

BOOKNEWS from

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FIREWORKS ALL DURING JULY

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.

PAST BUT PERFECT EVENTS....

TUESDAY JULY 1 4:00 PM Virtual Book Launch

Michael Robotham discusses [The White Crow](#) (Scribner \$28.99)
London police officer Philomena McCarthy is stunning in our
twisty July British Crime Club Pick

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)

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

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

WEDNESDAY JULY 2 5:00 PM Virtual Event

Lina Chern with Jen Johans

Chern discusses [Tricks of Fortune](#) (Random House \$18)
A Play the Fool Mystery with Tarot ace Katie True

EVENTS AFTER THE FOURTH

MONDAY JULY 7 6:30 PM Live Event

Bruce Borgos and Linda Castillo

Borgos discusses [The Blue Horse](#) (St Martins \$29)
Nevada Sheriff Porter Beck #3 begins with a wild horses
capture...and a murder
Castillo discusses [Rage](#) (St Martins \$28)
Chief of Police Kate Burkholder is shocked by the brutal killing
of an Amish youth

RESCHEDULED: TUESDAY JULY 8 2:00 PM Virtual Event

Gabino Iglesias with Patrick

Iglesias discusses [Zero Saints](#) (Little Brown \$17.99)
His first novel and also [Zero Saints](#) and [Coyote Songs](#) (\$17.99
each)

TUESDAY JULY 8 6:30 PM Live Event

Martin Walker discusses [An Enemy in the Village](#) (Knopf \$28)
A Bruno, Chief of Police, investigation in France's town of St.
Denis, of a particularly tricky murder

THURSDAY JULY 10 6:30 PM Live Event

Mary Dixie Carter and Kelsey Cox

Carter discusses [Marguerite by the Lake](#) (St Martins \$28)
A Gothic set on the estate of an iconic garden designer
Cox discusses [Party of Liars](#) (St Martins \$28)
A debut set in Texas Hill Country

TUESDAY JULY 15 6:30 PM Live Event

Spencer Quinn discusses [Mrs. Plansky Goes Rogue](#) (Forge \$28.99)

The feisty widow investigates a suspicious Florida yacht fire

THURSDAY JULY 17 5:00 PM Virtual Event

Steve Berry discusses [The List](#) (Grand Central \$29)

Introducing lawyer Brent Walker of quaint Concord, Georgia, a
company town
A perfect read for John Grisham fans

FRIDAY JULY 18 7:00 PM Live and Virtual Event

SciFi Friday discusses Alex Grecian's [Red Rabbit](#) (\$18.99)

SATURDAY JULY 19 10:30 AM Live and Virtual Event

Croak & Dagger discusses Elly Griffiths' [The Postscript Murders](#) (\$16.99)

TUESDAY JULY 22 6:30 PM Live Event

Daniel Silva discusses [An Inside Job](#) (Harper \$32) 6:30 PM
Ticketed Event

Gabriel Allon works a murder and lost masterpiece in Venice
Tickets: [\\$35 admits one](#) with one copy of *An Inside Job*
[\\$40 admits two](#) with one copy of *An Inside Job*

WEDNESDAY JULY 23 6:30 Live Event

Lisa Scottoline discusses [The Unraveling of Julia](#) (Grand Central \$30)

A gothic suspense story set in a Tuscany villa

FRIDAY JULY 25 6:30 PM Live Event

Joe Pan discusses his debut [Florida Palms](#) (Simon & Schuster \$29.99)

A group of young men are dragged into drug-running along
Florida's Space Coast and a turf war develops

SATURDAY JULY 26 11:00 AM Live Event

The Cookbook Club discusses Cathy Whims' [The Italian Summer Kitchen](#) (Countryman Press \$28)
Bring a dish to share

MONDAY JULY 28 1:00 PM Virtual Event

Denise Mina discusses [The Good Liar](#) (Little Brown (\$29)
Introducing Blood spatter expert Doctor Claudia O'Sheil

TUESDAY JULY 29 6:30 PM Live Book Launch

Kyle Mills with host Don Bentley
Mills discusses [Fade In](#) (Authors Equity \$29.99)
Reintroducing ex-navy SEAL Salam al-Fayed-Fade to his friends
Our copies will come with an alternative ending bonus chapter written by Kyle that will also be Signed

WEDNESDAY JULY 30 6:30 PM Live Event

Knits and Kits with One Sharp Stitch
Bestitched Needlepoint Shop presents Allie Pleiter
Pleiter discusses [One Sharp Stitch](#) (Kensington \$27)
This is a fundraiser for Scottsdale's [Newborn Kitten Rescue](#).
Local needlepoint shop [BeStitched](#) has created an exclusive limited edition canvas that will be available in conjunction with the event. Feel free to bring your needlework to the signing—stitching is welcome! Allie will make a donation to Newborn Kittens Rescue for each book sold that evening

THURSDAY JULY 31 5:00 PM Virtual Event

Canadian Daniel Kalla discusses [The Deepest Fake](#) (\$18.99)
A terminally ill CEO questions everything...and then....

THURSDAY JULY 31 7:00 PM Live Event

Hardboiled Crime discusses Dell Shannon's [Case Pending](#) (\$14.99)
A Library of Congress Crime Classic

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British Crime Club One Unsigned hardcover or paperback per month

Robotham, Michael. [The White Crow](#)

Cozy Crimes Club One Unsigned hardcover or paperback per month

Cahoon, Lynn. [An Amateur Sleuth's Guide to Murder](#)

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

Landau, A.J. [Cold Burn, A National Parks Thriller](#)

First Mystery Club One Signed First Printing per month
Berry, Kristen L. [We Don't Talk About Carol](#)

Hardboiled/Noir Club One Signed First Printing per month
Pan, Joe. [Florida Palm](#)

Historical Fiction Club One First Printing per month
Stiefvater, Maggie. [The Listeners](#)

Historical Fiction Paperback Club One Unsigned paperback per month

Reay, Katherine. [The English Masterpiece](#)

Notable New Fiction Club One Signed First Printing per month
Claton, Meg Waite. [Typewriter Beach](#)

Romance and Relationships Club One unsigned hardcover or paperback per month
Michelle, Holly. [Last Night Was Fun](#)

SOME DON'T MISS DEBUTS

Reviews are scattered throughout for you who especially support first time authors as we do here at The Pen. I am adding this list feature for you.

Arnold, Mallory. [How to Survive a Horror Story](#) (Sourcebooks \$32.99)

Barrington, Anna. [The Spectacle](#) (Union Square \$18.99)

Berry, Kristen L. [We Don't Talk About Carol](#) Random House \$30 Signed)

Cox, Kelsey. [Party of Liars](#) (St Martins \$28 Signed)

Healy, Anna Fitzgerald. [Etiquette for Lovers and Killers](#) (Penguin \$29)

Jackson-Opoku, Sandra. [Savvy Summers and the Sweet Potato Crime](#) (St Martins \$28)

Knightley, Brigitte. [The Irresistible Urge to Fall for Your Enemy](#) (Ace \$30)

Pan, Joe. [Florida Palms](#) (Simon & Schuster \$29.99 Signed)

Pote, Ryan. [Blood and Treasure](#) (Penguin \$30)

Rothschild, Loretta. [Finding Grace](#) (St Martins \$29)

Urza, Gabriel. [The Silver State](#) (Little Brown \$29)

Wallbrook, Zoe B. [History Lessons](#) (Soho \$25.95)

Ward, Hazell. [The Game is Murder](#) (Penguin \$30)

Wilson, Lauren. [The Goldens](#) (Flatiron \$28.99)

NEW SIGNED BOOKS FOR JULY

Berry, Kristen L. [We Don't Talk About Carol](#) (Random House \$30). Berry's debut, our **July First Mystery Subscription Club Book of the Month**, is a story of family, fertility, and personal trauma brilliantly layered over a thrilling investigation into six unsolved disappearances. Ex-reporter Sydney Singleton, who is in the process of undergoing fertility treatments, already has enough to worry about. Then she discovers the existence of her Aunt Carol, who disappeared in the 1960s along with five more Black girls from her neighborhood, and becomes fixated on their disappearances. But as she investigates, she worries that her fixation is all too similar to her out-of-control obsession with a kidnapping case that led to an

eight-day stay in the psychiatric department of a San Francisco hospital—events that ultimately caused her to leave journalism. Berry pulls these two intertwined narrative threads taut, making for a compulsive read. Sydney is drawn to figure out what happened to her aunt and the other girls, particularly since cases of missing people of color often receive less media coverage and are “less likely to be solved than cases of missing white folks.” But she’s afraid that the stress may be impacting her attempt to conceive, and she’s torn by her husband’s fears that she might be headed for another breakdown. Conflicts within her own family and her personal trauma both become entangled with these fears.

Berry, Steve. [The List](#) (Grand Central \$29). A standalone novel in the vein of John Grisham, even Scott Turow, draws upon Steve’s years practicing law in St Mary’s, Georgia, a company town. The paper mill was the largest employer and over time Steve represented both the workers and management. The terrifying plot for this thriller, first created in 1992, arises from those years. That mill is now long gone.

After a ten-year self-imposed exile as a prosecutor in Atlanta, Brent Walker is returning home to Concord, a quaint town in central Georgia nestled close to the Savannah River. Two years ago, his father died, and now Brent, hired by Southern Republic Pulp and Paper Company as its assistant general counsel, is returning to care for his ailing mother. For decades, Southern Republic has invested heavily in Concord, creating a thriving community where its employees live, work, and retire. It all looks serene and thriving. But it isn’t, thanks to the list....

Borgos, Bruce. [The Blue Horse](#) (St Martins \$29). I love the way Borgos marries the Western to Crime and highlights the union in rural Nevada. In his third for Sheriff Porter Beck he again doesn’t shy away from the brutality of humans or landscape as he opens up with a government “gathering” of wild horses to get them off the range (at the behest of ranchers, says Beck). And in the melee the pilot of the chopper herding the terrified animals is felled by, it turns out, not by pilot error but by a skilled marksman. Then the person coordinating the round-up for the Bureau of Land Management is savagely murdered, buried up to her neck and then trampled to death by the very same wild horses. And there’s no lack of suspects! Beck’s girlfriend Detective Charlie Blue Horse arrives to help while Beck’s sister Brinley is leading a group of troubled teens on a wilderness program when one of them bolts...right towards an unexpected danger. As COVID starts to ravage his county further, Beck must fight various thrillers. This series is Must Reading for fans of CJ Box, Craig Johnson, and Michael McGarrity’s NM series. Start with [The Bitter Past](#)—a stunning spy story too—and on to [Shades of Mercy](#) (\$19 each) for a killer thriller binge read.

Cahoon, Lynn. [An Amateur Sleuth’s Guide to Murder](#) (Kensington \$27) is our **July Cozy Crimes Subscription Club Book of the Month** and takes you to an island off Seattle, and into a bookish world. 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.... Cahoon has a wonderful time exploring this new world and sprinkling mysteries over it.

Pair it with a book just that bit too sexy to be a cozy: Allison Brennan’s [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 with, again, an island, lots of mysteries noted, and in the end, a bookstore.

Carter, Mary Dixie. [Marguerite by the Lake](#) (St Martins \$28). Marguerite Gray is a wealthy lifestyle influencer and author who is famous for her gardens, parties, and style advice. Marguerite is also aloof, entitled, and jealous of anyone who takes attention away from her. Her portrait, titled *Marguerite by the Lake*, painted by famed artist Serge Kuhnert, whose works sell for millions, looms in Rosecliff, her Connecticut mansion with stunning lake views. During an elegant garden party to launch Marguerite’s new book, gardener Phoenix Sullivan notices a 100-year-old spruce tree about to fall; she rushes to save Marguerite’s husband, Geoffrey Gray. The guests and Geoffrey credit Phoenix with saving their lives, but Marguerite is oddly cool, almost resentful. Geoffrey and Phoenix soon begin a clandestine affair, but little escapes Marguerite. A confrontation between the two women at a precarious cliff edge ends with Marguerite accidentally falling to her death. Despite how it looks to the staff and the police investigating the death, Geoffrey and Phoenix ramp up their relationship and Phoenix moves into Rosecliff. Carter skillfully adds echoes of Daphne du Maurier’s classic gothic thriller *Rebecca*, with touches of Vera Caspary’s *Laura*, to her sophisticated plot. Carter developed some similar themes in [The Photographer](#) (\$17.99) which I recommend.

