

# BOOKNEWS from

ISSN 1056-5655, © The Poisoned Pen, Ltd.  
Volume 35, Number 9  
August Booknews 2023  
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## AUGUST SUN AND SUSPENSE PART 1

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.

### TUESDAY AUGUST 1 1:00 PM

**Dame Denise Mina** discusses [The Second Murderer](#) (Little Brown \$28)  
Chandler's Philip Marlowe, has he met his match?  
Signed UK edition [The Second Murderer](#) (Sphere \$36)  
Mina also discusses [Three Fires](#) Pegasus (\$22)  
A 15th century *Bonfire of the Vanities* in Savonarola's Florence

### WEDNESDAY AUGUST 2 1:00 PM

**Ireland's Catherine Ryan Howard** discusses [The Trap](#) (Blackstone \$26.99)  
1990s Missing Persons Unit investigation for fans of Tana French  
Signed books available

### WEDNESDAY AUGUST 2 7:00 PM Live

**Shari Lapena** discusses [Everyone Here Is Lying](#) (Pamela Dorman \$29)  
A domestic thriller for fans of Gillian Flynn

### THURSDAY AUGUST 3 7:00 PM Live

**Bruce Borgos** discusses [The Bitter Past](#) (St Martins \$28)  
Our July First Mystery Book of the Month  
Eastern Nevada spy drama 1957 to present day

### FRIDAY AUGUST 4 7:00 PM

Live **TICKETED** Event  
**Diana Gabaldon** in conversation with **Jacqueline Carey**  
They discuss [Cassiel's Servant](#) (Tor \$30.99)  
An epic fantasy hero's journey #4 in the Kushiel's Legacy Series

### MONDAY AUGUST 7 1:00 PM

**UK's Will Dean** discusses [The Last One](#) (Atria \$18.99)  
Good luck guessing how this puzzler, a sea voyage drama, plays out

### MONDAY AUGUST 7 6:00 PM

**Rhys Bowen** discusses [The Paris Assignment](#) (Lake Union \$28.99)  
WWII story reaching all the way to Australia  
Signed books available

### TUESDAY AUGUST 8 4:00 PM

**James Byrne** discusses [Deadlock](#) (St Martins \$28)  
Dez the Gatekeeper's new mission  
Signed books available

### TUESDAY AUGUST 8 5:30 PM

**Adrian McKinty** discusses [The Detective Up Late](#) (Blackstone \$26.99)  
Sean Duffy #7  
Signed books available

### WEDNESDAY AUGUST 9 5:00 PM

**Kathy Reichs** discusses [The Bone Hacker](#) (Scribner \$27.99)  
Tempe Brennan in Montreal and Turks and Caicos  
Fabulous forensics and imaginative plot  
Signed books available

### THURSDAY AUGUST 10 5:00 PM

**Joanna Schaffhausen** discusses [Dead and Gone](#) (St Martins \$28)  
Detective Annalisa Vega  
Signed books available

### SATURDAY AUGUST 12 2:00 PM Live

**Mark Pryor** discusses [The Dark Edge of Night](#) (St Martins \$28)  
WWII Paris with Henri Lefort

### MONDAY AUGUST 14 7:00 PM Live Book Launch

**James Rollins** discusses [Tides of Fire](#) (Harper \$29.99)  
Sigma Force! Exclusive Art Work with our copies

### TUESDAY AUGUST 15 5:00 PM

**Isabel Cañas** discusses [Vampires of El Norte](#) (Penguin \$28)  
Signed books available

### TUESDAY AUGUST 15 7:00 PM Live

**Aimie K. Runyon** with **John Charles**  
They discuss [A Bakery in Paris](#) (Harper \$18.99)  
Historical drama set in Montmartre 1870/1946

**OUR AUGUST BOOKS OF THE MONTH**

We select a book and charge it to you. Free shipping. It's a treat each month, not just on Father's Day.

Email [Karen@poisonedpen.com](mailto:Karen@poisonedpen.com) to join

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

Fields, Helen. [The Institution](#)

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

Quinn, Spencer. [Mrs. Plansky's Revenge](#)

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

TBA

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

Simon, Nina. [Mother-Daughter Murder Night](#)

**Hardboiled/Noir Club** One Signed First Printing per month

TBA

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

DiVello, Sara. [Broadway Butterfly](#)

**Historical Fiction Paperback Club** One Unsigned paperback per month

James, Kelsey. [The Woman in the Castello](#)

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

Hoffman, Alice. [The Invisible Hour](#)

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

Mangan, Christine. [The Continental Affair](#)

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

TBA

**SOME SIGNED BOOKS FOR AUGUST**

Atkinson, Kate. [Normal Rules Don't Apply](#) (Doubleday UK \$39).

In this first full collection since *Not the End of the World*, we meet a queen who makes a bargain she cannot keep; a secretary who watches over the life she has just left; and a man whose luck changes when a horse speaks to him. Witty and wise, with subtle connections between the stories, *Normal Rules Don't Apply* is a startling, and funny feast for the imagination. In Kate Atkinson's world nothing is over until "the talking dog speaks."

Borgos, Bruce. [The Bitter Past](#) (St Martins \$28). Move past the violence of the opening scene and the sometimes corny (and not #MeToo rated) dialogue into a truly fascinating story bridging 1957 with 60 years later in Lincoln County, eastern Nevada, spy territory then and now thanks to the US nuclear program. I so loved the voice of Peter and his story, more than that of Sheriff Porter Beck. And of the true surprise revealed. Our blogger Lesa agrees and writes, "Borgos writes a compelling story with two timelines and elements of mystery, espionage, and history. Sheriff Porter Beck of Lincoln County, NV, was in the Army for 20 years, but he's never seen anything like the torture and murder of FBI agent Ralph Atterbury. He suspects that Ralph's killer didn't find the files the retired agent might have hidden. When FBI agent Sana Locke shows up, she gives Beck just enough information to realize he's looking for a killer with connections to the past. In the 1950s and for decades afterward, there were nuclear tests in the area. The KGB sent one man to infiltrate the test sites, but that spy was horrified when he saw the results of the nuclear tests. He took action, but not in the way the KGB expected. Over 60 years later, someone is looking for that man, presumed to be in his 80s. When a young woman disappears, Beck realizes it's a distraction to divide his small team. Beck calls on family members to protect the unidentified former spy and take down a well-armed opponent. This riveting debut has traces of Craig Johnson's novels, with the personal nuclear fallout in Betty Webb's [Desert Wind](#) (Poisoned Pen Press \$20 hardcover 1<sup>st</sup> printing Signed by Webb), which too roots a modern mystery

in nuclear testing and the Downwinders. It makes an excellent companion read.

Bowen, Rhys. [The Paris Assignment](#) (Lake Union \$28.99). Bowen's WWII stories are bittersweet, the wartime crucible laced with tragedy and romance yet producing survivors and future-leading endings. So it is with Madeleine Grant, a young Englishwoman from a sheltered background who arrives in Paris for the obligatory months required to complete her French language degree. There she falls in love with a charismatic Communist, a French rebel against family and expectations like herself, and defying her own family, returns to Paris, lives with him, becomes pregnant, they marry, and then come the Germans and individual choices about resisting. Madeleine's eventually take her to Australia and into new territory for her and for you Bowen readers. (Note, Rhys lived in Australia herself). There is a simultaneous paperback edition (Unsigned): [The Paris Assignment](#) (\$16.99)

Brennan, Allison. [North of Nowhere](#) (St Martins \$28) "set mainly in Montana's Rocky Mountains, hits the ground running. Tony Reed, a hired killer for a vicious L.A. crime family run by matriarch Frankie McIntire, kidnaps his boss's grandchildren—Kristen and Ryan—at the request of their mother, who wants to take them far away from the notorious McIntire clan. Five years later, a killer tracks down 16-year-old Kristen and 10-year-old Ryan, who is hard of hearing, at the remote ranch where they've been living and plans to return them to Frankie. When Tony learns they've been discovered, he attempts to shuttle the children to safety in a small plane, which crashes in the wilderness, killing him. Left to fend for themselves, Kristen and Ryan enter a blood-pounding game of cat and mouse with the killer and his laundry list of accomplices. Brennan writes vivid, exciting action sequences"—PW. Brennan is a Phoenix author and we will set up a discussion with her and other local authors from time to time in the fall.

Brown, Sandra. [Out of Nowhere](#) (Grand Central \$29.99). A brave tackling of not the run up to but the aftermath of a crowd

shooting at a Texas State Fair. We know from a short prologue that the shooter is not deranged but sane and awaiting the right moment. When it comes a sheltered young mom, a children's book illustrator, and a cocky corporate guy who up to now has had it all, both suffer loss and derailment. The shooter is at large so while the investigation proceeds, Elle and Calder have to contend with PTSD and navigate towards new realities including a relationship that would have been totally improbable. The key: can they let the shooter, whoever and whyever it is, win?

Byrne, James. [Deadlock](#) (St Martins \$28). How I love Dez Limerick, the action hero of this gem and its predecessor [The Gatekeeper](#) (\$9.99). He's a (British) Jack Reacher with a deep sense of humor, amazing skills, a greater capacity for attachment (not just to women), and lots of useful contacts being ex-military. A summons for help draws him away from the California of his first appearance to Portland – and that's another plus here as Portland and surrounding territory are richly displayed (OK the homeless camps not so much). Dez's friend Raziah, a talented young musician, has an older sister, a journalist, who has perhaps strayed into a story about Clockjack, a tech conglomerate whose tentacles stretch across entire industries and levels of government. (One can almost envision Elon Musk although Clockjack's CEO is a woman). Dez quickly neutralizes the immediate threat, disposing of Laleh's captors with crippling physical force. But when he digs into what caused the seemingly disproportionate attack, he learns that Clockjack plans use its technologies to acquire sensitive intelligence and topple foreign governments—so he infiltrates the company's headquarters outside Portland, using every tool at his disposal to bust up the scheme. Several of us so love the exhilarating Dez. I would make this our August Crime Book of the Month were it not that I did so last year for July.

Cañas, Isabel. [Vampires of El Norte](#) (Berkley \$28). As the daughter of a rancher in 1840s Mexico, Nena knows a thing or two about monsters—her home has long been threatened by tensions with Anglo settlers from the north. But something more sinister lurks near the ranch at night, something that drains men of their blood and leaves them for dead. Something that once attacked Nena nine years ago. Believing Nena dead, Néstor has been on the run from his grief ever since, moving from ranch to ranch working as a *vaquero*. But no amount of drink can dispel the night terrors of sharp teeth; no woman can erase his childhood sweetheart from his mind. When the United States invades Mexico in 1846, the two are brought abruptly together on the road to war: Nena as a curandera, a healer striving to prove her worth to her father so that he does not marry her off to a stranger, and Néstor as a member of the auxiliary cavalry of ranchers and vaqueros. But the shock of their reunion—and Nena's rage at Néstor for seemingly abandoning her long ago—is quickly overshadowed by the appearance of a nightmare made flesh. And unless Nena and Néstor work through their past and face the future together, neither will survive.

