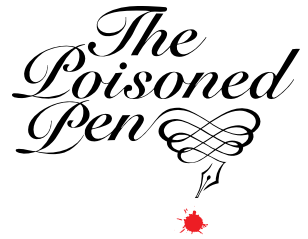


BOOKNEWS from

ISSN 1056-5655, © The Poisoned Pen, Ltd.
Volume 37, Number 8
June Booknews 2025 Part 2
sales@poisonedpen.com tel (888)560-9919
http://poisonedpen.com

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



WELCOME TO JUNE

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.

EVENTS UP TO THE FOURTH

As this second June *Booknews* reveals, in these turbulent times I find myself escaping into comfort reading or historical fiction. But I season it with darker stories. There's a two way push in publishing right now, one towards cozies, the other towards the dark, the macabre, the horrific. Also re escape reading a push in fantasy and darker, erotic Romantasy.

MONDAY JUNE 16 5:00 PM Virtual Event

Ashley Weaver discusses [One Final Turn](#) (St Martins \$28)
Electra MacDonald's WWII work continues in an excellent series
for fans of Maisie Dobbs
Signed books available

TUESDAY JUNE 17 5:00 PM Virtual Event

Brett Battles discusses [Stuart Woods' Finders Keepers](#) (Penguin \$30)

Rob Hart discusses [The Medusa Protocol](#) (Putnam \$30)
Signed books available for both

WEDNESDAY JUNE 18 7:00 PM Live Event

Ivy Pochoda discusses [Ecstasy](#) (Putnam \$28)
For fans of Madeleine Miller's *Circe* and similar

THURSDAY JUNE 19 5:00 PM Virtual Event

Dwyer Murphy discusses [The House on Buzzards Bay](#) (Viking \$30)

Signed books available

FRIDAY JUNE 20 7:00 PM Live and Virtual Event

SciFi Friday Book Club discusses Malka Oder's [The Mimicking of Known Successes](#) (\$19.99)

SATURDAY JUNE 21 10:30 AM Live and Virtual Event

Croak & Dagger Book Club discusses Julie Perrin's [How to Solve Your Own Murder](#) (\$18)

MONDAY JUNE 23 7:00 PM Live Book Launch

Megan Abbott discusses [Eldorado Drive](#) (Putnam \$30)
A tense and twisty suburban Detroit thriller
Our Jen Johans will also discuss some of Megan's favorite films with her

THURSDAY JUNE 26 5:00 PM Virtual Event

Meg Waite Clayton with Laura Dave
Clayton discusses [Typewriter Beach](#) (Harper \$30)
Carmel-by-the-Sea, Hitchcock, the Black List....
Signed books available for our **July Notable New Fiction Pick**

THURSDAY JUNE 26 7:00 PM Live Event

Hardboiled Crime Book Club discusses Hervé Le Corre's [Dogs & Wolves](#) (Europa Publishing \$17)

FRIDAY JUNE 27 5:00 PM Virtual

Gabino Iglesias discusses [Zero Saints](#) (Little Brown \$17.99)

SATURDAY JUNE 28 11:00 AM Live Event

The Cookbook Club discusses Monique Volz, [The Ambitious Kitchen Cookbook](#) (Clarkson Potter \$35)
Bring a dish to share

SUNDAY JUNE 29 2:00 PM Live Event

A sort of Historicon

Lynn Cahoon discusses [An Amateur Sleuth's Guide to Murder](#) (Kensington \$27)

Starts a series set on Bainbridge Island, our July Cozy Crimes Pick

Christina Dodd discusses [Thus with a Kiss I Die](#) (Kensington \$28)

Continues a Romeo and Juliet mystery series

Mary Anna Evans discusses [Dark Library](#) (Poisoned Pen Press \$32.99/\$)

A splendid Gothic

Dianne Freeman discusses [A Daughter's Guide to Mothers and Murder](#) (Kensington \$27)

Blackmail and Murder in Paris during the first Paris Olympics

Sam Lumley discusses [How to Have a Killer Time in DC](#) (Kensington \$27)

Celebrate Gay Pride Month with Sam

MONDAY JUNE 30 6:30 PM NEW TIME Ticketed Event

Brad Thor discusses [Edge of Honor](#) (Atria Books \$29.99)

Scot Harvath #24 written to climax on the Fourth of July

Tickets: [\\$30 admits one with one copy of the book](#)

[\\$35 admits two with one copy of the book](#)

TUESDAY JULY 1 4:00 PM Virtual Book Launch

Michael Robotham discusses [The White Crow](#) (Scribner \$28.99)

London police officer Philomena McCarthy is back

TUESDAY JULY 1 6:30 Live Event

Summer Reading with Allison Brennan, Christina Estes, Jenn McKinlay

Hosts: Barbara and John

Brennan discusses [Beach Reads and Deadly Deeds](#) (Park Row \$30), a fun, sexy standalone about a book-loving accountant who gets ensnared in a murder investigation at an island resort

Estes previews [The Story That Wouldn't Die](#) (St Martins \$28) debuts here August 18

McKinlay previous [Witches of Dubious Origin](#) (Penguin \$19) debuts here October 28

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British Crime Club One Unsigned hardcover or paperback per month

Nevin, EC. [A Novel Murder: A Mystery](#)

Cozy Crimes Club One Unsigned hardcover or paperback per month

Lippman, Laura. [Murder Takes a Vacation](#)

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

Karp, Marshall. [Don't Tell Me How to Die](#)

First Mystery Club One Signed First Printing per month

Dukess, Karen. [Welcome to Murder Week](#)

Hardboiled/Noir Club One Signed First Printing per month

Hart, Rob. [The Medusa Protocol](#)

Historical Fiction Club One First Printing per month

Sager, Riley. [With a Vengeance](#)

Historical Fiction Paperback Club One Unsigned paperback per month

McMorris, Kristina. [Girls of Good Fortune](#)

Notable New Fiction One Signed First Printing per month

Kelly, Martha Hall. [The Martha's Vineyard Beach & Book Club](#)

Romance and Relationships One unsigned hardcover or paperback per month

Sosa, Mia. [When Javi Dumped Mari](#)

ADDITIONAL SIGNED BOOKS OR EXPANDED REVIEWS

Battles, Brett. [Stuart Woods' Finders Keepers](#) (Penguin \$30). After attending an Arrington properties meeting at the group's newest, The Vineyard Arrington on Martha's Vineyard, Stone Barrington returns to New York City to catch up with his old friend Jack Coulter. Over lunch, Jack requests Stone's help in settling his niece Sara into city life post-divorce. Always eager to please new women, Stone takes Sara under his wing. Soon various men from Sara's past start getting hurt, but it's really Jack and his loved ones who find themselves a target in a deadly scheme which is not about Sara and is extremely well plotted. This is an excellent book, fast moving, sophisticated, and satisfying! While Battles is writing in the Woods universe he's infused it with his own harder hitting thriller vibes.

Brennan, Allison. [Beach Reads and Deadly Deeds](#) (Park Row \$30) delivers a breezy standalone about a book-loving accountant who gets ensnared in a murder investigation—an excellent summertime read. This is a sexy story but also peppered by Brennan with books and authors as she weaves in the personal dramas of other guests and employees.

After years of dedication to her job at a New York City accounting firm, 29-year-old Mia Crawford is offered a partnership. To sweeten the deal, her employers insist she take a two-week, all-expenses-paid vacation to a private island in the Caribbean. All modest Mia wants is to curl up with a book and, at most, carry on a quick and casual fling. In the resort's gift shop,

she spots an intriguing, water-damaged paperback on a table of books left behind by previous guests. After scooping it up, she notices messages scribbled in the margins that allude to some sort of criminal activity. When a guest's body washes up on the beach, Mia fears she's stumbled into something dangerous. As she investigates with the aid of her mysterious notes, she strikes up a romance.

Cahoon, Lynn. [An Amateur Sleuth's Guide to Murder](#) (Kensington \$27). This first in a cozy series is a delight and thus our **July Cozy Crimes Pick**. Bookish—and a dog! Meg Gates could use a guidebook for life. Indeed, she's faced some challenges. She dropped out of college to work for a tech startup that failed—and her fiancé just took her bridesmaid to Italy on what was supposed to be her own honeymoon. Now, at twenty-six, Meg has taken the ferry ride of shame from Seattle back to Bainbridge Island to live with her family. At least she has her rescue cocker spaniel, Watson, by her side. But it's Meg who could use a rescue—and she's hoping it will come in the form of a part-time gig doing research for a bestselling mystery writer. That's when the light bulb goes on: Meg will write her own guidebook—a manual on criminal investigation. But before she can impress her new boss with her pet project, the author's manager is found dead on the rocks beneath the author's Gothic mansion. And now.... This is the first hardcover for an author John enjoys.

Choi, Susan. [Flashlight](#) (Dutton \$30). In the opening scene, 10-year-old Louisa and her father go for an evening walk on the beach with a flashlight to guide them, to gaze at the sea that separates Japan from Korea. That night, Louisa washes up on the beach barely conscious yet alive, but her father does not. When someone discovers her, Louisa reports that her “father was kidnapped.” Soon after the beach incident, other strange details surface. “Choi feeds to readers seemingly disparate clues that eventually coalesce in a tale of espionage and global conflict, and the heartrending ways in which world struggles play out in individual lives.”

Evans, Mary Anna. [The Dark Library](#) (Sourcebooks \$32/\$17.99 for the paperback) is a Gothic with the requisite big house, dysfunctional family, and hidden secrets that plunge us into a deceptively peaceful Hudson Valley village in the midst of wartime. 1942. Estella “E.” Ecker, 31, has reluctantly returned to her childhood home of Rockfall House, a Victorian mansion near the college town of Benthams-on-Hudson, after the disappearance of her mother and the sudden death of her father. Given her father’s position as dean of Benthams College, E. has no trouble landing a job in the English department, though it barely pays her enough to keep up her crumbling ancestral home. As E. nurses hopes that her mother is alive and preparing to return home (despite the police’s suspicion that she died by suicide), the new dean of Benthams College falls to his death from his office window, and the body of a long-dead young woman is found near Rockfall House. Suspecting that all of these developments might be connected, E. searches for clues in her father’s rare book library while pursuing a romance with one of her colleagues. Evans has always enjoyed mechanical systems and coding and gives rein to both interests here.

Hart, Rob. [The Medusa Protocol](#) (Putnam \$30). Hart triumphs with this deliriously enjoyable sequel to [Assassins Anonymous](#) (\$19), a truly killer thriller we loved when it published last year. Patrick makes *Medusa* the **June Hardboiled Crime Pick** and it’s true that few books except perhaps *The Count of Monte Cristo* depict such an impregnable prison located on a deadly snake infested island off the coast of Brazil, or a woman such as Astrid, assassin code name Azrael, capable of surviving it. Mark, known in the assassin world as The Pale Horse retired from his career as the world’s deadliest killer and joined AA (a 12 step program for those no longer wishing to kill). Mark and his fellow members, bound by a code loosely based on the Alcoholics Anonymous program, are forced to save one of their own on a deadly black-ops island—without breaking their vow not to kill. Hart takes a step up: the repeat characters are fully fleshed out, the pacing is rapid, and the story is infused with heart.

Kelly, Martha Hall. [Martha’s Vineyard Beach and Book Club](#) (Random House \$30). Our **June Notable New Fiction Book** is a real delight on several levels. The narratives flows in two eras: 2016 when 34-year old Mari Starwood, grieving for the death of her mother, never knowing her father, arrives at Vineyard Haven under the guise of taking a painting class from the famous but reclusive Elizabeth Devereaux. With little money, Mari can only afford a day on the island before she takes her economy flight back to California. She’s made the trip with just a name on a piece of paper as a guide. Mrs. Devereaux, once encountered, reveals a story. It begins in 1942 with two girls of the Smith family faced with holding it and life together when the US Army arrives to upend things fur-

ther. Are there U-boats off the shores? Which men will be drafted, or enlist? Who is the mysterious man who washes ashore? Is there a spy at work? It’s all so dreadful Cadence and Briar start a book club for normalcy and that attracts a powerful NY publisher (think Putnam), amazing for aspiring writer Cadence. More amazing is what Mari learns about her own history. The affect of amphibious training in Vineyard waters, a “mock invasion,” and so much more is based upon both the author’s family’s history and the recollections of islanders who were family friends. This is truly historical fiction at its best and a brilliant summer read.

Lamb, Wally. [The River is Waiting](#) (Ricci \$29.99). A family’s life is shattered by addiction and trauma. Corby’s journey through the damage he has caused, incarceration, and his attempt to find mercy is a stark and sobering look at America and its response to crime and punishment.”

Lavelle, Daria. [Aftertaste](#) (Simon & Schuster \$28.99). This debut is getting raves – “An engaging debut novel, imagines sharing a last meal with a lost loved one, lured from beyond the pale by a sensitive chef with a talent for “tasting” the ghost’s favorite cuisine.” Or “Combining the grit of the restaurant world with the magic of the afterlife, Daria Lavelle perfectly blends unexpected ingredients into a book you’ll want to savor.”

