

BOOKNEWS from

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ANOTHER AWESOME AUGUST

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.

MONDAY AUGUST 4 5:00 PM Virtual Book Launch

Rhys Bowen discusses [Mrs. Endicott's Splendid Adventure](#)
(Lake Union \$28.99/\$16.99)

Three women of a certain age decamp from village life in Suffolk to that on the French Riviera

Signed books on sale August 5

TUESDAY AUGUST 5 6:30 PM Live Event

Dan Fesperman discusses [Pariah](#) (Knopf \$30)

A satirical spy story of celebrity diplomacy you can read in several ways

WEDNESDAY AUGUST 6 7:00 PM Live Offsite Event

An Outlander Evening with Diana Gabaldon

Diana discusses [The Outlander Oracle](#) (\$26 Signed) and previews *Blood of My Blood* on Starz

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

Doors Open 6:00 PM

Free to attend but you must buy one book by Diana at the event, or have preordered to pick up, to join the signing line

THURSDAY AUGUST 7 6:30 PM Live Event

JT Ellison and Megan Miranda

Miranda discusses [You Belong Here](#) (Simon & Schuster \$28.99)

Campus crime in the Blue Ridge mountains

Ellison discusses [Last Seen](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$28.99)

Forensic specialist Halley James goes on a quest from Virginia to Tennessee to discover what really happened to her mother

JT also writes as Joss Walker and we have Books #5 and #6 in the Jayne Thorne, CIA Librarian, series for you: [The Book of Spirits](#) and [The Scrolls of Time](#) (\$29.99 each). Find all 6 Joss Walker novel [HERE](#)

SATURDAY AUGUST 9 Live Event

Bookstore Romance Day all day

Lots and lots of book giveaways and some Romance novels at 20% off sale

At 2:00 PM four authors discuss and sign their books with sweet treats and some book giveaways

Kristen Ashley discusses [Avenging Angels: Tenderfoot](#) (Kristen \$23.99)

Liana de la Rosa discusses [Isabel and the Rogue](#) (Berkley \$19)

Jenn McKinlay discusses [I Can't Even...](#) (JMO Ink \$23)

Melissa Marr discusses [Toni and Addie Go Viral](#) (Tor Publishing \$19.99)

SUNDAY AUGUST 10 2:00 PM Virtual Event

Scott Carson (Michael Koryta) discusses [Departure 37](#) (Atria Books \$28.99)

One of the most original thrillers I have ever read deploys 1960s Cold War technology and trade craft to mysteries unfolding in remote coastal Maine

Our daring August Historical Fiction Book of the Month

Signed books available

MONDAY AUGUST 11 5:00 PM Virtual Event

Archer Sullivan and Sarah Stewart Taylor

Sullivan discusses [The Witch's Orchard](#) (St Martins \$28)

Our August First Mystery Book of the Month set in an Appalachian community

Taylor discusses [Hunter's Heart Ridge](#) (St Martins \$29)

1960s Vermont State Police Detective Frank Warren and ex-CIA Alice Bellows return

Signed books available for both authors

TUESDAY AUGUST 12 6:30 PM Book Launch

Lisa Gardner with host Isabella Maldonado

Gardner discusses [Kiss Her Goodbye](#) (Grand Central \$28)

Attendees who purchase the book from The Pen will be entered into a drawing for a spiffy prize bundle

All books purchased from The Pen come with a free recipe

card for a dessert featured in the book and will receive "Lost & Found," an original voice memo from Frankie Elkin, written by Lisa Gardner and read by series narrator Hillary Huber

No One Left Behind as part of her book research and they've set up a special [donations page](#) for her readers

WEDNESDAY AUGUST 13 5:00 PM Virtual Event

Francesca Serritella discusses [Full Bloom](#) (Random House \$30)

Our August Notable New Fiction Pick is set in Grasse, France's perfume capital

Some of our Signed copies come with a small perfume sample atomizer

**We now return to 7:00 PM start
times for Live Events**

THURSDAY AUGUST 14 7:00 PM Live Event

Elise Hart Kipness discusses [Close Call](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$16.99)

Former Olympian now sports reporter Kate Green courts danger once again

Our copies come with a terrific sticker and swag devised by Kipness

Kipness is a renowned sports reporter so we'll discuss this field and women working in it

FRIDAY AUGUST 15 7:00 PM Live Event

Caitlin Rother discusses [Down to the Bone](#) (Kensington Books \$29)

True Crime: What happened to the McStays, a family of four who vanished from their suburban San Diego home without a trace – until their skeletal remains were found in the Mojave Desert nearly four years later?