Carey, Jacqueline. [Cassiel's Servant](#) (Tor \$30.99 Aug 4). Carey's new novel is an epic fantasy hero's journey #4 in the Kushiel's Legacy Series. With this lyrical, BDSM-infused romantasy, Carey circles back to her Locus Award-winning debut fantasy, *Kushiel's Dart*, 21 years after its first publication— and the epic love between courtesan Phédre, who was sold into sexual slavery as a child, and celibate warrior Joscelin, here retold

from Joscelin's point of view. With the edges filed down a bit and all of the larger plot points known (the book ends with the wedding of Queen Ysandre), the original political themes fade, and a narrative lingers over Joscelin's youthful training days in the Cassiline Prefectory before shifting to his rube-in-the-city culture shock as he takes his first assignment, which brings him disapprovingly into Phédre's decadent world. Carey lovingly applies a full painter's palette to what had previously been only sketched. “Carey proves she has lost none of her inimitable style nor her ability to fully realize characters; devoted fans will revel in getting Joscelin's backstory.”

Cavanagh, Steve. [Kill for Me Kill for You](#) (Headline \$35). One dark evening in New York City, two strangers meet by chance. Over drinks, Amanda and Wendy realize they have so much in common. They both feel alone. They both drink alone. And they both desperately want revenge against the two men who destroyed their families. Together, they have the perfect plan. If you kill for me, I'll kill for you... Patricia Highsmith reimagined....

Connolly, John. [The Land of Lost Things](#) (Hodder UK \$36). Phoebe, an eight-year-old girl, lies comatose following a car accident—a body without a spirit. Ceres, her mother, can only sit by her bedside and read aloud the fairy stories Phoebe loves in the hope they might summon her back to this world. But an old house on the hospital grounds, a property connected to a book written by a vanished author, is calling to Ceres. Something wants her to enter, to journey to a land colored by the memories of childhood, and the folklore beloved of her father—a land of witches and dryads, giants and mandrakes; a land where old enemies are watching and waiting...NOTE: John signs the US edition [The Land of Lost Things](#) (Atria \$28) here on September 27.

DiVello, Sara. [Broadway Butterfly](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$28.99). Our **August Historical Fiction Book of the Month** is a novel based on the sensational 1923 murder of Roaring Twenties showgirl Dot King, a true, unsolved crime. It also provides a Gilded Age estate where lived Frances Stotesbury, her children, and her philandering husband. The author says, I worked on this for nine years, like almost a decade of my life, and that entire time, I was writing it telling myself that this was nonfiction, that this was true crime, and I wrote it that way. I was excruciatingly, obsessively careful with all of my facts and details. But after nine exhaustive years, I knew I wasn't going to be able to get certain conversations, like interrogation room conversations, conversations between Julia and Westbrook in the privacy of their Upper West Side apartment, conversations between Frances Stotesbury and her husband. I had to fill in the dialogue that I couldn't get, and there are also two scenes in the book that I had to fill in, based on research that led me to believe exactly what I thought happened in those two scenes. So I decided just to call it fiction, even though part of me felt like, well, I'm almost cheating myself—why the heck did I spend nine years of my life in the bowels of the New York Public Library if I could have just stayed home and imagined it all? But I know that is not the case, because my research is excruciating, exacting, and obsessive.” There is an Unsigned paperback edition: [Broadway Butterfly](#) (\$16.99).

⌘ Gelernter, JH. [The Montevideo Brief](#) (Penzler \$28). Oh joy, Napoleonic warrior Captain Thomas Grey is off on another

mission. The year is 1804. Grey, former British Royal Marine and dutiful agent of His Majesty's Secret Service, must complete an urgent mission: intercepting a Spanish armada full of gold and other valuable metals before it reaches Europe. Why? A secret treaty between France and Spain pledges that the two countries will unite in war against Britain as soon as the riches have arrived. Once Grey embarks and bands together with a detachment of the recently independent American military in South America, we get a third swashbuckling tale of adventure, piracy, and international intrigue. "The middle chunk, in which Grey is compelled to undertake a series of side quests en route to Montevideo, delivers particularly thrilling sequences. Although Thomas Grey is an invention, most other names, events, and details spring straight from the historical record; Gelernter's work draws inspiration from Patrick O'Brian, whose Master and Commander series similarly takes place during the Napoleonic Wars" in this "treat for spy novel junkies and devotees of British history alike." And said Patrick O'Brian fans. Grey's debut in [Hold Fast](#) (\$16.99) and the sequel, [Captain Grey's Gambit](#) (\$25.95 Signed or \$17.95) are bestsellers here at The Pen. The author joins me August 17 at 5:00 PM PDT to discuss his work which includes two crime novels written as Josh Haven.

Heller, Peter. [The Last Ranger](#) (Knopf \$27). Tip-ins. You can't beat Heller on writing about the West and the ravages of man on landscape and beast. Officer Ren Hopper is an enforcement ranger with the National Park Service, tasked with duties both mundane and thrilling: Breaking up fights at campgrounds, saving clueless tourists from moose attacks, and attempting to broker an uneasy peace between the wealthy vacationers who tromp through Yellowstone with cameras, and the residents of hardscrabble Cooke City who want to carve out a meaningful living. When Ren, hiking through the backcountry on his day off, encounters a tall man with a dog and a gun chasing a small black bear up a hill, his hackles are raised. But what begins as an investigation into the background of a local poacher soon opens into something far murkier: shattered windshield, a series of red ribbons tied to traps, the discovery of a frightening conspiracy, and a story of heroism gone awry. Heller's love for the land and anger at humans are palpable, and his prose is truly superb.

Herron, Mick. [The Secret Hours](#) (Baskerville UK \$42). For you purists, the UK edition but as our Signed US edition comes with a nifty Slough House tote bag I'd wait for it. And no, we can't cheat and give a tote to the Brit. And bravo to small independent British press Baskerville for taking a chance on Herron back when....

Monochrome is a busted flush: an inquiry into the misdeeds of the intelligence services, established by a vindictive prime minister but rendered toothless by a wily chief spook. For years it has ground away uselessly, interviewing witnesses with nothing to offer, producing a report with nothing to say, while the civil servants at its helm see their careers disappearing into a black hole. And then the OTIS file falls into their hands. What secrets does this hold that see a long-redundant spy being chased through Devon's green lanes in the dark? What happened in a newly reunified Berlin that someone is desperate to keep under wraps? And who will win the battle for the soul of the secret service—or was that decided a long time ago? Spies and pen-pushers, politicians and PAs, high-flyers, time-servers and burn-outs...they all have jobs to do in the daylight. But what they do in

the secret hours reveals who they really are.

Hirahara, Naomi. [Evergreen](#) (Soho \$27.95 Aug. 16). "I have long been a fan of Naomi Hirahara's writing, but *Evergreen* may be my favorite of her novels. The mystery is set against the backdrop of Japanese Americans returning to their homes in Los Angeles' Little Tokyo after World War II as they try to rebuild their lives after either having been unfairly held in detention camps or fighting with the 'Go for Broke' battalion, with everyone dealing with different types of discrimination, fear, and trauma. The historical details are accurate, heartrending, and eye-opening."—Lisa See on Hirahara's follow up to her multi-award winning novel [Clark and Division](#) (\$16.95), Japantown Mystery #1 set in WWII America.

Hoffman, Alice. [The Invisible Hour](#) (Atria \$27.99 Aug. 20). What a thrill to discover Nathaniel Hawthorne in the pages of Alice Hoffman's exquisite new novel, *The Invisible Hour*! And what delight to experience the melding, across the centuries, of two prodigious American literary imaginations—Hoffman's and Hawthorne's—in this redemptive tale of daughters and mothers and one true love for a man and his book. Much more to come on our **August Notable New Fiction Book of the Month** signed here August 20.

Howard, Catherine Ryan. [The Trap](#) (Blackstone \$26.99). A nameless man drives through the night, his latest victim in the back seat. He's going to tell her everything, from the beginning. And soon, she'll realize: what you don't know *can* hurt you .... One year ago, Lucy's sister, Nicki, left to meet friends at a pub in Dublin and never came home. The third Irish woman to vanish inexplicably in as many years near the Wicklow Mountains. The agony of not knowing what happened that night has turned Lucy's life into a waking nightmare. So, she's going to take matters into her own hands. Angela works as a civilian paper-pusher in the Missing Persons Unit, but wants nothing more than to be a fully-fledged member of An Garda Síochána, the Irish police force. With the official investigation into the missing women stalled, she begins pulling on a thread that could break the case wide open—and destroy her chances of ever joining the force. Howard bases her story on the real disappearance of Irish women in the area.

Jonasson, Ragnar/Katrin Jakobsdottir. [Reykjavik](#) (Joseph UK \$44). In 1956, fourteen year old Lara decides to spend the summer working for a couple on the small island of Videy, just off the coast of Reykjavik. In early August, the girl disappears without a trace. Time passes, and the mystery becomes Iceland's greatest unsolved case. What happened to the young girl? Is she still alive? Did she leave the island, or did something happen to her there? In 1986, tabloid journalist Valur Robertsson decides to write a series of articles about Lara, exactly thirty years after the disappearance. He hopes to uncover new evidence, and the articles are widely read. An elderly woman calls Valur, claiming to know where he can find Lara, giving him a few cryptic clues. The nation is told that Valur may be close to solving the case, and all eyes are on the young journalist. On August 18, 1986, Reykjavik is celebrating its 200th anniversary, the downtown area is filled with more people than anyone has ever seen. Valur has plans to publish his final article on Lara a few days later, but in the crowds someone pushes him in front of a bus. Valur's sister, Sunna Robertsdottir, takes on the task of investigating the case

following her brother's untimely death. Burdened by grief, and armed only with Valur's old notebook on the case, she decides to find out what happened to Lara, and who murdered Valur. Unexpectedly, Reykjavik is chosen as the venue for the Reagan & Gorbachev summit. As Icelanders wait for the two world leaders, Sunna closes in on the truth and discovers what happened to Lara – trying to catch a killer before he strikes again. NOTE Ragnar's coauthor Katrin is the Prime Minister of Iceland and this is her first novel.

Joy, David. [Those We Thought We Knew](#) (Putnam \$28). Patrick, the host for our zoom with Joy on July 31 you can watch on our FB or YT, says, "Joy really delivers with this uncompromising meditation on race, class, and history. If you appreciate the lush naturalistic prose of James Lee Burke, you need to give David Joy your close attention."

Khan, Vaseem. [Death of a Lesser God](#) (Hodder \$32). Post-partition India is subtle, intriguing and dynamic. Bombay, 1950. James Whitby, sentenced to death for the murder of prominent lawyer and former Quit India activist Fareed Mazumdar, is less than two weeks from a date with the gallows. In a last-ditch attempt to save his son, Whitby's father forces a new investigation into the killing. The investigation leads Inspector Persis Wadia of the Bombay Police to the old colonial capital of Calcutta, where, with the help of Scotland Yard criminalist Archie Blackfinch, she uncovers a possible link to a second case, the brutal murder of an African-American G.I. during the Calcutta Killings of 1946. Are the cases connected? And if Whitby didn't murder Mazumdar, then who did?

Kim, Angie. [Happiness Falls](#) (Random \$28). Join our virtual book launch with guest host Chris Bohjalian on August 29, 5:00 PM.

