

# BOOKNEWS from

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## THE SCARY SEASON IS UPON US

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.

If you want a wider look *The Millions* has put out "[The Great Fall 2024 Book Preview](#)." And remember, you can order any book from us, not just the books listed in our publications.

To keep this *Booknews* from becoming encyclopedic I'll be publishing our very own Gift Catalogue shortly with recommendations mostly outside fiction. Most Gift Catalogues are filled with publisher sponsored books but ours will be purely books we like.

JUST COMPLETED BUT WATCH THEM ON OUR [FB](#) or [UT](#) platforms or listen to the [Podcasts](#)

### TUESDAY OCTOBER 1 7:00 PM Live Event

Ally Carter discusses [The Most Wonderful Crime of the Year](#) (Harper \$24.99)

A holiday romp wherein a mystery writer goes missing  
Rebecca Thorne discusses [A Pirate's Life for Tea](#) (Tor \$19.99)  
More fantastical pirating adventure

### WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 2 7:00 PM Live Event

Ramona Emerson with Deborah J. Ledford  
Emerson discusses [Exposure](#) (Soho Press \$27.95)  
Navajo forensic photographer Rita Todacheene 's 2<sup>nd</sup> case

### THURSDAY OCTOBER 3 1:00 PM Virtual Event for Our Bookstore Birthday

Ian Rankin discusses [Midnight and Blue](#) (Orion UK \$40)  
Edinburgh's John Rebus goes behind bars to break a case  
The Signed UK edition publishes October 15 as does the US  
Unsigned

### THURSDAY OCTOBER 3 7:00 PM Live Event

Tami Hoag discusses [Bad Liar](#) (Putnam \$29.99)  
Dark doing in Louisiana swamp country

### SATURDAY OCTOBER 5 6:00 PM Live Event

Kevin Hearne discusses [Candle & Crow](#) (Random House Worlds \$28.99)  
Ink & Sigil

### MONDAY OCTOBER 7 5:00 PM Virtual Event

Jason Rekulak discusses [The Last One at the Wedding](#) (Flatiron \$28.99)  
A destination wedding at a New Hampshire estate goes wrong  
Signed books available

### OK, HERE WE GO LIVE FOR THE REST OF THE MONTH

### TUESDAY OCTOBER 8 5:00 PM Virtual Event

Lee Child discusses [Safe Enough](#) (Mysterious Press \$28.99)  
20 stories display Lee's voice and clever plotting  
Signed copies in stock

### TUESDAY OCTOBER 8 7:00 PM Live Book Launch

Danielle Trussoni discusses [The Puzzle Box](#) (Random \$29.99)  
Our October Crime Subscription Club Pick combines puzzles challenges with Japanese Imperial Family history  
Danielle will, surprise! be briefly joined by Iceland's Ragnar Jonasson and Yrsa Sigurdardottir. Bring your own books by them to get signed

### WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 9 7:00 PM Live Event

Scott Graham discusses [Death Valley Duo](#) (Torrey House \$17.95)  
His latest National Park Mystery with Chuck Bender  
Margaret Mizushima discusses [Gathering Mist](#) (Crooked Lane \$29.99)  
Mattie Wray and her K-9 Robo return

**SATURDAY OCTOBER 12 2:00 PM Live Event**

**John hosts a Holiday Preview**

**Jenn McKinlay** discusses [A Merry Little Murder Plot](#) (Berkley \$28)

A Briar Creek Library Lover's holiday mystery

**Karen Schaler** discusses [Finding Christmas](#) (Harper \$17.99)

**Jacqueline Snow** discusses [Christmas Sweater Weather](#) (Grand Central \$17.99)

**SUNDAY OCTOBER 13 1:00 PM Live Event**

**Cookies & Conversation, A Celebration**

**It's a party for our bookstore birthday with host Christina Estes**

Come tell us why you love The Pen and we'll say why we love you

Our streaming audience can chime in too in Comments

**TUESDAY OCTOBER 15 7:00 PM Live Event**

**Jeff Biggers and on screen, Andrew Davis**, Director of *The Fugitive* & other films

They discuss their debut thriller [Disturbing the Bones](#) (Melville House \$29.99)

A discovery at an archaeological site near Cairo, Illinois, collides with a global peace summit in Chicago

Our copies of our October Crime Subscription Club Pick are signed by both authors

**WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 16 7:00 PM Live Event**

**Paula Munier** discusses [Night Woods](#) (St Martins \$29)

Mercy Carr and her loyal dog Elvis return

**THURSDAY OCTOBER 17 5:00 PM Virtual Event**

**Lev AC Rosen** discusses [Rough Pages](#) (Forge \$27.99)

1950s San Francisco gay PI Evander Mills

Signed books in stock

**FRIDAY OCTOBER 18 7:00 PM Live or Virtual**

**SciFi Friday Group** discusses Mary Robinette Kowal's [The Spare Man](#) (\$19.99)

**SATURDAY OCTOBER 19 10:30 AM Live or Virtual**

**Croak & Dagger Mystery Group** discuss SA Barnes, [Dead Silence](#) (\$18.99)

**SATURDAY OCTOBER 19 6:00 PM Live Offsite Event**

**Michael Connelly** discusses [The Waiting](#) (LittleBrown \$30)

Ballard & Bosch investigate

Location: Scottsdale United Methodist Church, 4140 N Miller Road 85251

Free to attend.

**Don't miss it. There is No Streaming for this event**

**MONDAY OCTOBER 21 5:00 PM Virtual Book Launch**

**Robert Dugoni** discusses [Beyond Reasonable Doubt](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$28.99)

Seattle attorney Keera Duggan back in action

Signed books available as is the Unsigned [Paperback Edition](#) (\$16.99)

**TUESDAY OCTOBER 22 7:00 PM Live Book Launch**

**Tasha Alexander** discusses [Death by Misadventure](#) (St Martins \$29)

Lady Emily investigates in 1905 Bavaria

**Andrew Grant** discusses [In Too Deep: A Jack Reacher Novel](#) (Random \$30)

And also the anthology [Back in Black](#) (Blackstone \$16.99) wherein he has a new & original Reacher story

**THURSDAY OCTOBER 24 7:00 PM Live Event**

**Richard Chizmar** discusses [Memorials](#) (Gallery \$28.99)

A metafiction in Stephen King style

Our November Notable New Fiction Subscription Club Pick

**SATURDAY OCTOBER 26 11:00 Live Event**

**The Cookbook Club** members will discuss their choice of their favorite culinary writing or food fiction book  
Bring a recipe to share

**SATURDAY OCTOBER 26 2:00 PM Live Event**

**A Kensington Crime Quintet**

**Colleen Cambridge** discusses [Murder Takes the Stage](#) (\$27).

Agatha Christie's Housekeeper Phyllida Bright

**Daryl Wood Gerber** discusses [Murder on the Page](#) (\$27). A new cozy series debut features a caterer

**David Lewis** discusses [A Jewel in the Crown](#) (\$27) Our Historical Fiction Subscription Club Pick for November

**McKenna, Clara** discusses [Murder on Mistletoe Lane](#) (\$27) The Stella & Lindy 1900s series

**Carlene O'Connor** discusses [You Have Gone Too Far](#) (\$27)

A County Kerry mystery with Irish veterinarian Dimpna Wilde

**MONDAY OCTOBER 28 5:00 PM Virtual Event**

**Olivia Blacke** discusses [A New Lease on Death](#) (St Martins \$28)

A supernatural cozy with Boston crime solving duo Ruby...and a ghost

**MONDAY OCTOBER 28 7:00 PM Live Thriller Event**

**David McCloskey** discusses [The Seventh Floor](#) (Norton \$29.99)

Stunning spy thriller with CIA Agent Sam Joseph

**Taylor Moore** discusses [Cold Trail](#) (Harper \$30)

DEA Special Agent Garrett Kohl

**WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 30 7:00 PM Live Event**

**Hardboiled Crime Group** discusses Patricia Highsmith's [Deep Water](#) (\$15.95)

**FRIDAY NOVEMBER 1 6:00 PM Live Event**

**Sarah Sawyer and Zibby Owens with other authors**

**Sawyer** discusses [The Undercurrent](#) (Zibby Books \$27.99)

A debut praised by Gillian Flynn

**SATURDAY NOVEMBER 2 5:00 PM Live Book Launch**

Ellison, JT. [A Very Bad Thing](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$28.99)

Our November Crime Subscription Book of the Month

## OUR OCTOBER BOOK SUBSCRIPTION CLUB PICKS

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

Callaghan, Jo. [Leave No Trace](#) – and do not miss the first in series [In the Blink of an Eye](#) (\$15 discounted price to British Crime Club members)

**Cozy Crimes Club** One Unsigned hardcover or paperback per month  
Hannah, Darci. [A Fatal Feast at Bramsford Manor](#)

**The Crime Collectors Book of the Month Club** One Signed First Printing per month  
Trussoni, Danielle. [The Puzzle Box](#)

**First Mystery Club** One Signed First Printing per month  
Davis, Andrew/Jeff Biggers. [Disturbing the Bones](#)

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

**Historical Fiction Club** One First Printing per month  
Rasche, Anna. [The Stone Witch of Florence](#)

**Historical Fiction Paperback Club** One Unsigned paperback per month  
Stokes-Chapman, Susan. [The Shadow Key](#)

**Notable New Fiction** One Signed First Printing per month  
Bayard, Louis. [The Wildes](#)

**Romance and Relationships** One unsigned hardcover or paperback per month  
Levine, Jenna. [My Vampire Plus One](#)

## SIGNED BOOKS

Alexander, Tasha. [Death by Misadventure](#) (St Martins \$29). In the winter of 1906, Lady Emily and Colin are invited to the opulent home of Baroness Ursula von Duchtel in the Bavarian Alps. Outside is a mountainous winter wonderland with a view of Mad King Ludwig's fairy tale castle. Inside, the villa hosts a magnificent but eclectic art collection—as well as an equally eclectic collection of fellow guests. Soon a string of “accidents” follows.... Alexander delightfully evokes the castles of beautiful Bavaria, long a kingdom but merged into the new state of Germany before this tale begins.

\*Bayard, Louis. [The Wildes](#) (Algonquin \$29). The magical Bayard whose books I have admired for many years brings Oscar Wilde's wife Constance and two sons out from the shadows of history. Bayard transports us to the British countryside, an Italian villa, the trenches of France, and back to London. Told in the language of the late 19th & early 20th centuries, *The Wildes* involves the entire Wilde family and the scandalous drama that ensues. “It requires a novelist of great audacity to dare to attempt to bring Oscar Wilde back to life, and it requires a novelist of great skill, to say nothing of wit, to manage the feat persuasively. Happily, Louis Bayard is both of those novelists. As if that were not enough, *The Wildes* also presents us with a portrait of Oscar's wife, Constance, that is little short of breathtaking in its vibrant depth, and a recounting of the heartbreaking tragedy of the Wildes that is eloquent and fully compassionate to all its characters, certainly to the Wildes' sons, Cyril and Vyvyan, and even to (almost astonishingly) that feckless instrument of destruction Lord Alfred Douglas.... Bayard presented us with real people pressing, often excruciatingly, toward fateful decisions. This is an intoxicatingly gorgeous novel and our **October Notable New Fiction Subscription Club Pick**.

\*Cambridge, Colleen. [Murder Takes the Stage](#) (Kensington \$27). Phyllida Bright—amateur sleuth and Agatha Christie's esteemed housekeeper—discovers a killer stalking the stages of London's illustrious theaters. Her employer has temporarily relocated to the metropolis where one night Archibald Allston is found dead in an armchair onstage at the Adelphi Theater. First impressions are

that he died of natural causes. But the very next day, the unlucky actor playing Benvolio at the Belmont Theater is found with his head bashed in. And when a third victim turns up, this time with double-C initials, the fatal pattern is impossible to ignore. Start this series set in 1930s Devon at what Cambridge calls Mallowan Hall but is really Greenways with [Murder at Mallowan Hall](#); [A Trace of Poison](#) (\$16.95 each); [Murder by Invitation Only](#) (\$17.95).

Carlisle, Kate. [The Knife Before Christmas](#) (Berkley \$28) Might be December before Kate can sign a new Fixer Upper Mystery for us.

\*Carter, Ally. [The Most Wonderful Crime of the Year](#) (Harper \$24.99). The bridge is out. The phones are down. And the most famous mystery writer in the world just disappeared out of a locked room two days before Christmas. It's cozy mystery author Maggie Chase's first Christmas since her husband left her for her best friend, in the wake of which she developed mild agoraphobia. Making things worse, practically every traumatic incident in Maggie's life has happened around Christmas, including the deaths of both her parents. But her luck might be changing: Maggie's publisher forces her into attending a Christmas house party in England hosted by Eleanor Ashley, her longtime literary idol. Eleanor's gathered a who's who of mystery authors, including Maggie's nemesis, Ethan Wyatt. Maggie hopes Ethan's presence will be the only wrinkle in an otherwise delightful holiday—until Eleanor disappears. At first, it seems Eleanor's playing a game, forcing the authors to compete for the privilege of being her coauthor by following clues to find her. But when a fellow houseguest is poisoned, the stakes become all too real. As Maggie and Ethan join forces to investigate, their animosity slowly turns to love. Carter's impressive plotting means the final, Agatha Christie-esque reveal is a genuine surprise,

I loved Carter's spy romp [The Blonde Identity](#) (\$17.99), a cross between Janet Evanovich and Ian Fleming, and just terrific action and fun.