Rother has also written about a controversial San Diego death involving a Phoenix family

SATURDAY AUGUST 16 10:30 AM Live and Virtual Event

Croak and Dagger Group discusses Ramona Emerson's [Shutter](#) (\$16.95)

SUNDAY AUGUST 17 2:00 PM Live Book Launch

Australia's Sulari Gentill discusses [Five Found Dead](#) (Poisoned Pen \$34.99/\$18.99)

Murder on the *Orient Express* (again)

Gentill is a cancer survivor and this plays into her complex Golden Age of Mystery plot

MONDAY AUGUST 18 7:00 PM Live Event

Christina Estes discusses [The Story That Wouldn't Die](#) (St Martins \$28)

Phoenix TV reporter Jolene Garcia, a new Emmy winner on the story of a small business owner who died in a car crash

Estes writes knowledgeably about journalism from the inside

TUESDAY AUGUST 19 5:00 PM Virtual Event

A panel of Stephen King enthusiasts discusses [The End of the World As We Know It](#) (Gallery Books \$35)

New Tales of Stephen King's *The Stand*

The Panel: Christopher Golden & Brian Keene with Richard Chizmar, Meg Gardiner, Gabino Iglesias, Alma Katsu, Joe R. Lansdale, Catriona Ward, Wrath James White

WEDNESDAY AUGUST 20 5:00 PM Virtual Event

Peter Mann discusses [World Pacific](#) (Harper \$27.99)

A darkly comic adventure story set in 1939 San Francisco and Hong Kong based on the adventurer Richard Halliburton who set sail... never to be found

THURSDAY AUGUST 21 5:00 PM Virtual

Eli Cranor and Patrick

Cranor discusses [Mississippi Blue 42](#) (Soho \$29.95).

Fierce FBI rookie Rae Johnson explores the criminal underbelly of college football

Signed books available

FRIDAY AUGUST 22 7:00 PM Live and Virtual Event

SciFi Friday Group discusses Simon Jimenez's [The Spear Cuts Through the Water](#) (\$20)

SATURDAY AUGUST 23 11:00 AM Live Event

The Cookbook Club discusses [Yashim Cooks Istanbul](#) (Poisoned Pen \$10)

A great price for this cookbook by author and Edgar winner Jason Goodwin, a longtime favorite

Please bring a dish to share

MONDAY AUGUST 25 3:00 PM Virtual Event

Darcie Wilde discusses [The Heir](#) (Kensington \$27)

An 1830s London murder solved by a rebellious young Princess Victoria

TUESDAY AUGUST 26 7:00 PM Live Event

Ellen Crosby discusses [Deeds Left Undone](#) (Severn House \$29.99)

Return to Virginia Wine Country with vintner Lucie Montgomery during harvest season and another murder

THURSDAY AUGUST 28 7:00 PM Live Event

Hardboiled Crime Group discusses Elmore Leonard's [Rum Punch](#) (\$18.99)

SATURDAY AUGUST 30 5:00 PM Live Event

Stacy Willingham with Ashley Winstead

Willingham discusses [Forget Me Not](#) (St Martins \$29)

Murder and more on Galloway Farm, a muscadine vineyard on the South Carolina coast

SUNDAY AUGUST 31 4:00 PM Live Ticketed Event

Sara Cate discusses [The Good Girl Effect Deluxe Edition](#) (Sourcebooks \$18.99)

[Tickets](#): \$20 admits one with book

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 1

Closed for Labor Day

TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 2 7:00 PM Live Book Launch

William Kent Krueger discusses [Apostle's Cove](#) (Atria \$29)

