

BOOKNEWS from

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August Booknews 2023 Part 2
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KICKING OFF SEPTEMBER

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.

A Labor Day Week Booknews

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 4 1:00 PM Live

Ann Cleeves discusses [The Raging Storm](#) (St Martins \$29)
Devon's Detective Matthew Venn investigation in a bleak seaside town

Our British Crime Book of the Month

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

TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 5 7:00 PM Live

Alice Feeney discusses [Good Bad Girl](#) (Flatiron \$28.99)
What links a stolen baby and an elderly nursing home patient?

WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 6 7:00 PM Live

James R. Benn discusses [Proud Sorrows](#) (Soho \$27.95)
Billy Boyle cracks a 1944 English country estate mystery
Our September Historical Book of the Month

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 7 7:00 PM Live

Nina Simon discusses [Mother-Daughter Murder Night](#) (Morrow \$29.99)
A First Mystery Book of the Month

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 8 1:00 PM

Mick Herron with John Sandford

Herron discusses [The Secret Hours](#) (Soho \$27.95)

A standalone MI5 investigation where the present harks back to Cold War Berlin

Our US signed copies with tote bag are sold out

The UK signed edition: [The Secret Hours](#) (\$42)

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 8 7:00 PM Live

Graham Brown discusses [Clive Cussler's Condor's Fury](#)

(Putnam \$29.95)

The NUMA Files

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 9 2:00 PM Live

William Kent Krueger discusses [The River We Remember](#)

(Atria \$28.99)

Murder in a mid-20th-Century Minnesota small town

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 11 7:00 PM Live

Don Bentley and Kyle Mills (the Vince Flynn Series handover)

Bentley discusses [Tom Clancy Weapons Grade](#) (Putnam \$29.95)

Mills discusses [Vince Flynn Code Red](#) (Atria \$29.99)

Mills' final novel in the series

SIGNED EVENT BOOKS SEPTEMBER 4-11

Benn, James R. [Proud Sorrows](#) (Soho \$27.95). Visit a Norfolk village set alongside the fabled Wash tidal basin in November, 1944. US Army investigator Billy Boyle is there on leave where the plan is that his lover, Diana Seaton, will join him at Seaton Hall where her father Sir Richard, a navy man who lost an arm in WWI, resides. The leave is disrupted when a downed German plane resurfaces from the Wash and salvagers discover the body of a posh villager in the cockpit. How the blazes? Two German bodies remain, but where is the pilot? And is there some kind of espionage in play? Billy's usual team of Kaz, Kaz's sister rescued with Diana from a Nazi camp and recuperating, and Mike is on hand. The policeman in charge is surprisingly grim, uncooperative, and resentful when Billy is assigned by Headquarters to investigate..... So for you **Historical Book of the Month** members—this is our September selection—or for any Billy fan like us, here's a kind of wartime Agatha Christie country house murder for you. Real British history buffs will

recognize early what other role the Wash plays.

If you have missed this series it's there for bingeing and highly recommended: [order them here](#).

Bentley, Don. [Tom Clancy Weapons Grade](#) (Putnam \$29.95). Former helicopter ace and SWAT Team member Bentley brings it all into play in stunning high action at the conclusion of this full throttle thriller. I think Don has done a superb job writing Jack Ryan, Jr. He's moving on to take over Vince Flynn from Kyle Mills (see below) and they pair up to do the Flynn handover here at The Pen on September 11. Jack Jr. will get a new chronicler (I can't yet reveal who but maybe Don can by the 11th). But here we have Jack in country on a mission.

The quiet of a Texas night is shattered by the sounds of screeching brakes, crumpling metal and, most shockingly, rapid gunfire. The auto accident Jack thought he witnessed turned out to be a professional hit. Jack may be too late to save the victim, but he can go after the hitters. He's got just one lead—a meeting

the victim was going to. When Jack shows up instead, he's drawn into the seedy underbelly of a small, Texas town and the cold case of a college student who vanished from its streets. Jack is left with nothing but questions. Who wants it to look like the victim was drunk? Why does someone want an innocent witness killed? And most of all, what's a team of South African hitmen doing in the Lone Star State?

I am an admirer of the Jack Jr. thrillers written earlier by Mike Maden so [click here](#) and you can order all those by Mike and by Don.