Chapelle, Sarah. [Taylor Swift Style: Fashion Through the Eras](#) (St Martins \$35). **SIGNED HERE DECEMBER 10 at a Ticketed Event.**

The author writes, “Since 2011 I’ve been using my journalism background to identify and report on Taylor Swift’s fashion exacts. I’ve now transformed and actualized those content archives into *TSS*, which I think is going to be considered the ‘definitive’ Swiftie style book. *TSS* dives deep into Taylor’s fashion evolution, explaining the ‘why’ behind all her outfits. The book combines my insightful, nuanced commentary with 200+ photos spanning nearly two decades of Taylor’s career. It’s going to be a beautifully designed one-of-a-kind keepsake for any Swiftie’s coffee table.” So think big here for Gifts.

Child, Andrew. [In Too Deep: A Jack Reacher Novel](#) (Random \$30). Waking up shackled to a hospital bed with a broken arm, a concussion and no short-term memory, ex-military policeman Jack Reacher knows only one thing — that whoever did this to him is going to regret it. Learning how and why he got there leads Reacher to a web of criminals under investigation by the FBI, and he teams up with a suspended Arizona police detective who is seeking revenge on one of the suspects in her father’s murder. The 29th installment of the Reacher series feels fresh, with a mid-book twist that keeps the pages turning. So, hitch-hiking gone wrong, and our favorite special detective chained up in a basement. How will he get out of this one? Andrew launches this here October 22, publication day, so ask for your copy to be dated and personalized if you like.

Child, Lee. [Safe Enough](#) (Penzler \$20 special price to October 31). A collection of stories, 20 in all, showing Lee’s command of voices and subjects.

Chizmar, Richard. [Memorials](#) (Gallery \$28.99). 1983: Three students from a small college embark on a week-long road trip to film a documentary on roadside memorials for their American Studies class. The project starts out as a fun adventure with long stretches of empty road and nightly campfires where they begin to open up with one another. But as they venture deeper into the Appalachian backwoods, the atmosphere begins to darken. “Chizmar wows in an immersive and über-creepy novel that pays subtle homage to horror classics ranging from the works of H.P. Lovecraft to *The Blair Witch Project*...gradually ratchets up a palpable feeling of unease through an accumulation of small unsettling moments...Chizmar pulls no punches on the way to a thoroughly satisfying finale...It’s a tour de force.”—*PW* (starred review) for our **November Notable New Fiction Subscription Club Pick**.

\*Clarke, Susanna. [The Wood at Midwinter](#) (Bloomsbury \$16.99 with Signed Bookplate for the first 25 to order) is a beautifully illustrated short story set in the world of Jonathan Strange and Mr. Norrell. Nineteen-year-old Merowdis Scot is an unusual girl. She can talk to animals and trees—and she is only ever happy when she is walking in the woods. One snowy afternoon, out with her dogs and Apple the pig, Merowdis encounters a blackbird and a fox. As darkness falls, a strange figure enters in their midst—and the path of her life is changed forever.

Clavin, Tom. [Bandit Heaven: The Hole-In-The-Wall Gang](#) (St Martins \$30). Tip-ins for a saga billed as “The Final Chapter of the Wild West”—the true story of the most infamous hangout

for bandits, thieves and murderers of all time—and the lawmen tasked with rooting them out.

Connelly, Michael. [The Waiting](#) (LittleBrown \$30). Signed here October 19 to celebrate our 35<sup>th</sup> birthday. Ask for your copy to be personalized.

Renée Ballard, leader of the Los Angeles Police Department’s Open-Unsolved Unit, is worried that progress on a decades-old rape case might be derailed after her badge and gun go missing on personal time. But when she turns to retired detective Harry Bosch to help track her missing gear, his investigation takes a dangerous turn. Meanwhile, Bosch’s daughter, Maddie, a Hollywood patrol cop, is hoping to track a lead of her own on the famously unsolved Black Dahlia murder case, in the hopes of jump-starting a detective career like her father’s.

Connolly, John. [Night and Day Stories](#) (Hodder UK \$40) takes us from the dusty shelves of an uncanny library filled with fictional characters to a bunker deep beneath the earth where scientists seek revenge on old Nazis; from an English marsh haunted by a mother and her son to a country house where a grieving widower finds comfort from a most unlikely source. Concluding with the author’s account of how an obscure horror film brought him closer to his lost father, and how nostalgia can help to keep us sane, I am fond of Connolly’s forays into legends and folklore. The US edition is a paperback [Night and Day](#) (\$18.99). John has signed a few copies of it for us.

Cornwell, Patricia. [Identity Unknown](#) (Grand Central \$30). Virginia’s chief medical examiner investigates two bizarre, potentially linked crimes. First, Kay is called to examine the body of seven-year-old Luna Briley, daughter of billionaire Ryder and his wife, Piper, who claim Luna accidentally shot herself. After conducting an autopsy, however, Kay comes to believe the Brileys are guilty of child abuse—and likely murder. Meanwhile, Kay gets word that her former lover, Nobel-winning physicist Sal Giordano, has been killed and left on the grounds of Oz, an abandoned theme park founded by none other than Ryder Briley. When Kay and her friend, former detective Pete Marino, helicopter to Oz to recover Sal’s remains, they find strange crop circles surrounding his corpse. Questions abound in this 28th for Scarpetta.

Davis, Andrew/Jeff Biggers. [Disturbing the Bones](#) (Melville House \$29.99). Our copies of this debut, **Our October First Mystery Subscription Club Pick**, are signed by both authors. I will say first that this story is over the top—“Fans will find everything in this story they expect from the creator of *The Fugitive* —a high-voltage thriller, an amazing range of characters, and an astonishing conclusion.» —Sara Paretsky. Co-author Biggers is a journalist. It’s propulsive, cinematic, and tremendous fun with a kind of *Dr. Strangelove* vibe in part. “An exceptionally edge-of-your-seat murder mystery connected to modern day Cold War global politics. With echoes of current domestic political intrigue, the tale hooks the reader from the beginning,” says the author of *Black Klansman*. He’s right—and one could wish this could be a Real World scenario given the state of our country.

And from a man whose opinion carries weight, Michael Mann, this review: “From a Mississippi riverside archaeological dig revealing an unexpected atrocity to the back streets of

Chicago, a knife-edged investigation that morphs into a political thriller about a world on the brink. An ingenious page turner.” It is, even if some of the prose is, well, clunky. What I so much enjoyed is the Midwest vibe, the way it embraces Illinois from riverside to Chicago and then down to Cairo which is surprisingly southern if you don’t know Illinois history.

Here’s a Starred Review: “During an archaeological dig in Alexander County, Illinois, in which ambitious young scientist Molly Moore uncovers ancient villages dating back to 6,000 BCE, her drones and remote sensing equipment also unearth the bones of Florence Jenkins, a civil rights reporter who went missing in 1978. The discovery catches the attention of Florence’s son, Chicago homicide detective Randall Jenkins, who’s long wondered what happened to his mother. Ignoring warnings from federal officials, Molly and Randall try to piece together Florence’s fate. Meanwhile, a breakthrough defense program operates out of nearby Fort Defiance with hopes of giving the U.S. clear dominance over Russia. A misstep in that program causes a nuclear disaster in Siberia, further heating up the impending U.S. presidential election and increasing pressure on an upcoming peace summit in Chicago. Eventually, Molly and Randall’s investigation intersects with the ever-worsening political mess, ratcheting up the stakes....”

Dugoni, Robert. [Beyond Reasonable Doubt](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$28.99). When Jenna Bernstein, disgraced wunderkind CEO of a controversial biotech company, is accused of murdering her former partner and lover, she turns to Seattle attorney Keera Duggan to defend her. Keera is more than a master chess player who brings her intuitive moves into court—she’s Jenna’s childhood friend. But considering their history, Keera knows JENNA spells trouble.... There are some thought-compelling ethical issues in this follow up to Keera’s brilliant first appearance in the brilliantly plotted [Her Deadly Game](#) (\$16.99).

Unsigned paperback: [Beyond Reasonable Doubt](#) (\$16.99).

Ellison, JT. [A Very Bad Thing](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$28.99) is a compelling story about a woman who hides in plain sight from her past. Columbia Jones has done a very bad thing. You wouldn’t guess it by looking at her—she’s a highly successful author in the middle of a tour for a book that’s already slated to be a high-grossing feature film. She’s polished, demure, rich, and her hordes of devoted fans are ready to love whatever she does next. When her bloody dead body is found in her hotel room the last night of the tour, her fans and those closest to her are shocked. Was the killer a stalker, a delusional fan, or someone much closer to her? The fallout from Columbia’s death is immediate, with a quick string of events that will draw in readers. “Chapters alternate between different characters’ perspectives, but Riley, the journalist covering Columbia’s tour, is the flawed, determined, and whip-smart protagonist who’s most fun to follow. Mystery fans will also appreciate that this novel rewards readers who pay close attention to the clues.” Which is why this is our **November Crime Subscription Club Book of the Month**.

Emerson, Ramona. [Exposure](#) (Soho \$27.95). In the follow-up to the National Book Award–longlisted [Shutter](#) (\$16.99), a 2022 First Mystery Club Pick, Navajo forensic photographer Rita Todacheene grapples with a fanatical serial killer who has invented his own religion—and the ghosts he leaves behind.

Erdrich, Louise. [The Mighty Red](#) (Harper \$32). Tip ins. Come visit Tabor, ND, home of beet farms, fracking, and the Red River Valley. Most of the novel’s action occurs during the economic crisis of 2008 and its aftermath, and focuses on Crystal, a descendent of Ojibwe field hands and a hauler for the industrial sugar beet plant, her 18-year-old daughter Kismet, and Crystal’s problematic husband, Martin. Kismet, who once toyed with being a Goth, marries Gary, the troubled son of the largest beet grower in the area. She is in love with Hugo, a high school dropout, which further complicates the situation. By focusing on the Red River, which flows northward and floods annually, Erdrich tracks the state’s geological and ethnographic history. Readers learn about beet farming, pesticides, super seeds, loss of wildlife, erosion of the land, oil drilling, the Indigenous community, economic downturns, and the claustrophobic yet comforting life of a tight-knit community. “While the novel touches on tragedy, it also includes scenes of sheer comedic delight. No one describes a book-group meeting better than Erdrich.”—LJ

Fletcher, Molly. [Dynamic Drive: The Purpose Fueled Formula](#) (Hachette \$30). Molly Fletcher, renowned keynote speaker, podcast host, and entrepreneur, invites you to challenge the status quo and redefine your understanding of drive. “Unlike traditional approaches that dilute drive into a mere means to an end, which can lead to burnout, Dynamic Drive is a way of life, a mindset. It’s about figuring out the parts of your life where you are playing small or safe or are dissatisfied. Dynamic Drive is the process by which we implement and sustain intentional change. The greatest reward isn’t in what you achieve, but who you become in the process.” Fletcher is in town and dropping by on the 16th to sign copies of a book that otherwise might not come our way. Yay.

Gerber, Daryl Wood. [Murder on the Page](#) (Kensington \$27). A new cozy series debut features a caterer who crafts literary-themed dinner parties—and must ensure that a killer gets just desserts.... It’s also set in a community just ravaged by Helene which reminds us how long it takes for a book to come to publication and how the world it depicts can change.

Allie Catt, caterer and personal chef in the beautiful mountain community of Asheville, North Carolina, has devised a winning formula by using her clients’ favorite books as inspiration. Her first themed event is based on *Pride and Prejudice* (Allie’s cat, Darcy, approves), and it’s so popular that soon she has grand ideas for future parties based on *Rebecca*, *The Great Gatsby*, *Babette’s Feast* and more. Business is booming, and a rival catering company is fuming. But there’s a sting in the tale when the aunt of one of Allie’s clients and best friends, Tegan, is murdered. Tegan is the victim’s sole heir, and quickly becomes the main suspect. Allie has no doubts about her friend’s innocence, but how to prove it?

\*Hallett, Janice. [The Examiner](#) (Viper UK \$39). I am a devoted fan of Hallett’s surprising, original, and keenly plotted novels and have had the pleasure of doing her US debuts (virtual all) for every one. We met to tea in London in June which was a treat. I can therefore not only recommend this her version of a Dark Academic set in London during an arts course embracing a range of pupils, but also this [profile in the NY Times Book Review](#) that really captures Janet and her work. I recommend you read it. Here is also the [link to our book launch video](#) for the US edition last month.

Harkaway, Nick. [Karla's Choice](#) (Viking UK \$44). John Le Carré's son writing as Harkaway—he's an acclaimed novelist in his own right—brings back the iconic George Smiley. "In 1963, Hungarian publisher Laszlo Bánáti fails to show up at his office in London. Instead, a Soviet assassin arrives, telling Bánáti's assistant, Susanna Gero, "I am here to kill your Mr. Bánáti... but I have changed my mind." Gero cleverly manages to bring the would-be assassin to British intelligence, who task the happily retired Smiley with finding Bánáti and figuring out why the Soviets want him dead. Smiley plunges behind Soviet lines, launching a labyrinthine mission that puts him back on the trail of his old nemesis, Karla, head of the KGB, and fills in narrative gaps between Le Carré's *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold* and *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy*. Longtime Smiley fans will delight in the enormous cast of familiar characters, the thoughtful meditations on the morality of espionage, and the lived-in tradecraft. Harkaway brilliantly channels his late father's voice, and in the process delivers an essential new chapter for Smiley and Karla. "—*PW* Starred Review. Unsigned US edition (\$30).