Cork O'Connor must discover if he convicted an innocent man

OUR SUBSCRIPTION CLUB PICKS FOR AUGUST

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

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

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

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

British Crime Club One Unsigned hardcover or paperback per month

Mina, Denise. [The Good Liar](#) (with a huge shoutout to Shepherd-Robinson, Laura. [The Art of a Lie](#))

Cozy Crimes Club One Unsigned hardcover or paperback per month

Bivald, Katarina. [Just Another Dead Author](#)

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

Miranda, Megan. [You Belong Here](#)

First Mystery Club One Signed First Printing per month
Sullivan, Archer. [The Witch's Orchard](#)

Hardboiled/Noir Club One Signed First Printing per month

Historical Fiction Club One First Printing per month

Carson, Scott. [Departure 37](#)

Historical Fiction Paperback Club One Unsigned paperback per month

Fay, Juliet. [The Harvey Girls](#)

Notable New Fiction Club One Signed First Printing per month
Serritella, Francesca. [Full Bloom](#)

Romance and Relationships Club One unsigned hardcover or paperback per month

Blakely, Sally. [Friends to Lovers](#)

SOME SIGNED BOOKS FOR AUGUST

* Armitage, Richard. [The Cut](#) (Pegasus \$27.95). Signed for us to release on September 2. Please order early as supply is limited.

In the sleepy village of Barton Mallet, the old ruins of Blackstone Mill watch over the residents and their quiet lives. Ben Knot and his friends of the class of 1994 have been through a lot together, but teasing turns to bullying when the Knot gang targets young Mark Cherry. As violence escalates, the group fractures and tragedy strikes. Before the summer is over, one of them will be killed. Thirty years later, Ben is an award-winning architect who has moved his family back to Barton Mallet. His girlfriend, Dani, is a lovely stepmother to his children—budding actor Nate and star athlete Lily—but even though the family is happy, Ben has never been able to forget the tragedy of the past. And it's a past that is quickly coming back to haunt him, with the murderer's imminent release from prison. Ben's glittering career is also starting to tarnish as some shady business deals have put him on the path to bankruptcy. With the killer's parole date approaching—and the banks calling in their loans—Ben struggles to keep a grip on his perfect life. When Nate lands the leading role in a new horror film, Dani jumps at the chance to propel him towards stardom. But when the film crew descends on the village, the dream starts to turn into a nightmare. The film is not quite what it seems....

Bowen, Rhys. [Mrs. Endicott's Splendid Adventure](#) (Lake Union \$28.99/\$16.99). Fiftyish Mrs. Endicott is stunned when her banker husband of 30 years announces he wants a divorce. Further he wants to keep their home and bring in his pregnant girlfriend, allowing Mrs. Endicott a small allowance and a flat in London near Harrods. But Mrs. E is not the pushover he envisions. She hires a divorce lawyer, bluffs to a much better settlement, and then in conjunction with her longtime cleaner and a fierce older spinster often terrifying their Surrey village, hijacks the Bentley and away the trio goes to 1938 South of France. Their aim is Provence, perhaps seaside, but the Bentley breaks down near the small coastal village of St. Benet. And there a splendid adventure for all three women, different adventures, unfolds from

the start. This is in its way a revenge novel but it's also, as WWII rolls in, one of Bowen's penetrating looks at resilience, friendships, and the roles of women in wartime all the way to 1945. And also to found family and the gift of unexpected adventures for those who remain open to them.

Carson, Scott. [Departure 37](#) (Atria \$28.99). "Scott Carson brilliantly revives Cold War secrets—tensions and innovations, fears and mysteries—and propels them into the modern day. From nuclear laboratories to a remote peninsula in coastal Maine, he delivers a story that is as globally thrilling as it is personally uplifting." — Ivy Pochoda, echoed by Paul Tremblay and Stephen King and me for our unusual **August Historical Fiction Subscription Club Pick**. While there's a fantastic element Koryta, not even born then although I was already a college graduate, captures the era and the mood perfectly and thus doing crafts a book for this moment.