"We didn't call the police right away." Those are the electric first words of this extraordinary novel about a biracial Korean American family in Virginia whose lives are upended when their beloved father and husband goes missing. Mia, the irreverent, hyperanalytical twenty-year-old daughter, has an explanation for everything—which is why she isn't initially concerned when her father and younger brother Eugene don't return from a walk in a nearby park. They must have lost their phone. Or stopped for an errand somewhere. But by the time Mia's brother runs through the front door bloody and alone, it becomes clear that the father in this tight-knit family is missing and the only witness is Eugene, who has the rare genetic condition Angelman syndrome and cannot speak. What follows is both a ticking-clock investigation into the whereabouts of a father and an emotionally rich portrait of a family whose most personal secrets just may be at the heart of his disappearance

Lapena, Shari. [Everyone Here is Lying](#) (Viking \$29 Aug 2). Bestseller Lapena delivers a sharp, propulsive domestic thriller. Stanhope is an idyllic family neighborhood, and local resident William Wooler is the perfect husband and father — at first glance, anyway. He's also carrying on an affair, which just ended badly at a nearby motel. When William comes home and discovers his young daughter Avery back early from school, he snaps. Hours later, Avery is declared missing. The neighbors come forward with information, but who's actually telling the truth? As suspicions swirl, hope for Avery's return slips away, and the not-so-perfect community begins to spiral out of control.

MacDonald, Helen/Sin Blaché. [Prophet](#) (Grove \$29). In her debut fiction, with a writing partner, British naturalist MacDonald presents a kind of "present-day science fiction." An all-American diner appears overnight in a remote British field. It's brightly lit, warm and inviting but it has no power, no water, no connection to the real world. It's like a memory made flesh—a nostalgic flight of fancy. More and more objects materialize: toys, fairground rides, pets and other treasured mementos of the past. And the deaths quickly follow. Something is bringing these memories to life, then stifling innocent people with their own joy. This is a weapon like no other. But nobody knows who created it, or why. Two unlikely investigators must team up to battle a strange new reality where the Prophet has weaponized the past.

McKinty, Adrian. [The Detective Up Late](#) (Blackstone \$26.99). Alas our live event has become virtual so we will obtain Signed copies after the August 8 zoom event. This is billed as Belfast cop Sean Duffy's Last Case, which is not as sinister as it sounds as Duffy and family are relocating across the sea to Scotland. We meet Catholic Sean and Protestant Beth in Jerusalem, New Year's Eve, 1989. A group of Irish Protestants have come to celebrate the Second Coming. DI Sean just wants the 1980s to be over, and to move into part time work at Carrickfergus Station by spending seven days a month there, commuting from Scotland. A phone call about a missing girl ensnares him into working her case before he leaves...and a merry chase it becomes into the world of the travelers, informers, the IRA, and more. McKinty's voice for this series is superb and his mix of humor and horrible is perfect.

Mina, Denise. [The Second Murderer](#) (Harvill UK \$35). It's early fall when a heat wave descends on Los Angeles. Private Detective Philip Marlowe is called to the Montgomery estate, an almost mythic place sitting high on top of Beverly Hills. Wealthy socialite Chrissie Montgomery is missing. Young, naïve, and set to inherit an enormous fortune, she's a walking target, ripe for someone to get their claws into. Her dying father and his sultry bottle-blond girlfriend want her found before that happens. To make sure, they've got Anne Riordan—now head of her own all-female detective agency—on the case, too. The search for Chrissie takes the two investigators from the Montgomery mansion to the roughest neighborhoods of LA, through dive bars and boarding houses and out to Skid Row. And that's all before they find the body at The Brody Hotel. Who will get to Chrissie first? And what happens when a woman doesn't want to be found? Unsigned US Edition: [The Second Murderer](#) (Little Brown \$28).

Moore, Taylor. [Ricochet](#) (Harper \$29.99). After hunting down a rogue spy as part of an elite CIA counterespionage unit, Garrett Kohl returns home to Texas in hopes of settling down and carving out a normal life. While learning the ropes of fatherhood, falling deeper in love with his high school crush, and rebuilding his wildfire ravaged cattle ranch, he is approached in secret by an engineer working at a nearby nuclear weapons plant, who is in desperate need of his help. Utilizing a unique skill set—abilities Garrett has honed as a deep cover narcotics agent and former Green Beret—he embarks on an off-the-books investigation and learns that Iranian operatives are blackmailing weapons facility employees and potentially planning a devastating act of sabotage and destruction.... "Moore melds the thriller and western genres... punctuating frequent action scenes against vivid scenery that adds to the suspense. But he also concentrates on his believable characters.... [Garrett] makes for a forceful hero."

Preston, Douglas/Lincoln Child. [Dead Mountain](#) (Grand Central \$30 Aug. 22). Signed by both, Lincoln at home, Doug here. Plus a set of trading cards featuring characters comes with each of our copies.

In 2008, nine mountaineers failed to return from a winter backpacking trip in the New Mexico mountains. At their final campsite, searchers found a bizarre scene: something had appeared at the door of their tent so terrifying that it impelled them to slash their way out and flee barefoot to certain death in a blizzard. Despite a diligent search, only six bodies were found, two violently crushed and inexplicably missing their eyes. The case, given the code name “Dead Mountain” by the FBI, was never solved. Now, two more bodies from the lost expedition are unexpectedly discovered in a cave, one a grisly suicide. Young FBI Agent Corrie Swanson teams up with archaeologist Nora Kelly to investigate what really happened on that fateful trip fifteen years ago—and to find the ninth victim. But their search awakens a long-slumbering evil, which pursues Corrie and Nora with a vengeance, determined to prevent the final missing corpse from ever coming to light.

Pryor, Mark. [The Dark Edge of Night](#) (St Martins \$28 Aug. 12). Henri Lefort, who we once again learn from his backstory is actually the American Michel Lefort in the mantle of his dead WWI soldier brother, draws a missing persons case as Christmas, 1940, approaches with the Germans in control of Paris. It’s the Gestapo who order Henri to investigate what happened to Dr. Viktor Brandt, a neurologist working in a Paris hospital. Henri views catching the killer of a Parisian who was beaten to death in an assumed botched burglary as more important than locating a wayward scientist, but needs must. . . . Why do links to the nearby city of Rennes keep appearing? Who is the fellow cop so interested in Henri’s sister? Will the Princess Marie Bonaparte go along with the trap Henri sets for key Gestapo? There is an historical note at the end explaining much including the role of journalist and broadcaster Eric Sevareid. I find Henri is often too belligerent (with cause) but Pryor gets full marks for his plots and history. Start with [Die Around Sundown](#).

Quinn, Spencer. [Mrs. Plansky’s Revenge](#) (Forge \$26.99). Recent widow Mrs. Loretta Plansky, a 71-year-old tennis player, is discerning and spry. She and her husband, Norm, were a sophisticated couple who made millions with their unlikely invention of a “toaster knife,” a knife that actually toasts bread while you slice it. However, their retirement didn’t quite go according to plan. After Norm died, Mrs. Plansky, hip replaced, decided to downsize. When tired and spent Mrs. Plansky receives a frantic, distressing phone call from someone whom she believes is her grandson—he needs \$10,000 to post bail for a DUI arrest—she gives him what he asks for without question. Mrs. Plansky later learns, however, that the call was a fraud perpetrated by overseas criminals who proceeded to wipe out her entire nest egg. When the police and FBI conclude they don’t have enough evidence to solve the crime, Mrs. Plansky becomes intent on taking charge and seeking justice. Quinn’s briskly plotted nail-biter takes unexpected twists and turns that are nicely balanced by Mrs. Plansky’s memories of her husband. Fearless Mrs. Plansky barrels past her comfort zone, setting off to Romania, where she plunges headlong into danger. Her age never becomes a detriment. Rather, she works it to her advantage, employing great ingenuity to solve a crime that elevates her into an immensely likable, wholly appealing heroine

Reichs, Kathy. [The Bone Hacker](#) (Scribner \$27.99). Dr. Temperance Brennan is regretting being out on the St. Laurence in a small craft with a stopped motor when a storm strikes Montreal. It’s a taste of what the dead men and a boy must have felt when their boat left Florida and. . . . But before that sad cargo appears she’s examining a body dead by lightning strike in her lab when she discovers an odd tattoo. It brings her a cop from the British Turks and Caicos, islands known to be an unforgettable paradise. Agreeing to travel there to pursue the link between the tattoo and a pattern of young men disappearing on the coastlines for the past decade, Tempe learns that while “unforgettable” may be true, “paradise” is far from accurate. Then there’s that cargo of bodies. There’s a murder. There’s a LOT more. The stakes are high, but the situation becomes direr. . . . Reichs almost loses control of a highly complex and wildly imaginative plot but brings it together in this exciting chapter in Tempe’s long career that also stakes out new territory for a thriller.

Rollins, James. [Tides of Fire](#) (Morrow \$29.99 Aug. 14). Our copies each comes with an exclusive bookmark featuring lenticular art.

Jim has outdone himself with this stupendous thriller. Volcanology! Oceanography! Pacific trenches. Coral families. Triad families. Cutting edge research. Severe danger. Bad actors. We are at various locations in the western Pacific including land locations such as Indonesia, Hong Kong. . . . Romance. Check (not one but two that pluck the heartstrings). Family drama. A two-year old’s birthday party Vietnamese style. And. . . a crackerjack ending that will propel all of us towards the next Sigma Force adventure.

Schaffhausen, Joanna. [Dead and Gone](#) (St Martins \$28). Detective Annalisa Vega launches still another attempt to redeem her family’s name in the annals of the Chicago Police Department by investigating the death of an ex-cop who was her boss’s old friend. Now that Sam Tran, who left the CPD years ago to set up his own private agency, has been found hanging from a tree in Rosehill Cemetery, his old workmate Lynn Zimmer asks Annalisa to help bring closure to his ex-wife, Lara, and their 13-year-old son, Benji, by figuring out who strung him up. Annalisa, who was determined to follow in the footsteps of her father until he turned out to be such a dirty cop that she ratted him out, figures her best leads are in Sam’s open case files. And she’s right but surprised by what a truly grueling process it becomes before she can tell Lara Tran who killed her husband. . . . Buckle up.

Simon, Nina. [Mother-Daughter Murder Night](#) (Morrow \$29.99). Although it formally publishes September 5 I persuaded the publisher to let us have copies early for our **August First Mystery Club**. Only for members. Simon will join us for a live event on September 7 when we will have signed copies for everyone. I’ve made a big buy in for a debut that hits many of the high notes of *Where the Crawdads Sing* but with a stronger plot and peopled by three generations of amazing women. The teenager is great, the mom admirable, and the grandmother is absolutely unshelchable as well as outrageous. Still, given her Stage 4 cancer diagnosis, she’s the most alive character. However the true standout is the California coastal marshland. Further revelations will illustrate how prescient I am about this novel. . . in fact a real strength of The Pen is our ability to spot new talent and develop it. I believe we have done it again!

Slaughter, Karin. [After That Night](#) (Morrow \$32 Aug. 24). Will Trent and Sara Linton are back in an electrifying thriller featuring GBI investigator Will Trent and medical examiner Sara Linton. After that night, everything changed . . . Fifteen years ago, Sara Linton's life changed forever when a celebratory night out ended in a violent attack that tore her world apart. Since then, Sara has remade her life. A successful doctor, engaged to a man she loves, she has finally managed to leave the past behind her. Until one evening, on call in the ER, everything changes. Sara battles to save a broken young woman who's been brutally attacked. But as the investigation progresses, led by GBI Special Agent Will Trent, it becomes clear that Dani Cooper's assault is uncannily linked to Sara's. And the past isn't going to stay buried forever....

