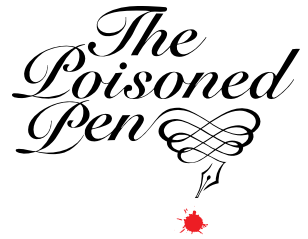


BOOKNEWS from

ISSN 1056-5655, © The Poisoned Pen, Ltd.
Volume 37, Number 6
May Booknews 2025
sales@poisonedpen.com tel (888)560-9919
http://poisonedpen.com

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



WELCOME TO MAY

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

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.

THURSDAY MAY 1 7:00 PM Live Event

Horrors! Nat Cassidy with ASU's Brian McAuley
Cassidy discusses [When the Wolf Comes Home](#) (Tor/Forge \$18.99)
Horrors!

SATURDAY MAY 3 5:00 PM Live Event

Sarah Penner with Olivia Fierro
Penner discusses [The Amalfi Curse](#) (Park Row \$30)
A deep dive into sunken treasure and love on the Amalfi coast

SUNDAY MAY 4 2:00 PM Live Event

Our annual Cozy Con with John
Colleen Cambridge discusses [A Fashionably French Murder](#) (Kensington \$27).
Daryl Wood Gerber discusses [Essence of Foul Play](#) (Kensington \$17.95)
Paige Shelton discusses [Written in Stone](#) (St Martins \$28)

MONDAY MAY 5 5:00 PM Virtual Event

Canada's Natalie Jenner discusses [Austen at Sea](#) (St Martins \$29)
Jenner sends special art work tying into the book for you
Jane's brother Sir Frank in 1865 and a rare Austen artifact

TUESDAY MAY 6 7:00 PM Live Double Book Launch

Jeffery Deaver discusses [South of Nowhere](#) (Putnam \$30)
A spectacular Colter Shaw in a raging river rescue operation
Alex Finlay discusses [Parents Weekend](#) (St Martins \$28)
What could go wrong at a wealthy private college Parents Weekend? Plenty!

SATURDAY MAY 10 10:00 AM Live Event

Local Authors Fair
Support local independently published authors
This is our last fair until the fall

MONDAY MAY 12 2:00 PM Virtual Event

Deidra Duncan discusses [Love Sick](#) (Harlequin \$18.99)
A hospital romcom
Julie Soto discusses [The Thrashers](#) (St Martins \$20)
A YA high school thriller

MONDAY MAY 12 5:00 PM Virtual Event

Sue Hincenbergs and Nita Prose
The Toronto Authors discuss Hincenbergs' debut [The Retirement Plan](#) (Morrow \$30)
Our copies come with a Canadian Author bookmark

WEDNESDAY MAY 14 7:00 PM Live Event

Dave Barry with KJZZ's Sam Dingman
Barry discusses [Class Clown: The Memoirs of a Professional Wiscass](#) (Simon & Schuster \$28.99)
Wise yet funny and a penetrating look at US society from the 1950s

THURSDAY MAY 15 7:00 PM Live Event

Host: Kaylah Shields – KK@whereismylibrarycard
Lucinda Berry discusses [One in Four](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$16.99).
Michelle Gagnon discusses [Slaying You](#) (Putnam \$30)

FRIDAY MAY 16 7:00 PM Live and Virtual Event

SciFi Friday Club discusses SB Divya's [Meru](#) (\$16.99)

SATURDAY MAY 17 10:30 AM Live and Virtual Event

Croak & Dagger Club discusses Nita Prose's [The Maid](#) (\$18)

SATURDAY MAY 17 5:00 PM Live Event

Eliza Reid with Christina Estes
Iceland's Reid discusses [Death on the Island](#) (Poisoned Pen Press \$32.99/\$17.99)
A debut set on Iceland's island of Heimaey
Our May First Mystery Subscription Club Pick

SUNDAY MAY 18 2:00 PM Live Event

Tori Eldridge discusses [Kaua'i Storm](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$16.99)
New series launch set in Hawai'i

MONDAY MAY 19 5:00 PM Virtual Book Launch

Michael McGarrity discusses [Night in the City](#) (Norton \$28.99)
A 1950s Manhattan hardboiled noir story

WEDNESDAY MAY 21 5:00 PM Virtual

Patrick and Jen host Arvind Ethan David
They discuss the fabulous graphic novel of [Raymond Chandler's Trouble is My Business](#) (Pantheon Graphic Library \$29)

THURSDAY MAY 22 7:00 PM Live Event

Sarah Pinborough discusses [We Live Here Now](#) (Flatiron \$30.99)

An unsettling British country house novel of suspense

SATURDAY MAY 24 11:00 AM Live Event

The Cookbook Club discusses Darlene Schrijver's [The Salad Lab](#) (Simon Element \$32.50)

Bring a recipe to share

TUESDAY MAY 27 7:00 PM Live Book Launch

Craig Johnson discusses [Return to Sender](#) (Viking \$30)

Walt Longmire

WEDNESDAY MAY 28 7:00 PM Live Event

Paul Doiron discusses [Skin and Bones](#) (St Martins \$31)

Stories featuring Maine's Mike Bowditch and others

THURSDAY MAY 29 1:00 PM Virtual Event

Jaclyn Goldis discusses [The Safari](#) (Atria \$28.99)

What could go wrong on a luxury safari in South Africa?

THURSDAY MAY 29 5:00 PM Virtual Event

Chris Pavone discusses [The Doorman](#) (Farrar Strauss \$29)

An Agatha Christie plot contained in a famed NYC apartment building

Signed books available

THURSDAY MAY 29 7:00 PM Live Event

Hardboiled Crime Club discusses Charles Willeford's [Miami Blues](#) (\$17)

FRIDAY MAY 30 5:00 PM Virtual Event

Linwood Barclay discusses [Whistle](#) (Harper \$30)

The Canadian bestseller enters new territory with a supernatural chiller

OUR SUBSCRIPTION CLUB PICKS FOR MAY

Gift Mom a Club for Mother's Day and she will thank you every month

We select a book and charge it to you. Free shipping to US Customers.

It's a Book in a Box treat each month. We do ask that you sign up for a minimum of 3 months.

To join, gift, or request information please email sales@poisonedpen.com

British Crime Club One Unsigned hardcover or paperback per month

Chibnall, Chris. [Death at the White Hart](#)

Cozy Crimes Club One Unsigned hardcover or paperback per month

Westermann, Vanessa. [Cover Art](#) (Canadian cozy debut)

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

Winstead, Ashley. [This Book Will Bury Me](#)

First Mystery Club One Signed First Printing per month

Reid, Eliza. [Death on the Island](#)

Hardboiled/Noir Club One Signed First Printing per month

McGarrity, Michael. [Night in the City](#)

Historical Fiction Club One First Printing per month

Sullivan, Emily. [A Death on Corfu](#)

Historical Fiction Paperback Club One Unsigned paperback per month

Hooper, Elise. [The Library of Lost Dollhouses](#)

Notable New Fiction One Signed First Printing per month

Gaige, Amity. [Heartwood](#)

Romance and Relationships One unsigned hardcover or paperback per month

Alexander, Neely Tubati. [Courtroom Drama](#)

NEW SIGNED BOOKS FOR MAY

Abrams, Stacey. [Coded Justice](#) (Doubleday \$30). Avery Keene is back! The fan-favorite former Supreme Court clerk has finally gone out on her own, securing a prestigious position at a high-end law firm in Washington, D.C., where she is about to earn real money and get her life in order after a tumultuous run working as a clerk on the Supreme Court. With her reputation preceding her, Avery is quickly tasked at her new job with becoming a corporate internal investigator. Her new client is Camasca—a mega-tech firm that's on the forefront of developing a new integrated AI system poised to revolutionize the medical industry, particularly by delivering vastly improved health care to veterans. The AI potential is breathtaking, but some disturbing anomalies have plagued Camasca in early testing—including the mysterious death of a Camasca engineer.

Backman, Fredrick. [My Friends](#) (Atria \$29.99). Most people don't even notice them—three tiny figures sitting at the end of a long pier in the corner of one of the most famous paintings in the world. Most people think it's just a depiction of the sea. But Louisa, an aspiring artist herself, knows otherwise, and she

is determined to find out the story of these three enigmatic figures. Twenty-five years earlier, in a distant seaside town, a group of teenagers find refuge from their bruising home lives by spending long summer days on an abandoned pier. Who knew it would become a transcendent work of art? A painting that will unexpectedly be placed into eighteen-year-old Louisa's care. She embarks on a surprise-filled cross-country journey to learn how the painting came to be and to decide what to do with it. Here's the #1 Indie Next Pick for May.

Barry, Dave. [Class Clown: The Memoirs of a Profession](#) (Simon & Schuster \$28.99). Whether writing fiction or his own life, Barry is irresistible. The book is hilarious in the Dave Barry way, covering his school days (when he was formally elected Class Clown), the stunts and antics he engaged in as a nationally syndicated columnist for *The Miami Herald*, the surreal experience of having his life turned into the TV sitcom "Dave's World" and his participation in The Rock Bottom Reminders, a near-talentless band made up of bestselling authors like Stephen King, Greg Iles, Amy Tan, and Ridley

Pearson. But he does not shy away from his father's alcoholism or his mother's suicide. We here are familiar with his long history with Ridley Pearson writing the *Peter and the Starcatchers* series and their memorable appearance here with it. There is much more to this memoir than laughs. In fact I find it essential reading if 1. You were born in or before 1950 in which case this is your life, or 2. You are younger which case there is much essential history about the 1950s-70s given life by Barry.

Finally there is some serious wisdom he has earned: 1. You should not confuse your career with your life. 2. A person who is nice to you but rude to the waiter is not a nice person. 3. There is a very fine line between "hobby" and "mental illness" [unless of course, I say, your hobby is reading although reading is to me essential, not a hobby].

Berry, Lucinda. [One in Four](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$16.99). Dr. Laurel Harlow can't believe she's agreed to do a reality TV show. But her years as a chemical dependency counselor and personal history with the show's director make her the obvious choice. Treating a mansion full of former child stars on the road to recovery is the tallest order of her career—especially when one of them turns up dead while the cameras are still rolling. In a house full of narcissists vying for the spotlight, everyone's hiding something... including Laurel as she takes a closer look into their lives. This is SO not a cozy.

Cambridge, Colleen. [A Fashionably French Murder](#) (Kensington \$27). American expat Tabitha Knight has found a new life in postwar Paris, along with a delightful friend in aspiring chef Julia Child. The two join a visiting American mother-of-the-bride for a private showing at an exclusive fashion atelier, Maison Lannet. It turns out bespoke dresses are one of a kind so the mom is out of luck. But when Tabitha returns later that evening to search for a lost glove, she finds the lights still on—and the couturier dead, strangled by a length of lace. The shop manager suspects that a jealous rival—perhaps Dior himself—committed the crime. There's a lot of post-war fashion and more to be found here.

John adds, "Buttressing Tabitha's investigation are witty culinary tips from Julia (including pointers for making crepes "as delicate as a man's ego"), vivid historical tidbits about postwar Paris, and elegant descriptions of couture gowns. Shrewd, fair-play clues and vibrant characters who continue to evolve as the series progresses are a bonus. This is terrific fun for foodies and Francophiles alike."

Cassidy, Matt. [When the Wolf Comes Home](#) (Tor/Forge \$18.99). It's a big spring for Horror and here is one such for you. Pat King is our PP Staffer best acquainted with horror and is hosting the author of [Mary](#) (\$21.99) who returns with an unabashed, adrenaline-fueled pop horror thriller where the darkest fears can become reality. One night, Jess, a struggling actress, finds a five-year-old runaway hiding in the bushes outside her apartment. After a violent, bloody encounter with the boy's father, she and the boy find themselves running for their lives. As they attempt to evade the boy's increasingly desperate father, Jess slowly comes to a horrifying understanding—the boy can turn his every fear into reality. "This is the kind of great, big, epic horror novel we got back in the '80s that came out swinging for the fences and left everything on the field. Welcome back, you shaggy, bloody monster of a book!"—Grady Hendrix.

Connelly, Michael. [Nightshade](#) (Little Brown \$30). Los Angeles County Sheriff's Detective Stilwell has been "exiled" to a low-key post policing rustic Catalina Island, after department politics drove him off a homicide desk on the mainland. But while following up the usual drunk-and-disorderlies and petty thefts that come with his new territory, Detective Stilwell gets a report of a body found weighed down at the bottom of the harbor—a Jane Doe identifiable at first only by a streak of purple dye in her hair. At the same time, a report of poaching on a protected reserve turns into a case fraught with violence and danger as Stilwell digs into the shady past of an island bigwig. Crossing all lines of protocol and jurisdiction, Stilwell doggedly works both cases. Though hampered by an old beef with an ex-colleague determined to thwart him at every turn, he is convinced he is the only one who can bring justice to the woman known as "Nightshade." This being Connelly, Stilwell is doubtless right.

Connolly John. [Children of Eve](#) (Simon & Schuster UK \$40). Wyatt Riggins, the boyfriend of rising Maine artist Zetta Nadeau, has gone missing, leaving behind a cell phone containing a single-word message: RUN. Private investigator Charlie Parker is hired to find out why Riggins has fled, and from whom. Parker discovers that Riggins, an ex-soldier, has been involved in the abduction of four children from Mexico: three girls and a boy, all belonging to the cartel boss Blas Urrea—except Urrea's family is safe and well in Mexico, which means the abductees cannot be his children. Yet whoever they are, Urrea wants them back, and has dispatched his agents to secure them, even if it means butchering everyone who stands in their way. One of those agents is Eugene Seeley, a clever, ruthless solver of other men's problems. The other is an unknown woman. Every child has a mother. Now Charlie Parker will face one unlike any other

Deaver, Jeffery. [South of Nowhere](#) (Putnam \$30). **Book launch May 6. Ask for your copy to be dated.**

I have been reading Deaver for over 30 years, discussing most of his imaginative thrillers. And I say, This Is His Best One. An absolute zinger with complex plotting, amazing use of various tech, much of it low key like, say, bees, vivid characters and some surprising Shaw family history. You can go in cold with never having read one of his thrillers before.

Expert tracker and reward seeker Colter Shaw, who collects rewards for finding fugitives and missing persons, starts out late into a riveting situation in a small northern California town where torrential rains have raised the Never Summer to such height that it will breach the old earthen levee, wiping out tiny old mining town Hinowah. The DRB (Disaster Response Bitch) who shows up to spur the Mayor into action showcases Deaver's deep dive into how to handle such an emergency. Meanwhile downstream Shaw is the sole person searching the Never Summer for the family of four whose SUV was hurled into the river as the levee's top eroded. In the end there are two cars with passengers in play.

Meanwhile Colter has learned that a woman named Margaret has called a mutual acquaintance seeking information about his family. The puzzle deepens when Colter finds a letter from his late father referencing a daughter Colter has never heard of. Then Colter's younger sister, Dorion, asks him for help. Dorion it turns out is the DRB. She hopes Colter can find the missing people in time to save their lives. After he

arrives in Hinowah, Colter detects explosive residue near the site of the initial breach, adding the hunt for a criminal to his daunting, time-sensitive rescue mission. Deaver's pacing is characteristically top-notch, and he ratchets up the suspense with Colter's unresolved questions about a potentially long-lost half sister.

Doiron, Paul. [Skin and Bones](#) (St Martins \$31) presents eight top-shelf mysteries featuring Maine game warden Mike Bowditch—including the previously unpublished "Sheep's Clothing"—in this exciting collection. Two of the strongest entries center Mike's colleague and future father-in-law, Charley Stevens. In "Backtrack," Charley and Mike try to find a doctor who went missing from his hunting party during a snowstorm; "The Caretaker" sees them help the vacationing Baker family identify a home invader who's been leaving behind cryptic photographs of an old doll. Both stories illustrate Doiron's gift for character development and emotional stakes: the Bakers come into focus over the course of a few paragraphs, and "Backtrack" employs a poignant framing device that tracks the case's long impact on Charley's psyche. "Sheep's Clothing" is excellent, too, a quasi-New England gothic about Mike investigating a murder-suicide in a misfit rural family. Throughout, Doiron's evocative prose and clever plotting work as well in the short story form as they do at novel length. If like me you're a longtime fan, you will be delighted. If new to Doiron, this is the perfect place to start.