Or from the Indie Next Pick: “A captivating and innovative debut novel that seamlessly blends food writing with the supernatural.” I say that Anthony Bourdain fans should find this irresistible.

PW writes: “Lavelle riffs on hungry ghost mythology in her delectable debut. As a child, Kostya Duhovny maintains emotional ties to his family’s Ukrainian homeland through the food and stories shared by his father. After his father dies unexpectedly, 11-year-old Kostya feels adrift, receiving little comfort from his depressed mother. When his tongue registers the phantom flavors of *pechotka*, a chicken liver dish that was a favorite of his father’s, Kostya at first chalks it up to a fluke of memory. As an adult, he realizes his gift (called clairgustance) allows him to conjure up the favorite foods of the recently deceased and even to bring their ghosts back to share a posthumous meal with a grieving loved one. Determined to visit with his own dearly departed, Kostya begins dabbling in the afterlife—and the equally harrowing New York City restaurant scene—with dangerous repercussions.”

Lippman, Laura. [Murder Takes a Vacation](#) (Harper \$30) is, surprise!, a cozy—our **June Cozy Crimes Pick**—that tours you around Paris and north on the Seine towards Normandy on a river cruise. As reviewer Oline Cogdill adds, It is “an homage to the joys of travel, of discovering new passions, of never giving up — with a bit of a nod to *The Maltese Falcon*. It also is a valentine to aging well, to older women who often feel invisible, and a plea to not fade away.” It’s not only a clever mystery but it sparkles with humor and insight. I loved it. For you Private Eye Tess Monaghan fans, she’s in the story a bit, on the phone, as our heroine Muriel Blossom, a Baltimore widow, is her former assistant.

In the decade since Muriel’s husband died, she’s carved out a pleasant but bland existence with her daughter’s family. Boring! And then she picks up a scrap in a parking lot that turns out to be an \$8 million lottery ticket. The lottery folk say it’s hers and allow her to accept the payout anonymously. So we meet Muriel upgraded to first class on a flight to London where she’ll transfer to a Paris flight, spend a few days with her best friend

Elinor, and then they'll board the boat. On the plane she's seated next to the charming Allan, who, after he points out the late arrival has caused her to miss her connection, takes her to dinner in London. When she arrives in Paris, she learns that Allan has suspiciously died. The police arrive to question Muriel, since she was in one of the most recent photos on Allan's phone. Enter American stranger Danny Johnson, who ingratiates himself with Muriel and warns her she might be in danger. On the, Muriel's stateroom is ransacked, a man attempts to mug her, and she learns Danny is lying about his identity.

Pochoda, Ivy. [Ecstasy](#) (Putnam \$28) sweeps you to the island of Naxos in a "defiantly feminist reimagining of Euripides' *The Bacchae*. Broke babes Lena and Hedy were partying their way around the world when Lena met ruthless hotel developer Stavros. Seduced by his wealth, Lena "stumbled into a hasty marriage...." I love this summary: "Plenty of people have updated Greek myths for the 21st century, but only Ivy Pochoda—to my knowledge!—has pitted a gorgeous supernatural DJ against a bitter, witchy drug dealer for her take on Sophocles. And those are just the background characters. Inspired by *The Bacchae*, this wild, bloody feminist fable follows a former ballerina who's suddenly liberated from her awful marriage, and celebrates by joining up with a wild cult of women on a Greek beach. It's a gory good time."

Smith, Martin Cruz. [Hotel Ukraine, The Last Arkady Renko Novel](#) (Simon & Schuster \$27.99). Publishes July 8 but I mention it here as preordering is essential as our supply is limited. We have loved Martin (aka Bill) and his work for decades and are so grateful he has agreed, despite his Parkinson's disease, the same disease that Arkady lives with, to sign Arkady's last case for us.

Stiefvater, Maggie. [The Listeners](#) (Viking \$30). I cannot begin to list all the reasons this fabulous novel, our **July Historical Fiction Subscription Book of the Month**, won my heart. It's based on the true story of Axis diplomats detained in the U.S. early in World War II at the Greenbrier and is transformed into a dazzling historical novel set at a fictional version of the sumptuous West Virginia hotel. When I lived in the South I stayed at the fabled Greenbrier, even arranged a Chamber of Commerce weekend there and scored the Duke and Duchess of Windsor's room. The famous interior designer Dorothy Draper played a role in the hotel's history post-war – you can read much about it on the [Greenbrier's](#) website.

But Stiefvater sets her magnificent novel in the early war years when her blazingly, beautifully imagined hotel was leased by the State Department as a refuge for German/Japanese/etc diplomats. (In 1942 the real hotel was transformed by the US Army into a General Hospital, necessitating the post-war renovation before it reopened in 1948 with Sam Snead on board in establishing the Greenbrier into a premier global golf destination).

So Stiefvater weaves all this into historical fiction, a classic spy thriller. Her "prodigious imagination and distinctive prose style have combined to create a novel that will remind readers of why they fell in love with reading in the first place. At its center is the captivating June Hudson, an erstwhile Appalachian orphan who was taken in by the wealthy Gilfoyle family, owners of the Avallon Hotel & Spa, a high-society retreat built over underground mineral springs. At his death, the patriarch bequeathed ownership to his playboy son, Edgar,

but made June the general manager, as she had spent her life learning the business—and also shared with Gilfoyle Sr. a rare gift relating to the "sweetwater" springs, a fantastical element of this otherwise realistic novel. Also brilliantly managed is the rest of the ensemble cast: sexy FBI agents; June's inimitable staff; the delegations of Japanese, Germans, and Italians detained at the hotel, some quite nasty, but among them a strange, special, totally silent child. And on top of all this, a delicious love story and a spot-on definition of luxury. **This is my top Summer Read suggestion.**

Sturino, Katie. [Sunny Side Up](#) (St Martins \$28). A debut. Sunny Greene is thirty-five, recently divorced, facing the looming prospect of going solo to her little brother's wedding, and currently trying to find anything plus-sized in the Bergdorf Goodman swimsuit department that doesn't make her want to cry. It's not going well. But isn't rock bottom the perfect place to start a climb? She decides it's now or never. Sunny has her PR empire, her gorgeous Chelsea apartment, her two dogs, and her loyal best friends. Maybe it's time to just love her body and accept herself for who she is. With a new commitment to confidence, her journey begins. Who says a plus-sized divorcee can't put herself first, feel beautiful, and date up a storm? "Escape into a world of designer clothes and trendy NYC restaurants, where career dreams come true at the drop of a hat, preferably by the pool in a flattering swimsuit."—*Oprah Daily*, 26 Best Summer Reads of 2025.

Prepare now for Bookstore Romance Day Saturday August 9 when John will have authors and books to tempt you.

* Weaver, Ashley. [One Final Turn](#) (St Martins \$28 After being dismissed (and rejected romantically) by her former handler, Major Ramsey, Electra McDonnell has returned to assisting her locksmith uncle in London. But then she's tapped for an intelligence assignment involving three escaped British POWs, one of whom might be her missing cousin, Toby. Traveling with the charming Captain Archie Blandings, Ellie must navigate an unfamiliar city and the difficulty of working with Major Ramsey again. Though Ellie is charmed by Lisbon's architecture and cuisine, she can't let the city's history or its enticing nightlife distract her from her mission. Every discovery related to the POWs and the valuable intelligence they carry puts Ellie, Ramsey, and Blandings in greater danger. Meanwhile, despite Ellie's attempts to treat the major professionally, she can't ignore the emotions his presence stirs up. Weaver tests her heroine's mettle with a series of increasingly complex challenges, compounded by Ellie's worry for her cousin and the strain of being far from home. A nail-biting confrontation at an ancient fortress throws a surprising new light on the case—and even more surprises wait for Ellie when she returns to London. With charming characters and fascinating wartime details, *One Final Turn* is a crackerjack conclusion to an engaging series.

Thor, Brad. [Edge of Honor](#) (Atria \$29.99). After six months abroad enjoying his honeymoon with the Norwegian Ninja who is on leave from the Norwegian Intelligence Service, Scot Harvath is feeling rested at last. He's resigned from the Carlton Group, his longtime private intelligence agency employer, he has some \$50 million as a cash cushion, he and she have traveled the world for fun with a full break from politics. But they're a bit restless and have returned to the States to celebrate the Fourth of July. As Thor writes in the Afterword (don't peek at the rest of it), his goal

with this his 25th book! was “to create a patriotic thriller set in the nation’s capital around the Fourth of July.” One of his favorite holidays.

In the novel other players have other plans for Scot as the stunning opening action scenes reveal—Thor’s mastery of weapons and action orchestration are on full display. Then it turns out that Norway’s Prime Minister is coming to DC which calls Sólvi back to work and the story rolls on from there. Try to join us to celebrate Thor’s 25th – ticket info is listed in Events above.

Walker, Martin. [An Enemy in the Village](#) (Knopf \$28). *Joie*, it’s a new novel in a charming, astute series whose earlier books form our very bestselling paperback series. When Bruno, Chief of Police of St. Denis, stumbles upon a motionless figure in a car parked at a scenic overpass on the ridge of the Vézère valley, he’s ready to investigate. Inside, he finds a suicide note and the dead body of Monique, a successful businesswoman who rented châteaux to wealthy expats. It seems like an open-and-shut case but Bruno suspects something more sinister in her death. And he’s right.... Oddly, after he delivers Monique’s final messages to those most important to her, malicious gossip about Bruno begins to spread through the village. One thing leads to another, and soon Bruno faces pressure to resign from the job. Despite this disturbing turn of events, ex-Army Bruno, never one to turn down a fine meal with good company in the French countryside, investigates. In the course of inquiry, he meets Laura—and her dog, which happens to be the same breed as his beloved basset hound. Walker has teased us before with suitable women for Bruno, who really ought to have a wife and children, so I’m not getting my hopes up that Laura is anything but a one-book stand..... Out July 1, Signed here on July 8 6:30 PM.

Walter, Jess. [So Far Gone](#) (Harper \$30). The genius of Jess Walter’s writing is both mercury and steel: never predictable, always reliable. Like all of Walter’s work, *So Far Gone* combines strong pacing and quick wit as it looks squarely at its subject, a man fighting to save his family after years of self-imposed isolation. Rhys Kinnick is jolted out of his reclusive life on land outside Spokane, Washington, when a stranger deposits his grandchildren on his porch, although he fails at first to recognize them. Though it had been rocky for years, his relationship with his daughter, Bethany, broke at Thanksgiving in 2016, when Bethany’s husband, Shane, pushed his conspiracy talk too far and Rhys punched him. But Rhys’ decision to disappear is bigger and deeper than just a family rift. When Bethany disappears and armed members of Shane’s church forcibly take his grandchildren, Rhys can no longer ignore the broken world from a safe distance. Several showdowns ensue, plus a high-spirited visit to a drug-positive festival in the Canadian woods. “The characters are created with loving care, the plot with reckless glee; Walter seems as fed up with various aspects of modern life as the smartphone-hating Rhys, and gives his version of the modern Northwest a distinctly Old West vibrational overlay.”

REPEAT REVIEWS OF OTHER SIGNED BOOKS FOR JUNE

Abbott, Megan. [Eldorado Drive](#) (Putnam \$30). Cash-strapped women whose life imploded when the Detroit auto industry declined fall prey to a pyramid scheme in this nerve-shredding thriller. Harper Bishop flees Grosse Pointe, Michigan, in June 2008 to evade an increasingly persistent creditor, leaving behind

her two older sisters who are also deeply in debt—Debra due to her husband’s medical bills, Pam because of her divorce from a thieving deadbeat. When Harper returns home in October, she’s shocked to find Debra sporting “meticulous highlights” and Pam driving a Lexus. The duo attribute their windfalls to the Wheel, an all-female “circle of giving” that requires new members to contribute initial dues of five grand. Her siblings’ enthusiasm is so contagious that Harper sets aside her misgivings and signs on, unwittingly sealing all their fates. Though the tale unfolds from Harper’s POV, and her fraught relationships are its focus, the most fully realized cast member is Pam’s daughter, Vivian, a surly teen whose resentment of her mother animates the proceedings. Elsewhere, Abbott probes the minefield of sisterhood to harrowing effect, using staccato prose to amplify the inherent apprehension and anxiety of the siblings’ relationships. The result is a tense and twisty delight.

Armentrout, Jennifer. [The Primal of Blood and Bone](#) (Evil Eye \$31.99). In the Blood 7 Ash series penultimate chapters, Poppy and Casteel face their most perilous challenges yet as old enemies rise and ancient powers stir from their slumber.