Tremayne, Peter. [Revenge of the Stormbringer](#) (Headline \$42). Summer, AD 672. Princess Gelgéis has arrived in Cashel with her personal bodyguard, a troop of female warriors called the Daughters of the Storm. When one of them is found slain next to the sleeping chamber of the newly married king and queen and, a short time later, the stewardess of the royal house is poisoned, questions are raised as to everyone's safety. Fidelma and Eadulf must first explain the 'locked room' mystery of how the attack took place in King Colgu's specially built secure apartment. Then they must interrogate the growing list of suspects—even Enda, the commander of the household guard, who had formed a romantic attachment to the murdered attendant, cannot be ignored. As the fair being held to celebrate the king and queen's wedding approaches, tensions mount and Fidelma must work quickly to expose a ruthless killer before it is too late.... **This 34th entry in a beloved medieval mystery series could well be the last so seize the moment and your copy.**

#### ORDER NOW FOR THESE LIVE SEPTEMBER EVENTS

Benn, James R. [Proud Sorrows](#) (Soho \$27.95 Sept. 6).  
Bentley, Don. [Tom Clancy: Weapons Grade](#) (Putnam \$29.95 Sept. 11)  
Brown, Graham. [Clive Cussler Condor's Fury](#) (Putnam \$29.95 Sept. 8)  
Cleeves, Ann. [The Raging Storm](#) (St Martins \$29 Sept. 4)  
Feeny, Alice. [Good Bad Girl](#) (Flatiron \$28.99 Sept. 5)  
✦ Herron, Mick. [The Secret Hours](#) (Soho \$27.995 Signed edition that comes with a nifty Slough House tote bag for Mick's September 8 1 PM VIRTUAL event with John Sandford. Supply is limited so order up)  
Johnson, Craig. [The Longmire Defense](#) (Viking \$28 Sept. 4).  
Krueger, William Kent. [The River We Remember](#) (Atria \$28.99 Sept. 9)  
Mills, Kyle. [Vince Flynn: Code Red](#) (Atria \$29.99 Sept. 11)  
Simon, Nina. [Mother-Daughter Murder Night](#) (Morrow \$29.99 Sept. 7)

#### UNSIGNED EVENT BOOKS

Dean, Will. [The Last One](#) (Atria \$18.99). When Caz steps onboard the exclusive cruise liner RMS *Atlantica*, it's the start of a vacation of a lifetime with her new love, Pete. On their first night they explore the ship, eat, dance, make friends, but when Caz wakes the next morning, Pete is missing. And when she walks out into the corridor, all the cabin doors are open. To her horror, she soon realizes that the ship is completely empty. No passengers, no crew, nobody but her. The *Atlantica* is steaming into the mid-Atlantic and Caz is the only person on board. But

that's just the beginning of the terrifying journey she finds herself trapped on in this white-knuckled mystery. I have to say that the last line of this gem is truly chilling!

#### CLASSICS

*Grove Atlantic is republishing some Len Deighton work (\$17 each):*

Deighton, Len. [Berlin Game: A Bernard Sampson Novel](#)

Deighton, Len. [London Match: A Bernard Sampson Novel](#)

Deighton, Len. [Mexico Set: A Bernard Sampson Novel](#)

*And two others:*

Deighton, Len. [Bomber](#)

Deighton, Len. [The Ipress File](#)

Fleming, Ian. [From Russia with Love](#) (\$18.99). In our present situation we can hark back to Bond and a win in this reissue. SMERSH, the Russian intelligence unit whose acronym stands for "Death to Spies," is hell-bent on destroying Special Agent James Bond. His death would deal a catastrophic hammer blow to the heart of the British Secret Service. The lure? A beautiful woman who needs 007's help. Tatiana Romanova is a Russian spy who promises to hand over the prized Spektor decoding machine if Bond aids her defection. Bond suspects a trap but can't resist the opportunity to give the British the upper hand in a chilling new front of the Cold War. So begins a deadly game of bluff and double bluff, with Bond a marked man as he enters the murky world of Balkan espionage.

Goodis, David. [Somebody's Done For](#) (Stark House \$15.95);

McKimmey, James. [24 Hours to Kill/Blue Mascara Tears](#) (Stark House \$19.95). More noir from small publisher Stark House.

Lewis, Lange. [The Birthday Murder](#) (American Mystery Classics \$15.95). Reprinted for the first time in over half a century, *The Birthday Murder* is a beautifully written and psychologically astute Golden Age mystery set in old Los Angeles. A successful writer and a B-movie director seem like the perfect match in the Hollywood hills, and with him working to produce her novel for an upcoming film, the pair's recent marriage isn't the only way that they're connected. But when the husband is found murdered on the wife's birthday, using a method of poisoning that was described in one of her books, Victoria suddenly becomes the main suspect. The case appears straightforward from the outside, but the LAPD investigator on the scene finds the truth to be anything but. Though all the signs point to Victoria, there's no motive to be found....

Northington, Jenn. [Fit for the Gods: Greek Mythology](#)

[Reimagined](#) (Knopf \$18). When I was young I devoured *Bullfinch's Mythology* in the school library. There were other authors retelling Greek myths, and then along came Rick Riordan with versions for Young Readers. And now there is adult novel after novel focusing on characters from the ancient pantheon as well as the works of Homer and the playwrights. Not to mention the Marvel movies, etc. I haven't examined Northington yet but it takes a particular spin as "An anthology of gender-bent, queered, race-bent, and inclusive retellings from the enchanting and eternally popular world of Greek myth", featuring stories by: Marika Bailey • Alyssa Cole • Zoraida Córdova • Maya Deane • Sarah Gailey • Zeyn Joukhadar • Mia P. Manansala • Juliana Spink Mills • Susan Purr • Taylor Rae • Jude Reali • Suleikha Snyder • Valerie Valdes • S. Zainab Williams • Wen Wen Yang.

## A FEW NEW HARDCOVERS

✦ Fields, Helen. [The Institution](#) (Collins \$28). This British import is our **August British Crime Club Book of the Month** although I am not clear that the formidable institution, the world's most secure prison, is located in Britain. However, British author, British #1 bestseller, British prose.... So I went with it so as to offer you something special (the US edition will be an April 2024 paperback). On a locked ward in the world's highest-security prison hospital, a scream shatters the night. The next morning, a nurse's body is found, an amateur Caesarian having killed her. The baby is too young to survive long, the experts say. Where is it? Forensic profiler Dr Connie Woolwine is renowned for her ability to get inside the mind of a murderer. Now, she must go deep undercover among the most deranged and dangerous men on earth and use her unique skills to find the infant, not to mention identify the mother's killer.

Gong, Chloe. [Immortal Longings](#) (Gallery \$28.99). YA author Gong's adult epic fantasy debut, inspired by Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, is a fiery collision of power plays, spilled blood, and romance amidst a set of deadly games.

Goodell, Jeff. [The Heat Will Kill You First](#) (Little Brown \$29). No way I can pass this brilliant nonfiction up given the month we've had here in Phoenix with a hot August to come.... "*When heat comes, it's invisible. It doesn't bend tree branches or blow hair across your face to let you know it's arrived.... The sun feels like the barrel of a gun pointed at you.*" The world is waking up to a new reality: wildfires are now seasonal in California, the Northeast is getting less and less snow each winter, and the ice sheets in the Arctic and Antarctica are melting fast. Heat is the first order threat that drives all other impacts of the climate crisis. And as the temperature rises, it is revealing fault lines in our governments, our politics, our economy, and our values. The basic science is not complicated: Stop burning fossil fuels tomorrow, and the global temperature will stop rising tomorrow. Stop burning fossil fuels in 50 years, and the temperature will keep rising for 50 years, making parts of our planet virtually uninhabitable. It's up to us. The hotter it gets, the deeper and wider our fault lines will open. *The Heat Will Kill You First* is about the extreme ways in which our planet is already changing. I add this is an excellent companion to James Rollins' thriller *Tides of Fire* as shown in Signed Books.

✦ Jewell, Lisa. [None of This is True](#) (Atria \$28) tells the twisted tale of a true crime podcaster who becomes the subject of her own work. When hit podcast host Alix Summer goes out to celebrate her 45th birthday at a posh place, she bumps into Josie Fair, also celebrating her 45th birthday. Same day. Same hospital in fact. A few days later, Josie reappears in Alix's life, declaring that she'd make a perfect subject for Alix's podcast. Alix agrees, wary but intrigued, as Josie's story certainly is unusual. Soon it becomes clear that Josie is playing a very dangerous game — and Alix realizes she's ensnared in a trap and her family's lives are at stake. There are some very damaged characters in this story which is in part structured like the eventual "Netflix production" of *The Birthday Twins* wherein Alix plays the starring role.

Mangan, Christine. [The Continental Affair](#) (Flatiron \$27.99) presents a thrilling chase through 1960s Europe with an emotional core and gorgeous prose. Henri and Louise fatefully cross paths one morning at the Alhambra in Granada, Spain.

Henri is a former gendarme living in exile from his homeland of Algeria. Louise is running, too—from a shadowy past in London and the chains of gendered expectations. When she steals the money that Henri is supposed to protect, the two end up in a cat-and-mouse chase across continental Europe—from Granada to Istanbul, with stops in Paris and Belgrade. As the narrative unfolds and an unlikely bond forms between the thief and the enforcer, the reader learns about both their pasts—including crimes, secrets, and private shames. Alternating chapters weave together their final train ride (from Belgrade to Istanbul) with their individual histories and the two-week journey that has brought them to this critical point. This is the obvious choice for the **August International Thriller Book of the Month** although I highly recommend Reichs' *The Bone Hacker* with its Turks and Caicos setting as well. And there is a promising novel by Musso I have yet to read.

✦ McAllister, Gillian. [Just Another Missing Person](#) (Harper \$30) isn't "just another missing person" story but a twisty exploration of professional and familial responsibility, the anonymity of the internet, and the slippery slope to criminality. DCI Julia Day is a dedicated, some would even say work-obsessed, detective in Portishead, England, so when she's summoned from dinner with her husband and daughter to investigate a report of missing woman Olivia Johnson, she's all in. As she drives to Olivia's apartment, she's surprised by a man in her back seat and by the message he carries: She is to plant evidence that will point toward the guilt of one Matthew James—or the blackmailer will reveal the fact that a year ago, Julia covered up a crime committed by her daughter, Genevieve. For Julia, there is no question: She has done, and will continue to do, whatever she can to protect Genevieve, and she consoles herself with the hope that if she can find Olivia alive, then no real harm will have been done. But when the missing woman turns up, she's not who Julia thought she was. Julia has to decide whom she can trust with her secrets in order to finally connect all the loose ends from a previous case to this one and to Genevieve's mistake—and figure out whether she still has a future in the police force. Great premise, truly surprising twist. I thought about this for the August British Crime Club but for some reason Julia's voice and thought processes irritated more than ensnared me. But that's just me, numerous raves indicate others ate this one up.

McBride, James. [The Heaven & Earth Grocery Store](#) (Penguin \$28). In 1972, when workers in Pottstown, Pennsylvania, were digging the foundations for a new development, the last thing they expected to find was a skeleton at the bottom of a well. Who the skeleton was and how it got there were two of the long-held secrets kept by the residents of Chicken Hill, the dilapidated neighborhood where immigrant Jews and African Americans lived side by side and shared ambitions and sorrows. Chicken Hill was where Moshe and Chona Ludlow lived when Moshe integrated his theater and where Chona ran the Heaven & Earth Grocery Store. When the state came looking for a deaf boy to institutionalize him, it was Chona and Nate Timblin, the Black janitor at Moshe's theater and the unofficial leader of the Black community on Chicken Hill, who worked together to keep the boy safe. "When the truth is finally revealed about what happened on Chicken Hill and the part the town's white establishment played in it, McBride shows us that even in dark times, it is love and community—heaven and earth—that sustain us.



