

BOOKNEWS from

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August Booknews 2023 Part 2
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AUGUST SUN AND SUSPENSE PART 2

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.

MONDAY AUGUST 14 7:00 PM Live Book Launch

James Rollins discusses [Tides of Fire](#) (Harper \$29.99)
Sigma Force! Dazzling exclusive at work comes with our copies

TUESDAY AUGUST 15 5:00 PM

Isabel Cañas discusses [Vampires of El Norte](#) (Penguin \$28)
And 1840s supernatural Western...and so much more
Signed books in stock

TUESDAY AUGUST 15 7:00 PM Live

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

WEDNESDAY AUGUST 16 7:00 PM Live

Naomi Hirahara discusses [Evergreen](#) (Soho \$27.95)
Japantown Mystery #2

THURSDAY AUGUST 17 5:00 PM

JH Gelernter discusses [The Montevideo Brief](#) (Penzler \$28)
Captain Grey adds Americans to his mission to halt a Spanish treasure ship
Signed books in stock

FRIDAY AUGUST 18 7:00 PM

SciFi Friday discusses Jodi Taylor's [Just One Damned Thing After Another](#) (\$12.99)

SATURDAY AUGUST 19

Bookstore Romance Day

Come by for recommendations by John
10% discount on our Romance titles
John is moderating [one of the BRD Panels](#) 9:00 AM PDT
For more panels [click here](#)

SATURDAY AUGUST 19 10:30 AM

Croak & Dagger discuss Grace Li's [Portrait of a Thief](#) (\$18)
A brilliant debut, a heist novel with Asian American actors

SUNDAY AUGUST 20 4:00 PM Live

Alice Hoffman discusses [The Invisible Hour](#) (Atria \$27.99)
Revisit Nathaniel Hawthorne in our August Notable New Fiction Book of the Month

TUESDAY AUGUST 22 7:00 PM Live

Douglas Preston (live) & Lincoln Child (virtual) discuss [Dead Mountain](#) (Grand Central \$30)
Another amazing adventure for archaeologist Nora Kelly

WEDNESDAY AUGUST 23 1:00 PM

Britain's A J Pearce with John Charles
Pearce discusses [Mrs. Porter Calling](#) (Scribner \$28)

THURSDAY AUGUST 24 1:00 PM

Ireland's Graham Norton discusses [Forever Home](#) (Harper \$29.99)

THURSDAY AUGUST 24 7:00 PM Live

Karin Slaughter with Isabella Maldonado (and kittens)
Slaughter discusses [After That Night](#) (Morrow \$32)
Atlanta's Will Trent and Sara Linton

MONDAY AUGUST 28 5:00 PM

Nina Simon discusses [Mother-Daughter Murder Night](#) (Morrow \$29.99)
Our August First Mystery Book of the Month
Live Event with Simon September 7 7:00 PM

MONDAY AUGUST 28 6:30 PM

Taylor Moore discusses [Ricochet](#) (Harper \$29.99)
Signed books available

TUESDAY AUGUST 29 5:00 PM Book Launch

Angie Kim with Chris Bohjalian
Kim discusses [Happiness Falls](#) (Random \$28)
Signed books available

THURSDAY AUGUST 31 5:00 PM

Jesse Q. Sutanto with John Charles
Indonesia's Sutanto discusses [I'm Not Done With You Yet](#) (Berkley \$27)

THURSDAY AUGUST 31 7:00 PM

Hardboiled Crime discusses Ed Brubaker's [Reckless](#) (Image \$24.99)
If nothing else click on the link to see the cover art

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 4 1:00 PM Live

Ann Cleeves discusses [The Raging Storm](#) (St Martins \$29)
A new Devon's Detective Matthew Venn investigation

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 4 4:00 PM Live Book Launch

Craig Johnson discusses [The Longmire Defense](#) (Viking \$28)
Sheriff Walt Longmire faces revelations about his grandfather

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 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

Mejia, Mindy. [To Catch a Storm](#)

First Mystery Club One Signed First Printing per month

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

Hardboiled/Noir Club One Signed First Printing per month

Joy, David. [Those We Thought We Knew](#)

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

Runyan, Aimie K. [A Bakery in Paris](#)

ABOUT OUR AUGUST CRIME BOOK OF THE MONTH

I'm delighted that our selections for August Books of the Month introduce you to two new authors—Nina Simon and Sara DiVello—with the potential for astounding careers. And that we are reintroducing you to other authors. No matter how many books an author may have written, the capacity to surprise and astound is always there. It's one reason we are so loyal to authors over time. So sometimes the best club pick is a new book by a familiar author.

So it is with Mindy Mejia and her thriller [To Catch a Storm](#) (Grove \$28). I read a lot of books to get to this one, mostly because I did not get an Advance Reading Copy but waited to publication date for the book. But also because I must read all the club picks but for Hardboiled & Noir, which is Patrick, and Romance & Relationships, which is John. And my goal along with excellence in characters, plot, setting, and prose, is to find the magic of surprise.

First I dived into *To Catch a Storm*. Then I could say I agree with, for example this: "A lot of people may think of the Midwest as nothing but placid fields of corn and soybeans. Mindy Mejia's stunning new thriller will change that. Set during a deadly ice storm, Mejia's story rushes across the frozen Iowa landscape in a fury of fire and a hail of bullets...."—William Kent Krueger, who swears he could not put it down.

Iowa, and in winter, is fresh turf to me. Eve, a physicist whose focus is on weather, a science based approach, is the wife who, while in the air taking data, is amazed to see her husband Matt's Tesla on fire in an isolated patch of woods below her. Jonah is...well, weird, but also sucks you in. He's a private investigator, but not in the ordinary way. He's a psychic tormented by dreams of a girl, Celine, who is long missing. He's compulsive about finding her. His boyhood friend, Iowa City cop Matt, is exhausted by Jonah and ordered not to work with him. But... now that Eve's husband, university professor Matt, too is inexplicably missing, from his burning car, or anywhere, these three people come together. Where they go...well, you have to read the book to find out.

"Mejia delivers her best work yet in this propulsive, intelligent page-turner... This indelible thriller has series potential."—PW Starred Review. Series potential is also a criterion for a club pick.

Kirkus adds, "Mejia has created a tangled web seen through the eyes of Eve, Jonah, and Max that extends far beyond two missing people. The story ricochets between the laws of physics and psychic dreams as Eve and Jonah work together, with Max circling around them. Love, lies, deceit, and violence unfold as Eve ruthlessly looks for her husband over the course of a few days in an intense, adrenaline-fueled thriller."

I hope you will think favorably about our selection process and then join one of our books of the month clubs, or give a membership as a gift.

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. Here's another rave review about "the taciturn sheriff of a small town who stands alone against evil. In this case that small town is Lincoln County, Nevada and evil comes in the form of the murderer of an FBI agent whose retirement comes to a brutal end. Sheriff Porter Beck's investigation leads him to a Soviet KGB agent and,

of all places, the Manhattan Project. From that point, what first appeared to be a typical Walt Longmire-type tale quickly morphs into an edge-of-your-seat thriller where the pile of secrets is exceeded only by the pile of bodies. Speaking of old tropes, nothing works better than a hero punching up against all-powerful forces he has no business messing with. But Beck is up to the job and so is Borgos in crafting a wholly satisfying thriller that entertains on every page in spinning a taut, superbly structured tale.”—Jon Land.

Here’s a series start for Craig Johnson fans. And I remind you of Betty Webb’s [Desert Wind](#) (Poisoned Pen Press \$20 hardcover 1st printing Signed by Webb), which too roots a modern mystery in nuclear testing and the Downwinders. Recent legislation has expanded government assistance to them.

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 whenever 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.

Cañas, Isabel. [Vampires of El Norte](#) (Berkley \$28). Here is everything you could want in an interesting variation on the supernatural Western—cowboys and monsters and a woman filled with white-hot rage. In 1846 Mexico, a young healer named Nena hopes to dodge the deadly tide of war near the Texas border. The good news: She’s been reunited with her childhood friend Néstor, now a member of an auxiliary cavalry of ranchers and vaqueros. The bad news: Both are being hunted by a vicious and immortal entity that hunts at night.

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....