Belle, Kimberly. [The Expat Affair](#) (Park Row \$30). “Like the rare diamonds at the heart of this book, *The Expat Affair* begins with gritty raw material—two American women in Amsterdam, expats and strangers caught up in violent forces—and applies unthinkable pressure—murders, stalking, the demands of a famous family dynasty on its last leg—to test whether its heroines will crack or be forged into something greater. The result is a marvel: a glamorous, smart, and propulsive thriller that is as much about women finding their agency as it is a high-stakes international game of cat and mouse.”—Ashley Winstead on this new book by new Edgar Award winner Belle.

Burke, James Lee. [Don’t Forget Me, Little Bessie](#) (Grove \$28). The kaleidoscopic fifth installment in MWA Grand Master Burke’s Holland Family saga follows 14-year-old Bessie Mae Holland as she navigates threats to her family in WWI-era Texas. The action kicks off with Betsy’s brother, Cody, losing an eye during a dispute with local bully Jubal Fowler. Betsy and Cody’s father, former Texas Ranger Hackberry Holland, struggles to suppress his violent instincts while confronting Jubal’s father, Winthrop, but Bessie shoots Winthrop, wounding him, and ends up in jail. A friendly drifter tampers with evidence to get Bessie released, and Cody flees to New York City, where he’s sucked into the criminal underworld. Meanwhile, Indian Charlie, an unscrupulous security guard for the Atlas Oil Company, seeks revenge against Hackberry for an old criminal case, putting Bessie—who longs to join her brother in New York—in harm’s way. Vivid, atmospheric prose (“The grit [was] so dense it could knock a squirrel out of a tree, the dust so high the sun was a pink wafer”) enhances Burke’s wrenching portrayal of Betsy’s hope for a better life. This is another winner from a crime writer at the top of his game.

Clark, Julie. [The Ghostwriter](#) (Sourcebooks \$27.99) “effortlessly delivers on her clever, metatextual premise in this devilish thriller.” Olivia Dumont had a successful career ghostwriting celebrity memoirs until her public rebuke of John Calder, a bestselling but misogynistic author, tarnished her reputation in the industry. Desperate for money, Dumont accepts a lucrative assignment to ghostwrite a book by horror superstar Vincent

Taylor, despite her utter lack of experience writing fiction. The other problem? Taylor is Olivia's estranged father. Fifty years ago, he became the prime suspect in the 1975 double murder of his siblings, Danny and Poppy, in their Ojai, California, home. Though rumors about the killings persist, they remain unsolved, and Taylor still lives in Ojai, where he's been churning out bestsellers for decades. In recent years, his cognitive abilities have declined, but Olivia remains wary of him—especially when she realizes his new book is a supposed tell-all about the murders. Clark keeps readers guessing about Taylor's motives and guilt, all while playing scrupulously fair with the reader. It adds up to a deeply satisfying shocker in the vein of Riley Sager..."—*PW* Starred Review

Read an [interview with Clark](#) and a [review of this gem](#)

Clayton, Meg Waite. [Typewriter Beach](#) (Harper \$30). Out July 1 to make our **July Notable New Fiction Subscription Club Pick**, this gem set in Carmel-by-the-Sea and Hollywood tells the story of the unlikely friendship between an Oscar-nominated screenwriter and a young actress hoping to be Alfred Hitchcock's new star. 1957. Isabella Giori is ten months into a standard seven-year studio contract when she auditions with Hitchcock. Just weeks later, she is sequestered by the studio's "fixer" in a tiny Carmel cottage, waiting and dreading. Meanwhile, next door, Léon Chazan is annoyed as hell when Iz interrupts his work on yet another screenplay he won't be able to sell, because he's been blacklisted. Soon, they're together in his roadster, speeding down the fog-shrouded Big Sur coast. 2018. Twenty-six-year-old screenwriter Gemma Chazan, in Carmel to sell her grandfather's cottage, finds a hidden safe full of secrets—raising questions about who the screenwriter known simply as Chazan really was, and whether she can live up to his name.

Our June 26 virtual conversation gives you a chance to hear Laura Dave, the author of [The Last Thing He Told Me](#) (\$17.99) and [The Night We Lost Him](#) (\$28.99), Meg's conversation partner, as well.

Dodd, Christina. [Thus With a Kiss I Die](#) (Kensington \$28) is book two in Dodd's sparkling mysteries featuring Romeo and Juliet's irreverent eldest daughter, Rosie. No, the lovers did not die. And now Rosie, thwarted in her love for Lysander, is unwed at twenty. Trapped. "Then!" she says, "I'm presented with a solution. Escalon's father, Prince Escalus the Elder, appears to me. He tasks that I find his killer. Did I mention Elder is a ghost? Given that I only recently dispatched Verona's first serial killer, I'm less than pleased. Yet Elder promises to unite me with my One True Love, so I gather clues. Meanwhile, revolution threatens, for beneath Verona society's glittering surface lurk dark shadows—and an enemy eager to make me a tragic heroine in my own right...."

Dukess, Karen. [Welcome to Murder Week](#) (Gallery Books \$28.99). An unexpected ticket for a "murder week" in England's Peak District upends the quiet routine of optician Cath who's leading a humdrum predictable life in Buffalo. Out of the blue, Cath's estranged mother, a chronic "bolter," has died, leaving nothing but a pair of tickets she had purchased to a weeklong British murder mystery party in a rural village. Unable to secure a refund in what is a Willowthrop fundraiser, Cath decides to go. Her shared accommodation in a Willowthrop cottage teams her up with Wyatt Green, who's at a crossroads in his marriage, and

Amity Clark, a divorced romance writer struggling with writer's block, to try and win the contest. In the process, she unearths previously unknown details about her mother's past, and falls for sexy bartender Dev Sharma, who's staffing the party. This our **First Mystery Subscription Club Pick** for June is not so much about the village's scripted murder mystery as it is an enjoyable sojourn through the Derbyshire countryside with (mostly) booklovers who enjoy discussing their favorites while parsing clues—delightful for you, too. And more crucially, while the details (and humor) of Willowthrop's murder plot will doubtless appeal to fans of Agatha Christie and *Midsomer Murders*, the novel's depth goes far beyond a whimsical murder-solving romp. It's a perfect way to start your summer reading.

* Freeman, Dianne. [A Daughter's Guide to Mothers and Murder](#) (Kensington \$27) is 8th in the "Countess of Harleigh" series and finds Frances and George still in Paris in 1900 as the Olympics are underway. Frances really doesn't want to do any favors for her first (and dead) husband's lover Alicia Stoke-Whitney, but reluctantly agrees to use her society contacts to investigate one Carlson Deaver and determine whether he's a suitable match for Alicia's daughter. He isn't. In fact, it's looking like Deaver may have murdered his first wife, Isabelle, and he is definitely a womanizing scoundrel. The action heats up when famed actress Sarah Bernhardt receives a blackmail letter in an envelope containing one of Isabelle's earrings. Could Bernhardt somehow be involved in Deaver's case? Freeman has a wonderful time touring you around Paris and encountering some of the famed and fashionable while serving up a truly despicable bad guy(s).

* Jewell, Lisa. [Don't Let Him In](#) (Atria \$29.99). Nick Radcliffe is a man of substance and good taste. He has a smile that could melt the coldest heart and a knack for putting others at ease. He's just what Nina Swann needed in her life after her husband's unexpected death. But to Nina's adult daughter, Ash, Nick seems too slick, too polished, too good to be true. Nick tries to dial up the charm in hopes that, by swindling Nina, he can secure a fortune for the one woman he truly loves: his current wife, Martha. Ash, however, is prepared to bring Nick's long con toppling down—even if it means finding his old victims herself. Without telling her mother, Ash begins digging into Nick's past. What she finds is more than unsettling...

* Khavari, Kate. [A Botanist's Guide to Rituals and Revenge](#) (Crooked Lane \$29.99). Saffron Everleigh returns to Ellington, the family estate, when her grandfather has a heart attack. Bill Wyatt, a dangerous man from her past, is there, posing as her grandfather's doctor. Claiming she owes him for burning notes to a deadly poison and ruining a lucrative sale, Bill orders Saffron to locate information on her late father's project which may interest a new buyer. He gives her less than a week, or her family will pay the price. With help from her beau Alexander and best friend, Elizabeth, Saffron chases down clues only to repeatedly run into dead ends. The situation grows more complicated when a medium arrives and begins holding séances to communicate with loved ones lost in the Great War, including Saffron's childhood sweetheart. Is Madame Martin in league with Bill? When she discovers secrets about her family during her search for information to appease Bill, Saffron wonders if this is a fight she can win. This 1920s series is welcome for fans of Deanna Raybourn's Victorian mysteries.

* King, Laurie R. [Knave of Diamonds](#): (Random House \$30). Russell's black sheep Uncle Jake is back, and with a load of problems for his clever niece. Not the least of which is the reason the family rejected him in the first place: He was involved—somehow—in the infamous disappearance of the Irish Crown Jewels from an impregnable safe in Dublin Castle. It was a theft that shook a government, enraged a king, threatened the English establishment—and baffled not only the Dublin police and Scotland Yard, but Sherlock Holmes himself. And, now, Jake expects Russell to step into the middle of it all?

Landau, AJ. [Cold Burn](#) (St Martins \$28). A knockout National Parks Mystery set in Glacier Bay, Alaska, Signed for us by both authors (Jeff Ayers & Jon Land) to make our **July Crime Club Subscription Book of the Month**. Club members get free shipping. Otherwise available in mid to late June and a must for readers of James Rollins, Clive Cussler, and Nevada Barr.

National Park Services investigator Michael Walker is working undercover on a cruise ship off Alaska's coast, surveilling a pair of thieves responsible for stealing precious artifacts from the Tlingit tribe. He is prepared to apprehend them when an assassin strikes, killing the husband-and-wife thieves and fleeing. Walker guns down the shooter and recovers the Tlingit artifacts. Before fully recovering, he is called to investigate the disappearance of a USGS team in Glacier Bay. FBI investigator Gina Delgado, meanwhile, is in the Everglades, looking into the murder of an intern working on an environmental project at the behest of the president's chief of staff. Soon, Delgado learns that the intern's killing is connected to the deaths of a cutting-edge Navy submarine's entire crew and an alarming shift in the pattern of vital ocean currents. For backup, she calls Walker, and eventually, both of their inquiries point to tech mogul Axel Cole who is planning the first manned mission to Mars. His hopes depend on a new fuel source called Prometheus.... "Suspense builds throughout the book, and the payoff far exceeds expectations." I'll say. I add that historical and geographical footnotes at the beginning of each chapter are illuminating and rewarding.

* Lewis, David. [A Beacon in the Night](#) (Kensington \$27). New Year's Eve 1940 during the London Blitz. Caitrin Colline, a former Welsh policewoman first met in the wonderful [A Jewel in the Crown](#) (\$17.95), meets her friend Florence Simmonds at the Blind Stag pub, managed by Caitrin's flirtatious but thuggish friend Teddy Baer. Unbeknownst to her friends, Caitrin is an operative for 512, an all-female counterespionage group led by war widow Bethany Goodman. As Churchill threatens to shut 512 down due to budgetary constraints, German bombers target British cathedrals, hospitals, and aristocratic houses with uncanny accuracy. Caitrin has learned that Florence and Teddy may be involved in the placement of homing devices that lead the Nazi bombers to their targets, and she infiltrates Teddy's inner circle to thwart the scheme. While some of Caitrin's motives are strained—notably, her fierce determination to recover her mother's ring from petty thieves rather than fight the Nazis who killed her fiancé—the action moves at a swift pace, the dialogue is sharp, and the well-placed historical details evoke the harrowing realities of English life during WWII. With a fierce heroine and nail-biting plot, this will delight fans of Jacqueline Winspear and Susan Elia MacNeal. It certainly does me.

Lumley, Sam. [How to Have a Killer Time in DC](#) (Kensington \$27). For 24-year-old Oliver Popp, autism is just another fact of life. As long as Oliver sticks to a comfortable itinerary planned well in advance, he gets by just fine as a staff writer for Offbeat Traveler magazine. But a curveball drops into Oliver's budding career when his first feature assignment takes him to Washington, DC, to chronicle the latest tourism trends. His freelance project photographer is Ricky Warner, a gregarious and impulsively adorable shot of adrenaline. If the flirty gay photographer isn't enough to unbalance shy Oliver at the get-go, there's also an unsettling chance encounter with old acquaintance, Elise Perkins, and a congressional hearing that's shaking up both the capitol and an entrepreneurial billionaire. The unexpected distractions soon collide—quite literally—when Elise is struck dead by a speeding car. Funny how she didn't move and didn't scream. She just stared it down like she knew it was coming. Forget the National Mall and Mt. Vernon Square. Oliver and Ricky are game for something much more interesting: solving a mystery and a murder.