Brown, Graham. [Clive Cussler's Condor's Fury](#) (Putnam \$29.95). "Danger abounds in the 20th ocean adventure in Cussler's NUMA Files series. Kurt Austin and Joe Zavala find trouble in the seas near Nassau. There, the National Underwater and Marine Agency training ship Edison responds to a mayday call from the MV Heron saying that they're under attack. The ship at first appears to be empty, but once the rescuers explore inside, a group of crazed men attacks them. The crazies are victims of Martin Colon, formerly of Cuban Intelligence and now VP of Ostrom Airship Corporation. The guy's a bad dude with a serious grudge against the United States. He and his henchmen have injected the Heron's crew with tiny microchips, electromagnetic sensors half the size of an average grain of pollen. If you get jabbed with this, your brain imprints and blindly obeys the first voice you hear. And if you're told to kill your friends, you'll kill them if you can. So now that Colon has successfully tested the weapon on individuals, he's ready to go big time. And what better device for spreading the dust-sized chips in the billions than to disperse them from his luxury airship the Condor?"—*Kirkus Reviews* ... I am waiting for my reading copy.

Cleeves, Ann. [The Raging Storm](#) (St Martins \$29). **Our signed copies come with a zinger of a map of Devon while supplies last.**

This third for Devon Inspector Matthew Venn, he of considerable personal baggage, is a true puzzler. There's a big cast despite how tiny the bleak seaside village of Greystone is, and no obvious motive for the killing of the visitor, a celebrity traveler/explorer past his prime who rented a very basic cottage to await a mysterious visitor. Jem Roscoe, sailor, legend, national treasure, has ended up dead in dinghy rocking off Scully Cove, there to be discovered by the village's lifeboat crew in rough seas. Roscoe, though a Devon man, had no obvious connection to Greystone. Venn, on the other hand, holidayed there as a child being raised in the Barum Brethern, a religious sect he abruptly departed years ago. And some of the locals still belong to the Brethern. As Venn and his team investigate, a second death occurs, staged to look like an accident but not fooling Venn. There's a lot more going on including fundraising for a child with a fatal illness. It's unlikely you will figure out what's behind the crimes until Cleeves reveals all. Lesa too gives our **September British Crime Book of the Month** a Star calling it an atmospheric police procedural that builds on the other books while introducing fascinating suspects." And another Starred review ends with "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."

The two earlier Venns (look up the TV series) are [The Long Call](#) (\$16.99) and [The Heron's Cry](#) (\$17.99).

Feeney, Alice. [Good Bad Girl](#) (Flatiron \$28.99). British author Feeney is a master of the twist in psychological suspense plots... her last, [Daisy Darker](#) (\$17.99), was also a stunning Cornish Gothic. This new chiller begins with a baby stolen from a stroller while her ambivalent mother's back was turned for an instant. The woman acknowledges to herself, "I will never see her again and it is all my fault...I know who has stolen her. And I know why."

Leaving you hanging there, Feeney jumps 20 years to the present and introduces a cast of several women as she "defly explores mother-daughter relationships and the secrets they sometimes hold. Frankie is the head librarian at a women's prison. She leaves this safe life behind on a journey to find her daughter, who ran away from home a year ago. Meanwhile, Patience is living in a tiny attic room over an art gallery and works in a care home. She'll do anything to protect Edith, her favorite patient, but Clio, Edith's estranged daughter, is resentful of Patience's care. Patience is bonding with Edith but not telling her the truth about most things. Edith is lying to her daughter, and Clio is lying to everyone and herself. These four women are somehow connected, and nearly 18 years of secrets and lies are about to come to light. Is it possible that a good girl did a bad thing for a good reason?"—*LJ Starred Review*. You will be able to judge for yourself.

Herron, Mick. [The Secret Hours](#) (Soho \$27.95). The opening chase scene alone is worth the price of this standalone story that retains the snark of the Slough House series regarding the British Intelligence services. Most of all I enjoyed Herron's pokes at Boris Johnson (unnamed, but you know it's him). The present ties into an MI5 Mission in Cold War Berlin. Admire how First Desk, a woman who renders toothless an inquiry established by a vindictive prime minister that has dragged on for years, outplays everyone. The Soho edition comes with nifty Slough House tote bags. The Signed UK edition, [The Secret Hours](#) (\$42), does not.