"In this striking thriller, Carson—a pseudonym for crime novelist Michael Koryta—nimble entwines a contemporary coming-of-age story with a tale of Cold War paranoia. Charlie Goodwin, 17 and half-orphaned, has relocated from Brooklyn, N.Y., to Ash Point, Maine, so her father can chase his dream of opening a brewery. There's not much to the town, save for the long-abandoned naval air station and the wreckage of the B-52 bomber Charlie's grandfather crashed into the side of a mountain in 1962. One morning, from the cockpit of that wreck, Charlie hears her dead mother's voice over the radio, warning her not to fly that day, though she had no plans to do so. Across the country, hundreds of pilots receive similar messages from their own mothers, living and dead. The calls come from an AI program designed to clear the skies, triggered when a satellite detects the reappearance of a B-52 that mysteriously vanished mid-flight on a mission to drop a hydrogen bomb on Cuba to bring an end to the Cuban Missile Crisis. As Charlie's story unfolds over a single tense afternoon, flashbacks chronicle Dr. Martin "Marty" Hazleton's efforts to find a method to shield airplanes from nuclear fallout. With copious cliffhangers, an original premise,

and a resonant emotional center, this builds on Carson's previous success."—*PW* Starred Review

Cañas, Isabel. [The Possession of Alba Diaz](#) (Penguin \$29) is another gorgeous and gory tale of possession in a Gothic *tour de force*. In 1765, plague sweeps through Zacatecas. Alba flees with her wealthy merchant parents and fiancé, Carlos, to his family's isolated mining village Mina San Gabriel for refuge. But safety proves fleeting as other dangers soon bare their teeth: Alba begins suffering from strange hallucinations, sleepwalking, and violent convulsions. She senses something cold lurking beneath her skin. Something angry. Carlos's cousin Elías is newly arrived from Spain, hoping to make a quick fortune off the family's silver mine. Alba, as his cousin's betrothed, is none of his business. But when Alba attempts to kill him during one of her mysterious episodes, Elías recognizes the signs of demonic possession and sets out to help her. In the fight for her life, Alba and Elías become entangled with the occult, the Church, long-kept secrets, and each other.... We are fans of Cañas' groundbreaking work combining suspense with themes like colonialism, romance, and possession in various forms: [The Hacienda](#) (\$17), her first, and [The Vampires of El Norte](#) (\$19).

Cavanagh, Steve. [Two Kinds of Stranger](#) (Headline \$40). Ellie Parker had everything. Perfect husband. Perfect apartment. Perfect friends and the perfect job. As an internet celebrity—famed for her random acts of kindness—everyone knew it. So when a betrayal causes her to lose it all, millions of people are watching. But even at her lowest, Ellie will always help someone in need. Which makes her the perfect target for a sadistic game—and client for NY trial lawyer Eddie Flynn.

Cranor, Eli. [Mississippi Blue 42](#) (Soho \$29.95). Fierce FBI rookie Rae Johnson explores the criminal underbelly of college football in this captivating thriller from Edgar winner and former collegiate quarterback Cranor. Set during the 2013-2014 season, the novel finds Rae, daughter of University of Arkansas coach Chuck Johnson, heading onto familiar turf for her first case. She arrives in Compton to join burned-out agent Frank Ranchino on a stalled undercover probe of potential fraud in the University of Central Mississippi's football program. Then star quarterback Matt Talley plunges to his death from the roof of a bar, and the game changes—at least in Rae's mind. Disobeying her pension-minded partner's orders to stay in her lane, Rae goes rogue and poses as a sports journalist to pursue her own, increasingly high stakes investigation into the quarterback's death. Rae goes rogue and poses as a sports journalist to pursue her own, increasingly high stakes investigation into the quarterback's death. Cranor's quirky characters, playful humor, and insider's view of the college football landscape ensure that this makes it all way to the end zone. Readers will hope to hear more from Rae soon.

Crosby, Ellen. [Deeds Left Undone](#) (Severn House \$19.99). It's harvest time and trouble is fermenting for Virginia winemaker Lucie Montgomery as a vineyard accident during harvest season leaves her without a valuable employee. It's her worst nightmare. But before she can search for a replacement, there's more bad news: Paul Merchant, her winery manager's husband, is found dead at the bottom of his swimming pool. Police rule Paul's death an accident, but his wife insists he was murdered because of his leadership of Don't Pave Paradise, a conservationist group

lobbying to keep the region's beautiful country roads unpaved and thereby stave off the hungry developers spreading out from DC. (all true). And six weeks ago, Paul's predecessor also died under mysterious circumstances. Hmm.... Another strong plot plus vibrant wine country and real issues once again brew a winner for Crosby in a new Wine Country Mystery.