Castillo, Linda. [Rage](#) (St Martins \$28). Painters Mill, Ohio, has a large Amish population. And is frequently rocked by crimes, some of them brutal as is the murder and dismemberment of a young landscaper and nursery owner one night. The victim is Amish and, like many of his peers, had been on *rumspringa*, a period when Amish youth foray into the secular (“English”) world before making a lifetime commitment to their church and culture. These kids have been strictly raised, sheltered, so it doesn’t always go well. But it appeared that Samuel was safely back in the fold. A second and similar murder and a photograph lead Painter’s Mill Chief of Police Kate Burkholder into a criminal world operating under the radar. Kate, no longer young, endures a lot of physical punishment in this investigation but it strengthens her bond with husband John Tomasetti, an agent with the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation, an investigative partner here.

Deb, making a July Pick, adds, I look forward to my yearly trips to Painter’s Mill and this installment delivers with tough gal Kate and all of her 5 man crew on the case of a baffling double homicide. Where else can you find a police procedural, newlywed love and insight into Amish culture?

Kate’s 2024 investigation is [The Burning](#) (\$10.99).

Clayton, Meg Waite. [Typewriter Beach](#) (Harper \$30). I have reviewed this our **July Notable New Fiction Subscription Club Pick** earlier. Here is the Indie Next Pick: “In 1957, a Hollywood starlet is sent to a cottage until her ‘condition’ goes away. She creates a masterpiece with the outcast screenwriter next door. Years later, the screenwriter’s granddaughter returns, finding closure with the legendary actress. Under the shimmer of 1950s movie magic and the shadows of the McCarthy era, this romantic, moody mystery spotlights life in front of the camera.” I love the loving Carmel-by-the-Sea setting, the weighty presence of Alfred Hitchcock and shadow of Grace Kelly, and remind you that the horrors of the Blacklist have returned.

Cox, Kelsey. [Party of Liars](#) (St Martins \$28) opens at a lavish, renovated, cliffside mansion in Texas Hill Country (a requisite for a plot marrying the Gothic to crime, no?). Shuttered for years, it’s been restored by the charismatic Ethan Matthews, husband to his second wife Dani, father of baby Charlotte, and father also to Sophie who tonight is going to celebrate her Sweet Sixteenth at an extravagant party...a party to die for as it turns out, but it’s the journey to get there, and then the aftermath, that fuels this debut. Told from multiple points of view including that of Dani, Sophie, Sophie’s neighbor and friend Mikayla, the elderly Irish nanny to Charlotte, and Ethan’s first wife Kim, the narrative flushes out secrets, lies, and sacrifices while exploring motherhood and murder. “Multiple intertwined characters help create a sense of urgency and intrigue, contributing to a buildup of suspense to a shocking conclusion.” Recommended to fans of Ashley Winstead alongside the roster of women writing suspense. I liked Cox’s concept a lot although I thought there was one twist too many in the end game.

Ellison, J T. [Last Seen](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$28.99). Just to say that JT will join Megan Miranda here on August 7 to sign this stellar new thriller that publishes August 1.

Halley James knows her marriage is over. But she’s not prepared for the rest of her life to fall apart too. She just lost her job at the forensics lab. Her dad needs emergency surgery. But the biggest blow comes back home in Marchburg, Virginia, where she discovers her mother didn’t actually die in a car crash. Her mom was murdered—and her father lied about it all these years. Since she was six years old, it’s been Halley and her dad. Now, she doesn’t know what to believe. Desperate for the truth, Halley chases down a lead in Brockville, Tennessee, a not so utopian town. “Darkly original and bursting with hold-your-breath suspense, *Last Seen* by J.T. Ellison is a haunting deep dive into a harrowing crime, buried memories, and one woman’s obsession to discover the truth no matter the consequences.”

I remind you that JT writes a marvelous series for Jayne Thorne, CIA Librarian, involving a bit of fantasy along with spying, under the name Joss Walker. We have the [Jayne Thorne Series](#) here for you.

Fesperman, Dan. [Pariah](#) (Knopf \$30). Patrick and I are forever fans of the elegant spy stories penned by Fesperman, a former reporter turned novelist. His career began in 1999 with the publication of the award-winning *Lie in the Dark* and he has produced 12 more vividly written, politically engaged, wildly different novels since at a pace which would explain why many of you have not heard of him. I think of him as an American John Le Carré although he has no series character.

His 14th novel is something new for Dan and hits at an interesting political moment for it focuses on a CIA plan to infiltrate a hostile Eastern European country with a despotic president and increasingly corrupt government who is also a buffoon, if a brutal one. And a fan of the adolescent male humor that is the trademark of Hal Knight, a comedian and movie star and very briefly, a Congressman before a disastrous #MeToo moment led to his resignation. Fleeing to a tiny Caribbean island, Hal is drinking his life away when the ops team lands to recruit him. It turns out that President Horvatz is not only a fan but wishes to invite Hal for an official visit. With nothing to lose, and doing something worthwhile for a change beckoning, Hal accepts the role of guest of honor. It becomes a his ultimate acting challenge, thrusting him into a real-life battle of wits. Hal is no trademark spy hero and frankly I’m not sure whether this is spy story or satire. Join us August 5 at the bookstore to find out.

Freeman, Brian. [Robert Ludlum’s The Bourne Escape](#) (Penguin \$32). Jason Bourne is on a boat in the Mediterranean moonlight with his lover, Johanna. He’s happy for the first time in years. Then in the next instant, he finds himself floating on wreckage as fire and smoke choke the sky. Johanna is gone. And Bourne finds the darkness of lost memory closing around his mind again. As he did once before, Bourne must piece together the fragments of who he is, even as assassins hunt him across Europe. He teams up with his spy chief, Shadow, who reveals the shocking secret that Bourne’s surrogate father – David Abbott, the founder of Treadstone – is alive and missing. Together they must find Abbott before his enemies do. But Shadow is a master of manipulation who won’t hesitate to betray Bourne in a game with no obvious winners....

Jackson, Holly. [Not Quite Dead Yet](#) (Random House \$28). It’s not every day that a victim gets to solve their own murder. The clock is ticking for Jet, but no matter the outcome of her investigation...she’s a dead woman walking. “Jet Mason has seven days to solve her own murder after being attacked on Halloween. Throughout the week, she uncovers shocking hidden truths about her family and community. This propulsive adult debut from a YA powerhouse author lives up to the incredible hook. Feisty, snarky Jet is such a fun lead, and the ticking clock towards her death will keep readers flying through the pages.”

* Jewell, Lisa. [Don’t Let Him In](#) (Atria \$29.99). Our copies signed for us by the British bestseller have just arrived. 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...

Landau, A J. [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 for a must for readers of James Rollins, Clive Cussler, and Nevada Barr.

National Park Service's 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.

* Mead, Tom. [The House at Devil's Neck](#) (Penzler \$26.95). Another Gothic married to crime, this time a locked room mystery in a London townhouse twinned with an allegedly haunted house on a lonely island called Devil's Neck. It's August, 1939, on the eve of World War II, but the aftermath of World War I drives this complex story and a solution to both strands that comes as a stunning surprise. If you like Golden Age stories with Gothic tones, and eccentric British characters, this new puzzle for sleuth Joseph Spector is for you. Peter Swanson, no slouch at the macabre and coincidence, is a fan: "A brilliant homage to the locked room mysteries of the golden age, with Tom Mead bringing his own gruesome sensibility to the mix. *The House at Devil's Neck* is brilliantly structured, exceptionally macabre, and filled with reversals and twists. This is a wonder cabinet of a book, and Mead is a magician." For a new read paperback, see a review in More July Paperbacks below.

Mills, Kyle. [Fade In](#) (Authors Equity \$29.99). When ex-navy SEAL Salam al-Fayed-Fade to his friends—steps in front of a sniper's bullet, he assumes all his problems are solved. Having already been declared clinically dead twice in his career, he's hoping the third time will be the charm. Instead, he wakes in a hospital having gone from being one of the deadliest operatives in US history to a man incapable of even standing without assistance. Alone and wanted by authorities, he's destined to spend the rest of his life lying in a prison infirmary. Until a shadowy organization offers him a new identity and next-generation medical care, But who's in charge, who's he working for?

Thriller fans, rejoice! Kyle Mills has brought back fan-favorite hero *Fade*—presumed dead—just in time to tackle one of the deadliest crises our planet could face. If you like your hero fearless, conflicted, and a bad-boy ex-Navy SEAL, dive in for the start of a new series. Mills doesn't hold back on what he sees as the state of the world where government is failing, oligarchs are parceling states out, people will accept tyranny to gain stability.... As I said to Kyle, it's like a return to the Tudor Court or a real life Game of Thrones, on a global scale. What place is there in it for *Fade*?

Note that our Signed copies come with an Alternate Ending chapter also signed for you by Kyle.

Miranda, Megan. [You Belong Here](#) (Simon & Schuster \$28.99). Miranda has created a Town vs. Gown plot but for a small Virginia mountain college town, not Cambridge or Oxford Universities. Nevertheless the social, financial, and aspirational divides are sharp. Into this a daughter, Delilah, drags her mother Beckett by secretly applying to Wyatt College and receiving a full scholarship. It also drags Beckett back into her parents' home—they are both retired Wyatt professors—and into memories of a long ago disaster, a fire during her own senior year that left two men dead and her roommate on the run...vanished. Beckett had built a life as a working single mom, a ghostwriter for hire, after shutting down, and out, Delilah's father. Now secret college traditions, buried memories, blame, and Delilah's disappearance are cratering it. This is a story for readers of Stacy Willingham, Ashley Winstead...and JT Ellison who signs her own new book with Megan on August 7.

Moreno Garcia, Silvia. [The Bewitching](#) (Random House \$29) has fun with a time-hopping, witch-filled mystery about three women: Minerva, a scholar in the 1990s working on a dissertation about a cult-favorite horror author; Beatrice, the author herself, who a generation before attended the same university as Minerva and whose beloved novel may have been inspired by real events that occurred on campus; and Minerva's great-grandmother, Nana Alba, who has eerie witch stories of her own.

Pan, Joe. [Florida Palms](#) (Simon & Schuster \$29.99). Our **July Hardboiled Crime Subscription Book of the Month** is a debut set in 2009, the height of a recession. Best friends Eddy, Cueball, and Jesse are fresh out of high school and wild at heart, staring at a lack of jobs along Florida's Space Coast. With no options, they join a furniture-moving company run by Cueball's father, a gruff ex-con biker who's supposedly retired from the fast life. But when a mysterious old boss arrives in town, the payload is switched out, and the young men are coerced into shipping a new designer drug up the East Coast. What is advertised as a bastion of brotherhood and respect quickly spirals into back-alley deals, bloodshed, and an all-out turf war. Pan "offers up a crew of freewheeling philosophers on bikes, whose cynicism and violence—and the bizarre, hilarious screeds by which they justify themselves—are counterbalanced by the naive, heartbreaking humanity of the young men swept along in their wake. Pan's love for Florida and its rougher, neglected corners is evident and intoxicating." So maybe he's darker than the late Tim Dorsey but hey....

Pleiter, Allie. [One Sharp Stitch](#) (Kensington \$27). A cozy series start finds Shelby Phillips returning to excruciatingly harmless Gwen Lake after her graphic arts career—and the office romance blooming with it—get tossed like rejected design mockups. Her plan is as simple and fool-proof as a tent stitch: manage the family needlepoint shop Nina's Nimble Needle during her parents' RV vacation. It's just a month. It's not as if they're retiring. But the month includes managing a trunk show featuring the work of Gina "Kat" Katsaros, a geeky type Shelby knew in high school, who now makes beautiful needlework designs and craft scissors. It didn't include finding Gina dead with an expensive scissors in her chest.... Our event for Pleiter is a

partnership with local needlework shop [BeStitched](#) so bring your own work and designs to show off. Or just come for the fun AND the fundraiser for our Scottsdale Newborn Kittens Rescue organization.

Quinn, Spencer. [Mrs. Plansky Goes Rogue](#) (Forge \$28.99). First met in the surprising drama [Mrs. Plansky's Revenge](#) (\$17.99), we now find the motorcycle ace, tennis-loving Florida widow, fresh off a surprising tournament win and bonding with her partner Kev Dinardo, witnessing a yacht turn into a fireball off Kev's back dock. Lightning strike? Hmm... Mrs. Plansky didn't see any. Then Kev goes missing and she breaks into his mansion only to find it ransacked. So there's more to Kev than just a great serve. Then Mrs. Plansky's 98-year-old reprobate father who lives in her spare room reveals he has introduced her wayward tennis pro son Jack, met earlier, to Kev.... There are many oddball characters here but my favorite is Fairbanks, the canniest reprobate of all.