Johnson, Craig. [The Longmire Defense](#) (Viking \$28). Back in Absaroka County and on the job, healing up from the events of [Hell and Back](#) (\$18) up in Montana, Sheriff Walt Longmire responds to a 911 call that a woman is lost in the Bighorns. The search area recalls a story his father told him about an elk hunt he went on as a teen with his own father, Lloyd. During the hunt, the state accountant, Big Bill Sutherland, was shot and killed, and his murder is still unsolved. When Walt finds the missing tourist, he also finds a buried, custom-made .300 H&H Magnum that was probably Big Bill's murder weapon. And its owner proves to be Walt's grandfather Lloyd, then the sheriff. And a man so tough on Walt that Walt has never gotten past their adversarial relationship although—a plot point—Lloyd forced Walt to learn to play chess. This truly cold case heats up as Walt discovers who else was on the fatal hunting trip with Big Bill. As memories both propel and disorient him—could Lloyd Longmire have been a murderer as clues suggest?—pressure comes down to forget the old case. There's a big cast here, familiar and new: the women in Walt's life; lawmen; Wyoming officials; and some surprises. Johnson truly scores delving into Walt's past—even his future; his family's past; and a sharply etched cast of bad actors. I loved

it. You will too. You can start here if you are new to Walt, as there are no dangling loose ends to the case. Or delight in this new view of a treasured character.

Krueger, William Kent. [The River We Remember](#) (Atria \$28.99). Krueger writes, "The story opens on Memorial Day in 1958 when the body of Jimmy Quinn, Black Earth County's leading citizen, is found floating in the Alabaster River, nearly naked and dead from a shotgun blast. This story is absolutely a compelling mystery; the question at its heart is who killed Jimmy Quinn. But it's so much more than just a mystery. It deals with the devastating effects of war on the human spirit. It explores the darkness of racism and bigotry. And maybe most important of all, it asks the question: How do we heal from the wounds delivered by the battles we fight in this life?"

Kent thinks of this as completing a trilogy begun with (Edgar winner) [Ordinary Grace](#) and [This Tender Land](#) (\$17), stories that take him outside his beloved Cork O'Connor series.

Mills, Kyle. [Vince Flynn Code Red](#) (Atria \$29.99). Damian Losa, a billionaire Mexican crime lord, wants a favor. Rapp owes him a debut of honor. The Syrian government appears to have created a highly addictive new narcotic that it plans to distribute throughout Europe. It's a major threat to Losa's business and he's determined to send someone to keep him on top by any means necessary. Rapp is the perfect choice for the mission. Not only does he have extensive experience operating in the Middle East, but he's also entirely expendable. As he crosses into war-torn Syria, Rapp quickly discovers a shocking truth. The new drug isn't being produced by Damascus to prop up the government's collapsing finances. Instead, it was created by Russia's asymmetrical warfare unit, not for profit but as a weapon against the West. With far more than Damian Losa's interests at stake, Rapp devises a desperate plan that forces him and his team onto

a battlefield where the United States is virtually powerless and allegiances shift almost hourly. Further, if Russia uncovers their plot, it will set off a disastrous confrontation.

The playing field for international thrillers has shifted back towards Russia. While Syria is the main theater here, a Russian general muses, "Russia had been revealed for what it was: a starving old woman lashed by the Siberian wind." And Rapp observes, "The Russians aren't people who play to win. They play to make everyone else lose." Which seems to me to be eminently true as current news unfolds.

Simon, Nina. [Mother-Daughter Murder Night](#) (Morrow \$29.99). By the time you read this our August First Mystery Book of the Month, released to club members earlier than the official September 5 publication date, will be revealed as the September Reece's Book Club Pick. And an Indie Next Pick. I didn't know any of that when I negotiated our signed copies. What I had was a feeling of here is a stronger version of *Where the Crawdads Sing*... and a memory that while I liked *Crawdads* well enough to make it an August 2018 First Mystery Book of the Month, and we had Delia Owens here at The Pen to sign our copies, I did not anticipate its runaway success. If I had I'd have had a thousand copies for her signing.

