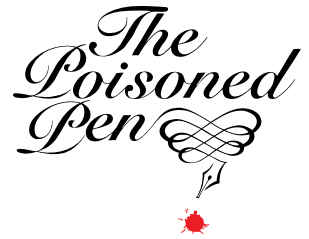


# BOOKNEWS from

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## MORE HOT JULY READING

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

Note: Event times are in Pacific Daylight Time

Note: The events marked "Live" offer Signed books. The virtual events do so when noted

Watch these virtual events on [Facebook Live](#) or on our [YouTube](#) channel and any time thereafter at a time that suits you. You don't have to belong to Facebook to click in.  
You also can listen to our [Podcasts](#) on [Google Music](#), [iTunes](#), [Spotify](#), and other popular podcast sites.

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.

### RECAP OF SOME EARLIER JULY EVENTS

#### TUESDAY JULY 9 7:00 PM Live Book Launch

**Peng Shepherd** discusses [All This and More](#) (Harper \$29.99)  
Can a woman rewrite every mistake she's ever made?

#### WEDNESDAY JULY 10 7:00 PM Live

**Eric Jay Dolin with Karen Odden**  
**Dolin** discusses [Left for Dead](#) (Liveright \$29.99)  
The true story of five castaways abandoned on the Falkland Islands during the War of 1812—plus his books on pirates

#### THURSDAY JULY 11 11:00 AM

**Donna Leon** discusses [A Refiner's Fire](#) (Grove \$28)  
Commissario Guido Brunetti #33 but it stands alone too  
Signed books available  
Signed UK edition [A Refiner's Fire](#) (Heinemann \$44)

#### THURSDAY JULY 11 5:00 PM

**Connie Berry** discusses [A Collection of Lies](#) (Crooked Lane \$30.99)  
Love this British/American series.

#### FRIDAY JULY 12 7:00 PM Live Cozy Fantasy Evening

**Sarah Beth Durst and Rebecca Thorne**  
**Durst** discusses [The Spellshop](#) (Tor \$29.99)  
A hardcover edition featuring lavender sprayed edges!  
**Local author Thorne** discusses [Can't Spell Treason Without Tea](#) (Tor \$19.99)  
With jade sprayed edges and brand-new original art!

#### SATURDAY JULY 13 6:00 PM Live

**Daniel Silva** discusses [Death in Cornwall](#) (Harper \$29.99)  
Gabriel Allon, a murder and a missing masterpiece

### NEW JULY EVENTS

#### MONDAY JULY 15 7:00 PM Live Book Launch

**T Jefferson Parker** discusses [Desperation Reef](#) (Forge \$28.99)  
A Laguna Beach and beyond Surfer Thriller

#### TUESDAY JULY 16 4:30 PM

**May Cobb** discusses [The Hollywood Assistant](#) (Berkley \$29)  
A twist, and then a twist. IMHO the wrong person dies  
Signed books available

#### TUESDAY JULY 16 7:00 PM Live

**Joe R. Lansdale** discusses [Sugar on the Bones](#) (LittleBrown \$29)  
Hap & Leonard return, with a slide show

#### THURSDAY JULY 18 5:00 PM

**Brian Freeman** discusses [Robert Ludlum's The Bourne Shadow](#) (Putnam \$30)  
**Ryan Steck** discusses [Out for Blood](#) (Tyndale \$29.99)  
Matthew Read  
Signed books available for both titles

#### THURSDAY JULY 18 7:00 PM Live

**Bruce Borgos** discusses [Shades of Mercy](#) (St Martins \$28)  
Nevada Sheriff Porter Beck. Wow!

#### FRIDAY JULY 19

Closed at 6:00 PM for Staff Meeting

#### SATURDAY JULY 20 10:30 AM

**Croak & Dagger** discuss Benjamin Stevenson's [Everyone in My Family Has Killed Someone](#) (\$18.99)

#### MONDAY JULY 22 2:00 PM

**Matthew Hart** discusses [The Lucifer Cut](#) (Pegasus \$27.95)  
A rocket propelled thriller through the modern diamond trade and quantum mechanics  
Signed books in stock

#### MONDAY JULY 22 5:00 PM

**Gregg Podolski** discusses [The Recruiter](#) (Blackstone \$27.99)  
A debut with a European recruiter of criminals  
Signed books available

#### WEDNESDAY JULY 24 4:00 PM

**David Grann** hosts **Dean Jobb**  
**Jobb** discusses [A Gentleman and a Thief](#) (Algonquin \$32.50)  
A Jazz Age True Crime Caper

#### WEDNESDAY JULY 24 7:00 PM Live

**David Ellis** discusses [The Best Lies](#) (Penguin \$29)  
Incredible plot set in Chicago, just terrific

#### THURSDAY JULY 25 7:00 PM

**Hardboiled Crime** discusses Graham Greene's [Brighton Rock](#) (\$18)

**FRIDAY JULY 26 7:00 PM**

**SciFi Friday** discusses Stuart Turton's [The 71/2 Deaths of Evelyn Hardcastle](#) (\$17.99)

**SATURDAY JULY 27 11:00 AM**

**The Cookbook Club** discusses Olga Massov's [Hot Sheet Sweet and Savory Cooking](#) (Harper \$32.50)  
Bring a dish from the book to share

**MONDAY JULY 29 5:00 PM Virtual Book Launch**

**Don Bentley hosts Josh Hood**

**Hood** discusses [Burn Out](#) (Blackstone \$26.99)  
US Forest Service elite Smoker Jumpers  
Signed books available

**TUESDAY JULY 30 5:00 PM**

**Allison Montclair** discusses [Murder at the White Palace](#) (St Martins \$28)  
Best yet Post War London's Sparks & Bainbridge  
Signed books available

**WEDNESDAY JULY 31 5:00 PM**

**Jamie Harrison** discusses [The River View](#) (Catapult \$28)  
**Mindy Mejia** discusses [A World of Hurt](#) (Grove \$27)  
Signed books available for both titles

**SATURDAY AUGUST 3 2:00 PM Live**

**Sara Johnson** discusses [The Hungry Bones](#) (Poisoned Pen \$16.99)  
Forensics expert Alexa Glock in old New Zealand mining village

**SUNDAY AUGUST 4 2:00 PM Live Book Launch**

**Deborah J Ledford** discusses [Havoc](#) (Thomas \$ Mercer \$16.99)  
Lightning Dance Duran #2

**SUNDAY AUGUST 4 6:00 PM Live Book Launch**

**Brad Thor** discusses [Shadow of Doubt](#) (Atria \$29.99)  
Scot Harvath  
[Tickets](#): \$33 with one copy of the book. We can offer a limited number free companion tickets, one for each ticket purchased.  
When you order please indicate if you wish one.

**OUR JULY BOOKS OF THE MONTH**

We select a book and charge it to you. Free shipping to US Customers.  
**It's a Book in a Box treat each month. We do ask that you sign up for a minimum of 3 months.**  
Email [Karen@poisonedpen.com](mailto:Karen@poisonedpen.com) to join

**British Crime Club** One Unsigned hardcover or paperback per month  
Pooley, Clare. [How to Age Dis-Gracefully](#)

**Cozy Crimes Club** One Unsigned hardcover or paperback per month  
Byron, Ellen. [A Very Woodsy Murder](#)

**The Crime Collectors Book of the Month Club** One Signed First Printing per month  
Silva, Daniel. [A Death in Cornwall](#)

**First Mystery Club** One Signed First Printing per month  
Jade, Carinn. [The Astrology House](#)

**Hardboiled/Noir Club** One Signed First Printing per month  
Lange, Richard. [Joe Hustle](#)

**History/Mystery Club** One First Printing per month  
Freeman, Dianne. [The Art Lovers Guide to Paris and Murder](#)

**Historical Fiction Paperback Club** One Unsigned paperback per month  
De la Rosa, Liana. [Anna Maria and the Fox](#)

**Notable New Fiction** One Signed First Printing per month  
Wroblewski, David. [Familiaris](#)

**Romance and Relationships** One unsigned hardcover or paperback per month  
Dubb, Sarah T. [Birding with Benefits](#)

**MORE SIGNED BOOKS**

Brennan, Allison. [You'll Never Find Me](#) (Mira \$29.99). The Angelhart family of private investigators are whip-smart, courageous characters willing to work outside the system when necessary to help those whom the system has failed. You can't help but root for them, especially the truly compelling Margo, a former Marine, sharp investigator, and at odds with her mother and three siblings who run the Angelhart PI Agency while Margo works free lance. All of them narrative the story as does at least one bad guy, an abusive cop, and one trainee who is not family. Brennan faces you with a complicated set of cases where marital discord merges into corporate espionage, doling out just the right amount of family drama while moving the story effortlessly between the investigations.

"Coupled with the unique Arizona setting, chilling villains, and Brennan's signature snappy prose, this is the beginning of a fabulous new series set in Phoenix" for an author who moved to here to the Valley of the Sun a few years ago.

Borgos, Bruce. [Shades of Mercy](#) (St Martins \$28). So glorious, a high action Western thriller! I thought Borgos could not top his amazing 2023 debut in [The Bitter Past](#) (\$19) featuring Russian spies, nuclear sabotage, murder, and a love story, but I was wrong. This sequel may be our August Crime Book of the Month, but regardless do not miss this second case for Sheriff Porter Beck, a former Army Intelligence officer, set in the Nevada high desert where a lot more goes on than you might imagine—in real life as in fiction.

As a government RPA (remotely piloted aircraft) is hijacked and explodes over a birthday party on the 4th of July, Lincoln County Sheriff Porter Beck is rushing to the scene of an emergency. He's not in time to save a childhood friend from a drug overdose. The next day, an Air Force special agent brings Beck to the ranch of another childhood friend, the party's host. They find Jesse Roy standing over a crater where his prize bull was incinerated by the hacked RPA. The government's immediate willingness to reimburse Roy for the bull plus other oddities

makes Beck think he's not getting the whole story. But when he's told that a brilliant incarcerated 16-year-old might be the hacker who took over the RPA, he believes it. Mercy Vaughn has the ability and knowledge. When she disappears from a road crew, all hell breaks loose. Beck is determined to find Mercy, but he's up against the U.S. government, a Mexican cartel, and Chinese agents, none of whom seems concerned with keeping the teen alive. Meanwhile his aging father, the former sheriff whose life story we know if we read *The Bitter Past*, looks on....

Cobb, May. [The Hollywood Assistant](#) (Berkley \$29). Cassidy Foster seems stuck in a dead end life, bored and dumped. When her BFF, a film producer working in Europe, presents her for a job working for famed director Nate Sterling and his supermodel-turned-actor wife, Marisol Torres, it sounds too good to be true: she'll make a handsome salary and be in proximity to some of L.A.'s brightest stars. But Cassidy soon discovers that in the privacy of their luxe Malibu mansion, Nate and Marisol's relationship is both sexy and stormy. He's remote, mostly locked in his office working remotely. She's craving society and snagging a juicy film part, so also seeking coaching. Cassidy can't find her footing and so when Nate asks he to tail Marisol—he suspects she's cheating on him with her voice coach—Cassidy agrees. Four weeks later the cops come knocking at Cassidy's door... who died? And why? Truly, the twists keep coming.

Cranor, Eli. [Broiler](#) (Soho \$27.95) is Edgar winner Cranor's "latest Trojan Horse of a novel, a satisfying hunk of noir that tells us far more about the American South than those endless newspaper think pieces set in diners and gas stations. Want to understand what's going on in the United States right now? Read Eli Cranor." —Laura Lippman. Zoom event with Patrick and Scott Phillips August 28 5:00 PM PDT

Gabriela and her boyfriend Edwin have worked as undocumented laborers at Luke Jackson's chicken plant in northwest Arkansas for seven years, processing thousands of broilers a day for little pay and no bathroom breaks. While Gabby plans for a future far beyond Detmer Foods, Luke strives for a coveted promotion, and his wife Mimi tends to their infant son and her growing postpartum depression. These two couples, who might as well occupy different universes for how rarely they interact, are brought into sudden and violent conflict when Luke fires Edwin to impress his higher-ups, leading Edwin to hatch a desperate scheme that will allow him and Gabby to truly begin their lives together.... "Cranor's ability to find the humanity in all his characters will keep readers from losing sympathy, and his unshakable depiction of the brutal conditions in the chicken plant would make [muckraker] Upton Sinclair proud."