Dugoni, Robert. [A Dead Draw](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$16.99). Dugoni's propulsive latest adventure for Tracy Crosswhite finds the sharpshooting Seattle detective facing old demons after being transferred to her department's cold case unit. Following a traumatic shoot-out with master criminal Ed House, who kidnapped and killed her sister, Tracy has been pulled from the SPD's major crimes division. Her first cold case leads to the arrest of Erik Schmidt, a mentee of House's, for the murder of two young girls. A technicality gets Schmidt released from jail, and he seeks revenge. Meanwhile, Tracy retreats to her hometown of Cedar Grove, Washington, to hone her marksmanship skills and protect her family. She discovers that Schmidt has followed her when he kidnaps her young friend and shooting instructor, Lydia, and demands a sunrise duel with Tracy in the ghost town of Silver Pines in exchange for Lydia's freedom. Dugoni elevates the proceedings by fleshing out Schmidt's psychology and smartly mixing western tropes into the action. It's another solid entry in a reliable series.

Eldridge, Tori. [Kaua'i Storm](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$16.99). After ten years as a national park ranger in Oregon, Makalani Pahukula is back on Kaua'i for her grandmother's birthday. Having been gone for so long, Makalani finds the disconnect with her people and her struggles have never been more profound. When she reaches the homestead, she finds a bickering family and the disconcerting news that her cousins—a failed college football player and a rebellious teenage girl—have gone missing. There is a lot going on in this series start including vivid portraits of the island, its history, and its present community. Eldridge infuses the narrative with native Hawaiian speech and contemporary speech patterns.

Finlay, Alex. [Parents Weekend](#) (St Martins \$28). In the glow of their children's exciting first year of college at an exclusive small private campus in Northern California, five families of the CEOs,

doctors, and government officials making up the parents plan on a night of dinner and cocktails for the opening festivities of Parents Weekend. But one group of parents is stood up at the meal. Their kids—five residents of Campisi Hall—never show up. Annoyance turns to fear as the hours pass and the students are still off the grid, especially because Natasha Belov, daughter of a wealthy businessman, has been recently found dead in a nearby sea cave. The case gets sent to newly arrived FBI agent Sarah Keller, since U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Cynthia Roosevelt's son, Blane, is among the missing students. Blane's not the only child of a high-profile parent in the cohort: Libby Akana's father, judge Kenneth Akana, oversaw actor Rock Nelson's headline-grabbing domestic violence trial and angered the star's fans. Juggling those clues, Agent Keller and her team race to uncover the truth as the case becomes an online sensation. Look for red herrings galore, and a surprise ending. This book pairs well with the Jeffery Deaver reviewed above as both deal with shocking crimes in small communities pierced by actors good and bad.

Gagnon, Michelle. [Slaying You](#) (Putnam \$30). A thriller about reluctant partners Amber Jamison and her girlfriend Kat who hit the danger jackpot when they discover that a serial killer is on their heels...again!...when they travel back to Las Vegas for the wedding of Dot, an old friend of Amber's and the leader of the Fatal Femmes, a motley crew of Vegas sex workers, costumers, and show girls. They fashion themselves as citizen sleuths in pursuit of a man who has been abducting women like them. Then people start dying....

Gaige, Amity. [Heartwood](#) (Atria \$28.99). Our **May Notable New Fiction Pick** is catnip to readers of Paul Doiron, CJ Box, or Cheryl Strayed. "A novelistic cousin to Cheryl Strayed's best-selling 2012 memoir of tackling the Pacific Crest Trail after her mother's death, it's the story of three woodsy women each lost in her own wilderness, and the gnarled roots between mothers and daughters. At the center of the story is Valerie Gillis, a nurse who goes missing in Maine during an audacious hike of the 14-state beast that is the Appalachian Trail. Her chapters are presented through the "love letters" (scrawled as increasingly desperate journal entries) that she writes to her mother, Janet, to pass the time and stay sane while she's stranded. Then there's Beverly 'Lt. Bev' Miller, a veteran game warden who leads the search for Valerie while silencing calls about her own ailing mother. By far the most magnetic of the novel's interconnected trio is Lena Kucharski. She's a 76-year-old retired scientist who forages for fresh dandelions, among other edible flora and fauna, undeterred by her motorized wheelchair or the banality of the Connecticut retirement community where she now lives. Estranged from her daughter, Christine, a lonely Lena is free to turn a forensic eye to the Gillis case." Read the [full review](#) in the *NY Times* which echoes my own enthusiasm for this exceptional, suspense-filled novel.

Gerber, Daryl Wood. [Essence of Foul Play](#) (Kensington \$17.95). Opening Aroma Wellness Spa is the fulfillment of a California dream for Emma Brennan. She's supported by her grandmother, a librarian she calls Nana Lissa, and cousin Sierra Reade, who runs the spa's restaurant, but not by her mother, who wanted Emma to follow in her footsteps as a teacher; similarly, among the local residents, there are both well-wishers and critics such as Willow Shafer, a rival of Emma's since college, whose own local spa emphasizes a different approach to treatment. And Willow

oddly accuses tennis-playing socialite Palmer Pilsner of leaving a death threat under her door. Hoping to smooth things over with Willow, Emma gives her a gift basket, but when Willow is fatally bludgeoned by a candlestick from that basket, Emma becomes the prime suspect in her murder. Things may be going well with the spa, which is booked up, but Emma can't get over being both a suspect in Willow's death and, soon, the recipient of a death threat of her own—so she decides to do a little investigating. Gerber spins off a new series set in the Carmel-by-the-Sea location of her Fairy Garden Mystery series.

Harris, Joanne. [Vianne](#) (Orion \$44). *Joie!* The prequel to *Chocolat* begins with Vianne, not yet a chocolatier, living in New York and moving on to Marseilles. Coming signed from London. Rent the movie with Juliette Binoche and Johnny Depp (I know, but he's great in it) filmed on location in a medieval French village (near where Martin Walker lives!!).

Hiaasen, Carl. [Fever Beach](#) (Knopf \$30). As Deb reports, here is another laugh out loud look at America today, wrapped around a mystery by a master storyteller. "The afternoon of September first, dishwasher-gray and rainy, a man named Dale Figgo picked up a hitchhiker on Gus Grissom Boulevard in Tangelo Shores, Florida. The hitchhiker, who reminded Figgo of Danny DeVito, asked for a lift to the interstate. Figgo said he'd take him there after finishing an errand." Imagine what follows.... Figgo's already messy life is about to get more complicated, thanks to two formidable adversaries Viva and Twilly, who are plunged into a mystery—involving dark money and darker motives—they are determined to solve, and become entangled in a world populated by some of Hiaasen's most outrageous characters roaming into the depths of Florida at its most Floridian: a sun-soaked bastion of right-wing extremism, white power, greed, and corruption.

Johnson, Craig. [Return to Sender](#) (Viking \$30). The book launch for Walt Longmire is here on May 27. When Blair McGowan, the mail person with the longest postal route in the country of over three hundred mile a day, goes missing the question becomes—where do you look for her? The Postal Inspector for the State of Wyoming elicits Sheriff Longmire to mount an investigation into her disappearance and Walt does everything to find her but mail it in....

Koontz, Dean. [Going Home in the Dark](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$28.99). As kids, outcasts Rebecca, Bobby, Spencer, and Ernie were inseparable friends in the idyllic town of Maple Grove. Three left to pursue lofty dreams—and achieved them. Only Ernie never left. When he falls into a coma, his three amigos feel an urgent need to return home. Don't they remember people lapsing into comas back then? And those people always awoke... didn't they?

Lamb, Wally. [The River Is Waiting](#) (Simon & Schuster \$28.99). Unemployed commercial artist Corby Ledbetter cares for toddler twins Maisie and Niko while his wife, Emily, works. One morning in 2017, Corby pops a couple of Ativans, pours rum in his coffee, plays peekaboo with the kids, burns the toast, and ruminates about his marriage, all before backing his car over Niko in the driveway. In these horrific yet riveting opening 12 pages, Corby's narration is as blatantly unreliable—"It's not like I'm addicted"—as his character is unsympathetic. His denial and self-pity are infuriating compared to Emily's raw despair over Niko's death. Imprisonment however not only gives him time to

recalibrate with the help of a librarian but to survive the brutality of two guards and face what will happen when he's released.

MacBride, Stuart. [This House of Burning Bones](#) (Pan Macmillan UK \$40). In the heat of a blistering summer, Aberdeen's police are struggling: half the force is off sick, all leave has been cancelled, someone's firebombed a hotel full of migrants, and there's a massive protest march happening this Saturday. With officers dropping like flies, Granite City Detective Inspector Logan McRae is forced to juggle cases and run a major murder investigation with a skeleton staff of misfits, idiots and malingerers until the top brass can arrange back-up from other divisions. It doesn't help that the Aberdeen Examiner has just been bought by Natasha Agapova, a tabloid media tycoon, hell-bent on blaming local police for everything. And she's more than happy to fan the flames. But, as bad as everything seems, it's all about to get much, much worse.

MacFarlane, Robert. [Is a River Alive?](#) (Norton \$31.99). **Our signed copies come with an extra, a memo book entitled "Field Notes." What an excellent gift idea for Mom or Dad—or you.**

MacFarlane presents another work of travel writing, reportage, and natural history. For him, rivers are living beings who should be recognized as such in imagination and law. Macfarlane takes readers on three unforgettable journeys teeming with extraordinary people, stories, and places: to the miraculous cloud-forests and mountain streams of Ecuador, to the wounded creeks and lagoons of India, and to the spectacular wild rivers of Canada—imperiled respectively by mining, pollution, and dams. Braiding these journeys is the life story of the fragile chalk stream a mile from Macfarlane's house, a stream flowing through his own years and days. Remarkable. Read an [interview with the author](#).

McGarrity, Michael. [Night in the City](#) (Norton \$28.99). A lawyer tries to clear himself of the murder of a New York City socialite in this sleek noir from one of our favorite writers who is, to our delight, branching out from New Mexico crime scenes and varying his time frames. It's 1950s Manhattan where junior attorney Sam Monroe has his heart broken by it-girl Laura Nielson. Not long after their breakup, she calls and invites him to her penthouse. When Monroe arrives, he finds his Army dog tag wrapped around Laura's lifeless body. Realizing he's likely to be the prime suspect, Monroe resolves to locate the killer before the cops catch up with him, and searches Laura's diary for clues. Meanwhile, he becomes the target of Johnnie Turner, a vengeful cop who lost a promotion after Monroe exposed his pattern of planting evidence during prosecutions. Turner's smear campaign shreds Monroe's professional reputation and forces him to resign from his post, so he enlists private investigator Debora Jean Ryan to help him track down Laura's killer. In time they discover that Laura's dark past is tangled up with a well-known crime family and the death of a popular high school athlete. "Fans of Dashiell Hammett's *The Thin Man* will enjoy the echoes peppered throughout this twisty journey through the underbelly of mid-century New York. It's a hardboiled good time."

Moore, Christopher. [Anima Rising](#) (Harper \$30) draws on Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* for a tale of *fin de siècle* Vienna. In 1911, painter Gustav Klimt rescues a drowning woman from the Danube canal and brings her back to his studio, where she

is cared for by one of his models. The woman has no memory of who she is or how she wound up in the canal. Klimt names her Judith after one of his paintings, and he turns to the world's leading psychiatrist, Sigmund Freud, to help cure her amnesia. When Freud hits a dead end, he taps his colleague Carl Jung, who agrees to hypnotize Judith. The incredible story she narrates under hypnosis involves surviving in the Arctic after being stranded there with exiled mad scientist Victor Frankenstein and his monster and interventions from Raven, an Inuit deity. As Moore delays clarifying whether Judith is telling the truth, his own imagination swings into overdrive. "This is a wild adventure through history, art, and literature for Moore's many fans and those who enjoy historical fiction with a side of fantasy and wry humor", says the *LJ* Starred Review. It may be deranged, but then this is Moore who earlier wrote artist-inspired novel [Sacré Bleu](#) (\$19.99).

Pavone, Chris. [The Doorman](#) (Farrar Strauss \$29). Chicky Diaz is everyone's favorite doorman at the Bohemia, the most famous apartment house in the world, home of celebrities, financiers, and New York's cultural elite. [Surely Pavone has modeled it upon the Dakota.] Within its walls it contains a hotbed of tensions, secrets, and lies, deftly portrayed by Pavone who really knows his upper crust New York and takes a close look in this new novel at the world of privilege and power. Things blow so hot that tonight, Chicky is going to work armed.

PW picks this as a hot summer read, saying: "Pavone pivots from his espionage thriller roots with this socially minded pulse-pounder about a security guard at an upscale Manhattan co-op whose knowledge of the residents' comings and goings becomes vital when an unthinkable crime occurs. Though the breakneck pace makes this easy to wolf down in a single sitting, it has staying power as a trenchant examination of Manhattan's upper crust." I agree and find Pavone nails his very interesting commentary on the oligarchy we are stuck with today.

Penner, Sarah. [The Amalfi Curse](#) (Park Row \$30) weaves a rousing story of witches, deep sea diving, and family secrets on the Amalfi Coast. In 1821 Positano, Mari DeLuca belongs to a coven who cast spells on the water to protect the town from pirates. Yearning for a new life, she makes plans to flee with a sailor from Boston. Before she can, though, a shipping magnate attempts to kidnap her, hoping to force Mari into using her powers to help his fleet, and she drowns him. In a parallel narrative set two centuries later, nautical archaeologist Haven Ambrose studies shipwrecks on the Amalfi coast while secretly searching for a trove of precious gems her father found before dying of a stroke. When Conrad, another researcher, shows up to take her place, Haven suspects he knows about the treasure. She hires Enzo Rossi, a local dive shop owner, to take her out on the water, and the pair race against Conrad to find the gems. What fun!

* Pinborough, Sarah. [We Live Here Now](#) (Flatiron \$30.99). Our copies will be from the Limited Edition with stenciled edges. Pinborough pens a Gothic novel about a house, a Dartmoor country estate called Larkin Lodge—and a marriage—gone terribly wrong after an accident that nearly kills the wife, Emily. Unnerved by a house where she thinks something is deeply wrong, Emily starts to believe there was once a murder in the Lodge. This being Pinborough, an interesting writer with a fondness for the supernatural, buckle up—it's not an Agatha Christie tale.

Reid, Eliza. [Death on the Island](#) (Poisoned Pen Press \$32.99/\$17.99). The former First Lady of Iceland who debuted her memoir [Secrets of the Sprakar](#) (\$16.99) with us over zoom now writes her first mystery earning high praise from Louise Penny. Think of a "twist Golden Age plot and a fascinating Nordic Noir setting" (says Ann Cleeves) on Iceland's island of Heimaey in the Westermans. I am drawn to this location having had an exciting visit there a few years ago in terrible weather—but no one died. Unlike here where at a gathering spearheaded by the Canadian Ambassador to Iceland on a mission to lure Heimaey's flourishing fish processing plant to his country goes off the rails, it ends with his deputy stricken dead at the conclusion of the banquet. And of course, in classic style, the weather imprisons all the suspects inside the locally famous Skel restaurant. Ingredients for the murder include a poisoning, affairs, missing journals, a side-eyeing, narcissistic business owner, his wife, a Booker Prize winning author still short of publishing his second novel, the chef, the victim's computer ace husband. And Jane Shearer, wife of Ambassador Graeme, who can't help wondering if the woman's death was truly accidental. Then Reid takes us back fourteen hours before the murder and counts it down hour by hour and then forward. Reid puts her solid knowledge of diplomats and diplomacy to work here, but in the end this, our **May First Mystery Book of the Month**, showcases strong and independent women, for good or for ill.