\*Hawkins, Paula. [The Blue Hour](#) (Harper \$30). A tiny, lonely island off the coast of Scotland is the refuge of a woman artist in a bad marriage she can't seem to break. Her will inexplicably left her work to the estate of a Glasgow gallerist, a former lover she'd fallen out with. To sort it out the estate's museum director visits Eris, only accessible by causeway when the tide allows, and encounters other people in Vanessa's messy life. In fact everyone's life in this story is messy keeping you in suspense whether anything for anyone will end well. Hawkins drops by to sign it here in late October.

Hearne, Kevin. [Candle & Crow](#) (Random House Worlds \$28.99). Book Three of the Ink & Sigil series. Al MacBharras has a most unusual job: He's a practitioner of ink-and-sigil magic, tasked with keeping order among the gods and monsters that dwell hidden in the human world. But there's one supernatural mystery he's never been able to solve: Years ago, someone cast twin curses on him that killed off his apprentices and drove away loved ones who heard him speak, leaving him bereft and isolated. But he's not quite alone: As Al works to solve this mystery, his friends draw him into their own eccentric dramas....

Hoag, Tami. [Bad Liar](#) (Putnam \$29.99). A murder victim dumped at the dead end of a lonely country road, face and hands obliterated by a shotgun blast, is not the way sheriff's detective Nick Fourcade wants to start his week. His only lead takes him to the family of a hometown hero suddenly gone missing. Hoag paints a wrenching story of blighted hopes, parental anguish, and women finding power in a Louisiana swamp small town. I found myself wishing that one of the murders, uncovered by bad luck, would go unsolved given the character of the victim. She's working on the sequel.

Klavan, Andrew. [A Woman Underground](#) (Penzler \$26.95). ). Cameron Winter is troubled in heart and mind. He's plagued by memories of his time as a government operative investigating a notorious Turkish sex trafficker. The fact that the mission was left unfinished still haunts him and threatens to tear him apart. In the midst of his painful soul-searching, Winter crosses paths with an ex-flame—his first love—and the chance encounter ignites a passion he thought was long lost. But just as soon as she wanders back into Winter's life, the woman vanishes, leaving Winter

scrambling to track her down. His pursuit takes him deep into a dangerous world....

\*Lewis, David. [A Jewel in the Crown](#) (Kensington \$27). **This Historical Fiction Subscription Club Pick for November** is signed here October 28. It's a fast-moving, hugely entertaining but historically accurate debut caper where two British agents at cross purposes are assigned to safeguard the crown jewels from bad actors by ushering them off to Canada. One is a kind of James Bond aristocrat, the other a feminist/socialist Welsh cop. Sparks fly. The action moves swiftly from England to Scotland to I think Portugal in a mission orchestrated by Winston Churchill. I pray for a sequel.

Here are comments from a customer who won an ARC of this book at an event: "The characters are vivid and have depth. The heroine (Caitrin) is a delight and makes a strong connection to the reader. It becomes second nature wanting her to succeed and looking forward to what comes next. I especially liked Caitrin being smart, resourceful, and kind all at once. Then there is her wit! Maybe one of Caitrin's strongest appeals to the reader is her wit. It is sharp, on point, and serves as Shakespearian comic relief. The language flows, making a comfortable read. Mr. Lewis hints that there is to be a series of these books under the umbrella of "The Secret Churchill Files." I'm lining up to buy them."

McCloskey, David. [The Seventh Floor](#) (Norton \$29.99). For his third sensational tradecraft thriller, former CIA analyst David McCloskey returns to some characters fans will recognize—namely CIA officers Artemis Aphrodite Procter and Sam Joseph, who both featured prominently in his debut novel, [Damascus Station](#) (\$17.95), McCloskey's ability to balance their strengths and flaws, their dark senses of humor and their exquisitely honed survival instincts make these larger-than-life personalities look almost like the folks next door in their all-too-human foibles. With her intelligence, reflexes, and risk-taking, Procter would be the person you'd want in charge of any surveillance mission. Except when she figures out that one of her closest friends, with whom she was trained at what the CIA calls "the Farm," must be the mole who betrayed Sam Joseph. Procter has sent Sam to a high-stakes baccarat table in Singapore to get intel from a Russian called Golikov. Golikov winds up dead, and Sam ends up in a Russian interrogation cell; Procter gets viciously fired over the debacle. And those are just the opening chapters.

McKinlay, Jenn. [A Merry Little Murder Plot](#) (Berkley \$28). During the most wonderful time of the year, famous author Helen Monroe arrives in Briar Creek to be the writer in residence, but her "bah humbug" attitude excludes her from the many holiday celebrations the town residents enjoy. To try to spread some Christmas cheer, library director Lindsey Norris invites the new writer in town to join her craftersnoon club. Murder ensues....

Mizushima, Margaret. [Gathering Mist](#) (Crooked Lane \$29.99). Lesa gives this new K-9 Mystery a Star: Just days before her wedding to veterinarian Cole Walker, police Deputy Mattie Wray must fly to Washington's Olympic Peninsula, where a celebrity's nine-year-old son has disappeared from a film set; the skills of Mattie's search-and-rescue dog Robo are needed to comb through the region's rainy forests, trails, and creeks. While working, the search teams learn that other boys have disappeared from the area in the last few years. Then one of the dogs and several searchers

are poisoned by arsenic-tainted water. Fearing for Mattie and Robo, Cole flies in to act as veterinarian for all the dogs. When they realize that the missing boy was probably kidnapped and didn't just wander off, their search becomes more desperate. Mattie fears that it will be the cadaver dogs that discover the boy, rather than Robo and the other air-scent dogs. VERDICT The sequel to *Standing Dead* sends Mattie and Robo to a difficult search environment. The story of the search, and the setting, are beautifully developed in a mystery that builds in intensity and suspense. Readers will appreciate the emphasis on search-and-rescue dogs in Mizushima's series. Sandra Dallas raves about this too.

Moore, Taylor. [Cold Trail: A Garrett Kohl Novel](#) (Harper \$30). DEA Special Agent Garrett Kohl must find out what's truly tainted in the energy industry and uncover a deep-rooted plot in order to protect his new business, beloved ranch, and family. Perfect for fans of C. J. Box. "Taylor Moore gives his readers an insider's glimpse into a world of covert operations that few novelists can match."—Nelson DeMille. Moore "brings his insider knowledge of the intelligence community and tradecraft to the genre...not to be missed."—Jack Carr

Mosse, Kate. [Map of Bones](#) (Pan UK \$44). Mosse concludes her Joubert Family Chronicles. Olifantshoek, 1688. When the violent Cape wind blows from the south-east, they say the voices of the unquiet dead can be heard whispering through the deserted valley. Suzanne Joubert, a Huguenot refugee from war-torn France, is here to walk in her cousin's footsteps. Louise Reydon-Joubert, the notorious she-captain and pirate commander, landed at the Cape of Good Hope more than sixty years ago, then disappeared from the record as if she had never existed. Suzanne has come to find her — to lay the stories to rest. But all is not as it seems... Franschoek, 1862. Nearly 180 years after Suzanne's perilous journey, another intrepid and courageous woman of the Joubert family — Isabelle Leopard — has journeyed to the small frontier town once known as Olifantshoek in search of her long-lost relations. A journalist and travel writer, intent on putting the women of her family back into the history books, she quickly discovers that the tragedies and crimes of the past are far from over. Isabelle faces a race against time if she is not only going to discover the truth but escape with her life....

Munier, Paula. [Night Woods](#) (St Martins \$29). Record snow and sleet and rain are pummeling Vermont and a wild boar has escaped from an exclusive hunting club nearby—but that won't stop a very pregnant and very bored Mercy Carr from hiking her beloved woods with her loyal dog Elvis. She's supposed to be decorating the nursery and helping her mother plan the baby shower, but she'd much rather be playing Scrabble with Homer Grant, a word-loving, shotgun-toting hermit living deep in the forest. But when she and Elvis drop by Homer's cabin for their weekly game, they arrive to find an unknown dead man—and no sign of Homer.... Munier may have tapped into recent weather.

O'Connor, Carlene. [You Have Gone Too Far](#) (Kensington \$27). Head to a remote village on Ireland's southwest coast, where winding windswept roads open to spectacular views of rugged cliffs against immense, lonely beaches...and some fear a mysterious cult could be connected to the disappearance of a young pregnant woman. O'Connor writes Irish village cozies but she's displaying a darker voice in this series set in what I think is the most beautiful part of Ireland.

Palahniuk, Chuck. [Shock Induction](#) (Simon & Schuster \$26.99) Tip-ins for "a dark, satirical parable about a string of mysterious high school disappearances, the seedy underbellies of billionaires, and the tough choices we make in the face of an uncertain future."

Penny, Louise. [The Grey Wolf](#) (St Martins \$30). "Penny's 19th novel featuring Chief Inspector Armand Gamache of the Sûreté du Québec is one of the series' best. The typically even-tempered Gamache is rattled by repeated phone calls from a mysterious stranger one morning while relaxing in the sleepy village of Three Pines with his wife. Shortly afterward, someone breaks into the couple's Montréal apartment and steals one of Gamache's old coats, then delivers it to his office at Sûreté headquarters with two anonymous notes inside: one requesting a meeting, the other cryptically listing a series of herbs. Enlisting the help of his son-in-law, Jean-Guy, and fellow investigator, Inspector Isabelle Lacoste, Gamache learns that his pursuer is engaged in a plot that crosses international borders. Splitting up, the three leads cover ground as far-flung as the White House and the Vatican to foil the plot, which forces Gamache to look at old allies with fresh skepticism. Penny pulls off the narrative's uncharacteristically epic scope without a hitch, swapping fair-play puzzles for pulse-pounding cliffhangers without sacrificing intimate character moments."—*PW* Starred Review

Prose, Nita. [The Mistletoe Mystery](#) (Random \$22). A novella brings us another mystery with Molly Gray, head maid at the Regency Grand Hotel. Molly and her boyfriend, Juan, are intent on making Christmas festive. The couple is deep in the honeymoon phase, doting on each other, turning their bathtub into a makeshift spa, and admiring their "misfit" Charlie Brown tree with its macaroni star topper. But Molly starts to doubt Juan's faithfulness when he begins withholding details about his whereabouts. Instead of solving a murder this time, Molly is trying her best to decipher the secretive behaviors of everyone around her including Juan. Is it due to the upcoming Secret Santa gift exchange at work? Or has Molly trusted the wrong people?

Rankin, Ian. [Midnight and Blue](#) (Orion \$40). Edinburgh's legendary copper John Rebus has put many a criminal behind bars. Now he joins them in a city prison serving a life sentence after events in [A Heart Full of Headstones](#) (\$18.99) where he's in constant danger and has to adjust to the prison hierarchy. Then a midnight murder of a convict in the man's cell presents a baffling locked-cell mystery only Rebus is likely to solve. Meanwhile his former team is working the case of a missing teenager, a girl who seems to have come into money.... Unsigned US edition (\$29).

Rasche, Anna. [The Stone Witch of Florence](#) (Park Row \$30). A debut by an historian and gemologist who has worked at the Met and the Brooklyn Museums immerses you in 14th Century Florence during the Plague and illuminates the intersection of folk magic, medicine and religion. Alchemist Ginevra di Gasparo, exiled from medieval Florence for healing the sick with gemstones, is summoned by powerful men desperate to combat the encroaching black plague. But they don't want her healing skills; they want her to track down missing relics that the church believes will ward off sickness. If she can return the stolen items, she will clear her name and be recognized as a doctor, but danger and betrayal are constant threats Will this be her chance to become a respected physician, or will the Inquisitor call her a

stone witch? Find out by reading our **October Historical Fiction Subscription Club Pick** that got this Indie Next Pick: “When a thief steals holy relics from churches in Florence during the outbreak of the Black Plague, one woman formerly accused of witchcraft and exiled is brought back to investigate by a deceitful, powerful bishop. A fascinating historical read.”

Rekulak, Jason. [The Last One at the Wedding](#) (Flatiron \$28.99). After a three-year estrangement, working-class father Frank Szatowski is shocked when his daughter, Maggie, calls him for the first time since. He was convinced that their estrangement would become permanent. He’s even more surprised when she invites him to her upcoming wedding in New Hampshire. He arrives eager to reconnect to find that the wedding is at a private estate—very secluded, very luxurious, very much out of his league. It seems that Maggie failed to mention that she’s marrying Aidan Gardner, the son of a famous tech billionaire. Yet something feels off: the groom is distracted; his mother is nowhere to be seen; and Frank has to sign a nondisclosure agreement just to be allowed on the property. What could possibly go wrong?