Durst, Sarah Beth. [The Spellshop](#) (Tor \$29.99). An absolute delight, a romantic, cozy escape fantasy perfect for YA readers as well as grown ups. Great world building. Chocolate essential. A librarian escapes a coup to a remote island where she builds a new life. Think of this as an ideal destination thriller for the cozy set.

Ellis, David. [The Best Lies](#) (Putnam \$29). Only a lawyer could write this unorthodox legal thriller. And it's set in Chicago! Too few crime novels are which has always mystified me. Anyway, Illinois attorney Leo Balanoff has just had his law license reinstated. Yet he may lose it again when DNA has been found on the shirtsleeve of murdered human trafficker Cyrus Balik. Leo

has a long and terrible history with Balik, truly scum, and a sound motive for killing him. Leo also has a long and risky history of playing the legal system to achieve personal goals. More or less giving rein to a savior complex molded by his family history. So when FBI cuts Leo a deal—they'll keep him out of prison if he helps take down Balik's syndicate—he accepts. That mission puts him back in touch with his ex-girlfriend, a former cop who's now working for a company developing a mysterious cure for cancer. These elements forge a complex plot peopled with complex characters and a narrative requiring your attention. I was up for it. Are you?

Freeman, Brian. [Robert Ludlum's The Bourne Shadow](#) (Putnam \$29.99). Ten years ago, David Webb was working as a teacher in Zurich when he was recruited into Treadstone and sent to infiltrate Le Renouveau, "the most poisonous neo-Nazi cell in Europe." When, as a final test of his loyalty, his handlers instructed him to kill his fiancée, Monika Roth, the mission went awry. That's the cliffhanger first chapter staged in remote, high altitude Switzerland. But thanks to a traumatic brain injury, Webb lost his ID and memory and became Jason Bourne. And now, years later, in Paris, a contentious presidential campaign pitting a right-wing extremist against an establishment candidate is in full flame. Le Renouveau has reemerged to join the extremists, targeting Bourne for reasons he can't decipher. Then a mysterious message sends him from Paris to Zurich where he learns the summons has come from Monica's sister Johanna. She recognizes Bourne as Webb. Off they go crisscrossing Europe to find Monika and maybe finding out what happened to turn Webb into Bourne. The action is brisk, the writing propulsive, and "Freeman keeps things brisk and punchy, generating a surprising amount of heat by finding a fresh way to revisit Bourne's amnesia. Fans of Ludlum's original trilogy or the film adaptations will be riveted." Highly recommended.

Grames, Juliet. [The Lost Boy of Santa Chionia](#) (Knopf \$29). Out in late July but not signed here until a special event with a Calabrian food buffet on August 25 with Stuart Neville. I mention it so you won't think we've overlooked it. The event is late because Grames has long been the editor of Neville's work over at Soho Press so our event will in part be about an editor and author working together—and an editor turning author.

My review: Once again drawing on her Italian heritage, the author of [The Seven or Eight Deaths of Stella Fortuna](#) (\$17.99) hurls us into the wild heart of Calabria, 1960, when isolation, a stagnant economy, severe flooding, and the grip of poverty make the mountain top village of Santa Chionia an unlikely place for an idealistic young American to open a nursery school. Even more challenging is filling a request from an aged village mother for Francesca to determine if the skeleton that surfaced after the waters receded might be the bones of her long missing son....

Grant, Kimi Cunningham. [The Nature of Disappearing](#) (St Martins \$18). Hurray, I was able to score Signed copies of this book so perfect for exploring wilderness, parks, the outdoors. Grant serves up the archetypal haunted heroine but with a new twist for a woman for whom the wilderness is as essential as oxygen. Idaho's Emlyn Anthony, haunted by abandonments, works as a high-end hunting and fishing guide, catering somewhat to high-end clients. That's a great setup in its own right, but it gears up when Emlyn gets a visit from Tyler, the

love of her life who left her half dead on the side of the road three years ago. She's also estranged from her former best friend Janessa, the woman who introduced Emlyn to Tyler. And now Tyler has shown up to give her the news that Janessa is missing, leading to a tense recoupling of sorts as they join forces to find Janessa by tracking through the wild landscape that Emlyn knows better than practically anyone. "Grant anchors the suspense in the lives of her well-developed characters and delivers a hugely satisfying finale. In the forest of survival thrillers, this stands tall."

✦ Griffiths, Elly. [The Man in Black and Other Stories](#) (Quercus \$42). In the title story, Ruth Galloway crosses paths with a mysterious man in a bookstore, setting in motion a rescue mission that hinges on the legends and lore of Norfolk. Then come ghost stories, cozy mysteries, tales of psychological suspense, and poignant vignettes of love and loss. Unsigned US edition not until mid-October.

✦ Grossman, Lev. [The Bright Sword](#) (Penguin \$35). A perfect summer fantasy. A gifted young knight named Collum arrives at Camelot to compete for a spot on the Round Table, only to find that he's too late. The king died two weeks ago at the Battle of Camlann, leaving no heir, and only a handful of the knights of the Round Table survive. They aren't the hero's of legend, like Lancelot or Gawain. They're the oddballs of the Round Table. Together this ragtag fellowship will set out to rebuild Camelot in a world that has lost its balance. The Indie Next Pick adds: "You know a book's good when it starts with a quote from *Monty Python*. I utterly loved it from the first page to the last. Witty, serious, magical, and with an amazing cast of characters, this is everything an Arthurian epic should be."

Breaking News: Lionsgate Television and 3 Arts Entertainment have preemptively acquired the rights to *The Bright Sword* for series development, described as "the first major Arthurian epic of the new millennium steeped in tradition, full of duels and quests, battles and tournaments, magic swords and Fisher Kings."

✦ Harkness, Deborah. [The Black Bird Oracle](#) (Headline \$46) ushers in "a new era for Diana, an Oxford scholar and powerful witch, as she navigates marriage to the vampire Matthew and motherhood, while reckoning with dark secrets from her family's storied past. There's no better time to get swept up in the romance, adventure, and magic of the All Souls world, beginning with *A Discovery of Witches*."—*Bustle*. The *LJ* Starred Review gives readers future hope: "Marked by Harkness' deft evocations and appreciation of learning, this is a book to treasure. The portentous ending, rife with new story threads and threats, will leave readers hoping that she doesn't wait another six years to continue the series." Why six years wait for this? Harkness was fighting a courageous battle with cancer.

We have a few Signed copies of the US edition left: [The Black Bird Oracle](#) (Random \$32).

Hart, Matthew. [The Lucifer Cut](#) (Pantheon \$27.95). I love Hart's thrillers and agree with *Booklist*: "The story is exciting and suspenseful, and Hart knows his stuff, having spent years writing about the diamond trade. This tale has a ring of truth about it that you just can't fake. Recommend it to everyone who enjoys a good, fast-paced thriller." Plus the landscapes including Cape Town are vividly rendered, the villains ruthless, and US Treasury

Agent Alex Turner, once a jewel thief himself, is relentless in pursuit of why Upper East Side diamond merchant Lou Fine and his wife Coco were murdered in their home. And whether diamonds in play are the real deal or amazing fakes, and if fakes, how were they manufactured to be undetectable. To find out, Alex's cohorts at the Treasury call him in to discuss the partnership between his girlfriend, multimillionaire diamond thief Lily, and Xi Mei, a well-connected Chinese woman who operates a diamond mine. Evidence suggests that Mei—and, by extension, the Chinese—are attempting to harness the fake diamond technology to get a leg up in the global economy. But it's more complicated than that.... For extra fun start with Alex's first, [The Russian Pink](#) (\$25.95), and move on to [Ice Angel](#) (\$25.95 Signed). Alas this publisher does not do paperbacks.

Harrison, Jamie. [The River View](#) (Catapult \$28). "The Jules Clement novels of Jamie Harrison are a welcome antidote to those sprawling, prime-time renditions of the New West. The heroes and villains of small-town Montana are way more intriguing—the crime is grubbier, the passion is bloodier, the revenge is sloppier—but the mountain views are just as spectacular. And Jules is beyond cool." —Carl Hiaasen. Happily they are now [reissued in nifty covers](#). As for the new book, it arrives early August after a six year wait and gets this Starred Review:

"In 1972, when Jules was a child, his father, the sheriff of Blue Deer, Montana, was gunned down during a traffic stop. Patrick Bell was convicted of the murder—he claimed he'd been on the way home to kill his unfaithful wife and the sheriff "was in the way"—but the precise circumstances of the crime were never made clear. Now, in 2001, Jules's mother urges him to learn as much as he can about his father's final moments. While Jules reluctantly revisits that case, he juggles others: his meddlesome neighbors separately hire him to spy on one another; a priest's suicide starts to look like it may have been a murder; and Absaroka County hires him to determine where, exactly, the bodies are buried in an abandoned graveyard that officials want to build a road over. Eventually, most of the plot's individual strands come together, with the death of Jules's father as a linchpin. The episodic structure works wonders, with each vignette highlighting Jules's damage as well as his brilliance."

Hood, Joshua. [Burn Out](#) (Blackstone \$26.99). Another summer high action thriller thrusts you into our growing fear of fires fueled by drought and by nature or human agency. Becoming one of the US Forest Service's elite smokejumpers has been Jake Slade's dream. Parachuting into the path of a raging fire and beating it into submission isn't a job for the faint of heart, but after four years in Folsom, he's ready to prove himself. And survives the grueling six-week training course. Then fighting a wildfire gets Slade involved in a string of murders deep in the mountains of California's notorious Emerald Triangle, leaving him caught between a disgraced DEA agent trying to solve his final case and the ruthless cartel hit man determined to kill them both. What began as a straightforward search and rescue mission swiftly turns into a harrowing run for his life....

Jade, Carinn. [The Astrology House](#) (Atria \$28.99). Those who liked Katy Hays' [The Cloisters](#) (\$17.99) will have fun with our **July First Mystery Book of the Month**. What we have is a locked room story set in a restored waterfront Victorian showplace place on Long Island Sound offering Astrological

Retreats, a mixed bag of guests and a hostess with an agenda of her own, dark secrets, and death. It will make you rethink the desirability of a couples' weekend no matter how glamorous the setting. Jade did her homework and clearly had fun crafting astrological intrigue and readings to match the characters in a sort of murderous love letter to the zodiac. It might inspire you to get your own chart read.

Johnson, Sara. [The Hungry Bones](#) (Poisoned Pen \$16.99). Prickly Alexa Glock whose forensic specialization is with teeth, earned a job with New Zealand law enforcement. And a rocky courtship with DI Bruce Horne who cheated with his ex. Alexa's trust issues have caused her to apply for a position in Scotland. Meanwhile a skeleton has been exhumed in a quaint former ghost town. If they are the bones of a Chinese miner, a woman wants to repatriate the "hungry ghost" of what may be her ancestor to China. Alexa's skill is needed but the surprise is the hole in the skull and a second skeleton found nearby, also murdered. So will the local police station open a cold case, or cases? Sara says I gave her the idea for this story when recounting a visit to such an old mining community in the South Island, so it will be fun to talk about all five of her books set in NZ on August 3.

Kearsley, Susanna. [The King's Messenger](#) (SimonSchuster UK \$44 due in August but best to preorder). 1613: King James – sixth of Scotland, first of England, son of Mary, Queen of Scots—has unified both countries under one crown. But the death of his eldest son, Henry, has plunged the nation into mourning, as the rumors rise the prince was poisoned. Andrew Logan's heard the rumors, but he's paid them little heed. As one of the King's Messengers he has enough secrets to guard, including his own. In these perilous times, when the merest suggestion of witchcraft can see someone tortured and hanged, men like Andrew must hide well the fact they were born with the Sight. He'll need all his gifts, though, when the king sends Andrew north to find and arrest Sir David Murray, once Prince Henry's trusted courtier, and bring him a prisoner to London to stand trial before the dreaded Star Chamber. This is catnip for readers of Philippa Gregory, no? Or PF Chisholm. Or even Outlander. US edition probably spring of 2025.