Ritter, Krysten. [The Retreat](#) (Harper \$28.99). Ritter—who starred in the Netflix series *Jessica Jones*—devises a deliciously deviant con here. Con artist Liz Dawson has reached her limit with posing as an art consultant in Chicago to gain entry to luxurious homes. A chance meeting with a philanthropist at a gala event leads to a job overseeing an art installation at the new mansion belonging to Isabelle Beresford and her venture capitalist husband, Oliver, in upscale Punta Mita, Mexico. The timing is perfect, since Liz's hotel is about to kick her out for unpaid bills, a romance has become overbearing, and the Chicago winter is oppressive. When she uses the community membership card left for her by the Beresfords and a staffer calls her "Señora Beresford," Liz seizes the opportunity to slip into a new identity and enjoy an opulent lifestyle. The ruse is simple: Liz resembles Isabelle in the few photographs she's able to find. And Isabelle and Oliver are off the grid in Bali. Liz's plan to leave once her job is finished stretches into months as she gets closer to her wealthy neighbors, whom she plans to defraud. But the Beresfords' continued absence causes problems when Oliver's business partners become restive and....

Shelton, Paige. [Written in Stone](#) (St Martins \$28). Moving to Edinburgh has changed Delaney Nichols' life. She loves her work at the Cracked Spine bookshop, her marriage to pub owner Tom, and the friends who've helped solve so many murders. Now she's thrilled to have received a coveted invitation to a special Hidden Door Festival invitation to artist Ryory Bennigan's studio, she isn't sure quite what to expect. What she finds is an elusive fellow obsessed with the Picts—complete with his own versions of their blue tattoos and vibrant red hair—recreating the stones they left behind. She also meets a visiting paleontologist, Dr. Adam Pace, from the University of Kansas attempting to sell an artifact that might just explain what the Picts' language really sounded like. Or at least that's what he claimed the artifact was for. Before the deal can close and Ryory can get a closer look at it, Dr. Pace is

found dead. With the police dragging their feet in the investigation, Delaney takes it upon herself to dig into Dr. Pace's past. Her research goes murky as she quickly discovers Pace's shady background—selling fake dinosaur bones and running into some 3D-printing trouble back in Kansas.

Slocumb, Brendan. [The Dark Maestro](#) (Knopf \$28). On reading the Afterword for Slocumb's new novel I learned of a major medical incident for the musician author so we are not looking at a visit. But he has kindly agreed to sign books for you fans as he has his first two remarkable novels. Our bookseller Deb says that Curtis "is one of the most endearing characters I've come across in years. In *The Violin Conspiracy*, Curtis had to solve the mystery of his missing violin. In *Dark Maestro*, the stakes are even higher: his budding career is on the line, and he must go after the people who want his family dead."

Once again Brendan melds music and crime. Curtis Wilson is a child prodigy on the cello who received his instrument through a free school program. His father, Zippy, is a low-level drug dealer in Washington, DC, who doesn't have much time for his son. But Zippy's girlfriend Larissa sees and encourages Curtis's musical potential while gifting him the comic books he devours. While, Zippy's boss moves Zippy into a higher but sketchier business position, Curtis earns a spot at Julliard and is becoming known nationwide as a star cellist. Then his father turns state's evidence and the family is moved into witness protection, putting a hold on Curtis's skyrocketing musical career. The family comes together, however, while in hiding to create an online comic book called *The Dark Maestro* as Curtis realizes he'll need to take down the criminals himself, with the help of Zippy, Larissa, and a comic book character he originally created as a child.

Vuong, Ocean. [The Emperor of Gladness](#) (Penguin \$30). One late summer evening in the post-industrial town of East Gladness, Connecticut, nineteen-year-old Hai stands on the edge of a bridge in pelting rain, ready to jump, when he hears someone shout across the river. The voice belongs to Grazina, an elderly widow succumbing to dementia, who convinces him to divert from ending his life to guarding hers. Bereft and out of options, he quickly becomes her caretaker. Over the course of the year, the unlikely pair develops a life-altering bond as described in Vuong's poetic language. Our bookseller Deb writes, "Sometimes, reading a book feels like work—trying to understand the hidden motivations and emotions behind each character's choices. And sometimes, the writing is so beautiful it takes your breath away and leaves you wanting to talk to someone about what you've just read. Wrap yourself in this one: do the work, and be rewarded with tenderness, love, loss, and hope."

Wilson, Kevin. [Run for the Hills](#) (Harper \$30). Ever since her dad left them twenty years ago, it's been just Madeline Hill and her mom on their farm in Coalfield, Tennessee. While it's a bit lonely, she sometimes admits, and a less exciting life than what she imagined for herself, it's mostly okay. Mostly. Then one day Reuben Hill pulls up in a PT Cruiser and informs Madeline that he believes she's his half sister. Reuben—left behind by their dad thirty years ago—has hired a detective to track down their father and a string of other half siblings. And he wants Mad to leave her home and join him for the craziest kind of road trip imaginable to find them all. As Mad and Rube—and eventually the others—

share stories of their father, who behaved so differently in each life he created, they begin to question what he was looking for with every new incarnation. Who are they to one another? What kind of man will they find?

Woodward, Mike. [Tom Clancy: Line of Demarcation](#) (Putnam \$32). Woodward's top-notch latest Jack Ryan Jr. thriller finds the Campus, a covert government organization, locked in a deadly contest between the Russians, corrupt foreign officials, and an international drug lord. Lead Campus operator Ryan is in Georgetown, Guyana, working undercover as the CEO of Athena Global Shipping Lines. Guyana has recently begun to exploit a massive new oil field that promises to be the largest previously untapped reserve in the world. Jack is lunching with Guyana's minister of the interior and attorney general when he's caught in sudden crossfire. He escapes, but the two officials are killed, setting in motion a multipronged plot that finds separate teams of Campus agents tasked with fighting a Russia-backed Guyanese coup and rescuing Campus operator Domingo "Ding" Chavez, who's deep undercover with a drug gang. Woodward juggles each subplot with aplomb, and ushers the proceedings toward the exact sort of explosive climax Clancy readers expect (with bonus points for the inclusion of hydrogen-powered killer Jet Skis). It's a standout entry in the series.

Mike has a second Clancy out in September when our plan is he will visit. Meanwhile he's agreed to sign this one for us.

MAY IS FOR MOM

Our [Gift Card](#) remains a classic gift letting Mom choose whatever sort of book she'd like. Can be emailed anywhere so good for the last minute too.

[Poisoned Pen Book Bags](#) (\$15) in cream canvas sporting our logo are great for toting reading and other materials around.

And to put in the tote or as a standalone this beautiful story Signed for us by Henry and on sale up until Mother's Day.

"Brilliant, riveting, so beautifully written, impossible to put down. I wanted to know, needed to know, about the strange manuscript left to a daughter, and the odyssey it sent her on." — Louise Penny

Henry, Patti Callahan. [The Story She Left Behind](#) (Atria \$25 special price and SIGNED) is inspired by a true literary mystery and is so beautifully written it's a joy to read for the language alone. But throw in a legendary book and its lost potential sequel, a lost mother, and a daughter's far ranging search for them both—as I said, perfect for Mother's Day. There's also a created language, the perils of early fame, and very probably some neurodivergent elements to what's lost. The story begins in 1927 when the magical childhood of eight-year-old Clara Harrington abruptly ends when her mother, the author Bronwyn Newcastle Fordham, disappears sailing off the coast of North Carolina. Bronwyn had sparked a national sensation by writing a book in an invented language when she was just twelve. By 1952, Clara is an illustrator raising her own daughter, Wynn timer. When a stranger named Charlie Jameson contacts her from London claiming to have discovered a handwritten dictionary of her mother's lost language. Clara is skeptical. Compelled by the tragedy of her mother's vanishing, she crosses the Atlantic with Wynn timer only to arrive during one of London's most deadly natural disasters—the Great Smog. With asthmatic Wynn timer in

peril, they escape the city with Charlie and find refuge in the Jameson's family retreat nestled in the Lake District. I'll leave it there but you should not!

CLASSICS

A good "starter pack list" for classic private eye novels is found in [this List](#) in the *NY Times Book Review*

Bude, John. [A Telegram from Le Touquet](#) (Poisoned Pen Press \$15.95). This rare and spirited mystery novel was first published in 1956 and is now reissued as a British Library Crime Classic with an Introduction by Martin Edwards. With some trepidation Nigel Derry approaches the country house of his enigmatic and unpredictable Aunt Gwenny for an Easter holiday visit. After a tense few days in which her guests' interactions range from awkward dinners to a knife fight, a disgruntled Aunt Gwenny departs for Europe. Receiving a telegram from Le Touquet inviting him to join Gwenny in the south of France, Nigel finds himself on a vacation cut short by murder as a cold shadow of suspicion eclipses the sunny beauty of the Côte d'Azur. Enter Inspector Blampignon of the Sûreté Nationale, whose problems abound as the case suggests that the crime may have occurred hundreds of miles away from where the victim was discovered. Undeterred, the formidable French detective soldiers on....

King, C. Daly. [Obelists en Route](#) (American Mystery Classics \$15.95). With luxury trains making a big comeback, this classic is spot on. The magnificent Transcontinental Express, showcasing the cutting edge of mid-1930s luxury train travel, is making its first trip from New York to San Francisco. For its record-breaking maiden voyage—coast to coast in three days with no passenger stops—the express carries only invited guests, among them renowned businessmen, physicians, psychologists, and even a high-ranking member of the NYPD. Among refined staterooms, an elegant dining car, and a "recreation room" for bridge, ping-pong, and dancing, the vehicle's most lauded feature is the swimming pool car—which is precisely where the waterlogged corpse of a prominent banker is discovered just one day into the journey. Uncertain of the cause of death and fearing negative publicity, the conductor drives on for the West Coast, charging a select group of passengers, including the sharp-witted Dr. Pons, tasked with sleuthing.

Simenon, Georges. [Pietr the Latvian](#) (Picador \$16). *Eh bien!* The entire 100 Inspector Maigret mysteries are repackaged and reissued for you. It begins here. When Detective Chief Inspector Maigret receives notice from Interpol that Pietr the Latvian, an infamous con man, is on his way to Paris, he rushes to intercept him at the train station. But when he arrives he is confounded to find two men who fit the description of the wanted man. One is alive, the other dead. So who is Pietr? Is he even Latvian?

Here is #2, [The Late Monsieur Gallet](#) (Picador \$16). wherein a Monsieur Gallet has been found dead—murdered—in his hotel room, in a small town outside of Paris. Inspector Maigret sets off to figure out the course of events that led to this grim outcome. But as he delves deeper, the circumstances of the crime become increasingly intriguing: Gallet's alias, his sickly pallor, his claimed profession, his wife's and son's strangely indifferent behavior in the wake of Gallet's death.

Et enfin, #3, [The Hanged Man of Saint-Pholien](#) (\$16). While stopped at a railway station on the northern edge of

Holland, Inspector Maigret catches sight of a traveler acting oddly: the man glances around furtively, pulls out handfuls of coins to pay for purchases, and guards a small suitcase. Maigret decides to follow the man, thinking he'll help catch a crook—but then. Stricken with remorse, Maigret resolves to suss out the who and why of the man.

Willeford, Charles. [Miami Blues](#) (\$17). After a brutal day investigating a quadruple homicide, Detective Hoke Moseley settles into his room at the un-illustrious El Dorado Hotel and nurses a glass of brandy. With his guard down, he doesn't think twice when he hears a knock on the door. The next day, he finds himself in the hospital, badly bruised and with his jaw wired shut. He thinks back over ten years of cases wondering who would want to beat him into unconsciousness, steal his gun and badge, and most importantly, make off with his prized dentures. But the pieces never quite add up to revenge, and the few clues he has keep connecting to a dimwitted hooker, and her ex-con boyfriend and the bizarre murder of a Hare Krishna pimp. Patrick is your go-to man for all things Willeford.

COZIES

Claire, Ann. [A Cyclist's Guide to Villains & Vines](#) (Kensington \$27) is a second delightful romp through the glorious French countryside, complete with wine, croissants, a murder, and a spunky sleuth after [A Cyclist's Guide to Crime & Croissants](#) (\$17.95). Sadie Greene and her Oui Cycle crew vow to wow her most discerning private group yet with a trip they will never forget. It won't be easy. The Silver Spinners, six globetrotting seniors, arrive with thrilling tales of two-wheeling adventures. Sadie worries she'll fail to impress such worldly travelers, even with the backdrop of Alsace, a dreamy region of rolling vineyards, delicious cuisine, and fairytale architecture. Sadie is dead wrong. Her group is stunned, but not for the right reasons.... I for one would never sign up for American ex-pat Sadie's bicycle tours, but reading about them is safe....

Dolan, Lian. [Abigail and Alexa Save the Wedding](#) (Harper \$30). Everyone loves—and hates—a big fancy wedding! From the author of *Lost and Found in Paris* and *The Marriage Sabbatical* comes a champagne-sparkling summer read about two very different women planning their children's wedding in glamorous Montecito, California. What could go wrong—or right as the two moms, one a wealthy member of the local Merry Widows, the other a garden club stalwart, must swing into action to make their children's dream come true? Any crimes here are small but the dynamics are large.

Flower, Amanda. [To Slip the Bonds of the Earth](#) (\$17.95) introduces Katherine Wright, sister to Wilbur and Orville. In December, 1903, on returning home to Dayton, Wilbur and Orville accept an invitation to a friend's party. Nervous about leaving their as-yet-unpatented flyer plans unattended, Wilbur decides to bring them to the festivities . . . where they are stolen right out from under his nose. As always, it's Katharine's job to problem solve—and in this case, crime-solve. As she sets out to uncover the thief among their circle of friends, Katharine soon gets more than she bargained for. For the sequel see New in Hardcover.

Gates, Eva. [Shot Through the Book](#) (Crooked Lane \$29.99). The upcoming YA book festival at the Bodie Island Lighthouse Library is bringing in renowned authors from all over the world.

When bestselling author Todd Harrison unexpectedly visits librarian Lucy McNeil at her Outer Banks beach house after a meeting, she is puzzled by his presence, since they're virtually strangers. After she steps inside to get him a drink, she's shocked to discover that he's been murdered on her deck in the few minutes she left him alone. Not knowing why he wanted to meet with her in private, or how someone managed to kill him in the time it takes to make lemonade, Lucy resolves to help the investigation and is caught up in an intrusive fan club mourning Todd, squabbling authors fighting for prominence in his absence, and a politically ruthless widow.

Haines, Carolyn. [Doggone Bones](#) (St Martins \$28). After a dog belonging to local pet activist Tilly Lawson is snatched right out of her backyard in Sunflower County, MS, Sarah Booth and the Delaney Detective Agency are up to their ears in concerned pet owners. Could Tilly's work liberating abused animals have come back to bite her, or was this a random act of dognapping? Delaney Detective Agency has their work cut out for them, especially as a troublesome online pet detective agency tries nosing their way into the investigation.

Hollis, Lee. [My Father Always Finds Corpses](#) (Kensington \$27). You never forget your first corpse. For former child star Jarrod Jarvis, that discovery was twenty-plus years ago, and a lot has happened since he solved a string of real-life Hollywood murders. Now Jarrod lives in Palm Springs where he writes and directs local theatre, while quietly grieving the loss of his partner, police detective Charlie. Jarrod hasn't disclosed much about his sleuthing past to his daughter, Liv, who just earned a degree in criminal justice. There's been distance between them since Charlie's death, and Jarrod's unsure how to bridge the gap. Liv, meanwhile, has put her career on hold in order to help her filmmaker boyfriend, Zel. His new documentary idea is to track down the surrogate who gave birth to Liv. Skeptical and annoyed by Zel's pressure tactics, Liv goes to confront him at his apartment. But there's no need to break things off—because someone has bludgeoned Zel to death. Jarrod rushes to Liv's aid, surprising his daughter with his ease around a crime scene, firing off questions like a modern-day Columbo with better hair and wardrobe

Jalaluddin, Uzma. [Detective Aunty](#) (Harper \$17.99). This is an absolute delight! When her grown daughter is suspected of murder, a charming and tenacious widow digs into the case to unmask the real killer in this charming series start that gives a generous nod to the golden age of mysteries with an observant widow, Kausar Khan, standing in for Miss Marple, and an east Toronto shopping mall destined for redevelopment in place of an English village. Kausar's polite but relentless quest for justice—and her daughter's freedom—is note-perfect. Kausar's relentless sleuthing, her love for her deceased husband and her friends, and her tact in dealing with a headstrong married daughter, enhance the unwinding of the murder. "It's sure to delight any fan of Nita Prose or Alexander McCall Smith."