Ellison, JT. [Last Seen](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$28.99). 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.

Here's what JT says about her 33rd novel: "This story is born out of my childhood, the deep peace and terror of growing up in isolation in the woods. The terrors came from all fronts; obviously, nature was primary. So why do I write these kinds of stories? Outside of bringing justice to a world where it's rare, and making sure there is hope in the end? The fear factor is undoubtedly a part of it, but it's also looking at the dynamic personalities that seek extremes and why they go to the lengths they do, either to fit in or to keep themselves separate from society."

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. See Walker below.

Estes, Christina. [The Story That Wouldn't Die](#) (St Martins \$28). Intrepid TV reporter Jolene Garcia investigates a deadly case of municipal corruption in Estes' vibrant sequel to [Off the Air](#) (\$28/\$19). Jolene has long found her fluffy beat in Phoenix, Ariz., stifling. She yearns to cover serious news instead of investigating whether the cupcakes at local bakeries are really, as they claim to be, gluten-free. When community activist Carlos Rios offers to meet with Jolene about a controversial zoning proposal, she sees it as an opportunity to prove her chops. Shortly after they meet and Carlos hints at possible corruption in city hall, he dies in a suspicious car accident, leading Jolene to suspect he was murdered. Then a beloved community figure, whom Carlos implicated in the city hall plot, turns up dead, and Jolene again tries her hand as a gumshoe. As in the previous book, Estes' experience as a broadcast journalist lends authenticity to the proceedings, and successfully crafts a brain-teasing, fair-play puzzle full of plausible suspects and interconnected treachery.

Fesperman, Dan. [Pariah](#) (Knopf \$30). His 14th novel is something new for Dan and hits at an interesting political moment. Patrick and I are forever fans of the elegant spy stories penned by Dan, 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. And here he deviates from classic spy stuff to explore celebrity diplomacy.

Wielding a sharp eye for atmospheric detail and a finely tuned ear for comic relief, Dan has proved to be one of

the genre's most exciting contemporary writers. His latest novel, deliciously fun, revolves around perhaps the least apt candidate for espionage work ever committed to ink: Hal Knight, a movie-star comedian and former Democratic congressman who has been #MeToo-ed for delivering a sexist rant on a film set. Unemployed, Hal is open to a CIA op to deploy celebrity diplomacy against a Eastern European despot (think Orban of Hungary here) with an increasingly corrupt government who is also a buffoon, if a brutal one. Hal accepts the role. It becomes a his ultimate acting challenge, thrusting him into a real-life battle of wits. Hal is no trademark spy hero but he grows committed.

I quote a full page review in the *NY Times* that applies generally to the spy genre: "The domestic thriller is driven by self-contained, cut-finger tragedies full of personal drama, while the international spy thriller raises the stakes, with no less than the fate of the world often dangling over the precipice. Perhaps because of its exaggerated risks and us-versus-them story arcs, the spy thriller can feel like a relic of an age when we had more trust in government security apparatuses. Today, we tend to like our dangers closer to home, and our villains to be neighbors down the street."

Gardner, Lisa. [Kiss Her Goodbye](#) (Grand Central \$28). For her fourth mission finding missing people no one is looking for, Frankie Elkins shakes off a promising relationship and heads to Tucson. Recent Afghan refugee and young mother Sabera Ahmadi was last seen exiting her place of work three weeks ago. The local police have yet to open a case, while her older, domineering husband seems unconcerned. At the insistence of Sabera's closest friend, missing persons expert Frankie Elkin agrees to take up the search just in time for a video of Sabera to surface—showing her walking away from the scene of a brutal double murder.