Mewshaw, Michael. [My Man in Antibes](#) (Godine \$28.95). A 20-year friendship with Graham Greene is the subject of a memoir by Michael Mewshaw. Long before Mewshaw, a peripatetic writer who spent many years living in Italy with his family, met the 68-year-old Greene in 1972, he'd become fascinated by the elder author. "Greene's deceptively simple style and straightforward storytelling are as hard-worked and finely wrought as hammered silver," writes Mewshaw. These are qualities he loves so much that he and wife Linda honeymooned in Haiti, the setting of Greene's *The Comedians*. When Mewshaw learned that Greene lived close to the French villa where he and Linda were living, he wrote to him. Greene responded by inviting them over for drinks, and a long friendship began. This memoir chronicles Mewshaw's sometimes cordial, sometimes rocky relationship with Greene, which lasted until Greene's death in 1991.

Patterson, James/Duane Swierczynski. [Lion & Lamb](#) (LittleBrown \$30). One spouse is murdered. The other is suspect #1. Even before the case hits the courtroom, it's the hottest ticket in town. For the defense: Cooper Lamb, private investigator to the stars. For the prosecution: Veena Lion, a sleuth so bright she's got to wear shades.

✠ Ripley, Mike. [Mr. Champion's Memory](#) (Severn House \$31.99). Ordered Upon Request. I am a Margery Allingham fan going back decades and one delightful feature of Ripley's stewardship of Allingham's characters lies in his references to cases and various characters Allingham created. He's also given Mr. Champion, by now a senior in the 1970s, some memory issues. But they do not prevent him from answering a plea from his nephew Christopher, a man in public relations, to help solve the odd murder of a reporter whose notebook, found with the body, references an A. Champion, an M. Lugg, and the year 1932. Mr. Champion can't easily recall what happened 40 years ago but given time and curiosity he plumbs the life of a wealthy man who may be up for Honors. Very British, very clever, very well written with elegant language one rarely sees any more. This is a treat for fans of Golden Age British crime fiction. Our website says this gem is out September 5 but ignore that, it's available now if you order it.

Soria, DL. [Thief Liar Lady](#) (Random House \$28) enchants readers with a clever fairytale retelling that asks, What if Cinderella was a grifter and spy? The bones of the story are familiar: Lady Aislinn Vincent is raised by her social-climbing stepmother after her father, a minor noble, dies. Ash is made beautiful with the help of magic, and enraptures the prince of Solis at a ball, earning herself a place in the palace as his fiancée. Soria's princess is no hapless girl, however. Ash's stepmother raised her to be an excellent pretender, so good she can use her wiles and a bit of the magic powder called lustre to ensnare a nobleman. Then she'll secure marriages for her stepsisters, who don't have noble blood, and the status and wealth her stepmother craves. Ash has other ideas. Guided by her Elorian maternal grandmother, Ash is determined to use this opportunity to sway negotiations between Solis and the Elorians they conquered more than 20 years earlier. Now Ash must use every skill and tool she possesses to manage the demands of her stepmother, the expectations of her fiancé's family, and the needs of the Elorian people. When she begins to fall for Lord Verance, the Elorian "hostage prince," Ash finally

begins to consider what *she* wants.

✠ Williams, Pip. [The Bookbinder](#) (Random \$28) takes readers into the complex lives of the "bindery girls" at Oxford University Press during World War I. Since she left school to work alongside her twin sister, Maude, in the bindery, Peggy Jones has longed to study the books whose pages she folds. But, after the death of their mother, Peggy must look after Maude, who is possessed of nimble fingers and an unusual brain, but unable to handle most household tasks on her own. War comes to Europe and Belgian refugees flood into Oxford. Peggy and Maude find their safe world upended: first by the exodus of dozens of men they know, and then by the arrival of two Belgians, wounded soldier Bastiaan and librarian Lotte. Williams returns to the world she created in [The Dictionary of Lost Words](#) (\$17), which I loved, which includes some familiar characters along with a new ensemble cast revolving around Peggy and Maude, their colleagues at the press, and the refugees and students they encounter. Peggy is forced to confront her desire for love, and her long-held dream to study at Somerville College, while Maude listens to the war news, folding pages into intricate origami. Williams sensitively explores wartime trauma through Lotte's and Bastiaan's experiences, and highlights the longstanding "town and gown" divide in Oxford, which fuels Peggy's fears—and ambition—regarding her academic dreams. This is excellent reading for you Dorothy L. Sayers fans and for a recent Ruth Ware.

## COZIES

Andrews, Donna. [Birder, She Wrote](#) (St Martins \$28). If cozies live and die by titles...here we are at Book 33 in the Meg Langslow series. Caerphilly, Virginia, is a pretty close-knit community, and once everyone realizes that nobody's seen wildlife photographer Edgar Bortnick for a couple of days, his neighbors start to worry. Meg's father, Dr. James Langslow, is especially concerned because Edgar, a veteran beekeeper, has mentored his own attempts at apiculture. When neighboring farmer Isaac Washington takes Meg; her grandmother; reporter Britni Colleton; deputy Horace Hollingsworth; and some cadaver dogs on a search for the Washington family's lost graveyard, they find a brand-new corpse....

Blacke, Olivia. [A Fatal Groove](#) (St Martins \$8.99). I include Blacke's entertaining second entry in the Record Shop Mystery series, a small paperback, to direct you to other cozies listed in our NEW IN SMALL PAPERBACKS section where lurk several cozies. *A Fatal Groove*, takes readers back to Cedar River, Texas, for another adventure involving lattes, LPs, local color, and murder. Juniper "Juni" Jessup and her sisters, Maggie and Tansy, work hard to get their new record-shop/café, Sip & Spin, off the ground. But when Bob Bobbert, Cedar River's longtime mayor, drops dead after sipping their coffee at the local Bluebonnet Festival, the Jessup sisters fall under suspicion. Juni, undeterred by her detective ex-boyfriend's warnings to let the pros handle it, begins investigating the case, which appears to have ties to a 1956 bank robbery (and may or may not involve her Uncle Calvin). Blacke packs her story with musical references and amusing nods to Texas lore, including the widely held (mythical) belief that it's illegal to pick bluebonnets.

Brecher, Christin. [Mugshots of Manhattan](#) (Kensington \$16.95) finds 28-year-old New York City event photographer Liv Spyers

embarking on the most exciting job of her career. She's been tapped to snap pictures at a three-day press extravaganza hosted by Grammy winner Bisa to celebrate the singer's big-screen debut and herald the kickoff of her latest tour. The star's large entourage claims to be as close-knit as family, but partway through the festivities, Bisa's sister, Anna, shows up uninvited. Petty jealousies and grievances emerge, and the plot thickens when Liv witnesses what she believes to be Anna's murder. When no body turns up, and Bisa's security staff turns a skeptical eye toward Liv, she decides to investigate with the aid of her boyfriend, an agent for the international Art Crimes Unit. Colorful characters and amusing descriptions of the lifestyle of the rich and famous make for a pleasant poolside read. Recommended by our own Jenn McKinlay.

✦ Brightwell, Emily. [Mrs. Jeffries Aims to Win](#) (Penguin \$17). This is one of the longest running historical cozy series. When Inspector Witherspoon's neighbor Luty Belle Crookshank and her butler, Hatchet, attend a competition at the West London Archery Club, they hardly expect to become embroiled in a murder case. Jeremy Marks has been shot by arrows while roaming the archery range in a heavy rainstorm. There's no dearth of suspects, since he was widely and cordially hated. Witherspoon has solved more murder cases than any other officer, but he doesn't realize that his success rate depends on the help of his staff and friends, whose wide circle of acquaintances dig up information. Constable Barnes, who's well aware of the reason for his superior's superior performance, relays information to Witherspoon without revealing its source, while Mrs. Jeffries has encouraging chats with him over restorative glasses of sherry.

Childs, Laura. [Honey Drop Dead](#) (Berkley \$28). Charleston, South Carolina, tea shop owner Theodosia Browning; her tea sommelier, Drayton Conneley; and chef Haley Parker are catering an outdoor tea organized around bees and honey. The event is designed to promote Holly Burns' Imago Gallery, which has recently been given a boost by a much-needed influx of money from investor Jeremy Slade. The wealthy crowd is annoyed by an impromptu speech from pushy politician Osgood Claxton III and shocked when a beekeeper caring for nearby hives walks over, sprays Claxton and the crowd with an unknown substance from his smoker, then takes out a gun and shoots the politician. Without a thought for her safety, Theodosia takes off after the killer. The chase is replete with tea lore and recipes as usual.

Connor, CJ. [Board to Death](#) (Kensington \$16.95). "Connor's sweet yet slight debut combines a tender romance with an underwhelming mystery. Nearing 30 and recovering from a divorce, Ben Rosencrantz leaves his position as an English professor to accept a job at his father's board game emporium in Salt Lake City. Seedy local Clive Newton enters the shop one afternoon and offers to sell Ben a rare and valuable edition of *The Landlord's Game*, a prototype for Monopoly. Suspicious of Clive's low asking price, Ben turns the offer down. A few hours later, after the shop has closed, Ben hears someone knocking, and upon opening the door finds Clive with a knife sticking out of his chest. Fearing he might wind up a suspect in Clive's murder, Ben sets out to find the real perpetrator, with the help of handsome flower shop owner Ezra McCaslin. The two fall for each other as they descend into the cutthroat subculture of board game collecting."—PW

Hilliard, ME. [Shadow in the Glass](#) (\$17.99). I missed listing this second in series after [An Unkindness of Ravens](#) (\$16.99) earlier. Widowed librarian Greer Hogan to the Adirondacks for the third wedding of her "brilliant, beautiful, and stinking rich" friend, Sarah Whitaker. Greer has her own agenda, to determine whether any of the wedding guests, many of whom are staying at the Whitaker family's large summer house, know anything about her husband Danny's murder three years earlier. Greer is surprised by the tension she senses in several of the guests, and when a body turns up, she investigates.

✦ Lloyd, Catherine. [Miss Morton and the Spirits of the Underworld](#) (Kensington \$27). In 1830s high-society London, Miss Caroline Morton, daughter of a disgraced earl, now gainfully employed as a lady's companion, is pleased to be guiding her employer's daughter, Dorothy Frogerton, through her first Season. Dorothy has been declared "an original" by a patron of the exclusive social club, Almack's, and is sifting through potential suitors. Mrs. Frogerton, meanwhile, finds her own diversions, including spiritualist gatherings at the home of Madam Lavinia, and begs Caroline to come along. Caroline is skeptical of Madam's antics and faux French accent—until she slips a note into Caroline's hand, which contains intimate family knowledge. Even as Caroline tries to discern whether the spiritualist's powers are real, a much darker mystery presents itself.