Murphy, Dwyer. [The House on Buzzards Bay](#) (Penguin \$30). For his second novel after [The Stolen Coast](#) (\$18), *CrimeReads* editor-in-chief Murphy charts the complex relationships between a group of longtime friends in this masterful psychological thriller. After attorney Jim inherited his family's beach house in southeastern Massachusetts, he made it a summer retreat for his four closest college friends and nicknamed it the Nanumett Sand and Swim Club. In recent years, the group has drifted apart, but Jim and his new wife, Valentina, have decided to reunite the crew, who are all at new phases of their lives: Bruce is a bestselling novelist; Rami a diplomat; Maya an art teacher; and her partner, Shannon, an expectant mother. Though the reunion begins well, things take a turn when Bruce chides Jim for bad parenting, causing the pair to get into a physical confrontation. The next day, Bruce disappears. Ties between the group unravel further when a woman named Camille arrives, claiming Bruce invited her. Eventually, somebody winds up dead. Murphy takes time to flesh out each of his main characters before executing a series of dizzying rug pulls. It's a devilish twist on the traditional locked-room mystery.

Oates, Joyce Carol. [Fox: A Novel](#) (Random House \$32) is "a hypnotic journey through the mind of a madman that you'll want to share with everyone you know." Who is Francis Fox? A charming English teacher new to the idyllic Langhorne Academy, Fox beguiles many of his students, their parents, and his colleagues at the elite boarding school, while leaving others wondering where he came from and why his biography is so enigmatic. When two brothers discover Fox's car half-submerged in a pond in a local nature preserve and parts of an unidentified body strewn about the nearby woods, the entire community, including Detective Horace Zwender and his deputy, begins to ask disturbing questions about Francis Fox and who he might really be.

Reid, Taylor Jenkins. [Atmosphere: A Love Story](#) (Random House \$30). In 1984, a botched satellite deployment by the Navigator space shuttle kills several members of the crew. As the disaster unfolds, capsule communicator Joan Goodwin desperately tries to advise surviving engineer Vanessa Ford from Houston's Johnson Space Center. The narrative then rewinds seven years, to when Joan, a "Goody Two-shoes" astronomer at Rice University, feels

a “pull deep down in the layers of her skin” upon learning that NASA is recruiting women for its astronaut corps. While training as a mission specialist, she meets tall, curly-haired Vanessa, an aeronautical engineer who longs to pilot the space shuttle. The two women are drawn to each other and begin a romance, which they keep secret due to NASA’s prohibition against “sexual deviation.” Their reticence makes the ill-fated 1984 flight even more poignant as Reid keeps the reader in suspense about what happens to Vanessa. Along the way, Reid makes palpable the astronauts’ passion for their work and captures in vibrant detail the era’s high-stakes and fast-paced shuttle program.

Sager, Riley. [With a Vengeance](#) (Dutton \$30). Here’s “A clever and fun mashup of Agatha Christie’s *And Then There Were None* and *Murder on the Orient Express*” that makes our **June Historical Fiction Pick**. I can’t resist as Rob and I are booked on the Orient Express from Singapore to Kuala Lumpur next February. We can only hope for an uneventful trip.

Anna Matheson was 16 when one of her railroad tycoon father’s trains, which was transporting WWII troops, exploded and killed 37 people, including her brother, Tommy. A dozen years later, in 1954, Anna, the sole surviving member of her family, has managed to lure the six individuals she blames for the tragedy onto an overnight train ride from Philadelphia to Chicago. She hopes that by confronting the dirty half-dozen with smoking guns she’s discovered during her investigation, she can elicit confessions before turning them over to the FBI at their destination. A few hours into the 13-hour-trip, just after Anna reveals herself and her agenda, one of her suspects keels over. Blindsided, Anna realizes she has effectively trapped herself with desperate people who want her dead—at least one of whom is ready to do the job. From there, Sager swiftly ratchets up the suspense through a Survivor-worthy series of alliances and betrayals as the body count mounts.

Note: luxury trains are making a serious comeback despite this!

Schwab, V E. [Bury Our Bones in the Midnight Soil](#) (Tor/Forge \$29.99). Spanning centuries and continents, this epic fantasy traces the lives of three female vampires, each from a different era, slowly revealing the ways in which their stories are violently and sensually connected. It’s Schwab’s most ambitious—and most explicitly queer—novel yet wherein three lesbian vampires stay connected through 16th-century Spain, 1827 London and contemporary Boston (Harvard! maybe it needs vampires)—Schwab’s latest novel follows three queer women seeking love and autonomy as they become vampires and, in their new condition, grapple with loss, jealousy, forbidden relationships and the loneliness of immortality. “Schwab crafts intricate backstories for her leads, beautifully balancing the humanity and monstrosity of all three women while chronicling their transformations over time as they learn what it means to live forever.”

JUNE CLASSICS FROM JAPAN

Ayatsuji, Yukito. [The Labyrinth House Murders](#) (Steerforth \$18.95) is a twisty and ingenious stand-alone classic Japanese murder mystery from the author of [The Decagon House Murders](#) (\$14.94). Can the brilliant Kiyoshi Shimada solve the mystery of this bizarre house before all those trapped in its labyrinth are dead? Can you guess the solution before he does? These are Golden Age style mysteries, classics in Japan, and much like an

Anthony Horowitz.

And it is Horowitz who writes “One of the most original solutions I’ve ever read” about the cult classic locked-room mystery [The Tokyo Zodiac Murders](#) (Pushkin/Vertigo \$17.95) publishing August 5 I bring to your attention also.

COZIES

Berenson, Laurien. [Peg and Rose Play the Ponies](#) (\$17.95). Rival sisters-in-law Peg Turnbull and Rose Donovan spent their summer doing the unthinkable: sleuthing for dangerous suspects and becoming (almost) friends. But when a September trip leads to more murder, it’ll be a miracle if the dysfunctional duo is still a team—and alive—by autumn....

Byron, Ellen. [French Quarter Fright Night](#) (\$18.99). This Vintage Cookbook cozy takes you to Halloween in New Orleans where the staff of Bon Vee Culinary House Museum is setting up a fantastic haunted house tour for their visitors. But when flashy movie star Blaine Taggart and his entourage move into the mansion next door, gift shop proprietor Ricki James-Diaz gets a fright of her own. While Ricki is excited about the potential business the tours will bring to her vintage cookbook shop, she’s less thrilled by former friend Blaine’s arrival in town. Then Bon Vee’s prop tomb becomes a real tomb for Blaine’s nasty assistant, and suddenly everyone at Bon Vee is a murder suspect. There isn’t a ghost of a chance one of them committed the crime.

Crawford, Isis. [A Catered Bake-Off](#) (Kensington \$27). When sisters Bernie and Libby Simmons bring their culinary prowess from A Little Taste of Heaven catering company to a baking competition in Upstate New York, it’s murder....

Delany, Vicki. [Trouble Is Brewing](#) (Kensington \$17.95). Members of the Reynolds and Hill families are staying at Lily’s grandmother’s bed and breakfast, and now they’ve gathered at Tea by the Sea to sip some delicious blends while they shower bride-to-be Hannah Hill with presents. But the last package Hannah unwraps contains a beheaded Raggedy Ann doll, similar to the last gift from her father before he died long ago, and she’s chilled to the bone. Lily senses that the shocking anonymous gift might be related to more bad news...and she’s right.

* Dukess, Karen. [Welcome to Murder Week](#) (Gallery Books \$28.99). American Cath finds a mysterious ticket while sorting through her recently departed mother’s belongings: a pass to a “Murder Week” event and fundraiser in a small English village. Flanked by her two best friends, she sets off to uncover the story behind her mother’s curious purchase—and ends up discovering more about her mother, and herself, in this charming, escapist read. It is our June First Mystery Subscription Club Book of the Month but it can also be called a Cozy! Found family, new friends, lifetime secrets, a romance.... And of course, a murder.

Erickson, Alex. [A Purrfect Date](#) (Kensington \$18.95). Ashley Branson is sure of one thing after experiencing a disastrous blind date—she would much rather enjoy the single life and hang out with playful felines at her studio, A Purrfect Pose, than ever compromise her inner peace like that again. When the mysterious guy makes a late arrival then has the nerve to dine and dash, it’s embarrassing. But when he winds up dead in his apartment that same night?

* Kinsey, TE. [The Beast of Littleton Woods](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$16.99). I adore Lady Hardcastle and her fearless maid Florence.

Their banter is fabulous yet they more or less stay between Edwardian village lines. Do yourself an immense favor and order all 12 for a summer binge read.

It's October 1912. The inhabitants of Littleton Cotterell emerge from their homes after a week of torrential storms to the gruesome news that one of Sid Hyde's prized sheep has been mauled to death. As rumors abound of a vicious beast stalking the Gloucestershire countryside in search of prey, Lady Hardcastle and her lady's maid, Florence Armstrong, set out to find what is surely a rational explanation. Then Hyde himself is brutally killed in a similar attack, and the villagers go from curious to terrified. Littleton Cotterell isn't exactly unaccustomed to murderers—but a ferocious animal capable of tearing a man to shreds? That's entirely different. When another man dies and a third is injured, it's clear that whatever is behind the attacks needs to be caught, and fast. But are the villagers really seeing what they think they are? Is there actually a beast on the loose? Or....?

Lippman, Laura. [Murder Takes a Vacation](#) (Harper \$30 SIGNED while they last) is, surprise!, a cozy—our **June Cozy Crimes Pick**—that is as much a study of a woman discovering herself at midlife as it is a story of possible murder, stolen art, and people being not what—or who—they seem to be. And as reviewer Oline Cogdill adds, It is “an homage to the joys of travel, of discovering new passions, of never giving up — with a bit of a nod to *The Maltese Falcon*. It also is a valentine to aging well, to older women who often feel invisible, and a plea to not fade away.” The writing is sparkling, humorous, intelligent, the landscape of Paris and of the river trip north on the Seine to Normandy spot on (I've done it, points to Lippman for accuracy), and it's just a perfect summer read.

Lotempio, Toni. [Murder on the Books](#) (Severn \$29.99). Ordered Upon Request. Thirty-some Charlotte James, better known to her mystery fans as C.J. Barrett, decides to take a break from writing her popular Steve Sheppard mystery series. Leaving New York City, she moves back to her hometown of Austin to wind down, recuperate, and maybe come up with some new ideas for her books. Settling into her new life, Charley reunites with friend and baker Zane who is about to open a charming double store front. But while Zane is ready to open her café, her business partner Sheila unexpectedly departs town, bailing on her bookshop and leaving nothing but a note behind. Charley is more than happy to take over but then she finds Sheila's body in a chest in the store's basement....

MacRae, Molly. [There'll Be Shell to Pay](#) (Kensington \$27). Maureen Nash is still getting used to life on Ocracoke Island, learning how to play the “shell game” of her business—and with the ghost whispering with the spirit of Emrys Lloyd, the 18th-century Welsh pirate who haunts her shop, The Moon Shell. The spectral buccaneer has unburied a treasure hidden in the shop's attic that turns out to be antique shell art stolen from Maureen's late husband's family years ago. One day Victor “Shelly” Sullivan and his wife Lenrose visit the shop to inquire about these rare items. Not only is it suspicious that this shell collector should arrive around the time Maureen found the art, but Emrys insists that Sullivan's wife is an imposter because Lenrose is dead. Yet the Fig Ladies, a group who formed an online fig appreciation society, will be meeting on Ocracoke for the first time in person and say Lenore is attending. Is she? or will it be a pretender? Either way, why? (I admit I am hooked by idea of the fig appreciation society)

* Nevin, E C. [A Novel Murder: A Mystery](#) (Knopf \$28) is our **British Crime Subscription Club Pick for June but it's also a classic cozy, not a whit silly, and a debut**. Our heroine is tall, shy, socially disastrous, and modestly off but she's determined to be a published author despite years of neglect and discouragement by her literary agent. Bravely she goes off to the Killer Lines Crime Fiction Festival and its assemblage of star authors in the town of Hoslewit, manuscript in hand, hoping again against hope. And what a lot of surprises result including the murder of said literary agent.

Noonan, Roz. [Puzzle Me a Murder](#) (\$17.95). Librarian Alice Pepper always had a natural talent for figuring out people and puzzles in the small Oregon town of West Hazel. Down-on-her-luck Alice had hoped to retire before turning sixty-five, not struggle to keep her cozy home and dependable job. But even after divorce leaves her golden years a mess, the pieces always come together with a little help from her friends—a fun-loving crew who thrive on jigsaws over coffee, cocktails, and gossip. So, when it's time to defend close confidant Ruby Milliner, she springs into action. Only, in this case, supporting Ruby means proving she didn't murder her cheating husband!