Mack, Catherine. [No One Was Supposed to Die at This Wedding](#) (St Martins \$28). This isn't entirely a cozy as there's some profanity here, but it's fun. When mystery author Eleanor Dash takes a break from overseeing the film adaptation of her latest novel to attend the nuptials of its two lead actors, a pile of problems stack up: she receives menacing notes, a storm

threatens to rip through the wedding, and she discovers a dead body. The rollicking plot pairs well with Dash's frisky, funny narration, which jabs at the drudgery of mystery writing even as Mack demonstrates easy expertise.

Perry, Carol J. [The Spirit Moves](#) (Kensington \$17.95). A Haunted Haven Mystery in a paranormal cozy series. When the body of "how-to" book writer Terry Holiday is found by Aster Paterson in her flower garden, the townspeople of Haven are shocked. But they're even more surprised when the beloved bookshop owner insists that the spirit of her late husband Peter Paterson led her to the grim discovery. Only Aster seems unsurprised—she's been baking his favorite shortbread cookies every day, hoping to lure his ghost back home . . . Even Maureen is a little skeptical—until Peter's ghost appears in the bookshop window for all to see.

* Sampson, Freya. [The Busybody Book Club](#) (Berkley \$19) paints a quirky, nuanced picture of small-town English life, replete with archetypes who turn out to be much more complex than they first appear. You could call this a cozy. See New in Large Paperbacks below for more of this gem. Library Reads adds, "In this modern take on a classic small-town mystery, book club members get drawn into amateur sleuthing when money to repair the town's community center goes missing. The characters are well drawn and likable, the setting is cozy, and the motives are plentiful.

Swann, Leonie. [Big Bad Wool](#) (Soho \$28.95). In Swann's witty sequel to [Three Bags Full](#) (\$18.95 – the 20th anniversary deluxe paperback edition)—one of the most original, wittiest debuts I can recall and perhaps soon to be a movie with Hugh Jackman and Emma Thompson—the crime-solving flock of Irish sheep and their shepherd, Rebecca, head to a remote chateau in France for the winter season. Rebecca lives in a small camper with her impossible mother, a tarot card reader, while the flock grazes the surrounding meadow. When several deer are found dead in the nearby forest, locals believe it's the work of the Garou, a legendary shape-shifting werewolf. Then a human body is found with wounds similar to the deer, and the sheep—led by the clever ewe Miss Maple—trot into action to protect Rebecca, and themselves, from harm. Soon, their investigation puts them on a collision course with a hell-bent Garou hunter. As in the previous book, Swann gives each of her animal protagonists a distinctive voice and personality, and she stirs up hilarious misunderstandings between the flock and their human counterparts. The mystery itself is brisk and surprising. Cozy mystery fans will be delighted

* Sutton, Paula. [The Potting Shed Murder](#) (Kensington \$28). Welcome to the beautiful, bucolic village of Pudding Corner, where there's death amongst the dahlias.... Daphne Brewster has gladly swapped south London for Pudding Corner, a Norfolk hamlet full of quintessentially English charm. With a mix of stone cottages, Georgian architecture, and Victorian Gothic houses all nestled together and surrounded by fields of gold and green, Pudding Corner and its neighboring village of Pepperbridge seem as far from the bustle of city living as one can get. For Daphne, joy at moving into beautiful Cranberry Farmhouse with her husband, James, and their three young children is tempered by some concerns about being the only Black woman for miles around. But within a few short months, Daphne has become known as the parish's "Vintage Lady" and has set up her own

shop. Business is thriving, and so is her family. As for Pudding Corner, it's rapidly revealing itself to be filled with complicated, intertwined lives on par with anything she left behind. Then the local school's headmaster is found dead in his allotment patch, unleashing a storm of secrets and scandal. Even a sleepy village has its social hierarchy, and as her new friend, Minerva, becomes a target of whispers and speculation, Daphne can't resist getting involved. I read this in a UK edition and thought the author worked too hard at her story.

Westermann, Vanessa. [Cover Art](#) (Cormorant \$24.95). See Our May Large Paperback Picks for more on this first novel in a Canadian Cottagecore series making our **May Cozy Crimes Subscription Book Pick**. The Canadians' use "cottage" to describe a (mostly summertime) cozy as many Canadians keep a country cottage as a vacation home. Hence "Cottagecore," I really enjoyed the characters, the small touristy town, and, of course, the mystery. And the nice production with French flaps, if not the cove art.

And there is a sequel just out: [Shudder Pulp](#) (\$24.95). Leaves are turning red in cottage country, and Charley Scott is putting together a Halloween pulp art installation inspired by local lake monster legends. Life imitates art when Laura, a mercenary newcomer with a controversial agenda to upgrade the dam, claims she was attacked by Charley's monster. Hours later, Laura is found dead by dry drowning. Artist Charley's Shudder Pulp exhibit is meant to be immersive, but could she actually have summoned a beast from beneath the waves? Charley and chocolatier Matt Thorn team up to investigate, but it'll take more than seafoam toffee to bait this beast.

NEW IN HARDCOVER

Out of the hundreds of new hardcovers publishing in May we curated 107 to add to our inventory and below are from that list that I call to your attention. It is not possible to review let alone list all the new May books. You can browse our Webstore for more or go to [Bookshop.org](#) where if you find something to order on our page we get a small % of the revenue.

Abercrombie, Joe. [The Devils](#) (Tor \$29). An epic fantasy making a top Library Reads Pick: "In an alternative medieval Europe, a young monk is tasked to lead a disparate group of supernatural beings on a holy quest using very unholy methods. Abercrombie's endlessly quotable wit, deft character work, crackling dialog, and gift for large cinematic action set pieces are on full display. This novel about found families will absolutely draw in new readers."

Adams, Jenny. [A Poisonous Silence](#) (Crooked Lane \$29.99). Philadelphia, 1921. Edie Shippen has officially started her new career as a private investigator...even though she has yet to book a client. When she runs into an old friend, the film actress Ava Sylvester, Edie is delighted at the chance to rekindle their relationship. But when Ava's co-star and new husband, Duncan, dies suddenly, all signs point to Ava. Edie's first official case begins in earnest, desperately trying to clear her friend's name. Gilbert Lawless has carved out a peaceful existence as a coroner's assistant. The last thing he wants is to jeopardize his position by involving himself with Edie Shippen. But when the body count racks up, Gilbert finds himself drawn into Edie's investigation on the set of Philadelphia's most famous film studio, where everyone seems to have something to hide. The cameras roll.... Simultaneous [large paperback edition](#) (\$19.99).

Allende, Isabel. [My Name is Emilia Del Valle](#) (Random House \$30). Chilean bestseller Allende delves into her country's 1891 civil war via the perspective of her title character, a young Irish Chilean woman. Now an intrepid reporter in San Francisco, Emilia travels to cover the conflict with her colleague, who soon becomes a love interest. The cinematic and propulsive novel is as good with romance as it is with the nitty-gritty of newspaper work, and it culminates with Emilia's satisfying reconciliation with her roots.

Armstrong, Kelley. [Death at a Highland Wedding](#) (St Martins \$28) is the 4th in her Rip Through Time series, an interesting concept. After slipping 150 years into the past, modern-day homicide detective Mallory Atkinson has embraced her new life in Victorian Scotland as housemaid Catriona Mitchell. She's developed real, meaningful relationships with the people around her and has come to love her role as assistant to undertaker Dr. Duncan Gray and Detective Hugh McCreadie. Mallory, Gray, and McCreadie are on their way to the Scottish Highlands for McCreadie's younger sister's wedding. The McCreadies and the groom's family, the Cranstons, have a complicated history, but their estate is beautiful so Gray and Mallory decide to escape the stifling company and explore, discovering that the groom, Archie Cranston, a slightly pompous and prickly man, has set up deadly traps in the woods for the endangered Scottish wildcats. Soon they come across a cat who's been caught and severely injured, but the cat's injuries don't match up with the intricacies of the trap. These strange irregularities, combined with the secretive and erratic behavior of the groom, put Mallory and Duncan on edge. And then a guest is murdered....

Barclay, Linwood. [Whistle](#) (Harper \$30) is the Canadian bestseller's 25th book and a departure worthy of Stephen King and Dean Koontz. Annie wrote and illustrated a Sandra Boynton sort of children's book featuring Pierce the Penguin. Unexpectedly it became iconic, children loving the bird who against the odds manages to fly. Unfortunately one young fan in NYC made himself cardboard wings and launched himself off a high balcony. Unlike Pierce, he did not fly, leaving Annie a wreck. Then her beloved husband is run down. Ruined by grief, she accepts her editor's offer of a retreat upstate in Lucknow. But the sleepy town has a shop, Choo-Choo Trains. Its elderly owner, train nerd Edwin Nabler, aka "Mr. Choo," looks unthreatening with his engineer's cap and vest emblazoned with railroad logos. But for those who have second sight, as one of the novel's characters does, he does not look insignificant; he looks like a ravening rat/coyote mix. Mr. Choo brings woe to Lucknow's residents by selling enchanted trains to them. A flood of deaths follow. Why? Grab your copy to find out what Nabler is up to and why Annie and her curious young son are caught in his web. Note: the book and publishing world stuff however are real.

* Bauer, Belinda. [The Impossible Thing](#) (Atlantic \$27) is another of the terrific British novels, mystery and more, out this spring. The *NY Times* gives it a rave, starting by asking "Who wants to read a novel about the trade in rare birds' eggs that thrived in England in the first half of the 20th Century but is now illegal?" Clearly reviewer Sarah Lyall, but Bauer has long been admired for her work. So start in 1926 Yorkshire when young Celie plucks a guillemot egg (look it up) from the side of a cliff. It pulls her family from poverty, gives her a surprising future. Skip forward to Wales where young Nick has just been robbed by thieves of

something in the attic... a mysterious red egg. Sarah ends her reviews with “My favorite characters, the one I cheered for the most, was the guillemot. The book’s final moments belong to her.” Irresistible, no? Certainly to those who read Deanne Raybourn’s Veronica Speedwell series.

Binet, Laurent. [Perspectives](#) (Farrar Strauss \$28). “It begins, naturally, with murder. As 1557 dawns, the aging painter Jacopo da Pontormo is found dead in front of the frescoes he has been laboring over for 11 years in the chapel of San Lorenzo, a chisel plunged into his heart. Cosimo de’ Medici, the Duke of Florence, assigns his trusted adviser Vasari to get to the bottom of the case. As the investigation unfolds, so too does the variegated tapestry that is 1550s Florentine society, laid bare in the 176 letters that make up the novel. Everyone seems to have a motive, from the nuns who loathe Pontormo’s “obscene” paintings to the disgruntled color grinder who organizes nighttime meetings to agitate for better workers’ rights. Then there’s the clue found at the scene of the crime: Part of one fresco has been skillfully but incongruously repainted, which implicates a whole cadre of fellow artists all experimenting with the new style that will one day become known as Mannerism.

“To complicate matters further, a scandalous painting is found in Pontormo’s studio that depicts the goddess Venus in a “lascivious” pose, with a face that looks suspiciously like that of Cosimo’s 17-year-old daughter, Maria. This painting becomes the center of a scheme to weaken Cosimo’s reputation, and Benvenuto Cellini, sculptor, goldsmith and all-around scoundrel, is hired to steal it — a choice that leads to some of the most hilarious high jinks in the book.... What’s moving, in the end, is the novel’s sheer enthusiasm for the act of making art, which seems to be the only thing spoken about with unironic passion.”

Boneta, Diego. [The Undoing of Alejandro Velasco](#) (Crossing \$16.95). After the heir to a Mexican business dynasty dies at UCLA, his best friend travels to his home in San Miguel de Allende with hopes of ferreting out the murderer. There, Boneta’s hero falls for his dead friend’s sister and learns that the family business isn’t as legitimate as it seems. What begins in a *Saltburn* vein has a series of shocking secrets up its sleeve.

* Chibnall, Chris. [Death at the White Hart](#) (Michael Joseph UK \$29.99). *Broadchurch* creator Chibnall flexes his talents for characterization and complex plotting in his engrossing first novel, our **May British Crime Club Pick**. Detective Sergeant Nicola Bridge, 38, has recently transferred from the Liverpool CID to her childhood home of Fleetcombe, a small West Dorset village. She hopes the transfer will bring her a quieter work life that doesn’t put additional strain on her fraying marriage. Almost as soon as she arrives, however, Nicola is assigned to investigate a murder: the bloody body of Jim Tiernan, landlord of the White Hart pub, has been discovered tied to a chair in the middle of the road, a huge crown of deer antlers attached to his head. As Nicola and her rookie DC, Harry Ward, examine the theatrical murder, they discover an undercurrent of crime, lies, and cruelty flowing just beneath Fleetcombe’s placid surface. Nicola is an exceptionally well-rounded sleuth whose personal challenges—including her philandering husband—help explain her aptitudes as a sensitive and skilled observer. As in his TV work, Chibnall gives equal depth to his supporting cast, making the potentially familiar premise feel lived-in and consequential.

This UK edition is for the BCC members. The unsigned

US edition [Death at the White Hart](#) (Penguin Publishing \$30) publishes in June.

Clark, Lucy. [The Surf House](#) (Grove Atlantic \$28). It’s hard to resist the location of this gripping voice and beautiful landscape — a remote surfing haven high on the cliffs in Morocco filled with various ex-pats and blessed with sun, waves, and a welcoming community. High fashion model Bea suffers a break on a shoot in Marrakesh, gets lost in the maze of alleys, is attacked by two men and saved by a woman with a knife. Bea kills one of the men. Marnie offers her a refuge at her coastal guest house but a cop demands a payoff. Desperate for the funds, Bea agrees to dig into the disappearance of a new arrival’s sister year earlier, after which.... This is melodrama but the landscapes and surfing culture offer something different.

Connolly, John. [The Children of Eve](#) (Atria \$29.99). See Signed books. Our US copies come with a special bookmark from Connolly.

Cummins, Jeanine. [Speak to Me of Home](#) (Holt \$29.99). Cummins’ 2020 novel [American Dirt](#) (\$17.99) nearly sank under a social media firestorm about whether she was entitled to write of an immigrant experience. Her life was threatened. Her book tour, a stop here, was cancelled. Nonetheless it became an Oprah Pick and bestseller, as often do books raising controversy. Cummins returns with a story rooted in Puerto Rico and three generations that asks, how can three women who share geography and genetics have such wildly different ideas of where they come from? And, more important, can they discover a common language to find their way back home?

Curtis, Aaron John. [Old School Indian](#) (Zando \$28). **Our first 15 copies come with a set of recipe cards.**

In a much heralded debut, we meet Abe Jacobs, a Kanien’kehá:ka from Ahkwesáhsne—or, as white people say, a Mohawk Indian from the Saint Regis Tribe. At eighteen, Abe left the reservation where he was raised and never looked back. Now forty-three, Abe is suffering from a rare disease—one his doctors in Miami believe will kill him. Running from his diagnosis and a failing marriage, Abe returns to the Rez, where he’s persuaded to undergo a healing at the hands of his Great Uncle Budge. But Budge—a wry, recovered alcoholic prone to wearing punk T-shirts—isn’t all that convincing. And Abe’s time off the Rez has made him a thorough skeptic. To heal, Abe will undertake a revelatory journey, confronting the parts of himself he’s hidden ever since he left home and learning to cultivate hope, even at his darkest hour.