Anyway here's the same love of a special environment, Elkhorn Slough, a marshland on the mid-California coast. Single mom Beth and her teenage daughter Jack dwell there in a pretty rickety shack. Beth is a nurse who cares for the locals including an elderly rancher with property that could become a high-end development. Enter Lana, Beth's mother, a truly original, fabulous, character, used to the high life in real estate in LA. But she's fallen on hard times which include a stage 4 cancer diagnosis. And arrives to move in with Beth and Jack just as Jack discovers the body of naturalist Ricardo Crux floating in

OUR SEPTEMBER 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

Cleeves, Ann. [The Raging Storm](#)

Devon Inspector Michael Venn procedural

Cozy Crimes Club One Unsigned hardcover or paperback per month

Carter, Ally. [The Blonde Identity](#)

A sweet & sexy cozy spy story

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

Goldberg, Lee. [Malibu Burning](#)

A timely, pacy, cops and crooks heist novel

First Mystery Club One Signed First Printing per month

Chua, Amy. Chua, Amy. [The Golden Gate](#)

Super rich in plot, characters, history, place, and themes

Hardboiled/Noir Club One Signed First Printing per month
TBA

History/Mystery Club One First Printing per month

Benn, James R. [Proud Sorrows](#)

A WW2 British country estate murder

Historical Fiction Paperback Club One Unsigned paperback per month

Rosenberg, Rebecca. [Madame Pommery](#)

The 19th Century woman who created Brut Champagne

Notable New Fiction One Signed First Printing per month

Kim, Angie. [Happiness Falls](#) with a special double-sided print per book

(Wildgen, Michelle. [Wine People](#) became our August Pick)

International Crime One Unsigned Hardcover or paperback per month

Eldridge, Tori. [The Ninja's Oath](#)

Chinese-Norwegian modern-day ninja, Lily Wong, goes to Shanghai

Romance and Relationships One unsigned hardcover or 2 paperbacks per month

TBA

the slough. Suspicion falls heavily on Jack so Lana swings into action.

Among the raves other than my own I like this one: “Nina Simon’s *Mother-Daughter Murder Night* is the rarest of novels. A lively and tender story of family that Simon deftly transforms into an edge-of-your-seat murder mystery set against the polarizing backdrop of land conservation—no novel has ever made family drama (or murder) this much fun. One part *The Maid* and one part family drama à la *The Nest*, *Mother-Daughter Murder Night* is a resounding and impressive triumph. I fell in love with Jack, Lana, and Beth immediately, and so will you.” — Katy Hays, author of *The Cloisters*

SIGNED BOOK CLUB PICKS NOT NOTED UNDER EVENTS

Chua, Amy. [The Golden Gate](#) (St Martins \$28). Try not to snicker as I say I don’t have the words to describe this debut, our **September First Mystery Book of the Month**. Succinct words because it’s so rich in characters, plots, descriptions, and more I can’t compress my thoughts. Here’s a try in a Starred Review from the usually acerbic *Kirkus Reviews*: “The many threads of the plot as well as the author’s concerns about race, class, and other matters come together in the cleverly imagined character and voice of her detective. Satisfyingly twisty, highly educational, and lots of fun.”

But why not let our blogger Lesa in her Starred Review for *LJ* tantalize you as this book tantalized me: “In 1930, seven-year-old Iris Stafford died in the Claremont Hotel, which she is now said to haunt. In 1931, Al Sullivan’s Mexican father was ‘repatriated’ to Mexico after the stock market crash, allegedly to free up jobs for Americans. By 1944, Iris’s sister Izzy and her two Bainbridge cousins have grown into beauties, and Al has taken his mother’s last name and risen to be a homicide detective with the Berkeley Police Department. They all come together at the Claremont when a presidential candidate is killed, and witnesses identify a woman who resembles one of the three Bainbridge cousins. The D.A. warns Mrs. Genevieve Bainbridge that he can charge all three of her granddaughters as co-conspirators if she doesn’t identify the killer. But Al has his doubts. Everyone has suggestions for his case, including Madame Chiang Kai-Shek, who purportedly was involved with the murder victim. Al is warned of Communists, Japanese spies, and the Chinese, but, as the son of a Mexican father and an Okie mother, he has himself experienced prejudice and is determined to find the truth. The mystery debut by Yale Law School professor Chua (*Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother*) is a successful, compelling mash-up of California history, ghost story, family tale, and social commentary.” And, I add, with a resolution I did not, nor likely will you, even imagine coming.