Cleeves, Ann. [The Raging Storm](#) (St Martins \$29). “Bestseller Cleeves’ outstanding third Matthew Venn novel following [The Long Call](#) (\$16.99) and [The Heron’s Cry](#) (\$17.99) sees the detective returning to a small village on the northern English coast to solve a pair of murders. In the middle of a storm one September afternoon, Jem Rosco—sailor, bon vivant, and local legend—enters a pub in his misty hometown of Greystone to await a visitor he won’t name. A few days later, a local rescue crew responding to an anonymous distress call discovers Rosco’s lifeless body in an anchored dinghy. Det. Insp. Matthew Venn and his bickering sergeants are called from Devon to investigate. Venn is less than enthusiastic: Greystone is home to the Brethren, a religious sect his family once belonged to, and he left unceremoniously several years earlier. As the detective and his officers dig into Rosco’s past, local magistrate Barty Parker—husband of Rosco’s first love, Nell—turns up dead as well. Then Nell herself disappears, and pressure mounts to identify the killer before the body count climbs. Cleeves crafts a devilishly intricate

mystery that will surprise even seasoned genre fans, and Venn remains an appealing lead every bit as memorable as the author's Vera Stanhope or Jimmy Perez. Cleeves' fans and newcomers alike will be hungry for the next entry."—*PW* Starred Review for our **September British Crime Book of the Month**. This time it is autographed by the author who visits us September 4 at 1:00 PM.

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.... Connolly will not be visiting The Pen for the US edition so buy this one.

DiVello, Sara. [Broadway Butterfly](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$28.99). Our **August Historical Fiction Book of the Month** is made all the more incredible by the fact that it's actually a true story. Also the first printing sold out by the time I ordered it so amazon publishing recalled enough of them from amazon's webstore to cover the club members and maybe 9 other buyers.

It follows the murder of Broadway real-life femme fatale Dot King in 1923. Though the primary setting might be the Great White Way, fictionalized newspaper reporter Julie Harpman battles those who want to bury the truth, as well as gender bias, in what becomes a valiant quest to find King's killer. As DiVello's stand-in, Harpman follows a sordid trail that winds its way far beyond the glitz and glamour of Broadway in the 1920's, unearthing not just a murder but also a conspiracy of epic proportions that stretches to the highest corridors of power.

Reminiscent of E. L. Doctorow's *Ragtime* in all the right ways, *Broadway Butterfly* is peppered with real-life denizens from this era, conjured either from DiVello's investigation, imagination or some combination of the two. It doesn't matter, since the story is so riveting and relentless in its sharp focus and period-perfect touches. DiVello has penned a blisteringly original, instant classic. 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.

NEW: Harvey, Kristy Woodson. [The Summer of Songbirds](#) (Gallery \$27.99). Nearly thirty years ago, in the wake of a personal tragedy, June Moore bought Camp Holly Springs and turned it into a thriving summer haven for girls. But now, June is in danger of losing the place she has sacrificed everything for, and begins to realize how much she has used the camp to avoid facing difficulties in her life. June's niece, Daphne, met her two best friends, Lanier and Mary Stuart, during a fateful summer at camp. They've all helped each other through hard things, from heartbreak and loss to substance abuse and unplanned pregnancy, and the three are inseparable even in their thirties. Yet now.... The Indie Next Pick for this summer Bestseller: "Three best friends are in the midst of life when their beloved summer camp faces closure due to severe financial hardships. This page-turning story is filled with friendship, humor, and romance—put this on your reading list!"

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: a 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](#) (Soho \$27.95 comes with a nifty Slough House Tote Bag). 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.

We have a few of the [Signed UK edition](#) (Baskerville \$42) left to order but it will not come with the Tote.

Hirahara, Naomi. [Evergreen](#) (Soho \$27.95 Aug. 16). The book titles refer to the street names where the family lived in the Japantown neighborhoods of Chicago (*Clark and Division*) and then back in Los Angeles (*Evergreen*). *Evergreen*, perfect for fans of Jacqueline Winspear or Sujata Massey, features a thoughtful, clever heroine trying to make the best of difficult circumstances, which include rampant racism and gender stereotyping.

In 1946, the Ito family and their fellow formerly incarcerated Japanese Americans are allowed to return to their West Coast homes after several years spent in horrific Relocation centers. The majority possess little more than the clothes on their backs, limited funds and reduced opportunities for gainful employment. It is a riveting, must-read, poignant work that deftly draws from actual real-life experiences that shattered well-established communities and created deep-seated mistrust of their government as well as some former friends and neighbors following their shameful imprisonment during the war years. Aki's parents had few possessions awaiting them upon their return to Los Angeles. Luckily Aki found a small, affordable home requiring minor maintenance for rent from an older Jewish landlord who had lost relatives in Concentration Camps and understood their situation. Aki was the first of the family to find gainful employment as an experienced nurse's aide in the overburdened Japanese Hospital in Boyle Heights. When an elderly Issei man named Haruki Watanabe was admitted with injuries that looked like signs of elder abuse, Aki is concerned his now unstable son Babe had administered a beating. Not long after this incident, Haruki is found in his apartment dead of gunshot wounds and possibly the victim of a robbery. Babe has gone to ground, thus becoming the obvious suspect. As Aki is drawn into investigating the crime, she learns Haruki was not the gentle old man she assumed him to be but had been involved in the numbers game racket run by mobsters. She puts herself in danger as she divides her time between work, family, reconnecting with her soldier husband and crime-solving. I recommend starting with Hirahara's multi-award winning novel [Clark and Division](#) (\$16.95), Japantown Mystery #1.

Hoffman, Alice. [The Invisible Hour](#) (Atria \$27.99 Aug. 20) infuses Hoffman's love of magical realism and history with the enduring magic of books. The Indie Next Pick: "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..." Our **August Notable New Fiction Book of the Month** is also about choices good and bad, parenting good and bad, found family good and bad. As a result of her grandparents' and her mother Ivy's choices or lack thereof, Mia Jacobs is born into and becomes trapped as a young woman in an oppressive western Massachusetts cult. Mia finds her escape in books—specifically, Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*—and in the discovery that time may be more fluid than anyone imagined. Here's your chance to fall in love with Hawthorne.

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.

Johnson, Craig. [The Longmire Defense](#) (Viking \$28 Sept. 4). Deep in the heart of the Wyoming countryside, Sheriff of Absaroka County, Walt Longmire, is called to a crime scene like few others that he has seen. This crime brings up issues that go back to Walt's grandfather's time in Wyoming, as the revelations he learns about his grandfather come back to offer clues and motives for Walt's investigation. Filled with back-country action, and the series' great cast of characters.

NEW REVIEW 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.

"Jónasson, a translator of Agatha Christie mysteries, teams up with Icelandic Prime Minister Jakobsdóttir for a thrilling Scandinavian noir inspired by a real-life cold case. In 1956, a 15-year-old housemaid named Lára vanishes from the only inhabited house on Videy, a small island off the coast of Reykjavik. Infrequent media inquiries into her disappearance prove fruitless until 1986, when Valur Róbertsson, an ambitious young journalist, sees Lára's case as a potentially career-making story. Just after Valur receives a compelling scoop, he's pushed in front of a bus and dies, and his grief-stricken younger sister, Sunna, takes over the investigation. "Jónasson has clearly learned a thing or two from Christie's trademark tight plotting and penetrating characterizations, and Jakobsdóttir's insider knowledge of Iceland's halls of power lend the proceedings an air of authenticity. Fans of Jo Nesbø's Harry Hole series will be rapt."—*PW*

The Unsigned US edition: [Reykjavik](#) (St Martins \$28) is out September 5.

Joy, David. [Those We Thought We Knew](#) (Putnam \$28). Patrick, making this the **August Hardboiled & Noir Book of the Month**, 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. Angie Kim takes a new approach vector to the missing-person mystery template and turns the standard mystery story into a philosophical inquiry concerning the nature of human communication.

“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. “A fantastic blend of suspense, family relationships, and medical drama makes this book [an Indie Next Pick] a winner. Mia is an utterly engaging narrator, and the plot twists will leave readers guessing until the final pages.”

Lapena, Shari. [Everyone Here is Lying](#) (Viking \$29 Aug 2). Canadian 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. A difficult child, and neuro-divergent issues, lie at the heart of the story.