Rosenfelt, David. [Dogged Pursuit](#) (St Martins \$28). In the origin story for Paterson NJ lawyer Andy Carpenter's career as defense attorney and crack crime solver, we meet him as he's left the prosecutor's office to start his own practice. Over a fruit stand (he does a deal for free peaches and apples, seasonally). His office neighbor Sam is an accountant but in fact a passionate and skillful hacker. And Andy's wife Nicole has again moved out, uncertain where this new career trajectory will take him. So Andy fulfills a childhood wish by going to the shelter to adopt a dog. Where a Golden called Tara mesmerizes him. But Tara has befriended a little Beagle called Sunny and Andy can't take them both because Sunny's owner Ryan is in jail on a murder charge. So you see where this is going.... The dogs go home with Andy, Andy takes on Ryan's defense, his ethics stretch to employing Sam's skills, and new friend Police Captain Pete recommends a just retired cop called Laurie as Andy's investigator. Laurie seems to know a freelancer called Marcus. And the game's afoot.

Scottoline, Lisa. [The Unraveling of Julia](#) (Grand Central \$30) is a marvelous marriage of the Gothic with a mystery plot. "The latest by Scottoline has it all: a shocking murder, a crumbling Tuscan villa, and a heroine forced to rise above her grief after a tragic loss. Scottoline deftly weaves a touch of astrology through this fast-paced thriller, and the result is a stunning novel that explores the lines between reality and dreams, sanity and madness,..."—Fiona Davis. OK, bBut remember, this is Scottoline, a lawyer with a love for Italy and its history, writing the story. Julia Pritzker is beginning to think she's cursed. She's lost her adoptive parents, then her husband is murdered. When she realizes that her horoscope essentially foretold his death, she begins to spiral. She fears her fate is written in the stars, not held in her own hands. Then a letter arrives out of the blue, informing her that she has inherited a Tuscan villa and vineyard—but her benefactor is a total stranger named Emilia Rossi. Julia has no information about her biological family, so she wonders if Rossi could be a blood relative. Bewildered, she heads to Tuscany for answers. There, Julia is horrified to discover that Rossi was a paranoid recluse, who believed herself to be a descendent of Duchess Caterina Sforza, a legendary Renaissance ruler. Stunned by her uncanny resemblance to Rossi, and even to Caterina, Julia is further unnerved when she unearths eerie parallels between them, including an obsession with astrology. Then events turn deadly.... Shteyngart, Gary. [Vera, Or Faith](#) (Random House \$28) follows a struggling family—her Russian intellectual father, her Boston

Brahmin mother, her goofy younger brother and her Korean birth mother, whom she'd like very much to meet—through the eyes of a precocious 10-year-old daughter. The many interwoven story lines are set in a near-future America.

Silva, Daniel. [An Inside Job](#) (Harper \$32). The story, which begins in Venice where Gabriel Allon is restoring a magnificent painting and discovers the body of a woman floating in the water nearby, moves to Rome, more specifically the Vatican, for there may be a stupendous discovery at play, a lost masterpiece. Although Gabriel may be a retired spy he has not lost either his skills or his high level connections. And he crafts a nifty scam in pursuit of justice and the painting. Silva paints a masterly picture of the Vatican and the Curia as well as delving into the life of Leonardo. If you have not yet seen the movie *The Conclave*, I recommend it, it pairs with *An Inside Job* in various ways. And with the election of a new Pope, this novel is even more fascinating. Both the movie and this novel imagine a perhaps different path for a Pope to take.

Smith, Martin Cruz. [Hotel Ukraine: An Arkady Renko Novel](#) (Simon Schuster \$27.99). The 11th and final installment in the Arkady Renko series that began with *Gorky Park* in 1981. The Russian homicide detective has lived under communism, witnessed its fall, and now lives during Vladimir Putin's reign. As Russia launches its "special military operation" against Ukraine, Renko must investigate the brutal murder of the deputy minister of defense in Moscow's Hotel Ukraine. Apparently, two people bashed his head in using two different types of weapons. Adding to the challenge, Renko suffers from Parkinson's disease, making it increasingly difficult to function. He knows it will only get worse, though he insists he's not an invalid. Meanwhile, he's in love with Tatiana Petrovna, a Moscow-based correspondent for the *New York Times* who hates injustice and is "constitutionally incapable of seeing a bear without poking it." She wants to report on Bucha, a Ukrainian city that suffered horrific destruction at the hands of the Russians. Renko's investigation takes him there as well. Is the killing tied in with the invasion? Renko and Petrovna take extraordinary risks for the sake of finding the truth.. However it comes out, Arkady's career is complete (he and the author both have Parkinson's).

St Clair, Scarlett. [Terror at the Gates](#) (Sourcebooks \$29.99) is the first in a seductive new Romantasy series. Banished and betrayed, Lilith rises from the shadows of her past to claim forbidden power—and a destiny...

Stiefvater, Maggie. [The Listeners](#) (Penguin \$30). The central character that enthralls is the Avallion itself. But wow! There are sentences in this imaginative drama, part spy story, so beautiful they nearly stopped my heart! "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." If you yearn for elegant evocative prose, this is for you. I add that it has just had full page reviews in the *NY Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*, raves.

Stiefvater's first adult novel is 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. 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.

Thor, Brad. [Edge of Honor](#) (Atria \$29.99). I have to include a thriller written to climax on the Fourth of July. 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.

Walker, Martin. [An Enemy in the Village](#) (Knopf \$28). When Bruno, Chief of Police of St. Denis, a village in the Vézère valley, stumbles upon a car parked at a scenic overpass on the ridge, he’s moves to investigate. Inside, he finds a suicide note and the dead body of Monique, a successful businesswoman who rented châteaux complete guest services with to wealthy expats. It’s a roaring business. Her death seems like an open-and-shut case but Bruno suspects something more sinister, in part because the location makes no sense. The notes reveal Monique had suffered a miscarriage. The will reveals her husband inherits little, the business going to her staff and her chateau being family property. But he has a cast iron alibi. Meanwhile, policing never being about one thing, Bruno is busy on other affairs, but he’s also thinking increasingly about his own lack of children, a family. And of course, cooking! A joy of this delightful series is the celebration of the region’s food and wine, as well as of basset hounds, horses, and community resources and events. I’m happy to announce that Bruno’s chapter with the ambitious Parisienne Isabelle comes to a close, opening up a different future. And that the mayor is as canny as ever. Plus French bureaucracy and the gendarmes division of law enforcement play major roles in this chapter.

* Ware, Ruth. [The Woman in Suite 11](#) (Gallery \$29.99). John reviews: A decade after that terrible business on a Norwegian cruise in [The Woman in Cabin 10](#) (\$18.99), Ware brings journalist Laura “Lo” Blacklock back for another rollercoaster ride of suspense. A now happily married Lo has spent the last decade raising her family, but she really would like to get back to work. A surprise invitation to the opening of billionaire Marcus Liedmann’s luxury hotel in Geneva provides the perfect

opportunity for Lo to jumpstart her writing career. Especially, if Lo can secure an interview with the notoriously reclusive Marcus. Ware once again proves her flair for punchy pacing and perceptive plotting as she slowly entangles her protagonist in another web of secrets, lies, and murder that sends her zigzagging her way across Europe. Fans of Ware will also appreciate the author’s deliciously desiccated sense of humor that provides a welcome counterbalance to nerve-jangling situations in which her protagonist finds herself enmeshed.

Williams, Beatriz. [Under the Stars](#) (Random House \$30). Out July 29 but signed here on September 11. Best to order to secure a first printing and we will hold your book to be signed then.

When a daughter, a world-class chef, and her famous mother, an actress, return to New England’s Winthrop Island to confront their complicated past, they discover a secret trove of paintings that connect them to a mysterious woman who vanished on a luxury steamship two centuries earlier.

CLASSICS

* Berkeley, Anthony. [Before the Fact](#) (Poisoned Pen Press \$15.99). This innovative British Library Crime Classic, first published in 1932, was the basis for Alfred Hitchcock’s film *Suspicion*, and remains an arresting work of literary artistry. Anthony Berkeley Cox, writing as Francis Iles, flips the traditional mystery model of the crime genre to delve into the psychology, fears, and motives of a suspicious victim, a wife, as she navigates a life with her disquieting yet charismatic husband—and the mounting peril of his murderous intentions. I remind you that Berkeley’s work as Iles produced *Malice Aforethought*, a terrifying novel and a great TV adaptation. It’s not a BLCC as of yet.

Rutledge, Nancy. [Blood on the Cat](#) (American Mystery Classics \$15.95). Bennet Farr was the richest, most corrupt, and most hated man in Cognac, a small town just outside of Chicago. He ruled the village with his money and crossed nearly all of the villagers in the process. So when he is found dead one November morning with a bread knife in his back, the chief of police faces a long line of suspects. Was it the new librarian, angered by Farr’s threat to close the library? Was it the schoolteacher, whose pupil he threatened? Or perhaps his son, who he disinherited just before his death? Reporter Killian McBean is also among the list, since Farr was planning to foreclose on the Cognac Courier and put him out of a job. But, as the cops are befuddled by too many motives, Killian’s journalistic acumen cuts through the noise in search of the real story—even if, in the end, it’s his cat Smoky that discovers the essential clue that nails it. Also available: [Blood on the Cat](#) (Penzler \$25.95)

Shannon, Dell. [Case Pending](#) (Poisoned Pen Press \$14.99). This first procedural from the prolific and multi-bylined Elizabeth Linington (1921-1988), the pioneering writer who first brought a woman’s eye to the genre in volumes published under her own name and the pseudonyms Anne Blaisdell, Lesley Egan, and Egan O’Neill as well as Shannon, kicks off with waitress/seamstress Agnes Browne’s discovery of a corpse in a vacant lot at the corner of Commerce and Humboldt. The victim, Elena Ramirez, has been strangled and battered so savagely that she’s lost an eye—a detail that forcefully recalls the similar bludgeoning of hotel chambermaid Carol Brooks six months ago in East Los Angeles. Cursing himself for his failure to solve the

earlier case in time to save her life, the LAPD's Lt. Luis Mendoza is determined to close this one.

My late Mother, aka MM for those of you who recall her pithy reviews and wide-ranging taste, admitted Linington and so she and I read all of her work under all her pseudonyms over time. I urged this book's inclusion in the Library of Congress Crime Classics series. You could do well to chase down used copies or eBooks' of other work.

Simenon, Georges. [A Crime in Holland](#); [The Grand Banks Café](#); [A Man's Head](#) (Picador \$16 each). Inspector Maigret's 7-9 cases reissued by Picador. A new TV adaptation of this French crime series will be fun to watch.

* White, Ethel Lina. [The Spiral Staircase](#) (Pushkin/Vertigo \$17.95). A chilling classic thriller from the 1930s set in a mansion buried deep in the countryside, on the Welsh Borders. Somewhere outside, a murderer lurks in the darkness. Four young women have already been killed, and each murder has been closer to the house than the last. Now a storm is coming. Professor Warren decides to batten down the hatches for the night—no one may come in or go out until morning. But what if the killer is already inside? This gothic thriller has been adapted to the screen in 1946, 1961, and 1975.

COZIES

Burdette, Lucy. [A Poisonous Palate](#) (\$19.99). A cold case heats up in the Florida Keys leading to a "fascinating mix of Hemingway lore, flashbacks to the 1970s, and appended recipes." When restaurant critic and amateur sleuth Hayley Snow—who lives on a houseboat in Key West with her police lieutenant husband, Nathan Bransford—receives an email from author Catherine Davitt asking for help investigating a 40-year-old disappearance, she's both curious and suspicious. Catherine, who's in town researching a Hemingway book, spent some time in 1978 in a nearby hippie encampment with her friend Veronica, who went missing and was never found. According to Catherine, the police brushed her off at the time and forced everyone to leave before bulldozing the encampment. And suddenly, now, this renewed interest leads to a new murder....

Byron, Ellen. [Solid Gold Murder](#) (Kensington \$27). This second Golden Motel Mystery headed by former Hollywood sitcom writer Dee Stern takes you to the summer season in the scenic Californian village of Foundgold. When Dee accidentally triggers a modern gold rush when a found nugget becomes a viral sensation, she suddenly turns her peaceful retreat into a hotspot for mayhem and murder....

Delany, Vicki. [Tea with Jam and Dread](#) (Kensington \$27). Long ago, Cape Cod tearoom owner Lily Roberts' grandmother Rose worked as a kitchen maid at Thornecroft Castle, and now Elizabeth, dowager Countess of Frockmorton, is celebrating her one hundredth birthday. Rose still has fond feelings for her onetime employer, so a group trip to Yorkshire is planned. It's also an opportunity for Lily to visit her boyfriend, who's currently working in England—and to indulge in some British tea. Ensnared at Thornecroft Castle, Lily overhears an argument among the younger generation about the fate of the family fortune. Little do they know that Elizabeth plans to sell the famous Frockmorton Sapphires out of the family for the first time in centuries. The icing on the cake comes when the jewels suddenly vanish—and things really go nuts when a party guest

dies from an allergic reaction to almonds that someone smuggled into Lily's coronation chicken sandwiches.... 6th in the Tea-by-the-Sea Mysteries.

