

BOOKNEWS from

ISSN 1056-5655, © The Poisoned Pen, Ltd.
Volume 36, Number 3
March Booknews 2024
sales@poisonedpen.com tel (888)560-9919
http://poisonedpen.com

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



MARCH MADNESS & MYSTERY

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

Note: Event times are in Mountain Standard Time until March 9, then 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.

Note that we have opened a [YouTube channel just for John Charles'](#) many author interviews, most of which do not appear in our regular calendar but are supplemental and varied. Watch at your leisure.

SATURDAY MARCH 2 4:00 PM Live

Jonathan Mayo discusses [Smart, Wrong, and Lucky: The Origin Story of Baseball's Unexpected Stars](#) (Triumph \$28).

Perfect for the Spring Training season

SUNDAY MARCH 3 2:00 PM Live

Cara Black discusses [Murder at La Villette](#) (Soho \$27.95)

The final Aimee LeDuc

MONDAY MARCH 4 7:00 PM Live

Elle Cosimano discusses [Finlay Donovan Rolls the Dice](#) (St Martins \$28)

Think a Janet Evanovich cozy

TUESDAY MARCH 5 4:00 PM

Yangze Choo with Lisa See

Choo discusses [The Fox Wife](#) (Holt \$27.99)

1907 Manchuria and China with an unusual investigator
Signed books in stock

TUESDAY MARCH 5 7:00 PM Live

Christina Dodd discusses [Every Single Secret](#) (Harlequin \$29)

Consult Dodd's social media for a special contest

WEDNESDAY MARCH 6 5:00 PM

Ben H. Winter discusses [Big Time](#) (Little Brown \$29)

Signed books available

WEDNESDAY MARCH 6 7:00 PM Live

AJ Tata discusses [The Phalanx Code](#) (St Martins \$29)

THURSDAY MARCH 7 7:00 PM Live

Hank Phillippi Ryan discusses [One Wrong Word](#) (Forge \$28.99)

Our March Crime Book of the Month

FRIDAY MARCH 8 2:00 PM Live

Tea hosted by **John**

Simone St. James discusses [Murder Road](#) (Berkley \$29)

SATURDAY MARCH 9 2:00 PM Live Book Launch

Rhys Bowen and Clare Broyles discuss [In Sunshine or in Shadow](#) (St Martins \$28)

Molly Murphy in the Catskills

TIME CHANGE: ALL EVENTS FROM HERE ARE GIVEN IN PDT

MONDAY MARCH 11 1:00 PM

Deanna Raybourn discusses [A Grave Robbery](#) (Penguin \$28)

A Veronica Speedwell Victorian romp

Signed books available

MONDAY MARCH 11 7:00 PM Live

A Soho Press Party

Stephen Mack Jones discusses [Deus X](#) (Soho \$27.95)

Detroit investigator August Snow

Sujata Massey discusses [The Mistress of Bhatia House](#) (Soho \$27.95)

1920s Bombay lawyer Perveen Mistry

TUESDAY MARCH 12 7:00 PM Live

Lisa Gardner discusses [Still See You Everywhere](#) (Grand Central \$29.99)

Frankie Elkins #3

Our copies come with a specially designed Frankie Elkin bookmark, with QR code to a Frankie Elkin survival guide that Lisa is writing

Isabella Maldonado discusses [A Forgotten Kill](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$16.99)

FBI Special Agent Daniela Vega

WEDNESDAY MARCH 13 7:00 PM Live

Kira Peikoff discusses [Baby X](#) (Crooked Lane \$30.99)

A speculative thriller of stolen DNA for fans of Blake Crouch

THURSDAY MARCH 14 7:00 PM Live

AJ Finn discusses [End of Story](#) (Harper \$30)

A San Francisco Gothic with nods to Agatha Christie

FRIDAY MARCH 15 7:00 PM

SciFi Friday discusses Ray Nayler's [The Mountain in the Sea](#) (\$18)

SATURDAY MARCH 16 10:30 AM

Croak & Dagger discusses Lev AC Rosen's [Lavender House](#) (\$17.99)

A truly fabulous 1950s San Francisco country house murder

TUESDAY MARCH 19 7:00 PM Live

Chris Bohjalian discusses [The Princess of Las Vegas](#) (Knopf \$29)

The heist is fake, the murders are real

WEDNESDAY MARCH 20 1:00 PM

UK's Natasha Pulley discusses [The Mars House](#) (Bloomsbury \$29.99)

A Romantasy set on Mars

Signed UK edition [The Mars House](#) (\$45)

THURSDAY MARCH 21 5:00 PM

Heather Gudenkauf discusses [Everyone is Watching](#) (Park Row \$30)

Mary Kubica discusses [She's Not Sorry](#) (Park Row \$30)

Lisa Unger discusses [The New Couple in 5B](#) (Park Row \$28.99)

Signed books available for all three titles

Kubica not available until April

SATURDAY MARCH 23 11:00 AM

The Cookbook Club discusses [The Hebridean Baker: My Scottish Island Kitchen](#) (Sourcebooks \$29.99)

Bring a recipe from the book to share

SATURDAY MARCH 23 2:00 PM Live Book Launch

Scott Carson (Michael Koryta) discusses [Lost Man's Lane](#) (Atria \$28.99)

A small town supernatural thriller

MONDAY MARCH 25 7:00 PM Live Book Launch

Christina Estes discusses [Off the Air](#) (St Martins \$28)

A debut mystery set here in Phoenix

Winner of the Tony Hillerman Prize

TUESDAY MARCH 26 5:00 PM

Robin Peguero discusses [One in the Chamber](#) (Grand Central \$29)

Lethal Washington DC dysfunction on all sides

TUESDAY MARCH 26 6:15 PM

Australia's Dervla McTiernan discusses [What Happened to Nina?](#) (Morrow \$30)

A fabulous thriller based inspired by real events—perfectly done

For local residents, think the Gilbert Goons cover up

WEDNESDAY MARCH 27 7:00 PM Live

Lisa Scottoline discusses [The Truth about the Devlins](#) (Putnam \$29.95)

And how this wealthy legal family's dysfunction may undo them

THURSDAY MARCH 28 7:00 PM

Hardboiled Crime discusses Joseph Hansen's [Fadeout](#) (\$15)

SUNDAY MARCH 31

Closed for Easter Sunday

AWARDS NEWS

Here's a reason for you to trust our Monthly Club Picks

4 out of 5 Thriller Award nominees for the 2023 Best First

Mystery first were our 2023 First Mystery Books of the Month:

I.S. Berry, [The Peacock and the Sparrow](#)

Amy Chua, [The Golden Gate](#)

Margot Douaihy, [Scorched Grace](#)

Steve Urszenyi, [Perfect Shot](#)

And also 5 of the Barry Award for Best First Novel:

I.S. Berry, [The Peacock and the Sparrow](#)

Bruce Borgos, [The Bitter Past](#)

Amy Chua, [The Golden Gate](#)

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

Iris Yamashita, [City Under One Roof](#)

OUR MARCH BOOKS OF THE MONTH

We select a book and charge it to you. Free shipping to US Customers. It's a treat each month, for you or as a gift.

Email Karen@poisonedpen.com to join

British Crime Club One Unsigned hardcover or paperback per month

Perrin, Kristen. [How to Solve Your Own Murder](#)

Cozy Crimes Club One Unsigned hardcover or paperback per month

Bull, Jessica. [Miss Austen Investigates](#)

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

Ryan, Hank Phillippi. [One Wrong Word](#)

First Mystery Club One Signed First Printing per month

Estes, Christina. [Off the Air](#)

Hardboiled/Noir Club One Signed First Printing per month

Fusilli, Jim. [The Price You Pay](#)

History/Mystery Club One First Printing per month

McDonough, Patrice. [Murder by Lamplight](#)

Historical Fiction Paperback Club One Unsigned paperback per month

Wray, CJ. [The Excitements](#)

Notable New Fiction One Signed First Printing per month

Phillips, Susan Elizabeth. [Simply the Best](#)

Romance and Relationships One unsigned hardcover or paperback per month

Edwards, Melodie. [Once Persuaded, Twice Sh](#)

SIGNED BOOKS FOR MARCH

✦ Ashley, Jennifer. [Speculations in Sin](#) (Penguin \$18). To save an innocent man's life, amateur sleuth and cook Kat Holloway must expose a financial scam that could ruin the most powerful aristocrats in Victorian-era London. It begins when on when Mr. Davis, the butler at the Mayfair home of the Bywater family, where Kat serves as a cook, goes off without notice one day and still hasn't returned by bedtime. Hmm. The murder, when it comes, strikes at the third-floor strong room of Daalman's Bank, where Samuel Millburn, the husband of Kat's dear friend Joanna Millburn, toiled as a clerk until he was suspected of embezzlement and fired. Hours later, the body of Stockley, a senior clerk who doesn't merit a first name, is found beaten to death. To clear Sam, Kat calls once more on Daniel McAdam, a freelancer who runs hush-hush errands for Scotland Yard, for help. 7th in Ashley's [Below Stairs Mysteries](#).

✦ Billingham, Mark. [The Last Dance](#) (Grove \$28). Good news! A surprise visit from the British author to Arizona gives us Signed copies of his new series start. In its Starred Review *PW* says that Billingham "launches a cracking new mystery series featuring the charming, sarcastic British DS Declan Miller. Miller's wife, Alex—also a detective—was recently murdered on the job. Afternoons spent in the company of his pet rats and punctuated by visits from Alex's ghost are not enough to keep Declan away from work for long, though, and he returns, grieving, after a six-week hiatus. The first case assigned to Miller and his new partner, Sara Xiu, is a double murder. It initially appears that the two victims—an organized crime heir and an IT consultant—have nothing in common, but after Declan taps into a network of sources spanning his and Alex's ballroom dancing friends, an old informant, and Alex's ghost, he starts to fear a complex conspiracy is at hand. Meanwhile, Declan's friend, prison snitch Gary 'Chesshead' Cole, tries to find Alex's murderer, with tragic results. Billingham imbues Miller with a brilliant sense of humor and populates the margins of this well-paced mystery with lovable, fully fleshed characters whom readers will adore. This is the author at his best."

Black, Cara. [Murder at La Villette](#) (Soho \$27.95) features the requisite host of colorful characters who spill out of the biker bars and tattoo parlors of the 19th arrondissement, a bevy of chic disguises, and a few slick car chases. But as usual, the star of the show is the city Aimée loves. Even when she's accused of the murder of her ex, Melac, the father of her child, who has been threatening to move Chloe to Brittany by taking Aimee to court. Stunned by a concussion, covered in incriminating evidence, cut off from her usual network, Aimee must go deep into the city to uncover who's framing her. "This is vintage Black for fans of women's empowerment and life in Paris." Cara says this is the last for her PI Aimee LeDuc, a series that has toured us around the City of Light in all its glory and diversity for 24 years. She is still writing, no fear there....

Bohjalian, Chris. [The Princess of Las Vegas](#) (Knopf \$29). Chris excels at unusually conceived fiction. Here it features a Vegas cabaret star inspired by the life of Princess Di. Some might find her strange or even delusional, an American speaking with a British accent, hair feathered into a style thirty years old, living and working in a casino that has become a dated trash heap. On top of that, Crissy's daily diet of Adderall and Valium leaves her

more than a little tipsy, her Senator boyfriend has gone back to his wife, and her entire career rests on resembling a dead woman. And yet, fans see her for the gifted chameleon she is, showering her with gifts, letters, and standing ovations night after night. When Richie Morley, the owner of the Buckingham Palace Casino, is savagely murdered, Crissy's carefully constructed kingdom comes crashing down all around her. A riveting tale of identity, obsession, fintech, and high-tech mobsters....

Author Chris adds, "Imagine *Hacks* if Jean Smart got involved with the mob and kept finding corpses...or *Oceans 11* if Julia Roberts started everyday with five mg of Valium and a Bloody Mary in a poolside cabana at a shabby casino. It's a thriller, yes, but also a slow burn character study of damaged sisters and a tween girl who is, it seems, always the smartest person in the room."

Bowen, Rhys/Clare Broyles. [In Sunshine or in Shadow](#) (St Martins \$28). A new Molly Murphy by the mother-daughter team, Signed by both. Fearing a summer typhus outbreak in Manhattan, a pregnant Molly takes the couple's children to stay with Daniel's mother in Westchester. Quickly bored, she decides to visit her friends Sid and Gus at an artists' colony in the Catskills. On a walk in the woods, Molly discovers a bullet-riddled corpse and launches an inquiry. Her initial investigation leads her to a land dispute involving a real estate developer with plans to build a resort catering to Jewish patrons. Fearing the police will settle on a Jewish suspect out of prejudice, rather than following the trail of evidence, Molly digs in. Enjoy the landscapes of NY State, so rural over a century ago, and the beginnings of the "Borscht Belt" that among other things produced many of the 20th Century's best knows comedians.

Carson, Scott. [Lost Man's Lane](#) (Atria \$28.99). Carson, aka Michael Koryta, evokes the best of Stephen King in this exceptional coming-of-age tale about a young man confronting the supernatural menace that's taken root in his hometown. In 1999 Bloomington, Indiana, 16-year-old Marshall Miller gets pulled over by a cop on the same day he gets his driver's license. While he's waiting for a ticket, he notices a frightened teenage girl in the backseat of the officer's car. Weeks later, Marshall spots the girl's face on a missing person poster: "Scott Carson fuses a gothic spellbinder steeped in old-American lore with the piercing ache of a coming-of-age story, bittersweet and filled with longing. With echoes of Ray Bradbury and Peter Straub, it's a dazzling, genuinely terrifying novel that hovers darkly in your head long after you finish."—Megan Abbott. Horror Master Christopher Golden adds, "Carson weaves a tale all his own, replete with unsettling evil and the questions of love and loss, of trust and family, that plague us all."

Choo, Yangsze. [The Fox Wife](#) (Holt \$27.99). One of the shape-shifting tricksters from Chinese folklore is the unlikely but convincing narrator, here, a silver fox calling herself Snow. She makes her way through 1908 northern Manchuria and Japan in female guises, intent on hunting down the man responsible for the death of her cub. In the process, she illuminates the realities of a hidebound society on the brink of change: "If there ever was a time for ghosts and foxes to appear, it's now," when the last imperial dynasty is failing and uncertainty is everywhere. For most of the novel, Snow's pursuit of a Manchurian named Bektu Nikan runs parallel to another quest featuring Bao, a former

teacher who has earned a reputation as an amateur detective. His attempt to investigate the death of a courtesan will eventually lead him to Snow — and the solution of a mystery from his youth, when he and his childhood sweetheart left offerings for the fox god at an improvised altar. Following various clues, Snow and Bao take the reader into the households of aristocrats and peasants, urban centers and rural villages. Their inquiries will soon enmesh them in the dramas of a merchant family convinced that a curse has doomed their son. Young men dabbling in revolutionary politics and a photographer with a bent for blackmail add complexity to the plot, as do a pair of foxes who masquerade as attractive gentlemen.

The author draws on Manchurian folklore, Chinese history, and her own nomadic youth for her latest novel. Northern China is the ancestral home of the Fox cult, notes Choo in her excellent Notes section which includes a brief glossary of Chinese names. I agree with this: “This wonderful weaving of fantasy and Chinese folklore builds on ancient lore that foxes can change form into humans.... Highly recommended for fans of whodunits that feature vivid characters and settings.” OK and a little fantasy. Plus there are Choo’s insights into end of the Manchu or Qing dynasty and role of Dr. Sun Yat Sen.

Cosimano, Elle. [Finlay Donovan Rolls the Dice](#) (St Martins \$28). Another rollicking round of high-speed felonies for mystery author Finlay Donovan and those unwary enough to get pulled into her orbit. News of a flash drive containing information about how to access \$14 million in cryptocurrency brings Finn up against two of her old antagonists, Russian mobster Feliks Zhirov, who’s escaped from prison just in time to join the festivities, and Ekatarina Rybakov, his star attorney, who in some ways is even more dangerous than him. As usual, Finn compensates for her limitations as a sleuth by her unexcelled ability to improvise, turning the most dangerous situations into set-up lines for droll payoffs. Perfect escapist fare for stay-at-home readers who wonder why nothing ever happens to them. I think of this series as a Janet Evanovich cozy. Look [HERE](#) for Finlay’s earlier adventures.

Dodd, Christina. [Every Single Secret](#) (Harlequin \$29). In an isolated lighthouse on the California coast, Rowan Winterbourne lives a solitary life with only her secrets for company. For she has a mission that drives her—to avenge herself against Gregory Torval, the powerful drug and arms dealer who murdered her mother and vowed to eliminate everyone in her family. Then Joe Grantham arrives at her door and, for the first time, Rowan lets her guard down—a dangerous mistake.... Dodd is recommended by John Charles and is good for fans of Sandra Brown, Lisa Jewell, and Jayne Ann Krentz.... maybe Ruth Ware.