NEW REVIEW: Lippman, Laura. [Prom Mom](#) (Morrow \$30). The title springs from the moniker given Amber Glass for supposedly killing her baby the night of her senior prom years ago. Putting the true facts aside, the story/legend was that it happened after her bad-boy boyfriend, Joe Simpson, dumped her. When Amber ends up returning home for the second chance she's long sought, she's sworn off Simpson who's now a successful but shady real estate tycoon. That is, until they reunite and Amber finds old love is hard to shake, even when the Hitchcockian tale siphons off a Patricia Highsmith brand of darkness. It would be too trite to call *Prom Mom* a morality tale, especially when it's a terrific character study that presents the flawed Amber, warts and all. We

like her because we see ourselves in her foibles and obsessions, learning the hard way that a person's nature is what it is.

NEW REVIEW MacDonald, Helen/Sin Blaché. [Prophet](#) (Grove \$29). A drug designed by the military weaponizes people's nostalgia in this sinuous and transfixing collaboration. After an American roadside diner magically appears outside of a U.S. air base in England, the two operatives dispatched to investigate—former MI6 agent Sunil Rao and American intelligence officer Adam Rubenstein—trace its likely origins to Lunastus-Dainsleif, a lab in Aurora, Colorado, that runs the military-funded Eos Prophet program. Prophet is a wildly unpredictable pharmacologic agent that induces material approximations of fond memories—referred to as Eos Prophet Generated Objects, or EPGOs—but at a grievous cost for the user: a psychic break, and sometimes death. Rao and Rubenstein prove immune to the side effects, which makes them the perfect agents to study the drug. The novel's denouement, in which Rao, Rubenstein, and their ops team navigate a landscape booby-trapped with rogue EPGOs to rescue Lunastus's CEO, is wildly surreal with occasional flashes of dark humor.... The authors' most irresistible achievement, though, is their odd-couple pairing of the Dionysian Rao with the fastidious Rubenstein, who bicker and banter contentiously despite their fondness for each other. The well-matched authors make good on their audacious premise.

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). This fascinating book by Mina has been reviewed in nearly every important literary publication. Patrick loves it too.

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. It’s a perilous journey.

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). If you loved Mrs. Pollifax’s spy adventures by Dorothy Gillman or Deanna Raybourn’s fabulous [Killers of a Certain Age](#) (\$17), then recent widow Mrs. Loretta Plansky is SO for you. Thea 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. After Norm died, Mrs. Plansky, hip replaced, decided to downsize. But her adult children seek to expand their lifestyles. Then, 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—and she gives him what he asks for without question. Then she learns 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 heads for Romania to recover what’s hers. She’s unstoppable. “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.” One perfect for our **August Cozy Crimes Book of the Month** although, frankly, it’s a stretch to call this a Cozy.

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 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 has created 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.

Jim says of it, “It’s the most cataclysmic, apocalyptic novel I’ve ever written—or in other words, the perfect summer beach read. It’s a sprawling high-seas adventure—taking place deep underwater and across fiery oceans. There are volcanic eruptions, devastating tsunamis, and wild gun battles—and that’s only in the first couple chapters. Where will this novel take you? What questions will it answer? I want to tell you, but why ruin the fun and surprises? All I’ll say: *Hold tight for the wildest Sigma adventure of all time.*”

On topic the *NYTBR* goes with [The Underworld](#) (Knopf \$32) by Susan Casey, who has written extensively about the sea, talking about her research excursions to the farthest reaches of the ocean and why we’ve paid so little attention to the sea floor. Contrary to what many may believe, this is not a barren, lifeless environment (though it is awfully exigent). Take the hadal snailfish, the deepest fish in the world. Casey says. “They look like they’re just having the time of their lives.” BUT my recommendation is to queue up the Smithsonian Channel (use HULU), and become enthralled by David Attenborough’s magnificent exploration of the *Great Barrier Reef*. This is what Rollins’ characters would have seen at upper ocean levels. And I bet most of us would react like Sir David at his first dive in the submersible.

NEW: Runyan, Aimie K. [A Bakery in Paris](#) (Berkley \$18.99). John reviews the local author who has written our **August Romance & Relationships Book of the Month**: Runyan deftly deploys a dual timeline plot to convey the fate and fortunes of two different generations of women from the same French family. In 1870s Paris, Lisette Vigneau finds herself rebelling against the arranged marriage her parents have planned for her. But

is throwing her lot in with revolutionary National Guardsman Theodore Fournier the right solution to her problem? In post World War II Paris, Micheline Chartier is doing everything she can to keep herself and her two younger sisters together as a family after their mother disappeared one day during the war. When the restaurant owners below their apartment move out, can the solution to Micheline's financial woes come in the form of a bakery? Fascinating details about the Franco-Prussian War and the siege of Paris add color to the storyline as do some intriguing old recipes for classic French baked goods.

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. They are only for members.** Simon will join us for a live event on September 7 when we will have signed copies for everyone else. 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, despite 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!

The Indie Next Pick adds: "I adored this twisty thriller set in the beauty of the marshlands of California. A grandmother, mother, and daughter try to solve a murder while also healing their troubled relationships."

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.**

Walker, Martin. [A Chateau Under Siege](#) (Knopf \$28 **SIGNED HERE NOVEMBER 13**). Why? Because the long awaited [Bruno's Cookbook](#) (Knopf \$40) finally publishes this November and so Martin is coming to us to sign both books. To secure a first printing of *Chateau* please order it now. Here's the *NY Times* review for *Chateau* (by a new reader of the Brunos who unpacks its charms):

"There's a mildly cantankerous protagonist along the lines of Andrea Camilleri's Inspector Montalbano or Donna Leon's Commissario Brunetti. There's a rustic village, St. Denis, where "the green of the grass and the honey colored stone of the houses against the clear blue sky" recall an Impressionist painting, and where shenanigans major and minor (and murder certainly counts as major) abound. There are mouthwatering descriptions of food — veal stews, plum tarts, fresh croissants with apricot jam (perhaps it's unsurprising that Walker also co-authored a cookbook of Bruno's favorite recipes with his wife, Julia). The slow, relaxed pace feels an awful lot like a vacation to the south of France. But there's also some unexpected steel, in keeping with Walker's prior career as a journalist. The murder victim was playing the hero in a re-enactment of the Hundred Years' War, and tracing his last steps requires Bruno to probe intelligence operations, emerging technologies, and rivalries within families and between countries." The crime reviewer acknowledges "the easy camaraderie and lush descriptions." This is book 16—think of all this reviewer's missed up to now. We have all 16 books and reading right through the [Bruno Chief of Police series](#) is truly a treat. A full set is not only binge worthy but makes a welcome gift to any reader.

UNSIGNED EVENT BOOKS

Norton, Graham. [Forever Home](#) (Harper \$29.99). "English teacher Carol Crotchie loses her husband to a French teacher, and years pass before she falls in love again. No one understands what she sees in Declan Barry, an older man whose wife went missing years before. When the never-divorced Declan is later diagnosed with early-onset Alzheimer's, his children, Killian and Sally, move him into a care home and then callously kick unemployed, 48-year-old Carol out of the lovely house she and Declan shared and put it on the market." There is a body and a cover up as well as secrets revealed and characters plumbed, not to their advantage, but Norton writes with what I think of as an Irish sensibility and tolerance, and with humor. Kirkus calls it, "Perfect for fans of Maeve Binchy's Ireland-set works of fiction and Alexander McCall Smith's quirky, character-driven comic

novels.” Norton is a celebrated Irish comedian and television host and well worth watching on our August 24 1:00 PM PDT zoom event.

✦ Pearce, AJ. [Mrs. Porter Calling](#) (Scribner \$28). London, 1943. Young Emmy Lake is doing her part in the war effort by spearheading the hugely popular “Yours Cheerfully” advice column in *Woman’s Friend* magazine. The postbags are full, Emmy’s guidance offers much needed support to her readers, and *Woman’s Friend* is thriving, cheered on by her best friends Bunty and Thelma, and resolute in the absence of her husband who is fighting in the army. But their world is turned upside down when glamorous socialite, the Honorable Cressida Porter, becomes the new publisher of the magazine, and wants to change everything about it. Aided by Mrs. Pye, a Paris-obsessed fashion editor with delusions of grandeur, and Small Winston, the grumpiest dog in London, Mrs. Porter fills the pages with expensive clothes and frivolous articles about her friends. Worst of all, she announces that she is cutting the advice column and leaving the readers to fend for themselves. Her vision for the publication’s future is dreadful and Emmy is determined to fight back.