Rosen, Lev AC. [Rough Pages](#) (Forge \$27.99). “Gripping... Rosen’s candid portrayal of the casual cruelties perpetrated on queer people in the 1950s provides a novel and edifying foundation for a traditional mystery. Readers will be ready for the next Mills adventure as soon as this one ends” —*Publishers Weekly* on [The Bell in the Fog](#), the second in the Evander Mills series after the amazing start in [Lavender House](#) (\$17.99), a staff favorite. And the reviewer is not wrong. This chapter opens when bookshop owners Howard Salzberger and DeeDee Lamb disappear. Andy worries not only for their safety but also that the subscriber list for their mail-order gay book service could fall into the wrong hands. To help prevent that, Andy forms an alliance with gossip reporter Rose Rainmeyer, hoping to gain access to some of Rose’s leads and ensure she doesn’t out him. Meanwhile, Andy’s protective urges cause conflict with his partner, Gene, who manages a local gay club. “Rosen buttresses his solid suspense plot with a rendering of midcentury San Francisco that feels realistic in its depiction of the dangers facing the city’s gay residents but refreshingly optimistic about their ability to lead fulfilled lives.” —*PW*

Rosenfelt, David. [The More the Terrier](#) (St Martins \$27). An Andy Carpenter Christmas crime (they make great gifts). Reluctant lawyer Andy Carpenter is relieved to be headed back to Paterson, New Jersey, after a week-long family vacation in the Adirondacks. He’s ready to put the holly jolly season way behind him and settle in at home with his three dogs. But when they finally arrive, there is an extra dog eagerly awaiting them, as well as one anxious dog sitter.

Sawyer, Sarah. [The Undercurrent](#) (Zibby Books \$27.99). A debut highly praised by Gillian Flynn and signed here November 1 is arresting, I’d say challenging in terms of how it addresses motherhood and parent-child relationships. At the core is the unsolved 1987 disappearance of a local girl and finds what might be a clue at her own mother’s home. Set in 2011, with short flashbacks to 1987, the narrative follows three women: Bee; Bee and Gus’s mother; and Leo’s mother. A new mother Bee Rowan; her troubled twin, Gus; and her girlhood crush Leo Nastasi were once close, but Bee hasn’t spoken to either of them in years. In

2011, Leo tracks down Bee in Maine, where she lives with her husband and eight-week-old daughter, Attie, and lets her know Gus wants to talk. Bee returns home with Attie to Austin, Texas, where, to Bee’s surprise, Gus is staying at their mother Mary’s house. There, she finds hidden in her childhood bedroom a letter to Leo from Deecie Jeffries, the girl who disappeared in 1987. The discovery prompts Bee and Leo to finally confront long-ago events that drove a wedge between them, and to solve the mystery of Deecie’s disappearance. The solution is one echoed in various recent mysteries and should prompt discussion. One reviewer recommends this to readers of Tana French.

\*Smith, Sally. [A Case of Mice and Murder](#) (Raven UK \$36). A customer was moved to send me a rave review: “I loved Sally Smith’s first mystery. I read it last Sunday, basically in one sitting. The entire book was amazing: the characters, the setting, the atmosphere. I savored every minute. I’ve been a Sarah Caudwell fan from day one and still occasionally re-read [Thus Was Adonis Murdered](#) (\$18). But *A Case of Mice and Murder* is on a completely different level.”

We have only 2 signed copies of this first in an early 1900s series set within the Temple, England’s legal community campus in London where even the City Police or Scotland Yard cannot enter to investigate the murder of the Lord Chief Justice who died on a cold night without his shoes on... But grab the [Unsigned UK edition](#) (\$28.99). This is one of my top favorite British mysteries of the year along with the two by Jo Callaghan.

Solomon, Rivers. [Model Home](#) (Farrar \$28) Tip-ins. The three Maxwell siblings keep their distance from the lily-white gated enclave outside Dallas where they grew up. When their family moved there, they were the only Black family in the neighborhood. The neighbors acted nice enough, but right away bad things, scary things—the strange and the unexplainable—began to happen in their house. Maybe it was some cosmic trial, a demonic rite of passage into the upper-middle class. Whatever it was, the Maxwells, steered by their formidable mother, stay the course....

Thorne, Rebecca. [A Pirate’s Life for Tea](#) (Tor.com \$19.99). *Bookshops & Bonedust* meets *Our Flag Means Death* in this **cozy fantasy on the low seas, where sapphic pirates find out if enemies actually can become lovers!** This trade paperback release features vivid orange sprayed edges, a beautiful color illustration, and a never-before-seen bonus short story! But why not start with Thorne’s first in this series, [Can’t Spell Treason Without Tea](#) (Tor \$19.99)?

Trussoni, Danielle. [The Puzzle Box](#) (Random \$29.99). Our **October Crime Subscription Club Pick** is a delight from its brilliantly constructed puzzles (the chrysanthemum crossword where the clues have to be filled in both clockwise and counterclockwise is a gem), the mechanics of the boxes and other challenges, and the enthralling Japanese Imperial Family history stretching back centuries but also focused on today’s figures, both challenge and entertain. Think *The DaVinci Code* (Dan Brown is a mentor to Trussoni who once lived in Japan) here: a book that is fun, wildly improbable, tours Tokyo and Kyoto, yet is grounded in actual events and, IMHO daringly, real people. I have snatched a copy of [The Puzzle Master](#) (\$18) to read before Trussoni joins us October 8, publication day, so ask for your copy to be dated too. I recommend reading it as well.



I add this review to mine: “Puzzle savant Mike Brink attempts to unearth a 19th-century Japanese secret in Trussoni’s astonishing sequel to *The Puzzle Master*. In 1868, Emperor Meiji hired a blind mechanical master, Ogawa Ryuichi, to build a lethal contraption accessible only once every 12 years—on the full moon in the Year of the Dragon—to house crucial imperial secrets. In the decades since, Meiji’s descendants have hosted regular competitions to open the Dragon Box, but no one has ever survived the attempt. In the present, the imperial family has hired Brink to come to Tokyo for the job. Meanwhile, a long-hidden group of female samurai newly aligned with Brink’s nemesis, Jameson Sedge, becomes interested in claiming what’s inside the box. The narrative’s solitary puzzle-solving and tense espionage are equally thrilling, while Trussoni’s depiction of Brink as both a puzzle-solving genius and someone learning to trust his own abilities lends the plot surprising emotional depth. Best of all, the puzzle-solving sends Brink on an immersive sprint through contemporary and historical Japan, with plenty of shrewdly delivered trivia and thematically rewarding solutions along the way. This clever and satisfying novel cements Mike Brink as an action hero for the ages.”

Tyson, Neil DeGrasse. [Merlin’s Tour of the Universe](#) (Blackstone \$29.99) has been revised and updated for today. I think it’s a marvelous gift book to a teen. In Tyson’s delightful journey through the cosmos, his fictional character Merlin responds to popular questions asked by adults and children alike. Merlin, a timeless visitor from Planet Omnicia in the Andromeda Galaxy, has observed first-hand many of the major scientific events of Earth’s history. Merlin’s friends include the most important scientific figures and explorers of all time—Da Vinci, Magellan, Newton, Einstein, and Hubble. While Merlin occasionally recounts playful conversations with these luminaries, all questions are answered with authentic science, infused with wit, wisdom, and an occasional rhyme. With the help of intermittent humorous cartoons, Merlin clarifies the details of familiar phenomena like gravity, light, space, and time, and travels to distant stars and galaxies to describe what makes them tick, rotate, explode, and collapse.

## CLASSICS

Highsmith, Patricia. [Deep Water](#) (\$15.95). Vic and Melinda Van Allen’s loveless marriage is held together only by a precarious arrangement whereby, in order to avoid the messiness of divorce, Melinda is allowed to take any number of lovers as long as she does not desert her family. Eventually, Vic can no longer suppress his jealousy and tries to win back his wife by asserting himself through a tall tale of murder—one that soon comes true. In this complex portrayal of a dangerous psychosis emerging in the most unlikely of places, Highsmith examines the chilling reality behind the idyllic facade of American suburban life.

\*James, MR. [Ghost Stories of an Antiquary](#) (Poisoned Pen \$14.99). This classic collection by early 20th century British author and academic M.R. James and edited by Leslie S. Klinger is chock full of stories, often originally read aloud by firelight in the university lodgings, that will confirm everything you feared about what lurks in the alcoves of old buildings or between the covers of ancient books.

Stark, Richard. [Lemons Never Lie](#) (Hard Case Crime \$16.99). The late Donald E. Westlake also wrote as Richard Stark and here

is a favorite. When he’s not carrying out heists with his friend Parker, Alan Grofield runs a small theater in Indiana. But putting on shows costs money and jobs have been thin lately – which is why Grofield agreed to fly to Las Vegas to hear Andrew Myers’ plan to knock over a brewery in upstate New York. Unfortunately, Myers’ plan is insane – so Grofield walks out on him. But Myers isn’t a man you walk out on!

Wright, LR. [The Suspect](#) (Felony & Mayhem \$16.95). The late Canadian author wrote a long and popular series set on Canada’s Sunshine Coast. This first in series, winner of the 1986 Edgar Award, remains a cult favorite among mystery fans, especially those who love small town settings, and is now a HULU TV drama. To Karl Alberg, a small town looks like the perfect place to soothe a psyche that’s been battered by too much big-city police work. Bees buzz among the roses, and the local librarian is attractive, intriguing, and unattached. Perhaps he has at last come in from the cold. But sunny towns can conceal a lot of secrets—some of them bleak enough to make a man yearn for nice straightforward urban crime. Certainly, that would be simpler than unraveling the brutal, unlikely, and unpremeditated murder of an eighty-five-year-old man!

## FOR THE SCARY SEASON

For shoppers at the store we have lots of stickers for this season on hand and a wealth of books for children.

Bill has also designed some merchandise like sweats and tees on [Bonfire](#)

Horrormeister RL Stine suggests some [Halloween books for Young Readers](#)

And here’s another just in: Bass, Lance. [Trick or Treat on Scary Street](#) (Union Square \$18.99).

*General Reading:*

Obvious authors like Stephen King and his son Joe Hill; Laurell K. Hamilton; Kim Harrison; Grady Hendrix; Alice Hoffman; Shirley Jackson; Dean Koontz; Anne Rice.

Anderson, Sarah. [Fangs](#) (Andrews McNeel \$16.99). You should read this book if you like: Paranormal romance, urban fantasy, rom-coms, vampires, fictional worlds intruding upon everyday reality, extremely complicated romantic situations Elsie the vampire is 300 years old, but in all that time, she has never met her match. This all changes one night in a bar when she meets Jimmy, a charming werewolf with a wry sense of humor and a fondness for running wild during the full moon. Together they enjoy horror films and scary novels, shady strolls, fine dining (though never with garlic), and a genuine fondness for each other’s unusual habits, macabre lifestyles, and monstrous appetites. *Fangs* chronicles the humor, sweetness, and awkwardness of meeting someone perfectly suited to you but also vastly different. This deluxe hardcover edition of *Fangs* features an “engraved” red cloth cover, dyed black page trim, and 25 exclusive comics not previously seen online.

Cohn, Ryan Matthew. [The Witch’s Door: Oddities and Tales From the Extreme](#) (Chronicle Books \$30). In this spellbinding and entertaining memoir, Regina and Ryan Cohn, founders of Oddities Flea Market, take us on a fascinating and specially curated tour of their most macabre and mysterious objects, art, and artifacts, sharing their incredible history and stories.

Davies, Owen. [The Art of the Grimoire](#) (Yale \$35). A copiously illustrated history of magic and spells, a beautiful book that will contribute to your Shelf Wealth.

Pino, Alessandro. [A Gothic Cookbook](#) (Andrews McNeel \$24.99). From Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* to Shirley Jackson's *The Haunting of Hill House*, *A Gothic Cookbook* focuses on 13 different Gothic stories and their edible motifs before bringing them to life—and to your table. Delicious yet devious, this cookbook is a culinary and literary delight.

Schiefer, Christine. [A Haunted Road Atlas: Next Stop](#) (Andrews McNeel \$24.99). From the bestselling authors of true crime/supernatural podcast *And That's Why We Drink!* From the truest crimes to the spookiest supernaturals, this guide will have even more illustrated stories, beverage pit stops, and ice cream recommendations. *A Haunted Road Atlas: Next Stop* will explore all the places Christine and Em didn't get to include in the first book, focusing on 30 new cities they've fallen in love with on their travels ... and the scariest places that left them shaking in their boots.

[The Little Book of Witchcraft](#) (\$12.99). Good-luck charms. Crystal energies. Practical magic. Modern spells via text message. These topics and more are covered in this introductory spell book and guide to meditative visualization—perfect for practitioners and newcomers alike. With chapters on subjects like “Magical Days and Times” and “Twenty-First-Century Spell-casting,” *The Little Book of Witchcraft* is both accessible and inviting. The recipe-like instructions and bullet-point style

*Demons, Vampires, and other Horrors*

Doocy, Maiga. [Sorcery and Small Magic's](#) (Orbit \$19.99). “When you find yourself magically bound to the guy you hate, what else is there to do but explore a magical forest full of bizarre, deadly monsters together in hopes of finding an elusive sorcerer who can cure you?”

Greyling, Asha. [The Vampire of Kings Street](#) (Crooked Lane \$29.99). In this gothic debut novel, perfect for fans of *Tread of Angels*, Miss Radhika Dhingra, a newly minted lawyer in 19th century New York, never expected that her first client would be a vampire accused of murder. Having a resident vampire is just the thing for upper-class New Yorkers—besides being a status symbol, they make excellent butlers or housekeepers, or here, a murder suspect.