Lansdale, Joe R. [Sugar on the Bones](#) (LittleBrown \$29). Patrick is off in Sedona reading his copy as I write this, so I quote a Starred Review: "Edgar winner Lansdale excels in his savagely funny 13th case for East Texas PIs Hap Collins and Leonard Pine. When Minnie Polson consults with Hap and his wife, Brett, about the blackmail she's been subject to, the duo's off-color jokes dissuade her from hiring them. Hap brushes off the encounter, but when Minnie dies in a suspicious house fire, he and Brett feel compelled to investigate. With Leonard's help, they turn up evidence of a complicated insurance money scheme, with suspects including Minnie's missing daughter, Alice, and Minnie's estranged husband, Al, who left her for a gold-digging stripper named Earline. As the detectives tease out the motivations of each of Minnie's relatives, they run afoul of a ruthless crime ring and have little choice but to employ the services of mercenaries Vanilla and Jim Bob. Blood-splattered action and a welcome spoonful of irreverent humor make this a surefire hit. It's a high-water mark for the series."

Ledford, Deborah J. [Havoc](#) (Thomas \$ Mercer \$16.99). In a follow up to [Redemption](#) (\$16.9) we find Eva "Lightning Dance"

Duran joining the Taos PD and working a bank robbery that left an officer down and a suspect on the run. She has the support of fellow tribal cops but there is tension between the Taos Puebloans and the local Hispanic community.

Leon, Donna. [A Refiner's Fire](#) (Heinemann \$44) begins low key as is often the case with Leon whose books are more about foibles and relationships, ethical issues and social as well, than about crime. But while this is a kind of slow burn involving overprivileged teens and protections from consequences, it evolves into a crushing crime after one teen, Orlando, warns Commissario Brunetti's colleague Griffoni he's heard whispers from his schoolmate Gianpaolo Porpora that something big is in the offing—it's a murderous attack on Enzo Bocchese, the Questura's chief lab technician, whose plans to sell most of his valuable collection of sculptures are upended by whoever breaks in and destroys them. In the meantime, there's more whispering—but this time, it's about Griffoni, who was photographed and identified at that coffee shop by someone who tipped off peerlessly shady avvocato Beniamino Cresti. And then.... We still have a few of the Signed US edition: [A Refiner's Fire](#) (Grove \$28)

McPhillips, Fiona. [When We Were Silent](#) (Flatiron \$28.99). Before Donna Tartt, in fact think of Josephine Tey's *Miss Pym Disposes* or Dorothy Sayers' *Gaudi Night*, the (elite) campus mystery was set as a big draw. Irish journalist McPhillips debuts with a dark one set at Dublin's most exclusive Catholic private school, Highfield Manor. In 1986, Louise Manson was once its newest student despite her working class status that made her the obvious outsider inside its granite walls with high-arched alcoves, an oak-lined library...and that Lou has enrolled to avenge her best friend Tina's suicide. She was befriended by some of her wealthy classmates. But after Lou attempts to shed light on the school's secret, her time at Highfield ends with a lifeless body sprawled at her feet. Thirty years later, Lou gets a shocking phone call. A high-profile lawyer is bringing a lawsuit against the school—and he needs Lou to testify if his young client is to prevail. Soon someone tries to extort Lou into staying silent and.... it's shattering.

Mejia, Mindy. [A World of Hurt](#) (Grove \$27). For the nerve-shredding sequel to [To Catch a Storm](#) (\$18 out August 13), Mejia shifts her focus from psychic PI Jonah Kendrick to his college friend, Iowa City cop Max Summerlin, and Kara Johnson, the lover of Kendrick's late niece, Celina. Summerlin is eager to get back in the field after recovering from gunshot wounds he sustained while breaking up an opioid ring run by Sam Olson. The officer gets his chance when he's tapped to join a task force looking for a hit man who's been killing people connected to Olson's operation. Summerlin is deflated, however, when he learns he's been recruited as a liaison for Johnson, who ran drugs for Olson before becoming an informant. Johnson, who was born with a condition that makes her unable to feel physical pain, is grieving the loss of Celina, whom Olson killed after she took the fall for Johnson's informing. Neither Johnson nor Summerlin is thrilled about their partnership, but each learns from the other as they make a run at Olson and the hit man targeting him. Mejia maintains breathless suspense as she fleshes out the combative dynamic between her captivating leads. For crime fiction fans, it's a must-read.

☒ Montclair, Allison. [Murder at the White Palace](#) (St Martins \$28). A spectacular entry into one of my favorite series set in 1946 London. Gwen Bainbridge and Iris Sparks come from very different social strata, had very different wars, and have complicated families, but somehow they make a friendship and a business partnership work. While war-widow Gwen, finally free from the London Court of Lunacy oversight after her breakdown, is bravely moving forward on tip toe, Iris is torn about her future with her gangster lover Archie. The discovery of a skeleton in a remodeling project leads to probing the past and mayhem, serious injury, meanwhile keeping the women's marriage bureau The Right Sort going. "The banter between Iris and Gwen remains brisk and hilarious, and Montclair does a particularly good job throwing readers off the culprit's scent. Series fans will be over the moon," says a reviewer as enthusiastic as I.

Moreno-Garcia, Silvia. [The Seventh Veil of Salome](#) (Random \$28.99). A Mexico City receptionist's exotic looks land her the lead role in the eponymous 1950s Hollywood epic. Vera Larios has no professional acting experience, which infuriates costar Nancy Hartley, who was certain the role was hers and that it would have been her big break. While Nancy schemes to knock Vera out of the picture, Moreno-Garcia unfurls a parallel story line in which the biblical Salome navigates power struggles in her Uncle Herod's court through stratagems not unlike those wielded by Vera and Nancy. Moreno-Garcia shines a light on the racial and gender politics of postwar Hollywood as she "reveals—veil by veil—layers of emotion, character, the Bible, and Hollywood. What a fun and compelling dance!"—Lisa See.

I add that when I was in high school, the actress Katy Jurado of *High Noon* fame made a visit to the parents of a friend of mine. We two girls could scarcely believe how exotic she was as we hid in the curtains to spy on her.

Parker, T Jefferson. [Desperation Reef](#) (Forge \$28.99). Three-time Edgar winner Parker's literary ground is California. He's toured us around many locations in the Golden State during his long career and he turns to Laguna Beach and a family of surfers. They are prepping for the high-stakes big-waves on the Mavericks that killed their patriarch 25 years ago. That's all we know at the start but as the plot moves along as does the competition deadline, "all three face down individual conflicts: restaurateur Jen struggles to let go of John's death, seafood supplier Casey seeks to untangle himself from an illegal fish-smuggling operation, and progressive church minister Brock deals with increasingly violent threats from a local white supremacist group. Each subplot comes to a crescendo at the surf competition, which Parker brings to vivid life. Though there's plenty of suspense, danger, and illicit activity on offer, the novel's focus is squarely on the Stonebreaker clan, whose bonds and fractures prove utterly riveting in Parker's hands."—*PW* Starred Review. Our July 15 date is the launch so ask for your copy to be dated. You fans of Don Winslow's surfing thrillers should snag this.

Pearse, Sarah. [The Wilds](#) (Bantam UK \$39). If a summer destination thriller is your bag, read on. Since the dark events that scarred her childhood, Kier Templer escaped her hometown to live life on the road. She and her twin have never lost contact until, on a trip to a Portuguese national park, Kier vanishes without a trace. Detective Elin Warner whom we met in Pearse's debut [The Sanatorium](#) (\$17) arrives in the same park ready to immerse herself in its vast wilderness – only to hear about Kier's

disappearance, and discover a disturbing map she left behind. The few strangers at an isolated campsite close ranks against Elin's questions, and the park's wild beauty starts to turn sinister as Elin works to uncover what really happened to Kier. Unsigned US edition: [The Wilds](#) (Viking \$30).

Podolski, Gregg. [The Recruiter](#) (Blackstone \$27.99). A debut introduces Rick Carter, a go-to guy for contract killers, hackers, gun smugglers, and any other assorted villains-for-hire a European crime boss might need. But wait! Suddenly he must save his family after a job goes sideways. Rick's troubles begin when a Belgian mob boss named Trish threatens to kill him if he refuses to oversee hits on six law enforcement officers across the globe. Reluctantly, Rick gets to work, but he's jolted when he realizes that one of the targets—a Philadelphia police detective—is his ex-wife's new husband. Refusing to help kill his children's stepfather, Rick tries to back out, and Trish makes good on her promise, unleashing two assassins to hunt him down. That sends Rick on a mad dash to protect the family he abandoned in New Jersey 10 years earlier, and he draws on his network of nefarious associates to throw his pursuers off the trail. Plus a cliffhanger sets up a sequel.

☒ Robotham, Michael. [Storm Child](#) (Sphere UK \$46). The way I can present this 4<sup>th</sup> book in a story arc about British psychologist Cyrus Haven and the troubled young woman he took in after she was discovered hiding in a secret room where a man lay tortured to death, is to say watch our zoom discussion on [FB](#) or [YT](#) or listen to the [podcast](#) – all of which had a choppy start as we were off an hour on the time difference between Scottsdale and Sydney where he lives. It's a corker and begins on a blistering summer day when Evie watches the bodies of 17 wash up on a Lincolnshire beach.... I asked him some tough questions and he replied. Unsigned US edition: [Storm Child](#) (Scribner \$28)

Rosenfelt, David. [Dog Day Afternoon](#) (St Martins \$28). Click the link to see the cover as the pup is a charmer. So, once again professionally retired NJ lawyer Andy Carpenter, beneficiary of his crooked father's fortune way back at the series start, returns to court to pull off another impossible defense. Why? A man showed up at the offices of Moore Law and used six bullets to kill six people, leaving only attorney Sally Montrose and paralegal Laura Schauble alive to identify him from his tattoo and distinctive footgear as handyman Nick Williams. Even a tyro would realize that the murders are the work of a professional hit man, but when the cops find the murder weapon in a trash bin a few blocks from Nick's home with Nick's fingerprint on it, they and lead prosecutor Richard Wallace have their man. However Marcus, Andy's backup and member of Andy's wife's PI firm, has been an informal mentor to Nick and asks Andy to defend him. How can Andy refuse?

Shepherd, Peng. [All This and More](#) (Harper \$29.99) is perfect for fans of Matt Haig's *The Midnight Library* and Kate Atkinson's *Life After Life*. Plus you can read it to play Choose Your Own Adventure in an adult way: the structure of the story provides a twist: the reader gets to decide what Marsh does next to change her fate. Endless options. Every choice has consequences. You can go back in the narrative and choose another path or paths if you wish.

• Meek, play-it-safe Marsh has just turned forty-five. Her career is stagnant, her marriage has imploded, and her teenage

daughter grows more distant by the day. Marsh is convinced she's missed her chance at everything—romance, professional fulfillment, and adventure—and is desperate for a do-over. She can't believe her luck when she's selected to be the star of the global sensation "All This and More", a show that uses quantum technology to allow contestants the chance to revise their pasts and change their present lives. It's Marsh's only shot to seize her dreams, and she's determined to get it right this time. But even as she rises to become a famous lawyer, gets back together with her high school sweetheart, and travels the world, she begins to worry that All This and More's promises might be too good to be true.

Silva, Daniel. [A Death in Cornwall](#) (Harper \$29.99). I've reviewed this book so often and enthusiastically we may be sold out by the time you read this. Gabriel Allon here is fully retired as a spy and is recruited by a policeman down in Cornwall whom Gabriel met when the cop was a kid to look into the murder of an Oxford professor. Is it the work of the local serial killer with his hammer, or is there a larger picture? A real picture by Picasso which involves the Louvre which wants to return the looted painting to its rightful heir (just murdered in Montmartre), the Geneva Freeport, haven to wealthy collectors and worse, and bad behavior in the British Establishment. Lots of familiar characters, none from Israel, and a return to Corsica and Gabriel's most implacable enemy, make this a joy for series fans but a new reader can plunge right in.