She is also collaborating with us on a contest with prizes covering this book and her upcoming June series start with [A Daughter of Fair Verona](#) (Kensington \$27).

Douaihy, Margot. [Blessed Water: A Sister Holiday Mystery](#) (Zando \$27.95). Poet Douaihy follows up [Scorched Grace](#) (\$17), a 2023 First Mystery Book of the Month and nominated for the Best First Novel Thriller Award, with another deliriously enjoyable, relentlessly plotted adventure for chain-smoking “punk nun” Sister Holiday Walsh. She spends her days teaching music at Saint Sebastian’s School in New Orleans, and her nights operating the newly established Redemption Detective Agency alongside former fire inspector Magnolia Riveaux. After

a potential client stands the women up for a consultation, they stumble on a priest’s corpse floating in the Mississippi River. There’s plenty of local color and high-stakes action to keep fans of the first book, on board, and the mystery itself is even more gripping this time out. Will Sister Holiday take her final vows?

Estes, Christina. [Off the Air](#) (St Martins \$28). Our local and Emmy-winning NPR reporter Estes, winner of the Tony Hillerman Contest for a debut set in the Southwest, writes what she knows (but not who she is). Lesa reviews our **March First Mystery Book of the Month**: “Phoenix TV reporter Jolene Garcia is always scrambling for the next story. All the networks show up when there’s a report of a death at radio station KFRK, home of controversial talk show host Larry Lemmon. Lemmon started the original ‘Build the Wall’ movement in southern Arizona and opposes immigration. When it’s confirmed that Lemmon is dead, Jolene’s station has a scoop. She interviewed him a week earlier for what is now his last interview. Still, she’s scrambling for new angles about the death, as is every other local reporter. Jolene’s police source won’t confirm that Lemmon was poisoned, so she watches as her chief rival breaks the murder story. In her efforts to get the whole story, Jolene covers the entire Phoenix area. Threatening notes, and pressure at work to remove her from the story only make her push harder—and when she attracts the attention of someone who hated Lemmon, she just might have her final interview.” Recommended to fans of Hank Phillippi Ryan who calls *Off the Air* a terrific solid mystery with authentic insights into the intriguing world of local TV journalism—but always coupled with compassion and heart. Estes’ ear for dialogue and understanding of human nature makes this a must read—and the perfect beginning for a series.”

I add that Estes illuminates the pressure on reporters in a chilling way—a focus on clicks and clickbait.

Everett, Percival. [James](#) (Knopf \$28). Tip ins. “A brilliant, action-packed reimagining of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, both harrowing and ferociously funny, told from the enslaved Jim’s point of view.”

Finn, A J. [End of Story](#) (Harper \$30). **Out in February, Signed here March 14.** Do order early to secure your first print. This is Finn’s first book since his bestseller [The Woman in the Window](#) (\$17.99) and again, a house is a key element in this San Francisco Gothic.

Enter the world of Sebastian Trapp, a reclusive novelist made rich by a long-running detective series and notorious by personal tragedy. On New Year’s Eve 20 years earlier, Sebastian’s first wife and teen age son disappeared from separate locations, and Sebastian remains, in the public eye, the primary person of interest. Recently diagnosed with kidney failure and given months to live, Sebastian invites—to the consternation of his second wife, Diana, and adult daughter, Madeleine—Manhattan crime fiction critic Nicky Hunter to move into his Victorian San Francisco mansion while interviewing him for a private memoir. From there, a cat-and-mouse game unfolds as Nicky and Sebastian, both charming but equally unreliable, chase each other through the labyrinth of Sebastian’s life toward the secrets at its core. Meanwhile, Madeleine receives unsettling texts from someone purporting to be her long-lost younger sibling. “Given the grand surroundings and rich array of eccentric characters, comparisons to *the Knives Out* film franchise will be inevitable.”

French, Tana. [The Hunter](#) (Viking \$32). In 2020's [The Searcher](#) (\$18), "Cal Hooper, is an ex-cop from Chicago who's seeking a measure of peace by moving to a remote village in western Ireland. Instead, a rebellious, preteen outcast named Trey Reddy enlists his help in finding her missing brother. As Cal soon learns, Ardnakelty's hills are roiling with "unseen things"; the close-knit community is claustrophobic and self-policing. Its tacit rules and codes prove nearly impenetrable. In "The Hunter," Cal, two years older, is still living in Ardnakelty. By now, rural Ireland has lost its romantic charm, but he has found actual romance with a local woman, Lena, and developed a paternal relationship with the teenage Trey. Smart, angry and talented, Trey — who helps Cal refinish and repair old furniture — has earned the grudging respect of villagers slow to relinquish their idea of the Reddy family as the anointed town losers. When Trey's feckless father, Johnny, reappears, he's trailing get-rich-quick schemes and a wealthy Londoner eager to reconnect with his roots — a "plastic paddy" filled with dreams of the Ould Sod. Cal and Lena want Trey to stay well clear, but she has different ideas. This is more than a teenager's rebellion; what Trey can't see is that the adults are battling for her future in a place where fatalism has just about taken the place of religion." And one of the men is no stranger: he's Trey's father....

Fusilli, Jim. [The Price You Pay](#) (Down & Out Books \$18). Patrick, making this the **March Hardboiled/Noir Book of the Month**, reviews: "Set in the mid-1970's Jersey City, Fusilli's terrific new crime epic. Young Mickey Wright comes of age during the violent reign of the Genovese crime family. Wright mourns the death of his mother, who did her best to give her son a solid moral compass, and is forced by his crooked cop father to get a job for a trucking operation run by the Teamsters and the mob. His illusions about the world are compromised quickly when he learns about the murder of a black trucker and the subsequent cover up. Mickey's girlfriend Debbie comes from a different, solidly middle class world, and she shares his idealistic views. Can Mickey escape from the clutches of fate to create a different life for himself, or will he succumb to the streets? Fans of Dennis Lehane and Don Winslow will love this one."

Gardner, Lisa. [Still See You Everywhere](#) (Grand Central \$29.99). **Our copies come with a specially designed Frankie Elkin bookmark, with QR code to a Frankie Elkin survival guide that Lisa is writing for this, Frankie's 3rd case.**

Frankie Elkin is an expert at finding the missing persons that the rest of the world has forgotten, but even she couldn't have anticipated this latest request—to locate the long-lost sister of a female serial killer facing execution in three weeks' time. The case was sensational. Kaylee Pierson had confessed from the very beginning, waived all appeals. Despite the media's chronicling of her tragic circumstances—the childhood spent with a violent father—no one could find sympathy for "the Beautiful Butcher" who had led eighteen men home from bars before viciously slitting their throats. Now, with only twenty-one days left to live, Pierson has finally received a lead on the whereabouts of the sister who was kidnapped over a decade ago, and she needs Frankie's help to find her. Frankie lands on a remote island in the middle of the Pacific where she goes undercover at the base camp. Her challenge: A dozen strangers. Countless dangerous secrets. Zero means of calling for help. And then the storm rolls in.... This [fabulous series](#) could be read in order.

Gudenkauf, Heather. [Everyone is Watching](#) (Park Row \$30). Five contestants have been chosen to compete for ten million dollars on the game show *One Lucky Winner*. The catch? None of them knows what (or who) to expect, and it will be live streamed all over the world. Completely secluded in an estate in Northern California, with strict instructions not to leave the property and zero contact with the outside world, the competitors start to feel a little too isolated. When long-kept secrets begin to rise to the surface, the contestants realize this is no longer just a reality show—someone is out for blood. "As addictive as the reality TV shows it's inspired by. *Big Brother* meets *Clue* in this utterly original and incredibly tense locked-room mystery. I couldn't tear myself away from it!" —May Cobb. Note: this is not a Locked Room Mystery, it's a Christie closed circle structure. Library Reads add, "This is a delicious book to be devoured in one binge reading session."

Jones, Stephen Graham. [The Angel of Indian Lake](#) (Saga Press \$28.99). The final installment in the lauded trilogy of Graham's horror novels picks up four years after [Don't Fear the Reaper](#) (\$18.99). It's been four years in prison since Jade Daniels last saw her hometown of Proofrock, Idaho, the day she took the fall, protecting her friend Letha and her family from incrimination. Since then, her reputation, and the town, has changed dramatically. There's a lot of unfinished business in Proofrock, from serial killer cultists to the rich trying to buy Western authenticity. But there's one aspect of Proofrock no one wants to confront...until Jade comes back to town. The curse of the Lake Witch is waiting.... Begin this with [My Heart Is a Chainsaw](#) (\$17.99). Jones has signed them all for us. Yay!

Jones, Stephen Mack. [Deus X](#) (Soho \$27.95). Lesa reviews: "Donut shops that employ skilled killers, young hackers planning revenge, and midnight meetings at rundown cathedrals are typical of this Hammett Award—winning series set in Detroit. Ex-cop August Snow received a \$12 million settlement from the city after he was fired and is using the money to restore his beloved neighborhood. While doing that, he's built a found family, including two elderly neighbors, a young hacker, his godfather, and a Franciscan priest, Father Grabowski, who was beloved by August's mother and abruptly retired following the hanging death of a young priest in a neighboring suburb. Put the suicide and retirement together with the sudden appearance of a priest who claims to be from the Vatican, and threatening phone calls to the retired priest, and Snow is suspicious....with grounds... There's a face-off between organized religion and friendship in a gritty crime novel for fans of Joe Ide's "IQ" series or David Heska Wanbli Weiden's *Winter Counts*."

Larson, Erik. [Demon of Unrest](#) (Crown \$35). Tip ins. Larson brings to life the pivotal five months between the election of Abraham Lincoln and the start of the Civil War—a slow-burning crisis that finally tore a deeply divided nation in two.

Maldonado, Isabella. [A Forgotten Kill](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$16.99). FBI Special Agent Daniela "Dani" Vega was seventeen when her mother murdered her father. Ten years after Dani's own damning eyewitness testimony sealed her mother's fate, she's starting to have doubts. What if she got it all wrong? A veteran NYPD homicide detective agrees to reopen the closed case on one condition—Dani must help him find a serial killer who's been operating throughout New York City for the past decade.

If anyone can decipher his patterns, and his riddles, it's a trained code breaker like Dani. The killer knows this too. And his next riddle—and victim—is meant just for her.

Fun fact: Isabella is teaming up with Jeffery Deaver to write an August 6 release: [Fatal Intrusion](#) (\$28.99). I'm fairly sure they will debut it here at The Pen.

Massey, Sujata. [The Mistress of Bhatia House](#) (Soho \$27.95). Sujata was unable to visit us last summer but she's here March 11 with fellow Soho author Jones. Set in 1922 India, the provocative fourth entry in her Perveen Mistry finds Perveen, Bombay's only female solicitor, volunteering to defend a young ayah who has been arrested for inducing her own abortion. The woman denies she was ever pregnant, and as Perveen investigates, she slowly uncovers corruption, fraud, and possibly murder, all tied to the misappropriation of funds raised for a women's hospital. Things get more complicated when Perveen's sister-in-law, suffering from severe postpartum depression, leaves her newborn with Perveen's parents and goes home to her mother. The complex mystery sometimes takes a backseat to Massey's deep dive into social issues during the Raj, especially the lack of rights for women of all classes. [This historical mystery series](#) is well worth reading from the beginning.

Mayo, Jonathan. [Smart, Wrong, And Lucky: The Origin Story of Baseball's Unexpected Stars](#) (Triumph \$28). In the plainest of terms, baseball scouts are tasked with seeing the future—a distant future, at that. Baseball's long developmental arc leaves room for plenty of twists and turns on the way to The Show. Mayo features "exclusive interviews with scouts, players, coaches, and more, this fascinating collection of origin stories is an ode to baseball's endless possibilities"—just in time for Spring Training.

✦ McDonough, Patrice. [Murder by Lamplight](#) (Kensington \$27). Lesa reviews our **March Historical Fiction Book of the Month**: This atmospheric, strong debut features two intriguing lead characters. After medical school in Philadelphia, Dr. Julia Lewis is one of Britain's first woman physicians. In 1866, that's still so unusual that Scotland Yard Inspector Richard Tennant is appalled when Dr. Lewis, and not her grandfather, shows up to help at his crime scene. Although this is her first crime scene, Dr. Lewis capably handles the gruesome murder. It's only the first of several, as a serial killer taunts Tennant with handwritten notes. Tennant, his team, and Dr. Lewis attempt to connect the victims through lifestyles and workhouses. As the working-class and poverty-stricken people of London suffer from cholera and typhus, and Dr. Lewis tries to help them, she gets closer and closer to a murderer who is watching. Although she doesn't fit the killer's M.O., a twisted mind can find its own pattern. While Scotland Yard looks in other directions, Julia's guesses about a troubled childhood are the clues that ultimately lead to a surprising villain, one too close for comfort. Fans of Victorian mysteries, medical mysteries, and detective duos will appreciate this historical suspense as will fans of Andrea Penrose or Ritu Mukerji's 2024 Edgar-nominated debut [Murder by Degrees](#) (Simon & Schuster \$27.99), a 2023 Historical Mystery Book of the Month.

Orange, Tommy. [Wandering Stars](#) (Knopf \$29). Tip ins. The sequel to his acclaimed debut, *There There* (\$17), follows the Bear Shield-Red Feather family as they deal with the fallout from a shooting at an Oakland powwow. Colorado, 1864. Star,

a young survivor of the Sand Creek Massacre, is brought to the Fort Marion prison castle, where he is forced to learn English and practice Christianity by Richard Henry Pratt, an evangelical prison guard who will go on to found the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, an institution dedicated to the eradication of Native history, culture, and identity. A generation later, Star's son, Charles, is sent to the school, where he is brutalized by the man who was once his father's jailer. Under Pratt's harsh treatment, Charles clings to moments he shares with a young fellow student, Opal Viola, as the two envision a future away from the institutional violence that follows their bloodlines.

Patterson, James/Nancy Allen. [The #1 Lawyer](#) (LittleBrown \$30). Signed Bookplate by Patterson. Stafford Lee Penney is a small-town lawyer with a big-time reputation for winning every case he tries. In his sharp suits and polished Oxford shoes, Penney is Biloxi, Mississippi's #1 Lawyer and top local celebrity. Just as Penney notches his latest courtroom victory, his wife is scandalously killed. He spirals into a legal and personal losing streak, damaging his reputation and ruining his career. That's when Penney makes a bold decision. He stops trading on his power-lawyer identity and creates a new one: lawyer lifeguard. Moonlighting at the beach, showing up to court in flip-flops, mentoring a law student, the new Penney is at first unrecognizable. And then he's arrested for murder....

Peikoff, Kira. [Baby X](#) (Crooked Lane \$30.99). In the near-future United States, where advanced technology can create egg or sperm from any person's cells, celebrities face the alarming potential of meeting biological children they never conceived. Famous singer Trace Thorne is tired of being targeted by the Vault, a black market site devoted to stealing DNA. Sick of paying ransom money for his own cell matter, he hires bio-security guard Ember Ryan to ensure his biological safety. Ember will do anything she can to protect her clients—and she does. The plotting is terrific, with a knockout final twist, the characterizations rich, and the premise fabulous. I was riveted. Fans of Rob Hart, Blake Crouch, and a host of thriller writers, this is for you.

Phillips, Susan Elizabeth. [Simply the Best](#) (Harper \$30). I can't begin to say how much I love this book. It has everything a great novel should have and you end up feeling uplifted. It's genius to combine a sports agent and an aspiring chocolatier, set them at odds in Chicago, then pull in a large cast where everyone turns out to be so much more than when you first meet them. In its way it scores a win for Women's History Month and so it is our **March Notable New Fiction Book of the Month**.

Pulley, Natasha. [The Mars House](#) (Gollancz UK \$45). We have a few signed UK copies coming. See *Some New March Hardcover* for a review of another imaginative and amazing book by Britain's Pulley.

✦ Raybourn, Deanna. [A Grave Robbery](#) (Penguin \$28). Yay, love this series. Lesa reviews: "The Earl of Rosemorran, patron and employer for Veronica Speedwell and Stoker, brings Stoker a new project. The earl has purchased a crystal casket containing a life-size waxwork sleeping beauty, and he wants Stoker to install a clockwork mechanism to make the figure appear to breathe. When Stoker makes the first cut, he discovers that the sleeping beauty is an actual human body disguised as an anatomical waxwork. He wants to identify her and provide a proper burial,

while Veronica wants to find out if the woman died by suicide or was murdered. Their misadventures take them from a Victorian circus to a mortuary and underground railroad. In order to catch a villain, the couple recruit allies, including a woman reporter, a Scotland Yard detective, a hermit, and an undertaker. The entire team is needed to launch Veronica's audacious scheme to substitute herself for the waxen beauty. But Veronica makes a costly mistake when she underestimates her opponent."