* Pennant, Mel. [A Murder for Miss Hortense](#) (Knopf \$27). British playwright Pennant debuts with a lively cozy centered on the indomitable Miss Hortense, a Jamaican nurse who's been living in Birmingham's Bigglesweigh neighborhood since 1960. In the decades since Miss Hortense emigrated from Jamaica, she and her friends and neighbors have started an unofficial investigative service to look into local crimes. One case that has remained unsolved is that of “the Brute,” a man who, in 1970, brutally attacked a series of women in Bigglesweigh and left them for dead. Now, in 2000, Miss Hortense's nemesis, Constance Brown, is dead. Authorities believe she died of a heart attack, but Hortense fears murder. Then the body of a mysterious stranger is placed inside Constance's house with a Bible verse taped to it, and Miss Hortense becomes convinced that the Brute has returned. Here's a look at Britain's immigrants, their culture, their trials beyond those of detective fiction, and told in a kind of patois that made it very hard for a speed reader like me to enjoy but that's just me—I can't read Dickens or Thackeray either.

Perry, Carol J. [The Spirit Moves](#) (Kensington \$17.95). 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. Haven's hard-headed realist cop Frank Hubbard is determined to unveil whatever trickery led to the apparition, as he suspects the answer to who killed Terry Holiday may be connected to the illusion. If Maureen's learned anything since she moved from New England and inherited her haunted inn, it's that 1) ghosts are real (at least some of them), and 2) so are murderers.

* Searles, Julia. [A Terribly Nasty Business](#) (Random House \$29) is “a follow-up to her debut in [A Most Agreeable Murder](#) (18). Our heroine Beatrice is once again solving crimes—this time

in chic London and in her own inimitable style. Filled with sly wit and clever twists, this Regency parody proves that murder is never easy to solve in a class-conscious society.”

NEW IN HARDCOVER

Berry, Kristen L. [We Don't Talk About Carol](#) (Bantam \$30). Berry debuts with a striking and soulful crime novel about a woman investigating her aunt's decades-old disappearance. Publicist Sydney Singleton draws on her skills as a former investigative reporter when she learns, after her grandmother's death, that she had an aunt she never knew about. After a little digging, Sydney discovers that Carol Singleton, her father's sister, was one of six young Black women who vanished between 1963 and 1965 in Raleigh, N.C., with little follow up from law enforcement. Certain that the disappearances are linked, she trawls old newspaper articles for clues and posts on true crime sites until she attracts the attention of a well-known true crime podcast and prompts the Raleigh PD to reopen the case. Meanwhile, she juggles a strained marriage, arduous IVF treatments, and painful childhood memories while attempting to repair her relationship with her younger sister, Sasha. Berry maintains suspense via the central mystery, but she's as interested in character as she is in plot, to the novel's immense credit. With an eye toward racial disparities in crime solving, Berry traces the emotional fallout of Carol's disappearance on Sydney's family and their neighbors, and delivers a stirring ode to the power of community. Readers will be wowed. I certainly am.

Bledsoe, Erin. [Mob Queen](#) (Blackstone \$28.99). All Virginia Hill wanted was a better life. Tough in the 1930s. With the help of a new friend, Madeline, she finds the courage to stand up to her volatile husband—only to end up divorced and destitute. Down but not out, Virginia joins Madeline working as a waitress in one of the Mob's favorite hangouts, a restaurant smack-dab in the middle of the World's Fair. But when Madeline disappears after getting involved with the wrong Mafia man, Virginia vows to find her friend no matter what. But to do that, she'll have to follow Madeline into the heart of the Chicago Mob ... and Bugsy Siegel.

Burrough, Bryan. [The Gunfighters: How Texas Made the West Wild](#) (Penguin \$35). As a journalist and author, Burrough is best known for *Barbarians at the Gate*, his classic exploration of the wild, wild east of 1980s Wall Street. Here he pens “a lively chronicle of the way real-life cowboys and their high-noon duels captured American attention in the late 1800s, he peels back the veneer of legend to reveal the true stories behind John Wesley Hardin (a psychopath), Wild Bill Hickok (a “titanic fraud”) and Wyatt Earp (a pimp turned vigilante), among others, to show how the media's fascination with the culture of violence in Texas and elsewhere helped cement an enduring myth of the wild West.

* Chibnall, Chris. [Death at the White Hart](#) (Penguin \$30). A small English village. An unexpected killing—the owner of the town pub, a man who knew everyone's secrets. A straight-up twisty British police procedural, with plenty of breadcrumbs to keep the pages turning. The UK edition was our May British Crime Club Pick.

“*Broadchurch* creator Chibnall flexes his talents for characterization and complex plotting in his engrossing first novel. DS 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.” I add that Nicola has a supporting team of misfits beautifully rendered.

Constantine, Liv. [Don't Open Your Eyes](#) (Random House \$30). A woman worries that her confounding nightmares are actually premonitions in this standalone from the sister authors of [The Last Mrs. Parrish](#) (\$16.99). Successful PR agent Annabelle Reynolds has a happy family life and a loving husband, so she's startled when she awakens one morning from a dream about a violent marital spat. Annabelle's husband, James, is a sensitive doctor who rescued her from a toxic relationship with a manipulative professor, so she knows he'd never lay hands on her... Subsequent dreams, including one about a beachside encounter with a handsome stranger, prove eerily prescient, and then Annabelle has a vision of her older daughter, Scarlett, in grave danger. She keeps a close eye on Scarlett while trying to understand who, or what, is penetrating her subconscious. The nerve-jangling action relies heavily on coincidence, but the plot barrels along at a breakneck pace.

* Conway, Kit. [Cat Fight](#) (Atria \$28.99). Conway debuts with a witty social thriller set in the wealthy English town of Sevenoaks. At a backyard dinner party, zoologist Coralie King and her husband, Adam, host their friends Twig and Blake Dorsett, founders of the once popular band Pineapple Punk, and Emma and Matt Brooks, who've become notorious among Sevenoaks' residents for their extravagant home renovations. Adam briefly steps away from the festivities, then returns claiming he saw a panther on the hood of his car. His declaration sounds insane to most of his friends, who assume his vision is tied to the joint he was smoking. The group half-heartedly agrees to keep the situation quiet so as not to cause panic, but word spreads quickly. In the coming days, online posts from concerned mothers about dangerous beasts roaming the English countryside get picked up by the national press, and journalists descend on Sevenoaks where buried secrets abound. “More crime-tinted suburban satire than straightforward mystery, Conway's twisty narrative is populated by three-dimensional characters and dagger-sharp renderings of middle-aged malaise.” And, I add, so detestable found this book a most unpleasant read. It has a great cover, however.

Cosby, SA. [King of Ashes](#) (Pine & Cedar \$28.99). “The Carruthers are a family living with multiple secrets and the trauma of losing their mother while the siblings were still young. When Roman, the oldest brother, returns home after their father is in a terrible accident, he gets drawn into gang warfare trying to protect his family. This page-turner is full of secrets,” says Indie Next.

De Feo, Giovanni. [The Secret Market of the Dead](#) (Saga Press \$28.99). A vibrant, enchanting world of dark saints, magical contracts, and unshakeable fate emerges in Italian novelist and comic

book writer Giovanni De Feo's first novel in English. The 18th-century Neapolitan village of Luceria pays reverence not only to the Catholic saints of the waking Day world but also to seven unusual Saints who live in the dreamworld of "the Night that is just on the other side of Luceria." The village is also the home of eight-year-old Oriana Siliceo, a blacksmith's daughter who dreams of the day she and her twin brother, Oriano, will inherit their father's smithy. But then...." This meditation on the twin powers of destiny and choice as well as the indomitable human passion to create comes wrapped in layers of whimsy, folklore, and darkness. intricately realized in the fantastical Night with its talking cats, wondrous creations, and fool's bargains. A winner for fans of Erin Morgenstern.

De Rosnay, Tatiana. [Blonde Dust](#) (Grand Central \$29). It's a departure from the author's usual European settings and characters: the novel follows Pauline, a French American chambermaid at the fabled Mapes Hotel in Reno, Nevada, in 1960, whose dream of becoming a veterinarian was derailed by an unexpected pregnancy and whose life is changed when she crosses paths with Marilyn Monroe.

Doquang, Mailan. [Ceylon Sapphires](#) (Penzler \$26.95). One great reason to read this second novel by Doquang is the splendid tour of Paris and especially of the Louvre. At a private showing in the Louvre, Napoleon Bonaparte's great-great-grand niece Margot Steiner admires the painting of her famous ancestor while wearing a precious Ceylon sapphire necklace commissioned by the emperor himself. After getting caught in a commotion on the crowded staircase, however, Mrs. Steiner discovers that her necklace is gone and the suspicious young woman who started the commotion has melted away into the throng... Rune Sarasin is new to Paris, but not new to stealing priceless jewels. She has spent the last few years plying her trade in the fast-paced city of Bangkok, but after unwittingly stealing from the ruthless smuggler Charles Lemaire, she now must hunt down the gems that he requests until she repays what she owes. But when Lemaire demands that she now steal sapphire earrings to match the necklace, Rune realizes that he will never willingly let her go. Taking down a man with near unlimited resources is a desperate challenge for a young woman on her own in a Europe-circling cat and mouse game. This is so well executed I read it in one go and recommend it highly to readers of heist novels from Donald E. Westlake to Christopher Reich in particular. It also pairs well the two by Kimberley Belle in this newsletter.

Franklin, Rob. [Great Black Hope](#) (Summit Books \$28.99). A gripping, elegant debut novel about a young Black man caught between worlds of race and class, glamour and tragedy, a friend's mysterious death and his own arrest—an important read for June 19th! "At once fresh and original while delighting the reader with hints of Franzen, McInerney, Baldwin. This novel—a whodunit, a coming-of-age, a New York novel—heralds the arrival of a rarefied talent." —Elin Hilderbrand

Frey, James. [Next to Heaven](#) (Atria \$29) "is a page-turning whodunit about the murder of depraved and dashing playboy—retired athlete Alexander "The Great." With no shortage of disagreeable suspects and no end to the outlandish events, it's a beach read in a designer trench coat—written so tongue-in-cheek you'll find yourself Googling which current rich celeb the characters might be based on. Recommended for readers who like

their mysteries messy, their characters messier, and their plotlines outrageously unhinged. Sex, drugs, orgies, and murder included." This dark book is not for me and you may recall the great Oprah scandal swirling around Frey:

The *NY Times* writes, In 2005, Oprah Winfrey selected his memoir *A Million Little Pieces* for her book club, only to learn soon after that he had fabricated parts of his story about drug addiction and his time in rehab. She shamed Frey on national TV for betraying the American public, and his publisher offered refunds. He was branded a villain, a fraud — and became perhaps the first canceled man this century. 'Did I lie? Yup,' he told me. 'Did I also write a book that tore people to shreds? Yeah.' [My question is, why then not call it a novel?] Today, lies are told with gusto, while facts are distorted and erased at the speed of tapping thumbs. Just scroll on X for a bit, and the Frey affair might look like a horse and buggy that was ticketed for trotting too fast."

Giddings, Megan. [Meet Me at the Crossroads](#) (Harper \$28.99). The sudden appearance of seven mysterious doors across the world draws attention from religious sects, covetous billionaires and everyday people who speculate over what lies on the other side. Olivia and Ayanna, two Black teenage siblings in the Midwest, differ in their opinions — Is it a door to nowhere? To a land paved with golden paths? — until one of them accidentally steps through and vanishes

Harmel, Kristin. [The Stolen Life of Colette Marceau](#) (Farrar Strauss \$28.99). Two jewel thieves, a priceless bracelet that disappears in 1940s Paris, and a quest for answers in a decades-old murder power a dual-timeline narrative. A young Parisian woman learning the family legacy of jewel theft, taking from the undeserving wealthy to help those in need as befits a kind of descendant of Robin Hood, lives at the core. "Harmel brilliantly creates absorbing characters, harrowing scenes, and, ultimately, goodness in a tale full of twists, moral dilemmas, and the enduring power of forgiveness."

Hauser, Emily. [Penelope's Bones](#) (University of Chicago Press \$30). I recommend this splendid book to readers of Homer, and to readers of mythology told from the point of view of "silenced women" from the Bronze Age like Madeleine Miller's *Circe*, books that have become their own popular genre. We carry many here at The Pen. Hauser draws on a wealth of scholarship and archaeological discoveries, updating the roles and personalities of Homer's characters by examining real women of the Bronze Age. For example some graves reveal that the Amazons were some kind of real thing given the women buried with weapons. Another discovery shows that a Hittite queen may have been a stand-in for Troy's Hecuba. There is a splendid review available in the [Wall Street Journal](#), it certainly hooked me.

Hightower, Lynn. [Spies in Plain Sight](#) (Severn \$29.99) is Hightower's dynamic second novel featuring French forensic accountant Junie Lagarde who lost her husband and her hearing-dog Leo in a plane crash (or did she?) in [The Beautiful Risk](#) (\$18.99), welcomes you to VIE. A spy organization of the people, by the people, and for the people. We are spies in plain sight. We make billionaires afraid. She is now a citizen journalist facing a newsroom attack ordered by one. He belongs to a shadowy secret society called the Emerald Vipers.