✂ Smith, Sally. [A Case of Mice and Murder](#) (Raven UK \$36). See Some New Hardcover Books for July for a review of our **August British Crime Book of the Month** in the Unsigned edition, a debut set in 1901 London inside the Inner and Middle Temples where the Lord Chief Justice has been murdered. **British Crime Club members should not order this edition, and their US edition will ship for free to US customers**

Song, KX. [The Night Ends with Fire](#) (Penguin \$30). Not signed but perfectly beautiful with vibrant colors in the fore edge painting, the end papers, the cover design. It's a new bestseller for both production and story. And amazing in that all this design comes at the same price as is typical for new hardcovers. Inspired by the legend of Mulan and Romance of the Three Kingdoms, one of the Four Great Classical Novels of Chinese literature, and with colors heralding fire, we read that The Three Kingdoms are at war, but Meilin's father refuses to answer the imperial draft. Trapped by his opium addiction, he plans to sell Meilin for her dowry. But when Meilin discovers her husband-to-be is another violent, ill-tempered man, she realizes that nothing will change for her unless she takes matters into her own hands. Song has penned a testament to the developing sub-genre of fantasy dedicated to books inspired by Chinese history and mythology, expanding on the space of retellings and re-imaginings.

Come into the store and admire the new display of high design books. They might inspire you to start a collection.

Steck, Ryan. [Out for Blood](#) (Tyndale \$29.99). Plus our copies come with an extra chapter! Gavin Kline, executive assistant director of the FBI's Intelligence Directorate, is escorting a high-value prisoner with the intel to bring down a global conspiracy when their plane comes under attack. In the aftermath, much of Kline's team is dead, but he recovers a phone from a member of the hit team that reveals another attack is imminent. This time

they're going after the man who was instrumental in capturing the prisoner and foiling their plans: Matthew Redd. So Redd kisses his family goodbye and runs for his life into the heart of Montana. He faces rogue government agents, a blizzard, avalanches.... Mission Impossible meets Yellowstone.... expect a high body count and plenty of action from former Marine Raider Redd. "If you're looking for action, this one's coming in hot!" — Jack Carr

Thor, Brad. [Shadow of Doubt](#) (Atria \$29.99) sends US asset Scot Harvath of the private intelligence Carlton Group back to Norway on what should have been R&R after his mission in the Ukraine detailed in 2023's [Dead Fall](#) (\$10.99). But it's not to be. First Harvath subdues a crazed passenger on his flight to Oslo. Then he's hijacked by the CIA at the airport with intent to blackmail him into spying on his fiancée, Sølvi, a Norwegian Intelligence officer currently charged with debriefing a Russian defector. Why? The CIA is justly alarmed over a Russian nuclear threat situated in Belarus. Next, Sølvi and the defector barely escape assassination from a supposedly safe house, bringing Harvath into her op despite his refusal. Meanwhile a French intelligence agent is killed in Paris, also the result of a security leak. So we have Norway, France, and the US on one hand and Russia and Belarus on another, all playing high stakes and in some cases treacherous games. There are magnificently choreographed action scenes, intense personal relationships, and devious plots to enjoy in this outstanding series entry.

Whitaker, Chris. [All the Colours of the Dark](#) (Orion UK \$45). Amidst the disappearances of young girls in a 1975 small Missouri town, an unlikely hero emerges — Patch, a scruffy, eye-patch wearing local boy, saves the daughter of a wealthy family, and, in doing so, leaves heartache in his wake. A missing person mystery, a serial killer thriller, a love story, a unique twist on each, this novel is about what lurks in the shadows of obsession.

## SUMMER COZIES

Barrett, Lorna. [A Controversial Cover](#) (Penguin \$29). Spunky bookseller Tricia Miles is ready to close the book on all her amateur sleuthing—she's tired of finding dead bodies and being accused of murder. But even the best laid plans often go awry. Stoneham, NH, is all abuzz when Lauren Barker, a famous children's book author, arrives for an event at the local library. Lauren is a Stoneham native, and her new book strikes some members of the town as controversial. But when Lauren is found strangled to death after an altercation at the event, the plot twist throws Tricia, and her wealthy sleuthing sister, right back into the middle of things.

Burns, Valerie. [A Cup of Flour, A Pinch of Death](#) (Kensington \$17.95). Who can resist a culinary cozy? Not one from Agatha and Edgar Award-nominated author Valerie Burns whose social media influencer Maddy Montgomery is still adjusting to her new life after moving to small-town Michigan to run a bakery and take care of a gigantic English mastiff. By now Baby Cakes Bakery is becoming a huge success—so much so that she's attracted the attention of her former nemesis, the fiancé-stealing Brandy Denton. When Brandy blows into New Bison like an ill wind and disrupts a vlog Maddy's filming, their argument goes viral. After Brandy's body is found at Baby Cakes, Maddy instantly goes from viral sensation to murder suspect. As Maddy is still reeling from the murder, a stranger shows up in the bakery

claiming to have been a friend of Octavia. He believes Maddy is in danger. When a second body washes up on the lake shore, it seems clear someone's out to kill to keep a secret—and it may have to do with her great aunt

Byron, Ellen. [A Very Woodsy Murder](#) (Kensington \$27). July brings thoughts of road trips, camping, time in national and state parks, and woods. **Our July Cozy Crimes Book of the Month** is a perfect fit. “Fragrant California woods are a welcome change for Los Angeles scriptwriter Dee Stern—until they turn dark and threaten her dream of renovating the Golden Motel in the Gold Rush foothills of the Sierras.” Yes, Dee has checked out of the familiar comforts in Studio City and checked in to the quaint village of Foundgold to run a motel. Running a rustic getaway in the woods sure beats LA traffic—until murder ruins the peace and quiet.... “Readers will love Byron’s well-scripted series debut, a tale both twisty and humorous, as she explores small-town loyalties and murderous rivalries, family both original and chosen, and following a new dream.” —Maddie Day

Delany, Vicki. [Trouble is Brewing](#) (Kensington \$27). Lily Roberts’s Cape Cod Tea by the Sea is hosting a beautiful bridal shower. But the last package bride Hannah unwraps contains a beheaded Raggedy Ann doll and triggers a bloodcurdling scream. A doll like this was the last gift from her father before he died long ago, and she’s chilled to the bone. Lily senses that the shocking anonymous gift just might be related to other tensions she’s picking up on. The mothers-in-law have been sniping at each other—and then Lily, out walking her dog, overhears the groom’s father, Ralph, offering his son a very sizable bribe to call off the wedding. She’s relieved when Greg angrily turns him down, but with so many people steamed at each other, can this event possibly go smoothly? The answer is no. Ralph is found dead in his bed....

Duncan, Emmeline. [Chaos at the Lazy Bones Bookshop](#) (Kensington \$17.95). Elyan Hollow was a quiet town on Oregon’s Columbia River until a famous Halloween movie was filmed there. Now it’s a Halloween-themed tourist destination supporting many small businesses, including Lazy Bones Books, which Bailey Briggs’ grandfather is passing on to her. For the Halloween festival she’s planning, Bailey has extended invitations to three well-known authors, including bestselling Rex Abbot, who graduated from high school in Elyan Hollow. Also in town is a crew from the TV show *Gone Ghosts*; Taylor Edison, its snooty research assistant, has talked Bailey into letting them shoot in the bookstore; and one-time local Lance Gregory, star of the show. The shoot, supervised by Bailey’s assistant, trashes the shop, leaving Bailey furious. Worse, she finds Lance dead in the maze created for the festival, becoming a prime suspect.

Durst, Sarah Beth. [The Spellshop](#) (Tor \$29.99). An absolute delight, a romantic, cozy escape fantasy perfect for YA readers as well as grown ups. Great world building. Chocolate essential. A librarian escapes a coup to a remote island where she builds a new life. Think of this as an ideal destination thriller for the cozy set.

Fluke, Joanne. [Blackberry Pie Murder](#) (\$17.95). A reissue from 2014. You Fluke fans should know that it will be 2025 before a new Hannah Swensen will be ready to serve.

Greene, MS. [There’s No Murder Like Show Murder](#) (Crooked Lane \$31.99). Lesa reviews: Tasha Weaver is passionate about

the Eastbrook Playhouse. She grew up in the regional theater and is now the head of the costume shop. Although Kurt Mozer, the leading man in the new production of *Annie Get Your Gun*, is disliked by the director and the other actors, Tasha knows how much the theater needs him. He may no longer be a Broadway star, but his name is selling tickets. When Kurt disappears, amid rumors that he quit, Tasha tracks him down and massages his ego, and he agrees to return. When he’s killed that same night in the theater, she feels guilty. Now the theater she loves is threatened again, and one of her friends might be a murderer.... Playwright Greene brings his love and passion for musical theater to this new series. Theater fans will appreciate the behind-the-scenes knowledge, along with the small details so essential to the atmosphere of this cozy mystery.

Noonan, Roz. [Puzzle Me a Murder](#) (Kensington \$27) “has it all—jigsaw puzzle clues, tarot card readings, small-town intrigue, a big, homey house, a looming wedding, and a murder of philandering husband. Oregon librarian Alice Pepper and her endearing collection of family members and friends grab your attention and pull you along as they fit the puzzle pieces together to reveal the big picture and solve the big case.” —Barbara Ross

Perry, Carol J. [Haunting License](#) (Kensington \$17.95). Inheriting the Haven House Inn from “mysterious benefactor” Penelope Josephine Gray has proven a mixed blessing for 27-year-old Maureen Doherty. Like most of Haven’s residences, the inn is full of ghosts. But the spirits who haunt Haven House are a fairly respectful lot and Executive Chef Ted Carr make Maureen’s pulse race, and his culinary skills make her taste buds tingle. Though it’s been a journey getting the century-old building up and running, Maureen’s greatest challenge this time comes from outside the inn. While walking her golden retriever, Finn, along the beach, she discovers the body of Eddie Manuel, owner of the charter boat Tightline. Eddie’s is the third corpse Maureen has stumbled across since her arrival, and local police detective Frank Hubbard is getting tired of interviewing her. But he also wants to protect her from the risks of her own snoopiness. Danger predictably follows as an archeologist, a wildlife photographer, and possibly a gang of grave robbers descend on the inn....

Siegel, Katie. [Charlotte Illes Is Not a Teacher](#) (Kensington \$17.95). “Siegel’s humor and heart shine as we follow Charlotte to her new job as a substitute teacher at her old middle school, as she helps her new colleagues solve a mystery. Fan favorites Lucy and Gabe are back to help and their banter remains delightful.”

## THE SUMMER OF SPIES

*This is a quick listing. I will do more in the next Booknews. There’s something about lazy summer days that can make us crave the perils and suspense of spy fiction...a genre quite broadly defined.*

Chambers, AJ. [The Vicar](#) (Blackstone \$17.95). This debut is “a classic spy thriller in every sense of the word. Terry Nolan, “the Vicar” of the title, is a former British intelligence operative now enjoying a peaceful and pleasant retirement across the pond in Boston, his past quite literally dead. That is, until he’s marked for actual death by mysterious, unknown assassins who are also after the entire network of spies he was once a part of. That sets Nolan on the trail of a missing protégé, even as he’s forced to return to his old haunts to prevent a catastrophic attack on his native land. Chambers puts his own military experience to great use in a book



that will remind spy thriller faithful of the best from the likes of Len Deighton, Frederick Forsyth, and Alistair MacLean with even some John le Carré thrown in for good measure”—*The Big Thrill*

Crawley, Harriet. [The Translator](#) (Bitter Lemon \$17.95). We're in 2017 when Clive Franklin, said to be among the best diplomatic interpreters in Britain, is on sabbatical in Scotland when summoned by Prime Minister Martha Maitland to an immediate “important meeting” in Moscow. A helicopter whisks him there where a forthright and angry Maitland puts forth a list of unpalatable demands to President Serov while Franklin does nothing to soften her speech. But he struggles to conceal his reaction to Serov's translator Marina Volina, Franklin's partner in an intense love affair years back at the UN. Then Marina whispers that she wants out, to defect, with valuable secrets. And thus we get a kind of Romeo-and-Juliet romance zipped into a spy drama.