Durst, Sarah Beth. [The Spellshop](#) (\$17). "This cottagecore cozy fantasy absolutely ran away with my heart. It features a librarian more comfortable with books than people, a sentient spider plant, stolen spellbooks, mythical creatures, found family, and jam." What is Cottagecore? "Cottagecore is an internet aesthetic and design style that celebrates a simple, sustainable, and romantic lifestyle in the countryside." For Durst's July book see New in Hardcover.

Fletcher, Jessica/Terrie Farley Moran. [Murder, She Wrote: A Body in Boston](#) (\$19). Invited to deliver a lecture at the Boston Public Library, Jessica Fletcher excitedly makes plans to see local friends. Naturally that includes dinner at Gilhooley's with PI Harry McGraw. Harry excitedly talks about his latest client, the CEO of Cure All Pharmaceuticals, who's received anonymous blackmail demands and wants Harry to identify the culprit. Cookie, Gilhooley's longtime bartender, also has something he wants to tell Jessica: he asked Harry to investigate his daughter Aileen's boyfriend, who Cookie thinks is too slick by half, but now Harry is too wrapped up in this new case. While Jessica wonders how best to approach Aileen, the young woman stumbles into Gilhooley's covered in blood. She just discovered her boyfriend's corpse....

Gilbert, Victoria. [Death and the Librarian](#) (Crooked Lane \$29.99). It's summertime in Virginia where Blue Ridge Library director Amy Muir has always been suspicious of wealthy art dealer Kurt Kendrick. As a close family friend, the ties that bind them are strong, but his murky past is concerning, especially since he is the godfather to Amy and her husband Richard's six-year-old twins. When a visitor to their small, historic Virginia town is found dead after publicly accusing Kurt of committing a decades-old murder, Amy is determined to prove that Kurt didn't kill anyone, in the past or the present.

Jackson-Opoku, Sandra. [Savvy Summers and the Sweet Potato Crime](#) (St Martins \$28). "Savvy Summers is trying to keep her soul food cafe on the South Side of Chicago open, despite a customer being murdered via one of her own pies. She and her coworker, Penny Lopés, attempt to solve the case while fending off developers. This series has fun characters and good food, as well as interesting history and culture."

James, Miranda. [Something Whiskered](#) (Berkley \$29). A dead baron, an Irish castle, and an unexpected ghost.... Charlie Harris, Helen Louise Brady, and their feline friend Diesel find themselves hot on the trail of a conniving killer in the 17th Cat in the Stacks cozy.

* Mandanna, Sangu. [A Witch's Guide to Magical Innkeeping](#) (Putnam \$19). Sera Swan was once the most formidable magical prodigy in Britain — until she drained her powers resurrecting her beloved, briefly deceased great-aunt. Fifteen years later, she's busy running an inn when she discovers an old spell that could restore her power, and enlists a handsome magical historian to help her crack it. Sera will need the help of an attractive historian, a nefarious talking fox, and the rest of her hodgepodge found family "A charming tale of a not-so-magical witch, a defensive magical historian, a cunning fox (who's really a cursed witch), and the inn's myriad guests. A perfectly written, cozy up with your tea, fantastic and romantic comedy.... Utterly delightful, and a bit bittersweet."

Pleiter, Allie. [One Sharp Stitch](#) (Kensington \$27). See Signed Books

Ryan, Sofie. [The Whole Cat and Caboodle](#) (\$19) is the reissue (with cute cover) of the first mystery in the Second Chance Cat cozies starring Sarah Grayson, owner of Second Chance, a charming shop in the oceanfront town of North Harbor, Maine and her rescue cat, Elvis. But when Sarah's elderly friend Maddie is found with the body of a dead man in her garden, the kindly old lady becomes the prime suspect in the murder. Not so fast, say Sarah and the big black feline....

West, Kathleen. [Making Friends Can Be Murder](#) (Penguin \$19). West's smart, twisty fourth novel features a group of women all named Sarah Jones. When personal trainer Sarah Jones moves to Minneapolis after a broken engagement, she's thrilled to find a group of women who all share her name. Soon after Sarah (known as "Thirty" since the women all go by their ages) joins The Sarahs, one of the other Sarahs—the high-powered banker—is found dead under a bridge. With the help of George, a rookie FBI agent who's keeping his own secrets, Thirty and her fellow Sarahs set out to solve the murder. Because they're rank amateurs—and one of them is a killer—the investigation quickly goes off the rails. West craftily assembles plot threads involving dark family secrets, a tentative new romance, the dead woman's teen daughters, and a stern nun with an unexpected past.

And for young readers:

Crain, Elayne. [There's Something Odd About the Babysitter](#) (Feiwel & Friends, \$18.99). Freddie, who's never liked a single babysitter, has to wonder, is this the one? A stack of raccoons in a trench coat? "An adorable and clever book. Kids and their grownups will both get a kick out of seeing what happens when raccoons decide to go into the childcare business." Illustrated by John Ledda

BEACH READING

Brennan, Allison. [Beach Reads and Deadly Deeds](#) (Park Row \$30 SIGNED) delivers a breezy standalone about a book-loving accountant who goes on holiday at a luxury island resort and 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.

Foster, Brooke Lea. [Our Last Vineyard Summer](#) (Gallery \$28.99). After suffering through her first year of graduate school at Columbia following her senator father's death, Betsy Whiting is hoping to spend the summer with her boyfriend...and hopefully end the summer as his fiancée. Instead, her mother—a longtime feminist and leader in the women's movement—calls Betsy and her sisters back home to Martha's Vineyard, announcing that they need to sell their beloved summer house to pay off their father's debts. When Betsy arrives on the island a week later, she must reckon with her strained familial relationships, a long-ago forbidden romance, and the complicated legacy of her parents, who divided the family even as they did good for the world. Recommended to fans of Beatriz Williams.

Galloway, Gregory. [All We Trust](#) (Melville House \$19.99). Deb calls this a "Perfect beachside read for noir-fans! This paperback original follows two small town crooks who get in over their heads: and is a fast paced romp with betrayal, kidnapping,

double-dealing and tested loyalties. Wear your sunglasses while reading this one!"

Kelly, Martha Hall. [Martha's Vineyard Beach and Book Club](#) (Random House \$30). 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. 1942 with two girls of the Smith family are barely holding life together when the US Army arrives to upend things further. 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 GeorgePutnam), amazing for aspiring writer Cadence. More amazing is what Mari learns about her own history.

Machida, Sonoko. [The Convenience Store by the Sea](#) (Penguin \$29). "Japanese convenience stores already verge on magical realism. A perfect jammy egg nestled between white bread so fluffy it may as well be a cloud? Absurd. Self-heating ramen containers? The future. *The Convenience Store by the Sea* is about one such *konbini* in southern Japan... If you miss those dramedies from the mid-aughts where all the characters are connected through fate and everyone is in love or having a nervous breakdown—the *Magnolia*, *Me You* and *Everyone We Know*, *I Heart Huckabees* school of sondering—this is the book for you." —*Vulture*

MacLean, Sarah. [These Summer Storms](#) (Random House \$30). It's been five years since Alice Storm last saw her family, but she reluctantly returns to their Rhode Island estate after her tech billionaire father is killed in an accident. What begins as a funeral morphs into a "Westing Game"-esque series of challenges stipulated in her father's will — and administered by his enigmatic aide. The publisher, bolstered by Jodi Picoult, calls this "a razor-sharp, wildly sexy novel about a wealthy New England family's long-overdue reckoning...and the one week that threatens to tear them apart."

White, Karen. [That Last Carolina Summer](#) (Park Row Books \$30). Take a trip to the South Carolina Low Country. As a child, Phoebe Manigault developed the gift of premonition after she was struck by lightning in the creek near her Charleston home. Plagued throughout her life by mysterious dreams, and always living in the shadow of her beautiful sister, Addie, Phoebe eventually moves to the West Coast, as far from her family as possible. Now, years later, she is summoned back to South Carolina, to help Addie care for their ailing mother. As Phoebe's return lures her back into deep-rooted tensions and conflicts, she is drawn to Celeste, whose granddaughter went missing years ago. And the longer Phoebe spends in her childhood home, the more her recurring nightmares intensify—bringing her closer to a shocking truth....

ART CRIMES

To go with the delight that is the new Daniel Silva [An Inside Job](#) (see Signed Books), here are some other suggestions for focused reading that should not overlook all of Silva's Gabriel Allon novels. I also highly recommend the eccentric but enthralling [Fred Taylor Art Mysteries](#) by Nicholas Kilmer – we have some in stock from now out of print Poisoned Pen Press mysteries.

Fiction:

Barrington, Anna. [The Spectacle](#) (Union Square \$18.99). Nobody knows quite who Rudolph Sullivan is, or how he ascended so quickly to the glittering top of New York's art scene. When aspiring artist and struggling gallery assistant Ingrid meets the charismatic dealer at a party, she falls fast—Rudolph offers her a seductive taste of luxury and an escape from her humdrum existence. But Rudolph is hiding much more than his dazzling facade lets on. With insatiable tastes and a need to keep up appearances, his debts mount rapidly, and he turns to double dealing to stay afloat. As his adversaries close in, Rudolph realizes his fall from grace could cost him more than his reputation. Panicking, paranoid, and willing to sacrifice anyone to maintain his precarious foothold, he plans his most audacious gambit yet—and Ingrid is at the center of it.

* Huber, Anna Lee. [A Tarnished Canvas](#) (Berkley \$19). I am a longtime reader of this 1830s mystery series led by Lady Darby, a widow of a notorious anatomist with a passion for painting, a penchant for solving murders, and over time a passionate marriage to a fellow sleuth. It begins with [The Anatomist's Wife](#) (\$17) and here in March, 1833, finds Kiera and her husband, Sebastian Gage, wintering in Edinburgh for 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 is actually murder...and worse.

Melanson, Phil. [Florenzer](#) (Liveright \$29.99). Leonardo da Vinci, twelve years old and a bastard, leaves the Tuscan countryside to join his father in Florence with dreams of becoming a painter. Melanson's assured debut is set between 1471 and 1483, crucial years for both the artist and his homeland. "Leonardo da Vinci! Lorenzo de Medici! Murder! Commissioned art! Papal armies! Queer love affairs! There appear to be all these and more in Phil Melanson's bloody and beautiful exploration of Renaissance Florence at a time beset by political chaos, and filled with glorious new artistic creations. All I've got under my belt so far is the cast of characters, but those names alone show that this volume is sure to be a ROMP."—Molly Odintz

Pager, Morgan. [The Art of Vanishing](#) (Random House \$30. "This wildly inventive, deeply moving novel blurs the line between art and those who behold it."—Jodi Picoult. And why not enjoy some magical realism? Jean's life is the same day in and day out. Frozen in time by his painter father, the legendary Henri Matisse, Jean observes the ebb and flow of museum guests as they take in the works of his father and other masters like Renoir, Picasso, and Modigliani. But his world takes a mesmerizing turn when Claire, a new museum employee, enters his life. Night after night, Claire moves through the gallery where Jean's painting hangs, mopping the floors, talking softly to herself to stem her loneliness, and gazing admiringly at the masterpieces above. The alluring man in the corner of the Matisse—is he watching her? Why does she feel a deepening pull to him, like he can see her truest self, her most profound secrets? Did he just *move*? In an extraordinary twist of

fate, Claire discovers she can step through the frame of Jean's painting and into a bygone era, a lush, verdant snapshot of family life in France in the throes of the First World War

* Reay, Katherine. [The English Masterpiece](#) (Harper \$18.99). Haven't heard of a Pablo Picasso masterwork called *Woman Laughing*? That's because it doesn't exist, as Lily Summers, assistant keeper of the Modern Collections at London's Tate Gallery, discovers. It's 1973, Picasso has just died, and Lily's boss at the Tate has decided to create a small commemorative exhibition for the artist. Lily, a painter herself who has studied Picasso, is delighted with the exhibition until, at its opening, she pauses before *Woman Laughing*: the painting is "a perfect execution of Picasso's surrealist period. But something feels off." In front of all in attendance, she blurts, "That's a forgery." This causes a scandal, infuriates the Tate's director, and makes the wealthy industrialist who loaned out the painting look shady. To save her job, Lily vows to learn the painting's provenance; meanwhile, a theory mounts that Lily herself is the forger. Artistic provenance, the inner workings of a museum, Tate Gallery history, a plot point revolving around Piet Mondrian's signature grids—the art stuff is all nimbly worked into the story. But *The English Masterpiece* isn't just for art lovers; it's a woman-swimming-against-the-tide novel marked by two Reay mainstays: romance and emotional growth.