Housewright, David. [Them Bones](#) (St Martins \$29). Angela Bjork, a doctoral candidate, was out on a dig site in Southeastern Montana, when she found a skeleton of an Ankylosaurus. And no sooner than when the skull was removed and placed on a truck then they were attacked, the truck and skull stolen. Worried that nothing is being done to find the stolen skull, she turns to unofficial PI Rushmore McKenzie. Worth millions on the black market, the chance to recover it becomes fainter by the day

Lief, Katya. [Women Like Us](#) (Grove Atlantic \$27). Five years after filmmaker Joni Ackerman got away with the murder of her abusive husband, her bullying con man brother, Marc, appears on her doorstep after a 20-year absence. Though Marc's apparent reformation from cruel conman to elder brother persuades Joni to leave him at her Malibu home to dog sit while she launches a project in New York, her colleague and best friend, Val, isn't fooled. When a chance encounter between Val and another woman confirms, Joni once again must embrace the power of recklessness to stop her brother from finding new victims and untangle just how similar their shared blood has made them. This is yet another example of women embracing agency with muddled ethics.

Marais, Bianca. [A Most Puzzling Murder](#) (Mira \$30). This is pure catnip for armchair puzzlers. See New in Paperback for a review.

McCausland, Vanessa. [The Last Illusion of Paige White](#) (Crown \$28). Gorgeous, charismatic Paige White has always lived a picture-perfect life. Her meticulously curated social pages exude an old-fashioned, wholesome lifestyle set against a picturesque town in Australia. Images of breakfasts lakeside with her daughter, sunny afternoons in the family van, and romantic picnics with her husband are the envy of her thousands of followers. But when a dark, brooding image pops up on Paige's page, where she appears waterlogged and disheveled—and shortly after she's discovered drowned—alarm bells go off. Jane Masters, Paige's childhood best friend, has returned for the funeral. Jane left years ago to pursue a bigger life as a journalist in Sydney, putting everyone from her early days in the rearview mirror. But as Jane sinks deeper into the community she thought she'd never return to, she begins to discover that darker things lurk beneath the sparkle of the lake.

Myracle, Lauren. [Plays Well with Others](#) (Blackstone \$27.99). One year after her ex-best friend posted their private correspondence on social media, good girl Jake Nolan is still reeling. Thanks to Shelby's betrayal, Jake lost her job, her house, and her husband, not to mention a cherished friendship that turned out to be built on deceit. Circle Shelby; cross out Jake. But enough is enough, and after moving into a bungalow on idyllic Sweetwater Lane, Jake decides to retaliate by doing some crossing out of her own. When her brand-new friend and neighbor Mabel admits to also having an enemy, they decide to join forces. Why not, since they're both itching for revenge? Only they're not the only ones....

* Nevin, EC. [A Novel Murder: A Mystery](#) (Knopf \$28). Our **British Crime June Pick** is a debut appealing to fans of Richard Osman, Janice Hallett...maybe Nita Prose. Welcome to the Killer Lines Crime Festival! In the quaint town of Hoslewit, the biggest names in crime writing have congregated to celebrate all things bookish and murderous. With a program packed with seminars and signings, egos and alcohol, it's sure to be a thrilling weekend.

Author Jane Hepburn is determined this is going to be her year. She's not quite reached the heady heights of best-sellerdom yet, but is convinced that if she can just make the right connections at the festival, it could be the start of a whole new chapter for her and her books. Then her literary agent is killed, and Jane's plans are derailed. But if she can solve the murder, perhaps it will provide the boost her writing career needs? If awkward, unassertive yet gifted Jane lives to tell the tale....

Patterson, James/Bill Clinton. [First Gentleman](#) (Little Brown \$32) is the third in the best-selling partnership between the former president and the prolific novelist, follows a grieving journalist as she chronicles the murder trial of Cole Wright, an N.F.L. star as well as the president's husband. "When we first got writing," Patterson recently remarked, "we simply could not have dreamt this one up."

Rao, Nilima. [A Shipwreck in Fiji](#) (Soho \$29.95). If you yearn for summer travel why not take a trip to Fiji? Even though it's 1915 you will learn much about this Pacific island as a destination. In the sequel to [A Disappearance in Fiji](#) (\$17.95), Sergeant Akal Singh, an unwilling transplant to Fiji after causing a scandal in Hong Kong, is just starting to settle into his life in the capital city of Suva when he is sent to the neighboring island of Ovalau, once a thriving port, on a series of fool's errands. First: investigate strange reports of Germans, thousands of miles from the front of World War I. Second: chaperone two strong-willed European ladies, Mary and Katherine, on a sight-seeing tour. And third: supervise the only police officer currently on Ovalau, a teenage constable with a penchant for hysterics. Accompanied by his friend Taviti, who is visiting his uncle, the local chief, Akal sets off on these seemingly straightforward tasks. Instead, they become embroiled in a series of local issues: the gruesome death of an unpopular local and the imprisonment of a group of Norwegian sailors in Taviti's uncle's village. To add to Akal's woes, Katherine, the charming aspiring journalist, harbors an agenda of her own.

* Robotham, M J. [Mrs. Spy](#) (Bloomsbury \$28.99). Maggie Flynn, unexpected MI5 operative and single mum, unravels the intelligence agency's most treacherous secrets in 1960s London as she stalks the city's streets in myriad disguises. It starts with the widow raising a Beatles-mad teenage daughter, Maggie is maintaining a connection to her late husband whose own covert past only emerged after his death. Then a chance encounter with a mysterious Russian agent reveals her knew her husband, and suspects that a British figure betrayed him. "*Mrs. Spy* has invented a new genre—the domestic spy story in where the redoubtable heroine can knock up a shepherd's pie as efficiently as knocking off an enemy agent. Smart, funny and tense—*Mrs. Spy* has a license to entertain." —Daisy Goodwin

Schellman, Katharine. [Last Dance Before Dawn](#) (St Martins \$28). Historical fiction for Gay Pride Month concludes The Nightingale series. Vivian Kelly has finally created a home and a family at the glamorous speakeasy known as The Nightingale, where no one cares who you are in the daytime. After all, in the underground world of 1920s New York City, everyone has a secret to keep. When a stranger from Chicago shows up at The Nightingale looking to settle old scores, Vivian and the Nightingale's owner, the mysterious and alluring Honor Huxley, send him packing. They soon discover, though, that the stranger was just a warning

that someone won't stop until they unravel a mystery that's been cold for years: a missing girl, a boy out for revenge, and a truck full of cash that disappeared in a job gone horribly wrong.

* Seales, Julia. [A Terribly Nasty Business](#) (Random House \$29). As with its predecessor [A Most Agreeable Murder](#) (\$18), Seales writes a lively parody of the Regency mystery with a nod towards *Bridgerton*. Read the two in that spirit. In the first Beatrice, a young lady pressured by cratering family finances towards a Society marriage but instead obsessed with true crime and solving murders herself, works out who is the killer at a ball held in her small town of Swampshire. Now she's in a fictional genteel part of London with her chaperone Miss Bolton that is also home to DS Investigations, the new office Beatrice opened with the prickly, annoyingly logical Inspector Drake, to solve the city's brutally thrilling crimes. But the agency attracts minor crimes while famed gentleman inspector Sir Huxley gets the murders until a string of murders thrusts DSI into a murderous scandal in the arts community—to Beatrice's relief.

Shapiro, BA. [The Lost Masterpiece](#) (Little Brown \$29). "Smart and entrancing... Shapiro infuses with supernatural elements as she orchestrates acts of passion, daring, and determination, mixing compelling art history with zesty fabrication, full-blown romance, and cleverly devised suspense."—*Booklist*. Bestseller Shapiro "blends fiction and history in an a historical novel about a fictional painting by Édouard Manet that was purloined during World War II. Nazis confiscated *The Party on the Seine* from descendants of Berthe Morisot, Manet's lover and a legendary impressionist painter in her own right. Together with Manet, she broke taboos and battled against French strictures and solemnities in the 19th century. Now, more than a century after the painting's creation, Tamara Rubin, a liberated woman living in Boston, enters its story. An agency dedicated to returning art stolen from Jewish families has pinpointed Tamara as the sole surviving heir to *The Party on the Seine*, to her unexpected joy. But a challenge from a Manet relative in Paris forces Tamara to seek legal help, setting the stage for lustful romance across the centuries, legal jousting across the Atlantic, and paranormal manifestations across the divide between living and dead. ... With crafty enhancements of history, sexy updates to real relationships, and bold inventions, Shapiro lays bare the genius and passion of Manet and Morisot and brings impressionism to life."—*LJ*

* Smith, Sally. [A Case of Mice and Murder](#) (Bloomsbury \$28.99). A British Crime Pick in the UK edition, this delightful debut set in 1901 London takes you into the ancient precinct of the Inner Temple, one of four Inns of Court, the professional associations for judges and barristers and here, home to the Lord Chief Justice. Smith gives us a tricky murder, but also a fascinating copyright case. Do pay attention to the map as the physical configuration of the Temples is important.

When barrister Gabriel Ward steps out of his rooms at exactly two minutes to seven on a sunny May morning in 1901, his mind is so full of his latest case—the disputed authorship of bestselling children's book *Millie the Temple Church Mouse* that he scarcely registers the body of the Lord Chief Justice of England on his doorstep. But even he, a neurodivergent man dedicated to strict order, cannot fail to notice the judge's dusty bare feet, in shocking contrast to his flawless evening dress, nor the silver carving knife sticking out of his chest. In the shaded courtyards and ancient buildings of the Inner Temple, the hidden

heart of London's legal world, murder has spent centuries confined firmly to the casebooks. The police can enter the Temple only by consent, so who better to investigate this tragic breach of law and order than a man who prizes both above all things?

Swanson, Peter. [Kill Your Darlings](#) (Harper \$30). Swanson pens a murder mystery in reverse. Thom and Wendy Graves appear to have it all: a beautiful home, flourishing careers, a successful son. There's just one thing: Wendy is planning to kill her husband. Moving from the current decayed state of the Graves' two-and-a-half-decade marriage to its beginning, Swanson takes readers through the couple's birthday celebrations, the birth of their son, the purchase of their first home, and—at the very start of their relationship—a violent decision that bonded them together. As the couple grows younger, readers gain insight into Wendy's coldness and Thom's drunkenness, until they finally learn what, exactly, has tied them to each other through the decades. As is typical for Swanson, there's plenty of shrewd sleight-of-hand if you enjoy playing with story structure. And he delivers his usual twist in the end.

* Taylor, Andrew. [A Schooling in Murder](#) (Harper UK \$28). It's a standalone whodunnit set in 1945 during the closing months of World War II. It takes place entirely at Monkshill Park, a country house on the Welsh borders that's now a third-rate girls' boarding school. The book has one rather unusual feature: the narrator is not only the detective but the victim.

Taylor, Austin. [Notes on Infinity](#) (Celadon \$29.99). "Zoe and Jack have found a way to genetically engineer genes related to aging. Their incredible work and parallel love story are almost too good to be true. Fans of *Tomorrow*, and *Tomorrow*, and *Tomorrow* will race through this.

Tremblay, Paul. [Horror Movie](#) (Harper \$30). In June 1993, a group of young guerilla filmmakers spent four weeks making *Horror Movie*, a notorious, disturbing, art-house horror flick. The weird part? Only three of the film's scenes were ever released to the public, but *Horror Movie* has nevertheless grown a rabid fan base. Three decades later, Hollywood has decided it's ripe for a remake. The man who played "The Thin Kid" is the only surviving cast member. He remembers all too well the secrets buried within the original screenplay, the bizarre events of the filming, and the dangerous crossed lines on set that resulted in tragedy. As memories flood back in, the boundaries between reality and film, past and present start to blur. But he's going to help remake the film... at what cost?

* Toyne, Simon. [The Black Highway](#) (Harper \$32). Forensic specialist Laughton Rees is not ashamed of her checkered past—after all, her youthful indiscretions led to the birth of her daughter Gracie, the person she loves most in the world—but when Gracie's father unexpectedly turns up in their lives again, Laughton is automatically wary. Shelby Facer is a dangerous man, formerly imprisoned for his involvement in an international drug trafficking ring. But what if he knows something about a body with no head or hands that has recently turned up in the river Thames? In fact Shelby IDs the man. The victim was part of a highly secretive smuggling ring Shelby was involved with during his and Laughton's youth—which Laughton's father, former commissioner for the Metropolitan police, was investigating before he died. Laughton throws herself into her father's old files to try to trace the connections between past and present, but as she and

DCI Tannahill Khan circle closer to the truth, danger grows.... “A stunning novel! Part wily procedural, part relentless psychological thriller, *Dark Objects* will keep you on the edge of your seat from start to finish...”—Jeffery Deaver.

OUR JUNE PAPERBACK PICKS

Note: small paperbacks are so few that we will incorporate new releases in that format and price into monthly Paperback Picks and reviews.