Dees, Cindy. [Double Tap](#) (Kensington \$28). I really ate up [Second Shot](#) (\$17.95), the first for Helen Warwick, a skilled CIA assassin struggling to retire and settle into a normal life with her unaware family. Ha. Years of eliminating the nation's enemies one sniper bullet at a time have earned Helen powerful adversaries. Then there are mysterious new foes, including a psychopath dubbed The DaVinci Killer, who wages a twisted war with a rival serial killer to turn murder into art. And when he sets his sights on Helen, she may very well become his next exhibit. Having survived, she's now back as the proud mother of a rising young politician. At a DC press conference for her son's campaign, she sees the ominous green light of a gun laser fixed on her son's head—and her CIA training kicks in. She jumps into action, pushes her son down, and saves him from a sniper's bullet. In that moment, Helen realizes she will never escape the secrets of her past—or the deranged man she thought she killed....Dees, an Air Force veteran and pilot, taps into her own life experience to write this excellent series.

Freeman, Brian. [Robert Ludlum's The Bourne Shadow](#) (Putnam \$29.99). Ten years ago, David Webb was working as a teacher in Zurich when he was recruited into Treadstone and sent to infiltrate Le Renouveau, “the most poisonous neo-Nazi cell in Europe.” This is just terrific with action that highlights Switzerland, especially Zurich. See Signed Books for more.

Jackson, Douglas. [Blood Roses](#) (Canelo \$32). Missing Philip Kerr? We do and so we're delighted to have found this UK import series. See More New Hardcover for July to enter the treacherous world of 1939 Warsaw where a Polish policeman has to opt to work for the nascent resistance against the Nazis.

Kirsanow, Peter. [Web Griffin: Zero Option](#) (Putnam \$30). In 1943, Franklin Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, and Joseph Stalin travel to Tehran to discuss war plans in a new Men at War thriller.

✦ Lewis, David. [A Jewel in the Crown](#) (Kensington \$27). I absolutely love this debut spy caper. It's uneven in plot lines but brimming with unusual locations, a mission to save the British Crown jewels in 1940 soon after Dunkirk, and introducing splendid British policewoman, a Socialist unfriendly to the Upper Classes. See More Hardcover for July below for this spy romp.

Silva, Daniel. [The Collector](#) (\$10.99). Legendary art restorer and spy Gabriel Allon joins forces with a brilliant and beautiful master-thief to track down the world's most valuable missing

painting but soon finds himself in a desperate race to prevent an unthinkable conflict between Russia and the West. The sequel, [A Death in Cornwall](#) (Harper \$29.99) is not a spy thriller but a murder/fraud investigation. See Signed Books.

Thor, Brad. [Shadow of Doubt](#) (Atria \$29.99) sends US asset Scot Harvath back to Norway on what should have been R&R after his mission in the Ukraine. Instead a Russian defector to Norway is endangered by a leak, a French intelligence agent is actually killed by another, and Harvath is blackmailed by the CIA alarmed over a Russian nuclear threat situated in Belarus. There are magnificently choreographed action scenes, intense personal relationships, and devious plots to enjoy in this outstanding series entry. See Signed Books for more.

## CHOOSE YOUR DESTINATION

And it's time we revive **Booktiks**, recommendations from our staff for reading about places you'll go....or wish you were going. Send sales@poisonedpen.com your destination and we'll reply. Warning: there may not be books available for every destination...at least that we know about.

Bryant, Kathleen. [Over the Edge](#) (Crooked Lane \$29.99). Here's a visit to Arizona's gorgeous red rock country. Bryant has dug deep into all the riches of Sedona in terms of its landscape, its legends, its history. And into what it's like for the people who work there serving the tourists and the privileged without themselves being either. Del Cooper, bounced from her career as an aggressive crime reporter, has returned to Sedona where her beloved artist aunt left her a property, run down, and takes a gig with a marginal tour company. The other employees are a mixed bag, the owner is kicking back in Hawai'i, and the tours are not high end but more adventurous. So it is that when, hiking in a remote red rock canyon after a party at the Lee Ranch, a former location for Westerns owned by two Hollywood exes, she finds the broken body of a man. It wasn't the fall that killed him—he was shot. It goes from there. The plot is a bit fuzzy—remember Sedona is famed for its energy vortexes—but Bryant's love for the gorgeous (and hazardous) red rock country and distaste for commercial development are well worth reading.

Carver, Caro. [Bad Tourists](#) (Avid Reader Press \$28). Three tight-knit friends embark on an extravagant divorce trip to the Maldives where they can unwind and celebrate a new chapter in midlife as paid for by Darcy who is celebrating her new divorce from her tech mogul husband—until they realize the resort of their dreams is harboring a killer. Carver, who lives in Scotland and has a history writing gothic thrillers, let herself go creating the Sapphire Island Resort with its over-the-water luxe suites, crystal clear waters, white sand beaches, one with a body. Secrets boiled up, twists too. Still, imagine yourself in this Indian Ocean paradise.

Dolin, Eric Jay. [Left for Dead](#) (Liveright \$29.99). Today the Falklands are all about birding, but once they were a war theater. “Personal and political dynamics are also at the heart of a Robinson Crusoe-level tale of survival shot through with mind-boggling, Russian-doll levels of treachery and betrayal... Dolin does an excellent job of bringing clarity to a story with permutations as complex as the coastline of the Falkland Islands. The twists and turns keep coming among a memorable cast of castaways. Copious photos and illustrations of local flora, fauna, as well as sites and principal players, are a welcome enhancement

to a tale that barely needs it.”—*The Globe and Mail* (Canada). Recommended also are two paperbacks about pirates! Who doesn’t love a swashbuckling tale? [Black Flags, Blue Waters](#) (\$18.95), notorious American pirates during its Golden Age; and [Rebels at Sea](#) (\$18.95) about privateering during the American Revolution.

Graham, Scott. [Death Valley Duel](#) (Torrey House \$17.95). Scott joins us on October 9th with Margaret Mizushima, but meanwhile you can enjoy his 9th National Parks Mystery. When Durango, Colorado, archaeologist Chuck Bender makes a stunning discovery of a century-old crime, he believes it may be related to a series of deadly accidents plaguing the Whitney to Death 150, the world’s toughest ultra trail-running race through punishing Death Valley. While Chuck’s teenage stepdaughter Carmelita is in it to win, Chuck races to uncover the wicked intent lying behind the tragedies. The snakes are the scariest.

Grant, Kimi Cunningham. [The Nature of Disappearing](#) (St Martins \$28 Signed). Hurray, I was able to score Signed copies of this book so perfect for a time to explore wilderness, parks, the outdoors. Grant serves up the archetypal haunted heroine but with a new twist for a woman for whom the wilderness is as essential as oxygen.... See Signed Books for more.

Heller, Peter. [The Last Ranger](#) (\$18). Here’s trip to Yellowstone for you. Officer Ren Hopper is an enforcement ranger with the National Park Service, tasked with duties both mundane and thrilling: Breaking up fights at campgrounds, saving clueless tourists from moose attacks, and attempting to broker an uneasy peace between the wealthy vacationers who tromp through the park with cameras, and the residents of hardscrabble Cooke City who want to carve out a meaningful living. When Ren, hiking through the backcountry on his day off, encounters a tall man with a dog and a gun chasing a small black bear up a hill, his hackles are raised. But what begins as an investigation into the background of a local poacher soon opens into something far murkier....

Johnson, Sara E. [The Bone Track](#) (\$15.99). This 2022 entry into Johnson’s Alex Glock series take you along New Zealand’s famed and scenic Milford Track leading through fabulous scenery to the South Island fjord. Or like me you can drive to the dock and board a ship for an overnight cruise in Milford Sound. Either way, New Zealand is an outstanding destination. Johnson can sign it when she’s here August 3 with her new book.

Also great for travelling around the islands is [Clanlands in New Zealand](#) (\$14), Signed by Outlander’s Sam Heughan, Graham MacTavish, and Diana Gabaldon.

Moore, Liza. [The God of the Woods](#) Riverhead (\$30 Signed). This #1 Indie Next Pick for July will immerse you in the atmosphere of a summer camp, with vivid descriptions of the surrounding forest and rising humidity. It’s a tense thriller involving a deceitful family and camp staff in an emotional rollercoaster that eventually reveals the heartbreaking truth at the core of events, as well as a bit of hope. “Like the placing of puzzle pieces, Liz Moore has written a carefully constructed mystery about a missing female camper. The narrative switches between two time periods: the 1950s and 1970s” before the digital age would have made some of the story unlikely.

✧ Nicholls, David. [You Are Here](#) (Harper \$29.99). Racking up raves all around, not a thriller. It “pairs two seemingly

mismatched divorced lovebirds on a begrudging backpacking trip across northern England—is the perfect palate cleanser, delivering Nicholls’s signature cocktail of slow-burn romance and quick-witted dialogue, but without all the gut-wrenching pain. But let’s be clear: This book has heart. Marnie and Michael’s earnest fumbling at second-chance love reveals both their particular vulnerabilities and our shared potential to move, under the weight of all our baggage, toward bright new horizons.” — *Oprah Daily*. I am probably past being able to hike along the famed Coast to Coast Walk, or Hadrian’s Wall with its glorious views, sense of history, and unpredictable weather, so this book is as close as I will get.

Parker, T. Jefferson. [Desperation Reef](#) (Forge \$28.99 Signed). A quick mention of a Surfing Noir thriller set on the California coast. If you liked the work of Kem Nunn or the surfing thrillers of Don Winslow, this story where a big wave surfing champion and her sons wind up competing in the same brutal contest, the Monsters of the Mavericks, that killed her husband years before.

Pearse, Sarah. [The Wilds](#) (Viking \$30). Another destination thriller, this one taking you inside a national park in Portugal. See Signed Books for the UK edition.

Segal, Francesca. [Welcome to Glorious Tuga](#) (Harper \$28.99). Tuga de Ora is a British overseas territory with a mixed heritage resulting from the island’s early settlement: Sephardic Jews, British and Dutch sailors, enslaved Nigerians, and Eastern European refugees. Cross this with the tropical lassitude of jungle, beaches, bougainvillea, and extreme heat, and Tuga is truly one-of-a-kind. Charlotte Walker, a 29-year-old herpetologist, has been granted a year-long fellowship to study endangered Tugan gold coin tortoises. But she also is grasping onto the slimmest hope of finding her father there. On the boat to Tuga, the seasick Charlotte meets Dan Zekri, who’s returning after 15 years in London to take over as the island’s chief medical officer. Charlotte may be FFA (“Folk From Away”), but most are quick to make her feel at home. Besides tortoise tracking, she puts her veterinary training to use by lambing and treating pets—but also finds herself delivering a eulogy for a piglet and rescuing library manuscripts from a silverfish infestation. This gently tragicomic book is the first in a trilogy, so readers can look forward to more Tugan adventure and romance.

Steadman, Catherine. [Look in the Mirror](#) (Random \$18; also \$30 [hardcover](#)). Nina Hepworth, 34, teaches literature at Cambridge and has lived most of her life in the shadow of her brilliant mathematician father, John. After John dies of natural causes, Nina learns that he owned a piece of prime real estate in the British Virgin Islands, which he’s left to her. Stunned, she flies to the Caribbean to inspect the premises, a glass-and-steel mansion overlooking a private beach. Soon, however, Nina’s elation is tempered by her discovery that the house is rigged with all sorts of unsettling surveillance technology, prompting questions about what her father was up to. In a parallel story line set in the recent past, a young nanny named Maria takes a live-in gig at the same house, only to be ghosted by the people who hired her.

Wood, Katherine. [Ladykiller](#) (Random \$29). Here’s a debut with a Greek islands setting, glamorous late-night parties by the pool, and cocktails on the beach for you readers seeking an escape to crystal blue waters. Gia and Abby have been friends since childhood, an impoverished Abby drawn into Gia’s rich family,

but have seen little of each other in the years since a tragedy in Greece when they were 18. Now Gia invites Abby to reunite at a lavish 30th-birthday celebration in Sweden, but then Gia fails to show up. She is also not in residence at her glittering beachfront estate in the Greek islands, her only inheritance after her father dies. Abby must confront her past while also receiving threatening messages as she searches for Gia. Well written with betrayals worthy of *Gone Girl* but for me, more like TV's *White Lotus*.