Shapiro, BA. [The Lost Masterpiece](#) (Little Brown \$29). 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. Berthe Morisot, Manet's lover and a legendary impressionist painter in her own right, 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

* Stevens, Nell. [The Original](#) (Norton \$28.99). Brought to her uncle's decaying Oxfordshire estate when she was a child, Grace has grown up on the periphery of a once-great household, an outsider in her own home. Now a self-possessed and secretive young woman, she has developed unusual predilections: for painting, particularly forgery; for deception; for other girls. As Grace cultivates her talent as a copyist, she realizes that her uncanny ability to recreate paintings might offer her a means of escape. Secretly, she puts this skill to use as an art forger, creating fake masterpieces in candlelit corners of the estate. Saving the money she makes from her sales, she plans a new life far from the family that has never seemed to want her. Then, a letter arrives from the South Atlantic. The writer claims to be her cousin Charles, long presumed dead at sea, who wishes to reconnect with his family. But is Charles who he claims to be, or an imposter? This is a kind of variation on Josephine Tey's classic [Brat Farrar](#) (\$17), one of my favorite lost heir mysteries!

Williams, Beatriz. [Under the Stars](#) (Random House \$30 SIGNED*). When a daughter, a world-class chef, and her famous mother, an actress, return to New England's Winthrop Island to confront their complicated past, they discover a secret trove of paintings that connect them to a mysterious woman who vanished on a luxury steamship two centuries earlier. * Publishes July 29 but signed here on September 11. But meanwhile, why not read it?

Nonfiction:

Armstrong, Dorothy. [Threads of Empire: A History of the World in Twelve Carpets](#) (St Martins \$33). I've been a sucker for carpets ever since our first trip to Turkey where the shills at Ephesus or in Istanbul nevertheless make a compelling pitch for glorious weaves. Earlier a trip to China had impact too. And when spending weeks in France I dragged Rob to Aubusson to revel in tapestries, not quite the same thing but again, weaving is an art. Go stay at La Posada hotel in Winslow, Arizona, and admire the magnificent, world's largest, Navajo rug. And just last month the Islamic wing at the Metropolitan Museum of Art caught me with some magnificent carpets. So looking at the world through the prism of handcrafted textiles, markets of status, sometimes trophies, but also works of art, is a lovely way to spend a summer's day. Yes, there are color photo plates.

Burgess, Anika. [Flashes of Brilliance: The Genius of Early Photography](#) (Norton \$35). Today you can't escape phone cameras—they are ubiquitous. And often annoying. However everyone is the hero of his or her own story and has a channel to post the pics, so why not read up on how the early pioneers invented, tamed, and led is to this transformation of art, science, history, and social interaction?

Finkel, Michael. [The Art Thief](#) (\$18). This Notable Book of 2023, a Best Book for many critics, chronicles the story of Stéphane Bréitwieser is the most prolific art thief of all time. He pulled off more than 200 heists, often in crowded museums in broad daylight. His girlfriend served as his accomplice. His collection was worth an estimated \$2 billion. (Maybe he was channeling legendary thief Arsène Lupin....).

Kean, Sam. [Dinner with King Tut: How Rogue Archaeologists Are Re-creating the Sights, Sounds, Smells, and Tastes of Lost Civilizations](#) (Little Brown \$32.50) explores the discipline called experimental archaeology. History often neglects the tastes, textures, sounds, and smells that were an intimate part of our ancestors' lives, but a new generation of researchers is resurrecting those hidden details, pioneering an exciting new discipline called experimental archaeology. These are scientists gone rogue: They make human mummies. They investigate the unsolved murders of ancient bog bodies. They carve primitive spears and go hunting, then knap their own obsidian blades to skin the game. They build perilous boats and plunge out onto the open sea—all in the name of experiencing history as it was.

NEW IN HARDCOVER

Arnold, Mallory. [How to Survive a Horror Story](#) (Sourcebooks \$32.99). A debut where "Seven strangers, all horror writers, are brought together for a reading of the will of Mortimer Queen. They have to survive the night in a classic old house. There are riddles, secrets, tales within tales, and a bit of gore wrapped up into an intricate and pulse-pounding evening." There is a simultaneous [Deluxe Paperback Edition](#) (\$17.99).

Bennett, Michael. [Carved in Blood](#) (Grove \$27). Māori ex-detective Hana Westerman is back after [Return to Blood](#) (\$17) to the force as a temporary constable and assisting with an investigation that involves her ex-husband, DI Jaye Hamilton. While purchasing champagne in an Auckland liquor store to celebrate his daughter's engagement, Jaye confronts a balaclava-clad robber and is shot. With Jaye on life support, the investigation falls to Hana, who leads a team that combs through thousands of CCTV feeds across the city. After they identify the weapon and the getaway vehicle, Hana's team zeroes in on a suspect: Toa Davis, a young Māori man and suspected courier for a local crime syndicate. Soon, Hana starts to suspect that the confrontation was not a random robbery but a targeted attack on Jaye, tied to his covert operations from the past. Bennett smoothly weaves depictions of Māori customs and ingrained racism in New Zealand society into a propulsive and intriguing whodunit. I was pleased to do the US book launch for Hana's debut in [Better the Blood](#) (\$17) in 2023. You can watch it on YT [HERE](#).

Davis, Lindsey. [There Will Be Bodies: A Flavia Albia Novel](#) (Minotaur \$30). In first century Rome, Flavia Albia—daughter and successor to Marcus Didius Falco—is once again faced with uncovering the truth. Quite literally—the purchase of a villa damaged but not destroyed by the eruption of Vesuvius ten years previously, reveals that among the bodies buried in the ash is that of the previous owner found locked in a storeroom. Suspicious caretakers, a Sicilian pirate, and a large inheritance complicate Flavia Albia's ensuing investigation.

Durst, Sarah Beth. [The Enchanted Greenhouse](#) (Bramble \$29.99). "On a remote island during a snowstorm, outside a magical greenhouse, Turlu the librarian wakes from her punishment as a statue—fully human again, and really cold. How did she get here? How was she freed? Who is the mysterious and attractive gardener, and can he help? Readers of cozy fantasy will be enchanted with this parallel story set in the world of [The Spellshop](#) (\$19.99)."

Which reminds me to repeat enthusiasm for *The Spellshop*: "This cottagecore cozy fantasy absolutely ran away with my heart. It features a librarian more comfortable with books than people, a sentient spider plant, stolen spellbooks, mythical creatures, found family, and jam." What is Cottagecore? "Cottagecore is an internet aesthetic and design style that celebrates a simple, sustainable, and romantic lifestyle in the countryside."

Givhan, Jennifer. [Salt Bones](#) (Little Brown \$29). At the edge of the Salton Sea, in the blistering borderlands, something is out hunting. . . . Malamar Veracruz has never left the dust-choked town of El Valle. Here, Mal has done her best to build a good life: She's raised two children, worked hard, and tried to forget the painful, unexplained disappearance of her sister, Elena. When another local girl goes missing, Mal plunges into a fresh yet familiar nightmare. As a desperate Mal hunts for answers, her search becomes increasingly tangled with inscrutable visions of a horse-headed woman, a local legend who Mal feels compelled to follow. Mal's perspective is joined by the voices of her two daughters, all three of whom must work to uncover the truth about the missing girls in their community before it's too late. Combining elements of Latina and Indigenous culture, family drama, mystery, horror, and magical realism in a spellbinding

mix, *Salt Bones* lays bare the realities of environmental catastrophe, family secrets, and the unrelenting bond between mothers and daughters.

* Griffiths, Elly. [The Frozen People](#) (Penguin \$30). The lively and inventive Griffiths breaks ground with a cold case team that travels back in time, here to 1850s, to investigate. Here, to clear the name of Cain Templeton, an eccentric arts patron who might have been part of a sinister group called The Collectors. Most memorable to me are Griffiths' descriptions of team leader Ali Dawson hampered by the clothing and rudimentary sanitation, personal and community, of Victorian London. Talk about imprisonment.... Especially when Ali appears to be trapped in the era and unable to return to help her son Finn who's in serious trouble. While there are flashes of humor here this book has a darker tone than Griffiths' wonderful earlier series.

* Grimes, Martha. [The Red Queen: A Richard Jury Mystery](#) (Grove \$28). This is a bit thin but that fact that Grimes is still writing in her nineties is reason enough for her fans to accompany Superintendent Richard Jury of the Yard and his cohorts on another eccentric investigation. It begins when one calm night in Twickenham, a businessman named Tom Treadnor is shot off his barstool at The Queen pub.

Harris, Charlaine. [The Last Wizard's Ball](#) (Saga Press \$27.99) is the sixth and final installment in the Gunnie Rose murderous and magical family drama Harris has so much enjoyed writing. I spent time with her at Thrillerfest and can say that her arthritis is such that we are not asking her to sign copies for us as she has so cheerfully done over decades. She wraps this up by sending Gunnie's sister Felicia to attend the Grand Wizards' Ball; she being one of the most powerful—and beautiful—death wizards in a generation, she is highly sought after as one of the belles of the ball. However, war and violence are on the rise in Europe as German and Japanese wizards are also courting Felicia... and some are refusing to take no for an answer. As the façade of genteel wizard society turns deadly, Lizbeth must learn to not only protect her sister, but also navigate the arcane world that is pulling her sister and family into a dangerous dance with death....

Hawley, Samuel. [Daikon](#) (Avid Reader Press \$29.99). Set amid the extraordinary devastation and despair of Japan's last days in World War II, this extraordinary novel's premise is that three atomic bombs were delivered to Japan. War has taken everything from physicist Keizo Kan. His young daughter was killed in the Great Tokyo Air Raid, and now his Japanese American wife, Noriko, has been imprisoned by the brutal Thought Police. An American bomber, downed over Japan on the first day of August 1945, offers the scientist a surprising chance at salvation. The Imperial Army dispatches him to examine an unusual device recovered from the plane's wreckage—a bomb containing uranium—and tells him that if he can unlock its mysteries, his wife will be released. "Since 1945, there have been rumors that the U.S. military hauled at least three atomic bombs to Japan, one for Hiroshima and one for Nagasaki. What happened to the third? The truth will never be known, but Samuel Hawley has crafted a breathtaking story of what might have been. Meticulously researched and beautifully written, *Daikon* is a riveting tale about war, intrigue, love, and perseverance." —John Grisham. Jess Walter adds, "*Daikon* is a gripping and fascinating work of historical fiction that's so convincing I felt like I'd stumbled

onto an extraordinary World War II documentary with indelible characters and haunting footage from a vantage I'd never imagined." The author lives in Istanbul.

Healy, Anna Fitzgerald. [Etiquette for Lovers and Killers](#) (Penguin \$29). Deb says, "Readers who liked recent hits *A Most Agreeable Murder* and *How To Solve Your Own Murder* will love this darkly humorous, twisty yet light hearted debut mystery set in 1960's coastal Maine. Each chapter starts with a rule of etiquette from the 60's and it's great fun to follow amateur sleuth Billie McCadie as she unravels blackmail, murder, lobster canapés and Jello Salad." With humor Healy reminds us of the importance of written thank you notes—and love letters, the dangers of tangling with billionaires, why manners are important, how devastating teenagers can be to one another, can murder be a game, and for a bookish Billie, can life track the story arcs of her favorite novels? If you are looking for something different and even refreshing, this is for you.

Holsinger, Bruce. [Culpability](#) (Spiegel \$30). "A thriller with a brain." A family drama set on the Chesapeake Bay that also covers much of the current issues being discussed in the news: namely, a morally questionable tech billionaire and the dangers represented by AI. How do we live in a world newly shaped by chatbots, autonomous cars, drones, and other nonhuman forces in ways that are thrilling, challenging, and unimaginably provocative?

Johansen, Iris. [Death Mask](#) (Grand Central \$30). World-renowned forensic sculptor Eve Duncan's skills frequently make her a target. And in this epic adventure, they make her the first choice to create an Egyptian death mask for a nefarious potential client. But Eve cannot be bought, not for all the riches in a gold mine. Her would-be employer soon realizes that he must threaten the lives of those she holds dear to procure Eve's services and force her to travel to Africa to mold the priceless mask. Eve knows that her husband, Joe Quinn, is out there somewhere, searching tirelessly for a way to help. Joe has back-up from Alex Dominic, a mercenary for hire, but nothing will make it easier to set his emotions aside in order to navigate the impenetrable jungle and mastermind a breathtaking escape. Against an unpredictable enemy, Eve and Joe must each focus on their own unique abilities to get out alive.

Knightley, Brigitte. [The Irresistible Urge to Fall for Your Enemy](#) (Ace \$30). Library Reads recommends: "In a world of amazing and strange magic, a healer and a killer make an unlikely alliance that may inadvertently save the lives of thousands. This debut is an absolutely delightful spin on enemies-to-lovers with fantastic prose, intelligent characters, sarcastic and quippy conversation, and desperately denied pining."