Dallas, Sandra. [Tough Luck](#) (St Martins \$28). Not every Western is by Cormac McCarthy. Here in an homage to *True Grit*, a young woman makes a perilous journey west in 1863 in search of her gold-mining father. After escaping an orphanage, Haidie Richards and her brother Boots journey to Colorado Territory, encountering treacherous challenges, unlikely allies, and the truth about their father, while Haidie devises a daring plan to claim their future. Dallas has long been one of my favorite authors. If you have missed her fabulous [The Persian Pickle Club](#) (\$18), waste no time but grab a copy of this sly and groundbreaking 1930s novel set in Kansas where gossip is fun but overlies something darker.

David, Arvind Ethan. [Trouble is My Business](#) (Pantheon Graphic Library \$29), illustrated by Ilias Kyriazis, is a graphic novel adaptation of Raymond Chandler’s novella featuring his hard-boiled

fiction classic detective Phillip Marlowe. Satisfying new attention is also brought to George, the Black chauffeur only glancingly described in the original. Some of you may know David from his Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency Series. Join Patrick and Jen Johans for a virtual event on May 21 at 5:00 PM with David discussing this new version of a classic.

Deitch, Hannah. [Killer Potential](#) (Morrow \$28.99). Unread by me, but Indie Next recommends a debut about "An SAT tutor who stumbles upon a brutal murder in the home of her rich employers, immediately becomes the prime suspect, and embarks on a wild cross-country ride with a mysterious, alluring woman found bound at the scene. Staying one step ahead of the law requires guts, brains, and trust." The publishers adds, take note, that this is "a thriller that asks timely questions about our belief in the romance of social mobility, and how the stories we're sold about our potential can shape the course of our lives."

Flower, Amanda. [Not They Who Soar](#) (Kensington \$27). Flower's dazzling second mystery featuring Wilbur and Orville Wright's sister, Katharine, the sequel to [To Slip the Bonds of the Earth](#) (\$17.95), is even better than the first. In 1904, Katharine travels from Ohio to St. Louis to attend the World's Fair with her best friend, Margaret Meacham. Though the expo features an aeronautical competition, Katharine's brothers have stayed home, convinced they can't compete with the lineup of hot air balloons. Shortly after Katharine arrives at the St. Louis train station, a breathless young woman fleeing a group of men asks for her help, then dashes away. Katharine pushes the encounter from her mind—until she finds the young woman dying near a Brazilian pilot's sabotaged balloon. The stranger's final words, "aeronautic competition," move Katharine and Margaret to dig into the fair's seedy underbelly. Flower plays scrupulously fair with readers, and she continues to mold Katharine into a top-shelf gumshoe without stretching credibility or straying too far from the historical record.

Flowers, Ashley. [The Missing Half](#) (Random House \$30). Sometimes I include a non-recommendation, especially when "celebrity authors" might mislead you. "Crime Junkie" podcaster Flowers teams up with Alex Kiester for a preposterous thriller about two women who try to track down their sisters' killer. Nic Monroe, 24, has been a mess ever since her older sister, Kasey, disappeared seven years ago. Kasey's car was found abandoned 150 miles from her hometown of Mishawaka, Ind., with the driver's door open and her purse on the front seat. The incident occurred two weeks after another young woman, Jules Connor, vanished under eerily similar circumstances. Though the bodies have never been found, police believe that both women were murdered by the same unidentified serial killer. In the present, Jules's sister, Jenna, comes knocking. She suggests the two join forces, and they eventually unearth new information about their sisters' disappearances that stretches credibility to the breaking point. There's a certain soapy thrill in following the plot's melodramatic twists and turns, but they culminate in an absurd finale."

Golden, Christopher. [The Night Birds](#) (St Martins \$29). Golden was in the van of the rise of Horror to popularity and publishing. Here he gathers his cast on a deteriorated, half-sunken freighter ship off the coast of Galveston, Texas. Charlie Book and Ruby Cahill have history. After their love ended in heartbreak years

ago, they never expected to see each other again. Now, as part of his work for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Book lives aboard the derelict *Christabel*. Over many years, a massive forest of mangrove trees has grown up through the deck of the ship, creating a startlingly beautiful enigma Book calls the Floating Forest. As a powerful storm churns through the Gulf, he intends to sleep on board as usual. But when he arrives at the dock, he's stunned to find Ruby there waiting for him. And she's not alone. With her are a mysterious woman and her infant child, asking Book to hide them safely aboard the *Christabel* while they're on the run. Only it isn't the police who are after them, it's a coven of witches the woman, Mae, has fled, stealing away the helpless infant for whom the coven had hideous plans...or so Mae claims....

Other new titles in Horror this month include: Demchuk, David. [The Butcher's Daughter](#) (Soho \$27.95). Durbin, Frederic S. [Country Under Heaven](#) (Melville House \$20.99). Grant, Mira. [Overgrowth](#) (Tor \$28.99). Iglesias, Gabino. [Zero Saints](#) (\$17.99). Serafini, Matt. [Feeders](#) (Gallery \$18.99). And of course Stephen King as shown below.

Goldis, Jaelyn. [The Safari](#) (Atria \$28.99). Odelia Babel, the 64-year-old CEO of billion-dollar luxury brand Circ, invites her family and her best friend to the Leopard Sands estate in South Africa, where she plans to marry Asher Bach, a much younger fashion designer. Odelia's three grown children are skeptical of the union, and concerned about what it might mean for their inheritances. The morning of the ceremony, Odelia is found dead. Suspicion immediately falls on her son, Sam, with whom she had a nasty fight the night before. But readers know that Odelia had already been receiving threatening letters, and it's gradually revealed that resentments have long been building within the Babel family. The setting is evocative,

Hincenbergs, Sue. [The Retirement Plan](#) (Morrow \$30). The Toronto author's debut has a nifty premise: Three best friends turn to murder to collect their husband's life insurance policies and retire together, martinis in hand. BUT, the husbands have a plan of their own which also includes a hitman. Alas she is in Canada so we cannot get it signed but we will include our Canadian Author bookmark.

Here is a Starred Review: "Canadian TV producer Hincenbergs delivers a sure-footed and deeply funny debut that revolves around a group of friends in their 60s. Five years before the start of the novel, couples Pam and Hank, Shalisa and Andre, Nancy and Larry, and Marlene and Dave lost their life savings in the same misguided investment. In the aftermath, each partner's seldom voiced resentments have put major strains on their marriages. When Dave dies in an apparent accident, his friends are distraught—particularly the husbands. For the last four years, they've been siphoning money from the casino where two of them work with the intention of replacing the money they lost. To them, Dave's death could only be a murder orchestrated by the casino's new boss, who has ties to organized crime in India. The wives, meanwhile, are inspired by the million-dollar life insurance payout Dave's widow, Marlene, receives, and launch a scheme of their own. Readers will turn the pages with glee as the interests of the desperate husbands and determined wives collide with a pack of Mumbai gangsters and a dog-loving private investigator."

* Horowitz, Anthony. [Marble Hall Murders](#) (Harper \$28.99). The always-meta Horowitz delivers another twisty whodunit that toys with the mechanics of the genre. Susan Ryeland has been hired to edit the unfinished manuscript for iconic fictional detective Atticus Pund's final case. Buried in the text are clues to a possible real-life murder—which gain urgency when the person who put them there turns up dead. This is a long and deliciously complex book, and Horowitz makes it all go down as easy as a glass of lemonade.

Iggulden, Conn. [Tyrant](#) (Pegasus \$27.95). British historical blockbuster author Iggulden writes of Emperor Nero in a trilogy, of which this is Book Two. Agrippina secures her son Lucius' fate through her marriage to Emperor Claudius. Though more intelligent than her previous husbands—and with a power that is absolute—for a time she bends her husband to her will. Claudius is gentle as a lamb with a rope around its neck. So it is that Lucius is adopted into the imperial family and becomes Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus. But this is merely the first of many moves in the game of power. Those of you who were riveted by Sir Derek Jacobi's performance in *I, Claudius*, will enjoy revisiting Ancient Rome, 50 AD.

* Jenner, Natalie. [Austen at Sea](#) (St Martins \$29) is set just after the Civil War as a handful of American book-lovers journey to England by sea to meet Jane Austen's last remaining sibling, an aging sea captain now in his 90s who is hoping to preserve his sister's legacy before he passes away. "Unexpected friendships form, romance blossoms, and deception lurks in this heartfelt story that Austen herself would certainly have loved... If you've ever found sustenance in a Jane Austen novel—or sought meaning in your own life through the power of books—this is the novel you've been waiting for."—Kristin Harmel. Our copies come with a colorful art print sent to us by the Canadian author.

King, Stephen. [Never Flinch](#) (Scribner \$32). King cements PI Holly Gibney's status as one of the great contemporary detectives in this thrilling sequel to [Holly](#) (\$19.99). When a letter arrives at the Buckeye City Police Department proclaiming that "the INNOCENT should be punished for the needless DEATH of an innocent," detective Izzy Jaynes is rattled. Soon afterward, a series of random citizens turn up murdered, each of them clasp a paper printed with the names of unknown people, and Izzy pulls her friend Holly, of the Finders Keepers detective agency, onto the case. Meanwhile, as controversial feminist writer and speaker Kate McKay embarks on a national tour, she and her assistant are targeted for assassination by far-right extremists. When Holly is hired to be part of Kate's security team, her two cases intertwine, and she works with Izzy and Kate to bring the bloodshed to a halt. Holly shines as a quirky but lovable beacon of hope amid the plot's grisly violence, and King never lets his Rube Goldberg-esque plot overshadow his characters' humanity. Elegantly structured and sharply written, this moody mystery from the master of horror is a must-read.

* Lawton, John. [Smoke and Embers](#) (Grove \$28). The intricate ninth installment in Lawton's series featuring Scotland Yard inspector Frederick Troy tracks the fates of nearly a dozen Europeans during the desperate final months of WWII. The action opens in 1950, with London still in a postwar depression. Troy's brother, Rod, has been reelected as an MP for the Labour Party, thanks in part to generous donations from war racketeer

Otto Ohnherz and his consigliere, Jay Fabian, who claims to be an Auschwitz survivor—though Troy suspects him of being a Russian agent. The novel then rewinds to 1945 Poland, where Sam Fabian, a physicist and Polish Jew, survives Auschwitz and is recruited as a translator for the Russians in Berlin. There, he trades identities with Nazi deserter Klaus von Niegutt, who changes his fake name from "Sam" to "Jay" and heads for London. After Ohnherz dies in the 1950s timeline, Jay apparently falls off a roof to his death, but his past is so dense with deceptions and aliases that Troy suspects murder. Short chapters and snappy dialogue help speed the kaleidoscopic narrative along, though not at the expense of character development or emotional power.

Li, Christina. [The Manor of Dreams](#) (Avid Reader \$28.99). *Mexican Gothic* meets *The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo* in Christina Li's haunting novel about the secrets that lie in wait in the crumbling mansion of a former Hollywood starlet, and the intertwined fates of the two Chinese American families fighting to inherit it. Vivian Yin is dead. The first Chinese actress to win an Oscar, the trailblazing ingénue rose to fame in the eighties, only to disappear from the spotlight at the height of her career to live out the rest of her life as a recluse.

Now her remaining family members are gathered for the reading of her will, and her daughters expect to inherit their childhood home: Vivian's grand, sprawling, Southern California garden estate. But due to a last-minute change to the will, the house is passed on to another family instead—one that has suddenly returned after decades of estrangement.

"I wanted to write a story about a house that had a tragic past," Li says. "I based it off the origin story of Stanford University." The author, who graduated with a master's degree from Stanford in 2022, recalls learning in an Asian American art history class about the school's founder, who gained wealth during the Gilded Age from exploiting Chinese laborers who worked on the transcontinental railroad. I add that a case has been made for the murder of Jane Stanford, Leland's widow. We who attended the university in the late 1950s operated under "Mrs. Stanford's will," which laid down strict rules including a dress code for women and a 10:00 PM curfew.

Merson, KA. [The Language of the Birds](#) (Ballantine \$30). This debut is impressive, imaginative, and challenging even for experienced solvers of ciphers and clues, a treat for fans of puzzles and if you put in the work, a lesson in decoding word-based challenges. There are lots of diagrams to enjoy. So it's not a fast-paced thriller but there are excellent payoffs. Especially recommended to fans of Danielle Trussoni and even to those of *The DaVinci Code* although it's much more challenging. An extra treat is the wide tour around Death Valley and west into California. Great landscapes. And love the dog.

Seventeen-year-old Arizona's favorite things include cryptography, geocaching, the writings of Jules Verne—and exploring the Sierra Nevadas on her Russian Ural motorcycle, with her dog Mojo riding shotgun in his sidecar. She's not, in other words, your average teenager—in short, neurodivergent. So when she learns her mother's been kidnapped and finds a cryptic test accompanying the ransom note, she's not just horrified—but electrified. Solving puzzles and cracking codes are what she does best, and she knows exactly how to tackle the challenge the kidnappers are dangling in front of her. What she doesn't yet

realize is that she's been enlisted in a treasure hunt, on the trail of an occult, centuries-old secret her father supposedly took to his grave. And if the prize at the end is real, it could shake the world.

* Morris, Jenny. [An Ethical Guide to Murder](#) (Mira \$30) has a high concept. Thea has a secret. She can tell how long someone has left to live just by touching them. Not only that, but she can transfer life from one person to another—something she finds out the hard way when her best friend, Ruth, suffers a fatal head injury on a night out. Desperate to save her, Thea accidentally kills the man responsible and lets his life flow directly into Ruth. Thea comes to understand that she has a godlike power, but how to use it quickly becomes a question of self-control. Is it really so wrong to take a little life from a bad person—say, a very annoying boss—and gift it to someone who's truly good? Realizing she needs to harness her newfound skills, Thea creates an Ethical Guide to Murder. But as she embarks on her mission to punish the wicked and give the deserving more time, how can she really know who deserves to live and die, and can she figure out her own rules before Ruth's borrowed time runs out?

* North, Alex. [The Man Made of Smoke](#) (Celadon \$27.99). I like this new North better than his earlier books, probably because for me it read much more about character than gruesome crimes—not that targeting children isn't heinous. But how this plays out is satisfying. When Daniel Garvie was 12, he narrowly escaped the notorious Pied Piper killer at a highway rest stop before encountering a boy who'd soon become one of the Piper's many victims. Decades later, Daniel has forged a career in criminal psychology and remains obsessed with the case. It also became an object of fascination for Daniel's policeman father, John, who spent much of his retirement trying to crack it. When Daniel learns that John has died by suicide, he returns to the unnamed island where he grew up to follow breadcrumbs his father left behind. As Daniel pieces together John's clues to a new string of murders, he learns that all of the recent victims were present at the same rest stop where he once fled the serial child killer. "North toggles smoothly between Daniel's present-day inquiry, John's sleuthing in the past, and the final days of a young boy named James."

Segaloff, Nat. [The Rambo Report](#) (Kensington \$29). Whether you are a reader of *First Blood*, the book that inspired the Rambo films, or other works by David Morrell (we here are serious Morrell fans), this excellent and deeply researched study of the books and films puts them in an historical context that for anyone who lived through the second half of the 20th Century in America is well worth reading. Despite present day mythology, those decades right up to the present were not those of a unified country or a united golden age but full of rifts and upheavals. I, born in 1940, can well attest to this. Segaloff does a brilliant job putting the idea of a "hero" of the times forward and in context, and explains the enduring pull of Rambo (which even became a verb).

David, who wrote the book's Foreword, writes to me that he read the book for accuracy. And adds, "I think it's an informative book not only for Rambo fans but for students of American culture and film history." Although this is NonFiction I include it among the new fiction because it relates to such a significant thriller.

Teller, Danielle. [Forged](#) (Pegasus \$27.95) takes you into the Gilded Age devious schemes of the brilliant but ruthless Fanny

Bartlett, a.k.a. Kitty Warren, initially a naïve young woman who is cast out the preyed upon, but quickly learns how to survive and thrive. "With an exacting eye for detail, Teller takes the reader on a whirlwind tour from the frigid Canadian wilderness to the booming steel towns of the American Midwest to the glittering metropolises of New York and Paris. Despite her flaws, "Kitty" emerges as an endlessly captivating enigma, by turns vulnerable and calculating, driven as much by her love for another woman as by her desire to prove herself equal to—or better than—the mercenary men who dominate her world. You can't help but root for her, even at her worst, knowing all the while that sooner or later her past will catch up with her." Think of Tom Ripley here.