Harrison, Rachel. [So Thirsty](#) (Putnam \$29). Sloane Parker is dreading her birthday. She doesn't need a reminder she's getting older, or that she's feeling indifferent about her own life. Her husband surprises her with a birthday-weekend getaway—not with him. Instead with troublemaker extraordinaire Naomi. Sloane anticipates a weekend of wine tastings and cozy robes and strategic avoidance of issues she'd rather not confront, like her husband's repeated infidelity. But when they arrive at their rental cottage, it becomes clear Naomi has something else in mind. She wants Sloane to stop letting things happen to her, for Sloane to really live. So Naomi orchestrates a wild night out with a group of mysterious strangers, only for it to take a horrifying turn that changes Sloane's and Naomi's lives literally forever.

Henderson, Alexis. [An Academy for Liars](#) (Ace \$29). “This dark academia fantasy is an immersive, glittering jewel shot through with tendrils of true horror. In Savannah, Georgia, a young

woman gets recruited to a mysterious academy of magic teeming with secrets. Fans of Lev Grossman and Olivie Blake will enjoy this book, yet Henderson is a wholly unique voice in the genre.”

Iglesias, Gabino. [House of Bone and Rain](#) (Little Brown \$29 Signed). A group of young men seek vengeance after one of their mothers is murdered in a Puerto Rican slum turn to real horror(s).

Jones, Stephen Graham. [The Angel of Indian Lake](#) (Saga Press \$28.99 Signed) concludes the horrors of the Indian Lake trilogy as Jade returns to Proofrock, Idaho, to build a life after the years of sacrifice—only to find the Lake Witch is waiting for her.... [My Heart Is a Chainsaw](#); [Don't Fear the Reaper](#) (\$18.99 each).

Levine, Jenna. [My Vampire Plus One](#) (Berkley \$19) and [My Roommate Is a Vampire](#) (\$17). Romances, with bite.

Waggoner, CM. [The Village Library Demon-Hunting Society](#) (Ace \$18.99). “Small-town librarian Sherry Pinkwhistle doesn't find it strange that she is always on hand to solve local murders. But when a loved one is targeted, she realizes that a demon may be possessing the town. This cozy paranormal mystery is full of likable, quirky characters.”

*Ghostly Reads*

Hendrix, Grady. [How to Sell a Haunted House](#) (\$18). Some houses don't want to be sold, and their Charleston home has other plans for squabbling siblings.

James, MR. [Ghost Stories of an Antiquary](#) (Poisoned Pen \$14.99). This classic collection by early 20th century British author and academic M.R. James and edited by Leslie S. Klinger is chock full of stories, often originally read aloud by firelight in the university lodgings, that will confirm everything you feared about what lurks in the alcoves of old buildings or between the covers of ancient books

Hieber, Leanna R. [A Haunted History of Invisible Women: True Stories of America's Ghosts](#) (\$16.95), the first-ever book of its kind, an offbeat history of female ghosts, the stereotypes, myths, and paranormal tales that swirl around them, what their stories reveal about us—and why they haunt us.

Tuttle, Lisa. [Classic Ghost Stories](#) (Flame Tree Publishing \$12.99) rounds up a selection of mysterious and intriguing tales from the shadows, featuring M.R. James, Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, Edith Wharton and Algernon Blackwood, with F. Marion Crawford's *The Doll's Ghost* and Guy de Maupassant's *The Apparition*. Stories are perfect for dipping in and out of behind a locked door with a warm drink.

*Witchy Reads mostly with a twitch of romance:*

Cooke, C J. [The Book of Witching](#) (Penguin \$19).

Harper, Lana. [Payback's a Witch](#) (\$19).

Harper, Molly. [Witches Get Stuff Done](#) (\$16.99).

Harrison, Kim. [Dead Witch Walking](#) (\$18.99).

Hawley, Sarah. [A Witch's Guide to Fake Dating a Demon](#) (\$17).

Mandanna, Sangu. [A Witches' Guide to Magical Innkeeping](#) (\$18).

Shield, Sydney J. [The Honey Witch](#) (\$18.99).

Sterling, Erin. [The Wedding Witch](#) (\$18.99).

## COZIES

Adams, Ellery. [The Little Lost Library](#) (Kensington \$27). Big clues come in small packages as Miracle Books owner Nora Pennington and the Secret, Book, and Scone Society attempt to solve a series of murders connected to bibliophile elderly Lucille Wynter's missing books. And Lucille was the first to die in her crumbling Southern Gothic mansion. Is Wynter House home to hidden valuables?

Andrews, Donna. [Rockin' Around the Chickadee](#) (St Martins \$27). Meg Langslow's sister-in-law, Delaney, is pregnant. Since her due date is on or around Christmas Day, this is putting a bit of a damper on the usual holiday festivities. While Delaney is bored and mutinous, she's doing well, and they're managing to maintain a serene, peaceful environment for her . . . until a body is found in Meg and Michael's yard. The body turns out to be an attendee at Presumed Innocent, a nearby conference that Meg's grandmother has organized...

\*Beaton, MC/RW Green. [Killing Time: An Agatha Raisin Mystery](#) (St Martins \$27). Agatha Raisin's private detective agency has their work cut out for them when a series of shop burglaries disturbs their quiet Cotswolds village. When the break-ins take a violent turn and a murder occurs, it's all hands on deck to find the killer. As if that weren't keeping Agatha busy enough, Sir Charles Fraith has called on her to help stage a glamorous promotional extravaganza on the grounds of his ancestral home, Barfield House. When Agatha begins to receive death threats and narrowly avoids being kidnapped, she takes advantage of a previously arranged trip to Mallorca with her recent paramour, former police officer John Glass, to lie low for a while. Can Agatha track down whoever it is that wants her dead, nail the murderer, and keep her romance alive too?

Blacke, Olivia. [A New Lease on Death](#) (St Martins \$28). Ruby Young's new Boston apartment comes with all the usual perks. Windows facing the brick wall of the next-door building. Heat that barely works. A malfunctioning buzzer. Noisy neighbors. A dead body on the sidewalk outside. And a ghost. Since Cordelia Graves died in her apartment a few months ago, she's kept up her residency, despite being bored and annoyed by new roommate Ruby. When her across-the-hall neighbor, Jake Macintyre, is shot and killed in an apparent mugging gone wrong outside their building, Cordelia is convinced there's more to it and is determined to bring his killer to justice. Unfortunately, Cordelia, being dead herself, can't solve the mystery alone....

Gerber, Daryl Wood. [Murder on the Page](#) (Kensington \$27). A new cozy series debut features a caterer who crafts literary-themed dinner parties—and must ensure that a killer gets just desserts.... See Signed Books for more.

Goldenbaum, Sally. [A Twisted Skein](#) (Kensington \$17.95). Even as the summer season cools down, Izzy Perry's Sea Harbor Yarn Studio is heating up, thanks to an upcoming fashion benefit. The show will feature hand-knit garments, and enthusiastic knitters flock to the shop for supplies. Yet Seaside Knitter Birdie is enjoying flocks of a different kind, thanks to a rekindled interest in bird-watching, a hobby she enjoyed with her late husband. Along with a small group, she often spends weekend mornings looking for warblers or keeping watch for gannets and grebes. The group members themselves are almost as fascinating as the birds. It's a lovely time—until Birdie stumbles upon a fellow

birder's body amid a tangle of branches....

Hannah, Darci. [A Fatal Feast at Bramsford Manor](#) (Kensington \$27) is perfect for the Scary Season as it whisks you to a haunted English manor house where Chef Bunny MacBride's debut TV show *Food & Spirits* suffers a setback. Bunny is to team up with ghost hunter Brett Bloom and psychic medium Giff McGrady to visit haunted sites around the world and tempt whatever spirits might be there with a delicious meal. Bramsford Manor, an historic house now a famous hotel in Hampshire, is said to be the home of the Mistletoe Bride, a young 18<sup>th</sup> Century woman victim of a tragic accident on her Christmas wedding night. Bunny is set to serve up a traditional English Christmas feast when someone swipes a boning knife from her kit and plunges it into an all too human dinner guest—making Bunny a suspect in our **October Cozy Crimes Subscription Club Pick**.

Minix, Sue. [A Murderous Plot](#) (Harper \$18.99). When an amnesiac man covered in blood mysteriously appears in the woods during her morning run, retired amateur sleuth, Jen, promises to stay away from the case. She has a murder mystery to write, and absolutely no interest in being involved in another case with the Riddleton police force. She just wants to run her bookshop, and write her next book, in peace. Then the body of the millionaire developer Simeon Kirby turns up – the man who has been threatening Jen's bookshop for years.... This is a new entry in the Bookstore Mystery Series.

## SOME OCTOBER HARDCOVERS

Baldree, Travis. [Bookshops & Bonedust: Special Edition](#) (Tor \$29.99) is out for fans who want one of the beautiful new productions offered by Tor which also republishes Baldree's [Legends & Lattes: A Novel of High Fantasy](#) (\$29.99).

Banville, John. [The Drowned](#) (Hanover Square \$28.99) transports readers to a dour small town on the 1950s Irish coast, where one tragedy after another makes a small cast of characters reconsider what they know and value in the world they inhabit. In his established style, Banville, who earlier write crime as Benjamin Black before returning to his own name, offers a stark series of events in understated tones and with a handful of voices. These include Dublin Detective Inspector Strafford and the brilliant pathologist Quirke (who had a pretty good TV series). A loner who actively avoids human contact discovers a luxury motorcar, abandoned, engine still running. He approaches, against his better judgment, and winds up involved in a missing-person case, which will draw Strafford to town, even as the detective wrestles with his own relationships: an estranged wife, a much younger girlfriend, and ever-complicating ties to Dr. Quirke. Read an excellent review of *The Drowned* in *The Wall Street Journal*.

Brown, Lauren Ling. [Society of Lies](#) (Random \$30). This buzzy debut mystery-thriller follows Maya Banks, who returns to Princeton to investigate the mysterious death of her little sister. The search for answers brings Maya back within the orbit of the Sterling Club, the most exclusive social group on campus. Did little sister Naomi discover the dangerous secret society within the club? The secret society that Maya has tried hard to forget? Bonus trivia, and this seems relevant: Author Brown is a Princeton graduate herself.

\*Callaghan, Jo. [Leave No Trace](#) (Simon Schuster UK \$28). To enjoy this **British Crime Subscription Club Pick for**

**October** to the fullest it's best to start with the first book for the Future Policing Unit, [In the Blink of an Eye](#) (\$18—\$15 to club members), a massive UK bestseller. The interplay between the coppers and the experimental AI detective Lock is fascinating, moving, and contentious. Kat Frank is an older officer being, her superiors believe, expediently sidelined into an experimental unit cooperating with the university. The university's creation, AIDE Lock, could use some humbling (even if he is a machine with hologram). It all works best if you start with *Blink* and move to *Trace*. Keep this in mind: "Callaghan, who is a professional researcher into the effects of AI, has a great talent for making the benefits and limitations of the technology comprehensible. Her account of Lock's ability to absorb information about human relationships and to provide a sense of empathy and humor is fascinating."—*Literary Review*

In *Trace*, when the body of a man is found crucified at the top of Mount Judd, AIDE Lock – the world's first AI Detective – and DCS Kat Frank are thrust into the spotlight as they are given their first live case. But with the discovery of another man's body – also crucified – it appears that their killer is only just getting started. With the police warning local men to be vigilant, the Future Policing Unit is thrust into a hostile media frenzy as they desperately search for connections between the victims.

Chronister, Kay. [The Bog Wife](#) (Carroll \$28) is Appalachian Gothic. It goes like this: For generations uncounted, the Haddesley family has tended their ancestral cranberry bog and honored an ancient covenant. The family performs a harrowing ritual sacrifice, and the land issues forth a "bog wife" to ensure continued fertility and fecundity. The latest generation of Haddesley siblings, five, has hit a snag, however, and things are about to get *really* weird.

Dixon, Ruby. [Bull Moon Rising](#) (Ace \$30). The special first edition hardcover will include a gorgeous, shimmering jacket with effects, brilliantly illustrated four-color endpapers, striking and detailed-stained edges, and a beautiful foil-stamped case. In a world of magical artifacts and fantastical beings, a woman determined to save her family joins forces with an unlikely partner—a minotaur—in this steamy Romantasy entry into the Royal Artifactual Guild. The Indie Next Pick: "Bull Moon Rising was a great mix of fantasy worldbuilding and steamy monster romance that we expect from Ruby Dixon. The tension in Aspeth and Hawk's marriage of convenience is delicious."

Ellison, Harlan, ed. [The Last Dangerous Visions](#) (Blackstone \$27.99). An anthology more than half a century in the making, here is the third and final installment of the legendary science fiction anthology series. In 1973 celebrated writer and editor Harlan Ellison announced the third and final volume of his unprecedented anthology series, which began with *Dangerous Visions* and continued with *Again, Dangerous Visions*. But for reasons undisclosed, *The Last Dangerous Visions* was never completed. Now, six years after Ellison's passing, science fiction's most famous unpublished book is here. "And with it, the heartbreaking true story of the troubled genius behind it. Provocative and controversial, socially conscious and politically charged, wildly imaginative yet deeply grounded, the 32 never-before-published stories, essays, and poems in *The Last Dangerous Visions* stand as a testament to Ellison's lifelong pursuit of art, uniting a diverse range of science fiction writers both famous and newly minted,

including Max Brooks, Edward Bryant, Cecil Castellucci, James S. A. Corey, Howard Fast, P. C. Hodgell, Dan Simmons, Robert Shekley, Adrian Tchaikovsky, Mildred Downey Broxon, and Cory Doctorow among others.