#### MORE NEW HARDCOVERS FOR JULY

Anderson, M T. [Nicked](#) (Knopf \$28) is based on a bizarre but true quest to steal the mystical corpse of a long-dead saint. The year is 1087, and a pox is sweeping through the Italian city of Bari. When a lowly monk is visited by Saint Nicholas in his dreams, he interprets the vision as a call to serve the sick. But his superiors, and the power brokers they serve, have different plans for the tender-hearted Brother Nicephorus. Enter Tyun, a charismatic treasure hunter renowned for “liberating” holy relics from their tombs. The seven-hundred-year-old bones of Saint Nicholas are rumored to weep a mysterious liquid that can heal the sick, Tyun says. For the humble price of a small fortune, he will steal the bones and deliver them to Bari, curing the plague and restoring glory to the fallen city. And Nicephorus, the “dreamer,” will be his guide. The Indie Next Pick: “A truly immersive, boisterous, playful, and earnest heist story from so far in the past it becomes magical. With a writing style as elusive as the plot twists, a colorful cast of thieves and priests, and a breathless romance, it’s not one to miss.”

Barry, Kevin. [The Heart in Winter](#) (Knopf \$28). “This rip-roaring western chronicles the misadventures of an opium-smoking Irishman. The story begins in 1891 Butte, Montana, where reckless Tom Rourke senses “the approach of a dangerous fate.” He fancies himself a poet and balladeer, and to pay for his booze and dope, he writes letters to prospective brides on behalf of illiterate men. He also spends a lot of time admiring himself in saloon mirrors. After he meets Polly Gallagher, a mail-order bride from Chicago, the two trade lines of poetry and begin a passionate and chaotic affair. They burn down a boardinghouse, rob the safe, steal a horse, and head west across Montana to Idaho, with a posse in pursuit and tragedy in tow. The action is rendered in crisp and gritty prose” with, I add, plenty of sex. So not Romantasy but not Louis L’Amour either.

⌘ Billingham, Mark. [The Wrong Hands](#) (Grove \$27). Billingham’s droll detective DS Miller, first met in [The Last Dance](#) (\$18), returns with a bang and a briefcase. He’s still working with DS Sara Xiu, still dancing with his ex-police friends, and still hunting for the murderer of his beloved wife, Alex, a fellow police officer. His relentlessly warped humor covers a battered and grieving heart. Two petty criminals decide to try a new line in crime: stealing briefcases from men in public restrooms. Distraction, theft, and a speedy departure is the overall plan, but the first theft does not go well. The briefcase, when opened, reveals a pair of severed hands that are proof of a contract killing ordered by a local gangster. The killer, an incessant maker of lists and a devoted fan of *Midsomer Murders*, needs the hands back to prove that the killing took place so that he can get paid. When one of the thieves delivers the briefcase to DS Miller, a twisty tango of characters and mayhem ensues. Either this brand of British humor is for you or it isn’t.

Brazier, Eliza Jane. [It Had to Be You](#) (Berkley \$29). John reviews: While traveling on the train from Italy to France, contract killer Eva meets Jonathan. It is lust at first sight, which leads to a hot hookup in the baggage compartment. However, after Jonathan then immediately ghosts her, Eva wants to kill him. Six months later, she may get her chance when she bumps into Jonathan again in France. Eva has been hired to fulfill a contract put out on Jonathan, but what she doesn’t know is that Jonathan happens to be in the same line of work. When it comes to any future between Eva and Jonathan, is it now simply a matter of kill or be killed? As with her previous novels, such as [Girls and Their Horses](#) (\$18) Brazier demonstrates she isn’t afraid to flirt with the darker side of the thriller, and here gives romantic suspense a high adrenaline makeover. ... Think Hitchcock’s films or Patricia Highsmith’s Ripley books....

Cameron, Marc. [Bad River](#) (Kensington \$28). In the Inupiaq village of Wainwright on the Arctic Ocean, two teenagers discover a frozen body in the permafrost wall of their family’s cellar. They recognize the face through the ice. It is the face of a young woman who went missing—two years ago. In South Dakota, Arliss Cutter searches for answers surrounding his brother’s mysterious death. But his visit only raises more questions without any leads. Until he returns to Alaska—and learns that his brother had something in common with the frozen body in the ice cellar. Inside the young woman’s pocket is a fossilized animal tooth—similar to the one Arliss’ brother picked up on a trip to South Dakota. A bizarre coincidence? From South Dakota to Anchorage to the Inupiaq villages of the Arctic, Arliss follows this bloodstained trail of clues to a remote lodge on the banks of the Kobuk River to find answers to too many terrible questions. The last Cutter was [Bone Rattle](#) (\$17.95).

Copeland, Johanna. [Our Kind of Game](#) (Harper \$30). Former attorney Copeland stuns with this audacious debut thriller about the extremes to which some people will go to protect the ones they love. In 2019, Stella Parker is dissatisfied with the life she’s built for herself in the D.C. suburbs, having traded her law career for marriage and motherhood. Her ennui turns to terror after her neighbor, Gwen, drops her phone in Stella’s driveway while limping down the block one evening. When Stella picks it up, she sees messages suggesting Gwen may know one of her long-buried secrets. In a parallel story line set in 1987, high schooler Julie Waits hopes that making the cheerleading squad will provide a distraction from her mother’s string of abusive relationships and the chaos that ensues whenever she decides to end them. Gradually, Copeland teases out the connections between Stella and Julie and unveils the grisly truth about Julie’s mother. With expertly timed reveals and plenty of thorny insights into the causes and consequences of gender-based violence, this first-rate suspense novel thrills and provokes in equal measure.

Espach, Alison. [The Wedding People](#) (Holt \$28.99). Revealed now as the #1 Indie Next Pick for August (there was an aggressive campaign to secure nominations): “*The Wedding People* hits the absolute sweet spot of compulsively fun to read while asking serious questions about life, love, and a lavish destination wedding.” Basically a very unhappy woman checks into the exclusive venue for the wedding with a peculiar agenda of her own. The Bridezilla is horrified to learn why and it goes from there in unexpected directions.

Jackson, Douglas. [Blood Roses](#) (Canelo \$32). Missing Philip Kerr? We do and so we're delighted to have found this UK import series start, a gripping mash up of a WWII thriller and a serial killer chiller. We are not in Berlin but in Warsaw, 1939. Jan Kalisz, like Bernie Gunther, is a policeman forced to work under the reality of Nazi rule. The Warsaw police's former chief investigator, Kalisz is pushed into a dangerous double life as he also works to support the fledgling Polish resistance. He cannot tell anyone, even his family, where his true allegiance lies even as he is shunned as a Nazi collaborator. When the niece of a Wehrmacht General is found horribly mutilated, Kalisz's new overlords suddenly become more interested than they have been over similar killings. In fact there is a psychopath at work, a killer who comes to be called The Artist.

Having read this exciting find I'm on the hunt for Kalisz's next.

Jones, Stephen Graham. [I Was a Teenage Slasher](#) (Saga \$29.99). Why not a bit of Horror to enjoy? The Indie Next Pick: "My heart aches for the slasher? This cannot be right. Tolly, the slasher, tells his bloody, horrific story in a voice so real and raw that you can almost hear him, as though seated right beside you, and feel every detail of his inescapable pain."

Kirsanow, Peter. [Web Griffin: Zero Option](#) (Putnam \$30). In 1943, Franklin Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, and Joseph Stalin travel to Tehran to discuss war plans. As the heads of state prepare to convene, the U.S. gets word that a German SS officer and a Russian NKVD major have separately been tasked with killing the leaders. "Wild Bill" Donovan, head of the Office of Strategic Services, taps US Army Major Richard Canidy and Lt. Eric Fulmar to intervene. The Thorisdottir sisters, who help transport OSS contacts to secure locations around the world, get into the action too in this latest entry in the Men at War Series.

✦ Lewis, David. [A Jewel in the Crown](#) (Kensington \$27). I absolutely love this debut spy caper. It's uneven in plot lines but brimming with unusual locations, a mission to save the British Crown jewels in 1940 soon after Dunkirk. The priceless artifacts will be secretly removed from the Tower of London and driven north to Scotland by two operatives posing as a young married couple, to be taken from there to Canada (as had the British gold reserves been earlier). Caitrin Colline—a Welsh coalminer's daughter and an ardent socialist—will play the wife of Lord Marlton, Hector Neville-Percy. A less likely couple to complete this mission is at first difficult to imagine, but as things keep going wrong, possibly for sinister reasons and not merely as snafus, they each prove their mettle. Lewis will join us for a multi-author Kensington Press event on October 26 when he will sign copies. Meanwhile for a truly engaging summer spy read, get one now.

Lapena, Shari. [What Have You Done?](#) (Penguin \$30). Hmmm. Teenagers get their kicks telling ghost stories in the old graveyard. The parents trust their kids will arrive home safe from school. Everyone knows everyone. Curtains rarely twitch. Front doors are left unlocked. But Diana Brewer isn't lying safely in her bed where she belongs. Instead she lies in a hayfield, circled by vultures, discovered by a local farmer. How quickly a girl becomes a ghost. How quickly a town of friendly, familiar faces becomes a town of suspects, a place of fear and paranoia. Someone in little Fairhill, Vermont, did this.

Lyons, Jenn. [The Sky on Fire](#) (Tor \$29.99). Lyons's addictive and intricately plotted quest story after [The Ruin of Kings](#) (\$17.99) intertwines all the elements of a suspenseful heist—danger, high stakes, clever characters, secrets, and betrayal—in a sprawling fantasy world replete with pompous dragons.

McCreight, Kimberly. [Like Mother, Like Daughter](#) (Knopf \$28). Having survived a traumatic childhood in a group home, successful attorney Kat McHugh's carefully constructed life is now starting to break apart. She is recently separated from her filmmaker husband and fending off his requests to use her inheritance to fund his next project, while her daughter Cleo is growing more emotionally distant from her, especially after Kat learns that Cleo is dating the campus drug dealer. When Kat starts receiving anonymous threats, she uses her talents and connections from her legal career to try to unmask the person who is intimidating her and her daughter. One day, an irritated Cleo arrives home at her mother's insistence and discovers food burning in the kitchen—and no trace of her mother. So Cleo starts to dig into her mother's professional life and childhood, and her alarming discoveries put her directly in the crosshairs. Think of [Pieces of Her](#) (\$16.99 by Karin Slaughter).

Patterson, James/JD Barker. [Confessions of the Dead](#) (Grand Central \$32). Hollows Bend, New Hampshire, is a picture-perfect New England town where weekend tourists flock to see fall leaves and eat breakfast at the Stairway Diner. The crime rate—zero—is a point of pride for Sheriff Ellie Pritchett. The day the stranger shows up is when the trouble starts. The sheriff and her deputy investigate the mysterious teenage girl. None of the locals can place her. She can't—or won't—answer any questions. She won't even tell them her name. While the girl is in protective custody, the officers are called to multiple crime scenes leading them closer and closer to a lake outside of town that doesn't appear on any map...

Shaffer, Meg. [The Lost Story](#) (Random \$29) plays on portal fantasy nostalgia in this brilliant riff on the *Chronicles of Narnia*. Emilie Wendell is mourning the loss of her adoptive mother when she discovers she has a half-sister who was kidnapped 20 years ago. She begs the help of famous missing-persons investigator Jeremy Cox. Jeremy and his high school best friend, Rafe Howell, were lost as teenagers in West Virginia's Red Crow State Park and emerged six months later completely changed. Rafe, now an artist, can't remember what happened, and ever since the incident his drawings have returned to a fantastical world he can't explain. Jeremy knows the truth—that they went through a portal into that other realm—but he's bound by a promise not to reveal the truth to Rafe. When Rafe joins in the search for Emilia's long-lost sister, the investigation takes both men back to the wondrous but deadly world they once loved.

✦ Smith, Sally. [A Case of Mice and Murder](#) (Raven Books UK \$29). The Inner Temple: a warren of shaded courtyards and ancient buildings forming the hidden heart of London's legal world since the 1300s. I visited it in June while at Capital Crime. Fabulous. When barrister Gabriel Ward steps out of his rooms on a sunny May morning in 1901, his mind is so full of his latest case—the disputed authorship of bestselling children's book *Millie the Temple Church Mouse*—that he scarcely registers the body of the Lord Chief Justice of England blocking his doorstep. But even he cannot fail to notice the judge's dusty bare feet, in

shocking contrast to his flawless evening dress, nor the silver carving knife sticking out of his chest. Temple cutlery, by golly. The police can enter the Temple only by consent, so who better to investigate this tragic breach of law and order than a man who prizes both above all things? But murder doesn't answer to logic or reasoned argument, and Gabriel soon discovers that the Temple's heavy oak doors are hiding surprising secrets.... Not only is this a debut by a King's Counsel who lives in the Temple, it has a map, it's slyly witty, and it starts a series. What a treat and so it's our **August British Crime Book of the Month**. Club members wait for free shipping, but others, especially fans of S.J. Bennett, Janice Hallett, and Richard Coles, can order it now.