“Pearce tells her story in Emmy’s voice, with liberal amounts of pluck, compassion, and the day-to-day details of wartime life in London. On top of her professional challenges, Emmy juggles volunteer shifts at the local fire station. She shares a flat with her best friend, Bunty, and the two welcome their friend Thelma and her three children as new neighbors. Emmy’s new husband, Charles, is off fighting in the war, and Bunty continues her recovery from a serious injury. Although Pearce’s (and Emmy’s) narrative voice is resolutely optimistic, the characters are not immune from the small privations and the larger tragedies of war. Pearce skillfully balances the big issues with daily joys, like a new pet guinea pig or Emmy’s charming banter with her colleagues. For readers who love plucky heroines or World War II fiction—or who just need encouragement to keep going in tough times.”

Sutanto, Jesse Q. [I’m Not Done With You Yet](#) (Berkley \$27). When half-white, half-Chinese American Jane Morgan—who happily self-identifies as a sociopath—enters Oxford’s creative writing program, she feels out of place, unsure of her talent and how to fit in with the school’s insular, lily-white student body. Her transition is eased by Thalia Ashcroft, a gifted and popular peer who takes Jane under her wing. Jane, however, is jealous of anyone else interested in Thalia, and their time together ends with an unspecified act of violence. Nine years later, Jane is unhappily married in San Francisco, with two published but unsuccessful novels. The past comes knocking when she reads one morning that Thalia, whom she hasn’t heard from in years, has made the *New York Times* bestseller list with her debut novel—the plot of which suggests it was inspired by the pair’s relationship. After some social media sleuthing, Jane flies cross-country to reconnect with Thalia at a genre convention in New York City, opening old wounds and inflicting new ones in the process. Even readers anticipating some of the twists Sutanto lines up will be entertained by Jane’s ice-cold narration. This is wickedly enjoyable....

A NEW CLASSIC CRIME

Brand, Christianna. [Death of Jezebel](#) (Poisoned Pen \$14.95). Seven years after Johnny Wise killed himself upon discovering his fiancée, Perpetua Kirk, in a compromising position with actor

Earl Anderson, the surviving parties are reunited for a medieval stage pageant managed by sugar daddy Edgar Port that features a castle, knights in armor, a damsel in distress, and more violent death, all brought to you by this new British Library Crime Classic.

And previously mentioned:

Lewis, Lange. [The Birthday Murder](#) (American Mystery Classics \$15.95). I found a moment to read this reissue of a real gem, funny, enjoyably satirical, and definitely for those who enjoy mysteries where writers may be up to no good. Here we get a novelist and her husband, a B-movie director, and thus vintage Hollywood, which is to say about 1945. Living the ideal literary life in the Hollywood Hills, the husband lands the job of producing his wife’s new novel for an upcoming film. And then he is found murdered—on her birthday. And by poisoning, as found in one of her books. This is truly fun.

END OF SUMMER READING

Cornwall, Lecia. [That Summer in Berlin](#) (\$17). An English debutante who agrees to spy for her country during the 1936 Berlin Olympics anchors a tense and thrilling read that sweeps you from castles and country estates to the glittering enticements of high society in Nazi Germany. Gripping action, political intrigue, and conflicted relationships go with a vivid depiction of the stunning beauty of Germany and the contrasting horror of Hitler’s regime.

✦ Hall, Emylia. [The Shell House Detectives](#) (\$16.99). This beautifully written cozy coastal mystery packs a real punch, plus if you yearn for a Cornish summer, Hall dishes it up in this series start.

Kelley, Pamela. [The Bookshop by the Bay](#) (St Martins \$17). Mary Kay Andrews readers will enjoy reading about Jess who loves her work as a high-profile lawyer in Charleston. But when her marriage implodes, she retreats to her childhood home on Cape Cod with her thirty-year-old daughter, Caitlin, hoping to regroup with her longtime best friend, Alison. And Alison whose career has taken a hit after twenty years as an editor for the magazine *Cape Cod Living*. But when she learns her beloved bookstore on the Cape is looking for new ownership, a new dream starts to form.... “A wonderful multi-generational story about mothers, daughters, and friendship set in a quaint seaside town on Cape Cod. If you love talk of bookstores, delicious food and coffee shops, this one is for you!” —Rachel Hanna.

Kraus, Daniel. [Whalefall](#) (MTV Books \$27.99). *The Martian* meets *127 Hours* in this “powerfully humane” (Owen King, *New York Times* bestselling author) and scientifically accurate thriller about a scuba diver who’s been swallowed by an eighty-foot, sixty-ton sperm whale and has only one hour to escape before his oxygen runs out. Spare a thought for Jay Gardiner, the teenage hero of Daniel Kraus’s new novel,” who is certainly *not* having the time of his life. Jay is grieving his estranged father, and challenges himself to retrieve his remains from the bottom of the sea. And that’s all before he gets hoovered up by a 60-ton whale. Library Reads makes this one of its Top Ten August recommends: “This masterfully researched thriller weaves the story of a young diver’s tumultuous relationship with his father with the primal terrors of the deep sea. A heart-pounding tale of humanity, science, and survival you won’t soon forget.”

Orsted, Brad. [Through the Wilderness: My Journey of Redemption and Healing in the American Wild](#) (St. Martin's \$29) chronicles a restorative stay at Yellowstone National Park.

Rosen, Renee. [Park Avenue Summer](#) (Penguin \$17). It's 1965 and *Cosmopolitan* magazine's brazen new editor in chief—Helen Gurley Brown—shocks America and saves a dying publication by daring to talk to women about all things off-limits... “*Mad Men* meets *The Devil Wears Prada*, which might as well be saying ‘put me in your cart immediately.’”—PopSugar.

Storey, Kate. [White House by the Sea](#) (Scribner \$30), a history of the Kennedys at Hyannis Port, has been named one of *Elle Magazine*'s Most Anticipated Books of Summer, and *Town & Country*'s #1 Best Book of the Summer. The triumphs and tragedies of this American family feel so ancient Greek mythos to me, and still fascinate.

MORE AUGUST COZY CRIMES

Burdette, Lucy. [A Clue in the Crumbs](#) (Crooked Lane \$29.99). Key West food critic Hayley Snow and her pal Miss Gloria welcome the Booth sisters, aka the Scottish Scone Sisters, who have arrived to host *The UK Bakes!—Key West Edition* (cooking shows, so popular). The day the sisters arrive, their host B&B gets torched. The inn owner's wife, considered a talented local baker, is one of the three local contestants in the contest beginning the next day. And now she's a person of interest in the fire. Next, her husband's body is discovered by a dog walker... and the weapon points to the two Scots.....

Danvers, Holly. [Read to Death at the Lakeside Library](#) (Crooked Lane \$29.99). Tourists flock back to the Northwoods and travel to Lofty Pines, Wisconsin. For Rain Wilmot, owner of the Lakeside Library, this is the perfect opportunity to bring back her mother's summer book club. But the summer sun starts to really heat up when one of the club's members, Lily Redlin, is found dead in her own home not long after the first meeting. Alongside her sidekick and neighbor Julia Reynolds and the charming Jace Lowe, Rain discovers that the murder is seemingly inspired by the book the club recently discussed Agatha Christie's classic mystery novel *Sparkling Cyanide*. The deeper Rain dives into the story, the more confusing and complicated the plot becomes....

✦ Hall, Emylia. [The Shell House Detectives](#) (\$16.99). This beautifully written cozy coastal mystery packs a real punch, plus if you yearn for a Cornish summer, Hall dishes it up in this series start.

Manning, Kirsty. [The Paris Mystery](#) (Knopf \$17). A debut cozy from historical fiction author Manning takes you to 1938 Paris. See More Large Paperbacks below for a rave review.

Waddell, Mark. [The Body in the Back Garden](#) (Crooked Lane \$29.99). The Cozy is branching out into the quozzy. And here into Vancouver Island which provides a beautiful setting. “A quaint coastal island setting; a whip-smart writer-turned-amateur detective; a cozy cast of characters and lots of local flavor. *The Body in the Back Garden* is like a modern-day *Murder, She Wrote*—only set in Canada, and with a queer millennial man in the Jessica Fletcher starring role. Throw in his handsome Mounted Policeman love interest (Red Serge tunic, midnight-blue jodhpurs? Yes, please!) and this humorous whodunnit keeps readers turning/scrolling those pages. A welcome addition to the ‘quozzy’ mystery genre.” —Frank Anthony Polito

MORE AUGUST HARDCOVERS

Ackerman, Jennifer. [What an Owl Knows](#) (Penguin \$30). There are some 260 species of owls spread across every continent except Antarctica, and in this fascinating book, Ackerman explains why the birds are both naturally wondrous and culturally.