Maxwell, Alyssa. [Murder at the Elms](#) (Kensington \$27). "Reporter Emma Cross and her new husband, Derrick Andrews, own and operate the *Newport Messenger* in 1901 Rhode Island. Emma, the paper's sole news reporter, has received a tip from Edward and Herminie Berwind's butler that the entire domestic staff at the Berwinds' mansion intends to strike. When nearly all the servants vote in favor, the Berwinds fire the strikers. Not long after, Emma is attending a musical at the Elms when chambermaid Ines Varella is found strangled in a coal cart near the property. Emma, who helped persuade Ines not to strike, worries her advice could've gotten the maid killed, so she launches an investigation, only to stumble on a jewelry theft and a second murder in the process. Maxwell manages a vivid re-creation of Gilded Age Newport and delivers several well-earned and hard-to-predict plot twists. Fans of the (sob) late Anne Perry's Thomas and Charlotte Pitt novels will find plenty to enjoy."

#### OUR AUGUST LARGE PAPERBACK PICKS

Baldacci, David. [Long Shadows](#) (\$18.99). Baldacci sets up a real puzzle here for FBI Agent Amos Decker. He's in crisis following the suicide of a close friend and his own receipt of a letter suggesting that the brain injury that makes him The Memory Man is morphing in a way that could change his life. Not an easy or sociable guy, he is resistant to the prospect of working with a new partner, Frederica White, after his former colleague is reassigned. Then he's hit with a case that will take all of his special skills to solve. Federal Judge Julia Cummins, murdered, seemingly had no enemies, and there was no forced entry to her property. Close friends and neighbors in the community apparently heard nothing, and Cummins' distraught ex-husband, Barry, and teenage son, Tyler, both have strong alibis. Why did the judge have a personal bodyguard, not one assigned by the Secret Service? And what is the meaning behind the strange

calling card left by the killer? I will say that the resolution to this gem is one you will not see coming. I really applaud Baldacci for this fabulous plot.

✦ Cambridge, Colleen. [A Trace of Poison](#) (\$16.95). The Murder Fete, a gathering of amateur and professional mystery writers in the English village of Lisleigh, provides the backdrop for Cambridge's delightful sequel to 2021's [Murder at Mallowan Hall](#). When a Catholic priest is poisoned during the festival, Phyllida Bright, Agatha Christie's fictional housekeeper, quickly determines that the intended victim may have been the loathsome Alastair Whittlesby, president of the local writers' club. Whittlesby has been considered the front-runner to win a writing contest with a prize of a publishing contract, and he believes that one of the other amateur writers wanted him out of the way. Cambridge weaves in just the right amount of historical detail and references to classic Christie novels while placing Phyllida and her intelligent sleuthing skills front and center. That the judges for the contest include Christie and other members of the real-life Detection Club, including Anthony Berkeley, G.K. Chesterton, and Dorothy L. Sayers, only adds to the fun. Fans of traditional mysteries will appreciate the author's sometimes tongue-in-cheek adherence to the conventions of the genre, particularly the denouement where all is revealed. Dame Agatha would be proud.

Durrant, Sabine. [Sun Damage](#) (Harper \$18.99). How about a sizzling summertime swindle? Sean and Ali have pulled off their most brazen deception having sold an "authenticated" yet nevertheless fake Picasso to a wealthy young man for 60,000 Euros. It was a hastily scrawled tiny drawing on a crumpled vintage napkin. Sean frequently sold valuable jewelry and bibelot to trusted fences. In this instance, one posed as an art curator and conservator who certified the work as genuine. Sean and his fence were to split the cash but he had yet to pay his confederate. Meanwhile, the grifters were relaxing and seeking their next mark in the beach town of Sainte-Cecile-sur-Mer. Enter Lulu Fletcher Davies, a bored, upper-middle-class English girl, fresh from a boarding school background with training as a professional chef. She seems to be a typical "Sloane Ranger" with requisite good manners, upbringing, sophistication and an upscale wardrobe. The late Princess Diana represented the epitome of "Sloanes". What's extraordinary is Lulu could be a genuinely posh doppelgänger or mirror image of Ali. Sean is immediately taken with her. There are certain differences: Lulu is a trained chef, a competent driver, has severe celiac disease and can barely say "bonjour" in French while former foster child Ali doesn't cook or drive cars, loves all sorts of bread and pastries and speaks fluent French. So Lulu has a catering job coming up in a small village several hours away, cooking for nine guests in a luxury home. What could go wrong if Ali hijacks Lulu's ID?

✦ Edwards, Martin. [The Puzzle of Blackstone Lodge](#) (Poisoned Pen \$16.99). Rachel Savernake investigates a bizarre locked-room puzzle in this delicious Gothic mystery from the winner of the CWA Diamond Dagger. London, 1930. Nell Fagan is a journalist on the trail of an intriguing and bizarre mystery: in 1606, a man vanished from a locked gatehouse in a remote Yorkshire village, and now, 300 years later, it's happened again. Nell confides in the best sleuth she knows, judge's daughter and staunch defender of truth and justice, Rachel Savernake. Thank goodness she did, because barely a week later, while investigating

a series of deaths at a sanatorium, Nell disappears, and Rachel is left to put together the pieces of the puzzle. Looking for answers, Rachel travels to lonely Blackstone Fell in Yorkshire, with its eerie moor and sinister tower. With help from her friend Jacob Flint – who's determined to expose a fraudulent séance – Rachel will risk her life to bring an end to the disappearances and bring the truth to light. A dazzling mystery peopled by clerics and medics; journalists and judges, and third in this series. Note: we have 2 Signed copies of this in the UK edition: [Blackstone Fell](#) (Zeus \$44).

✦ Feeney, Alice. [Daisy Darker](#) (\$17.99). Here is the seaside Gothic you've needed for summer. The Darker family reluctantly gathers at grandmother Nana's Cornish tidal island estate to celebrate her 80th birthday: Daisy Darker; her older sisters, Lily and Rose; their divorced parents; and Lily's 15-year-old daughter, Trixie. Nana, believing she will die in the coming year, has decided to tell her family who will inherit her mansion and the fortune that she made writing a children's book based on Daisy. Aside from Nana, Trixie and (sometimes) Daisy, the Darkers are a decidedly unlikable family, prone to hatred and jealousies; they relish the destruction of happy moments. Ill as a child because she was "born with a broken heart," Daisy is accustomed to a lack of attention and affection from her mother and sisters. Lily, who resents any attention her teenage daughter receives, engages in emotional abuse toward Trixie. Feeney gives these characters quirks, ones that make their motives and secrets riveting and that propel this brisk plot with all of its surprising twists as she unabashedly enters Agatha Christie's *And Then There Were None* territory when family members start to die, their deaths accompanied by macabre poems. At the same time, she makes the plot of the captivating *Daisy Darker* uniquely her own.

✦ Gregory, Philippa. [Dawnlands](#) (\$18.99). Much fiction has been written set in England's Civil War between the Cavaliers and Roundheads, or Royalists and Parliamentarians. King Charles I lost his head. His son returned from exile in 1660 to be crowned Charles II, and died without a son, leaving his brother James to rule. I have always thought that Charles, who fathered multiple bastards but remained married to his barren Portuguese Queen (a Catholic) to his death, failed in his royal duty as James was going to be the wrong man for the job. Plus James' second wife Mary Beatrice of Modena was openly Catholic and the son she bore is still known as the "warming-pan baby" thanks to her reluctance to give birth in public and the rumor that evolved that a baby boy was smuggled into the birth chamber in a warming pan (misinformation campaigns are nothing new, no?).

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

✦ Hallett, Janice. [The Twyford Code](#) (\$17.99). What is the mysterious connection between a teacher's disappearance and an unsolved code in a children's book? Forty years ago, Steven

“Smithy” Smith found a copy of a famous children’s book by disgraced author Edith Twyford, its margins full of strange markings and annotations. When he showed it to his remedial English teacher Miss Iles, she believed that it was part of a secret code that ran through all of Twyford’s novels. And when she later disappeared on a class field trip, Smithy becomes convinced that she had been right. Now, out of prison after a long stretch, Smithy decides to investigate the mystery that has haunted him for decades. In a series of voice recordings on an old iPhone, Smithy alternates between visiting the people of his childhood and looking back on the events that later landed him in prison. But it soon becomes clear that Edith Twyford wasn’t just a writer of forgotten children’s stories. *The Twyford Code* holds a great secret, and Smithy may just have the key. “Filled with numerous clues, acrostics, and red herrings, this thrilling scavenger hunt for the truth is delightfully deceptive and thoroughly immersive.” — *PW* Starred Review on UK bestseller Hallett’s second novel after the amazing [The Appeal](#) (\$18.99). Do not miss either of these unusual crime novels.

Iglesias, Gabino. [The Devil Takes You Home](#) (\$17.99). “Echoing the *Book of Job*, the story follows a father in Austin who loses his job and health insurance, his young daughter to terrible disease and, finally, his marriage. At wit’s end, the narrator, Mario, takes up an offer from a meth-addicted friend and embarks on a new line of work as a cartel hit man. This shift spawns a borderlands odyssey that blends noir and magical realism, meditations on religiosity and human cruelty, and social commentary on guns, the drug trade and resurgent racism.” Iglesias says, “I put all my anger with the health care system into this book.”

James, Kelsey. [The Woman in the Castello](#) (Kensington \$16.95). Who can resist time spent in Italy? Even better in the 1960s where the film industry is booming, a gothic mood prevails in a crumbling castle being used as a movie set, and a young American actress is desperate to support her young child and her dying mother? Silvia Whitford arrives in Rome set to play a role in a horror movie being shot by Italian cine masters. But when she checks in Silvia learns to her shock that the financial plug has been pulled on *The Revenge of the Lake Witch*. Broke and desperate she turns to her only possible asset, her mother’s long estranged sister, owner of a rundown *Castello* in the cypress-covered hills. It’s tense, but eventually a cast is assembled at the village, the *castello* which fortunately has an atmospheric lake, becomes the backdrop for the Gothic script beginning to film, and real life begins to mirror it. Echoes of Italy’s Fascist past, wartime, Old Hollywood, and much more combine to create a fabulous drama that makes up our **August Historical Paperback Book of the Month**. I so loved this.

Meyer, Deon. [The Dark Flood](#) (\$17). Demoted from the elite Cape Town Hawks police unit for being too keen on uncovering state corruption, Meyer’s stalwart detectives Benny Griessel and Vaughn Cupido barely survive a hearing with the corrupt commissioner. They await transfer from Cape Town to dull duty in Stellenbosch when an anonymous warning and a missing-student assignment reveal that the flood of corruption they knew was there is worse than they imagined. “Absorbing procedural details lead to an explosive confrontation with a ruthless street gang and a police-corruption scheme that links South African Police Service to the country’s devastating political scandals. It’s a grim period for South Africa, but Griessel and Caputo remain

loyal to justice and to each other. A gritty but surprisingly hopeful installment in Meyer’s immensely popular series.” —*Booklist*.

Raybourn, Deanna. [Killers of a Certain Age](#) (\$17). “Edgar finalist Raybourn makes a dazzling excursion out of the Victorian era [and the Veronica Speedwell series] with this uproarious contemporary thriller. Raybourn’s sharply funny, cunningly plotted, creative thriller about four almost seniors, four women trained as assassins by a British WWII female spymaster but retired on pensions – Killers of a Certain Age – is a glorious chase novel where one by one players are unmasked after the women, summoned together to take a luxury cruise, realize that their former employer has put out a kill order on them. How they strategize, survive, and maybe turn the tables is a real treat. Think Mrs. Pollifax, a senior spy created by the late Dorothy Gilman and much missed, on steroids. Fans of Helen Tursten and Richard Osman will relish watching these badass women in their 60s swing into action. And new to the senior sleuths ranks too, Mrs. Plansky (by Quinn) as detailed in this Booknews.