Rose, Karen. [Cheater](#) (Penguin \$28). **Signed here April 6.** Death is not an unfamiliar visitor to Shady Oaks Retirement Village, which provides San Diego with premier elderly support from independent retiree housing to full-time hospice care. But when a resident's body is found brutally stabbed and his apartment ransacked, it's clear there's someone deadly in their community. Detective Katherine "Kit" McKittrick quickly discovers that Shady Oaks is full of skeleton-riddled closets, and most tenants prefer to keep their doors firmly closed to the SDPD.

Ruffin, Maurice Carlos. [The American Daughters](#) (Random \$28). Tip ins. Ady, a curious, sharp-witted girl, and her fierce mother, Sanite, are inseparable. But enslaved to a businessman in the French Quarter of New Orleans, mother and daughter are separated, Ady is left hopeless and directionless until she stumbles into the Mockingbird Inn and meets Lenore, a free Black woman with whom she becomes fast friends. Lenore invites Ady to join a clandestine society of spies called the Daughters. With the courage instilled in her by Sanite—and with help from these strong women—Ady learns how to put herself first while working to undermine the Confederates.

Ryan, Hank Phillippi. [One Wrong Word](#) (Forge \$28.99). One wrong word can ruin your life. And no one knows that better than Boston's savvy crisis management expert Arden Ward. But here comes a shocking crisis of her own when she's unfairly accused of having an affair with a powerful client. She's given an ultimatum: she has just two weeks to save her career and her reputation. Is Cordelia Bannister the answer? Cordelia needs Arden's help for her husband Ned, a Boston real estate mogul. Though he was recently acquitted in fatally running over a drunk in a parking garage, his reputation is ruined, and the fallout is devastating not only to the Bannisters' lives, but the lives of their two children. Under pressure from her hard-driving boss, Arden devotes her skill and determination—and maybe her final days on the job—to helping this shattered family, but soon, unsettling revelations begin to emerge. And then—another car crash throws Ned back into the spotlight, upping the pressure on Arden to protect her own future. But the more she tries to untangle the truth, the more elusive it proves to be. As in the Phillip's book above, characters turn out to be more than first presented. It's a nifty hat trick gracing our **March Crime Collectors Book of the Month**.

Scottoline, Lisa. [The Truth about the Devlins](#) (Putnam \$29.95). The ne'er-do-well son of a successful Irish American family gets dragged into criminal complications that threaten to undo it. The first 35 years in the life of Thomas "TJ" Devlin have been one disappointment after another to his parents, lawyers who founded a prosperous insurance and reinsurance firm, and his more successful siblings, John and Gabby. A longtime alcoholic who's been unemployable ever since he did time for an incident involving his ex-girlfriend Carrie's then 2-year-old daughter, TJ

is nominally an investigator for Devlin & Devlin, but everyone knows the post is a sinecure. Things change dramatically when golden-boy John tells TJ that he just killed Neil Lemaire, an accountant for D&D client Runstan Electronics. Their speedy return to the murder scene reveals no corpse, so the brothers breathe easier—until Lemaire turns up shot to death in his car. John's way of avoiding anything that might jeopardize his status as heir apparent to D&D is to throw TJ under the bus. And then....

St. Clair, Scarlett. [Touch of Chaos Indie Exclusive Edition](#) (Sourcebooks \$26.99). Tip ins. The world will burn in the final installment of Scarlett St. Clair's bestselling Hades X Persephone saga.

St James, Simone. [Murder Road](#) (Berkley \$29). In July 1995, newlyweds April and Eddie Carter are on the way to their honeymoon resort when a wrong turn down a deserted road turns deadly. Stopping to pick up a lone female hitchhiker in the dark Michigan woods, they realize she is gravely injured and bleeding, and a black truck is suddenly barreling down upon them. The nearest hospital is in Coldlake Falls, where the young woman dies, and the local police have questions for the Carters... lots of them. Witnesses-turned-suspects, April and Eddie must find a way to clear their names, while also grappling with the history of the Atticus Line—that same road where a string of unsolved murders over two decades haunts the town. Along with a little help from savvy locals and curious teenage sleuths, April and Eddie dig deeper into a case long grown cold, while also wrestling with their own haunted secrets. St. James's intricate plot skillfully mixes gumshoe detective work with unexpected supernatural chills."—*LJ* Starred Review

Tata, AJ. [The Phalanx Code](#) (St Martins \$29). Early on, Lt. General Garrett receives an unexpected pardon from U.S. president Kim Campbell, but he's liberated by Jake Mahegan, his former colleague on the secretive Dagger team, before official channels can reach him. The rest of the Dagger team gathers in Wyoming at the underground complex of billionaire tech mogul Mitch Drewson, who warns Garrett that his business rival, Aurelius Blanc, is on the cusp of establishing a technofascist "global security state." Coding savant Misha Constance and French cryptologist Evelyn Champollion attempt to break Blanc's Phalanx Code, an encrypted "kill list" of Garrett's inner circle, as he contends with a series of explosive family revelations.

☒ Tremayne, Peter. [Made for Murders](#) (Headline \$44). And how great that the author of the many Sister Fidelma mysteries set in medieval Ireland is diving into Elizabethan England. It is the early 1600s and the City of London sees Queen Elizabeth living out her dying days as Scottish King James waits in the wings to take to the throne. Meanwhile, in Southwark, along the south bank of the River Thames, Master Hardy Drew, Constable of the Bankside Watch, maintains law and order amongst the cut-throats and smugglers, in the taverns and brothels, as well as with the gentlefolk, who flock across the river to enjoy the latest plays by Shakespeare and Jonson. In twelve enthralling murder mysteries, brought together in this captivating collection of short stories, Master Hardy Drew confronts mystery and murder most foul and learns that deaths come cheaply on the Bankside Watch....

Unger, Lisa. [The New Couple in 5B](#) (Park Row \$28.99). The always surprising Unger deploys spine-tingling locations with

great skill. Here she has created a Manhattan apartment Gothic. *Kirkus Reviews* thinks so too and gives this a Star: “New Yorkers Rosie and Chad Lowan have spent most of the first year of their marriage caring for his dying uncle Ivan. Rosie expects Ivan’s long-estranged daughter, Dana, to inherit his dreamy Park Avenue apartment, so she’s shocked to discover after his death that he’s left it to her and Chad. It’s a huge boon—Chad is an aspiring actor, and Rosie has published one bestselling true-crime book but is struggling to start a second, so money is always tight. The apartment in the elegant, century-old Windermere is not just a place to live but a multi-million-dollar asset. Dana, however, is not just surprised to be cut out of Ivan’s will but furious. The couple’s joy is marred not only by her rage but by odd goings-on in the building. At the behest of her editor and BFF, Max, Rosie focuses her next book on the Windermere’s grisly history of residents who died in murders, suicides, and bizarre accidents. Does the building bear some sort of curse—and if so, is it all in the past?” Finish the book, then read the Afterword which illuminates Unger’s personal journey behind the story.

Winter, Ben H. [Big Time](#) (Little Brown \$29), which begins with Allie trapped in a car with her captor, “is a weird and wonderful cautionary tale about futuristic technology run amok. It features the month’s most engaging investigator, a schlumpy bureaucrat roused to action.”—*NYTBR*. A Starred Review: “Winters plays with readers’ expectations like a virtuoso in this stellar technological thriller, which opens on a nightmare situation and never takes its foot off the gas. New mom Allie Zerkofsky, a self-described “regular boring middle-school teacher,” and her infant, Rachel, are abducted from a New Jersey playground by two assailants, who separate them. When Allie asks her abductor what will happen to Rachel, however, her abductor says she has no idea what baby Allie is referring to. Allie’s responding howls of grief distract the kidnapper, leading to a car crash and enabling Allie to escape. Winters then introduces Grace Berney, an attorney for the FDA’s Center for Devices and Radiological Health, whose boss asks her to trace an unusual medical device implanted in an unidentified amnesiac female patient—whose injuries readers will recognize as matching Allie’s. Grace’s digging leads to the defunct Substance Material Group, a business that had been exploring a new theory about time. Winters’s many jaw-dropping plot twists are always grounded in pitch-perfect depictions of ordinary people caught up in extraordinary events. Blake Crouch fans will be in heaven.”

Lou Berney adds, “*Big Time* is a wild and wonderful trip, a kaleidoscope of mind-bending science, metaphysics, and good old-fashioned thrills. And most engaging of all are the characters Ben Winters creates: a hugely appealing Everywoman sleuth, a young woman struggling with a harrowing dilemma, and one of the scariest antagonists in recent memory.”

CLASSICS

Davis, Richard. [In the Fog](#) (Poisoned Pen Press \$16.99). This Library of Congress Crime Classic edited by Leslie S. Klinger begins on the evening following the great fog of 1897, as four strangers are dining at an exclusive gentleman’s club, while a fifth, Sir Andrew, is just finishing the last few pages of a pulp mystery novel. As Sir Andrew rises to leave, a visiting American diplomat announces that the previous evening, he stumbled upon the scene of a double murder which has left Scotland Yard

detectives baffled. Sir Andrew listens raptly as each diner in turn each adds his own bits of background and theories about who could have killed the Russian princess and the young British adventurer.

Hitchens, Dolores. [The Cat Wears a Noose](#) (Penzler \$15.95). Walking home wearily from an evening spent poring over the books of the Parchly Heights Methodist Ladies’ Aid searching for a fifty-eight-cent error, Miss Jennifer Murdock becomes witness to a terrible scene: A man, stumbling drunk, arrives home—and just as he fumbles with his keys, gunfire erupts and kills him on the spot. Jennifer is determined not to tell her sister, Rachel, anything about it. After all, Rachel considers herself a sleuth, or as Jennifer views it, a busybody who pokes her nose in places it doesn’t belong. What she doesn’t know is what Rachel is up to.... This American Mystery Classic was previously published under the pseudonym D.B. Olsen.

Reilly, Helen. [McKee of Centre Street](#) (Penzler \$15.95). Another American Mystery classic, reissued for the first time eighty years. It is one of the first police procedurals ever written by a woman. When one of New York’s favorite dancers is killed in a crowded high-tone speakeasy, everyone present becomes a suspect—and those that may have eluded questioning as well. It’s up to Inspector McKee of the NYPD to sift through the witness statements, separate fact from fiction, and put together a picture of the crime as it happened in order to discover what’s missing from the official narrative. And in the process, he’ll uncover a story that leads back into the past, with blackmail and stolen emeralds lurking in the shadows.... As McKee’s case comes into focus, a rich and confounding mystery plot is revealed, which will take all of the inspector’s resources to solve. Along the way, the inner workings of the New York City police department in the 1930s is on full display, including the line-ups, the radio room, the morgue, and the fingerprinting -technologies that were at the cutting edge of the era’s fight against crime.

Silko, Leslie Marmon. [Ceremony](#) (Penguin \$30). The Penguin Classics Deluxe Edition contains a new preface by the author and an introduction by Larry McMurry. More than 35 years since its original publication, *Ceremony* remains one of the most profound and moving works of Native American literature, a novel that is itself a ceremony of healing. Tayo, a World War II veteran of mixed ancestry, returns to the Laguna Pueblo Reservation. He is deeply scarred by his experience as a prisoner of the Japanese and further wounded by the rejection he encounters from his people. Only by immersing himself in the Indian past can he begin to regain the peace that was taken from him. Masterfully written and filled with the somber majesty of Pueblo myth. We were fortunate that she came to visit us years ago. The older paperback edition is [Ceremony](#) (\$18).

ST PATRICK’S DAY READING

Banville, John. [Snow](#) (\$16.99). This one-off by Banville (who abandoned his crime alias Benjamin Black) is a terrific Irish country house murder, classic in form. Detective Inspector St. John Strafford has been summoned to County Wexford to investigate a murder. A parish priest has been found dead in Ballyglass House, the family seat of the aristocratic, secretive Osborne family. The year is 1957 and the Catholic Church rules Ireland with an iron fist. Strafford—flinty, visibly Protestant and determined to identify the murderer—faces obstruction at every turn....

Berry, Flynn. [Northern Spy](#) (\$18). From 2021, The Indie Next Pick: “This emotionally rich espionage story set in present-day Ireland looks at a country divided, the invisibility of motherhood, and the bonds of family that can supersede all else. It is the story of two sisters, one a paramedic and one a BBC news service employee. When one sister is apparently part of an IRA attack, the other refuses to believe it and sets out to prove her sister’s innocence. I read this in one sitting — compelling is not a strong enough adjective for this thrilling novel!” So did I, this is a superb look at Belfast as well as difficult ethics and actions. So excited to say that Berry has a new book in June when we hope to see her here.

Bowen, Rhys. [Wild Irish Rose](#) (\$17). New York, 1907: Now that she’s no longer a private detective—at least not officially—Molly Murphy Sullivan, mother and wife, misses investigating. One freezing day Molly decides to accompany friends to Ellis Island to help distribute clothing to immigrants in need. This journey quickly stirs up memories for Molly—and one person looks like a dead ringer for Molly herself. That evening her police captain husband Daniel is late returning home. He comes with a tale to tell: there was a murder on Ellis Island that day, and the main suspect is that spitting image of Molly, one Rose McSweeney. The circumstances are eerily similar to when Molly herself arrived on Ellis Island and was falsely accused of a crime, so she resolves to clear Rose’s name despite Daniel’s opposition. See Signed Books for the sequel.

Brannigan, Ellie. [Murder at an Irish Castle](#) (Crooked Lane \$18.99). Rayne McGrath who hits her 30th birthday thinking her bridal wear designer business on Rodeo Drive and her engagement promise a secure future, one she’ll love. And then boom, it all goes bust. Bust just in time for her to be pressured into flying to Ireland where her Uncle Nevin’s will comes as a new surprise. He’s left her the run-down family castle and worse, if she can’t turn its finances around the whole village will go under too. And wait—maybe Uncle Nevin was murdered. It’s not the set up that’s wildly original, it’s the solutions to the various vexing problems including his death that make this a standout.

Bruen, Ken. Bruen, Ken. [Galway Confidential](#) (Penzler \$26.95). Galway private eye Jack Taylor awakens from an 18-month coma to a raging pandemic, two serial felons, and a most unexpected savior called Raftery. Jack doesn’t know the man, but the former U.S. Marine, who’s taken time out from his podcast, Galway Confidential, to visit Jack every day since rescuing him from a knife-wielding attacker, is at his side when he comes around. The rest of their city isn’t doing so well under a series of vicious attacks. Jack reluctantly agrees to investigate. “As usual with Bruen, the mystery is mainly an excuse for an unblinkered tour of the local lowlifes, its focus strategically blurred by shots of Jameson whiskey and throwaway apothegms,” typical of all 17 books in this series. My favorite remains the first: [The Guards](#) (\$16.99).

Coughlan, Claire. [Where They Lie](#) (Harper \$18.99). This literary thriller is set in Dublin where in 1943, actress Julia Bridges disappears. Last seen entering the house of Gloria Fitzpatrick who is later put on trial for the murder of a woman whose abortion she facilitated. Julia’s body has never been found, nor proof that Gloria, sentenced to an institution for the criminally insane where she committed suicide, had any role in Julia’s death.

Skip to 1968. Nicoletta Sarto is an ambitious young reporter at the Irish Sentinel when the bones of Julia are unearthed in the garden of a house on the city’s outskirts. Just like that, Nicoletta is plunged into the underworld of the Dublin illegal abortion industry—and into her own past.

Deibel, Jennifer. [The Irish Matchmaker](#) (Baker \$16.99). As daughter of a well-known matchmaker, Catriona Daly is no stranger to the business of love—and sees it as her ticket away from the sleepy village that only comes alive during the annual matchmaking festival. Enter Lord Osborne’s son, Andrew, and shy cattle farmer Donal Bunratty is in desperate need of a wife after loss left him to handle the farm and raise his daughter on his own. Both of them eye the matchmaker’s daughter...

Egan, Timothy. [The Immortal Irishman](#) (\$22.99). A dashing young orator during the Great Hunger of the 1840s, Thomas Francis Meagher led a failed uprising against British rule, for which he was banished to a Tasmanian prison colony for life. But two years later he was “back from the dead” and in New York, instantly the most famous Irishman in America. Meagher’s rebirth included his leading the newly formed Irish Brigade in many of the fiercest battles of the Civil War. Afterward, he tried to build a new Ireland in the wild west of Montana — a quixotic adventure that ended in the great mystery of his disappearance, which Egan resolves convincingly at last.