Alexander, Neely Tubati. [Courtroom Drama](#) (\$17.99) “delivers a wildly entertaining romance between two members of a sequestered jury. On trial is Margot Kitsch, one of the stars of *Real Housewives*—esque reality TV show *Authentic Moms of Malibu*, who stands accused of killing her husband. Jury member and reality TV superfan Sydney Parks is thrilled to be there—especially when she finds herself seated next to her childhood best friend, Damon Bradburn, in the jury box. The pair fell out of touch after discovering their parents’ affair. Now they listen to the alarming testimony of a woman called Sydney and.... Alexander impressively drives forward both the murder trial and the romance, conjuring real chemistry between her leads and soapy, salacious intrigue in the courtroom.”

Belle, Kimberly. [The Expat Affair](#) (\$18.99) “Like the rare diamonds at the heart of this book, *The Expat Affair* begins with gritty raw material—two American women in Amsterdam, expats and strangers caught up in violent forces—and applies unthinkable pressure—murders, stalking, the demands of a famous family dynasty on its last leg—to test whether its heroines will crack or be forged into something greater. The result is a marvel: a glamorous, smart, and propulsive thriller that is as much about women finding their agency as it is a high-stakes international game of cat and mouse.”—Ashley Winstead

Cavanagh, Steve. [Fifty Fifty](#) (\$18.99). Here’s an unusual courtroom drama. Two sisters are on trial for murder. Each called 911 to report a murder. Each said the other did it. Who do you believe? Maybe NY’s former con-artist turned defense attorney Eddie Flynn will sort it out?

* Gray, Claudia. [The Rushworth Family Plot](#) (\$18). Gray’s clever fourth Jane Austen homage keeps her winning streak alive. In 1823, Jonathan Darcy (son of *Pride and Prejudice*’s Fitzwilliam Darcy) and his sleuthing colleague, Juliet Tilney (daughter of *Northanger Abbey*’s Catherine Morland), are in London to participate in the social season and possibly find a mate—an unwelcome prospect, since each harbors romantic feelings for the other. When Jonathan’s family must return to Pemberley, he’s forced to board with his father’s friend, Sir Thomas Bertram. Jonathan and Juliet get a respite from their mandated socializing after Maria Rushworth, Bertram’s black-sheep sister, arrives at the family home, and then someone close to her is strangled to death with a length of rope. As a result, the amateur sleuths eagerly exit the London rat race and tap into their deductive acumen. Gray continues to effortlessly capture the language and tone of Austen’s novels, this time heating up the series’ sparkling romance plot while delivering her most intricate puzzle to date. [Order all four](#) if you’ve missed out.

Greaney, Mark. [Sentinel](#) (\$10.99) follows [Armored](#) (\$10.99) featuring U.S. State Department bodyguard Josh Duffy. Josh and his wife Nicole are in Ghana supporting an American diplomatic

team working to help build a much-needed dam. Ghana has a stable democracy, so Josh and Nicole feel safe bringing their two young children with them. It’s almost a vacation. Then China decides the dam must go, and everything heads south. A Chinese insurrection expert arrives in the country, and China arms and trains a native rebel army. Foreign mercenaries and jihadists—separate forces—also arrive. The plot is complicated, but the objective is simple: overthrow the current government and place Ghana firmly under the thumb of China. Soon, Josh and his family are on the run, chased by a Chinese hit squad and the rebels.

* Hallett, Janice. [The Examiner](#) (\$19.99). At Royal Hastings University, the fictional setting of the novel, administrators admit early on to the drastic measures that have been taken with a once thriving arts program to make it “workplace-relevant.” This is the reality that Royal Hastings arts instructor Angela Nathaniel faces at the start, and her solution is to create an MA program that fosters creative synergy between artists and industry. For her pilot year, which must be successful if the university is to give the course its final approval, Gela has hand-picked six students. Each member of the class brings their own fractious personality – and potential secrets – into the mix. As they scrabble and fight and sabotage each other, Hallett drops hints of ever more sinister situations, including inappropriate relationships among students and staff, borderline psychopathy, domestic terrorism, technology that transcends science fiction, and, of course, murder. Hallett does a great job assembling a portrait of school bureaucracy and student life. And as ever, she is without a doubt a master at engendering comic effect between her characters while dropping unsettling hints that something is amiss.

* Kinsey, TE. [The Beast of Littleton Woods](#) (\$16.99). See Cozies for a review of one of my very favorite British historical series, 12th for Lady Harcastle and her fearless maid Florence who inhabit the village of Littleton Cotterell by now in October, 1912. Again I recommend ordering the set for a summer binge read.

* Lloyd, Ellery. [The Final Act of Juliette Willoughby](#) (\$18.99). This fascinating novel from married couple Collette Lyons and Paul Vlitos writing as Lloyd (*People Like Her*; *The Club*) unspools under several narrators in multiple time lines to a dramatic climax. In 1938, a young Juliette Willoughby, exhibited her only painting at the famous International Surrealist Exhibition in Paris for a single night, stirring much interest before mysteriously withdrawing it from the exhibit. Then she and her artist lover perished in a fire shortly thereafter and the painting and its secrets were presumed lost. In 1991, Caroline Cooper, a young art history student at Cambridge, decides to write her master’s thesis on sphinxes in surrealist art; at the urging of her mentor, she agrees to include Juliette Willoughby’s “Self-Portrait as Sphinx”—if she can find enough material since the painting was presumably forever lost. In the present day, Caroline, now a world-famous expert on Juliette Willoughby’s painting, is on stage in Dubai to authenticate that same lost painting, recently auctioned for 42 million pounds.... But how?

Parker, T Jefferson. [Desperation Reef](#) (\$19.99). A family of Laguna Beach surfers prepare for the high-stakes competition that killed their patriarch in Edgar winner Parker’s outstanding thriller. “Twenty-five years ago, John Stonebreaker died during the Monsters of the Mavericks surfing contest off the coast of Northern California. Now, his widow, Jen, and their twin sons,

Brock and Casey—all world-class surfers in their own right—are getting ready to enter the same event. In the weeks leading up to the competition, all three face down individual conflicts: restaurateur Jen struggles to let go of John's death, seafood supplier Casey seeks to untangle himself from an illegal fish-smuggling operation, and progressive church minister Brock deals with increasingly violent threats from a local white supremacist group. Each subplot comes to a crescendo at the surf competition, which Parker brings to vivid life. Though there's plenty of suspense, danger, and illicit activity on offer, the novel's focus is squarely on the Stonebreaker clan, whose bonds and fractures prove utterly riveting in Parker's hands."—*PW* Starred Review for a book that fans of Don Winslow's surfing thrillers should grab immediately.

Walker, Martin. [A Grave in the Woods](#) (\$18). It's fascinating to see events of the past viewed from the lens of today. So first, the discovery of a tomb wherein the unclothed skeletons of two teenaged German girls and the clothed one of a Fascist Italy naval officer have been concealed since 1944 under the bones of a dog, all three killed by a French Resistance patrol, prompts a reaction from NATO partners today to honor rather than revile the dead. Walker delineates the Resistance and its continuing fallout vividly as the village of St. Denis pulls together a diplomatic gathering of Germans and Italians and a surprise American. And to save an ancient estate's rebirth as a luxe hotel. Meanwhile torrential rains have so inundated the Massif Central that water management, dams and bridges and, sob, trees, must be reviewed as massive flooding is predicted. This is a vivid portrait of how climate change forces a reorder of historic engineering.

[Bruno's Cookbook](#) (Knopf \$40). Treat yourself to more time with Bruno and a sumptuous French cookbook that immerses you in the delectable countryside cuisine of Bruno's beloved Périgord region, featuring favorite meals from Roasted Tomato Tapenade and Tarragon Chicken to A Most Indulgent Chocolate Cake. Great photos, too.

Wise, Henry. [Holy City](#) (\$18). A 2024 Hardboiled Crime Club Pick is the 2025 Edgar winner for Best First Novel. When Will Seems' mother died 13 years ago, he fled rural Euphoria County, Virginia, for the "holy city" of Richmond. Now, he's back with the Euphoria County's police department, and he finds that his old neighborhood remains mired in poverty and crime. Then his childhood friend, Tom Janders, is murdered in an arson. Zeke Hathorn, father of another of Will's boyhood friends, is spotted running from the burning building, and authorities swiftly place him in custody. Substantial evidence implicates Zeke in Tom's death, and Will's boss wants to send Zeke to prison. Will, however, owes a deep adolescent debt to Zeke's son and sets out to prove the older man's innocence. "Deeply rooted in the complex natural and cultural landscape of southern Virginia, *Holy City* is an engaging, original, and sometimes explosive take on what it can mean to go home again. Wise gives us a suspenseful crime story rich with lyrical flourishes and populated by tough, courageous, complicated people struggling with the power and burden of lifelong guilt, of unpayable debts. . . ultimately *Holy City* is a searching exploration of the fraught space between revenge and redemption."—James A. McLaughlin

MORE NEW IN PAPERBACK

Aldyn, KD. [Sister, Butcher, Sister](#) (Sourcebooks \$17.99). If you crave darkness, violence, and a female killer, one of three traumatized sisters, expressing rage, this is for you. Think *The Butcher and the Wren* vibe.

Berry, Flynn. [Trust Her](#) (\$18) is a follow on [to Northern Spy](#) (\$18). Three years after they narrowly escaped the IRA's worst punishment for informing, Northern Irish sisters Tessa and Marian Daly have built a new life in Dublin with their young children. Though Tessa is haunted by the abrupt and violent end to her old life, she does her best to immerse herself in the joys of Finn's childhood and the rhythms of her new job at the Irish Observer. It's a small island, though, and just as quickly as they disappeared, figures from the sisters' past surface to drag them back into the conflict....

Brazier, Eliza Jane. [It Had to Be You](#) (\$19). When Eva and Jonathan hook up on the sleeper train from Florence to Paris, they think they'll never see each other again. Which is too bad, because neither has ever felt a spark like this for another person. But love isn't on the agenda in their line of work. Six months later, they run into each other in the Hall of Mirrors in Versailles. This encounter is not by chance, because Eva has been hired to kill Jonathan. She's a contract killer, but what she doesn't know is that he is too. Their meeting kicks off a high-stakes adventure across Western Europe. There will be tourism. There will be bodies. There might be a fatal attraction....

Booth, Stephanie. [Libby Lost and Found](#) (\$17.99). Indie Next says: "A delightful read! Full of endearing characters who collide with heartwarming results: an author of a beloved children's series over deadline due to early onset Alzheimer's, a tiny intrepid superfan, and her wacky family and town." Who are we without the books we love? Without the stories we tell ourselves? And about the endings we write for ourselves?

Brady, Ali. [Battle of the Bookstores](#) (Berkley \$19). When the smarmy landlord who owns both bookstores decides to combine them—and hire only one manager—Ryan (cat lover and Romance addict) and Josie (literary fiction) must compete for the job. As their literary tastes and management styles clash, neither realizes that they've already become friends by chatting on an online forum for booksellers. "Readers will enjoy the witty banter, loveable cast of characters, spicy scenes, literary references, and the representation of the romance genre and romance bookstores as inclusive stories and places for anyone and everyone to find themselves." Recommended to readers of Jenn McKinlay.

* Cartmel, Andrew. [Like a Bullet](#) (Titan \$18.99). "A crime caper from the author of the excellent Vinyl Detective series features a feisty amoral book dealer using her unique skills to solve fiendish crimes. When Erik Make Loud, retired rock star and a major World War Two nut, hires Cordelia, the Paperback Sleuth, to track down a series of lurid paperbacks about his favourite global conflict—the "Commando" novels by the blatantly pseudonymous Butch Raider—it seems like a routine job. But Cordelia soon discovers the final novel in the series, the incredibly rare *Commando Gold*, is all but impossible to track down. The books' creator—real name Monty Harrington, once a promising young poet and now a depraved drunk—proves easier to find. Writing pulp war stories didn't come naturally to Monty.

Until he met someone who knew all about such stuff.... too authentically as it turns out.

Carver, Caro. [Bad Tourists](#) (\$18.99). Three tight-knit friends embark on an extravagant divorce trip to the Maldives where they can unwind and celebrate a new chapter in midlife—until they realize the isolated resort of their dreams is harboring a killer. Maybe their friendships aren't as tight knit as they thought....

* Chilton, LM. [Don't Swipe Right](#) (Gallery \$17.99). Along with too much cheap wine and bad reality TV, Gwen turns to a dating app to help fill the void in her life. Swiping through the few eligible bachelors left in town, she spends her evenings out on one disastrous date after another. But when a string of murders suddenly occurs in her small coastal English city, she's shocked by the connection between each of the victims—they've all been on a date with her. Before she knows what's happening, Gwen finds herself the main suspect in a serial killer's murderous spree, and the only way she can clear her name is to track down her former dates (even those that have ghosted her) and unmask a killer.