Ryan, Hank Phillippi. [The House Guest](#) (\$19.99). After every divorce, one spouse gets all the friends. What does the other one get? If they’re smart, they get the benefits. Alyssa Macallan is terrified when she’s dumped by her wealthy and powerful husband. With a devastating divorce looming, she begins to suspect her toxic and manipulative soon-to-be-ex is scheming to ruin her—leaving her alone and penniless. And when the FBI shows up at her door, Alyssa knows she really needs a friend. And then she gets one. A seductive new friend, one who’s running from a dangerous relationship of her own. Alyssa offers Bree Lorraine the safety of her guest house, and the two become confidantes. Then Bree makes a heart-stopping, tempting offer. Maybe Alyssa and Bree can solve each others’ problems. But is anyone really what they seem? It’s *Gaslight* meets *Thelma and Louise* in an exceptional domestic thriller. Highly recommended.

Sullivan, Connor. [Sleeping Bear](#) (\$17.99). When Army veteran Cassie Gale goes missing on a solo camping trip along Alaska’s Yukon River in Sullivan’s impressive debut, her father, former intelligence officer Jim Gale, immediately organizes a search party of friends and family to augment the state’s thin law enforcement resources. Jim eventually determines that Cassie was the latest victim of a Russian kidnapping scheme. Meanwhile, on Russia’s Kamchatka Peninsula, Cassie and several other Americans abducted from Alaska are being held in a former missile silo. Some are used for medical experimentation by a particularly despicable villain, General Viktor Sokolov, while others are forced to fight Russian soldiers in televised bouts that Kremlin higher-ups use for wagered entertainment. An electrifying finale featuring a tense rescue mission by a Navy SEAL team caps off the drama. Sullivan nails it out of the gate with a debut that moves with confidence.

Wagner, David. [Best Served Cold](#) (Poisoned Pen \$16.99). Immerse yourself in Italian food and wine along with a new mystery for U.S. interpreter/translator Rick Montoya, originally from New Mexico but Mom’s family is resident in Italy. Our Lesa reviews: “When Rick finishes a top-secret job in Palermo, Italy, involving the interview of a Mafia informer, his uncle (Commissario Piero Fontana) suggests that Rick spend some time with his aunt in northern Italy. The visit is interrupted when an old college friend, Zeke Campbell, asks for help with

a tour group in Assisi. Zeke, now a priest, is leading a religious tour of members from Rick's home state of New Mexico, but their tour guide failed to show up when they arrived in Assisi. Although Rick plans to interpret for the group on their tour, he's recruited by the local police as an interpreter when the tour guide is found murdered. Suspects include members of the group, as well as people who had business with the guide, who seems to have been a shady businessman. Now Montoya's time is divided between interpreting, the murder investigation and meals with the attractive police inspector. The climax unites Rick's job in Palermo with murder suspects in an attractive Assisi setting."

### SOME LARGE AUGUST PAPERBACKS

Coulter, Catherine. [Reckoning: An FBI Thriller](#) (\$19.99). When she was twelve years old, Kirra Mandarian's parents were murdered and she barely escaped with her life. Fourteen years later Kirra is a commonwealth attorney back home in Porte Franklin, Virginia, and her goal is to find out who killed her parents and why. She assumes the identity of E.N.—Eliot Ness—and gathers proof to bring down the man she believes was behind her parents' deaths. She quickly learns that big-time criminals are very dangerous indeed and realizes she needs Dillon Savich's help. Savich brings in Special Agent Griffin Hammersmith to work with Lieutenant Jeter Thorpe, the young detective who'd saved Kirra years before. Meanwhile Emma Hunt, a piano prodigy and the granddaughter of powerful crime boss Mason Lord, was only six years old when she was abducted. How will these cases link?

✎ Ellis, J R. [The Brewery Murders](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$16.99). Steeped in a history of award-winning Yorkshire ale, the town of Markham boasts not one but two breweries. Richard Foster runs one; his sister, Emily, along with her partner, Janice, runs the other. And not without some resentment. The unwelcome return of the town's former bad boy, Brendan Scholes, threatens to ignite the sibling rivalry further. Scholes claims to have found the long-lost secret recipe to the beer that made Richard and Emily's father famous, and he wants money. But it isn't long before Scholes' body is found floating in a fermentation tank at one of the breweries, his head caved in by a hammer. DCI Oldroyd and Andy Carter are called in to investigate the murder, and there's no shortage of suspects. As rumors of the possible existence of a recipe for the famous beer spread against a backdrop of growing homophobia and misogyny, tempers run high and Markham's beer industry is at stake....

✎ Glass, Ava. [Alias Emma](#): (\$17). Nothing about Emma Makepeace is real. Not even her name. A newly minted secret agent, she's barely graduated from basic training when she gets the call for her first major assignment. Eager to serve her country and prove her worth, she dives in headfirst. Emma must covertly travel across one of the world's most watched cities to bring the reluctant—and handsome—son of Russian dissidents into protective custody, so long as the assassins from the Motherland don't find him first. With London's famous Ring of Steel hacked by the Russian government, the two must cross the city without being seen by the hundreds of thousands of CCTV cameras that document every inch of the city's streets, alleys, and gutters.. They have twelve hours to make it to safety. But when Emma's handler goes dark, there's no one left to trust.....

Headen, Miesha Wilson, ed. [Cleveland Noir](#) (Akashic \$16.95). The Urban Noir series continues to tour Ohio with stories by:

Paula McLain, Jill Bialosky, Thrity Umrigar, Michael Ruhlman, Daniel Stashower, D.M. Pulley, J.D. Belcher, Alex DiFrancesco, Miesha Wilson Headen, Abby L. Vandiver, Sam Conrad, Angela Crook, Susan Petrone, Dana McSwain, and Mary Grimm.

Lansdale, Joe R. [Things Get Ugly: The Best Crime Fiction of Joe R. Lansdale](#) (Subterranean \$18.95). In 19 stories, Lansdale heads back to the dangerous woods of East Texas. In his first crime career-retrospective, including previously uncollected work, Lansdale shows exactly why critics continue to compare him to Elmore Leonard, Donald Westlake, Flannery O'Connor, and William Faulkner.

Lupica, Mike. [Robert B Parker's Fallout](#) (\$18). The small town of Paradise is devastated when a star high-school baseball player is found dead at the bottom of a bluff just a day after winning the team's biggest game. For Jesse, the loss is doubly difficult—the teen was the nephew of his colleague, Suitcase Simpson, and Jesse had been coaching the young shortstop. As he searches for answers about how the boy died and why, he is stonewalled at every turn, and it seems that someone is determined to keep him from digging further. Jesse suddenly must divide his attention between two cases after the shocking murder of former Paradise police chief, Charlie Farrell. Before his death, Farrell had been looking into a series of scam calls that preyed upon the elderly. But how do these "ghost calls" connect to his murder? When threats—and gunshots—appear on Jesse's own doorstep, the race to find answers is on. Both old and new enemies come into play, and in the end, Jesse and his team must discover the common factor between the two deaths in order to prevent a third.

MacRae, Molly. [Argyles and Arsenic](#) (\$16.95). After 93 well-lived years, Violet MacAskill is ready to simplify her life. Her eccentric solution? She'll throw a decanting and decluttering party at her family home—a Scottish Baronial manor near the seaside town of Inversgail, Scotland. Violet sets aside everything she wants or needs, then she invites her many friends. Janet Marsh and Christine Robertson, two of the women who own Yon Bonnie Books in Inversgail, enjoy themselves at the party. Not everyone who attends has a good time, though. Wendy Erskine, director of the Inversgail museum, is found dead, and rumors swirl about food poisoning from a local food truck. Then Violet tells Constable Hobbs that a tin of rat poison is missing. And when Hobbs' own grandmother comes under suspicion for murder, he enlists the women from Yon Bonnie Books, and the race is on to find the murderer.

✎ Miro, JM. [Ordinary Monsters](#) (\$19.99) "is the wholly original, haunting first installment in a historical fantasy series filled with monsters and magic. It takes the Victorian gothic aesthetic of its 1880s London setting and re-invents its lore on a global scale. Marlowe, found as a baby in a freight car, remained safe traveling from London to San Francisco, thanks to a series of caring adoptive mothers. But no one can explain how Marlowe is able to emit a blue light and alter people's flesh. Meanwhile, teenaged Charlie Ovid, a mixed-race orphan in the postbellum American South, is imprisoned after killing a man in self-defense, with a mob of white men eager to kill him. Yet everyone is wary of Charlie's ability to heal any wounds he incurs. Alice Quicke and Coulton, representatives of the mysterious Cairndale Institute in Edinburgh, are determined to retrieve both boys. These children—called Talents—act as bridges between the living and the

dead. Miro's perfect blending of period detail and unique fantasy lore give this spectacle an engrossing quality.

Morelli, Laura. [The Last Masterpiece](#) (Harper \$18.99). Art historian Morelli once again links Renaissance Italy and the crucible of World War Two in the most absorbing and innovative fashion... think *The Monument Women*. In the summer of 1943, Eva Brunner is taking photographs of Nazi-looted art hidden in the salt mines of the Austrian hinterland. Across the ocean in Connecticut, Josephine Evans is working as a humble typist at the Yale Art Gallery. When both women are called to Italy to contribute to the war effort, neither imagines she will hold the fate of some of the world's greatest masterpieces, torn from the Uffizi Galleries and other Florentine art collections, in her hands including the Mona Lisa. Enjoy exquisite historical details, surprising plot twists, and unforgettable characters who commit extraordinary acts of bravery to create and protect art.

Musso, Guillaume. [The Stranger in the Seine](#) (LittleBrown \$17.99). "Musso combines a baffling mystery with a memorable lead in this superior thriller. Roxane Montchrestien, longtime member of a French police brigade that hunts down the country's most wanted, attempts to resign after she gets caught up in a street protest that turns violent. Instead, she's transferred to the Bureau of Unconventional Affairs, an X-Files-esque division established "to investigate unusual cases that the judicial police couldn't find any rational explanations for." Soon afterward, a naked, amnesia-stricken woman is found in the Seine, and she asks for Roxane's predecessor before slipping away from the hospital where she's been recuperating. The plot thickens when Roxane learns that a DNA sample from the unidentified woman matches pianist Milena Bergman, who died a year earlier in a plane crash. Roxane teams up with Milena's fiancé to ferret out the truth, uncovering a web of deceit in the process. Musso delivers a satisfying resolution to the puzzle she constructs, and Roxane's inner conflicts about staying on the force in a time of social upheaval lend welcome emotional depth. Devotees of Christopher Fowler's Peculiar Crimes Unit series will be enthralled."—*PW* Starred Review

O'Farrell, Maggie. [The Marriage Portrait](#) (\$17). The National Book Award-winning author of *Hamnet* unspools the immersive and poignant story of the woman who was the inspiration for Robert Browning's famous poem "My Last Duchess," Lucrezia di Cosimo de' Medici. Lucrezia is only 15 years old in 1560 when she is forced to leave her home in Florence to marry Alfonso II d'Este, the Duke of Ferrara. Originally engaged to marry Lucrezia's recently deceased sister, Alfonso is desperate for an heir to consolidate his power. But while Alfonso appears considerate and patient at first, Lucrezia soon begins to see that a much different, much more dangerous, man lurks beneath his calm exterior. Like *Hamnet*, *The Marriage Portrait* captures a time and place in such textured and atmospheric detail that it is easy to get lost in its world. This novel, however, manages to juggle this cinematic portrayal of a period alongside a startlingly intimate portrait of a woman whose rebellious spirit must be confined to the wild images she hides in her landscape painting

✦ Paris, BA. [The Prisoner](#) (\$18). Amelie has always been a survivor, from losing her parents as a child in Paris to making it on her own in London. As she builds a life for herself, she is swept up into a glamorous lifestyle where she married the

handsome billionaire Ned Hawthorne. But then, Amelie wakes up in a pitch-black room, not knowing where she is. Why has she been taken? Who are her mysterious captors? And why does she soon feel safer here, imprisoned, than she had begun to feel with her husband Ned? Weaving between the recent past and present, the book's first half is tense and uneasy with a lonely young woman stumbling into a world she can barely conceive

✦ Penrose, Andrea. [Murder at the Serpentine Bridge](#) (\$16.95). The Napoleonic Wars are finally over, and the Prince Regent has invited the sovereigns of Europe to London for a gala peace celebration. Charlotte Sloane, whose secret identity is scathing political cartoonist A.J. Quill, has finally married the dashing Earl of Wrexford, and they have created an unorthodox family with their two rambunctious, streetwise wards. But after the boys discover the body of engineering wizard Jeremiah Willis floating in a lake in Hyde Park, Charlotte's long-desired life of domesticity will have to wait a while longer. Willis was designing a fearsome secret weapon, but the prototype for his invention is missing, and the Crown's spymaster, Lord Grentham, recruits Wrexford to retrieve it before it falls into the hands of a foreign enemy. 6<sup>th</sup> in a well researched Regency series.