Fanning, Kieran. [Irish Fairy Tales, Myths, and Legends](#) (\$17.99). This UK import presents a collection of much loved Irish fairy tales, myths and legends, bound into a beautiful new edition. Enjoy the rich mythical history of Ireland from the arrival of the Tuatha De Danann on the island and their great battles with the Fomorians right up to the modern day fairytales of Irish storytelling. Including the Ulster Cycle, and the Fenian Cycle, the book features heroes such as Cuchulainn and Fionn Mac Cumhaill, and many traditional favorites such as The Children of Lir.

French, Tana. [In the Woods](#) (\$18). The first in the internationally bestselling Dublin Murder Squad series (and a 2007 First Mystery Book of the Month) is as the *NY Times* calls it “Required reading for anyone who appreciates tough, unflinching intelligence and ingenious plotting.” As dusk approaches a small Dublin suburb in the summer of 1984, mothers begin to call their children home. But on this warm evening, three children do not return from the dark and silent woods. When the police arrive, they find only one child.... We recommend all of French’s work which you can find [HERE](#). The latest is [The Hunter](#) (Viking \$32).

Howard, Catherine Ryan. [56 Days](#) (\$15.99). This is the only novel set in the current pandemic that I’ve enjoyed and in fact the structure of the story, where two people, Ciara and Oliver, barely acquainted decide to ride it out together in Oliver’s apartment in Dublin, demands the lock-down. We recommend [Ryan’s other novels](#) as well.

Keefe, Patrick Raden. [Say Nothing](#) (\$20). Jean McConville’s abduction was one of the most notorious episodes of the vicious conflict known as The Troubles. Everyone in the neighborhood knew the I.R.A. was responsible. But in a climate of fear and paranoia, no one would speak of it. In 2003, five years after an accord brought an uneasy peace to Northern Ireland, a set of human bones was discovered on a beach. McConville’s children

knew it was their mother when they were told a blue safety pin was attached to the dress. “In this meticulously reported book—as finely paced as a novel—Keefe uses McConville’s murder as a prism to tell the history of the Troubles in Northern Ireland. Interviewing people on both sides of the conflict, he transforms the tragic damage and waste of the era into a searing, utterly gripping saga.” —*NYT Book Review*

McCormack, Mike. [This Plague of Souls](#) (Soho \$27). Nealon returns from prison to his house in the West of Ireland to find it empty. No heat or light, no sign of his wife or child. It is as if the world has forgotten or erased him. Then he starts getting calls from a man who claims to know what’s happened to his family—a man who’ll tell Nealon all he needs to know in return for a single meeting. In a hotel lobby, in the shadow of an unfolding terrorist attack, Nealon and the man embark on a conversation shot through with secrets and evasions, a verbal game of cat and mouse that leaps from Nealon’s past and childhood to the motives driving a series of international crimes launched against “a world so wretched it can only be redeemed by an act of revenge.” “McCormack’s existential noir is a terse and brooding exploration of the connections between rural Ireland and the globalized cruelties of the 21st century.”

McDermid, Val. [Still Life](#) (\$17). This gloriously plotted and paced police procedural featuring Glasgow’s Karen Pirie begins with a body found near Edinburgh in the Firth of Forth but segues to Ireland for some great action that includes a historic disappearance, art forgery, and secret identities—that seems to orbit around a painting copyist who can mimic anyone from Holbein to Hockney. Meanwhile, a traffic crash leads to the discovery of a skeleton in a suburban garage. The whole is marvelous but the scenes where Pirie runs her basically undercover investigation in Ireland are the highlight.

McKinty, Adrian. [The Cold, Cold Ground](#) (\$15.95). 1981, Northern Ireland. Belfast at the height of the Troubles, brilliantly rendered. Hunger strikes, riots, power cuts, a homophobic serial killer with a penchant for opera, and a young woman’s suicide that may yet turn out to be murder: on the surface, the events are unconnected, but then things—and people—aren’t always what they seem. Detective Sergeant Duffy is the man tasked with trying to get to the bottom of it all. It’s no easy job—especially when it turns out that one of the victims was involved in the IRA but was last seen discussing business with someone from the loyalist Ulster Volunteer Force. Add to this the fact that, as a Catholic policeman, it doesn’t matter which side he’s on, because nobody trusts him, and Sergeant Duffy really is in a no-win situation. Order the rest of the [Sean Duffys](#) too including 2023’s [The Detective Up Late](#) (Blackstone \$26.99).

McTiernan, Dervla. [The Ruin](#) (\$16). This first for Detective Cormac Reilly is a bestseller here at The Pen. When Aisling Conroy’s boyfriend Jack is found in the freezing black waters of the river Corrib in Ireland, the police tell her it was suicide. She throws herself into work, trying to forget—but Jack’s sister Maude reappears in Ireland after years abroad, determined to prove Jack was murdered. Meanwhile, Detective Cormac Reilly, who was recently transferred to Galway from his squad in Dublin, is assigned to dig into a cold case from twenty years ago—the seeming overdose of Jack and Maude’s drug and alcohol addled mother. This unsettling small-town noir draws us

deep into the dark heart of Ireland, where corruption, desperation, and crime run rife....

Meier, Leslie. [Irish Coffee Murder](#) (Kensington \$27). A trio of coffee-themed murders celebrates the wearing of the green. The novellas include step dancing and a ghost story. Try her [Irish Parade Murder](#) (\$8.99) too.

Murphy, Catie. [Dead in Dublin](#) (\$7.99). Ferrying tourists around Dublin for the Leprechaun Limo Service makes quite a change after years in the military. Still, Megan Malone is enjoying her life in Ireland. She likes the scenery, the easy pace, the quirky, quick-witted locals. Everything—except having one of her clients drop dead at the statue of fabled fishmonger, Molly Malone. Most restaurant critics notch up their share of enemies. Elizabeth Darr, however, was a well-loved international star. She and her husband, Simon, had just had dinner when Elizabeth collapsed, and spoiled seafood is the first suspect. The restaurant’s owner, worried her business is doomed, begs Megan to look into it. Between her irate boss and a handsome Garda who’s both amused and annoyed by her persistence, Megan has her hands full even before she’s cajoled into taking care of two adorable Jack Russell puppies—IMHO possibly one of the highest energy canines there is.

[Death by Irish Whiskey](#) (\$8.99) is the most recent entry in the cozy The Dublin Driver Mysteries. Megan Malone finds her relationship on the rocks when a double murder at the whiskey festival draws her in – despite promising her girlfriend she’d quit sleuthing for good...

Neville, Stuart. [The Ghosts of Belfast](#) (\$16.95). John Connolly calls this first of Neville’s Belfast Novels, winner of the *LA Times* Book Prize, “One of the best Irish novels, in any genre, of recent times.” Northern Ireland’s Troubles may be over, but peace has not erased the crimes of the past. Gerry Fegan, a former paramilitary contract killer, is haunted by the ghosts of the twelve people he slaughtered. Every night, at the point of losing his mind, he drowns their screams in drink. But it’s not enough. In order to appease the ghosts, Fegan is going to have to kill the men who gave him orders. From the greedy politicians to the corrupt security forces, the street thugs to the complacent bystanders who let it happen, all are called to account. But when Fegan’s vendetta threatens to derail a hard-won truce and destabilize the government, old comrades and enemies alike want him dead.

Don’t overlook [The House of Ashes](#) (\$16.99) and [The Traveller and Other Stories](#) (\$16.95), a darkly compelling collection of Northern Irish Noir which concludes with his long-awaited novella, “The Traveller,” the companion piece to *The Ghosts of Belfast* and *Collusion*.

O’Connor, Carlene. [Murder in an Irish Bookshop](#) (\$8.99). What better cozy read for March than this 7th in the Irish Village Mysteries that began with [Murder in an Irish Village](#) (\$8.99)? The opening of a bookshop in Kilbane, Ireland, is cause for celebration in Irish village Kilbane until its residents learn the shop is stocking only good literature and the co-owners, Oran and Padraig McCarthy, will let in only customers who can quote James Joyce or Seamus Heaney. When elderly Margaret O’Shea is found dead near the shop, gardaí Siobhán O’Sullivan is sure she died of natural causes, but when Siobhán tries to speak to Oran, his behavior strikes her as odd. She later wonders whether Oran’s antipathy to any fiction he doesn’t view as literary might

be connected to Margaret's death—and to the subsequent death of Deirdre Walsh, the self-published author of a dense literary novel, who collapses during a bookshop event. Order [all of this cheerful cozy series](#) in paperback and grab a SIGNED copy of the newest, [Murder at an Irish Chipper](#) (Kensington \$27). Who doesn't love fish and chips?

O'Rawe, Richard. [Northern Heist](#) (\$17.99). "O'Rawe channels both Elmore Leonard and Guy Ritchie in this heist thriller full of sharp twists and gritty dialogue, emerging with a style all his own. His reimagining of the real-life bank heist feels so authentic readers will hope he has a strong alibi. Ken Bruen fans won't want to miss this one." —*PW* Starred Review

Silva, Daniel. [The Marching Season](#) (\$9.99). The author of the superb Gabriel Allon spy series wrote a couple of thrillers for Michael Osborne. When the Good Friday peace accords are shattered with three savage acts of terrorism, Northern Ireland is blown back into the depths of conflict. And after his father-in-law is nominated to become the new American ambassador to London, retired CIA agent Michael Osbourne is drawn back into the game....

Slatter, AG. [All the Murmuring Bones](#) (Titan \$14.95). Set in a fantasy world reminiscent of 19th-century Ireland, this stunning gothic adventure shimmers with fairy tale enchantment. Miren O'Malley has lived her 18 years under the thumb of her overbearing grandmother, Aoife, the matriarch of the once powerful O'Malley dynasty, now paupers in a crumbling coastal mansion. Miren grew up with stories of her family sacrificing children to the sea-queen in return for their prosperity. But their line has been diluted—Miren's mother married an outsider and had only one child, leaving none to be sacrificed. To revive the family wealth, Aoife plans to marry Miren off to her rich and brutal cousin. But when Miren learns that her mother was a witch and that her supposedly long-dead parents are still alive, she finally takes control of her life and sets out to find them. While navigating the greed and arrogance of man and the magic of kelpies and merfolk, Miren vows to right her family's generations of wrongs

Taylor, Patrick. [A Dublin Student Doctor](#) (\$18.99). Doctor Fingal O'Reilly, the quarrelsome general practitioner of the small village of Ballybucklebo, wasn't always the man he is today. Taylor turns back the clock to give us a portrait of the young Fingal—and show us the pivotal events that shaped the man he would become. [Use this link](#) to browse the dozens of novels Taylor writes about Ireland. If you were a Maeve Binchy reader, try Taylor.

Taylor, Sarah Stewart. [The Mountains Wild](#) (\$12). This gem starts the Maggie D'Arcy series wherein the NJ homicide detective tackles the case that changed the course of her life (spoiler, she eventually moves to Ireland). "With its evocative Dublin setting, lyrical prose, tough but sympathetic heroine, and a killer twist in the plot, *The Mountains Wild* should top everyone's must-read lists."—Deborah Crombie. Order the whole D'Arcy series and preorder the August 2024 chapter.

Todd, Charles. [An Irish Hostage](#) \$16.99). The Great War is over—but in Ireland, in the wake of the bloody 1916 Easter Rising, anyone who served in France is now considered a traitor, including nurse Eileen Flynn and former soldier Michael

Sullivan, who only want to be married in the small, isolated village where she grew up. Even her grandmother is against it, and Eileen's only protection is her cousin Terrence who was a hero of the Rising and is still being hunted by the British. Bess Crawford had promised to be there for the wedding. And in spite of the danger to her, she keeps that promise—only to be met with the shocking news that the groom has vanished....

Tremayne, Peter. [Death of a Heretic](#) (Headline UK \$25 SIGNED), a Sister Fidelma medieval Ireland mystery, a richly imagined and researched mystery series.

COZIES

Adams, Ellery. [Paper Cuts](#) (\$17.95). The sixth entry in the Secret, Book, and Scone Society series finds bookstore owner Nora in a jam when the woman her husband left her for—who'd just extended an olive branch to Nora—turns up dead. Distraught, the bookseller turns to her "Society": a quartet of small-business owners in the fictional resort town of Miracle Springs, N.C. As gossip spreads, Nora befriends the deceased woman's young son, unleashing animosity from some townsfolk, and setting off a flurry of events that reunites a few families, causes ripples in a few more, and sends several characters to the ER.

Adams, Jenny. [A Deadly Endeavor](#) (Crooked Lane \$29.99). It's 1921. Edie Shippen has recently returned to Philadelphia from California, where she recovered from the Spanish flu, only to discover that her twin sister is engaged to her former lover, Theo. Adams infuses her locations "with fascinating historical color. She never quite strikes the proper balance between grit and froth, however. The result is an uneasy blend of dark thriller and silver-spoon cozy," says a favorable *PW* review. See Some New Hardcover for March for more.

☞ Ball, Jessica. [Miss Austen Investigates](#) (Union Square \$18.99). Our **March Cozy Crimes Book of the Month**. See Our March Large Paperback Picks for a rave review.

Childs, Laura. [Murder in the Tea Leaves](#) (Penguin \$28). When Theodosia Browning reads the tea leaves on the set of the movie, *Dark Fortunes*, things go from spooky to worse. Lights are dimmed, the camera rolls, and red hot sparks fly as the film's director is murdered in a tricky electrical accident. Or was it an accident? Though the cast and crew are stunned beyond belief, nobody admits to seeing a thing. And when Theodosia's friend, Delaine, becomes the prime suspect, Theodosia begins her own shadow investigation. 27th in a series set in Charleston which although much bigger than Cabot's Cove begins to resemble it.... Enjoy the recipes and Tea Time tips.

Duncan, Emmeline. [Death Unfiltered](#) (Kensington \$17.95). As the owner of Portland, Oregon's popular Ground Rules coffee cart, hard-working young master barista Sage Caplin is excited to expand her business with a brick-and mortar store. But Ground Rules isn't the only newcomer set to open in Portland's grand new Button Building. Fortunately, most of the fellow micro-restaurant owners and patrons are great—with two exceptions. There's Rose, a true-crime podcaster and active TikToker who's pestering Sage for an interview about her estranged con-artist mother; and Bianca, the familiar and perpetually unpleasant owner of Breakfast Bandits. Bianca is abrasive to everyone, so Sage doesn't feel singled out. . . . Until Bianca falls dead at the

building's grand opening—a to-go cup of Ground Rules coffee in her hand. Laced with Ketamine, also known as Special K.

Graves, Sarah. [Death by Chocolate Marshmallow Pie](#) (\$17.95). It's not all moonlight and roses for Jacobia Tiptree, known to Eastport's chocolate fans as Jake. Her father and stepmother are quarreling about his plans to move from the home they share with Jake into assisted living. Her son, Sam, and daughter-in-law, Mika, are having some yet-to-be-disclosed disagreement. And while drama dominates at home, there's also stress at work ever since Brad Fairway, whom Jake thinks she remembers vaguely from her days in New York laundering money for the mob, opens up high-end patisserie Choco's directly across Water Street from Jake and Ellie White's Chocolate Moose. But finding Brad shot to death in his shop proves no solution to Jake's business woes, since the local police immediately pounce on Ellie as their sole suspect. 6th in Graves' [Death by Chocolate](#) cozies.

Leigh, Sydney. [Peril in Pink](#) (Crooked Lane \$29.99). "Grab a bottle of rosé and get ready to enjoy all the vibes in this boutique cozy! It's the grand opening of the premiere girlcation destination, and the only thing more delicious than the temperamental rockstars are the signature pink cocktails. Host Jess and her crew are determined to deliver an Instagram-worthy weekend, but quickly learn that dealing with the posh guests at the trendiest new Hudson Valley B&B can be murder." —Olivia Blacke. And the untraditional B&B designed to cater to the hashtag crowd is a delight.

Maxwell, Jessa. [The Golden Spoon](#) (\$17). This country house/cooking school mystery debut morphs from a cozy into a soft thriller. I loved it, it was a 2023 First Mystery Club Book of the Month and a March Indie Next Pick: "Imagine *The Great British Baking Show* with a splash of Agatha Christie murder mystique. Interesting characters, intriguing subplots, and a fun setting kept me turning the pages." See Our March Large Paperback Picks for more.

Moore, Ian. [Death and Fromage](#) (Sourcebooks \$16.99). Proving that Paris doesn't have a monopoly on great French cuisine, tiny Saint-Sauver in the Loire Valley boasts not one but two Michelin-starred chefs. Guy Garçon is the future, explains food critic Auguste Tatillon. Tonight, however, belongs to three-starred Sébastien Grosmallard, owner of Les Gens Qui Mangent, who's celebrating his return to his hometown by hosting a tasting menu soirée. Although Tatillon believes Grosmallard's day has passed, patrons look forward eagerly to his signature dessert, *parfait de fromage de chèvre de Grosmallard*. But when the dish arrives, disaster! Grosmallard's son, Antonin, has made the fabled confection with vegan goat cheese! Tatillon pans the event, and the next day cheesemaker Fabrice Ménard is found dead in his own fermentation tank. Normally, Richard Ainsworth, who owns a bed and breakfast, is known in Saint-Sauver for his quiet demeanor, his love of American cinema, and his passing resemblance to *Downton Abbey*'s Lord Grantham. Yet again, egged on by his adventurous dinner partner, lovely Valérie d'Orçay, he decides that there's something suspicious about Ménard's death and agrees to help her investigate. Start with [Death and Croissants](#) (\$16.99).