Villavicencio, Karla Cornejo. [Catalina](#) (One World \$28). When Catalina is admitted to Harvard, it feels like the fulfillment of destiny: a miracle child escapes death in Latin America, moves to Queens to be raised by her undocumented grandparents, and becomes one of the chosen. But nothing is simple for Catalina, least of all her own complicated, contradictory, ruthlessly probing mind. The Indie Next Pick finds "*Catalina* is such a delightful book — funny and quick-witted, but also thoughtful and heart-rending. I loved Catalina's smart, singular voice. This is a perfect read for lovers of Lily King's *Writers & Lovers*, or fans of Sally Rooney's work.

Vlautin, Willy. [The Horse](#) (Harper \$25.99). Al Ward is flawed — alcoholism, a never quite good enough country guitarist and song writer. When a blind horse shows up at his isolated shack on a snowy, freezing night, the best of Al comes out. Yes, Al is flawed, but you'll root for him.

#### OUR JULY LARGE PAPERBACK PICKS

Davis, Fiona. [The Spectacular](#) (\$18). Davis has made an impressive career crafting novels of suspense around major New York cultural and physical landmarks. Here she takes on Radio City Music Hall in, at the outset, 1956, as another young woman seeks the empowerment to fulfill her dreams. Nineteen-year-old dance teacher Marion, feeling trapped by her straitlaced father and her upcoming engagement to what will clearly be a company man, impulsively auditions for the Rockettes and is soon flung into a sequined world of grueling rehearsals, stage glitter, and four shows per day. When an anonymous bomber targets Radio City Music Hall, Marion's glittering new life reveals a dangerous dark side and she is flung into the search for a killer.

Heller, Peter. [The Last Ranger](#) (\$18). Here's trip to Yellowstone for you. Officer Ren Hopper is an enforcement ranger with the National Park Service, tasked with duties both mundane and thrilling. But what begins as an investigation into the background of a local poacher soon opens into something far murkier.... See Choose Your Own Outdoor Adventure above.

Hirahara, Naomi. [Evergreen](#) (\$18.95) follows up to her multi-award winning novel [Clark and Division](#) (\$16.95), Japantown Mystery #1 set in WWII America, Hirahara's mystery is set against the backdrop of Japanese Americans returning to their homes in Los Angeles' Little Tokyo after World War II as they try to rebuild their lives after either having been unfairly held in detention camps or fighting with the 'Go for Broke' battalion, with everyone dealing with different types of discrimination, fear, and trauma. They form a must-read pair.

James, Tania. [Loot](#) (\$18). Our **Historical Paperback Book of the Month for AUGUST** is out now. It's an immersive and elegantly written dive into India under the Raj, specifically in Mysore where the ruler, Tipu Sultan, a man drawn to woodcarving and automatons, specifically of the Bengal Tiger as Tipu styles himself as such, sets young woodcarver Abbas to work with French clockmaker Lucien du Leze to create it. The depictions of Tipu's palace, his battle with the East India Company and eventual defeat at the battle of Seringapatam, are extraordinary (you can Google all of it). Du Leze returns home to Rouen with Abbas in tow. In time his mission becomes to recover the tiger automaton, looted and displayed in an English country estate with other plundered art. And then....Wow. I really loved this.

Koryta, Michael. [An Honest Man](#) (\$18.99). After discovering seven men murdered aboard their yacht — including two Senate rivals — Israel Pike is regarded as a prime suspect. A troubled man infamous on Salvation Point Island for killing his own father a decade before, Israel has few options, no friends, and a life-threatening secret. Elsewhere on the island, 12-year-old Lyman Rankin seeks shelter from his alcoholic father in an abandoned house only to discover that he is not alone. A mysterious woman greets him with a hatchet and a promise: "Make a sound and I'll kill you." As the investigation barrels forward, Lyman, Israel, and the fate of the case collide in immutable ways....

Lippman, Laura. [Prom Mom](#) (\$18.99). Since she gave birth on the floor of a hotel bathroom, was accused of killing the baby and jailed for manslaughter as a teenager, Amber Glass, with no clear memory of what did happen, has struggled to escape being labeled "Prom Mom." When chance brings her back to Baltimore and into the orbit of Joe, her baby's father, and his high-strung wife, Meredith, the life Amber has fought for starts spinning out of control. By then, the Covid-19 pandemic is in full swing, dooming Joe's hopes for the local shopping center he recently purchased. With Amber's help, he concocts a scheme to bail himself out before he meets financial ruin. Lippman works up a slow burn, gently teasing out a game of cat and mouse between Joe and Amber that comes into full focus toward the end of the novel which is currently in development for a limited series.

McGarrity, Michael. [The Long Ago](#) (\$15.99). McGarrity's first stand-alone after a western trilogy and the earlier Kevin Kerney series, is more family saga than crime novel — one I adored without reservation, and inhaled in a single sitting. The Lansdale siblings, Ray and Barbara, survived instability, absent parents and other childhood losses by retreating into a shared utopian fantasy they called 'the Long Ago.' Escaping reality isn't as easy when you become an adult, though. In the early 1960s, Ray, once shiftless and wayward, finds purpose in the Army as the Vietnam War looms large, while Barbara flees their Livingston, Montana, hometown, and no one seems to know where she is. Ray, home on leave, wants to find her. 'People who decide to voluntarily disappear — if that's what really happened with her — usually want to keep it that way,' the sheriff warns him. But Ray takes the words of another cop to heart: 'We all lose people, Ray. Sometimes you can't do a damn thing about it, sometimes you can.'"

Murphy, Dwyer. [The Stolen Coast](#) (\$18). Jack Betancourt lives in the rundown Massachusetts beach town of Onset. He leads a quiet life, working at a business built by his ex-spy father that helps people in trouble disappear: thieves, mobsters, spies, and fugitives of all sorts. Jack's old girlfriend Elena, a lawyer with a very shady past, arrives back in Onset after a seven-year absence. She has a plan to steal diamonds valued between three and 180 million dollars (depending on the buyer) from a law firm colleague's safe and needs Jack's help to do it. Their scheme has a lot of moving parts, and bad luck threatens to shut them down, but Elena's a ruthless leader, and Jack is driven by a cocktail of motivations even he can't quite untangle. Murphy's spare, polished prose carries a touch of Elmore Leonard and a whisper of Ernest Hemingway, but in balancing those influences he locates a style all his own.

Quinn, Spencer. [Mrs. Plansky's Revenge](#) (\$17.99). Quinn's first novel in a new series since the meteoric launch of Chet and Bernie—a series inspired by a conversation here at The Pen, and thus in tribute set in Arizona. Mrs. Loretta Plansky, a recent widow in her seventies, is settling into retirement in Florida while dealing with her 98-year-old father and fielding requests for money from her beloved children and grandchildren. Thankfully, her new hip hasn't changed her killer tennis game one bit. One night Mrs. Plansky is startled awake by a phone call from a voice claiming to be her grandson Will, who desperately needs ten thousand dollars to get out of a jam. By morning, Mrs. Plansky has lost everything. Mrs. Plansky follows her only clue on a whirlwind adventure to a small village in Romania to get her money and her dignity back—and perhaps find a new lease on life, too. Quinn returns to The Pen August 6 with a new Chet & Bernie: [A Farewell to Arfs](#) (Forge \$27.99).

Scott, Kieran. [People Will Talk](#) (Gallery \$17.99). Perfect for poolside, a murderous romp set at a clambake for the upper crust of New Jersey's Cape May. To everyone's amazement, especially three women close to 34-year-old playboy Peter Frank whose parents are the host, his mom's welcoming speech is hijacked by the announcement from a fourth, the dreadful overprivileged Tilly Danforth, that the couple will be married on the spot. And they are—but the bride doesn't survive the reception. Baffled, our trio, stymied by Peter's refusal to talk, staving off scandal as well as clearing their own names, investigate.

✦ Shepherd Robinson, Laura. [The Square of Sevens](#) (\$20.99). “Come for the orphaned, Dickensian fortune teller using an ancient regional method in 18th-century Cornwall who and stay for a sweeping epic of Georgian high society, mystery, and divination. Shortly before he dies, Red's father entrusts her care to a gentleman scholar, along with a document containing the secret of the Square of Sevens technique. Raised as a lady in Bath, she can't give up a quest to learn who was her mother and how did she die?”

Winstead, Ashley. [Midnight Is the Darkest Hour](#) (\$16.99). I don't have space to describe all the reasons to put this on top of your reading list. Think *Where the Crawdads Sing* crossed with *Twilight* if set in Bottom Springs, Louisiana, a tiny town controlled by evangelist preacher Comier and his decrees. As is his timid daughter who's learned to pilfer books from donation boxes at the library. One of them is *Twilight*. Then Ruth meets a beautiful young man. Here is “The sharp-toothed answer to every

fairy tale that warns girls to stay out of the woods...because what if we like what we find? Ashley Winstead has at once crafted an incisive critique of fundamentalism and one of the most unforgettable love stories I've ever read, dressed as a thriller that surprises at every turn.”—Katie Gutierrez. Especially the ending.

### MORE LARGE PAPERBACKS FOR JULY

Baldacci, David. [Absolute Power](#) (\$19.99). A new edition of Baldacci's 1996 debut wherein a burglar, Luther Whitney, breaks into a Virginia mansion, and witnesses a brutal crime involving the president—a man who believes he can get away with anything. Back then this mindset was considered fiction.

Bell, David. [Storm Warning](#) (Berkley \$18). A hurricane's relentless pounding—nonstop rain, howling wind, the cacophony of destruction—provides a terrifying backdrop as Bell's latest weighs the brutality of people and nature. Jake Powell temporarily left his wife and daughter in Ohio to deal with his emotional issues about six months ago. He ended up on a small Florida barrier island, living at Sunset Manor, a decaying apartment building targeted for demolition. Now Jake is ready to return to his family and is planning to hit the road, when a powerful hurricane is forecasted to hit the island. Jake figures he has just enough time to gather his few belongings and say goodbye to the ragtag group of residents scattered throughout his building, but his plans stall after he finds Dallas, his friend and the building's manager, murdered. Plus, Jake's wife and daughter have braved the storm to reach him. The police won't come to the island because of the storm, nor can Jake leave. The question becomes: which is more deadly, the hurricane or the killer?

Carpenter, Shawn. [The Price of Redemption](#) (Saga Press \$18.99). A debut swashbuckling fantasy, the start of the Tides of Magic series, follows a powerful sorceress, the Marquese Enid d'Tancreville, as she is forced on the run where she meets a vast cast of characters including a young sea captain who has need of a sea mage. Perfect for fans of Patrick O'Brian, Naomi Novik, and Brian McClellan.

Cornwell, Patricia. [Unnatural Death](#) (\$19.99). Virginia Chief Medical Examiner Kay Scarpetta works side by side with her niece, Secret Service Agent Lucy Farinelli, to solve the murders of two suspected Russian spies.

Craven, MW. [Fearless](#) (\$18.99). Ben Koenig, a former U.S. marshal whose professional slipup six years earlier stirred the ire of Russian organized crime and forced him off the grid. He's lured out of the shadows by his former boss, whose daughter, Martha, has disappeared from the campus of Georgetown University, where she was studying forensic accounting. Though he suspects Martha is already dead, Koenig agrees to investigate. Rumors that Martha was researching a suspicious energy company lead Koenig to Gauntlet, Texas, where a solar farm has sprung up, owned by a former Georgetown student with a questionable past. Koenig has myriad special skills. Chief among them is a biological inability to feel fear that has some comparing him to Jack Reacher.

Davis, Lindsey. [Voices of Rome](#) (Hodder UK \$19). A UK import of four tales of Ancient Rome.