Quinn, Kate, et al. [A Day of Fire: A Novel of Pompeii](#) (Harper \$18.99). Pompeii was a lively resort flourishing in the shadow of Mount Vesuvius at the height of the Roman Empire. When Vesuvius erupted in an explosion of flame and ash, the entire town would be destroyed. Some of its citizens died in the chaos, some escaped the mountain's wrath . . . and these are their stories as told by several authors: A boy loses his innocence in Pompeii's flourishing streets. An heiress dreads her wedding day, not knowing it will be swallowed by fire. An ex-legionary stakes his entire future on a gladiator bout destined never to be finished. A crippled senator welcomes death, until a tomboy on horseback comes to his rescue. A young mother faces an impossible choice for her unborn child as the ash falls. A priestess and a prostitute seek redemption and resurrection as the town is buried.

Schaffhausen, Joanna. [Long Gone](#) (\$18). Detective Annalisa Vega of the Chicago PD and Nick Carelli, her partner and ex-husband, are called to veteran police officer Leo Hammond's home, where they find him dead in his bedroom, shot with his own gun. Hammond's wife insists that an intruder, dressed in a black wetsuit complete with diving mask, killed him. An obvious suspect is Moe Bocks, who had a run-in with Hammond a month earlier in a bar. Bocks is believed to have murdered his girlfriend in 1998, but he wasn't charged for lack of evidence. That Vega's best friend has begun dating Bocks complicates the investigation. These and other cases entwine in unexpected ways and bring Vega to the attention of a band of dirty cops. She's soon suspected of murder, with conveniently planted evidence stacking up against her. Loads of exciting action, balanced with dramatic personal revelations and some fine nuts-and-bolts police work, keep the pages turning," says one reviewer who, like me, enjoys police procedurals.

Shreve, Craig. [The African Samurai](#) (Simon Schuster \$17.99). Those who loved *Shogun*, or Lian Hearn's glorious *Tales of the Otori*, or even Laura Jo Rowland's medieval Japan crime novels, will want to read about an East African, kidnapped when young, and eventually made samurai with a new name, Yasuke. It begins in 1579 when a Portuguese trade ship sails into port at

Kuchinotsu, Japan, loaded with European wares and weapons. On board is Father Alessandro Valignano, an Italian priest and Jesuit missionary whose authority in central and east Asia is second only to the pope's. Beside him is his protector, a large and imposing East African man. Taken from his village as a boy, sold as a slave to Portuguese mercenaries, and forced to fight in wars in India, the young but experienced soldier is haunted by memories of his past. A riot in Kyoto brings his protector in front of the land's most powerful warlord, Oda Nobunaga. Nobunaga is preparing a campaign to complete the unification of a nation. And so....

Wortham, Reavis. [Hard Country](#) (Poisoned Pen \$16.99). Tucker Snow is as tough as they come, hardened by decades working as an undercover narcotics agent for the Texas Department of Public Safety. But after taking a dream job as a special ranger with the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association, Tucker's wife and toddler are killed in a horrific traffic accident caused by a drug addled felon. Close to breaking, Tucker sets his badge aside to move his surviving teenage daughter outside of Ganther Bluff, a quiet town with enough room for them to mourn their unexpected loss. But peace doesn't last long for a man like Tucker Snow. Instead of settling into small-town life to heal, a fresh kind of hell hits. Jeffery Deaver praises "a nonstop thriller plot, characters who are so real we're sure we've crossed paths in real life, and a breathtaking portrait—both searing and sympathetic—of a small town, from an author whose compelling voice and keenly observant eye transport us there. Wortham is known for his protagonists and Tucker Snow is one of his all-time best: sharp, uncompromising, wry, thoroughly human, and the one thing we don't see enough of nowadays: a dyed-in-the-wool hero."

#### OUR AUGUST SMALL PAPERBACK PICKS

Alexander, Ellie. [Catch Me If You Candy](#) (St Martins \$8.99). Bakershop #17. When a murder occurs on All Hallows' Eve—one predicted by her mother's Mahjong partner, bakeshop owner Jules Capshaw must sift through the clues to catch a killer before she suffers the same fate.

Cosimano, Elle. [Finlay Donovan Knocks 'em Dead](#) (\$9.99). Finlay Donovan #2. Struggling novelist and single mom Finlay Donovan uncovers a world of Russian mobsters and assassins disguised as soccer moms in an effort to keep her ex-husband safe.

Day, Maddie. [Murder at a Cape Bookstore](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Cozy Capers Book Group #5. Bicycle shop owner Mac Almeida and her crime-solving book group put their sleuthing skills to good use when the organizer of the spring equinox festival is found dead in the Book Nook.

Howell, Dorothy. [Seams Like Murder](#) (\$8.99). Sewing Studio #2. When Abbey Chandler becomes a suspect in the murder of a librarian in the town of Hideaway Grove, she becomes drawn into a series of sewing projects while trying to find the real killer.

✦ Loudon, Margaret. [A Deadly Dedication](#) (Penguin \$8.99). Open Book #4. When the owner of Upper Chumley-on-Stokes' proposed first high-end gourmet shop is poisoned, American novelist and bookstore owner Penelope Parish is faced with a long list of suspects that makes this page-turning mystery her toughest yet.

Maden, Mike. [Clive Cussler's Hellburner](#) (\$9.99). Oregon Files #16. After narrowly escaping an explosion and losing a crew member, Juan Cabrillo must track down a nuclear torpedo before it starts World War III.

Mezrich, Ben. [The Midnight Ride](#) (\$9.99). Busted for card counting, MIT student Hailey Gordon grabs her winnings and makes her escape, hiding out in an unlocked room, where she stumbles upon a dead body – and the most fascinating secret in American history.

✦ Robotham, Michael. [When You Are Mine](#) (\$9.99). A young, ambitious police officer with the elite Metropolitan Police in London, Philomena McCarthy, after a domestic violence call gone wrong, is trapped in a web of secrets, corruption and murder, and finds her impending marriage, career and very survival in jeopardy.

#### AUGUST SMALL PAPERBACKS

Cass, Laurie. [A Troubling Tail](#) (Penguin \$8.99). Bookmobile Cat #11. Librarian Minnie Hamilton and her rescue cat Eddie get into a sticky situation when they investigate the murder of one of their favorite patrons, the owner of Henika's Candy Emporium.

Conte, Cate. [Nine Lives and Alibis: A Cat Cafe Mystery](#) (St Martins \$8.99). Cat Café #7. When famous medium, Balfour Dempsey, meets his demise—one he didn't see coming, during the town's Halloween preparations, cat café owner Maddie James and her family, with the whole town in a frenzy, find themselves in the middle of a murder mystery that is all tricks and no treats.

Evanovich, Janet. [The Recovery Agent](#) (\$10.99). Gabriella Rose #1. Recovery agent Gabriella Rose must come up with a large sum of money in order to keep her family's home from being wiped off the map.

Gervais, Simon. [Robert Ludlum's The Blackbriar Genesis](#) (\$9.99). Blackbriar #1. When an undercover Treadstone agent is murdered in Prague, but none of his superiors know what he was doing there, Blackbriar operatives Helen Jouvart and Donovan Wade are sent to investigate, drawing them into a world of conspiracy and fake news.

Gilstrap, John. [Harm's Way](#) (Kensington \$9.99). Jonathan Grave #15. While on an off-the-books mission to rescue 10 missionaries being held hostage in Venezuela by a vicious drug syndicate, Jonathan Grave, along with his key operatives, infiltrates the enemy camp where he discovers something far more dangerous, not just to his team, but to the whole world.

Graham, Heather. [Cursed at Dawn](#) (Mira \$9.99). Blackbird #3. FBI agents Della Hamilton and Mason Carter investigate after Stephan Dante, the self-proclaimed "king of the vampires" escapes from prison, leaving a blood trail in his wake.

Grant, Kimi Cunningham. [These Silent Woods](#) (\$9.99). A father and daughter living in isolation in the remote Appalachian mountains must reckon with the ghosts of their past in this mesmerizing novel of suspense.

Grisham, John. [The Boys from Biloxi](#) (\$10.99). John Grisham returns to Mississippi with the riveting story of two sons of immigrant families who grow up as friends, but ultimately find themselves on opposite sides of the law.

Hunter, Stephen. [Soft Target](#) (\$9.99). Reissue. Ray Cruz #2. Black Friday. America's largest shopping mall, suburban Minneapolis. 3:00 pm. Twelve gunmen open fire in the mall corridors, and take more than a thousand hostage. Cruz, a retired Marine sniper, is taken captive along with his fiancée and her family. He has a plan— now all he needs is a gun.

King, Stephen. [Duma Key](#) (\$11.99). Reissue. Renting a house on an eerily undeveloped stretch of the Florida coast after suffering a crippling accident and ending his marriage, construction millionaire Edgar Freemantle obsessively creates works of art that lead him to discover unsettling elements from his landlady's enigmatic family history.

Patterson, James. [The Noise](#) (\$9.99). After a mysterious explosion kills thousands in the Pacific Northwest, two survivors are left—16-year-old Tennant and her 8-year-old sister, Sophie.

Rovin, Jeff. [Tom Clancy's OpCenter: Call of Duty](#) (St Martins \$9.99). Op-Center #21. Op-Center's attempt to exfiltrate a Chinese scientist threatens to incite a full-fledged war between China and the United States.

Wilton, Traci. [Mrs. Morris and the Wolfman](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Salem B&B #7. Saturday night at the movies has some added flair now that Darren and Elise Shultz are reopening one of Salem's classic theaters. Charlene is delighted to help the couple with their venture, and Darren has lined up a cult classic double-header featuring Lon Chaney in *The Wolfman*. But things get hairier than expected when Elise starts to choke on her popcorn mid-movie—and once the lights go up, she's dead.