Eldridge, Tori. [The Ninja’s Oath](#) (Polis \$27.99). Our **International Crime Book of the Month** gets this intriguing review: “Chinese Norwegian ninja Lily Wong embarks on a thorny rescue mission in her action-packed fourth adventure. Wong’s honorary uncle, Lee Chang, the former chief enforcer of the Shanghai Scorpion Black Society, has asked for the budding ninja’s help. His 12-year-old grandniece, Chyou, has disappeared, and Wong, whom Chang recently helped in a bloody battle against Hong Kong’s triads, defers her return to Los Angeles to head to Shanghai and aid in the search. Wong—who tries her best to keep her considerable combat skills a secret from family

and friends—has experience in rescue and protection from her time working with a refugee organization. Her efforts to find Chyou are complicated by tensions between Chang and Chyou’s grandfather, Qiang, who is convinced the girl has been abducted by his estranged brother’s “criminal friends.” Meanwhile, Wong fears the child may have been targeted by sex traffickers. The stakes are raised even higher when another of Chang’s family members vanishes before Chyou can be found. Eldridge excels at orchestrating thrilling martial arts fights, and at brisk plotting that mostly dodges predictability.”

Goldberg, Lee. [Malibu Burning](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$28.88). Our **September Crime Book of the Month** combines real suspense, police and fire investigations, terrific pacing, expert dialogue, and a satisfying conclusion to the duel played out between a cop and a criminal. It’s certainly a timely read. It begins when master thief Danny Cole is nabbed by US Marshal Andrew Walker after Danny fleeces a cartel boss for big bucks. Danny gets a choice: sit in prison, or volunteer for California’s convict firefighting program. He and the team live in a low security camp in the woods, basically on call. When a fire rages near Malibu, Danny’s best crew friend is killed when a luxury home owner diverts the fight to his property. Danny is not a guy to let this go. Eight years later he’s served his time and is ready with a plan to avenge his friend and pillage mansions vacated during or by wildfires. Walker by now has joined the LA County Sheriff’s arson squad. The pace here is terrific as crooks and cops make you root for both as Goldberg spins out his complicated con. I loved this, but I’m a sucker for heists. I’m not alone: “...a fast-paced, over-the-top caper that entertains while keeping readers guessing.” —*LJ* Starred Review. Megan Abbott echoes Mark Greaney: “By turns tense and rambunctious, wildly entertaining, and breakneck-paced, Lee Goldberg’s splendid *Malibu Burning* is pure storytelling pleasure from beginning to end.”

It comes in a paperback too: [Malibu Burning](#) (\$16.99).

Kim, Angie. [Happiness Falls](#) (Hogarth \$28). In her second novel after the runaway success of her Edgar Award-winning debut [Miracle Creek](#) (\$17), Kim portrays a Korean American family in crisis when the beloved father 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. Kim turns the missing-person story into something wholly original, creating a family who must go to remarkable lengths to truly understand one another. This is a splendid **September Notable New Fiction Book of the Month**. **And all of our copies come with a special double-sided print courtesy of Hogarth.**

FYI, as noted by the Mayo Clinic, “Angelman Syndrome is a genetic disorder. It causes delayed development, problems with speech and balance, intellectual disability, and, sometimes, seizures. People with Angelman Syndrome

often smile and laugh frequently, and have happy, excitable personalities.”

Wildgen, Michelle. [Wine People](#) (Zibby Books \$29.99). 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 boutique NY wine importer, built from the ground up by its charismatic and controlling founder who now hints he may be retiring, is for you. It’s a cutthroat world. Two very different women compete among the men, neither of whom is entirely sure they want the prize, but neither willing to step back. So they join forces but how shaky will their bond be? “A riveting, behind-the-scenes portrait of a high-drama industry, from the chateau to the corner office...pour a glass and dive in.”—Oprah Daily on our August Notable New Fiction Book of the Month,

It comes in a simultaneous paperback too: [Wine People](#) (Zibby Books \$17.99). And I’m scheduling a zoom with Wildgen sometime in October. This is an excellent book to give as a gift with the holidays coming up.