Lapena, Shari. [She Didn't See it Coming](#) (Penguin \$30). When Bryden Frost fails to pick up her daughter from day care, her friends and family start to panic. After the police find nothing missing from her condo, they send a K9 unit to search the entire complex. Soon, they discover Bryden's dead body encased in a plastic bag and stuffed inside a suitcase in one of the building's storage lockers. Over the next week, the police—led by detective Jayne Salter—question several suspects, each with their own secrets. There's Bryden's neighbor, who's warding off accusations of assault; her sister, who's been jealous of Bryden since birth; her best friend, who's become a little too entangled

in Bryden's home life; and her husband, who's prone to violent outbursts and acting visibly nervous. Lapena lays out the puzzle with a sure hand, and ties everything together

Levy, Shawn. [Clint: The Man and the Movies](#) (Harper \$35). Clint Eastwood released his latest film, the legal thriller *Juror #2* last fall, at 94, making his career — seven decades and counting — among the longest and most prolific in Hollywood history. In reckoning with his life and work, both behind and in front of the camera, Levy depicts Eastwood as an “inkblot” for a complex American century: “a squinting paragon of aggressive masculinity and rough justice whose films showcase his love for the downtrodden, his libertarian politics and his fierce commitment to environmental conservation.”

Michallon, Clemence. [Our Last Resort](#) (Knopf \$29) follows a brother and sister, raised in a cult, who reunite at a five-star luxury hotel in the Utah desert — only to be caught up in a murder investigation after the death of another guest. The environment is colorful but color the lives of the characters sad.

* Mullet, Melinda. [A Ghostwriter's Guide to Murder](#) (Crooked Lane \$29.99). As ghostwriter for the long-running Simon Hills mysteries, Maeve has planned the perfect murder time and again, and she enjoys it. She dreams of writing something under her own name someday rather than babysitting her adopted character Simon, but at least she's writing. And as one of the burnt-out souls who've run away from dry land to live on London's waterways, she has the joy of working from the home she loves: a colorful houseboat. Life on the canals is grand, but when her cheating ex-boyfriend turns up floating face down in the water outside her boat, murdered, and the police arrest her, the plot takes a wayward turn. Suddenly, Maeve is thrust into one of her own crime dramas, complete with missing money, violent thugs, extortion, and conspiracy. Only this time, there is no real-life Simon Hill to come to her aid. Instead, with the help of friends from the river—India, owner of a popular floating bookshop; Paul, the exceedingly attractive landlord of the local pub; and Ash, Maeve's quiet, nerdy neighbor who is keeping some secrets of his own—Maeve may have a shot at saving herself.

There is a \$19.99 [Paperback Edition](#) too.

Myers, Kate. [Salty](#) (Harper \$28). Captain Denise has spent 20 years working her way up through the ranks of Ahoy, a yacht management company catering to the “low end of the very rich.” Unfortunately, her work dictates that she never question the owners—even when the owners are the loathsome Falcon family, the wealthy and unfeeling jerks who tore down her childhood home to build a new condo. Things only get worse for Denise when her world-traveling younger sister comes home looking for work, the condo building collapses, and an elderly neighbor turns up dead—and that's all *before* the Falcons' ridiculous yacht sinks under suspicious circumstances

Patterson, James/Mike Lupica. [The Hampton's Lawyer](#) (Little Brown \$30). Jane Smith — the undefeated defense attorney — is back on the case. Despite her ongoing cancer treatments, she does not slow down. When Jane Smith takes on a famous celebrity client, she's armed and ready: with brilliant arguments, hard evidence—and two Glockes. Yet she's chased down, shot at, and risks contempt of court. That's when mounting a legal defense turns into self-defense.

Pote, Ryan. [Blood and Treasure](#) (Penguin \$30). Former Navy helicopter pilot Pote offers up a debut thriller in the vein of Clive Cussler. After the International Space Station suddenly disintegrates in orbit, video footage indicates that the sole survivor, Iranian astronaut Moj Zahedi, murdered the crew and reprogrammed a Cold War-era satellite weapon for unknown purposes, before escaping to Earth in a Soyuz space capsule. Former Navy pilot and CIA operative Ethan Cain, now the owner of a deep-sea treasure-hunting company, is anchored off the coast of Africa, where he's just recovered the fabled Ark of the Covenant when Moj splashes down. Ethan rescues and revives the drowned astronaut, then learns that she's a former CIA operative whom the agency disavowed after her cover was blown. Moj then joined a ruthless group of Persian assassins led by Hezbollah terrorist Azhar Arbab. Azhar, it turns out, has been chasing Ethan for weeks in pursuit of the Ark, and the arrival of Moj complicates both men's missions. A handful of goofy contrivances aside, Pote spins his setup into an exhilarating tale that's packed with sleek action and gasp-worthy cliffhangers.

* Robotham, Michael. [The White Crow](#) (Scribner \$28.99) is one of the most knockout plots peopled with brilliant characters I have read. You will delight in the complex characters and layered plotlines. Here's what a Starred Review, agreeing with me, has to say of our July British Crime Book of the Month which has a truly devilish surprise climax: “London Metropolitan Police constable Philomena McCarthy returns in Robotham's rip-roaring sequel to *When You Are Mine* (\$17.99). When Philomena and her partner catch a glimpse of a barefoot child hiding in a yard in a posh neighborhood, they take the girl to her home and find her mother murdered. A few miles away, a jewelry store is robbed and the owner is forced to put on a suicide vest before the assailants escape. After one of Philomena's colleagues frees him, the store owner asks about his wife, who turns out to be the dead woman Philomena discovered, and the action kicks into high gear. As Philomena, despite her low rank, is drawn deeper into the investigation, evidence emerges that her criminal father—who insists he's gone straight with a legit property development firm—is connected to the jewelry store robbery. Soon, she's forced to decide whether to protect her career or her family. Robotham nimbly balances Philomena's psychological stresses with vigorous action and sharp dialogue. The plot is sleek and elegant, with interlocking story lines that culminate in a big, bloody finale.” But then a quiet and satisfying coda. I can't wait for Philomena's return.

Rothschild, Loretta. [Finding Grace](#) (St Martins \$29). Honor seems to have everything: she adores her bright and beautiful daughter, Chloe, and her charming, handsome husband, Tom, even if he works one hundred hours a week. Yet Honor's longing for another baby threatens to eclipse all of it—until a shocking event changes their lives forever. Years later, Tom makes a decision that ripples through their families' lives in ways he could never have foreseen. As the consequences of that fateful choice unfold, two women's paths become irrevocably intertwined. But when old love clashes with new, who will be left standing? And what happens when your secrets come back to haunt you?

* Summerscale, Kate. [The Peepshow](#) (Penguin \$30). Summerscale's lane is historical true crime and here she examines a series of sensational murders that rocked 1950s London. “The

multiple-award-winning author brings a novelist's eye and a sociologist's understanding to a trove of thrilling material."

Trinchieri, Camilla. [Murder in Pitigliano](#) (Soho \$29.95). The plot here is muddled but you can't go wrong spending time in the Tuscan medieval village of Pitigliano and enjoying delicious food and wine, and an excellent dog, as former NY cop Nico Doyle continues to expand his new life and agrees to help a little girl exonerate her father from a murder charge. The local cops are well drawn too.

Urza, Gabriel. [The Silver State](#) (Little Brown \$29). What if justice isn't something the legal system is truly capable of? Law school graduate Santi Elcano's idealism is wearing away by the cases and clients he's assigned. When a young mother, Anna Weston, is brutally murdered and her body is found near Reno's infamous silver mines, Santi and his mentor in the public defender's office, C.J., are tasked with defending Michael Atwood, a man arrested for Anna's murder on scant physical evidence. Eight years later, a shocking letter from Atwood—now on death row—forces Santi to reexamine his role in the case. At the time, public obsession with Anna's disappearance and intense pressure on the police to make an arrest led to a rushed trial. As they investigated the case, Santi and C.J. became increasingly convinced they were defending an innocent man. Now, a horrific discovery leads Santi to reconsider everything he once believed, and all that it has cost him—love, family, and friendship. Illuminating the deals that get cut in the name of justice, *The Silver State* explores the murkiness between victim and perpetrator, and the cost of a life in the law.

Wallbrook, Zoe B. [History Lessons](#) (Soho \$25.95). Daphne Ouverture, a junior professor of European history at the prestigious Harrison University. When Sam Taylor, a high-achieving frenemy from Harrison's anthropology department, sends Daphne a strange text message about Henri Charrière's novel *Papillon*, she's perplexed and deletes it. Soon after, Daphne learns that Sam has been murdered and her own copy of the book has gone missing. Police detective Asma Ahmed, who's tasked with solving the crime, has few leads aside from Sam's cryptic texts to Daphne. Asma asks her ex-partner, Rowan Peterson, who left the force to open a bookstore, to consult on the case, and they come to believe Daphne may be hiding evidence. Then Daphne is attacked in her home by an unseen assailant, and it becomes clear she might be the next victim. Not content to hide out, Daphne decides to solve the crime herself—with help from Rowan—while juggling classes, campus politics, and the shock of discovering that some of her colleagues aren't who they seem to be. There's plenty to enjoy about this witty, erudite mystery, especially for campus crime lovers, although you may find it overwritten. Less is more is a good hallmark.

Wang, Kathy. [The Satisfaction Cafe](#) (Scribner \$27.99). "Taiwanese immigrant Joan realizes her childhood dream—a café where hosts ask diners questions and provide pleasant conversation. Wang brings up the issues of sadness, isolation, and loneliness in a quiet, restrained way, and offers a graceful pragmatic character in Joan. If cafés can offer cats to make people happier, why can't true human companionship be offered?"

* Ward, Hazell. [The Game is Murder](#) (Penguin \$30). In this fresh and immersive murder mystery that riffs on crime classics, the reader is put in the role of the Great Detective, reinvestigating an infamous never-before-solved case from 1970s England. You

are invited to a very special murder mystery party. The game is simple: Listen to the witnesses. Examine the evidence. Solve the case. Be careful. Trust no one. All might not be as it seems. If you agree to play the role of the Great Detective, you must undertake to provide a complete solution to the case. A verdict is not enough. We need to know who did it, how they did it, and why. Are you ready? Can you solve the ultimate murder mystery—and catch a killer? A word of warning: Unsolved mysteries are not permitted..... I look forward to reading what may be our August British Crime Club Pick.

Wilson, Lauren. [The Goldens](#) (Flatiron \$28.99). For fans of Netflix's hit *Sirens*, follow writer Chloe Hughes as she sinks deeper under the influence of model, socialite, and influencer Clara Holland. Unreliable narrator fans, dig right in!

OUR JULY LARGE PAPERBACK PICKS

July sees a tsunami of stellar paperback reading.

I list Picks here but may add more in a second July Booknews as I read further

Ellis, David. [The Best Lies](#) (\$19). Only a lawyer could write this unorthodox legal thriller. And it's set in Chicago! Illinois attorney Leo Balanoff has just had his law license reinstated. Yet he may lose it again when DNA has been found on the shirtsleeve of murdered human trafficker Cyrus Balik. Leo has a long and terrible history with Balik, truly scum, and a sound motive for killing him. Leo also has a long and risky history of playing the legal system to achieve personal goals. More or less giving rein to a savior complex molded by his family history. So when FBI cuts Leo a deal—they'll keep him out of prison if he helps take down Balik's syndicate—he accepts. That mission puts him back in touch with his ex-girlfriend, a former cop who's now working for a company developing a mysterious cure for cancer. These elements forge a complex plot peopled with complex characters and a narrative requiring your attention. I was up for it. Are you?

Estes, Christina. [Off the Air](#) (\$18). "In her exhilarating debut *Off the Air*, Christina Estes uses her years of experience as a broadcast journalist to make us feel like we're side by side with Phoenix reporter Jolene Garcia as she doggedly investigates the death of a controversial talk show host. Chock full of insider info about TV news, the story is as timely as it is fun. I couldn't stop reading!" -Kellye Garrett. Hank Phillippi Ryan, an Emmy Award winning journalist herself, calls it "a terrific solid mystery with authentic insights into the intriguing world of local TV journalism-but always coupled with compassion and heart. Estes's ear for dialogue and understanding of human nature makes this a must read-and the perfect beginning for a series. We debut Jolene's next case [The Story That Wouldn't Die](#) (St Martins \$28) on August 18 6:30 PM.