Ventura, Maud. [Make Me Famous](#) (Harper \$30). Ventura paints the backstory of a child/teen/young woman totally fixed on being famous no matter the cost. Angst-ridden pop star Cleo Louvent's narration is as irresistible as her singing voice. Then move to an exclusive island in the South Pacific, where Cleo has traveled to work on her next record. There, she reflects on her rise to stardom by taking measure of her determination to stay on top of the charts no matter the cost: "Extreme notoriety unleashed in me a beast, merciless and cruel.... Fame is a war trophy, and no one is ever ready to give it up." Then Ventura pulls it all together with a shocking and deeply satisfying ending. It really is a stunner!

Vidich, Paul. [The Poet's Game](#) (Pegasus \$27.95) draws you into a spy game hall of mirrors with Russia on one side and the CIA on the other. Alex Matthews thought he had left it all behind: his CIA career, the viper's den of bureaucracy at headquarters, the deceptions of the cat-and-mouse game of double agents, and the sudden trips to Russia, which poisoned his marriage and made him an absentee husband and father, with tragic results—his wife and daughter are killed in an accident.. But then the Director came asking for a favor. Something that only Alex could do because it involved the asset Byron—a Russian agent whom Alex had recruited. Byron had something of great interest to the CIA. Alex, having rebuilt his life and found love anew with Anna, can't quite shake off a vestige of the patriotism that fueled him. So he reluctantly (and unfortunately) agrees.... Alongside the plot Vidich is asking what does it take to be a spy, and what does that life cost?

* Weir, Alison. [The Cardinal](#) (Random House \$32). Cardinal Thomas Wolsey enjoyed one of the most meteoric careers in history. His rise from humble beginnings coincided with young Henry VIII's ascension to the throne in 1509. The two grew to be cherished friends, and by 1515 Wolsey, now a cardinal, had become the controlling figure in all matters of church and state. And as with anyone rising high in a Tudor Court, he was bound for a tragic fall. Here is his story.

Also by Weir and staying in her lane: [The Passionate Tudor](#) (\$30) recounts the sad life of Henry's elder daughter, Mary, with his first wife Catherine of Aragon, who upon coming to the throne when her brother died, ruthlessly pursued returning England to Catholicism, earning the sobriquet "Bloody Mary" by burning hundreds of her subjects at the stake.

Wheeler, Clare Anderson. [The Gatsby Gambit](#) (Penguin \$30). April marked Fitzgerald's novel's 100th birthday. Here is a riff on it. Greta Gatsby, Jay's younger sister, is thrilled to be returning to her brother's home after finishing school, and unsurprised to discover he has houseguests: Tom and Daisy Buchanan, Nick

Carraway, and Jordan Baker. All of them are surprised, though, when Tom ends up dead. The initial verdict is suicide, but Greta's not so sure, and her investigation uncovers a number of dark secrets above and below stairs. As Greta searches for the killer, it becomes clear that someone is determined to keep the truth hidden.

In a related release, Nghi Vo's [Don't Sleep with the Dead](#) (Tor \$24.95), a novella, the Hugo Award winner's reimagining of *Gatsby* presents Nick Carraway and Jay Gatsby as you've never seen them before in "a vibrant and queer reinvention of the Jazz Age classic."—NPR

Woods, Kell. [Upon a Starlit Tide](#) (Tor \$28.99). This gorgeously imagined historical fantasy is an absolute winner for readers of Jen-Luc Bannalec's [modern mysteries](#) set in France's Brittany, or for those who became interested in St. Malo when reading Anthony Doerr's blockbuster [All the Light We Cannot See](#) (\$18.99) with so much of the story set in St. Malo. It doesn't hurt that the cover and the end papers wrapping the story are gorgeous too.

St Malo, Brittany, 1758, is a fabled port with fabled sea defenses, and home to wealthy corsairs and merchants. It's also a target, or its ships are, in on-going wars with Britain. The household of the Léons, one of the wealthiest clans, is a magnificent estate outside the city. The Lion himself, somewhat self made but married up, has three daughters. He favors the youngest, Lucinde, whom he calls his treasure. She however longs for the sea, to sail the wide world, and suffers from her misshapen painful feet. One early morning after a storm she's stolen to the beach, rescues a drowning man off a shipwreck, and events propel her to imagine a different life. How different you will see. This is the kind of fairy tale with sharp teeth, not cozy, and is beautifully written. Plus you learn a lot by osmosis.

NEW NONFICTION

Arkush, Michael. [Golf 100: A Spirited Ranking of the Greatest Players of All Time](#) (Knopf \$30). Having watched the roller-coaster that was Rory McElroy's win at The Masters despite four double bogeys, I am moved to bring this joyride through golf history to your attention as well as athletes like Nancy Lopez, Lee Trevino, along with familiar names like Nicklaus and Woods. I won't reveal the golfer Arkush anoints as the GOAT but for me it will always be Jack Nicklaus, not just for his prowess on the links but for his exemplary character. Even if you never long for a tee time at St. Andrews, Augusta, or Nebraska's surprising golf nirvana.

Choi, Anne Soon. [LA Coroner](#) (Third State Books \$29.95) is a gripping true crime biography of Dr. Thomas Noguchi, the controversial "Coroner to the Stars," who performed the autopsies of Marilyn Monroe, Robert F. Kennedy, Natalie Wood, and hundreds of other notable personalities. is the first-ever "life" of Dr. Thomas Noguchi, the Chief Medical Examiner–Coroner of Los Angeles County from 1967 to 1982. Throughout his illustrious career, Dr. Noguchi conducted the official autopsies of some of the most high-profile figures of his time including Marilyn Monroe, Robert F. Kennedy, and Natalie Wood. His elaborate press conferences, which often generated more controversy than they did answers, catapulted him into the public eye. Noguchi was also the inspiration for the popular 1970s–80s television drama *Quincy, M.E.*, starring Jack Klugman. Featuring never-before-

published details about Noguchi's most controversial cases, this bio is of interest to all True Crime readers.

Gallot, Benoit. [The Secret Life of a Cemetery](#) (Graystone Publishing \$28.95). As I am heading to Paris in May this beautifully photographed book is a must read. And why not also for you? "Père Lachaise is best explored without a guide: You're guaranteed to lose your way. You'll feel as though you've stepped out of time, out of Paris, and into another place entirely. In his debut memoir, Gallot, head curator of Père Lachaise and son of a grave stonemason, pulls back the curtains on his otherworldly workplace—a cemetery crammed with tourists in the high season and mourners year round, but also a natural paradise, where foxes roam, birds flit between trees, and wildflowers and moss encroach onto tombstones. In elegant, engrossing chapters, Gallot reveals the secret world of Père Lachaise—its Napoleonic origins, its unusual graves and monuments—alongside touching stories from his working life in the cemetery." Actually cemeteries are amazing places to visit when you travel, so many stories, and often beautiful art.

Hammer, Joshua. [The Mesopotamian Riddle](#) (Simon & Schuster \$29.95). I love this. On paper, upper-class Henry Rawlinson, a British diplomat in Baghdad, had little in common with Austen Layard, a law clerk turned archeologist, and Edward Hincks, a curmudgeonly Irish clergyman. But what Rawlinson, Layard, and Hincks did share was a fascination with the Middle East. By the mid-19th century, when the discovery of Assyrian palaces led to thousands of inscribed tablets from the Assyrian royal library, the civilization of ancient Mesopotamia had been "almost entirely forgotten." Scholars in the 1840s still were not sure whether cuneiform was a Semitic language, or exactly which culture it belonged to. The "rediscovery of this lost civilization... seized the public's imagination" and led to the Royal Asiatic Society arranging a competition to see who could most accurately translate a relic "inscribed with eight hundred lines of tiny cuneiform characters." Layard and Rawlinson both traveled in what is now Iraq and Iran, uncovering treasures on archeological digs, while Hincks, who had limited resources, translated from Ireland via the casts and impressions of artifacts created by others. Reading about their adventurous efforts, their "feat of analysis, intuition, and stamina," and seeing cuneiform interspersed in the book's text is truly fascinating. Finally, the Mesopotamian Riddle had been solved.

You can read [this other super rave](#) as well and I point out this is a gripping read for any fans of Victorian fiction including, say, by Deanna Raybourn.

* Latour, Pippa with Jude Dobson. [The Last Secret Agent](#) (St Martins \$30). This posthumously published memoir is claimed to be "the incredible true story of the last surviving British SOE woman operative in WWII," who parachuted into occupied France in 1944 to wage sabotage and subversion behind Nazi lines. Those of you who have read say Susan Elia MacNeal or Cara Black's two spy thrillers will love this, and those who have not will learn much from the story of the much-decorated Pippa who took the official Secrets Act seriously until telling her story to Dobson. She was able to grow old and died in October of 2023. There is some excellent material here for fans of Rhys Bowen and especially of Jacqueline Winspear (FANYs are mentioned).

Interestingly St Martins is also publishing under the Pen and Sword imprint in September a biography, [Phyllis Latour](#) (\$39.95), a life of Latour written by Gabrielle McDonald-Rothwell, a journalist and war historian, and presumably not written with Pippa. It would be interesting to compare them: memory on the one hand, research on the other.

Leslie, Ian. [John & Paul: A Love Story in Songs](#) (Celadon \$32). John Lennon and Paul McCartney knew each other for twenty-three years, from 1957 to 1980. Few other musical partnerships have been rooted in such a deep, intense and complicated personal relationship, and traveled so far and so fast. “It is stunning to follow Leslie’s insights into how far and fast John and Paul traveled, how profound their preternatural alliance was, and how epic their heroic journey. I’m sorry John isn’t here to read this book. I hope if Paul does read it he feels the depth of appreciation and gratitude and intelligence it contains.” —*The New York Times*

OUR MAY LARGE PAPERBACK PICKS

Atkins, Ace. [Don’t Let the Devil Ride](#) (\$18.99). Addison McKellar has grown used to her husband Dean’s frequent work-related absences, but after several days pass without a word from him, she worries something bad has happened. Though Dean’s friends and associates at his Memphis construction firm assure Addison she’s overreacting, she follows her father’s advice and hires private investigator Porter Hayes. It doesn’t take long for the former cop and Vietnam vet to discover that Dean is not the man he claims to be, kick-starting a globe-trotting adventure involving a B-movie actress, Russian mobsters, and a suave French criminal, each of whom are after a mysterious cache of holy relics in transit from Turkey to Memphis.

Barclay, Linwood. [I Will Ruin You](#) (\$18.99).). Instructor Richard Boyle successfully talks a former student in a dynamite vest out of carrying out his planned grudge killings only to see him trip over a shoelace as he turns to go and blow himself up. The attacker’s parents sue Richard, charging he didn’t do enough to save their son. Richard is not on the greatest terms with parents, who are already unhappy with him for teaching their kids about cannibalism via Cormac McCarthy’s novel *The Road*. But this turns out to be the least of Richard’s worries after another one-time student, a misfit drug dealer looking to capitalize on Richard’s celebrity, demands \$10,000 not to tell everyone that the teacher fondled him as coach of the wrestling team. Richard’s desperate efforts to avoid the false charge only draw him in deeper, eventually linking him to a murder and threatening his marriage. “I think the only thing we can accuse Richard of is being an idiot,” says his sister-in-law, a police officer. The immensely clever and talented Barclay takes on book censorship and both school and gun violence and forges them into another of his amazing thrillers.

Bowen, Sarina. [Dying to Meet Your](#) (Harper \$18.99). An irresistible voice and a strong plot make this a winner. Rowan Gallagher is a devoted single mother and a talented architect with a high-profile commission restoring an historic mansion for the most powerful family in Maine. But inside, she’s a mess. She knows that stalking her ex’s avatar all over Portland on her FriendFinder app isn’t the healthiest way to heal from their breakup. But she’s out of ice cream and she’s sick of romcoms. Watching his every move is both fascinating and infuriating. He’s

dining out while she’s wallowing on the couch. The last straw comes when he parks in their favorite spot on the waterfront. In a weak moment, she leashes the dog and sets off to see who else is in his car. Instead of catching her ex in a kiss, Rowan becomes the first witness to his murder—and the primary suspect. But Rowan isn’t the only one keeping secrets. As she digs for the truth, she discovers the dead man was stalking her too....

Connelly, Michael. [The Waiting](#) (\$19.99). LAPD Detective Renée Ballard of the LAPD’s Open-Unsolved Unit tracks a serial rapist whose trail has gone cold, and enlists a new volunteer to the Open-Unsolved Unit: patrol officer Maddie Bosch, Harry Bosch’s daughter. The arrested man is only twenty-four, so the genetic link must be familial: His father was the Pillowcase Rapist, responsible for a five-year reign of terror in the City of Angels. But when Ballard and her team move in on their suspect, they encounter a baffling web of secrets and legal hurdles. See Signed Books for a new Connelly character and possible series start.

Doiron, Paul. [Pitch Dark](#) (\$18).). Legendary bush pilot Josie Jonson can’t believe her luck when a skilled builder shows up after she purchases land near Prentiss Pond. All Mark Redmond asks in return for building Josie’s dream cabin is that he be left alone to home school his 12-year-old daughter, Cady. For Maine game warden investigator Mike Bowditch, the intensity of Redmond’s secretiveness is troubling. There’s suspicious criminal activity being reported around the area—including rumors of an armed man offering large sums of money in exchange for the location of Redmond and Cady. Josie, though hesitant to violate the trust of her prized builder, eventually agrees to fly Mike and his father-in-law, retired warden Charley Stevens, to the secluded pond in an attempt to protect Redmond and Cady. But hours after landing, the trip takes a dark turn when they witness a horrific murder and are taken captive themselves. Freeing himself, Mike is forced to set off through the impenetrable Maine forest towards Canada, alone and unarmed in pursuit of a mysterious fugitive.

Finlay, Alex. [If Something Happens to Me](#) (\$19) is a tightly coiled spintangler about a law student under suspicion for his high school girlfriend’s disappearance. Five years ago, while Ryan Richardson and his girlfriend, Alison Lane, were on a date, Ryan fell unconscious and Alison vanished. After Ryan woke up, he recovered vague memories of being attacked by a man with a missing finger, but the residents of Leavenworth, Kans., quickly came to suspect him of killing Alison. Now, Ryan has changed his name and fled Leavenworth for law school. He’s on a summer trip to Italy when he learns that Alison’s car has been discovered in a Kansas lake—but her remains are nowhere to be found. Instead, the waterlogged vehicle contains the skeletons of two unknown men and a cryptic note from Alison. In Tuscany, Ryan catches a glimpse of a man who resembles his and Alison’s possible attacker and ends up chasing him across Europe. Meanwhile, back in Kansas, the deputy who recovered Alison’s car traces the case to unexpected corners of Philadelphia. As in Finlay’s previous novels, relentless pacing, impressive characterizations, and the author’s knack for surprise combine to produce top-shelf entertainment and was our June 2024 Crime Book of the Month

* Goodman, Alison. [The Ladies Road Guide to Utter Ruin](#) (Penguin \$19). is the second chapter in the adventures of Lady Augusta and Lady Julia Colebrook, those twin Wonder Women

of Regency England. “Things have continued to move rapidly in the three weeks since Gus and Julia spirited Lady Hester Belford from the asylum in which she was imprisoned in [The Benevolent Society of Ill-Mannered Ladies](#) (\$19)—our bestselling historical fiction paperback—and stashed her and her companion, Elizabeth Grant, in their home. Lady Hester’s brother and guardian, Lord Deelee, is on the hunt for her, and her other brother, Lord Evan, can do little to protect her, since he’s still supposed to be banished for a duel he fought 20 years ago. And the fugitives’ presence has to be kept secret from the twins’ dunderheaded brother, Lord Duffield, who’s more than eager to help his old friend Lord Deelee. As if their sense of oppression by the patriarchy weren’t intense enough, Gus and Julia soon get the word that their guests’ woes may be linked to the Exalted Brethren of Rack and Ruin, a gentleman’s club that treats women in the vilest ways imaginable, and that thief-taker James Mulholland is hot on the trail of Lord Evan, whose romance with Gus glows all the brighter for the dangers that beset it. Although the twins’ adventures reach an early boiling point only halfway through, they’re best treated not as a standalone or even as a sequel to their splashy debut, but as the latest installment in what’s likely to be a long-running period soap opera, one that the closing episodes promise to continue in France.”—*Kirkus Reviews*. Yay we say. This is a year of Jane Austen and while she wouldn’t have approved of these fiercely feminist ladies, she’d probably have applauded their intentions.

