.99). Southern Homebrew #3. When a local Bluegrass musician disappears and her moonshine is tied to the crime, Hattie Hayes, with no time to fiddle around, must stay sharp to solve this crime.

Martin, Kat. [Against the Fire: A Novel](#) (Mira \$9.99). Reissue. Once one of the "no-account Raines boys," Gabriel Raines pulled himself out of poverty to become a successful businessman — one who has become the target of revenge.

Olsen, Gregg. [Lying Next to Me](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Adam and Sophie Warner and their three-year-old daughter are vacationing in Washington State's Hood Canal for Memorial Day weekend.

But on Adam's first day out on the water, he sees Sophie abducted by a stranger. Now Adam must rely on Mason County detective Lee Husemann to find his daughter.

Quigley, Mindy. [Ashes to Ashes, Crust to Crust](#) (St Martin's \$8.99). Deep Dish #2. Determined to win the hefty cash prize in the Geneva Bay's annual "Taste of Wisconsin" culinary contest, pizzeria owner Delilah O'Leary finds herself spread thin when one of her competition's customers is found dead, forcing her to act quickly before someone else bites the crust.