Allen, Amanda. [Death Comes to Santa Fe](#) (Severn \$21.99). Ordered Upon Request. It's the week of Fiesta in Santa Fe and former New York darling turned amateur sleuth Madeline Vaughn-Alwin is looking forward to enjoying the celebrations. But as ‘Old Man Gloom’ Zozobra goes up in flames, so too do Maddie's hopes for a carefree life.... Human remains are found in the dying embers of Zozobra, and then Maddie and her dashing beau Dr. David Cole find a body washed up in the arroyo at the edge of town.

Beukes, Lauren. [Bridge](#) (LittleBrown \$29). Growing up, Bridget Kittinger and her neuroscientist mother Jo played a game of other worlds and other selves — it was a game, right? But her mother's growing obsession with the “dreamworm,” a mythical object that opens portals to alternate realities, eventually drove the pair apart. Now Jo is dead, and Bridget is left to pick up the pieces. But as she clears out her mom's place, she actually finds it — the dreamworm — *and it works*. Could her mother still be alive somewhere in another dimension? Bridget is prepared to find out, but others are on the hunt for the dreamworm, and they're willing to do whatever it takes to get their hands on it. Thrust into a life-or-death chase, Bridget races across multiple dimensions to reconnect with her mother, find her true self, and escape her pursuers.

Boyd, William. [The Romantic](#) (Knopf \$28). Wow. Panned in the *WSJ*, Starred elsewhere, unread by me as again, no ARC was delivered. Clearly this is not an easy book. The Starred Review: “Cast as a true story “discovered” by Boyd, this raucous picaresque chronicles an Englishman's search for fulfillment and his encounters with prominent historical figures. Cashel Greville Ross is raised by an aunt, his parents having drowned shortly after his birth in 1799. He joins the British army as a young man, serves as a drummer at Waterloo, and travels the globe in search of his fortune. In Pisa, he meets Mary Shelley, who introduces him to her poet husband, Percy, and the couple's good friend Lord Byron. In Africa, he races Richard Francis Burton and John Speke to locate the headwaters of the Nile. After he's almost court-martialed for disobeying orders in Ceylon, Cashel does a stint in debtor's prison in England, founds a brewery in America, and becomes an accidental smuggler of Greek antiquities in Trieste. He also falls in love with numerous beautiful women.... Whether in describing military life on the far-flung frontiers of the British Empire, detailing the financial perils of 19th-century publishing, or backgrounding Cashel's adventure as Nicaraguan consul to Trieste, this inventively charts the highs and lows of a life extravagantly lived.”

Carter, Ally. [The Blonde Identity](#) (Avon \$30) serves up an irresistible cocktail of danger and passion in YA author Carter's un-put-downable adult debut. A woman wakes up on an icy Paris sidewalk with no memory of who she is and bad guys closing in. According to her enemies, she's a rogue CIA operative named Alex who stole a critical flash drive from a Russian mobster and now she's on the run for her life. Run she does—right into

the arms of sexy spy Jake Sawyer, who rescues her from her myriad pursuers and informs her that she's really Alex's innocent identical twin sister, Zoe. With a Russian gangster and a shady CIA agent hot on their heels, Sawyer and Zoe must jump on and off trains, boats, and bridges to stay alive—and locate the real Alex. Carter ratchets up the danger—and the sexual tension—at every turn, throwing plenty of red herrings across the trail and keeping readers guessing who to trust. Zoe's sense of humor in the face of danger adds levity, and readers will fall hard for gallant Sawyer. Carter also expertly teases a sequel about Alex, whetting appetites for the next installment.

Clarke, Lucy. [The Hike](#) (Penguin \$28) “transports you to the Norwegian wilderness where a group of female friends are pushed to their absolute limits and beyond. I couldn't stop turning the pages! A brilliant exploration of female friendship and all that it entails. A must-read for 2023.” —Sarah Pearse

Davis, Megan. [The Messenger](#) (Pegasus \$27.95). A young Parisian named Alex Giraud makes the mistake of his life. Stifled at home, mocked at school, and rebellious by nature, he plans a robbery with his friend Sami, and it goes very, very wrong. The victim dies. It is his father. But he was alive when they ran away. Arrested anyway, convicted, and imprisoned, Alex is now out on parole seven and a half years later, and he has a single mission: to find the real killer. But he has no idea what he's getting himself into. Alex's father, Eddy, was a journalist, investigating organized crime and corruption, and Alex is sure the answer must lie there, but as he talks to Eddy's friends, colleagues, and lovers and digs into Eddy's notebooks, the deeper Alex goes, the murkier it gets. Defensive forts ringing Paris play a role. “Each of the forts has a fascinating and often terrible more recent history, some of which is linked to French collaboration in WWII. Also some of the country's seamier history during the Cold War.... Part of the inspiration for Eddy and the other journalists herein comes from the Mitrokhin Archive which was a cache of top-level KGB documents smuggled out of Russia in 1992 by Vasili Mitrokhin, a KGB archivist.”

Dees, Cindy. [Second Shot](#) (Kensington \$27). Former spy-turned-author Dees fashions a series debut that stands out from the get-go, thanks to its hero. Helen Warwick isn't your typical genre assassin. To begin with, she's a woman and on top of that she's 53 years old, neither of which you see very often. Her first adventure rises above the field not for her typically grudging return to service at the bequest of her former employers, but because she finds herself in a war between dueling serial killers. When one of them sets their sights on her, Helen gets to practice her deadly skills anew, her reluctant embrace of that quickly morphing into accepting the person she's been hiding in the closet with her winter coats. *Second Shot* is as daring in its approach as it is flawless in its execution (no pun intended!). Helen is like the retired gunfighter forced to don her guns one last time, only to leave them strapped on once the smoke has cleared.

☒ Donoghue, Emma. [Learned By Heart](#) (LittleBrown \$28) story inspired by Eliza Raine, who was written about in Anne Lister's coded diaries about her lesbian love life. At the beginning of the 19th century at a chilly boarding school in Yorkshire, 14-year-olds Eliza and Anne share a garret near the servants' quarters. Born in India to an Indian mother and an East India Company man, Eliza has been sent to England for “finishing” by her father,

who is subsequently lost at sea, leaving her and her sister with a small fortune and in the care of guardians. Anne is vibrant, defiant, and smarter than most of the other “Middles” in their class, and she soon draws the observant but reserved Eliza into her orbit. In Anne's presence, Eliza grows in confidence and the two become inseparable as their friendship turns sexual. The bonds that form between the two girls ultimately lead to Eliza's tragic undoing, and she ends up in a mental asylum. Donoghue makes good use of her choice to delve into Eliza's perspective rather than Anne's by exploring the steep cost for her protagonist of tethering herself to a rebel.

Duncan, David James. [Sun House](#) (LittleBrown \$35). I can't even begin to discuss this huge novel that has been 31 years in the writing. Instead I direct you to this long, lavish, loving review in the [Washington Post](#) that begins “the third novel by David James Duncan, author of ‘The River Why’ and ‘The Brothers K,’ is a spiritual epic about seekers who end up living on a large commune in western Montana. The novels — with their wisdom-seeking, devotion to nature, vibrant family antics, old-fashioned storytelling, and enthusiastic use of vernacular, puns, exclamations and italics — had fervent fans, and fit on a shelf with a motley, crowd-pleasing, very American crew that includes Mark Twain, Edward Abbey, Norman Maclean and John Irving. (For the reason of energetic typography, you might throw in Tom Wolfe, too.) They left his readers wanting more.”

Godfrey, Bradleigh. [The Followers](#) (Blackstone \$26.99). The author of 2022 First Mystery Book of the Month [Imposter](#) (\$16.99), a tense thriller involving a traumatic brain injury to one of two sisters, returns with a cat-and-mouse page-turner that will have you reconsidering your own social media footprint. When a popular influencer posts a photo with her brand new husband, she has no idea of his hidden past, or the dangers her post will bring to their doorstep. A chilling and whip-smart look at the dark side of the digital world.