\*Griffiths, Elly. [The Man in Black and Other Stories](#) (Harper \$28) is wonderful. In bite-sized tales Griffiths is able to explore what some of her fictional creations such as Ruth Galloway, Harbinder Kaur, and Max Mephisto might have done outside of the novels. I was so happy to spend more time with Ruth and Nelson, whom I really miss.

Grisham, John/Jim McCloskey. [Framed](#) (Knopf \$30). The champion of the legal thriller turns to a harrowing nonfiction topic which documents 10 shocking cases of wrongful conviction in the United States' criminal justice system. That's just a fraction of the actual numbers, but by spotlighting these representative examples, Grisham aims to shed light on an ongoing American tragedy. Coauthor McCloskey is the founder of the nonprofit [Centurion](#), which works to exonerate wrongly convicted prisoners.

Haddon, Mark. [Dogs and Monsters: Stories](#) (Knopf \$28) draws on Greek mythology and science fiction for a potent collection of stories about human foibles and desires. In "The Mother's Story," a woman sticks up for her Minotaur son, who, far from being a monster, is a neurodivergent boy rejected by his princely father. "D.O.G.Z" begins with a retelling of the scene in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* where mortal Actaeon encounters goddess Diana bathing, then swerves into an account of the progeny of Ovid's 33 dogs. "The Quiet Limit of the World" riffs on the Greek myth of Tithonus, who was made immortal by the goddess Eos, but forgot to ask for eternal youth.... "Run, don't walk, to pick up this new collection from Haddon, author of the unforgettable [The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime](#) (\$16), one of my proudest Notable New Fiction Subscription Club Picks.

Harkaway, Nick. [Karla's Choice: A John Le Carré Novel](#) (Penguin \$30). See Signed Books for a Review.

Jaramillo, Luis. [The Witches of El Paso](#) (Atria \$27.99). A lawyer and her elderly great-aunt use their supernatural gifts to find a lost child in this richly imagined and empowering story of motherhood, magic, and legacy in the vein of *The Inheritance of Orquidea Divina* and *La Hacienda*.

Kashiwai, Hisashi. [The Restaurant of Lost Recipes](#) (Penguin \$26). Every meal is a mystery.... Koishi is in her 30s and works at a restaurant in Kyoto—it's known as the Kamogawa Diner, though it doesn't have a sign—with her father, Nagare Kamogawa, the chef. Both miss Koishi's late mother, Kikuko. Their cat, Drowsy, spends its days trying to get into the restaurant, though he's banned to protect the customers from cat hair. Enjoy a Japanese café-esque setting with beloved staff who delivers plenty of empathic kindness to customers whose visits inspire stand-alone narratives. . . Deliciousness lingers." Honestly, the cover art is so cute this book will just leap off the shelf. What a great gift idea.

\*Kelly, Julia. [Betrayal at Blackthorn Park](#) (St Martins \$28). Kelly sets her narrative in the fall of 1940, just as Evelyne returns to London after completing spy "finishing school" in Hampshire and a test mission in Yorkshire. Evelyne is surprised

to learn that her first field assignment will involve testing the security measures at Blackthorn Park, the titular manor house requisitioned by the Special Operations Executive (SOE) for the manufacture and testing of explosives. Prime Minister Winston Churchill is scheduled to visit Blackthorn soon for a weapons demonstration, and the estate has received reports of theft, which Evelyne is firmly told *not* to investigate. With her handler, the aggravatingly handsome David Poole, Evelyne leaves London (and her best friend, Moira) behind for Sussex, where she poses as the cousin of a local woman and begins her assignment. Before she can complete her security tests, however, she finds Sir Nigel Balram, the head of engineering at Blackthorn, shot dead in his office. It looks at first glance like a suicide, but Evelyne and David aren't convinced—which means they must work together to both discover a motive and catch a killer before Churchill's visit, before things go (more) terribly wrong.

\*Kelly, Vanessa. [Murder in Highbury](#) (Kensington \$27) begins shortly after the events of Jane Austen's *Emma*. Emma is content in her marriage to Magistrate George Knightley and still leading society in rural Highbury while also caring for her ailing father. However, a pleasurable summer soon turns chilling when Emma's dear friend Harriet happens upon the corpse of none other than Augusta Elton, the local vicar's wife. To make matters worse, Mrs. Elton's expensive pearl necklace is missing, stolen directly from her person. Word travels fast, and suspicions fall on an unlikely suspect. "Jane Austen fans and mystery readers alike will revel in this return to Highbury and the chance to catch up with the lives of Emma and Mr. Knightley (now wed) and all of its memorable residents. It turns out Emma's natural inclination to meddle has not been entirely curbed by her new husband, and a good thing, too.

Korelitz, Jean Hanff. [The Sequel](#) (Celadon \$29). Korelitz has winking, spoofy, devilish fun with the business and ethics of novel writing in this cat-and-mouse turned mouse-and-cat literary thriller. Anna Williams-Bonner, known to readers of *The Plot* as the widow of novelist Jacob Finch Bonner, is now the executor of his estate and a published author herself. She has written a novel whose storyline parallels its author's own: the book charts "a brief but loving marriage, a husband's devastating suicide, and finally a slow and painful return to purpose and life." Actually, Jake was no suicide: Anna has gotten away with murder. One day at a bookshop, where she's signing preorders of her novel, Anna receives a note suggesting that her evil-doing, which has hardly been limited to killing Jake, is "not forgotten." This development sets off a tremendous plot...Anna says of sequels, "They're never as good as the first book, are they?" *The Sequel* poses other writerly questions less explicitly, among them, who owns a story?

The Indie Next Pick avers, "The meta-fictional humor of this sequel to [The Plot](#) (\$17.95 a 2021 Crime Subscription Club Pick that I adored), works on every level — as a straightforward thriller, as a satire of the literary industrial complex, and as a knowing wink to the secret strivings and longings of artists everywhere."

Here's a long review from the [NYTBR](#).

Larison, John. [The Ancients](#) (Penguin \$30). "In this apocalyptic story, Larison sweeps us across a landscape through the eyes of characters each with a unique view of the devastation of the past. Different societies clash as resources grow scarce, and plans for colonization of other lands become paramount."

Liang, Ann. [A Song to Drown Rivers](#) (SimonSchuster \$32) is born out of the author's love for Chinese history and retells the story of Xishi. The beautiful young villager is recruited by a handsome military officer to join the royal court of the neighboring kingdom of Wu. Her mission, should she choose to accept it: Infiltrate the enemy palace, seduce the king, and stir things up. Liang's work has its roots in actual folklore, as Xishi is one of the famous Four Beauties of Ancient China. It is a heartbreaking tale of the duplicities and brutalities of war, but one that illustrates the power of women to subvert the grasp of kings. "The choice was this: a kingdom, or my happiness.... Happiness was a side dish.... But revenge—that was the salt of life. Necessary. Essential."

Indie Next adds: "As enchanting as it is heartbreaking, the story follows a young woman turned deadly spy, who uses her beauty and charm as a devastating weapon to topple kingdoms. This book will take your breath away!"

And while looking at Chinese myths, here's another: Kwan, Katrina. [The Last Dragon of the East](#) (\$17.99), a tale inspired by Chinese myths of ancient dragon gods and threads of fate.

Marske, Freya. [Swordcrossed](#) (Bramble Books \$28.99). "In this vibrant story, a struggling heir hires a charming con artist to be his swordsman at his upcoming wedding. Through sword-fighting practice and an unexpected mystery, white-hot desire sparks and they risk losing everything they hold dear." The cozy, low stakes of *Legends & Lattes* meets the scorching bodyguard fantasy of Jennifer L. Armentrout's *From Blood and Ash* in this enemies-to-lovers romance" says the publisher putting this out with edges sprayed rose.

Patterson, James/Brian Sitts. [Murder Island](#) (Grand Central \$32). When professor turned crime-fighter Brandt "Doc" Savage and his girlfriend Kira Sunlight land on a desert island in the middle of the Atlantic, they think they've found a perfect utopia. An escape from their tumultuous pasts. Then they are violently separated. Doc's search for Kira takes him from the coast of Brazil to northern Europe and the jungles of the Congo, and he discovers they are entangled in a global conspiracy

Rail, Evan. [The Absinthe Forger](#) (Melville House \$32). Deb makes it a pick of this true crime gem calling it "a deep dive into the little known world of absinthe collectors, populated with shadowy dealers and secret stashes. Learn lots about the history of this drink and love all the crazy details! Thought to be hallucinogenic and banned globally for a century, absinthe is once again legal and popular. And today, when vintage, pre-ban bottles are discovered, they can sell for exorbitant prices to private collectors; when a mysterious bon vivant claimed to be in possession of a collection of precious, pre-ban bottles, it electrified the community. This is an incredible true crime story." When we were in Quebec in the fall of 2023 Rob ordered absinthe and we enjoyed the production by the bartender which involves a kind of samovar and sugar cubes and dripping water to end with a glass filled with green liquid.

Rankin, Ian. [Midnight and Blue](#) (LittleBrown \$29). Edinburgh's John Rebus solves a locked room murder from the inside.... serving a life sentence in prison. See Signed Books for the UK edition, nearly sold out.

Robbins, Lawrence. [The President's Lawyer](#) (Atria \$28.99). A high-stakes legal thriller follows a Washington, DC, litigator who is hired to defend his best friend, the former President of the United States, against a murder charge. Unread by me, but maybe for fans of Patterson, Grisham, or Baldacci?

Ryan, Tom. [The Treasure Hunters Club](#) (Grove \$27). Welcome to Maple Bay, Nova Scotia. For nearly a century, people have ventured to the idyllic seaside town of Maple Bay in search of a legendary lost pirate treasure, but locals know there's more than just gold buried in the sand. As the paths of three strangers converge in Maple Bay, the truth is about to be blown wide open. But not before the bodies start to pile up. Here we are in a seaside town filled with pirate lore, family secrets, unforgivable grudges, secret societies, and of course, a treasure lost to time.

Segura, Alex/Rob Hart. [Dark Space](#) (Blackstone \$27.99). "Segura (*Secret Identity*) and Hart (*The Paradox Hotel*) offer a thrilling space adventure that mixes real-world politics and space exploration to dramatic effect. The intergalactic spaceship Mosaic is not the Enterprise and is not just out there to boldly go but instead is a ship of compromises between American and Chinese interests that is barely holding together. The novel splits its time between the heroic Lieutenant Commander Jose Carriles and the begrudging bureaucrat Corin Timony back on New Destiny. Carriles just wants to get there in one piece after a terrifying breakdown nearly scuttles the ship. Timony learns of the mishap, meets a cover-up, and hunts for the truth. The novel's point is to play with expectations; as once it is clear this is not a standard exploration story, then it can become what it is really about—the horror of both what humanity brings to the universe and the terror waiting in the unknown. The fun comes in watching those expectations come crashing down and seeing what remains. This clever science-fiction novel is a perfect choice for readers looking for a perilous adventure with a dash of coziness."—LJ

\*Sepetys, Ruta. [The Bletchley Riddle](#) (Viking \$18.99) is targeted to 10-13 year olds but with so many puzzle plots and books on the rise I think the well depicted—and explained—excitement, as well as the daily drudgery, of codebreaking, is welcome. The suspenseful storytelling is narrated by Polish Jewish siblings Jakob and Lizzie. Nineteen-year-old Jakob has been recruited from Cambridge University by Britain's Government Code and Cypher School at Bletchley Park to help decipher messages encrypted using the German Enigma machine. When his self-described straightforward-speaking 14-year-old sister Lizzie eludes their American grandmother's (first, but not last) attempt to bring her to Cleveland, she, too, ends up at Bletchley Park, assigned to carry packages between departments. Now, Lizzie endeavors to disprove the apparent death of their mother, who worked at the American Embassy in London and disappeared in Poland during the 1939 German attack. Short chapters make for fast-paced narration through simultaneously developing mysteries and relationships.

Smith, Alexander McCall. [The Great Hippopotamus Hotel](#) (Knopf \$28). The 25<sup>th</sup> entry in the No. 1 Ladies Detective Agency series set in Botswana. In the rolling hills just outside Gaborone, surrounded by a grove of acacia trees, lies The Great Hippopotamus Hotel. With spacious rooms overlooking the Botswanan countryside and a fine and loyal staff, the hotel

has served as a refuge to weary travelers for many years. But a sudden string of misfortunes threatens to ruin the hotel's reputation. Food poisoning befalls an unlucky diner, laundry mysteriously disappears from the drying line, and a scorpion stings one of the guests. Mishap after mishap, until it seems these incidents are more than simple coincidences—something foul is afoot. Mma Ramotswe and Mma Makutsi are on the case to find out who could be responsible for these unfortunate events. The answer at first seems clear, especially when they find out Violet Sephotho is involved. But as they dig deeper, they realize that the solution is not that simple....