Pandian, Gigi. [A Midnight Puzzle](#) (St Martins \$28). What do a family curse, an old theater, and the Secret Staircase Construction crew have in common? Former stage magician Tempest Raj,

returning for the third installment in Pandian's popular cozy series, is about to find out. Tempest's home-renovation company is being blamed by former client Julian Rhodes for causing his wife's "accidental" death. Meanwhile, the theater that Tempest has rented for her final performance appears to be haunted by the ghost of her mother. After Tempest finds Julian's corpse at the theater, the body count climbs, and she and her friends must discover not only who is setting the deadly booby traps at the theater but also how these events are tied to the deaths of Tempest's mother and aunt. The story arc of the Raj family curse concludes in this book, but there is still an opening for the series to continue with more magical illusions and classic mystery references to charm readers with more locked-room mysteries.

Perrin, Kristen. [How to Solve Your Own Murder](#) (Dutton \$28). First-time novelist Perrin delivers a spellbinding cozy mystery. **Our March British Crime Book of the Month** gets this top pick from Library Reads, echoed by me: "It's 1965, and Frances is at a country fair with her friends when she ducks into a fortune teller's tent and is given a fortune that predicts her murder. She then becomes obsessed with figuring out who will murder her. Many years later, when she sends for her great-niece, she starts a race against time for her murder to be solved. This novel is original, witty, and a real page-turner." The setting is the village of Castle Knoll and the story plays out in the present day. See Some Hardcover for March for more.

Osler, Rob. [Cirque Du Slay](#) (Crooked Lane \$29.99). Hayden McCall, a Seattle middle school teacher and gay dating blogger, gets involved with Magician Kennedy Osaka, the new artistic director of Mysterium, a contemporary circus, who has big plans to make it more exciting. Meanwhile, Hayden and his friend Hollister are treated to tickets to a VIP preview show by his neighbor Sarah Lee, Kennedy's old college roommate, who can't make it herself because she's getting ready for a fundraiser for Bakers Without Borders, where Kennedy has agreed to perform the next night. Before the world can see whether the magician's onstage chops are matched by her ability to herd Mysterium's cats, her leadership is cut short: Sarah Lee finds her in her room at the Park Olympic Hotel, stabbed to death with a pair of designer scissors. The hotel's security videos prove unhelpful, and the cops' interest in the case is limited to suspecting Sarah Lee, so Hayden and Hollister decide to investigate on their own.

Sutanto, Jesse Q. [The Good, The Bad, and The Aunties](#) (Berkley \$18). Sutanto's zany third and final adventure for newlywed Meddy Chan and her bighearted yet bullheaded aunts serves up all the mafia mix-ups and madcap chases that series fans have come to expect. Meddy and her well-mannered husband, Nathan, are honeymooning in France when they get a call from Meddy's mother inviting them to Jakarta to celebrate Chinese New Year with her large extended family. During the festivities, a cavalcade of sleek black cars arrive. From one of them emerges gangster Abraham "Abi" Lincoln, who, as a teen, was in love with Meddy's aunt Enjelin. He's come bearing gifts to the entire family in a bid to renew his courtship, but in a rush of excitement, an important document gets mixed in with the presents and then goes missing. Meddy, Nathan, and the aunties set out to retrieve it, only to fall into the middle of a vicious business rivalry that could endanger their lives. We will miss them. There is a hardcover too: [The Good, The Bad, and The Aunties](#) (Berkley \$29)

SOME NEW HARDCOVERS FOR MARCH

Adams, Jenny. [A Deadly Endeavor](#) (Crooked Lane \$29.99). I like the writing and the characters of this debut historical set in 1921 Philadelphia, not to mention Adams' scrutiny of the city's social classes and patrician families. Another plus is her vivid and sympathetic portrayal of the PTSD experienced by men who fought in the Great War. The thing preventing me from making this the March Historical Mystery of the Month is the pathology of the serial killer. It's as though Dr. Jekyll dropped into the story (sorry, a spoiler). Since rebellious socialite Edie Shippen and Dr. Gilbert Lawless, working in the city's coroner's office, are excellent lead characters I hope this is the start of a series as it has everything else going for it.

Adams, Parker. [The Lock Box](#) (Crooked Lane \$29.99). We live to read debuts and series starts and here is a thriller with a safecracker heroine landed in one stirring action scene after another as what appeared to be a routine job opening a safe in a spectacular Malibu mansion turns into a fight for her life. Escaping from the crew waylaying her at the mansion she thinks she's made a clean getaway only to be ambushed again at home and her young son Evan taken captive. So now she has to pull off a seemingly impossible new heist, breaking into the most secure safe ever designed. Parker, writer of other high stakes thrillers, clearly had to either practice or bone up on safecracking to write this. Among the reviews are this from Meg Gardiner. "A safecracking heroine, a devilish stew of villains, and a fiendishly deadly heist—*The Lock Box* has everything I love in a thriller. I couldn't put it down." —Meg Gardiner. Hank Phillippi Ryan adds, "Wow! A cinematic total immersion thriller, *The Lock Box* is instantly propulsive and lightning fast, with nonstop action and a riveting plot. But the brilliant safecracker Monna Locke is the star—she's my new favorite kick-ass character, with her mad skills and her tender heart."

Armentrout, Jennifer L./Rayvn Salvador. [Visions of Flesh and Blood](#) (Blue Box Press \$31.99) is a comprehensive companion guide to the Blood and Ash Series. Enjoy background, history, reader-favorite information, art, and reference materials. Combined with original short stories and scenes from some of the world's most beloved characters, as well as never-before-seen visual enticements

Bakis, Kirsten. [King Nyx](#) (Norton \$28.99). Set in November 1918 on the opulent, castle-like island estate of an eccentric millionaire, Claude Arkel, this atmospheric, novel reimagines the life of Anna Filing Fort, whose husband, Charles Hoy Fort, was the most famous "anomalist" of the early twentieth century. Settling in as guests on Prosper Island, the young couple find themselves quarantined in a shabby outpost far from Mr. Arkel's mansion from which, they learn, three girls have gone missing. After she encounters a figure in the woods that may be the ghost of her long-lost friend Mary, Anna resolves to find out who Mr. Arkel really is, and what has become of the missing girls. This is "A contemporary feminist tale with the mood and mystery of a classic gothic novel."

Balakrishnan, Chris/Wasowski. [How to Win Friends and Influence Fungi](#) (St Martins \$30). In the vein of popular-science bestsellers such as *Atlas Obscura* and *What If?*, the co-founders of the global science organization Nerd Nite bring readers a collection of wacky yet fascinating STEM topics. For 20 years,

Nerd Nite has delivered to live audiences around the world, the most interesting, fun, and informative presentations about science, history, the arts, pop culture, you name it. There hasn't been a rabbit hole that their army of presenters hasn't been afraid to explore. Finally, after countless requests to bring Nerd Nite to more fans across the globe, college pals Matt Wasowski and Chris Balakrishnan are bringing readers the quirky and accessible science content in book form.

Carr, Flora. [The Tower](#) (Knopf \$28). Mary, Queen of Scots, recently married to her third husband and several months pregnant after he raped her, is rowed from Edinburgh to Lockleven in 1567 to be held in old, damp Lochleven Castle, on an island in the middle of the loch. The castle belongs to her father's mistress. Mary plots her escape while attended by a small, faithful circle of women-in-waiting. Friendships, jealousies, and more intense emotions crisscross the group, while their captors spy on them and Mary secretly works with loyalists to secure freedom. Carr's interest in the women—their bodies, their allegiances, their intimacies—offers a contemporary perspective that extends beyond the foursome to other females seeking or manipulating power. Mary was, in my view, horribly unlucky in that her first husband, heir to the throne of France, up and died before she could produce an heir. After that it was more bad luck and very bad judgment that ended her life in 1587, 20 years after Carr's novel takes place.

Cavanagh, Steve. [Kill for Me, Kill for You](#) (Atria \$27.99) is a tense and tricky revenge thriller about grieving women in New York City. Amanda White's stalking of Wallace Crone, a well-connected sex offender she is sure has gotten off the hook for assaulting and murdering her six year-old-daughter and driving her husband to suicide, lands her a restraining order and a mandate to attend a grief support group on the Upper West Side. Drunken conversations with fellow group member Wendy lead the pair to concoct a Strangers on a Train-style pact in which Wendy will kill Crone and Amanda will kill the man Wendy claims raped and murdered her daughter three years earlier. In a parallel narrative, 39-year-old Manhattan real estate agent Ruth Gelman survives a home invasion during which she's stabbed multiple times. Unable to give the NYPD more than a thin description of her attacker, she's left dependent on her husband, Scott, for her safety, and mired in a state of near-constant paranoia. The initial link between the stories is Det. Andrew Farrow (nicknamed St. Jude for his habit of pursuing hopeless cases), but as the plot gathers steam, the overlaps become more and more substantial and startling. Possible signed copies.

Croft, Jennifer. [The Extinction of Irena Rey](#) (Bloomsbury \$28.99) serves up a wickedly funny mystery involving an internationally famous author and her translators. It's 2017 and narrator Emi, who hails from Buenos Aires, is one of eight translators visiting celebrated Polish novelist Irena Ray's house in the ancient Bialowieza forest. This is the translators' seventh "pilgrimage" to Bialowieza, where they've gathered to put Irena's latest tome into their respective languages. All of them worship Irena, whom Emi calls "Our Lady of Literature," with hilariously slavish devotion. When Irena disappears, so does their collective sanity, and thus begins a twisty detective story. Efforts to track down Irena are interspersed with various "bizarre actions" involving snakes, mythological Slavic creatures, archers, patriots, and attempted murder. "Each of the perils is absurdly entertaining in its own

way, and the endangered forest's fungi capture Emi's imagination and provide Croft with a magical and metaphor-rich backdrop. Emi's relationships with her colleagues, who are nicknamed for the languages they're translating Irena's novel into, further enliven the narrative as it reaches a poignant denouement."—*PW* Starred review

In its Starred Review, *LJ* adds, "The building unease of the plot is offset by the back and forth between Emi's text and Alexis's footnotes, which add humor even as they cast doubt on events. Readers are left unsure what to trust, as the novel questions if true, accurate translation is possible and what is lost along the way. This fiction debut from Booker Prize—winning translator Croft is a metatextual feast." As publishing goes more and more global, translators become more and more crucial, a role of interest to all of us readers. Recommended too to readers of Sulari Gentill's metafiction.

Drabkin, Ronald. [Beverly Hills Spy](#) (Morrow \$29.99). This is a fascinating account of a WWI British war hero/naval aviator, the first man to take off from and land a plane on a ship, adept at aeronautical inventions to the point where he designed the first modern aircraft carrier, and sidelined post war mostly by class prejudice from promotion—he isn't one of us—and a wife-swapping with two women named Dorothy—who moved to Los Angeles. There he mingled with big stars like (British) Charlie Chaplin, and, thoroughly disgruntled, became a spy for the Japanese who were building an attack on the US. Given a salary ten times that of a high-paid admiral, he provided the Japanese Navy with crucial information about troops, warplane production, and technology that enabled the attack on Pearl Harbor. But then he had a change of heart.... Recently declassified FBI files show that both MI5 and the FBI under Hoover sought to cover up their deficiencies and blame the commanders on the ground for Pearl Harbor—and Rutland of Jutland. His death in England might have been suicide...or.... Terrific bibliography with a well written text.

Falconer, Ian/David Sedaris. [Pretty Ugly](#) (Astra House/TOON Books \$18.99) is "a hilariously quirky monster tale about appreciating beauty in all its weird and wonderful forms" by Ian Falconer, creator of the iconic Olivia books, and bestselling humorist David Sedaris!

✦ Gregory, Philippa. [Normal Women](#) (Harper \$39.99) draws on an enormous archive of primary and secondary sources to rewrite British history, focusing on the agency, persistence, and effectiveness of everyday women throughout periods of social and cultural transition. She sweeps from the making of the Bayeux tapestry in the eleventh century to the Black Death in 1348—after which women were briefly paid the same wages as men, the last time for seven centuries—to the 1992 ordination of women by the Church of England, when the church accepted, for the first time, that a woman could perform the miracle of the mass.

Garcia Marquez, Gabriel. [Until August](#) (\$22) is an extraordinary rediscovered novel from the Nobel Prize-winning author. Sitting alone beside the languorous blue waters of the lagoon, Ana Magdalena Bach contemplates the men at the hotel bar. She has been happily married for twenty-seven years and has no reason to escape the life she has made with her husband and children. And yet, every August, she travels by ferry here to the island where

her mother is buried, and for one night takes a new lover. Across sultry Caribbean evenings full of salsa and boleros, lotharios and con men, Ana journeys further each year into the hinterland of her desire and the fear hidden in her heart.

Gentill, Sulari. [The Mystery Writer](#) (Sourcebooks \$34.99). The Australian author may tour the US in the fall. See Our March Large Paperback Picks for a review of this clever standalone once again embracing the writing process in the plot that is full of surprises

Gomez-Jurado, Juan. [Black Wolf](#) (St Martins \$28). This series is like "James Bond meets *Girl with Dragon Tattoo* but with "none of the eyerolling misogyny" In Madrid, Antonia Scott and her partner, Jon Gutiérrez, are key players in the EU's Red Queen project, designed to root out the very worst criminals. They pull a decomposed body from the banks of the Manzanares River. Then white-slave trafficker Yuri Voronin is murdered by the Russian mafia, and his pregnant wife, Lola Moreno, goes on the run. Scott and Gutiérrez are sympathetic protagonists. He's smart, strong, brave, and gay. She's the most intelligent person on the planet, and one of the quirkiest protagonists in crime fiction. She's afraid of almost nothing, hates to be touched, and relaxes for three minutes a day by imagining how she could kill herself. As with Red Queen, the action is intense, with blood flowing and dead bodies galore: Police find eight dead women who'd been locked in a shipping container—perhaps they once had been beautiful, but you couldn't tell anymore. Just when it looks like all is done and dusted, something happens that screams for a sequel. For the series' first, *Red Queen*, see Our March Large Paperback Picks.

Gonzalez, Xochitl. [Anita De Monte Laughs Last](#) (Flatiron \$28.99). Gonzalez, author of *Olga Dies Dreaming*, takes inspiration from the mysterious 1985 death of Cuban American artist Ana Mendieta for this astute account of an art history student who researches the circumstances of a similar tragedy. "Award winning Cuban artist Anita de Monte, who is married to successful minimalist artist Jack Martin (a stand in for the sculptor Carl Andre), mysteriously plummets to her death from the window of their 33rd-floor apartment in New York City. Gonzalez then jumps to 1998, when third-year Brown University art history student Raquel Toro is on the brink of starting her senior thesis on Martin. Raquel begins a coveted summer internship with Belinda Kim, an acclaimed Asian American feminist curator opposed to the "art for art's sake" philosophy trumpeted by Raquel's white thesis adviser. Under Kim's tutelage, Raquel learns of de Monte's mysterious death, propelling her research on Martin in an unexpected direction. Her own life begins to resemble de Monte's when she falls for a Brown classmate, a wealthy white up-and-coming artist with ties to the New York art world. Just as de Monte played second fiddle to Martin during their marriage, Raquel's boyfriend downplays her research, and both relationships fray due to the men's deceitful and manipulative behavior. In addition to the intrigue generated by Raquel's search for answers about de Monte's death, Gonzalez crafts excoriating and whip-smart commentary on the art world's Eurocentric conceptions of beauty and the racism faced by first-generation students of color. This is incandescent."—*PW* Starred Review

✦ Howes, Emily. [The Painter's Daughters](#) (Simon & Schuster \$27.99) are the children of British artist Thomas Gainsborough.

The two are the subjects of his magnificent portrait *The Painter's Daughters Chasing a Butterfly*, displayed at the National Gallery in London. The sisters' lives are defined by one dreadful, all-consuming secret: Molly is mentally unstable, and Polly must do all she can to cover up for her, lest she be dragged away to "Bedlam." Peggy continues to secretly mitigate Molly's increasingly erratic behavior, even when they move to the fashionable city of Bath and enter high society as young women, but it's only a matter of time before the irresistible promise of romance pierces their small circle. This rupture tests the sisters' loyalty to one another and leads to a devastating betrayal. Howes weaves a second narrative through the main drama, one that alludes to the mysterious noble lineage of their mother, the story of an innkeeper's daughter and her illegitimate child. "This artistically inspired debut novel is faithful to the factual details of the Gainsborough sisters' lives while deploying seductive literary embellishments to fill in for the unknowable gaps in their family history." In my view this book is made to order for *Masterpiece Theater* and it's a good choice to read for March, Women's History Month.