Goldin, Megan. [Dark Corners](#) (St Martins \$29). Here's another thriller drawing upon the world of influencers and the obsession with true crime podcasts. Terence Bailey is about to be released from prison for breaking and entering, though investigators have long suspected him in the murders of six women. As his release date approaches, Bailey gets a surprise visit from Maddison Logan, a hot, young influencer with a huge social media following. Hours later, Maddison disappears, and police suspect she's been kidnapped—or worse. Is Maddison's disappearance connected to her visit to Bailey? And why was she visiting him in the first place? But who is Maddison? Using a fake Instagram account, Rachel goes undercover to BuzzCon, a popular influencer conference, where she discovers a world of fierce rivalry that may have turned lethal. When police find the body of a woman with a tattoo of a snake eating its tail—identical to a tattoo Rachel had seen on Bailey's hand—the FBI must consider a chilling possibility: Bailey has an accomplice on the outside and a dangerous obsession with influencers, including Rachel Krall.

Hecht, Daniel. [The Body Below](#) (Blackstone \$27.99). A complex, improbable, but gripping novel unfolds here. Once a superstar investigative reporter, disgraced by misconduct, Conn returned to his Vermont hometown to put his life back together. Now, after ten years covering local news, he knows his community like

nobody else. When he kicks a submerged object while swimming—something with the density and resilience of human flesh—he wonders if it’s connected to an unsolved murder in a nearby town. Detective Marlene Selanski heads up the State Police investigation. She considers Conn a possible suspect, and when the case turns personal for him, she warns him against “vigilante research” that could interfere with her investigation. Defying Selanski, Conn and his fiancée, Celine Gabrielli, combine their talents—his decades of journalistic research, her PhD in psychology, and a wealth of knowledge about the traditional ways of Vermont’s old villages—to seek answers on their own. I have not confirmed if this is the Daniel Hecht of such good thrillers of years ago as *Skull Session*.

Jaworowski, Ken. [Small Town Sins](#) (Holt \$27.99) is a compelling portrait of a community, told through the eyes of three desperate people whose lives go off the rails. Jaworowski has given the reader both a page-turning noir thriller and a rich, character-driven tragedy of hard lives and bad choices. A fierce and propulsive book!” —Dan Chaon. “Imagine my delight at this wonderful little book, this riotous cross-section of John Irving and Jim Thompson. These characters breathe the same air other people breathe, they work jobs like real people do. An addictive read from its first page, *Small Town Sins* pays the reader’s attention back with love.—John Darnielle. I have yet to read this debut and, thinking Lehane’s *Mystic River* too, will pass it to Patrick for more.

✎ Jones, Sandie. [The Trade Off](#) (St Martins \$29). A #MeToo era thriller. “Interviewing for a job at the powerful tabloid *The Globe* is a dream come true for Jess Townsend; she’s miles away from the local paper where she cut her journalistic teeth. After one uncomfortable moment with Max Forsythe, the editor, she learns that he’s going to hire her because she seems to have a moral compass, and Max is looking to steer the paper out of its nasty-gossip-infested waters into the world of more serious journalism. This is news, however, to Stella Thorne, the deputy editor who ruthlessly sets up stings to catch celebrities *in flagrante delicto*, and to the owner, Peter Kingsley, who just wants the money to keep rolling in. When Jess is forced to help set up a young actress in a fake drug bust, she can hardly live with herself; then, a hot reality TV star becomes the target of the paper, and a false story about her having an affair leads to her death by suicide. As Jess begins to reckon with this tragedy and her own role in it, she stumbles onto a much bigger story.... Jones unapologetically stares down the ugliness of the modern media and its coldblooded exploitation of celebrities to benefit those truly in power, as well as the rampages of fake news.” —*Kirkus Reviews*

Kakimoto, Megan Kamalei. [Every Drop Is a Man’s Nightmare](#) (Bloomsbury \$27.99). “Kakimoto interweaves themes of sexual desire and fertility with Hawaiian mythology in her unflinching debut collection. In the title story, 12-year-old Sadie transports pork leftovers from a party via the Pali Highway, risking the wrath of Kamapua‘a, the Hawaiian fire goddess Pele’s ex-lover, who is half man, half pig and curses anyone bringing pork over the old Pali road. Sadie’s transgression may have incurred a lifetime of bad luck, beginning when her family’s car hits a wild boar. Years later, the injured pig mysteriously replaces Sadie’s baby in the child’s bassinet. “Hotel Molokai” recalls the time the 13-year-old narrator’s grandmother brought her to visit family on the island and make a pilgrimage to a sacred rock imbued with

powerful fertility magic....Marked by a wry sense of humor and an unerring touch for the surreal, Kakimoto’s stories add up to a powerful exploration of gender, class, race, colonialism, and domestic violence. This eloquent outing marks Kakimoto as a writer to watch.” —*PW* Starred Review

Kingfisher, T. [Thornhedge](#) (Tor \$19.99). “Why was Sleeping Beauty trapped so thoroughly in her castle? That’s the question asked in Kingfisher’s inside-out version of the classic fairy tale, told through the eyes of Toadling, the almost-fairy with the too-kindly heart trapped by a spell gone wrong. She isn’t the princess, although she might have been. Toadling is the fairy “godmother” tasked with keeping a changeling “princess” from doing any more harm than she already has. When a kindly would-be knight finally arrives to solve the mystery, Toadling has to decide whether to trust in his seeming goodness or maintain the protections that have trapped her every bit as much as the beautiful but deadly princess within. This marvelously fractured fairy tale takes a well-known and well-loved story and turns it completely around, into a story about love not being enough, duty not being sufficient, and love and joy being found in the unlikeliest of people and places.” —*LJ* Starred Review

Kuhn, Eleanor. [On the Horns of Death](#) (Severn \$31.99). Historical mystery takes us to Crete, circa 1460 BC. Martis is a fifteen-year-old girl whose ambition in life is to be a “bull-leaper,” part of the sacred religious rites to honor “The Goddess.” An honored position, but very dangerous, as you can imagine. While she is preparing to do this, her sister Arge is preparing to get married. Unfortunately, she dies. And her younger sister Martis is tasked by the High Priestess (and the demanding Shade of the poisoned sister; there’s a touch of the supernatural here) to find her murderer. This may be cozier than you’d expect in an historical. I’ve been to visit Knossos, Sir Arthur Evans’ dig on Crete where he recreated a vision of King Minos’ palace, so I look forward to this. For my money the best portrait of this ancient Mediterranean civilization lies in *The King Must Die* and *The Bull from the Sea* by the brilliant author Mary Renault.

Mackie, Patrick. [Mozart in Motion](#) (Farrar Strauss \$30). In this erudite, ambitious and elegantly written book, a British poet presents Mozart as a kinetically restless, socially observant composer constantly in dialogue with his times. Mackie’s assertions about Mozart’s identification with the Enlightenment are intriguing and insightful. You don’t have to be a music lover to enjoy this delightful book.

Moehling, Joshua. [Where the Dead Sleep](#) (Sourcebooks \$27.99) takes you back to Sandy Lake, Minnesota, as acting sheriff Ben Packard investigates the murder of a local. The *NY Times* find this to be “a well-paced whodunit that doubles as an evocation of Minnesota small-town life in all of its messy, dysfunctional glory. Nothing like a home invasion and a murder to reveal all sides. The victim of the invasion is Bill Sandersen, and at first it seems like anyone could have killed him — he was a gambler, a womanizer, a man who didn’t always pay his debts. The number of suspects keeps rising as each new, sordid detail emerges. Packard grapples with what he can never know about the town’s secrets — and whether he even wants to know. Packard is an appealing character to keep company with. His ambivalence about whether he wants to run for election as sheriff — and disrupt his privacy in a place that’s less than hospitable to queer life — is palpable

and real. The solution to the mystery is a surprise, but the real suspense emerges as Packard figures himself out, defying expectations in quiet, sometimes devastating ways.” Meet Ben first in [And There He Kept Her](#) (\$17.99).