* Harris, CS. [What Cannot Be Said](#) (\$19). July 1815: The Prince Regent’s grandiose plans to celebrate Napoléon’s recent defeat at Waterloo are thrown into turmoil when Lady McInnis and her daughter Emma are found brutally murdered in Richmond Park, their bodies posed in a chilling imitation of the stone effigies once found atop medieval tombs. Bow Street magistrate Sir Henry Lovejoy immediately turns to his friend Sebastian St. Cyr, Viscount Devlin, for help with the investigation. For as Devlin discovers, Lovejoy’s own wife and daughter were also murdered in Richmond Park, their bodies posed in the same bizarre postures. A traumatized ex-soldier was hanged for their killings. So is London now confronting a malicious copyist? Or did Lovejoy help send an innocent man to the gallows?

This is one of Harris’ trickiest plots. I cannot recommend strongly enough you immerse yourselves in this brilliant and gorgeously written [Regency era series](#) – not cozy. The sequel is [Who Will Remember](#) (Berkley \$29); we may still have Signed copies.

Hart, Rob. [Assassins Anonymous](#) (\$19). For those missing the hitmen of Lawrence Sanders and Donald E. Westlake, try this one from Hart. “In a novel packed with explosive fight scenes and non-stop action, Rob Hart has written a fresh, thoughtful and surprisingly self-aware lead character in former assassin Mark, who’s trying to start a new chapter of his life. *Assassins Anonymous* has an emotional center I didn’t expect in a book about a professional killer. I am working on Signed copies of Hart’s sequel, [The Medusa Protocol](#) (Putnam \$30), earning raves too.

Jean, Emiko. [The Return of Ellie Black](#) (\$18.99). Ellie Black, emaciated and traumatized, is found in a Washington state forest two years after she was kidnapped from a parking lot near her hometown. Who took her and how she escaped confound police detective Chelsey Calhoun because Ellie is evading her questions.

The toll her disappearance takes on her parents and high school boyfriend is acutely painted with heartbreak and the anguish that comes with not knowing whether Ellie is alive. Chelsey, who is of Japanese heritage adopted into a white family, carries a double load of challenges as she fends off sexism and racism on the job and in her community while working the case. Like Jessica Knoll, whose crime novels also revolve around missing girls, Jean focuses less on sensationalizing predators and more on the tragedy of a “frenzy of missing girls. They do not give answers. They do not speak of what has come to pass. They whisper: Find us. Please.” Highly recommended.

Johnson, Craig. [First Frost: A Longmire Mystery](#) (\$18). It’s the summer of 1964, and recent college graduates Walt Longmire and Henry Standing Bear read the writing on the wall and enlist to serve in the Vietnam War. As they catch a few final waves in California before reporting for duty, a sudden storm assaults the shores and capsizes a nearby cargo boat. Walt and Henry jump to action, but it’s soon revealed by the police who greet them ashore that the sunken boat carried valuable contraband from underground sources. The boys, in their early twenties and in the peak of their physical prowess from playing college football for the last four years, head out on Route 66. The question, of course, is how far they will get before the consequences of their actions catch up to them—the answer being, not very. Back in the present day, Walt is forced to speak before a Judge following the fatal events of The Longmire Defense. With powerful enemies lurking behind the scenes, the sheriff of Absaroka County faces another pivotal moment, and decision, in his life. The sequel debuts here May 27, see Signed Books.

Ignatius, David. [Phantom Orbit](#) (\$18.99). Ignatius writes fine, low action, character driven spy thrillers which I find akin to the work of Joseph Kanon. Here he expands that universe with a nifty concept that is prescient as well: major powers jockeying for dominance in space. It follows Ivan Volkov, a Russian student in Beijing, who discovers an unsolved puzzle in the writings of the 17th-century astronomer Johannes Kepler. Becoming an unlikely scholarship winner in astronomy at Beijing’s Tsinghua University, Volkov takes the puzzle to Professor Cao Lin, a senior scientist in the Chinese space program, and declares his intention to solve it. The puzzle holds untold consequences for space warfare. While at Tsinghua Volkov briefly romances American student Edith Ryan. He then returns to Moscow, marries, fathers a son who grows up to become a Russian prosecutor, and draws on his research with Cao Lin to become a major figure in Russia’s satellite warfare program. But his personal life craters and he manages to reconnect with Edith—now a CIA analyst—to warn the U.S. of dangerous tactics being utilized by Russian forces that could pose a global threat. “Ignatius alternates chapters between Ivan, Cao Lin, Edith, and Ivan’s son, Dmitry, patiently knitting together their storylines until the high-stakes espionage plot achieves liftoff. This is contemporary cloak-and-dagger intrigue at its finest.” Love this, don’t miss it.

* Khavari, Kate. [The Botanist’s Guide to Society and Secrets](#) (\$19.99). Saffron Everleigh, a botanist specializing in poisonous plants who’s already been involved in solving several murder cases, is struggling to succeed at University College London. Female scholars get precious little respect in the 1920s, and many feel that she’s trading on the name of her well-regarded father. Upon returning from a conference in Paris, Saffron

learns that Adrian Ashton—the brother of her sometime love interest, microbiologist Alexander—is a suspect in the death of a Russian horticulturalist. Her connection with DI Green prompts Alexander to ask her to investigate, and she starts sleuthing. Also involved is her roommate Elizabeth Hale’s brother, Nick, whose claim to work for the Agricultural Ministry is most likely a cover for something more sinister. On top of that, Nick has had mysterious dealings with Alexander in the past that neither man wants to discuss. After another scientist dies from poisoning, Nick talks Saffron into taking an undercover job at the lab where the Russian had been working. And then.... This is a delightful offbeat historical series, not quite cozy, and well researched and told. Look for Signed copies of the sequel [A Botanist’s Guide to Rituals and Revenge](#) (Crooked Lane \$29.99) in June.

* Lewis, David. [A Jewel in the Crown](#) (\$17.95). I absolutely love this debut spy caper. It’s uneven in plot lines but brimming with unusual locations, a mission to save the British Crown jewels in 1940 soon after Dunkirk, and introducing splendid British policewoman, a Socialist unfriendly to the Upper Classes. The priceless artifacts will be secretly removed from the Tower of London and driven north to Scotland by two operatives posing as a young married couple, to be taken from there to Canada (as had the British gold reserves been earlier). Caitrin Colline—a Welsh coalminer’s daughter and an ardent socialist—will play the wife of Lord Marlton, Hector Neville-Percy. A less likely couple to complete this mission is at first difficult to imagine, but as things keep going wrong, possibly for sinister reasons and not merely as snafus, they each prove their mettle. Lewis will sign the sequel, [A Beacon in the Night](#) (Kensington \$27), for us on June 29.

Tintera, Amy. [Listen for the Lie](#) (\$18.99). Against her better judgment, Lucy Chase returns to her hometown of Plumpton, Texas, for her grandmother’s birthday, knowing full well that almost everyone in town still believes she murdered her best friend five years ago, when they were in their early 20s. Coincidentally—or is it?—Ben Owens, a true-crime podcaster, is also in town, interviewing Lucy’s family and former friends about the murder of Savannah Harper, who died from several violent blows to the head. Lucy was found hours later covered in blood, with no memory of what happened. She was—and is—a woman with secrets, which has not endeared her to the people of Plumpton; their narrative is that she was always violent, secretive, difficult. But Ben wants to tell Lucy’s story; attractive and relentless, he uncovers new evidence and coaxes new interviews, and people slowly begin to question whether Lucy is truly guilty. So will you.

Verghese, Abraham. [The Covenant of Water](#) (\$22). “Three generations of a South Indian family are marked by passions and peccadilloes, conditions and ambitions, interventions both medical and divine . . . As in the bestselling and equally weighty [Cutting for Stone](#) (\$19), the fiction debut by Verghese (who’s also a physician), the medical procedures and advances play a central role—scenes of hand surgery and brain surgery are narrated with the same enthusiastic detail as scenes of lovemaking. A few times along this very long journey one may briefly wonder, Is all this really necessary? What a joy to say it is, to experience the exquisite, uniquely literary delight of all the pieces falling into place in a way one really did not see coming....”—*Kirkus Reviews*. Truly the landscape is extraordinary and shapes the story in myriad ways.

Westermann, Vanessa. [Cover Art](#) (Cormorant \$24.95). See Cozies for comments on this delightful debut by a Canadian author set in a small lakeside touristy town rich in art and chocolate. Our hero is in fact a chocolatier. And there is a sequel just out: [Shudder Pulp](#) (\$24.95), once again blending art, murder, and chocolate. I recommend treating yourself to both.

White, Randy Wayne. [One Deadly Eye](#) (\$18.99). Who could better weave the convergence of a 500-year tropical hurricane and the high voltage evil of a deviant crime syndicate than White? This welcome return of Doc Ford hits more powerfully and reads faster than Hurricane Ian. If you weren’t on or near the SW Florida barrier islands around the end of September 2022, now’s your chance....” But beforehand, a Russian diplomat disappears while Doc Ford is tagging great white sharks in South Africa, and members of a criminal brotherhood, Bratva, don’t think it’s a coincidence. They track the biologist to Dinkin’s Bay Marina on the west coast of Florida, where Brotherhood mercenaries have already deployed, prepared to pillage and kill in the wake of Ian’s strike. Doc has a lot at stake—the lives of his fiancée, Hannah Smith, and their son, plus the fate of his hipster pal, Tomlinson, whose sailboat has disappeared in the Gulf of Mexico. Expect a sequel to be Signed here on September 4: [Tomlinson’s Wake](#) (Harper \$29.99).

MORE MAY LARGE PAPERBACKS

Aoyama, Michiko. [What You Are Looking For Is in the Library](#) (Harper \$18.95 Indie Bookstore Edition.). I totally love this book wherein an uncannily prescient librarian is able to match a patron with the perfect book in his or her time of crisis and change a life. This is a special Independent Bookstore edition. A Time Best Book of the Year for 2023. It’s excellent for fans of *Before the Coffee Gets Cold*, another charming, internationally bestselling Japanese novel.

* Archer, Jeffrey. [An Eye for an Eye](#) (\$18.99). Lord Hartley, the latest in a line of peers going back over two hundred years, lies dying. But his will triggers an inheritance with explosive consequences: Two deaths. Continents apart. No obvious connection. So why are they both at the centre of a master criminal’s plot for revenge? And can Scotland Yard’s William Warwick uncover the truth before it’s too late...

Binnings Ewen, Pamela. [The Queen of Paris](#) (Berkley \$17.99) imagines the hidden life of Coco Chanel during the four years of Nazi occupation in Paris in the midst of WWII—as discovered in recently unearthed wartime files. Chanel was a fashion icon, a ruthless businesswoman, and above all, a survivor from early days to the end.

Bradley, Kaliane. [The Ministry of Time](#) (\$18.99). British Cambodian writer Bradley’s clever debut features time travel, romance, cloak-and-dagger plotting, and a critique of the British Empire. The unnamed narrator, who works as a translator for Britain’s Ministry of Defence sometime in the near future, is selected by the government to aid a newly formed agency to process time travelers from the past. Her assigned “expat” is real-life polar explorer Lt. Graham Gore, who has arrived in the future sometime before his death during the ill-fated 1845 Franklin expedition, a mind-bender Bradley deals with by structuring an experimental time travel ministry helping an “expat” stolen from the past adjust to modern life. Don’t question the physics, just go with the flow....

Connolly, John. [The Instruments of Darkness](#) (\$19.99). Maine PI Charlie Parker wrestles with potentially paranormal forces as he tries to determine if a young mother killed her own child. Charlie's friend, attorney Moxie Castin, has recently taken on the case of Colleen Clark, whose two-year-old son, Henry, vanished from his bed in the middle of the night. After Colleen's husband suggested to the police that she might have abducted Henry, authorities found a blanket soaked with the boy's blood hidden in her car. Moxie retains Charlie to help ferret out the truth and, after interviewing Colleen at length, he teams up with psychic Sabine Drew, who contacted police after she heard a boy's cries from beyond the grave. Together and apart, the detective and the psychic explore multiple leads. There's a lot going on here but plot pro Connolly pulls it all together. See Signed Books for the next Parker.

Dodd, Christina. [A Daughter of Fair Verona](#) (\$18.95). "Romeo and Juliet are alive and well and the parents of seven kids. I'm the oldest, with the emphasis on 'old'—a certified spinster at twenty, and happy to stay that way. It's not easy to keep your taste for romance with parents like mine. Picture it—constant monologues, passionate declarations, fighting, making up, making out...it's exhausting. Each time they've presented me with a betrothal, I've set out to find the groom-to-be a more suitable bride. After all, someone sensible needs to stay home and manage this household. But their latest match, Duke Stephano, isn't so easy to palm off on anyone else. The debaucher has had three previous wives—all of whom met unfortunate ends." Kristan Hannah calls this "Fun, funny, charming, and absolutely delightful." Dodd signs a sequel for us June 29.

Doiron, Paul. [Skin and Bones: And Other Mike Bowditch](#) (St Martins \$20). See Signed Books for the simultaneous hardcover edition.

* Donoghue, Emma. [Learned By Heart](#) (\$18.99) is inspired by Eliza Raine, who was written about in Anne Lister's coded diaries about her lesbian love life. At the beginning of the 19th century at a chilly boarding school in Yorkshire, 14-year-olds Eliza and Anne share a garret near the servants' quarters. Born in India to an Indian mother and an East India Company man, Eliza has been sent to England for "finishing" by her father, who is subsequently lost at sea, leaving her and her sister with a small fortune and in the care of guardians. Anne is vibrant, defiant, and smarter than most of the other "Middles" in their class, and she soon draws the observant but reserved Eliza into her orbit. In Anne's presence, Eliza grows in confidence and the two become inseparable as their friendship turns sexual. The bonds that form between the two girls ultimately lead to Eliza's tragic undoing, and she ends up in a mental asylum. Donoghue makes good use of her choice to delve into Eliza's perspective rather than Anne's by exploring the steep cost for her protagonist of tethering herself to a rebel.

Elliott, Julia. [Hellions: Stories](#) (Tin House \$17.95) presents an electric story collection that blends folklore, fairy tales, Southern Gothic, and horror, reveling in the collision of the familiar with the wildly surreal. This might be just right to read on May Day.

* Foley, Lucy. [The Midnight Feast](#) (\$18.99). "It has everything you want from a Lucy Foley thriller: a glamorous location, an entertaining cast of characters brought to life with a terrific sense of humor, an undercurrent of witchy menace—and an

unsolved murder. This is the perfect book to take on holiday. Just count yourself lucky you're not staying at The Manor."—Alex Michaelides

* Fletcher, Susan. [The Night in Question](#) (\$18.99). Florrie Butterfield—eighty-seven, one-legged, and of cheerful disposition—believes there can't be any more adventures or surprises in life to experience. Yet one midsummer's evening, there's an accident at Babbington Hall—the adult residence where she lives—so shocking and strange that Florrie is suspicious; is this really an accident? Or is she being lied to? Is she, in fact, living alongside a potential murderer? In her efforts to learn the truth, Florrie is forced to look back on her own life, with all its passions and regrets; she must confront her own bloody secret—and, at last, forgive herself. Above all, Florrie learns, through the help of her new friend, Stanhope, that you're never too old to have the life you've always dreamed of.