Lovering, Carola. [Bye, Baby](#) (St Martins \$29). Less a mystery than a vivid depiction of female friendships and how they fracture, motherhood (or opting out), spur of the moment actions with consequences, the whole Influencer culture, the aspirational life in New York City—and a baby snatch. It's very well written and will be best enjoyed by a younger, female audience who can relate to the worlds Billie, the snatcher, and Cassie, the wealthy influencer, inhabit.

McTiernan, Dervla. [What Happened to Nina?](#) (Morrow \$30). The tragic specter of Gabrielle Petito, whose boyfriend murdered her on a hiking trip and then went back home, claiming he had no idea where she was, hangs over McTiernan's almost painfully gripping new thriller. I think it is superb, one you can't put down once opened. The *NY Times* reviewer agrees: "The first voice in the book belongs to Nina Fraser, 20 years old and spending the weekend with her controlling boyfriend, Simon Jordan, at his parents' secluded Vermont country house. She wants to end their relationship. A few days later, Simon is back in their hometown, saying that they broke up. But Nina has disappeared. As disturbing details about their relationship emerge, the Jordans hire a lawyer and start stonewalling. 'I'm begging you,' Nina's mother, Lee, says to Simon's mother, Jamie. 'Mother to mother. I know you understand that I ... that we can't survive unless we know what happened to Nina.' 'You need to leave us alone,' Jamie replies. Social media muddies the story, of course, especially when the Jordans hire a P.R. firm to spread false rumors about Nina and her parents. Rory, Simon's father, is rich and ruthless. 'Nobody trusts facts anymore,' he says. Despite its title, the central question posed by this disturbing, enthralling book is less concerned with what happened to Nina (you'll find out soon enough), but how the parents — all broken, terrified and desperate in their own ways — respond to the exigencies of the moment. The last scene will make your blood run cold." It certainly did make mine. Tiernan lives in Australia and is not available to sign this splendid thriller that I urge you to grab right away.

Pandian, Gigi. [A Midnight Puzzle](#) (St Martins \$28). See Cozies for a review of the new Secret Staircase Mystery.

Peguero, Robin. [One in the Chamber](#) (Grand Central \$29). I said we would not be political this election year—we all need a respite. But Peguero, who served as a press spokesman in the U.S. House, a speechwriter in the U.S. Senate before becoming a lawyer, and an investigative counsel on the House Select Committee Investigating the January 6th Attack on the U.S. Capitol, and is currently Chief of Staff to a member of Congress, serves up his second novel not about politics but about DC dysfunction. I agree with this quote by Ashley Winstead who calls it the "snarky, vicious political mystery of my dreams, a perfect mix of gossily DC intrigue and high-minded political and legal ideas. If *The West Wing* was set in Capitol Hill and featured a diverse cohort of brilliant but troubled junior staffers and made you want to burn down the republic—that's *One in the Chamber*. The final shocking chapter had me reeling and thinking for days."

✎ Perrin, Kristen. [How to Solve Your Own Murder](#) (Dutton \$28). The intrigue in our **March British Crime Book of the Month** begins with a chilling scene from 1965 in Dorset, England: three friends, all 17-year-old girls, attend the Castle Knoll country fair. On a lark, they have their fortunes told by an ageless-looking psychic in the darkness of a tent that "screams Hollywood kitsch." Two of the girls dismiss the psychic's predictions, but Frances Adams takes the warning to heart: "*Your future contains dry bones.... All signs point toward your murder.*" A year later, when one of the trio goes missing, that unsettling prophecy forever changes Frances's future—she lives for decades with the expectation of her impending death. Perrin craftily unravels Frances's life story from the perspective of her 25-year-old great-niece, Annabelle Adams. An aspiring mystery novelist, Annie lives in Chelsea with her "bohemian" mother, once a "quite... famous and successful" artist, now suffering a career slump. The house they share is technically owned by wealthy Great Aunt Frances. Annie is stunned when she receives correspondence informing her that Great Aunt Frances, whom she has never met, wants to discuss Annabelle's appointment as "sole benefactor of her estate and assets." Just as Annabelle heads to Castle Knoll estate, Frances turns up dead. Natural causes? Or did the long-ago psychic's prediction come true? An investigation reveals a long list of potential suspects that includes estate caretakers, villagers, friends, and family. When Frances' will is finally read, the terms stipulate that whoever can solve the mystery of what she believed was her impending death inherits her estate and fortune. And sets off a cleverly competing test of wills. "Perrin suspensefully braids the past and the present, weaving a tight, intricate web of dubious secrets, motives, and deceptions so ominous that you will be biting their nails anticipating the chilling final reveal."

Pulley, Natasha. [The Mars House](#) (Bloomsbury \$29.99). "This book does it all: fish-out-of-water scenarios, passionate debates with thoughtful responses about immigration and gender and cultural other-ing, slow-burn romance, thrillingly tense standoffs and secrets, and oh did I mention the mammoths? Just wait until you get to the part with the mammoths. All-around enjoyable, pretty much a perfect read." OK, Pulley again astonishes "in this thorny and addictive sci-fi romance. When climate crises force Royal Ballet of London principal January Stirling to seek refuge on Mars, an unexpected array of circumstances takes him from a life of manual labor and poverty to an arranged marriage to the wealthy Senator Aubrey Gale, who favors harsh immigration

policies that January disagrees with. The faked relationship is both a political maneuver for Gale and a means of survival for January. Through the societal inequalities of life on Mars due to the differences between “Natural” citizens—those who were born on Mars and have adjusted to its atmosphere, like Gale—and “Earthstrong”—those born on Earth, like January, who don’t know their own strength in the lighter gravitational pull—Pulley introduces some truly complex ethical and political questions. Even better, she refuses to offer black-and-white answers, and never loses sight of her characters’ empathy and humanity. The worldbuilding is carefully considered, linguistically nuanced, and technologically fascinating.”—*PW* Starred Review. I have always admired Natasha’s daring and creativity in storytelling.

Redman, Eric. [Death in Hilo](#) (Crooked Lane \$30.99). I love a good police procedural and Redman writes them set in Hawai’i and led by Homicide cop Kawika Wong who here, hoping for promotion to Chief in Honolulu, faces a 12-year-old investigation rearing its head when a cub reporter goes for a scoop on the murder of one Ron Fortunato. Kawika and his then superior Terry Tanaka find themselves facing an official review. Meanwhile an elusive serial killer dubbed The Slasher has been dropping unconnected victims in a park adjacent to Waikiki beach. Then a freshly decapitated body is found there, raising the question of whether this is The Slasher at work, or a copycat killer. Lots going on on the Big Island (Fortunato) and Oahu (The Slasher). Start with [Bones of Hilo](#) (\$18.99), nominated for a Thriller Award for Best First Novel—I recommend it too.

✦ Ryan, Jennifer. [The Underground Library](#) (Ballantine \$28.99). With horrendous examples of civilian and military life homing in everyday, here’s a look at London in the Blitz moving to the Underground and developing astonishing community and facilities along with keep their spirits up. When the Bethnal Green Library is hit, three women take the book stacks to the local Tube station and create an underground library while sorting out their own lives and stories. Ryan emphasizes community, supportive roles, and survival. Ryan built her story on deep research into London Transport, personal accounts, etc. It’s worth reading her Note at the end of the book.

Spufford, Francis. [Cahokia Jazz](#) (Scribner \$28) I set in “an alternate America where the Indigenous population wasn’t decimated by the European-borne smallpox epidemic in the 16th century. The resulting change is best exemplified by the city of Cahokia in 1922, where Indigenous people rule hereditarily and are integrated with white and Black populations. Det. Joe Barrow and his corrupt white partner, Phineas Drummond, are called to the rooftop of the Land Trust building, where a dead body has been discovered, eviscerated and missing its heart. Early indications point to an Aztec ritual sacrifice. But the two detectives soon find a link to the local KKK, whose goal is to rid the city of Indigenous rule. Barrow quickly realizes he is in over his head trying to expose a conspiracy that involves a German American bootlegger, a munitions tycoon, an Indigenous femme fatale, and maybe even the Cahokia PD. This richly imagined and densely plotted story refreshes the crime genre and acts as a fun house mirror reflection of contemporary attitudes toward race—all set to a thumping jazz age soundtrack. Standing alongside Orson Scott Card’s Alvin Maker series and Michael Chabon’s *The Yiddish Policemen’s Union*, this is a challenging evocation of an America that never was.”—*PW* Starred Review

Tintera, Amy. [Listen for the Lie](#) (Celdadon \$26.99). This is going to be a big seller and yes, I read it too late to snag Signed copies. The premise: Years back, Lucy Chase murdered her best friend, Savvy—or so Plumpton, Texas, believes. One morning, after they left a party together, Savvy was discovered dead in the woods, and Lucy was found nearby, walking down a back road, covered in Savvy’s blood, her skin under Savvy’s nails. Lucy had a head injury; she’s never remembered anything about that night. Her then-husband and her parents, along with the rest of the town, were quick to assume her guilt, but there was insufficient evidence to charge her with Savvy’s murder. Lucy decided to move far away, to L.A., and try to start a new life. OK. Then a podcaster comes along determined to work the case and blows up Lucy’s LA life. With nothing for it, she returns to Plumpton, with everyone staring her down, sure of her guilt, is worse. Strangely, Ben, the annoyingly attractive podcaster, is the only one to question why everyone in this town (including Lucy herself) was so quick to assume Lucy’s guilt. The circumstantial evidence is damning, but Ben is able to expose enough secrets to complicate the case considerably. Lucy is as surprised as anyone. And Lucy’s amnesia throws a wrench in readers’ ability to guess at Tintera’s plot twists. “Even as Lucy wrestles with trauma, balancing guardedness with rare vulnerabilities, she and Savvy reveal a real sense of fun. Plumpton is a thoroughly realized setting, complete with neighborhood personalities and an authentic small-town dynamic. *Listen for the Lie* is quite sexy, compulsively readable, and laugh-out-loud funny, and Tintera has left herself healthy room for a sequel.”

Thornton, Chris Harding. [Little Underworld](#) (MCD/FSG Originals \$28), “No one’s innocent in Omaha. Not even the good folks. Crooked PIs, dirty cops, sleazy politicians, coroners, mobsters; everyone’s got an angle, a hustle, an agenda, or a body to deal with. *Little Underworld* is big, nasty, sharp, and wonderfully dark, packed with 1930s noir and witty dialogue. This book grabs you by those wide lapels and refuses to let go.”—Gabino Iglesias. Indeed Thornton gives us a riveting peek into Prohibition-era Omaha where the stakes grow very high.

Trinchieri, Camilla. [The Road to Murder](#) (Soho \$27.95). Though it took some time to settle into his new life in Gravigna, Italy, following the death of his wife, former NYPD detective Nico Doyle has figured out a thing or two. The locals have not only welcomed him, but are giving him rave reviews on his cooking, and his budding relationship with Nelli, a local woman, is healing old wounds. When Nico receives a phone call before dawn, he wants to ignore it. A phone call at that time can only mean trouble. Sure enough, it’s Perillo of the local carabinieri. A woman has been found dead in her home, slumped over her piano, and the sole witness speaks only English. Nico reluctantly agrees to help Perillo with the case. Judging by the crime scene, Perillo and Nico determine foul play, and they don’t have to look long for suspects. “Trinchieri keeps the food, wine, and sumptuous descriptions of the Italian countryside flowing, and she offers a surprising yet satisfying resolution to the central mystery.” Cozy fans will find this [Tuscan Mystery series](#)—this is the 4th entry—delicious too.

OUR MARCH LARGE PAPERBACK PICKS

✦ Ball, Jessica. [Miss Austen Investigates](#) (Union Square \$18.99). In Austen’s day, the novel was a relatively a new art form, dismissed by critics as ephemeral, lightweight, and feminine.

But she had no pretensions about literature—she was simply hungry for stories. For Austen, libraries represented a means of empowerment. Just like Fanny, she spent years trapped by her circumstances. As an unmarried daughter, lacking an independent income, she was forced to comply with the whims of parents and subsist on handouts from wealthier relations. But through her subscription to various libraries, she was at liberty to decide what she read and set her imagination free to roam. Her legacy has inspired legions of readers and writers, and librarians.

In our **March Cozy Crimes Book of the Month**, a debut, a 20-year-old Jane Austen unexpectedly becomes an amateur sleuth to clear her brother's name in Bull's imaginative debut and series launch. Budding novelist Jane attends a ball at the opulent home of Lord John Harcourt, where she expects dashing Irishman Tom Lefroy to offer her his hand in marriage. Before Lefroy can bend a knee, however, one of Harcourt's housemaids finds the body of a young woman in the laundry closet, and the festivities come to a halt. Jane recognizes the victim as Madame Renault, a milliner who'd sold her a hat a few days earlier. The expensive necklace Renault was wearing before her death is missing from her corpse, so the local magistrate surmises that vagabonds used the ball as cover to steal Madame Renault's necklace and leave her for dead. When the jewelry turns up in the pocket of Jane's nonverbal older brother Georgie, he's swiftly arrested and charged with theft and murder. With Georgie unable to defend himself and Jane convinced of his innocence, she enlists the help of her close-knit family to find the killer before her brother is hanged. Bull's Jane is an endearingly clumsy detective, equal parts clever and impulsive, and the investigation contains the kind of high stakes that similar breezy historicals often lack.

Blauner, Peter. [Picture in the Sand](#) (\$19). 1954 Egypt. The long-shot dream of a career in Hollywood for young Ali Hassan, the protagonist of this outstanding thriller, seems on the cusp of realization. Legendary film director Cecil B. DeMille has arrived with his cast and crew to shoot scenes for his epic, *The Ten Commandments*, and has hired Ali as an assistant. The country has just fallen under the control of secularist leader Gamal Abdel Nasser, and when the Muslim Brotherhood targets DeMille's production as a means to discredit the new regime, Ali is swept up in the resultant intrigue and violence. Entangled in Nasser's crackdown, he spends the next 17 years in prison. Blauner tells this suspenseful story within the narrative framework of e-mails exchanged between Ali, now an old man in poor health, and his grandson, Alex, who has left their home in the United States to join modern-day Middle Eastern terrorists. Ali offers his own life story as an attempt to persuade his grandson against making the same mistakes he did. This knockout is highly recommended.

Coben, Harlan. [I Will Find You](#) (\$19.99). David Burroughs was once a devoted father to his three-year-old son Matthew, living a dream life just a short drive away from the working-class suburb where he and his wife, Cheryl, first fell in love—until one night he discovers Matthew brutally murdered in his bed and is convicted in his killing. His wife divorces him, and he goes to prison for life. He hardly cares whether he lives or dies because his family is gone. That is, until one day five years later, his ex-sister-in-law Rachel becomes his first visitor in prison and shows him a recent photograph she's found of Matthew at an amusement park....

Cranor, Eli. [Ozark Dogs](#) (\$16.95). A dispute over a woman led Tom Fitzjurls to kill Rudnick Ledford by shooting him in the back. The open-and-shut case landed Tom in prison, sentenced to life without parole. That left his father, Jeremiah, a Vietnam vet who operates a car junkyard in Taggard, Ark., to raise Tom's infant daughter, Jo, after she was abandoned by her mother. Now a high school senior, Jo is chafing to escape her guardian's tight restrictions on her social life, even as Jeremiah struggles with accepting that she'll be moving on. Meanwhile, Rud's brother, Evail, a meth dealer, ex-con, and white supremacist who narrowly avoided being killed at the same time as his sibling, believes he's found the perfect way to get revenge on the Fitzjurls family. Evail's threat to Jo forces Jeremiah, who was nicknamed the Judge during his tour of duty for his marksmanship, to team up with several allies he doesn't fully trust to protect her. The author has a superior gift for capturing the cadences and feel of Southern small towns. Greg Iles fans will be eager for Cranor's next

Ellison, J T. [It's One of Us](#) (\$18.99). Just nominated for a Thriller Award for Best Novel, an emotionally-layered thriller formed around a couple where fertility treatments and IVF keep failing reflects Ellison's personal journey. One day DNA results from a murder investigation show that Olivia's husband Park is the father of the prime suspect. How can this be when the couple is childless? Answer: Park had donated sperm to a clinic. The continuing disappointment of childlessness has been straining their marriage, with unspoken recriminations and resentments. Into this turmoil come two Nashville homicide detectives. When the police discover that the manner of the victim's death eerily mirrors that of Park's college girlfriend, Park is thrust into the center of a vicious media storm. The assorted points-of-view of the major characters form the novel's structure.