Nugent, Liz. [Strange Sally Diamond](#) (Gallery \$27.99). This new novel by Nugent is not for the faint hearted. “Ruthlessly bullied as a child in Ireland, Sally has lived a quiet life with her parents, rarely venturing outside. When her widower father dies just before her 44th birthday, Sally incinerates his body with the garbage, thinking she’s honoring his wishes to “put him out with the trash.” Instead, the act draws outrage from neighbors, authorities, and the media, suddenly thrusting the reclusive Sally into an unwelcome spotlight. She’s always known that she was adopted, but slowly—with the aid of letters her ‘father’ left behind, plus a series of messages from a mysterious stranger who may hail from Sally’s blurry past—she comes to know the precise horrors of her backstory. Can she overcome them and learn to navigate a world she barely understands? Nugent fashions an unforgettable protagonist in Sally, and never loses sight of her characters’ fundamental humanity, even as she piles on twists and steers the narrative into exceptional darkness. Inventive, addictive, and bold...”—*PW*, and oddly, sympathetic.

Pekkanen, Sarah. [Gone Tonight](#) (St Martins \$29). Pekkanen, one half of the writing team known as Greer Henricks, presents her own cat and mouse domestic thriller. Catherine Sterling’s personal and professional worlds are beginning to collide: she’s a nurse who cares for patients with Alzheimer’s disease, and her mother is starting to show classic symptoms. The two live together, making the forgetfulness hard to miss, with Ruth Sterling looking very confused when recent events are discussed and forgetting words. Ruth is reluctant to get any scans that could confirm the likely diagnosis—her mother died of Alzheimer’s, she says, and she knows what’s ahead. But then Catherine makes a discovery that causes her to doubt that her mother’s problems are real. As the point of view shifts between the two women, readers get Ruth’s first-person point of view; her odd behavior is hiding an explosive past that Catherine knows nothing about.

Rose, Karen. [Beneath Dark Waters](#) (Berkley \$28). Public prosecutor J.P. “Kaj” Cardozo has only lived in New Orleans for six months, and he’s already working on a high-profile celebrity sexual assault case that’s made headlines all over the country. But when his son becomes the target of a kidnapping attempt as a threat to Kaj, he is desperate to keep him safe and turns to a private investigative firm famous for their protection services. A veteran Marine, Val Sorensen is glad to have found a new career with Broussard Investigations. Her latest assignment as the bodyguard to ten-year-old Elijah Cardozo reminds her why. But when the high-stakes investigation reveals an explosive network of crime through a revived drug gang, lingering deep-seated corruption in the NOPD, and a group of murderers-for-hire targeting Kaj, Elijah, and his star client, they’re all left scrambling for safety.

Schumacher, Julie. [The English Experience](#) (Knopf \$27). Schumacher’s droll conclusion to her Fitger trilogy finds the blundering American professor abroad and out of his element. Jason Fitger, the curmudgeonly chair of Payne University’s English department, is tasked with teaching the school’s

Experience: England class in London over winter break. Though his ex-wife, Janet Matthias, a law school administrator at Payne, is surprised by the assignment, remembering Fitger to be a bad traveler, he’s soon off on the three-week excursion with 11 undergrads. Excerpts of their writing assignments are mixed into the narrative, including one in which the students must find their own way to the British Museum and write about an object there. One student takes unauthorized side trips to mainland Europe, to Fitger’s consternation. Adding to his worries is Janet’s request to put him as a reference on a job application, since he still loves her and doesn’t want her to leave Payne. Along the way, Schumacher continues the series’ epistolary theme with student essays about experiences ranging from the consumption of a Scotch egg to equally unsavory field trips to Oxford, Stonehenge, and Bath.

Smirnoff, Karin. [The Girl in the Eagle’s Talons](#) (Knopf \$29) reunites investigative reporter Mikael Blomkvist and punk computer hacker Lisbeth Salander in the small town of Gasskas in northern Sweden. Blomkvist is there to attend his daughter’s wedding to Henry Salo, the town’s head commissioner, while Lisbeth has come to assume temporary custody of her 13-year-old niece, whose mother has mysteriously disappeared with a hard drive containing \$400 million in Bitcoin. Marcus Branco, the sadistic founder of a secretive energy firm intent on acquiring land in Gasskas, sends his henchmen to disrupt the wedding and kidnap Blomkvist’s grandson as leverage against Salo. The boy ends up in the clutches of a serial killer, forcing Blomkvist and Salander to team up once again, in hopes of saving his life. Smirnoff follows Stieg Larsson and David Lagercrantz as the series’ third author. Lisbeth Salander is back. She’s cold, lethal, and remorseless—and that’s on her good days.

Spillane, Mickey. [Dig Two Graves](#) (Titan \$25.95). Winter 1964. After a hit-and-run accident nearly kills her mother, Mike Hammer’s partner (both in life and the PI business), Velda Sterling, learns her father is not who she thought he is. Seeking to uncover her true, troubling heritage, Velda and Mike travel to Phoenix, Arizona—and sunny Dreamland Park, where retired law enforcement officers protect and corral notorious criminals held under Witness Protection. Mike and Velda find themselves swept up in escalating violence, fueled by the missing millions from an armored-car robbery, which leads them to a deadly midnight confrontation in a cemetery.

✦ Swann, Leonie. [The Sunset Years of Agnes Sharp](#) (Soho \$27.95). It has been an eventful morning for Agnes Sharp and the other inhabitants of Sunset Hall, a house share for the old and unruly in the sleepy English countryside. Although they have had some issues (misplaced reading glasses, conflicting culinary tastes, decreasing mobility, and gluttonous grandsons), nothing prepares them for an unexpected visit from a police officer who presents them with a vexing dilemma: what to do with the body of a housemate that they’ve stashed in the shed. When a policeman arrives to inform them that a neighbor has been murdered — shot dead “in her deck chair” — they wonder if they could pin both deaths on the same killer. That bright idea, naturally, is going to go wrong in all manner of spectacular ways. To investigate, they will step out of their comfort zone, into the not-so-idyllic village of Duck End. I adored Swann’s unique [Three Bags Full](#) (\$16) where the sheep solve the murder of their beloved shepherd. Here, we get a tortoise.

Valentine, Danielle. [Delicate Condition](#) (Sourcebooks \$27.99). “Unflinching... Valentine successfully mines pregnancy’s horrors for dramatic effect while condemning condescension toward, and ignorance of, women’s struggles with fertility and childbearing. It adds up to a fiercely feminist millennial heir to *Rosemary’s Baby*.” This brave adult fiction debut is difficult to describe...the horror parts are in my view overweighted.” Portraying women fighting for control over their own bodies, in its way it makes a companion read to Alice Hoffman’s *Invisible Hour*.

Ward, JR. [The St. Ambrose School for Girls](#) (Gallery \$27.99). When Sarah Taylor arrives at the exclusive St. Ambrose School, she’s carrying more baggage than just what fits in her suitcase. She knows she’s not like the other girls—if the shabby, all-black, non-designer clothes don’t give that away, the bottle of lithium hidden in her desk drawer sure does. St. Ambrose’s queen bee, Greta Stanhope, picks Sarah as a target from day one and the most popular, powerful, horrible girl at school is relentless in making sure Sarah knows what the pecking order is. Sarah is determined not to give Greta the satisfaction of breaking her. But when scandal unfolds, and someone ends up dead, her world threatens to unravel. And then... wow, this is truly a fabulous resolution, “both a taut thriller and a study on the intensity of teenage relationships and coming-of-age emotions. With its vivid campus setting, twisty mystery, and cast of complicated female characters, this story will burrow into readers’ heads and stay there.” For those who wish Donna Tartt had written more Dark Academic fiction after [The Secret History](#) (\$18), this is for you.

✎ Williams, Pip. [The Bookbinder](#) (Random \$28). If there were one book out in August I would recommend to anyone who loves books as books, that is, a bibliophile, and who is also passionate about historical fiction, then this gorgeous novel set in the world of Oxford University and the Oxford University Press—where, in the early 20th Century, they did real bookbinding from folding pages into signatures, assembling, sewing, etc, as a career. Oxford had the right to print books from I think the late 1400s. While men dominated the OUP work force up until, as here, WWI enlarged the roles of women as the men went off to fight, the women were crucial as the folders. The young woman who is the focus of this gem has a younger sister who is “simple” yet wise she cares for, and an unquenchable desire to attend Somerville College which, daringly, is admitting women (think Dorothy L. Sayers). The English suffragettes are folded into this rich story. I was just memorized by it and so grateful to Williams, who lives remotely in Australia, for writing it. I can also recommend her earlier bestselling and Reece’s Book Club Pick [The Dictionary of Lost Words](#) (\$17), where Williams again fuses history told through women’s eyes and the power of the written word.