Sobel, Dava. [The Elements of Marie Curie: How the Glow of Radium Lit a Path for Women in Science](#) (Grove Atlantic \$30). The author of [Longitude](#) (\$17) and other landmark books of science extends the scope of the typical biography. In addition to profiling the formidable Mme. Curie, Sobel investigates the next generation of female scientists trained in her laboratory—including her elder daughter Irène, winner of the 1935 Nobel Prize in chemistry. By tracking the enduring legacy of one pioneering researcher, Sobel brings a new kind of high-altitude perspective to the history of women in science.

Stephenson, Neal. [Polostan](#) (Harper \$35). Sci-fi godfather and elder statesman Stephenson is back on shelves this month with a historical fiction riff on his always-ambitious speculative fiction concerns. The split-timeline narrative moves between past and present, espionage and revolution, anarchists and gun runners. What starts in the American West moves through Lenin's Russia and then to Washington, D.C. during the Great Depression. *Polostan* is the first installment in the planned three-novel *Bomb Light* cycle.

\*Stokes-Chapman, Susan. [The Shadow Key](#) (Harper \$30). The simultaneous [paperback edition](#) (\$17.99) is **our October Historical Paperback Fiction Subscription Club Pick**. Set in Georgian era Wales in a remote estate and tiny village, here is a true Gothic story that slowly reveals itself. It begins with a London surgeon who lost his practice over a death and has taken his only offer of employment. It comes, Dr. Henry Talbot finds, from a Lord Julian. Arriving at Plas Helyg, Henry can't speak the language and immediately finds himself treated with hostile suspicion by superstitious villagers, whose beliefs in myths and magic he's inclined to dismiss. But when he discovers that the previous doctor died under peculiar, inexplicable circumstances, his determination to uncover the truth leads him down a path fraught with danger—made all the more perilous by his headstrong, reluctant ally Linette, Lord Julian's cousin. Hint: this is not a romance, in fact the relationships will all surprise you. Stokes-Chapman is in love with Wales and writes a book different from her first, the fabulous [Pandora](#) (\$17), set in London, which I urge you to try if you missed it.

Vandermeer, Jeff. [Absolution](#) (Farrar \$29). Nebula winner VanderMeer adds an eerie and evocative coda to his Southern Reach horror-fantasy trilogy with this prequel, set two decades prior and illuminating a fatal expedition into what would come to be known as Area X off the southeast coast of a bureaucracy-crippled country. "In three discrete narratives told through multiple perspectives, VanderMeer explores the failure of human intelligence to deal with incomprehensible alienness."

## OUR OCTOBER LARGE PAPERBACK PICKS

\*Barron, Stephanie. [Jane and the Final Mystery](#) (\$18.95). This is the book that Barron said she'd never write but then she found a way to see Jane Austen to her final days without a deathbed scene. Instead we get a mesmerizing look at the English Public School system, not so different in 1817 as 1917 and into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. We're in Winchester, the city where Jane did die, and a city where Winchester College plays an important role. When her nephew Edward brings Jane news that Arthur Prendergast, a senior pupil at the all-boys' boarding school, has been found dead in a culvert near the school grounds—in the pocket of his drenched waistcoat is an incriminating note penned by the young William Heathcote, the son of Jane's dear friend Elizabeth—Jane resolves to investigate despite her declining health. This is a terrific book and brings a magnificent series to a close.

\*Blake, Matthew. [Anna O](#) (\$18.99). A much heralded debut, our British Crime Subscription book last January, presents Anna Ogilvy, a budding twenty-five-year-old writer with a bright future, who one night commits a double murder while sleepwalking, and then never opens her eyes again. Dubbed "Sleeping Beauty" by the tabloids, Anna's condition is a rare psychosomatic disorder known to neurologists as "resignation syndrome." Dr. Benedict Prince is a forensic psychologist and an expert in the field of sleep-related homicides. His methods are the last hope of solving the infamous "Anna O" case and waking Anna up so she can stand trial. But he must be careful treating such a high-profile suspect—he's got career secrets and a complicated personal life of his own.

Chouinard, Michelle. [The Serial Killer Guide to San Francisco](#) (St Martins \$18). Since she was a child, Capricorn "Capri" Sanzio has known that her grandfather William Sanzio, nicknamed Overkill Bill, was a convicted serial killer infamous for his brutality. Capri's father always refused to discuss his father, who died in prison still proclaiming his innocence. But this family history fascinated Capri and led to her choice of career: founding a successful "Killer Crime Tour" company in San Francisco. Still, Capri has long avoided doing a podcast or writing a book about her grandfather, but when her wealthy ex-mother-in-law, Sylvia Clement, announces that she's no longer going to pay tuition for Capri's daughter, Capri must consider both to raise the money. Her family history and present circumstances intersect when rising socialite Katherine Harper, and then Sylvia, are both murdered in ways similar to Overkill Bill's methods, suggesting a copycat has emerged. The murders spur Capri to take a closer look at her family, including reinvestigating her grandfather's case. "Along the way, Chouinard includes interstitials from the Killer Crime Tours' guide to San Francisco, featuring historical snippets about lurid sites in various neighborhoods around the city. Trying to prove a convicted killer's innocence might border on cliché, but Chouinard tackles the trope with a fresh energy and finds new avenues to weave it into the plot."—Oline Cogdill

Daniels, Betty Ternier. [Grounds for Murder](#) (ECW Press \$18.95). Daniels infuses her charming if uneven debut with a palpable love for the Canadian countryside. Recently widowed Jeannie Wolfort-Lang, 61, has a peaceful morning in her Saskatchewan garden interrupted by a call from her son, Jordan. He informs her that Monica Ashton, a high-powered Saskatoon realtor, wants to buy Jeannie's farm for a mysterious client. Jeannie

resists, and she's not pleased when the overbearing Monica arrives a few days later during a fierce windstorm. By the time the storm clears, Monica's car has been totaled by falling tree limbs, and she demands that Jeannie loan her a vehicle so she can return to Saskatoon. Jeannie agrees, and a short time later, her car is discovered at the bottom of a ravine with Monica's body in the driver's seat. Jeannie suspects foul play, worrying that Monica's client may have been attempting to kill her instead. To investigate, she teams up with a hunky local cop, igniting the first sparks of a potential romance as she tries to stay of harm's way and considers the future of her farm. Think of this as an outdoorsy cozy.

Eng, Tan Twan. [The House of Doors](#) (\$18.99) is a novel about W. Somerset Maugham's sojourn to Malaysia and the secrets he discovered there. But it's about so much more including crucial Chinese history. At Cassowary House in Penang, Malaya, in 1921, Lesley Hamlyn prepares to receive "Willie" Somerset Maugham, the famed English writer and friend of her husband, Robert. Increasingly drawn to Willie—who is desperate for new material for a novel to stave off bankruptcy—Lesley gradually unburdens herself to the author, unearthing a trove of long-buried secrets ranging from the personal to the political. Tan seamlessly merges fact and fiction as he explores the underlying tensions in both Lesley and Willie's marriages, as well as Lesley's intriguing involvement with the Chinese revolutionary Sun Yat Sen during his 1910 sojourn in Penang. A side plot involves Lesley's friend Ethel Proudlock, another real-life figure, who stood trial for the murder of her fellow Englishman in Kuala Lumpur.

Graves, Sydney. [The Arizona Triangle](#) (Harper \$18.99), a series start by author Kate Christensen writing as Graves, while light on plot, presents "a gorgeously written southwestern noir that straddles the line between literary and genre in a landscape whose spaciousness and light contrast sharply with the darkness of crime and the treacherous terrain of personal history. Graves has caught beautifully the complex textures and wood smoke tang of Tucson and the rich high desert environment, and gone beyond that to create characters and a community as particular and elemental as a great western. And her protagonist, Jo Bailen [who works for an all-women PI agency in Tucson], is as distinctly wrought and shaped as a Saguaro cactus. I loved her and this story." — Peter Nichols. Lesa adds, "This desert noir features complex characters trapped in an ugly, emotional past. The vivid details and beauty of the Arizona landscape are in sharp contrast to the repellent secrets of a killer."

Hand, Elizabeth. [A Haunting on the Hill](#) (\$18.99) returns you (authorized) to the setting of Shirley Jackson's [The Haunting of Hill House](#) (\$17) where it follows four friends who convene at the mansion to workshop a play. Horror ensues in a story that avoids imitation and homage.

McCloskey, David. [Moscow X](#) (\$18.99) is a secret CIA operation designed to cause migraines for the Russian government, especially for Vladimir Putin. "Access to Putin's money would give us beautiful opportunities for fuckery and general mayhem," declares Artemis Aphrodite Procter, formerly the CIA's Chief of Station in Tajikistan, who joins in. CIA officers Sia and Max enter Russia under commercial cover to recruit Vladimir Putin's moneyman. Sia works for a London law firm that conceals the wealth of the superrich. Max's family business in Mexico—a CIA

front since the 1960s—is a farm that breeds high-end racehorses. They pose as a couple to target Vadim, Putin’s private banker, and his wife, Anna, who—unbeknownst to CIA—is a Russian intelligence officer under deep cover at the bank. As they descend further into a Russian world dripping with luxury and rife with gangland violence, Sia and Max’s only hope may be Anna, who is playing a game of her own. “The CIA pokes the Russian bear, and thriller fans win. The author researched his subject deeply, and it shows.” I am a fan of McCloskey’s spy fiction; see Signed Books for the new book.

Mukerji, Ritu. [Murder by Degrees](#) (\$17.99). A female physician becomes an amateur sleuth in internist Mukerji’s impressive debut. In 1875 Philadelphia, Dr. Lydia Weston teaches at the Woman’s Medical College and sees patients at a low-cost clinic she helped found to serve the city’s working class. One of her patients is Anna Ward, a chambermaid in the home of wealthy couple Edward and Beatrice Curtis. During an appointment with Lydia, Anna is visibly troubled by something she won’t explain; she then misses her next appointment and seems to vanish entirely. Soon after the police are notified of Anna’s disappearance, they find a young woman’s body in the Schuylkill River. Though the corpse is too bloated to identify, Anna’s journal is found nearby. Lydia helps her mentor, police consultant Dr. Harlan Stanley, perform the autopsy, which identifies blunt force trauma as the cause of death. Given her intimate knowledge of Anna’s life, the detectives assigned to the case let Lydia assist in the investigation. But what if the body proves not to be Anna after all? Mukerji will wow you with the era’s medical practices.

Sands, Stella. [Wordhunter](#) (Harper \$18.99). True crime author Sands makes an auspicious fiction debut with this crackling mystery centered on a Lisbeth Salanderesque savant. Raised in a rusting trailer in Central Florida, 20-something Maggie Moore sees her extraordinary way with words—she can identify nearly anyone based on their syntax and sentence structure—as her only ticket out of poverty. When her linguistics professor recognizes Maggie’s talent and taps her to assist local police on a rape case, she helps nail the perp by decoding the notes he left at his crime scenes. Impressed, the cops enlist Maggie to track down Heidi Hemphill, the mayor’s kidnapped daughter. As Maggie analyzes the linguistic habits of the lead suspects and makes quick friends with Det. Silas Jackson, she starts to notice eerie similarities between Heidi’s case and that of Maggie’s best friend, Lucy Tidwell, who disappeared years earlier. The more Maggie and Jackson dig, the more they worry that the culprit might be too powerful to touch—and that they’ve unwittingly affixed targets to their own backs. Sands nails the genius investigator formula on her first try, spinning Maggie into a memorable heroine and handing her an enthralling first case. This transfixes from the first page

Siger, Jeffrey. [At Any Cost](#) (\$18.99). Here’s lucky #13 for Athens Chief Inspector Andreas Kaldis benefiting from Siger’s usual gorgeous descriptions of whatever region of Greece is the investigation’s focus. Here it’s the Aegean islands where wildfires are raging. Are arsonists burning down national forests to facilitate land grabs? And is tiny island Syros a target for tech giants to create something or other using wind power and marine cables? Kaldis and his wife Lila have a personal connection in that their niece has become engaged to a Brooklyn-based software engineer (born in Greece), alarming her mother, Kaldis’ sister.

Stevenson, Benjamin. [Everyone This Christmas Has a Secret](#) (Harper \$19.99). **The first 30 to order get a Signed Bookplate.** “Though slimmer than its predecessors, Stevenson’s third meta-whodunit featuring Australian golden age mystery expert Ernest Cunningham is every bit as ingenious. Shortly before Ernest’s upcoming wedding, his ex-wife, Erin, is locked up for the murder of her philanthropist partner, Lyle Pearse, after he’s found stabbed to death in their home in the Blue Mountains. Given Ernest’s previous successes solving the murder of a famous writer and the crimes of a serial killer, Erin calls and begs him to help clear her name. After speaking to Erin and poking around Lyle’s offices, Ernest identifies six main suspects, including magician Rylan Blaze; Lyle’s old assistant, Flick; and a pair of teenage twins who attended the rehab program he directed. The clues are doled out in the form of an Advent calendar, with one fair-play puzzle piece revealed at the end of each chapter. As usual, Stevenson hits the sweet spot between self-awareness and sincerity, never allowing the regular fourth-wall breaks to curdle into snark, and the resolution is hugely gratifying.”—*PW* Starred Review.