Gentill, Sulari. [The Mystery Writer](#) (Poisoned Pen Press \$16.99). "This intriguing mystery delves into the world of book publishing. Theo is an aspiring author who meets one of her childhood idols, Dan. As they grow closer, Dan is murdered and Theo becomes embroiled in scandal and conspiracies as she tries to solve his murder and outrun those who mean her harm—before she or someone she loves is next. This novel has a million twists that will keep readers guessing until the last page." And a midwinter setting.

Gómez-Jurado, Juan. [Red Queen](#) (\$19). Antonia Scott—the daughter of a British diplomat and a Spanish mother—has a gifted forensic mind, whose ability to reconstruct crimes and solve baffling murders is legendary. But after a personal trauma, she's refused to continue her work or even leave her apartment. Jon Gutierrez, a police officer in Bilbao—disgraced, suspended, and about to face criminal charges—is offered a chance to salvage his career by a secretive organization that works in the shadows to direct criminal investigations of a highly sensitive nature. All he has to do is succeed in bringing in Antonia. The *NY Times Book Review* finds that "Stunning beauty, brilliant mind, innovative detection, cascading traumas: all present and accounted for...."

☒ Griffiths, Elly. [The Last Remains](#) (\$18.99). When builders renovating a café in King's Lynn find a human skeleton behind a wall, they call for DCI Harry Nelson and Dr. Ruth Galloway, Head of Archaeology at the nearby University of North Norfolk.

Ruth is preoccupied with the threatened closure of her department and by her ever-complicated relationship with Nelson, the father of her child. However, she agrees to look at the case. Ruth sees at once that the bones are modern. They are identified as the remains of Emily Pickering, a young archaeology student who went missing in the 1990s. Emily attended a course run by her Cambridge tutor. Suspicion falls on him and also on another course member, Ruth's friend Cathbad, who is still frail following his near death from Covid. As they investigate, Nelson and his team uncover a tangled web of relationships within the student group and the adults leading them. What was the link between the group and the King's Lynn café where Emily's bones were found? Then, just when the team seems to be making progress, Cathbad disappears!

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

✂ Kelly, Erin. [The Skeleton Key](#) (\$17.99). I absolutely love this enchanting novel. It's intriguing, original, and beautifully crafted by an author who sells well in the UK but has never quite caught on here. This may be her breakout book. So I absolutely agree with this Starred Review that emphasizes its treasure hunt and bookish aspects: Exquisite prose and multilayered characters lift this exceptional novel from British author Kelly. Frank Churcher is bringing out a new edition of the illustrated book that made him rich and famous: *The Golden Bones*, "a collision of pretty pictures, mythology and logic puzzles," is about a murdered woman whose bones are scattered across England and contains clues to the location of small gold replicas of the woman's bones. A bestseller since its first publication 50 years earlier, it has become an obsession for legions of fanatics who call themselves Bonehunters. Frank has asked his middle-aged daughter, Nell, to return home to London to be part of a documentary film to kick off publicity for the new edition. Things don't go as planned, and the police are soon investigating a murder. I compare this to the work of Janice Hallett.

Leon, Donna. [So Shall You Reap](#) (\$17). Book lovers will relish discovering how Venice's Commissario Guido Brunetti organizes his books, and which ones he's culling on a Saturday evening. His book work is interrupted by a phone call from Ispettore Vianello, who says a fellow officer has been arrested

at a gay pride parade for "resisting arrest." Then, the body of an undocumented immigrant from Sri Lanka—with whom Brunetti had a brief exchange the day before—turns up in a canal. Brunetti, Vianello, Commissario Griffoni and Signorina Elettra go in search of answers. The taut plot builds as the team pieces together seemingly disparate clues: the victim's interest in Buddhism, the revolutionary Tamil Tigers and a group of 1980s Italian leftist political terrorists. The team's investigation leads them to details of real estate and land use, and Brunetti to clues from his past as a university student. The whole gives Leon plenty of space to ponder in her elegant way ethics and political issues and how we change with aging. I really admire the ancient nun and her garden.

Maxwell, Jessa. [The Golden Spoon](#) (\$17). Byzantine chicanery seasoned with a dash of revenge greets six contestants gathered for Bake Week on the property of a crumbling Vermont manse, in Maxwell's outstanding debut. Tantalizing backstage backstories include those of an ex-journalist from Brooklyn, a pie prodigy from Minnesota, a Bronx math teacher, a wealthy former CEO tech from Boston, a retired Rhode Island registered nurse, and a restorer of old buildings from New Hampshire. Hosting the competition's 10th season is the heir to the manor, Betsy Martin, joined for the first time by an award-winning baker, Archie Morris, along with regular lead coordinator, Melanie Blair. Sabotage starts slow but early. Everything escalates to an extremely dark and stormy night (including a blackout), leading to startling revelations and a jaw-dropping confession. Sweet and savory turn deadly sour in this fast-paced, entertaining debut.

Miranda, Megan. [The Only Survivors](#) (\$17). Once again Miranda uses landscape to gripping effect. A group of former classmates who reunite to mark the tenth anniversary of a tragic accident—only to have one of the survivors disappear. It would be hard to concoct a more promisingly sinister setting [that] affords plenty of hiding places for predators and plenty of opportunities for the weather itself to turn villainous. "Miranda uses this setting to maximum effect, both as a plot device and as a way to inject steady droplets of terror into the narrative. Masterfully suspenseful." —*Booklist* Starred Review. She signs her next here April 20.

Sandford, John. [Dark Angel](#) (\$19). Letty, though adopted, is Lucas Davenport in spades! And by now her days working a desk job at are behind her. Her previous actions at a gunfight in Texas, in [The Investigator](#) (\$10.99)—and her incredible skills with firearms—draw the attention of several branches of the US government, and make her a perfect fit for even more dangerous work. The Department of Homeland Security and the NSA have tasked her with infiltrating a hacker group, known only as Ordinary People, that is intent on wreaking havoc. Letty and her reluctant partner from the NSA pose as free-spirited programmers for hire and embark on a cross country road trip to the group's California headquarters. While the two work to make inroads with Ordinary People and uncover their plans, they begin to suspect that the hackers are not their only enemy. Longtime Sandford fans who have missed Kidd will love this book. Sandford signs his next for us here in April.

Willig, Lauren. [Two Wars and a Wedding](#) (\$19.99). An archaeologist, boards a boat for Cuba in 1898, determined to stop her estranged friend, Ava, from taking a dangerous nursing

post during the Spanish American War. Betsy had already witnessed the horror of the Greco-Turkish War, and though the details don't come out until later, Betsy believes her own life is of little value. In flashbacks to Athens, where Betsy had traveled two years earlier hoping to work on a dig, she meets Charles de Robecourt, a charming married archaeologist who gives her a leg up (they also have an affair, and she falls in love with him). But Betsy's choice to become a nurse when war breaks out in Greece drives a wedge between her and Ava, who doesn't think Betsy is cut out for the work, and she faces further heartache involving Charles. Willig's strong character work and extensive research on the Smith College Relief Unit brings Betsy to vivid life. The harrowing battle details, too, are spot on, from the Spaniards' smokeless gunpowder to the menacing whine of a Mauser bullet. Readers will devour this riveting tale.

✎ Winspear, Jacqueline. [The White Lady](#) (\$18.99). In 1917, Elinor White, the heroine of this smart, nuanced mystery which has much in common with the Maisie Dobbs series, was working in a resistance network in German-occupied Belgium, where she, then 13, was living with her 15-year-old sister and British mother. Elinor later emigrated to England and served as a British intelligence agent. Now, in 1947, she lives quietly in Kent, staying aloof from the inhabitants of the tiny village of Shackleford until the arrival of Jim Mackie with his wife, Rose; and their three-year-old daughter, Susie. Jim has left London and taken work as a farmhand to break away from the crime family into which he was born. His brothers are now pressuring him to help them pull off their latest criminal operation. Trauma in Elinor's past has made her acutely sensitive to children in peril, and she can't resist trying to protect Susie and her parents from the Mackies. As Elinor uses her undercover skills and former intelligence contacts to try to foil the Mackie brothers' plans, her sleuthing has unexpected personal repercussions. The chapters illuminating Elinor's dramatic backstory add vulnerability to her characterization, enriching the suspenseful main narrative. As ever Winspear is comfortably at home in Southern England's countryside.

✎ Wray, CJ. [The Excitements](#) (Harper \$19.99). Our **March Historical Fiction Paperback Book of the Month** is an irresistible caper wherein the past comes to bear on nonagenarian British WWII veteran sisters, Penny and Josephine Williamson. As the women prepare to receive yet another award for their service (this time for their help liberating France), their doting great-nephew, Archie, whisks them off to Paris, where his former lover happens to be auctioning off a spectacular jewelry collection belonging to the family of Josephine and Penny's childhood neighbors. Old vendettas emerge, and the sisters prepare to pull off a heist to settle some outstanding debts. As that adventure unfolds, Wray fills in the past 90-plus years of Penny and Josephine's lives, making readers privy to secrets that neither sister has dared to share with the other, particularly when it comes to their extracurricular activities during wartime. Keeping track of the shifting time periods can require close concentration, but the extra focus is worth it: Wray makes the Williamson sisters and their rich backstories leap off the page, successfully convincing readers that their *joie de vivre* has been a lifelong condition that shows no signs of letting up. Filled with surprise, poignancy, and excitement, this is a surefire winner

SOME MARCH LARGE PAPERBACKS

Allen, Samantha Jayne. [Hard Rain](#) (\$19). From the Tony Hillerman Prize-winning author of *Pay Dirt Road* comes a second case for Annie McIntyre. In shock and found clinging to a tree branch, Bethany Richter is pulled from thrashing floodwaters that have decimated the town of Garnett, Texas and killed a dozen others. Six months after solving the murder of a local waitress, Annie is working as an apprentice P.I. when she's handed her first solo case: uncover the identity of the man who rescued Bethany before he was swept downriver. When Annie's search turns up a different victim—shot dead, not drowned—Annie questions if the hero they seek is actually a killer.

Ardai, Charles. [Death Comes Too Late](#) (Hard Case Crime \$16.99). Ardai celebrates the 20th anniversary of his publishing imprint, Hard Case Crime, by reprinting 20 of his own noir tales from 1990 to 2023.

Armstrong, Kelley. [The Poisoner's Ring](#) (\$19). Lesa reviews: In this sequel to [A Rip Through Time](#) (\$17.99), time-traveling modern-day homicide detective Mallory Atkinson is still stuck in Victorian Edinburgh in another woman's body, but now her real identity is known to her employers, Dr. Duncan Gray (an undertaker/medical examiner to whom Mallory serves as assistant) and his chemist sister Isla. She's soon drawn into another murder investigation with Duncan and police detective Hugh McCreadie: Men have been dying of poisoning in Edinburgh, and their widows are accused of killing them. The latest such death is personal—the Grays' sister Annis has been accused of poisoning her husband, Lord Gordon Leslie. The newspapers and the scandalous broadsheets have a field day when they learn that Lady Leslie's sister is a chemist who could have provided the toxin that killed the lord. But then Mallory recognizes the signs of a poison not readily accessible in Edinburgh in 1869. She, Duncan, and Hugh will have a difficult time finding the single manipulative villain who they believe must be at the heart of four seemingly unrelated murders.

Baldacci, David. [Simply Lies](#) (\$19.99). Mickey Gibson, single mother and former detective, leads a hectic life similar to that of many moms: juggling the demands of her two small children with the tasks of her job working remotely for ProEye, a global investigation company that hunts down wealthy tax and credit cheats. When Mickey gets a call from a colleague named Arlene Robinson, she thinks nothing of Arlene's unusual request for her to go inventory the vacant home of an arms dealer who cheated ProEye's clients and fled. That is, until she arrives at the mansion to discover a dead body in a secret room—and that nothing is as it seems. Not only does the arms dealer not exist but the murder victim turns out to be Harry Langhorne, a man with mob ties who used to be in Witness Protection. What's more, no one named Arlene Robinson works at ProEye....

Beagle, Peter S. [The Way Home](#) (\$18). SFWA Grand Master Beagle returns to the magical landscape of his most famous work with two breathtaking novellas, "Two Hearts," a Hugo Award winner originally published in 2006, and its heartbreaking sequel "Sooz," which is original to this volume. Narrator Sooz is nine in "Two Hearts" when a malignant griffin lands and nests in Midnight Wood near her home. Sooz sets out to ask King Lir for help defeating the beast, aided by two mysterious riders familiar to Beagle's fans: Schmendrick the magician and his

companion Molly Grue. Together they find Lir, and poignantly rouse him from old age and fatigue, recruiting both him and his beloved Unicorn to slay the griffin. Eight years later, in “Sooz,” the now 17-year-old heroine seeks the sister she never knew she had who was kidnapped by the fairies as a baby....With beautiful worldbuilding and tons of heart, these tender fantasies are sure to delight as [The Last Unicorn](#) (\$17) did me when I was young, and does still.

Bollen, Christopher. [The Lost Americans](#) (Harper \$18.99). See Some Hardcover for March for a review.

Brown, Sandra. [Out of Nowhere](#) (\$19.99). 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?

Casale, Alexia. [The Best Way to Bury Your Husband](#) (Penguin \$18). The premise reminds me in concept of Sandra Dallas’ wonderful classic [The Persian Pickle Club](#) (\$16.99) which is well worth reading if you missed it. While it may sound like a cozy this is really about women in abusive marriages who after years of trauma snap. When Sally kills her husband with a cast-iron skillet, she’s more fearful of losing her kids than of disposing of a fresh corpse. That just wouldn’t be fair—not after twenty years of marriage to a truly terrible man. But Sally isn’t the only woman in town reaching the brink. Soon, Sally finds herself leading an extremely unusual self-help group, and among them there are four bodies to hide. Can they all figure out the perfect way to bury their husbands and reclaim living?

Callanan, Liam. [When in Rome](#) (\$18). Cancel that Alitalia flight. All the fun of a trip to Italy—and a Yale education, for that matter—can be found for a fraction of the price in Liam Callanan’s delightful novel. With breathtaking descriptions of secret corners of the Eternal City and New Haven, this novel introduces us to Claire, who, at 52, is ready to resolve issues of faith, passion, and obligation that have dogged her since she was 22. Only she has to think about things a little longer. So hold on. And while you wait, prepare to be charmed by this clever, engaging book. I grew impatient with Claire—grow up, already!—I fell completely in love with the Rome Callanan depicts with the same love as he did Paris in his last novel, [Paris by the Book](#) (\$17), also recommended.

✂ Casey, Jane. [The Close](#) (\$19.99). The new neighbors seem just right for Jellicoe Close, a pretty street filled with perfect houses and happy families. But one neat front door hides a ruthless criminal – and the new neighbors aren’t what they seem to be either. DS Maeve Kerrigan and DI Josh Derwent are undercover, posing as a couple to investigate a deadly conspiracy. As they try to gather the evidence they need, they have no idea of the true threat they face...someone in Jellicoe Close has murder on their mind in this 10th entry in a strong policing series.

Catton, Eleanor. [Birnam Wood](#) (\$19). Booker Prize winner Catton of NZ returns with a tragic eco-thriller of betrayed

ideals and compromised loyalties involving a collective of guerilla gardeners in her home country. The group, Birnam Wood, sets its sights on a farm in Korowai National Park after a landslide maroons the isolated township of Thorndike, and three personalities vie for control. As matriarch Mira Bunting, 29, uses a series of aliases to scout and buy the land, her duplicity brings her into conflict with the younger Shelley Noakes, whose own beliefs are further strained by the return of ex-member Tony Gallo, a would-be journalist with an ax to grind. As Mira plays into Robert’s hands, Tony goes on the warpath, and their various schemes collide in a shocking crime. Thanks to a convincing backdrop of ecological peril, Catton’s human drama is made even more acute.

Clayborn, Kate. [The Other Side of Disappearing](#) (Kensington \$17.95). “Four lives collide: two sisters whose mother deserted them 10 years ago to run off with a con man, a podcaster working on the case, and a journalist with a mission. The mystery—where did their mom go?—meshes neatly with the group’s clashing goals as they follow the woman’s trail across the country. This beautifully written novel is a thoughtful look at the many faces of love.”