Dunn, Erin. [He's to Die For](#) (St Martins \$18). A brilliant young investigator meets the man of his dreams while working a high-profile murder case in Dunn's debut. Rav Trivedi, an Ivy League-educated Brit, is the youngest member of the NYPD's homicide squad at 29 years old. When music executive Richard Vanderford is found murdered in his home, Rav is tapped to lead the investigation. It turns out that Vanderford was not short on enemies, including popular band the Nicks (Vanderford bought the master recordings of the group's first two albums out from under them). Rav, however, doesn't think the Nicks killed Vanderford—especially not their hunky lead singer Jack Vale. After Jack is cleared as a suspect, he and Rav consummate their mutual attraction, but then new evidence emerges that puts Rav's career on the line. Eventually, he's faced with a choice between taking the easy road to save his career or risking his reputation on the word of his new flame. This cozy makes fine Gay Pride Month reading.

Espach, Alison. [The Wedding People](#) (\$18.99). June is the Wedding Month. So head to Newport with Phoebe Stone. Phoebe arrives at the grand Cornwall Inn wearing a green dress and gold heels, not a bag in sight, alone. She's immediately mistaken by everyone in the lobby for one of the wedding people, but she's actually the only guest at the Cornwall who isn't here for the big event. Phoebe is here because she's dreamed of coming for years—she hoped to shuck oysters and take sunset sails with her husband, only now she's here without him, at rock bottom, and determined to have one last decadent splurge on herself. Meanwhile, the bride has accounted for every detail and every possible disaster the weekend might yield except for, well, Phoebe and Phoebe's plan—which makes it that much more surprising when the two women can't stop confiding in each other.

* Foley, Lucy. [Midnight Feast Indie Edition Sprayed](#) (\$18.99). In case you like this Foley enough to upgrade to a fancy edition....

Freeman, Brian. [Break Every Rule](#) (\$18.99). Go for a thrill ride with ace Freeman. Tommy Miller is a man with deadly skills, hiding in Florida under a false identity. After being set up on an overseas mission, he's on the run from terrorists—and from the government who betrayed him. So when his wife and daughter

are violently abducted, it seems his ghosts are finally catching up with him. But Tommy isn't the only one with secrets. His wife, Teresa, has been concealing her own dangerous past, and as Tommy races to rescue his family, he must peel away the clues she's left behind.

Gilbert, Sian. [I Did Warn Her](#) (Harper \$19.99). A luxurious yacht, a gorgeous crew with secrets and rivalries...and murder! Enjoy a cunning locked room mystery set on a billionaire's yacht. And think ahead to the Bezos wedding now gaining large scale protests in Venice, the venue.

Hilderbrand, Elin. [Swan Song](#) (\$10.99) brings Hilderbrand's Nantucket novels to a brilliant finish. When rich strangers move to the island, social mayhem—and a possible murder follow. Can Nantucket's best locals save the day, and their way of life? Read Martha Kelly in *Signed* books on Martha's Vineyard, then switch to neighboring Nantucket, especially if you are a fan of Francine Mathews' Nantucket mysteries.

* Huber, Anna Lee. [A Tarnished Canvas](#) (Penguin \$19) is the, can it be?, 13th in the Lady Darby series. March 1833. Kiera and her husband, Sebastian Gage, have decided to settle in Edinburgh for the winter with their infant daughter. This also allows Kiera to enjoy long hours painting in her studio, making progress on the portraits she soon hopes to unveil in her own exhibit. She's thrilled when she receives an invitation to the auction of the late Lord Eldin's coveted art collection, and she and Gage eagerly accept. When the floor collapses beneath the gathering, killing one of their fellow bidders, Kiera and Gage are lucky to escape with their lives. Within days it becomes apparent that what at first seemed to be a terrible accident...isn't.

Iglesias, Gabino. [Zero Saints](#) (Little Brown \$17.99). Enforcer and drug dealer Fernando has seen better days. On his way home from work, some heavily-tattooed gangsters throw him in the back of a car and take him to an abandoned house, where they saw off his friend's head and feed the kid's fingers to...something. Their message is clear: this is their territory, now. But Fernando isn't put down that easily. Using the assistance of a Santeria priestess, an insane Puerto Rican pop sensation, a very human dog, and a Russian hitman, he'll build the courage (and firepower) he'll need to fight a gangbanger who's a bit more than human.

Iles, Greg. [Southern Man](#) (\$23.99) returns you to the world of Mississippi's Penn Cage. It was written during what was thought of as the post-Trump era and thus is so out of date as to be like reading fantasy.

James, Kelsey. [The Colony of Lost Souls](#) (Kensington \$18.95) is a 1930s Gothic set on the California coast and inside a cult with a charismatic leader.... Séances, seductions, desperation, dark secrets, and the bonds of sisterhood, a rich mix for you.

Jones, Dan. [Wolves of Winter](#) (\$19) is more bloody 14th Century fiction. 1347. Bruised and bloodied by an epic battle at Crécy, six soldiers known as the Essex Dogs pick through the wreckage of the fighting—and their own lives. Now a new siege is beginning, and the Dogs are sent to attack the soaring walls of Calais. King Edward has vowed no Englishman will leave France 'til this city falls. To get home, they must survive a merciless winter in a lawless camp deadlier than any battlefield. Obsessed with tracking down the vanished Captain, Loveday struggles to control

his own men. Romford is haunted by the reappearance of a horrific figure from his past. And Scotsman is spiraling into a pit of drink, violence, and self-pity. The Dogs are being torn apart—and this war is far from over.

Lapena, Shari. [What Have You Done?](#) (\$18). In Fairhill, Vermont, a community where nothing seems to happen, a violent death exposes the cruelty hiding beneath the town's supposedly placid surface. Teenagers Riley, Evan, and Diana are best friends, 17 years old and ready to take on the world. They just need to get through one more year. Content (for now) to hang out in the graveyard on Friday nights, drink vodka, and tell ghost stories, they even tolerate Diana's controlling boyfriend, Cameron. Only Riley knows that Diana is unhappy with the clingy Cameron, who wants them to go to the same college, and that she plans to break away from him soon. Then a local farmer discovers Diana's naked, dead body surrounded by vultures in a field one morning, changing the friends forever.

Marais, Bianca. [A Most Puzzling Murder](#) (Mira \$18.99) serves up an entertaining interactive whodunit peppered with riddles and choose-your-own-outcome elements. Socially awkward 21-year-old Destiny Whip has long taken solace in solving puzzles and mysteries alongside her fellow members of the Council of Enigmatologists. One day, she's contacted by mysterious Mordecai Scruffmore, who invites her to Scruffmore Castle on Eerie Island to compete as one of two finalists for a coveted position as his family's historian. Destiny is surprised, considering she never applied for the role, but she eagerly accepts, harboring suspicions that Mordecai might be her long-lost biological father. After she arrives, she's haunted by visions that someone in the family will die, and she sets out to solve that mystery while digging into her own past. Readers affect which clues they get by choosing which chapter to read next, and are tasked with solving a series of brainteasers (answers can be found at the back of the book, for the less puzzle-inclined). [Comes in hardcover](#) (\$30) too.

* Marsh, Violet. [Lady Charlotte Always Gets Her Man](#) (\$9.99). A woman escapes an arranged marriage to a dastardly viscount and falls for his brother instead. After Lady Charlotte Lovett's mother informs her that she is engaged to Viscount Hawley, Charlotte, who believes Hawley was responsible for the deaths of his two former wives, flees—and ends up at the Black Sheep, a coffeehouse owned by her estranged cousin, Hannah Wick. Charlotte offers to use her inheritance from a great-aunt to invest in the coffeehouse, hoping that through eavesdropping, she'll manage to dig up more dirt and prove Hawley's villainy. It's at the Black Sheep where she meets Dr. Matthew Talbot, Hawley's younger brother. Though Charlotte is attracted to the seemingly kindhearted Matthew, she can tell he's keeping secrets and worries he's in on his brother's villainy. Danger mounts....

McMorris, Kristina. [Girls of Good Fortune](#) (Sourcebooks 17.99). As she struggles to survive in Portland, Oregon, a stoic young Chinese woman passing as white after the passage of the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act endures life-threatening racism. Celia Hart cautiously conceals her Chinese heritage by using her mother's maiden name instead of her father's surname, Chung. She lives alone after her mother died and her father left for a job in a Union Pacific Railroad coal mine, and she works as a housekeeper for the snooty Portland mayor's family. Her life takes a calamitous

turn when white laborers massacre the Chinese miners and she and the mayor's son, to whom she's secretly engaged, conceive a child. Celia's courage supports her as she is dismissed from the mayor's mansion, becomes a housekeeper at the Dewdrop Inn brothel, shelters her beloved baby daughter, and survives her kidnapping from Portland's notorious Shanghai tunnels. Will she achieve Good Fortune in our **June Historical Fiction Pick**?

Neville, Stuart. [Blood Like Mine](#) (\$19.95) with bloody stained edges. In Stuart Neville's horror debut, a mother's undying love and a daughter's insatiable hunger carve a bloody trail across the highways of the Southwest.

Penner, J. [A Fellowship of Librarians & Dragons Deluxe Edition](#) (Sourcebooks \$17.99). Why not get cozy with fantasy? People-pleasing sunshine dwarf Doli Butterbuckle is content with her simple tea magic and circle of friends. It's true that she might have once wanted more for herself and that she's never quite lived up to her family's expectations, but her life is just fine. That is, until she inherits a dragon egg... As Doli grapples with her newfound responsibility, she turns to gargoyle librarian Sarson, an expert in dragon lore. The more time she spends in his library, the more she finds herself falling for the well-read newcomer. But dealing with her overbearing family, stopping a sinister plot she's uncovered, and handling a dragon that refuses to stay out of trouble means her hands are already full.

Read, Shelley. [Go As a River](#) (\$19). The 2024 High Plains Book Award Winner. The 2023 Reading the West Book Award Winner. Victoria encounters Wil by chance on a street corner, a meeting that profoundly alters both of their young lives, igniting as much passion as danger. When tragedy strikes, Victoria leaves the only life she has ever known, fleeing into the surrounding mountains, where she struggles to survive in the wilderness with no clear notion of what her future will bring. As the seasons change, she also charts the changes in herself, finding in the beautiful but harsh landscape the meaning and strength to move forward and rebuild all that she has lost, even as the Gunnison River threatens to submerge her homeland—its ranches, farms, and the beloved peach orchard that has been in her family for generations. Inspired by true events surrounding the destruction of the town of Iola in the 1960s, *Go as a River* is a story of deeply held love in the face of hardship and loss, but also of finding courage, resilience, friendship, and, finally, home—where least expected.

* Sampson, Freya. [The Busy Body Book Club](#) (Penguin \$19.99). I wanted to like this British cozy set in a small Cornish seaside village where five seniors, members of a book club who disagree on everything, face funds stolen during a meeting, putting the community center at risk, and then suspicion falling on a member who has disappeared. Plus a body is found in his house—but it falls flat and frankly, is boring. The author tried too hard to pile up cozy elements including amateur senior sleuths.

Shepherd, L.J. [The Trials of Lila Dalton](#) (\$17.99). Here's a variation on a locked-room mystery—it's a locked-courtroom mystery. Lila Dalton has no memory of how she came to be in this courtroom; no memory of how she got to the courthouse at all, or why she's facing a jury who seems to be waiting for her. The man on trial is accused of mass murder, and she's his lawyer, but she can't remember any details of the case. She can't remember anything... Stranded on an island in the Atlantic Ocean where the most serious crimes are tried, Lila has to prove

her client's innocence if she wants to go home. But how can she solve this case when she's not sure she can trust anything around her, including her own memory?

Stevenson, M. [Behooved](#) (Bramble \$19.99). A charming slow-burn fantasy featuring a duty-bound noblewoman with a chronic illness, a prince who would rather be in a library than on a throne, and a magical ride through a world of cozy enchantment. The Indie Next Pick: "Come for the horse puns, stay for the very sweet enemies-to-lovers romance! This is a slow burn, low spice, but it was so charming and comforting. A read I can see myself coming back to!"

Van Pelt, Shelby. [Remarkably Bright Creatures](#) (\$19.99). I missed this in April but here it is now, a story tracing a widow's unlikely connection with a giant Pacific octopus, in an edition featuring sprayed and stenciled edges, silver foil, and a reading group guide.

* Westerson, Jeri. [The Mummy of Mayfair](#) (\$18.99). London, 1895. Although their last high-profile case was a huge success, private detectives Tim Badger and Benjamin Watson know they can't afford to turn down any work, despite financial assistance from their mentor, Sherlock Holmes. So when the eminent Doctor Enoch Sawyer of St Bart's Hospital asks Badger if the duo will provide security for a mummy unwrapping party he is hosting, Badger doesn't hesitate to take the job. After all, how hard can guarding the doctor's bizarre Egyptian artifacts be? But with Doctor Sawyer running late for his own party, the 'genuine' ancient sarcophagus of Runihura Saa is opened to reveal the remains of... Doctor Sawyer! Book three in the Irregular Detectives Series modeled after Doyle's Baker Street Irregulars.