### MORE OCTOBER LARGE PAPERBACKS

Chambers, Diana. [The Secret War of Julia Child](#) (Sourcebooks \$17.99). Before she mastered the art of French cooking in midlife, Julia Child found herself working in the secrets trade in Asia during World War II. Single, 6 foot 2, and thirty years old, Julia McWilliams took a job working for America’s first espionage agency, years before cooking or Paris entered the picture. The Secret War of Julia Child traces Julia’s transformation from ambitious Pasadena blue blood to Washington, DC file clerk, to head of General “Wild Bill” Donovan’s secret File Registry as part of the Office of Strategic Services. The wartime journey takes her to South Asia’s remote front lines of then-Ceylon, India, and China, where she finds purpose, adventure, self-knowledge – and love with mapmaker Paul Child.

Connolly, John. [Night and Day](#) (Atria \$18.99 Signed). See the Signed hardcover review.

Coulson, Christine. [One Woman Show](#) (\$17.99). Author Christine Coulson spent twenty-five years writing for the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Her final project was to write wall labels for the museum’s new British Galleries. During that time, she dreamt of using The Met’s strict label format to describe people as intricate works of art. The result is this “jewel box of a novel” that imagines a privileged 20th-century woman as an artifact—an object prized, collected, and critiqued. One Woman Show revolves around the life of Kitty Whitaker as she is defined by her potential for display and moved from collection to collection through multiple marriages. Coulson precisely distills each stage of this sprawling life, every brief snapshot in time a wry reflection on womanhood, ownership, value, and power.

Crouch, Blake. [Run](#) (Random \$18.99). Tonight, the mobilizing killers are reading the names of those to be killed over the Emergency Broadcast System. Jack Coleclough is listening over the battery-powered radio on his kitchen table in Albuquerque, and he just heard his name. People are coming to his house to kill him, his wife, his daughter, and his son. He has no idea what’s happening, or why, but the time for questions is long past. His only chance is to run. I can only say that I hope this scenario remains fiction.



Davies, Michael. [Outback: The Desmond Bagley Centenary](#) (Harper \$18.99). Davies, who completed the first Kemp novel *Domino Island* for publication nearly 40 years after Bagley's death, now weaves an original tale of danger and death under the blistering Australian sun. Insurance investigator Bill Kemp had never wanted to trek deep into Australia's remote interior. But when his clients Sophie and Adam Church inherit an abandoned opal mine, triggering some explosive long-lost secrets, they – and Kemp – find themselves facing an unknown enemy even more deadly than the vast, forbidding wilderness. Bill Kemp—part James Bond, part Philip Marlowe, and all hero.”—Jeffery Deaver. I love Bagley's wonderful adventures and sold zillions while we could get them.

Dornbush, Jennifer Graese. [Frozen Lives](#) (Berkley \$17.99). The newest addition to the *Coroner's Daughter* series when she hears that her friend Jo Blakely's 11-year-old son, Jeremiah, has disappeared, and Dr. Emily Hartford rushes from her work as a Chicago surgeon to her hometown of Freeport, Michigan. She's able to connect about the case immediately with her old friend Detective Ishkode Aditson about the case, but there's nothing to learn. Emily offers Jo what comfort she can, but she knows from her father's line of work as a coroner that the worst may be coming. So Emily's as thrilled as Jo when Jeremiah comes home safely. Though he has little memory or information about where he's been, his family is deeply relieved, and Emily can shift her focus back to life in the Windy City and her neglected relationship with her boyfriend, Brandon. But no sooner does she breathe a sigh of relief than the trouble multiplies. This time, not only is Jeremiah missing, but so is Jo....

Ellroy, James. [The Enchanters](#) (\$19) “goes straight to the tragic heart of 1962 Hollywood with a wild riff on the Marilyn Monroe death myth in an astonishing, behind-the-headlines crime epic.”

Ferrante, Elena. [The Days of Abandonment](#) (Ecco \$15). What is an Italian to do after being suddenly left by her husband after fifteen years of marriage? With two young children to care for, Olga finds it more and more difficult to do the things she used to: keep a spotless house, cook meals with creativity and passion, refrain from using obscenities. After running into her husband with his much-younger new lover in public, she cannot even refrain from assaulting him physically. In a “raging, torrential voice,” Olga conveys her journey from denial to devastating emptiness—and when she finds herself literally trapped within the four walls of their high-rise apartment, she is forced to confront her ghosts, the potential loss of her own identity, and the possibility that life may never return to normal.

\*Hawkins, Paula. [A Slow Fire Burning](#) (\$17). When a young man is found gruesomely murdered in a London houseboat, it triggers questions about three women who knew him. Laura is the troubled one-night-stand last seen in the victim's home. Carla is his grief-stricken aunt, already mourning the recent death of yet another family member. And Miriam is the nosy neighbor clearly keeping secrets from the police. Three women with separate connections to the victim. Three women who are – for different reasons – simmering with resentment. Who are, whether they know it or not, burning to right the wrongs done to them. So, who? For Hawkins' latest see Signed Books.

Jiles, Paulette. [Chenneville: A Novel of Murder, Loss, and Vengeance](#) (\$18.99). “Paulette Jiles has done it again. John

Chenneville's travails through the post-Civil War US are written in a way that is thoughtful, profound, and fluid like poetry. Even if you're not familiar with Jiles, once you read it, you'll want more.”

Klavan, Andrew. [The House of Love and Death](#) (\$17.95). The job Cameron Winter did for a shadowy federal agency wasn't to kill people but to arrange for them to be killed by someone else. After a confrontation with someone he had to shoot directly, he goes into retirement as a teacher of Romantic poetry at a university in the Chicago suburbs, where he catches a news story about the Wasserman family—psychologist Norman, community volunteer Marion, their teenage daughter, Lila, and Agnes Wilde, the live-in nanny for their 7-year-old son, Robert—all but the boy shot to death in their home in upscale Maidenvale, which was then set afire. There's much to baffle Inspector Roland Strange and his colleagues, but the mystery that Winter finds irresistible is why the nanny, who lowered her charge from a second-story window and urged him to run away, didn't follow him herself. In fair play I found it hard to believe the motive here but Klavan assures me it is indeed powerful enough to fuel murder. For the sequel see Signed Books.

Lansdale, Joe. [In the Mad Mountains: Stories Inspired by H P Lovecraft](#) (Subterranean \$16.95). Eleven-time Bram Stoker Award-winner Lansdale returns with this wicked short story collection of his irreverent Lovecraftian tributes. Lansdale is terrifyingly down-home while merging his classic gonzo stylings with the eldritch horrors of Lovecraft. Knowingly skewering Lovecraft's paranoid mythos, Lansdale embarks upon haunting yet sly explorations of the unknown. What a treat.

Mason, Daniel. [North Woods](#) (\$18). One home, four hundred years of history and an unforgettable story of family and fortune, love and loss. Perfect for fans of *Demon Copperhead* by Barbara Kingsolver. “A treatise on forest management (and mismanagement), a hallucinatory dream sequence, and an anthropologist's life's work all rolled into one. *North Woods* fires on all cylinders by engaging all the senses as it transports readers through history.”—*San Francisco Chronicle*

\*Macmillan, Gilly. [The Manor House](#) (Harper \$18.99) is a fine example of an unreliable narrator. After a huge lottery win, Nicole and Tom build their dream house on an estate in Gloucestershire. The state-of-the-art glass barn has everything, including glitches. When Tom is found dead in their swimming pool, Nicole is devastated. Was Tom's death an accident—or something sinister? Nearby neighbors Sasha, Olly, Kitty, and Anna, along with Tom's old friend, Patrick, offer Nicole support, but the uneasy feeling remains until the surprising conclusion.

Sanderson, Brandon. [Yumi and the Nightmare Painter](#) (\$19.99) and Scalzi, John. [Starter Villain](#) (\$18.99), two paperback releases from Tor.com for you sci-fi fans.

Sivinski, Stacy. [The Crescent Moon Tearoom](#) (Atria \$18.99). “Sisters and secrets. Magic and mystery. Tea and tarot! I could not have been more invested in what happens to these triplets and their tea shop in Chicago, bursting with magic and a house that loves them just as much as they love each other.”

Teschner, John. [Valley of Refuge](#) (\$18.99). There are few crime fiction stories set in Hawaii so I like to point out Teschner who is a kind of guardian of the islands' ecology, and history.

Here the plot is fuelled by survivalist billionaires vs. ancestral lands, cryptoconspiracies, and class warfare. Nalani Winthrop is weighing the financial opportunity of a lifetime against her family's legacy in Hawai'i. Winthrop has inherited a small parcel of land that's of interest to the AinaKai Alliance, a nonprofit scientific organization that wants to research marine life off the island's North Shore. Selling her land to the group, she believes, would help protect vulnerable native species while providing Winthrop's family a life-changing windfall. In reality, tech billionaire Franky Dalton has a different agenda.

Wegert, Tessa. [Devils at the Door](#) (\$18.99). A new chapter in an excellent series. What could be more awkward for Shana Merchant, a senior investigator for the New York State Police, and her teammate Tim Wellington as they busily plan their Christmas wedding than to take in Henrietta Della Merchant, the wayward daughter of Doug Merchant, her brother in Vermont? But Hen's become so uncommunicative and unmanageable at home that Shana and Tim open their doors and hearts to her. The gesture's not returned: Hen continues obstinately silent even after Shana's called one night to Devil's Oven Island, where she finds Hen and three of her few school friends, one of them dead. A preliminary exam indicates that Leif Colebrook has drowned, but the medical examiner rules otherwise, and Shana, still burdened by her neighbors' identification of her with Blake Bram, the cousin whose many murder victims include her ex-husband, finds her position compromised even further by Hen's involvement in Leif's death.

#### OUR OCTOBER SMALL PAPERBACK PICKS

Brennan, Allison. [The Missing Witness](#) (\$9.99). Quinn & Costa #5. Framed for the murder of an FBI agent after testifying against David Chen and his illegal businesses, Kara Quinn goes on the run, determined to clear her name without putting her partner, Matt Costa, in danger.

Bruns, Catherine. [In the Blink of a Pie](#) (Sourcebooks \$8.99). Maple Syrup #3. It's Thanksgiving in Sugar Ridge, Vermont, and Leila Khoury, manager of Sappy Endings Farm, is ready to usher in the holiday season by hosting a pie-baking contest. But when a neighbor drops dead from sampling a poisoned pumpkin pie, it's not just Leila's perfect day that's in jeopardy—her livelihood is now at stake. And after yet another near-fatal incident, she realizes an even more terrifying truth: the killer wasn't targeting her neighbor, but someone even closer to home!

Day, Maddie. [Murder Uncorked](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Cece Barton #1. Wine bar manager and widowed single mom Cecelia "Cece" Barton finds herself suspected of murder, and launching her own investigation, uncorks Alexander Valley's bitterest old rivalries and secret new alliances to clear her name before everything she's worked so hard for is shattered.

Hawkins, Rachel. [The Villa](#) (\$9.99). While on a girls trip to Italy with her best friend, Chess, Emily discovers their high-end villa was once the scene of a brutal murder, and, digging into the past, finds the truth seeping into the present as dangerous betrayals emerge.

Quigley, Mindy. [Sleep in Heavenly Pizza](#) (St Martins \$9.99). Deep Dish #4. Pizza chef Delilah O'Leary and her cat Butterball navigate holiday festivities and an unexpected visit from Delilah's sister, only to face a murder mystery that threatens the town's snow sculpting championship and their festive spirit.

#### MORE OCTOBER SMALL PAPERBACKS

Fletcher, Jessica. [Murder, She Wrote: Fit for Murder](#) (\$9.99). Jessica Fletcher #57. Bertha Mae's friend Evelyn is convinced that yoga and meditation instructor Martin Terranova is after Bertha Mae's money. A short while later, Martin turns up dead in his weight room, and now Jessica must put her investigative skills to the test when Evelyn becomes the prime suspect.

Flower, Amanda. [Gingerbread Danger](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Amish Candy Shop #9. As Christmas preparations are underway in the small town of Harvest, Ohio, an Amish person is killed outside a candy factory, and Bailey King must investigate.

Hollis, Lee. [Christmas Mittens Murder](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Lee Hollis, Lynn Cahoon and Maddie Day, contribute cozy mysteries featuring hand knit mittens made for murder.

Larsen, Ward. [Assassin's Mark: A David Slaton Novel](#) (Tor \$9.99). David Slaton #9. With backing from the CIA, operative David Slaton is called in to find those responsible after Marine One is brought down in the middle of Washington, D.C.

Moss, Korina. [Fondue or Die: A Cheese Shop Mystery](#) (St Martins \$9.99). Cheese Shop \$5. Willa Bauer, owner of Curds & Whey, is thrilled to celebrate Yarrow Glen's Dairy Days and this festival goes all out: butter sculptures, goat races, cheese wheel relays, even a Miss Dairy pageant. Too bad the pageant runner, Nadine, is treating Dairy Days prep like it's *fondue* or die. So when Willa finds Nadine's dead body under years' worth of ceramic milk jugs, she is sure the death was no accident.

Patterson, James. [Shattered](#) (\$10.99). Michael Bennett #14. When his partner and best friend FBI abduction specialist Emily Parker is murdered, NYPD master homicide investigator Michael Bennett takes on the most intensely personal investigation of his career.