Harrison, Kim. [The Operator](#) (\$19.99). For Peri Reed, a special task agent in hiding, forgetting the past can be a blessing. Betrayed by the man she thought she loved and the agency who turned her into the very thing she fought against, Peri abandoned the wealth and privilege of Opti for anonymity riddled with memory gaps and self-doubt. But when a highly addictive drug promises to end her dependency on those who'd use her as a tool for their own success, she must choose to remain broken and vulnerable, or return to the above-the-law power and prestige she once left: strong but without will—for whoever holds her next fix will hold her loyalty.

Hooper, Elise. [The Library of Lost Dollhouses](#) (Morrow \$18.99). **I love this our May Historical Fiction Paperback Pick.** Tildy Barrows, Head Curator of a beautiful archival library in San Francisco, is meticulously dedicated to the century's worth of inventory housed in her beloved Beaux Art building. She loves the Bel's calm and order in the shelves of books and walls of art. But Tildy's life takes an unexpected turn when she, first, learns the library is on the verge of bankruptcy and, second, Tildy stumbles on a secret room in the museum containing two large, ornate dollhouses. Both pieces bear the maker's mark "CH"—and, astonishingly, one holds a miniature portrait of Tildy's mother. Stunned and intrigued, Tildy embarks on a quest to uncover the dollhouse maker's identity and save the Bel's finances by mounting an exhibit showcasing the miniatures. After finding clues hidden within these remarkable miniatures, Tildy sets out to decipher the secret history of the dollhouses, aiming to salvage her cherished library in the process. The story shifts between Tildy's present-day search for Cora Hale and Cora's own experiences, a century before. Sent to Paris in 1910 after a scandal in New York, Cora crosses paths with Belva, who quickly becomes benefactor and friend. Commissioned to create a dollhouse for Belva, Cora throws herself into the project as World War I creeps ever closer to Paris. Meanwhile, in 2024, Tildy's research takes her to rural New Hampshire, where she meets a handsome man connected to Cora—and stumbles on a manuscript that could change everything.

Howzell Hall, Rachel. [Fog and Fury](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$16.99) is a promising series launch centered on ex-cop Sonny Rush. Sonny has left the LAPD after a decade to move to the supposedly tranquil beach town of Haven, Calif. She's excited to start a new career as a PI, working for her godfather, former

detective Ivan Poole. But she's crestfallen when her first assignment—tracking down Figgy, a missing goldendoodle—puts her in contact with her ex-lover, Cooper Sutton, who lied to Sonny about being divorced when they were together. Meanwhile, teenage athlete Xander Monroe is found dead on a Haven jogging trail with a note in his pocket that reads, "A beautiful place to die." Xander's distraught parents hire Sonny to confirm their suspicion that he was murdered. Sonny's digging reveals that Haven's idyllic reputation is far from the truth, with networks of corruption undergirding the entire town.

* Hunter, Cara. [Making a Killing](#) (Harper \$18.99). When Nick Vincent, producer of true-crime show *Infamous*, hears about an explosive new angle on a high-profile case—the 2016 murder of an eight-year-old girl in Oxford—he leaps at the chance to send a researcher to verify the claims. Two months later, a dog walker discovers a woman's body, bound and buried in a shallow grave in the woods. Forensic evidence links the corpse to the disappearance of that same child. DCI Adam Fawley, the original investigating officer, is called in to run the enquiry. And he remembers the case well—he arrested the child's mother for murder. A murder he now knows she didn't commit. The investigation raises more questions than answers. What connects the two crimes? Where has the dead girl been all these years? How did she manage to disappear?

Littell, Robert. [The Amateur](#) (\$19.95). Memorable Charlie Heller is an ace cryptographer for the CIA, a quiet man in a quiet back-office job. But when his fiancée, Sarah Diamond, is murdered by terrorists at the American Embassy in West Germany and the Company refuses to pursue her killers, Heller takes matters into his own hands. This spy thriller classic is now a major motion picture starring Rami Malek, Rachel Brosnahan, Caitriona Balfe, and Laurence Fishburne.

Maxwell, Jessa. [I Need You to Read This](#) (\$17.99). Tired of spending dull days working as a pharmaceutical copywriter and reading the *New York Herald's* Dear Constance advice column, Alex Marks is shaken when she learns Francis Keen, the longtime columnist, has been murdered. One night, flown with wine, Alex decides to apply to be her hero's replacement. She gets the job, allowing her to confirm what she's always suspected: that she's a great writer and advice dispenser. But soon Alex picks up on a sinister undercurrent at the *Herald* of bad blood between the supportive editor and the paper's owner, and gets threatening letters that question her fitness for the job. Worried she might become the next target for Francis' killer, she enlists a former cop and a canny waitress at the diner she frequents to help her investigate. Maxwell, author of [The Golden Spoon](#) (\$17), a Christie-style country house murder—maybe a combination of *Clue* and the *Great British Bake Off* set in a cooking school and 2023 First Mystery Book of the Month—expertly explores the power structures of Manhattan's elite while portraying the troubled newspaper industry.

McMorris, Kristina. [The Girls of Good Fortune](#) (Sourcebooks \$17.99 Deluxe Edition). The author of the devastating Depression-era bestseller [Sold on a Monday](#) (\$15.95) turns to 188 Oregon. Amid the subterranean labyrinth of Portland's notorious Shanghai Tunnels, a woman awakens in an underground cell, drugged and disguised. Celia soon realizes she's a "shanghaied" victim on the verge of being shipped off as forced labor, leaving

behind those she loves most. Although well accustomed to adapting for survival—being half-Chinese, passing as white during an era fraught with anti-Chinese sentiment—she fears that far more than her own fate hangs in the balance. As she pieces together the twisting path that led to her abduction, from serving as a maid for the family of a dubious mayor to becoming entwined in the case of a gold miners' massacre, revelations emerge of a child left in peril. Desperate, Celia needs to claw her way back to the surface.

Sharyn Newman fans may remember she wrote a terrific thriller also set in these tunnels.

Miller, Kirsten. [Lula Dean's Little Library of Banned Books](#) (\$18.99). finds a Georgia town transformed amid a fight over book bans. Lula Dean, a restless empty nester who's starved for attention, finds purpose by banning books she deems inappropriate for children, among them Anne Frank's *The Diary of a Young Girl* and Toni Morrison's *Beloved*. Furthering her crusade, Lula stocks a makeshift lending library in front of her house with "appropriate" titles like *The Southern Belle's Guide to Etiquette*. Lindsay Underwood, a lesbian teen, takes action by sneaking banned books into the lending library under the cover of dust jackets belonging to Lula's approved books. As various townspeople read the works Lula meant to ban, they start changing their lives and the town for the better. Is this a social critique? Yes.

Moore, Gareth. [Meowdle: 75 Feline Crime Puzzles to Solve](#) (Hodder \$17.99) is a collection of 75 original cat-themed logic puzzles that promises to purr-plex and entertain amateur sleuths of all ages. This book is packed with a variety of engaging brainteasers, each inspired by the playful antics and cleverness of our feline friends. Perfect for cat lovers and puzzle enthusiasts alike.

Pötzsch, Oliver. [The Gravedigger's Almanac](#) (Harper \$19.99). The Bavarian author of the terrific *The Hangman's Daughter* and sequels and more pens the first volume in new series which introduces a gravedigger and young inspector who must stop a serial killer in 1890s Vienna—the period during which modern criminology was born. A gravedigger at the city's famous Central Cemetery, Augustin Rothmayer is an unorthodox yet highly educated oddball who finds solace amongst the dead as well as in the writing the pages of the first almanac of his profession. But his fragile peace is abruptly disturbed one day in 1893 when young inspector Leopold von Herzfeldt, an ambitious young transfer from Graz, arrives in need of help from someone expert in death. No one knows the subject better than Augustin Rothmayer. A superstitious killer is on the loose. His victims include several maids, each brutally staked. Recognizing the killer is using an ancient ritual for keeping the undead buried, the gravedigger joins the inspector on a journey that will take them deep into the underworld of their glamorous cosmopolitan city.

Reid, Eliza. [Death on the Island](#) (Sourcebooks \$17.99). See Signed Books for the simultaneous hardcover edition.

* Sampson, Freya. [The Busybody Book Club](#) (Berkley \$19) paints a quirky, nuanced picture of small-town English life, replete with archetypes who turn out to be much more complex than they first appear. You could call this a cozy.

The motley members of a book club in St. Tredock, Cornwall, are stunned when the newest among them, Michael,

sprints out of a meeting and then disappears—along with £10,000 in cash meant to fund the community center’s much-needed new roof. But transplanted Londoner Nova, the book club chair, may have left the door to the money unlocked. Already juggling work and wedding plans, she’s now blamed for the theft. When a dead body is discovered at Michael’s house, the other club members spring into sleuthing. The action is packed with a range of book references (Bridgerton, Ursula K. Le Guin, and Shakespeare, to name a few—and inevitably, Agatha Christie).

Siblin, Eric. [The Fatal Scroll](#) (ECW Press \$19.95) explores shady side of the antiquities trade, ancient philosophy, and tech’s utopian promises. Irresistible to me who is headed there mid May. Marcus Sinclair is a history teacher whose life is stuck in neutral when he inherits a papyrus scroll from his antiquarian uncle. The mysterious scroll might contain a lost masterpiece from ancient Rome or perhaps an ancient recipe for personal tranquility, but it’s unreadable unless Marcus can figure out a way to unroll the scroll without destroying it. His quest takes him to Naples, where he befriends a Google software engineer days before the man is found dead. Marcus is interviewed by an investigative journalist, Kristi Grainger, and they find themselves on parallel paths leading to a Neapolitan trafficker in antiquities, a tech mogul obsessed with the distant past, and a clutch of academics searching for the lost library of Herculaneum. In a seaside city that is by turns lush and lethal, Marcus must confront the unraveling of more than a scroll. This novel is inspired by a real place — the Villa dei Papri, the only library from antiquity to have survived — and coincides with the Vesuvius Challenge, a real-life international competition to decipher Herculaneum scrolls.

Swanson, Peter. [A Talent for Murder](#) (\$18.99). Swanson’s take on Patricia Highsmith’s *The Talented Mr. Ripley* adds a few unnerving twists of its own. The story revolves around a newlywed’s suspicions that her husband might be a murderer. Maine librarian Martha Ratliff is feeling uneasy about her recent marriage to traveling salesman Alan Peralta. Her fear that she doesn’t truly know Alan is exacerbated when he returns from a trip to Connecticut in an unusually severe mood. When Martha searches online for details about his trip, she turns up a news story about the supposed suicide of a young woman named Josie Nixon at the same art conference Alan visited. Soon, Martha starts drawing connections between Alan’s past trips and nearby homicides. For guidance, she turns to Lily Kintner, her old friend from graduate school (and a character from Swanson’s previous novels). Together, the women stage a meeting between Lily and Alan, which only serves to illuminate that little is as it seems when it comes to Josie’s death.

Underwood, Blair. [Sins of Survivors](#) (Harper \$18.99). In 1908 Alabama, precocious young Benjamin Carter brings deadly consequences down upon his father’s head when he dares to use a white drinking fountain instead of the “colored” one. With his fierce and protective older brother Jasper, Ben escapes Alabama, joining the Great Migration to Black Bottom, Detroit’s flourishing Black neighborhood. There, the brothers rise from the ashes to become kingpins of this new community, owning businesses, playing politics, and diving into Detroit’s violent criminal underbelly. Through their wit and grit, Ben and Jasper

establish the Carter dynasty, securing a prosperous future for their families. But heavy are the heads that wear the crowns. Seeing their children come of age, young men and women fueled by ambitions of their own, the brothers clash over which direction to steer the Carter empire. With the scent of brotherly discontent, competing Detroit power players will use every advantage—and weakness—to bring the family to its knees.

Wood, Monica. [How to Read a Book](#) (Harper \$18.99). Violet Powell was just 19, drunk and high, when she caused the death of Lorraine Daigle, a beloved mother and kindergarten teacher. She is convicted of manslaughter and sentenced to 28 months in prison. Though she thinks she won’t be able to survive, she does. Prison turns out to be excruciating and monotonous, and while she’s serving time, Troy, her “boyfriend-slash-fiancé-slash-future-slash-everything,” never writes or visits. Even worse, her mother dies and her family blames her. The book club that meets every Friday is her solace, along with Kitten, Jennie Big, Aimee, Dawna-Lynne, and the seven other members of the group. The discussions, in which Violet and her fellow inmates get to exert some control over their lives by complaining about books, are a brief respite. When she’s released, her sister drops her in Portland with a prepaid one-year lease on a furnished apartment, money, clothes, and the information that no one in her town or family can forgive her or wants to see her again. She must find her own way. A chance meeting with Harriet in a bookstore turns into an unexpected meeting with Frank Daigle, husband of the woman whose death she caused.....

Xu Elegant, Naomi. [Ginkgo Season](#) (WW Norton \$19.99). After suffering her first big heartbreak two years earlier, Penelope Lin has built a quiet life with no romantic entanglements. She spends her days cataloging a museum’s vast collection of Qing Dynasty bound-foot shoes and in the comfortable company of close friends. One day, she happens to meet Hoang, who confesses to releasing mice from the cancer research lab where he works. Hoang’s openness catches Penelope off guard; from then on, she finds her carefully constructed life slowly start to unravel.

OUR MAY SMALL PAPERBACK PICKS

Battles, Brett. [Stuart Woods’ Golden Hour](#) (\$10.99). Teddy Fay #7. Teddy Fay is ready to embark on the European press tour of Peter Barrington’s latest film *Storm’s Eye*, when he receives an unexpected visit from Lance Cabot, director of the CIA. Several CIA agents have been turning up dead. The commonality? They were all part of a mission Teddy was involved in: Golden Hour.

Berry, Steve. [The Atlas Maneuver](#) (\$10.99). Cotton Malone #18. When he unwittingly becomes caught in a war between the world’s oldest bank and the CIA, one that directly involves the Black Eagle Trust and a legendary treasure worth billions, retired Justice Department operative Cotton Malone, must stop cryptocurrency from being weaponized to attack the world’s financial systems.

Cornwell, Patricia. [Unnatural Death: A Scarpetta Novel](#) (\$10.99). Kay Scarpetta #27. Examining the remains of two campers wanted by authorities in a Northern Virginia wilderness, chief medical examiner Dr. Kay Scarpetta considers this one of the most frightening body retrievals of her career as she tries to discover who would commit murders this savage.

Jance, J A. [Den of Iniquity: A J P Beaumont Novel](#) (\$9.99). J.P. Beaumont #26. Former Seattle cop J.P. Beaumont investigates a young man who supposedly died of a fentanyl overdose while dealing with turmoil in his own personal life.

Penney, Elizabeth. [Bodies and Battlements](#) (\$9.99). Ravensea Castle #1. Herbalist Nora Asquith is delighted to welcome Ravensea Castle's first guests to the picturesque village of Monkwell, Yorkshire. After a thousand years of ownership, her family has decided to convert the castle into a bed and breakfast. But when Hilda Dibble, a self-appointed local luminary, is found dead in the knot garden the next morning, Nora's business is not only at risk—she's a prime suspect.

* Ware, Ruth. [Zero Days](#) (\$10.99). When a routine assignment goes horribly wrong, resulting in her husband's murder, penetration specialist Jack, now the #1 suspect, goes on the run, deciding who she can trust as she races against time to clear her name and find the real killer.

REISSUED IN SMALL PAPERBACKS

Cussler, Clive. [Inca Gold](#) (\$10.99). Dirk Pitt #12. Dirk Pitt returns in an adventure involving a long-sunken treasure of gold, a lost civilization's secrets, and an international smuggling ring.

Hoag, Tami. [A Thin Dark Line](#) (\$9.99). Broussard and Fourcade #1. Follows the struggle of Louisiana investigator Annie Broussard to bring to justice the killer of a young woman, a quest that allies her with a shady, volatile fellow detective.

Reichs, Kathy. [Devil Bones](#) (\$10.99). Temperance Brennan #11. When a plumber discovers the remains of a murdered girl and various dark religious objects in the cellar of a client's house, Temperance Brennan is called in to investigate the case and finds her efforts challenged by vigilante upheavals against Wiccans and occultists.