MORE LARGE PAPERBACKS FOR AUGUST

Barcena, Juan Gómez. [Not Even the Dead](#) (Open Letter Books \$18.95). We’ll never know what the late Cormac McCarthy might have thought of *Not Even the Dead*, but I wager that the novel would have appealed to him, and also to Roberto Bolaño and Joseph Conrad,” writes author Randy Boyagoda in the *NY Time Book Review*. “Splendidly translated by Katie Whitemore,” the novel “begins like a Borgesian fable” and “what follows is a confidently convoluted, transhistorical chronicle told through the experiences of two men: Juan de Toñanes, a humdrum ex-conquistador keeping a tavern in Spanish-ruled 16th-century

Mexico, and Juan the Indian, a charismatic, missionary-taught Indigenous man causing trouble for church and state alike.” Fans of the late McCarthy, alert!

Ford, Kelly J. [The Hunt](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$16.99). Ford’s prior two books, *Cottonmouths* and *Real Bad Things*, splendidly evoked the dark poetry of the Ozarks. Here Ford renders the town of Presley, Arkansas, as a living entity swirling with resentments and loyalties, and governed by fear, thanks to wild rumors that a serial murderer stalks prey at the town’s famous “Hunt for the Golden Egg” each Easter, where residents vie to find an egg worth \$50,000: “Since KCLS 103.9 FM’s inaugural Hunt for the Golden Egg in 2005, 17 citizens ... have either died in a mysterious manner or disappeared.” Nell Holcomb has never been sure what to think — was her brother the so-called killer’s first victim, or is there a more complicated explanation? Obviously, the answer is the latter, but the way Ford unspools the story and depicts Nell’s internal struggles makes “The Hunt” truly absorbing. You won’t find any tidy narratives or simple judgments here.

Garza, Amber. [In a Quiet Town](#) (Mira \$18.99). Tatum hasn’t seen her daughter, Adrienne, in years, not since Tatum’s husband—the pastor in their small California town—all but disowned her. When she finally gathers the courage to secretly reconnect with Adrienne, Tatum’s thrilled she’s even willing to talk to her. But then—Adrienne disappears. Tatum tries desperately to get the police or her husband to take her daughter’s disappearance seriously, but no one will listen, until a mysterious man shows up claiming to be Adrienne’s fiancé. Hmmm.

Heartfield, Kate. [The Embroidered Book](#) (Harper \$17.99). A big historical based on the lives of the children of Hapsburg Empress Maria Theresa , especially of her two daughters Marie Antoinette, married into France, and Charlotte, married into Naples. There are triumphs and mostly tragedies as the old order is violently disrupted by Napoleon who was the Putin of his day however glamorized he has become. Loads of research underpins the elegant prose.

Kidd, Jess. [The Night Ship](#) (\$17.99). 1629: A newly orphaned young girl named Mayken is bound for the Dutch East Indies on the *Batavia*, one of the greatest ships of the Dutch Golden Age. Curious and mischievous, Mayken spends the long journey going on misadventures above and below the deck, searching for a mythical monster. But the true monsters might be closer than she thinks. 1989: A lonely boy named Gil is sent to live off the coast of Western Australia among the seasonal fishing community where his late mother once resided. There, on the tiny reef-shrouded island, he discovers the story of an infamous shipwreck... This is a month rich in historical fiction.

Manning, Kirsty. [The Paris Mystery](#) (Knopf \$17). A debut cozy from historical fiction author Manning takes you to 1938 Paris. Australian journalist Charlotte “Charlie” James begins a job with the Paris bureau of the *London Times*. Charlie’s first assignment is a masquerade party hosted by Lady Eleanor Ashworth on the grounds of her Versailles villa. Performers from the famous Cirque d’Hiver entertain the high-society attendees, until banker Maxime Marchand is stabbed to death. Eager to prove she’s as tough as any man—especially after being belittled by her boss, who assumed she was a man when he hired her—Charlie seizes

her chance to report on the crime. There are many guests with potential motives so the investigation may expose secrets Charlie would rather keep hidden. You can read this for the French *couture* alone—Mainbocher, Chanel, a talented young Russian.

Sutton, Halley. [The Hurricane Blonde](#) (Penguin \$18) immerses readers in the underbelly of Hollywood. Former child actor Salma Lowe has a past overloaded with trauma: her famous parents are philandering alcoholics; her beloved starlet sister, Tawney, was brutally murdered 20 years earlier; and Salma herself was raped as a teen, causing her to leave show business and fall into drug addiction. Now in recovery, Salma runs bus tours of places where famous women, including her sister, met tragic ends. But when Tawney's former fiancé, "the most dangerous director in Hollywood," begins filming a movie about Tawney, and Salma finds the lead actress drowned in the pool of Tawney's former home, her fragile sense of stability begins to crack...in a seedy Los Angeles where directors exploit women, police disbelieve victims, and members of the press are soulless vipers. That atmosphere, plus intriguing true Hollywood lore about Marilyn Monroe, Sharon Tate, and other stars who've died tragically, keeps the pages turning. This is an acid-washed treat for fans of L.A Noir.

Urquhart, Alanna. [The Butcher and the Wren](#) (\$18). Our August 2022 First Mystery of the Month is now in paper. Urquhart, co-host true crime podcast *Morbid*, tells her thriller from the dueling perspectives of a notorious serial killer and the medical examiner following where the killer's trail of victims leads... all in Louisiana's bayou territory.

Wildgen, Michelle. [Wine People](#) (Zibby Books \$17.99). If the rarefied world of wine experts interests you (also the foodie world that goes with), this novel of the rivals contending for top spots in a wildly successful NY company, built from the ground up by its charismatic and controlling founder who now hints he may be retiring, is for you. Two very different women compete among the men, neither of whom is entirely sure they want the prize, but neither willing to step back. This comes in a hardcover, [Wine People](#) (Zibby Books \$27.99), that will be our **September Notable New Fiction Book of the Month**.

Wilson, Emily H. [Inanna: The Sumerians](#) (Forge \$16.95). I love this, someone writing historical fiction set outside the usual ancient civilizations of Greece, Rome, and Egypt. Instead we are in Mesopotamia, Sumeria, the ancient city of Ur where Inanna, later called Aphrodite by the Greeks and Ishtar by the Babylonians, and Venus by the Romans, was born to the high gods Annunaki. Wilson has written a gorgeous myth mirroring the *Epic of Gilgamesh* which may be the oldest story in the world, handed down orally and then written in cuneiform on clay, which endures. Anyone who loves fantasy or mythology will enjoy this richly imagined, researched, and lovingly told novel. And... there will be a sequel.

Winslow, Don. [A Cool Breeze on the Underground](#) (\$16.99) is the 30th Anniversary reissue of Winslow's first published novel, an Edgar nominee kicking off the investigations of then graduate student Neal Carey. Neal Carey is not your usual private eye. A graduate student at Columbia University, he grew up on the streets of New York, usually on the wrong side of the law. Then

he met a PI who introduced him to the Bank, an exclusive institution with a sideline in keeping its wealthy clients happy and out of trouble. They pay Neal's college tuition, and Neal gets an education that can't be found in any textbook, from learning how to trail a suspect to mastering the proper way to search a room. Now it's payback time. The Bank wants Neal to put his skills to work in finding Allie Chase, the rebellious teenage daughter of a prominent senator. The problem is that she's gone underground in the London punk scene. Bonus: an Introduction by Winslow. And the rest of the Careys will follow.

Zijin Chen. [Bad Kids](#) (Pushkin Verigo \$14.95). If you relish something different try this huge bestseller from China which illustrates that, no matter the planning, there is no perfect crime. As Zhang Dongsheng gradually learns after, early one beautiful morning on a leisurely climb up Sanmingshan mountain in Ningbo, once a military stronghold and now a nature park, while guiding his elderly in-laws on a summer outing, he pushes them over the wall to their deaths. Zhang did not allow for teenagers to witness the murders, nor for their determination to blackmail him, starting everyone down a dark path that will unravel all their lives. Crucial to this is Professor Yan Liang, a PhD Supervisor in the Mathematics Department at the nearby Zhejiang University campus. I can see why this book has so gripped its Chinese audience.