Gardiner, Meg. [Shadowheart](#) (\$18.99). Arrested by Jessup County Deputy Marius Hayes in a Tennessee motel parking lot, drifter Efram Judah Goode insists he had nothing to do with the deaths of the three women inside the motel or the fourth, also mummy-wrapped with duct tape, in the back seat of the car he'd been driving. But he's perfectly willing to cop to 13 other homicides stretching back to 2003. He's unsurprisingly convicted of the four brand-new murders as well, but Special Agent Caitlin Hendrix of the FBI's Behavioral Analysis Unit, isn't satisfied. Working with other members of the unit willing to

put in endless hours in pursuit of scant evidence, she realizes that this new streak of murders, which continues apace while Goode is safely imprisoned, is the work of a copycat. Acting on further information from Finch Winter, an adopted teen who's convinced that her birth mother was one of Goode's victims, she uncovers enough links between Goode and the copycat to reach a truly alarming conclusion.... it's serial killer vs. serial killer....

Idov, Michael. [The Collaborators](#) (\$18.99). *Slow Horses* meets *Red Sparrow* in this "sharp, freshly conceived, [and] thoroughly entertaining" (*Kirkus Reviews*, starred review) spy thriller featuring a brilliant young intelligence officer and a troubled heiress who stumble into a global conspiracy that pits present-day Russia against the CIA. Unlike most spy fiction, it's driven in the liveliest sense by young characters who reflect their generation. Falk, a millennial who wears Weezer tees, and Maya, who was up for a part in a Peacock vampire series, are an irresistible pairing. "What the ever expanding world of espionage fiction needs, it turns out, is a Yale-educated Millennial field operative who dresses in Weezer t-shirts and knows his way around a semi-automatic...[with a] slim, well-paced, deceptively complex novel of American and Russian intelligence.... novel as cool as it is accomplished, that knits together action, tradecraft and quippy dialogue with flair."—*Vogue* on one of our 2024 First Mystery Subscription Club Picks.

Jade, Carinn. [The Astrology House](#) (\$18.99). Margot needs a minute. She's been working eighty-hour weeks as a newly minted partner at her law firm. She's disconnected from her brother, the only family she has left. And she's still not pregnant after years of trying. Stars Harbor Astrological Retreat promises rest, relaxation, and wisdom for Margot and her friends. With Instagram-worthy views and nightly astrology readings in an impeccably restored waterfront Victorian house, this getaway should be nothing but idyllic fun. For Margot's brother, Adam, it's the perfect opportunity to rekindle the romance that fuels his writing. But his wife, Aimee, hides the darkness of her past with a beautiful social media feed. Their friend, Farah, is a successful doctor who cannot admit that she's losing control. Yet no one holds a greater secret than their astrologer host, Rini. She has a plan for all of her guests, especially one. Those who liked Katy Hays' [The Cloisters](#) (\$17.99 & \$10.99) will have fun

Kalla, Daniel. [The Deepest Fake](#) (Simon Schuster Canada \$18.99). This paperback original from Canadian Kalla is fabulous! I was riveted to the story. A tech CEO and AI pioneer's carefully curated life is unraveling. As deepfakes and deception blur the lines between truth and illusion, the novel explores the challenges and pitfalls of safeguarding reality in an age when it can be fabricated. In the end you won't be surprised at what's behind it all but the journey is one to undertake.

Kanon, Joseph. [Shanghai](#) (\$17.99). In this superbly written WWII espionage thriller, Edgar winner Kanon, one of my all time favorite spy fiction authors, introduces Daniel Lohr, a German Jew who escapes 1938 Berlin for Shanghai, the only port city that doesn't require an entry visa. On the journey there, Daniel's unexpected liaison with fellow passenger Leah Auerbach is overshadowed by a close call with Colonel Yamada, an officer in the dreaded Japanese military police and a close ally of the Nazis. When Daniel arrives in Shanghai, he takes refuge with his uncle, Nathan, who operates a casino and a jazz club while steadily expanding his partnership with Chinese mob bosses

across the city. After surviving a gang-related ambush that nearly kills Nathan, Daniel rises to prominence in Shanghai's criminal underworld. However, his obsession with Leah and hatred of Yamada threaten to undermine him as he navigates the combined perils of Shanghai's German-allied Japanese occupation, the city's ballooning gang violence, and the psychological pressures of his own refugee status.

Krueger, William Kent. [Spirit Crossing](#) (\$18.99). In one of Kent's most puzzling mysteries to date, the disappearance of a local politician's teenage daughter is major news in Minnesota. As a huge manhunt is launched to find her, Cork O'Connor's grandson stumbles across the shallow grave of a young Ojibwe woman — but nobody seems that interested. Nobody, that is, except Cork and the newly formed Iron Lake Ojibwe Tribal Police. As Cork and the tribal officers dig into the circumstances of this mysterious and grim discovery, they uncover a connection to the missing teenager. And soon, it's clear that Cork's young grandson "Little Rabbit" (being in part educated by Henry Meloux) is in danger of being the killer's next victim.

Leon, Donna. [A Refiner's Fire](#) (\$17). It begins when teenage gangs roam the city and bully Venetians while parents and officials are too hamstrung, scared, or indulgent to step in. While this is a slow burn involving overprivileged teens protected from consequences, it evolves into a crushing crime after one teen, Orlando, warns Commissario Brunetti's colleague Griffoni he's heard whispers from his schoolmate Gianpaolo Porpora that something big is in the offing—it's a murderous attack on Enzo Bocchese, the Questura's chief lab technician, whose plans to sell most of his valuable collection of sculptures are upended by whomever breaks in and destroys them. There's more whispering—but this time, it's about Griffoni, photographed and identified at that coffee shop by someone who tipped off peerlessly shady *avvocato* Beniamino Cresti. And then.... It's also about aging in general and out of a profession in particular.

Piazza, Jo. [Everyone is Lying to You](#) (Penguin \$19). Debs says, "Influencers are becoming the norm in our daily life and this thriller takes a look at what happens when one disappears suddenly after inviting her former best friend to write a profile piece about her. Investigating a disappearance is much harder when everything you know about the victim is a lie.... the paperback original format meant to be read in one big gulp.

Rosenfelt, David. [Dog Day Afternoon](#) (\$19). A favor for his friend and associate Marcus Clark lands Paterson, New Jersey, attorney Andy Carpenter back in the courtroom for another impossible defense. A man shows up at the offices of Moore Law and uses six bullets to kill six people, leaving only attorney Sally Montrose and paralegal Laura Schauble alive to identify him from his tattoo and distinctive footwear as handyman Nick Williams. Even a tyro would realize that the murders are the work of a professional hit man, but lead prosecutor Richard Wallace is no tyro, and when the cops find the murder weapon in a trash bin a few blocks from Nick's home with Nick's fingerprint on it, he seems done for. Along the way, though, Marcus, who's served as an informal mentor to Nick and his friend Rafe Duran, asks Andy to defend him. Much as he hates the practice of law, Andy can't say no to Marcus, and he's soon gathering evidence that will link the six killings—more will follow. Bonus: the dog you'd forgotten about turns up to brighten the final scene."

Shepherd, Peng. [All This and More](#) (\$19.99). Meek, play-it-safe Marsh has just turned forty-five, and her life is in shambles. Her career is stagnant, her marriage has imploded, and her teenage daughter grows more distant by the day. Marsh is convinced she's missed her chance at everything—romance, professional fulfillment, and adventure—and is desperate for a do-over. She can't believe her luck when she's selected to be the star of the global sensation "All This and More", a show that uses quantum technology to allow contestants the chance to revise their pasts and change their present lives. It's Marsh's only shot to seize her dreams, and she's determined to get it right this time. But even as she rises to become a famous lawyer, gets back together with her high school sweetheart, and travels the world, she begins to worry that the show's promises might be too good to be true. While the technology is amazing, something seems a bit off.... Perfect for fans of Matt Haig's *The Midnight Library* and Kate Atkinson's *Life After Life*.

Taylor, Sarah Stewart. [Agony Hill](#) (\$19) is a slow burn story (deploy patience) that paints arson and (serial?) murder in small Bethany, Vermont. It's 1965 and an Interstate is coming through that roils the small community. A new State Trooper arrives unsure if his first case at a remote farm on Agony Hill where farmer Hugh Weber is found dead in his half-burned barn is a copy-cat suicide of a neighbor, or murder. Weber's widow is left with four boys and a baby on the way, but she won't say much. Warren's mysterious neighbor Alice Bellows has ties to the intelligence community and may have information. No one's really talking. Then a second fire on Agony Hill throws Warren's investigation into chaos. Here is a setting so vividly described it could be a character.

Vlautin, Willy. [The Horse](#) (\$17.99). "Al Ward is flawed — alcoholism, a never quite good enough country guitarist and song writer. When a blind horse shows up at his isolated shack on a snowy, freezing night, the best of Al comes out.

Whitaker, Chris. [All the Colors of the Dark](#) (\$19) begins in 1975 in Monta Clare, Missouri, when two teens, Patch and Grace, fall in love in the pitch black basement where they're being held by their kidnapper. The novel's time frame unspools over 27 years, across numerous American cities and states while Patch, the protagonist, searches for his lost, possibly nonexistent, love. Patch goes into the dark one person and comes out someone else. Read this [interview in the NY Times](#) to see why Whitaker was a year into *All the Colors of the Dark* before he realized why it was so difficult for him to write about kids in captivity who were deprived of light for 300 days. "I began to piece together how my life had shaped up to get to this point," Whitaker said. "I wanted to answer the question, for myself as much as the characters: If someone else dictates the beginning of your story, is it possible to write the end yourself?"

MORE JULY PAPERBACKS

So many more... look for them in a second July Booknews

If a publisher is listed the book is a paperback original

Chao, Gloria. [The Ex-Girlfriend Murder Club](#) (Mira Books \$18.99). Jones was a cheating scumbag, and yes, she'd agreed to meet Olivia and Elle—Tucker's other girlfriends—to exact revenge for all he'd put them through... But then they found him. Dead. Do they look guilty? Yes. Do they feel guilty for having wished

him dead just hours before? Maybe a little. But—solid motive and a crime scene covered in their DNA aside—they're innocent. They swear.

Chern, Lina. [Tricks of Fortune](#) (Random House \$18) Tarot ace Katie True gets embroiled in another local murder when her best friend becomes the prime suspect in this exciting mystery from the Edgar Award-winning author of [Play the Fool](#) (\$17).

Evanovich, Janet. [Now Or Never](#) (Atria \$18.99). Plum #31. She said yes to Morelli. She said yes to Ranger. Now Stephanie Plum has two fiancés and no idea what to do about it. Meanwhile aided by the usual suspects she's busy tracking down fugitives from justice. Most terrifying of all is Zoran—a laundromat manager by day and self-proclaimed vampire by night with a taste for the blood of pretty girls. When he shows up on Stephanie's doorstep, it's not for the meatloaf dinner.....

Grames, Juliet. [The Lost Boy of Santa Chionia](#) (\$18) depicts a place isolated in a way not possible today. Narrator Francesca Loftfield, a 20-something American woman, arrives in the early 1960s as a charity worker. She has come to Santa Chionia to establish a nursery school that would help reduce the high child mortality rates by improving nutrition and hygiene. Once again drawing on her Italian heritage, the author of [The Seven or Eight Deaths of Stella Fortuna](#) (\$17.99) hurls us into the wild heart of Calabria, 1960, when isolation, a stagnant economy, severe flooding, and the grip of poverty make the mountain top village of Santa Chionia an unlikely place for an idealistic young American to open a nursery school. Even more challenging is filling a request from an aged village mother for Francesca to determine if the skeleton that surfaced after flood waters receded might be the bones of her long missing son....

* Grossman, Lev. [The Bright Sword](#) (\$20). A gifted young knight named Collum arrives at Camelot to compete for a spot on the Round Table, only to find that he's too late. The king died two weeks ago at the Battle of Camlann, leaving no heir, and only a handful of the knights of the Round Table survive. They aren't the hero's of legend, like Lancelot or Gawain. They're the oddballs of the Round Table, from the edges of the stories, like Sir Palomides, the Saracen Knight, and Sir Dagonet, Arthur's fool, who was knighted as a joke. They're joined by Nimue, who was Merlin's apprentice until she turned on him and buried him under a hill. Together this ragtag fellowship will set out to rebuild Camelot in a world that has lost its balance. But Arthur's death has revealed Britain's fault lines and before they can restore Camelot they'll have to learn the truth of why the lonely, brilliant King Arthur fell.

Heller, Peter. [Burn](#) (\$18). Two men—friends since boyhood—emerge from the woods of rural Maine to a dystopian country racked by bewildering violence. Perhaps not what you'd expect from Heller. Indie Next says "In the spirit of *Station Eleven*, there is only one thing humankind understands when it must survive: it cannot be done alone. You read this novel and wonder how such a painful book can be so damn beautiful. Gorgeous writing meets heart-pounding thriller."