Dewitt, Patrick. [The Librarianist](#) (\$18.99). In a tribute to reading, books, and librarians, meet retired Portland, Oregon librarian Bob Comet, a lonely, compassionate guy, who's lived in the same

place since childhood and was once betrayed by his wife and best friend. He has no family and few friends. One day he chances to walk into a convenience store and meets an older woman who seems lost and confused. It turns out that Chip lives at the Gambell-Reed Senior Center, and Bob becomes fascinated by the residents there, eventually signing up to volunteer. Finally he has landed in a place where he feels he belongs.... But when Chip's son Sam arrives to take her to a more secure facility, Bob is in for a shock as Chip's real identity is revealed.

Evanovich, Janet. [Dirty Thirty](#) (\$18.99). Stephanie Plum is offered a freelance assignment: local jeweler Martin Rabner wants her to locate his former security guard, Andy Manley (a.k.a. Nutsy), who he is convinced stole a fortune in diamonds out of his safe. Stephanie is also looking for Duncan Dugan, a fugitive from justice arrested for robbing the same jewelry store on the same day. With her boyfriend Morelli away in Miami on police business, Stephanie is taking care of his giant orange dog who will devour anything, from Stephanie's stray donuts to the upholstery in her car. Morelli's absence also means the inscrutable, irresistible security expert Ranger is right on hand.

George, Nina. [The Little Village of Book Lovers](#) (Random \$18). George offers an appealing companion piece to [The Little Paris Bookshop](#) (\$18), featuring a bookseller in the South of France with a magical ability.

Goodman, Carol. [Return to Wyldcliffe Heights](#) (Harper \$18.99). Get on your Gothic, perfect for Bronte fans. Agnes is an editorial assistant at the small press that published Veronica St. Clair's bestseller, *The Secret of Wyldcliffe Heights*. For almost 30 years, readers, including Agnes, have wanted a sequel, but St. Clair, a blind recluse, refused to write it. Agnes is shocked when she's hired to transcribe St. Clair's harrowing sequel to the original gothic tale. Arriving at the Hudson Valley mansion, she quickly gets wrapped up in the seemingly autobiographical novel that connects to her own family story and to her mother, who was mentally ill.

Harris, Charlaine. [All the Dead Shall Weep](#) (\$16.99). Enjoy the 5th in the Gunnie Rose series as sisters Lizbeth Rose and Felicia as well as brothers Eli and Peter are reunited in Texoma only to break apart before the Wizard's Ball held in San Diego determines all their fates.

Herchenroether, Sara. [The Night Flowers](#) (\$17.95). In 1983, deep in New Mexico's Gila National Forest, the bodies of a young woman and two children were found. Who were they? How did they get there? Thirty years later, two women find themselves drawn to the cold case. Librarian Laura MacDonald begins her own investigation as a way to distract herself from breast cancer treatments and becomes consumed by her search for answers. Jean Martinez is a veteran detective determined to keep working cold cases for the Sierra County police force even as her family begs her to retire. With only fragments from dusty case files and a witness who doesn't want to remember, this unlikely duo digs into the victims' story. An excellent book with a setting like a Michael McGarrity NM mystery.

Macdonald, Helen/Sin Blaché. [Prophet](#) (\$20). "*Prophet* hooked me with its uncanny *Twin Peaks* x *Twilight Zone* mise-en-scène. This page-turning thriller is deceptively fun despite a deadly serious, thought-provoking core. I was delighted by the sly pop culture nostalgia!" says the Indie Next Pick.

McAllister, Gillian. [Just Another Missing Person](#) (\$18.99). Twenty-two-year-old Olivia has been missing for one day...and counting. She was last seen on CCTV, entering a dead-end alley. And not coming back out again. Julia, the detective heading up the search, thinks she knows what faces her: a desperate family, a ticking clock, and long hours away from her husband and daughter. But she has no idea just how close to home this case is going to get—the criminal at the heart of the disappearance has something she never expected. His weapon isn't a gun, or a knife: it's a secret. Her worst one. And her family's safety depends on one thing: Julia must NOT find out what happened to Olivia—and must frame somebody else for her murder. What would you do?

Offutt, Chris. [Code of the Hills](#) (\$17). Enjoy excellent Kentucky noir in Offutt's third Mick Hardin novel that "once again beautifully captures both the roughness and the generosity of the inhabitants of Rocksalt, both the menace and the beauty of the eastern Kentucky landscape. The dialogue is a highlight, consistently sharp, quick, and funny; in that, Offutt is rapidly becoming a rural-noir rival to greats like Elmore Leonard... Another love letter to Appalachia with a high body count. Another bloody delight."—*Kirkus* Starred Review

Penrose, Andrea. [Murder at the Merton Library](#) (\$17.95). In a new entry in a Regency series that excels in exploring the era's burgeoning science and technology, the Earl of Wexford is summoned to Oxford to investigate a perplexing murder in a college library while Lady Charlotte labors in London under her pen name AJ Quill to determine if a laboratory fire was deliberately set, and if it's connected to consortiums competing to build a ship powered by steam rather than sails, something that could revolutionize commerce, military power and financial clout. I recommend the entire [Wrexford & Sloane series](#).

Penzler, Otto, ed. [Golden Age Whodunits](#) (Norton \$15.95) collects some of the finest American whodunits of the era, including household names and welcome rediscoveries. F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ellery Queen, and Mary Roberts Rinehart are all included, as are Ring Lardner, Melville Davisson Post, and Helen Reilly. The result is a cross section of the whodunit tale in the years that made it a staple in mystery fiction. Now is a great time to ground yourself in classics.

Perry, Anne. [Three Debts Paid](#) (\$15.99). A serial killer is roaming the streets of London, and Daniel Pitt's university chum Ian, now a member of the police, is leading the search. Ian quickly involves Miriam fford Croft, Daniel's good friend and now officially one of the first female pathologists in London, to tap her scientific know. Next, Ian passes Daniel the case of Nicholas Wolford, their former university professor. Charged with assault after reacting violently to an accusation of plagiarism, Wolford, a proud, boastful man, is loath to admit he was in the wrong. But Daniel must defend him—whether he likes him or not. As the murders continue with no clue as to who is committing them, Miriam, Daniel, and Ian find themselves questioning everything about the "Rainy-day Slasher." How we here miss Anne.

Phillips, Gary. [Bad Night Is Falling](#) (Soho \$17.95). African American PI Ivan Monk, who also owns a donut shop, investigates a fatal firebombing in LA's Rancho Tajuata housing project. Monk is hired by the head of the Ra-Falcons, a Black

Muslim splinter group that was hired to work security at the multiracial project, to clear them of responsibility in the fiery death of a family from Mexico. The search for the bombers leads Monk through a minefield of racial tension between the black residents and the burgeoning Latino population and back to some shady financial dealings that started with the 1965 Watts riots. Meanwhile Monk's lady, Superior Court Judge Jill Kodama, is the object of a nasty recall campaign because of her reluctance to enforce the controversial "Three Strikes" law. This novel follows *Violent Spring* and *Perdition, USA*.

Sternbergh, Adam. [The Eden Test](#) (\$18.99). "What makes a successful marriage? That's the question at the heart of this twisty, twisted, and compulsively readable thriller. It's Adam Sternbergh's best novel yet—full of smart and thoughtful questions about husbands, wives, and the secrets of domestic bliss." —Jason Rekulak

Sutanto, Jesse Q. [I'm Not Done with You Yet](#) (\$18). Former classmates at Oxford's MFA writing program become locked in a vicious death match at a Manhattan writers conference. One is mid-list. The other a bestseller. But where did her hit story come from? "Obsession and envy collide in this deliciously dark tale of two writers with more than one explosive secret between them."

✦ Toyne, Simon. [The Clearing](#) (\$18.99). Midsummer's Eve. Bonfires dot the English countryside and flicker in the ancient Forest of Dean as costumed revelers dance and drink the night away. But when the sun rises, a local girl, Maddie Friar, has vanished, last seen heading to a party in a forest commune called "The Clearing." Eminent criminologist and academic Dr. Laughton Rees also knows about the Cinderman. She has found dozens of historical missing persons cases in these woods, all women, all attributed to this local forest legend. But she doesn't believe in legends so she heads to the forest and, with help from Adele, starts questioning everyone, from the mysterious Earl, lord of the crumbling abbey in the heart of the forest, to the charismatic leader of The Clearing. But as Laughton slowly begins to unravel the legend of the Cinderman she finds the truth is scarier, and deadlier, than a myth.

Velton, Sonia. [The Nightingale's Castle](#) (Harper \$18.99). In 1573, Countess Erzsébet Báthory gives birth to an illegitimate child secretly passed to a peasant family living in the foothills of the Carpathian Mountains to raise as their own. Years later, a young woman called Boróka—ignorant of her true history—is sent to join the Countess's household. Terrified of the Countess's murderous reputation and the brutally cruel women who run the castle, Boróka struggles to find her place. Then plague breaches the castle's walls.... "Here is a propulsive, feminist reimaging of the story of Erzsébet Báthory, rumored to have murdered hundreds of peasant girls and bathed in their blood."

This reminds me to mention a publishing phenomenon from 2006: Elizabeth Kostova's [The Historian](#) (\$16). If you like Deborah Harkness or miss Anne Rice, pick it up. It hasn't dated.

## OUR JULY SMALL PAPERBACK PICKS

Chien, Vivien. [Peking Duck and Cover](#) (St Martin's \$9.99). Noodle Shop #10. Chinese New Year is supposed to be a time of fresh beginnings and celebrations of good fortune to come. With Lana Lee as his right-hand woman and head event planner, Ian Sung orchestrates an extravagant evening filled with music, live entertainment, and generous giveaways. But at the end of

the night, during an elaborate firework show in the parking lot, a member of the lion dance performance team is found dead backstage with a single bullet hole through the heart and a red envelope in their pocket containing four one-dollar bills—an omen of death.

DeMille, Nelson. [The Maze](#) (\$10.99). John Corey #8. Called out of retirement by his former lover to investigate a serial killer targeting prostitutes, former NYPD Homicide Detective John Corey, as he digs deeper into these killings, which have garnered national attention, discovers that there are sinister forces at work that don't want this case solved.

Moore, Taylor. [Ricochet](#) (\$9.99). Garrett Kohl #3. Embarking on an off-the-books mission to stop Iranian operatives from blackmailing nuclear weapons facility employees in an attempt to sabotage and destroy, DEA Special Agent Garrett Kohl and his CIA team call on a ragtag crew of outcasts and outlaws to dismantle their operation.

Rose, Karen. [Cheater](#) (\$9.99). San Diego Case Files #2. San Diego Detective Kit McKittrick investigates a nursing home with numerous skeletons in the closet after a resident is found stabbed to death and his apartment ransacked.

Silva, Daniel. [The Collector](#) (\$10.99). Gabriel Allon #23. Legendary art restorer and spy Gabriel Allon joins forces with a brilliant and beautiful master-thief to track down the world's most valuable missing painting but soon finds himself in a desperate race to prevent an unthinkable conflict between Russia and the West.

## JULY SMALL PAPERBACKS

Childs, Laura. [Honey Drop Dead](#) (\$9.99). Tea Shop #26. Tea shop owner Theodosia Browning investigates after a phony beekeeper shows up at a community event and sprays toxic smoke at park goers.

Clark, Mary Higgins. [Weep No More, My Lady](#) (\$10.99). Reissue. At a glamorous spa, beautiful young Elizabeth Longe tries to discover the mysterious circumstances surrounding the death of her beloved sister, Leila LaSalle, a successful actress, and finds her life in danger.

Coben, Harlan. [The Match](#) (\$10.99). When a DNA match on an online ancestry database leads him to a second cousin who disappears as quickly as he resurfaces after an epic fall from grace, Wilde must figure out if his cousin is linked to a cunning conspiracy involving a ruthless killer.

Hurwitz, Gregg. [The Last Orphan](#) (\$9.99). Orphan X #8. When one little mistake lands him under the control of the President, who makes him a deal—eliminate a man she considers too dangerous to live and she'll guarantee his survival—Evan Smoak, a former Orphan assassin, must choose between his principles and his life.

Patterson, James. [Run, Rose, Run](#) (\$10.99). On the rise and on the run, a young singer-songwriter arrives in Nashville to claim her destiny, but it's also where the darkness she's fled might find her—and destroy her.