Collins, Megan. [Thicker Than Water](#) (\$17.99). Julia Larkin, who runs a brand development business with her sister-in-law, Sienna, struggles to process multiple shocks. First, her husband Jason’s boss is brutally murdered—someone stabs him, smothers him, and sews his lips shut. Though the dead man was tied up in a scandal involving the IRS, the police pursue other theories about his murder. Julia gets another gut-punch when she learns that Jason is in a coma after a car crash, and the cops reveal that he’s a suspect in his boss’s murder. With Jason unable to defend himself, Julia and Sienna team up to clear his name. “Collins’ choice to alternate perspectives between the sisters-in-law pays off by leaving the reader uncertain about which of them, if either, has an accurate view of Jason’s character. Admirers of William Landay’s similarly themed *Defending Jacob* will be riveted.”

Frazier, Charles. [The Trackers](#) (\$19.99). Hurtling past the downtrodden communities of Depression-era America, painter Val Welch travels westward to the rural town of Dawes, Wyoming. Through a stroke of luck, he’s landed a New Deal assignment to create a mural representing the region for their new Post Office. A wealthy art lover named John Long and his wife Eve have agreed to host Val at their sprawling ranch. Soon rumors and intrigue surround the couple...

Gaylin, Alison. [Robert B Parker’s Bad Influence](#) (\$19). Picking up the Sunny Randall series from Mike Lupica, Gaylin sets the Boston PI to searching for the unknown person who’s threatening a pair of Instagram influencers before the threats come true. “Gaylin elevates Parker’s original Sunny by bringing a more contemporary depiction, capturing her sense of humor, confidence, insecurities, anxieties and bravery....”

Gudenkauf, Heather. [Everyone Is Watching](#) (\$17.99). See Signed books for a review of this simultaneous paperback release.

Hart, Emilia. [Weyward](#) (\$18). “Men are always trying to dominate the Weyward women, but they always fail, because the Weyward women can call birds to their aid. This matriarchal clan of witches is almost broken until Kate, who stars in the most recent of the three timelines. *Practical Magic* meets Margaret Atwood in an unflinching feminist fantasy that is boiling over with rage and loaded with empowerment.”

Hauty, Chris. [The Devil You Know](#) (\$17.99). When a justice of the Supreme Court is killed by the police officer assigned to protect him, the country is shocked. Hayley Chill's superiors suspect the assassination is part of a major conspiracy. In Maui, where one member of the Supreme Court owns a vacation home, a busload of children is taken hostage with the justice's death as ransom. Together with a deputy US marshal, Hayley embarks on the monumental task of rescuing the children while also protecting the justice in her 4th outing.

Hewson, David. [The Medici Murders](#) (Canongate \$18). Hewson, author of the Nic Costa mysteries, introduces an elaborately detailed historical series, heavy with Venetian atmosphere. In 1548, Lorenzino de Medici was assassinated by two hired killers in Venice. In the present, when British media star Marmaduke Godolphin brings a group to Venice to reveal his latest project about Medici, he's stabbed with a stiletto on the same spot, and his body ends up in the canal. Before he was a media star, Godolphin was a history professor admired by four posh students nicknamed the Gilded Circle. He paid for those former students, plus his son and a young woman, to come to Venice, where he was to reveal a scandalous secret about Medici's murder. He needed help from retired British archivist Arnold Clover to uncover documents supporting his theory. Instead, Godolphin is dead. Captain Valentina Fabbri from the Carabinieri recruits Clover to tell her about the cast of characters surrounding Godolphin. Fabbri arrests all of his circle while she awaits Clover's story of history and scandal.

✎ Hunter, Cara. [All the Rage](#) (Morrow \$18.99). A minicab driver finds Faith Appleford, a college student who has been assaulted, stumbling along the road. When D.I. Fawley's team conducts a follow-up, Faith's mother acknowledges her daughter was abducted, but she insists it was just a prank. Days later and near the Appleford household, 15-year-old Sasha Blake is reported missing. Fawley's team has reason to suspect the two incidents are connected; plus, the method by which both Faith and Sasha were abducted shares too many similarities to a serial rapist case Fawley solved two decades ago. Local press and online wannabe detectives imply law enforcement never caught the real culprit and that evidence was manufactured to frame an innocent man. Adding fuel to the fire, the incarcerated rapist's case just happens to be up for review. Suddenly, Fawley gets sidelined as his career-making case faces scrutiny and another victim is targeted. So is a copycat killer at work or something much more insidious? "The answers will leave readers gobsmacked."

King, Owen. [The Curator](#) (\$18.99) is a "Dickensian fantasy of illusion and charm where cats are revered as religious figures, thieves are noble, scholars are revolutionaries, and conjurers are the most wonderful criminals you can imagine." King's strange, terrifying novel is part gothic thriller and part absurd, Bulgakovesque government satire. Wildly creative, this novel weaves and dips into class struggle and resentment, dark comedy, and bittersweet romance that will delight fans of twisty dark fantasies."—*Booklist* King's creative worldbuilding is admirable and he makes even walk-on characters feel fully realized. Fans of *Jonathan Strange & Mr. Norrell* will be especially enchanted

✎ Odden, Karen. [Down a Dark River](#) (\$20). In the vein of C. S. Harris and Anne Perry, Karen Odden's mystery introduces Inspector Michael Corraivan as he investigates a string of

vicious murders that has rocked Victorian London's upper crust. Victorian London comes alive as narrator Joshua Manning introduces the city, showing aristocratic privilege and prejudice against women and the poor. Listeners meet Chief Inspector Michael Corraivan, a child of poverty and a former bare-knuckled boxer. Corraivan has a baffling case: Young women are being murdered, placed in boats, and set afloat on the River Thames. Manning's Corraivan is cocky yet vulnerable, and his young, loyal assistant Gordon Stiles would do anything for him. As they move among victims and suspects, upper-class and servants' accents add authenticity. Most memorably portrayed are Dr. James Everett, who dispenses wisdom and advice, and novelist Belinda Gale, who boldly and lovingly criticizes Corraivan.

Pulley, Natasha. [The Half Life of Valery K](#) (\$18.99).) revolves around a horrifying and secretive research project deep in the countryside of the Soviet Union in 1963. After having spent several years in a Siberian prison camp, biochemist Valery Kolkhanov is moved to the facility, where he's initially pleased with the warm water, plentiful food, and opportunity to study an irradiated ecosystem. Eventually, he begins to suspect that all is not as it seems, despite assurances from his former professor and current boss, the glamorous Dr. Resovskaya. As Valery forms an unusual bond with Konstantin Shenkov, the KGB officer in charge of security for the center, the two discover evidence of a conspiracy along with unspeakable human damage caused by the facility's experiments with radiation exposure, and find their lives at risk. Pulley, extrapolating out from the records of a historic Soviet research center, raises questions about scientific experimentation and the ways in which it can be manipulated for less than honorable purposes. Her dark humor, which turns on the blind faith given to Soviet authority figures despite their outlandish claims, combines with complex characters and a clear understanding of radiation science to yield an explosive blend

Robotham, Michael. [Lying Beside You](#) (\$17.99). Twenty years after the brutal killing of his parents and little sisters, forensic psychologist Cyrus Haven is called in to profile the killer and help piece together the hours before the disappearance. While Cyrus is on the case, Evie Cormac, a damaged and gifted teenager who is also Cyrus's ward and can tell when someone is lying, is working at a bar where another woman goes missing... and Evie is the only witness. When a double murder—of an elderly father and his daughter—draws Cyrus into a mystery that deepens as young women go missing, Evie's intuitive skills prove invaluable. Could these two cases somehow be linked? Add to the mix that Cyrus's brother, Elias, has been released from a psychiatric hospital after twenty years for killing Cyrus's parents and young sisters, and he's coming to stay with Evie and Cyrus.... What a puzzle.

Rose, Jeneva. [You Shouldn't Have Come Here](#) (\$16.99). , books an Airbnb on a ranch in the middle of Wyoming. When she arrives at the idyllic getaway, she's pleased to find that the owner is a handsome man by the name of Calvin Wells—and he's eager to introduce her to his easygoing way of life. But there are things Grace discovers that she's not too pleased about: A lack of cell phone service. A missing woman. And a feeling that something isn't right with the ranch. A sinister undercurrent runs throughout, and while the reader is privy to each narrator's thoughts, there are a few land mines buried along the way to the surprise ending. Hmmm. Rage! A cat and mouse thriller set in Wyoming ... at an

Airbnb ranch and told by Jeneva Rose? Yes please! This is the vacation we're too nervous to go on but truly excited to read! Um. Do you have any internet access here?

Rosenfelt, David. [Good Dog, Bad Cop: A K Team Novel](#) (\$18). This is just so much fun—and with a very clever plot to boot. I love both Marcus and Simon the retiree K-9 who function much like Spenser's Hawk or Dennis Lehane's Bubba to keep the K Team safe despite dire perils. This team—retired police detective Corey Douglas and other PIs who consult on cold cases for the Paterson, N.J., PD—look into the execution-style murder of police detective Danny Avery. Despite a lack of evidence, Corey is certain there's a link between this case and the subsequent deaths of Danny's mentor, former detective Jimmy Dietrich, and Danny's wife, who were both killed on Jimmy's boat. No one was ever arrested for this latter case, and cop gossip put the deaths down to a murder suicide, with Jimmy pulling the trigger. The K Team's investigations lead Corey down a rabbit hole as the list of deaths and suspects grows, and no one is who they claim to be. The complicated, fair play mystery presents just the right amount of difficulty for the keen-eyed reader to solve.

Shannon, Samantha. [A Day of Fallen Night](#) (\$21.99). A prequel to [The Priory of the Orange Tree](#) (\$20) filled with even more dragons, magic, and lore. An epic feminist fantasy series that's a master class in world-building, Melim is a sister of the Priory. For fifty years, she has trained to slay wyrms – but none have appeared since the Nameless One, and the younger generation is starting to question the Priory's purpose. To the north, in the Queendom of Inys, Sabran the Ambitious has married the new King of Hróth, narrowly saving both realms from ruin. Their daughter, Glorian, trails in their shadow – exactly where she wants to be. The dragons of the East have slept for centuries. Dumai has spent her life in a Seiikinese mountain temple, trying to wake the gods from their long slumber. Now someone from her mother's past is coming to upend her fate. Then the Dreadmount erupts, bringing with it an age of terror and violence....

Sherwood, Kim. [Double or Nothing: James Bond is Missing](#) (Harper \$18.99). Weirdly there is a [hardcover edition](#) publishing April 11. James Bond pastiche, the authorized first in a projected trilogy, from British author Sherwood, introduces a diverse team of new 00 agents: 003 Johanna Harwood (of Algerian French descent), 004 Joseph Dryden (gay), and 009 Sid Bashir (Muslim). The trio's multiple missions include discovering what tech billionaire Sir Bertram Paradise, a cross between Elon Musk and every previous Bond villain, is up to with his climate change solution, Cloud Nine, and looking for Bond himself, who's been missing for 17 months. The action-packed plot takes the agents to predictably far-flung locales with ample opportunities for violence. "No luxury brand goes unnamed, and Bond himself is quoted often. But there are also surprising changes: Q has been replaced by a supercomputer, and Moneypenny has become the 00 team's leader. Not read by me but I enjoyed this snarky comment from *Kirkus*: "This kickoff to a new trilogy is a florid update to the Double O canon that desperately wishes it were a movie."

Thompson, Victoria. [Murder on Bedford Street](#) (\$19). "Gaslight" has taken on a whole new meaning in our virtual age but it also describes a period at the turn of the 20th Century New York in a long-running series by Thompson. Here investment banker Hugh

Breedlove consults Frank Malloy, an ex-cop who still works as a PI despite coming into a fortune, and his capable wife, Sarah, a midwife, because he's concerned about his teenage daughter, Ruth. Julia, Ruth's cousin and Hugh's niece, has been committed to an asylum by Julia's husband, Chet Longly, whom she was forced to marry by her parents. Hugh regards Chet as a libertine, and doubts that Julia has any mental illness. Frank takes the case, and Sarah joins him in interviewing Julia at the Manhattan State Hospital on Ward's Island. Convinced of her sanity, Chet then probes a maid's suspicious death at the Longly residence.

Walls, Jeannette. [Hang the Moon](#) (\$18). Born at the turn of the 20th century into a life of comfort and privilege, Sallie Kincaid remembers little about her mother who died in a violent argument with the Duke. By the time she is just eight years old, the Duke has remarried and had a son, Eddie. While Sallie is her father's daughter, sharp-witted and resourceful, Eddie is his mother's son, timid and cerebral. When Sallie tries to teach young Eddie to be more like their father, her daredevil coaching leads to an accident, and Sallie is cast out. Nine years later, she returns, determined to reclaim her place in the family. Per Library Reads: "Walls' latest coming-of-age novel about love, loss, and the grey areas of the law is set in Prohibition-era small-town Virginia. This is a must-read for anyone who craves fiction that has unforgettable characters and is recommended to fans of Sue Monk Kidd and Kaye Gibbons."

Ware, Ruth. [Zero Days](#) (\$18.99). A married couple whose business it is to test security by breaking into offices etc to expose weaknesses in defense is on a mission one night, she doing the B&E, he monitoring it and systems with tech. It's touch and go, but a go, but oddly he goes off line at the end. When she arrives home, exhausted and after meandering a bit across London, she finds him dead, his throat cut. And herself, with no real alibi, the focus of police interest. It goes from there. Lots of adrenaline here and some high action. I found the crux of it, the bad actor, to be obvious but as a portrait of grief this is truly wrenching. And of resilience, uplifting.

OUR MARCH SMALL PAPERBACK PICKS

Dirico, Maria. [The Witless Protection Program](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Catering Hall #5. When she sees her philandering husband, who is supposed to be dead, at a huge wedding expo in Manhattan, Mia calls an emergency meeting with the family—and the Family because if he's alive, she's still married and may never be free to marry Shane—or anyone else.

Jance, JA. [The Blessing of the Lost Girls](#) (\$9.99). Joanna Brady #20. Federal investigator Dan Pardee, Brandon Walker's son-in-law, crosses paths with Sheriff Joanna Brady as he traces the bloody path of a merciless serial killer across the Southwest.

Preston, Douglas. [The Cabinet of Dr Leng](#) (\$9.99). Pendergast #21. As Constance Greene finds her way back to New York City in the late 1800s to prevent the death of her siblings and stop serial killer, Dr. Enoch Leng, FBI Special Agent Pendergast desperately tries to find a way to reunite with her before it's too late.

Reichs, Kathy. [Cold, Cold Bones](#) (\$10.99). Temperance Brennan #21. Forensic anthropologist Temperance Brennan discovers a very fresh, human eyeball in a box on her porch with coordinates etched into it that point to a murder at a Benedictine monastery.

MORE MARCH SMALL PAPERBACK S

Blacke, Olivia. [Rhythm and Clues](#) (Tor \$8.99). Record Shop #3. When a predatory investor is killed outside their shop during a violent storm, the Jessup sisters, owners of Sip & Spin Records, are trapped in town with a killer, and when the river spits out an unexpected surprise, Detective Beau Russell asks them for help, bringing them face-to-face with danger.

Brennan, Allison. [Stalked](#) (\$8.99). Reissue. Lucy Kincaid #5. When Tony Presidio is found dead, supposedly of a heart attack, Lucy Kincaid, a new trainee at the FBI Academy in Quantico, enlists the help of her PI boyfriend Sean Rogal to follow her suspicions that Tony was murdered.

Brownlow, John. [Agent Seventeen](#) (Hanover \$9.99). Sixteen people have done this job before me. I am Seventeen. The most feared assassin in the world. But to be the best, you must beat the best. My next target is Sixteen, just as one day Eighteen will hunt me down. It's a dog-eat-dog world and it gets lonely at the top. Nobody gets to stay for long. But while we're here, all that matters is that we win.

Coco, Nancy. [Three Fudges and a Baby](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Candy-Coated #13. When her very pregnant best friend Jenn's doula is accused of murder, Ally agrees to prove the doula's innocence and races against time to solve the case before Jenn's special delivery arrives.

Fox, Candice. [Fire with Fire](#) (\$9.99). After the investigation into their daughter's disappearance yields no results, two desperate parents take the LAPD forensic lab hostage while an undercover cop and a fired police officer race against time to find the missing girl.

Graham, Heather. [Shadow of Death](#) (\$9.99). When the doomsday cult they've been tracking sends a deadly message, Amy Larson and Hunter Forrest arrive in Denver, Colorado, where they investigate the disappearance of a hiker, which leads them to the discovery of dozens of bodies.

Parks, Adele. [Lies, Lies, Lies](#) (\$9.99). Daisy finds her happy little family of three will never be the same again after her husband's drinking spirals out of control during a party.

Picoult, Jodi. [Salem Falls](#) (\$10.99). Reissue. Robbed of his teaching career and reputation by a student's false accusations, Jack St. Bride is struggling to rebuild his life in the wake of an eight-month jail sentence by taking a job washing dishes at Addie Peabody's diner, but fresh accusations of rape by teenage girls from his former school threaten to destroy him once again.