Iglesias, Gabino. [Zero Saints](#) (Little Brown \$17.99) This first novel by the *NY Times Book Review*'s Horror columnist Iglesias follows Fernando, a drug dealer and enforcer living in Austin, whose life takes a lethal turn when an unknown gang with seemingly supernatural abilities arrives on his turf. They also

discuss [The Devil Takes You home](#)—Iglesias’ Shirley Jackson and Bram Stoker award-winning thriller—and [Coyote Songs](#) (\$17.99 each).

Johnston, Antony. [Can You Solve the Murder?: An Interactive Crime Novel](#) (Penguin \$18). “A Choose Your Own Adventure-style novel for willing and agile grownups. . . . Every decision leads to a fork in the road, and most of these forks lead to false accusations that will mark defeat. The result is a more elaborate version of the board game Clue that’s as interactive as readers who don’t play video games are likely to find.” GT Karber, author of *Murdle* adds, “A wonderfully intriguing mystery that tests your powers of investigation! Follow leads, find clues, and interrogate suspects in this intricately crafted page-turner! Will you make the right calls and catch the culprit, or will they slip through your fingers?”

Koller Croft, Rachel. [We Love the Nightlife](#) (\$19). London 1979. Two women with a deep love for disco meet one fateful night on the dance floor. Locked in a toxic female friendship, these two vampires careen toward catastrophe.

* Mead, Tom. [Cabaret Macabre](#) (\$17.95). Mead is captivated by the locked room mystery so beloved in Golden Age crime fiction, and so he writes a third puzzle for magician Joseph Spector to solve: murder(s) inevitably taking place at a 400-year-old family seat called Marchbanks in the snowy countryside. It’s 1938. QC Sir Giles Drury has been receiving threatening letters, perhaps from Victor Silvius, confined to a private sanatorium for the past nine years after attacking Sir Giles. His wife Lady Elspeth hires Spector to investigate. Victor’s sister however believes her brother isn’t safe at The Grange and pushes Inspector Flint of the Yard to investigate. These cases collide at Marchbanks, fatally, requiring Spector and his mastery over misdirection to crack them.

Nichols, Peter. [Granite Harbor](#) (\$18.99). The inventive author of *The Rocks* turns a seeming idyll of small-town Maine into a killing field suitable for *Silence of the Lambs* or TV’s *Mare of Eastown*. A local teenager is found brutally murdered in the Settlement, Granite Harbor’s historic archaeological site. Alex Brangwen, adjusting to life as a single father with a failed career as a novelist, is the town’s sole detective. This is his first murder case and, as both a parent and detective, Alex knows the people of Granite Harbor are looking to him to catch the killer and temper the fear that has descended over the town. Then a second body surfaces....and the search for a killer with a shocking method plays out on a bedrock of strong characters, a community of parents and children, lovers and friends, colleagues and rivals, all connected in deep, moving, surprising, and inspiring ways.

Oates, Joyce Carol. [Flint Kill Creek: Stories of Mystery and Suspense](#) (\$17.95). Oates is always worth reading.

Patterson, James. [Eruption](#) (Little Brown \$19.99), completing a manuscript left by Michael Crichton. Also by team Patterson: [The President’s Shadow](#) (\$19.99) and [Missing Persons](#) (\$10.99)

Pearse, Sarah. [The Wilds](#) (\$18). Since the dark events that scarred her childhood, Kier Templar escaped her hometown to live life on the road. She and her twin have never lost contact until, on a trip to a Portuguese national park, Kier vanishes without a trace. Detective Elin Warner, first met in [The Sanatorium](#) (\$17), arrives in the same park ready to immerse herself in its vast wilderness

—only to hear about Kier’s disappearance, and discover a disturbing map she left behind. The few strangers at an isolated campsite close ranks against Elin’s questions, and the park’s wild beauty starts to turn sinister. British author Pearse is a real adept at the Destination Thriller

Phillips, Scott. [The Devil Raises His Own](#) (\$18.95). Los Angeles, 1916: Photographer Bill Ogden has opened a portrait studio in the seedy noir world of early Hollywood, where he is joined by his granddaughter, Flavia—a woman in need of a fresh start after bludgeoning her drunken, abusive husband to death in Wichita. Though his business is mainly legit, Bill finds himself brushing up against the “blue movie” porn industry growing in the shadows of the motion picture mainstream. When a series of grisly murders take place across the city, Bill and his capable granddaughter are pulled into events as tricky and tangled as anything this side of *The Big Sleep*.

Priest, Cherie. [It Was Her House First](#) (Sourcebooks \$17.99) spins a chillingly effective ghost story. After the death of her brother, Ben, anxious Ronnie Mitchell moves into a house in West Seattle. Guilt-stricken by her perceived failure to save Ben, she obsesses over fears as far-fetched as “wearing polyester and being caught in a plane crash so my clothes melt to my skin before I die.” Little does she know, her new home is haunted by the vengeful spirit of silent movie star Venita Rost, who lived in the house with her husband, Oscar Amundson, and their young daughter, Priscilla, in the 1930s, and has wrought havoc on everyone who’s lived there since. Priscilla died in an apparent accident in 1932, Venita drowned shortly after, and Oscar was wrongfully convicted of killing Venita and hanged. Priest alternates narration between Ronnie and the ghost of Bartholomew Sloan, a detective who harbors his own guilt about failing to help acquit Oscar in the 1930s. Finding fresh angles on a familiar premise, Priest delivers an eccentric haunted house thriller with plenty of surprises up its sleeve.

Quinn, Kate. [The Briar Club](#) (\$19.99) captures the paranoia of the McCarthy era and evoking the changing roles for women in postwar America. It’s 1950. Everyone keeps to themselves at Briarwood House, a down-at-the-heels all-female boardinghouse in the heart of the nation’s capital where secrets hide behind white picket fences. But when the lovely, mysterious widow Grace March moves into the attic room, she draws her oddball collection of neighbors into unlikely friendship: poised English beauty Fliss, whose facade of perfect wife and mother covers gaping inner wounds; policeman’s daughter Nora, who finds herself entangled with a shadowy gangster; frustrated baseball star Beatrice, whose career has come to an end along with the women’s baseball league of WWII; and poisonous, gung-ho Arlene, who has thrown herself into McCarthy’s Red Scare. Grace’s weekly attic-room dinner parties cover a terrible secret of her own. When a shocking act of violence tears the house apart, the Briar Club women must decide once and for all: who is the true enemy in their midst?

Shafak, Elif. [There Are Rivers in the Sky](#) (\$19). In the ancient city of Nineveh, on the bank of the River Tigris, King Ashurbanipal of Mesopotamia, erudite but ruthless, built a great library that would crumble with the end of his reign. From its ruins, however, emerged a poem, the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, that would infuse the existence of two rivers and bind together three

lives. One in Victorian London along the stinking Thames. One in 2014 Turkey where a child needs to be baptized in the Tigris. And in 2018 London, a hydrologist living in a houseboat on the Thames contemplates suicide until a curious book about her homeland changes everything....

Smith, Ian K. [Eagle Rock: An Ashe Cayne Chicago Novel](#) (\$18.99) presents a kind of locked-room mystery after billionaire developer Elliott Kantar unexpectedly dies in his sleep at age 77, leaving a vast fortune, a widow, a son, and five grandchildren. Ashe Cayne, a wealthy Black investigator with a notorious litigator father and a web of Chicago connections, is asked by an heir to explore Elliott's death. It reveals the dead man did far more than lord it over his desk and empire all day. This is a terrific tour around Chicago by one of its most successful and Chicago booster citizens, doctor and author Smith, and a nifty mystery as well. I recommend all four in the [Ashe Cayne series](#).

Truelove, Barbara. [Of Monsters and Mainframes](#) (Bindery Books, \$18.95). Spaceships aren't programmed to seek revenge—but for Dracula, Demeter will make an exception. “A delightful found family romp through space! Think if Murderbot was a creature form. I really can't get over how fantastic and charming this is!”

A BURST OF SMALL PAPERBACKS FOR JULY

If a publisher is listed the book is a paperback original

Alten, Steve. [The Trench](#) (\$9.99). Reissue. Paleo-biologist Jonas Taylor once dared to enter the perilous Marianas Trench, where the Megalodon shark has spawned since the dawn of time, and now that the monster is terrorizing the California coast, he must return to fight his ultimate battle.

Beaton, MC. [Killing Time: An Agatha Raisin Mystery](#) (\$9.99). Agatha Raisin #35. When a series of shop burglaries turn deadly, Agatha Raisin's private detective agency is on the case, but Agatha begins receiving death threats and narrowly avoids being kidnapped, so she takes advantage of a previously arranged trip to Mallorca with former police officer John Glass to lie low for a while.

Bradbury, Ray. [The Martian Chronicles](#) (\$10.99). Reissue. Leaving behind a world on the brink of destruction, man came to the Red planet and found the Martians waiting, dreamlike. Seeking the promise of a new beginning, man brought with him his oldest fears and his deepest desires. Man conquered Mars—and in that instant, Mars conquered him.

Cahoon, Lynn. [Seven Secret Spellcasters](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Kitchen Witch #7. As kitchen witch Mia prepares for her transfer of powers on Halloween Eve, a murder implicates her boyfriend and his familiar.

Castillo, Linda. [The Burning](#) (\$10.99). Kate Burkholder #16. Newlywed Chief of Police Kate Burkholder is awakened by an urgent midnight call summoning her to a suspicious fire in the woods. When she arrives at the scene, she discovers the charred body of an Amish man named Milan Swanz, who had been burned alive. The Amish are reluctant to speak about Swanz, who had recently been excommunicated, and Kate is left wondering: Are they protecting the memory of one of their own? Or are they afraid of something else?

Child, Lee. [In Too Deep: A Reacher Novel](#) (\$10.99). Jack Reacher #29. Waking up handcuffed in a dark hospital room with

no memory, Reacher finds himself framed for a murder, setting the stage for an explosive reckoning.

Childs, Laura. [Peach Tea Smash](#) (\$9.99). Tea Shop #28. When Cricket Sadler asks her to find out who killed her beloved husband Harlan during the Mad Hatter Masquerade, tea shop owner Theodosia realizes the killer might have mistaken Harlan for his crazy son—a slum landlord who recently injured a woman in a boating accident.

Hays, Katy. [The Cloisters](#) (\$10.99). Assigned to The Cloisters, a gothic museum and garden that is part of NYC's Metropolitan Museum of Art but located upriver on the Hudson, curatorial associate Ann Stilwell becomes obsessed with the history of fortune-telling after discovering a hidden 15th-century deck of tarot cards that might hold the key to predicting the future.

Hollis, Lee. [Murder at the High School Reunion](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Maya and Sandra #5. At their twenty-fifth high school reunion in Portland, Maine, P.I. partners and moms Maya Kendrick and Sandra Wallage must figure out which of their former classmates should have been voted most likely to kill.

Hurwitz, Gregg. [Lone Wolf: An Orphan X Novel](#) (\$10.99). Orphan X #9. Orphan X helps a little girl find her missing dog and finds himself battered between feuding AI technocrat billionaires and a female assassin called the Wolf.

Jackson, Lisa. [Wicked Dreams](#) (Kensington \$9.99). The note pinned to the dead body found on the remote beach has no name, just Ravinia Rutledge's phone number and the words “Next of Kin.” Ravinia insists she doesn't recognize the man on the mortuary slab, but she suspects Detective Nev Rhodes doesn't believe her.

* Jewell, Lisa. [Watching You](#) (\$10.99). When a murder occurs in Melville Heights—one of the nicest neighborhoods in Bristol, England—dangerous obsessions come to light involving the headmaster at a local school, in this place where everyone has a secret.

King, Stephen. [Holly](#) (\$11.99). Formerly shy private detective Holly Gibney reluctantly agrees to search for a client's missing daughter, which may have something to do with an unholy secret being harbored in the basement of a pair of semi-retired octogenarian academics.

Martin, Kat. [The Ghost Illusion](#) (Kensington \$9.99). Eve St. Clair desperately needs help sorting reality from her fearful imaginings when ghostly voices seem to haunt the Victorian house in Sunderland, England, that she inherited from her uncle.

Taylor, Brad. [Dead Man's Hand](#) (\$9.99). In Pike Logan and the TaskForce's #18th zinger, a rogue band of Ukrainian partisans known as the Wolves teams up with members of Russia's military intelligence to assassinate Vladimir Putin. But Putin is aware of the traitors in his midst and assigns the loyal commander of the Russian National Guard to root them out. It's a mission Victor Petrov is expected to undertake after he prevents Sweden from joining NATO—by assassinating a deputy minister of foreign affairs.

Woodward, M P. [Tom Clancy Shadow State](#) (\$10.99). Jack Ryan Jr. #12. Cut off from his comrades at The Campus just when he needs them most, Jack Ryan, Jr. finds himself in the middle of an international conspiracy that may be too much for even him to handle.