UNSIGNED BOOK CLUB PICKS

Carter, Ally. [The Blonde Identity](#) (Avon \$24.99). A sweet & sexy cozy spy story is so much fun and something different for the **September Cozy Crimes of the Month**. The James Bond moments are electric (and mostly funny), the sexy bits the same. There’s an unreliable narrator (well explained) in Ally whom the bad Russian mob actors think is a rogue CIA Agent with an incriminating flash drive, a determined and kind agent guy in Jake with a past of his own, and the locations starting in Paris and proceeding on a surprise river cruise are evocative. But it’s the banter that makes this so much fun. I hope that Carter is busily writing a sequel.

Rosenberg, Rebecca. [Madame Pommery](#) (Lion Heart UK \$18). This is a UK Import so if it’s delayed we will move it to October. Based on the real 19th Century woman who created Brut Champagne, this historical fiction delves into the culture of the province of Champagne. When Madame Pommery, founder of an orphanage and teacher of etiquette, loses her husband in 1860, she’s only 40. Forced to cope with failing finances, a young son, and neighbors’ scorn, the resourceful widow resolves to change the region’s wine it from a sweet dessert beverage to a dry, crisp wine to be enjoyed anytime. Derided and on her own, she excavates caves under the Reims city dump and visits Paris to recruit financing. Then the Franco-Prussian war breaks out in 1870, her son and entire crew have to leave to fight, and ruin lies in wait. Then Prussian troops invade France, and Prussian General Frederick Franz occupies Madame Pommery’s house as his army headquarters. Undaunted, Pommery uses her secret

wine caves to hide the Francs-Tireurs, resistance fighters for France, while she plans to build a spectacular castle winery above the caves. Next, when her former lover, a Scottish Baron, unexpectedly proposes marriage, Madame Pommery must choose between nobility and her passionate quest for fine champagne and the most beautiful winery in the world. Note: Rosenberg has also written a novel about the woman known as and for Veuve Cliquot. I must search it out to read as a companion.

2023 IS THE J.R.R. TOLKIEN “UNOFFICIAL YEAR”

Tolkien died 50 years ago. Not only has this original R.R. of fantasy remained enthralling, there is new work out worth reading.

Groom, Nick. [Tolkien in the Twenty-first Century](#) (Pegasus \$32, out September 5). What is it about Middle-Earth and its inhabitants that has captured the imagination of millions of people around the world? And why does Tolkien’s visionary creation continue to fascinate and inspire us eighty-five years after its first publication? Groom presents an original and thought-provoking journey into his world, revealing how his visionary creation of Middle-Earth is more relevant now than ever before. This is a Finalist for the The 2023 Tolkien Society Best Book Award.

Rateliff, John D. [The History of the Hobbit](#) (Harper \$55). *The Hobbit* was first published on September 21, 1937. Like its sequel, *The Lord of the Rings*, it is a story that “grew in the telling,” and many characters and plot threads in the published text are quite different from the story J.R.R. Tolkien first wrote to read aloud to his young sons as one of their “fireside reads.” Together in one volume, *The History of the Hobbit* presents the complete text of the unpublished manuscript of *The Hobbit*, accompanied by John Rateliff’s lively and informative account of how the book came to be written and published. Recording the numerous changes made to the story both before and after publication, he examines—chapter by chapter—why those changes were made and how they reflect Tolkien’s ever-growing concept of Middle-earth. As well as reproducing the original version of one of the world’s most popular novels—both on its own merits and as the foundation for *The Lord of the Rings*—this book includes many little-known illustrations and draft maps for *The Hobbit* by Tolkien himself. Also featured are extensive commentaries on the dates of composition, how Tolkien’s professional and early mythological writings influenced the story, the imaginary geography he created, and how Tolkien came to revise the book years after publication to accommodate events in *The Lord of the Rings*. Endorsed by Christopher Tolkien as a companion to his essential [The History of Middle-earth](#) (Random Boxed Set \$49.95).

You can browse our webstore by inputting J R R Tolkien for a large array of editions of his and associated work.