Frankie quickly notes there's much more to the Ahmadi family than meets the eye. The father Isaad is a brilliant mathematician, Sabera a gifted linguist, and their little girl Zahra has an uncanny ability to remember anything she sees. Which given everything that has happened during the girl's short life, may be a terrible curse. When Isaad also disappears under mysterious circumstances and an attempt is made on Zahra's life, Frankie realizes she must crack the code of this family's horrific past. This tale "is filled with an odd assortment of wonderful characters, including a boa constrictor and an iguana."—*Library Journal* Starred Review.

Gentili, Sulari. [Five Found Dead](#) (Poisoned Pen \$34.99/\$18.99). Bestselling mystery author Joe Penvalle has won the most brutal battle of his life. Now that he has finished his intense cancer treatment, he and his twin sister, Meredith, are boarding the glorious Orient Express in Paris, hoping for some much-needed rest and rejuvenation. Meredith also hopes that the literary ghosts on the train will nudge Joe's muse awake. After their first evening spent getting to know some of their fellow travelers, Joe pulls out his laptop and opens a new document, back at work. The next morning, they discover that the cabin next door has become a crime scene, bathed in blood but with no body in sight. Surely it was a murder. The pair soon find themselves caught up in an Agatha Christie-esque murder investigation. Without any help from the authorities, and with the victim still not found, Joe and Meredith are asked to join a group of fellow passengers with law enforcement backgrounds to look into the mysterious

disappearance of the man in Cabin 1 G. But when the steward guarding the crime scene is murdered, it marks the beginning of a killing spree which leaves five found dead—and one still missing.

REPEAT: Jackson, Holly. [Not Quite Dead Yet](#) (Bantam \$28). Out late July but getting August Indie Next Love: "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."

Kipness, Elise Hart. [Close Call](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$16.99). With a hard-won Emmy now gracing her mantel, sports reporter and former Olympian Kate Green turns her energy to the action unfolding in Flushing Meadows. Working on a feature for her weekly TV show, she spotlights two of today's biggest female tennis stars: the sunny up-and-comer and the brash veteran. But the project goes sideways when one turns up missing. Following an interview with Kate, one player receives a sinister text with a disturbing photo of the other woman, bound and gagged. Kate calls on her estranged father, an NYPD detective, for help in launching a search. Although wary he's hiding something, she's not sure where else to turn. Their investigation leads to the victim's hometown—and a growing list of suspects.

The Kate Green series is based on Elise's experience in live TV. Like her protagonist, she chased marquee athletes through the tunnels of Madison Square Garden and stood before glaring lights reporting to national audiences. (At five feet, she often stood on a milk crate to interview NBA players). And she's covered events including the Olympics, NBA and NCAA Championships, and the US Open.

Krueger, William Kent. [Apostle's Cove](#) (Atria \$29). Signed **here September 2nd** when we get a top-shelf whodunit, but **please order early to avoid disappointment.**

Cork O'Connor, now a PI, is dreading his upcoming 60th birthday when he gets a call from his son, Stephen, an intern with an Innocence Project-style organization that seeks to overturn wrongful convictions. Stephen believes that the first major investigation Cork oversaw as sheriff of Tamarack County, put an innocent man behind bars. The first half of the book recounts that case, detailing the murder of Chastity Boshey and the events that led to the confession and conviction of her husband, Axel. The second half sees Cork reopen the case only to meet puzzling resistance from Axel, and look into a new murder that seems linked to Chastity's. Krueger's muscular prose keeps the action chugging along, but not at the expense of detailed character work: the author's portraits of Axel, Cork, and their associates across more than a quarter-century lend the narrative a stirring humanity. All this with a vividly rendered setting and an elegant dual-timeline plot.

Kuang, R F. [Katabasis \(Deluxe Limited Edition\)](#) (Harper \$34). Not signed I think and in very short supply. The collector's hardcover features stenciled edges, case effects, and illustrated endpapers. *Dante's Inferno* meets Susanna Clarke's *Piranesi* in this all-new dark academia fantasy from R. F. Kuang, the #1 bestselling author of *Babel* and *Yellowface*, in which two graduate students must put aside their rivalry and journey to Hell to save their professor's soul—perhaps at the cost of their own. *Katabasis*, noun, Ancient Greek: The story of a hero's descent to the underworld.

Lansdale, Joe R. [Hatchet Girls](#) (Little Brown \$30). Out mid-August, Signed here October 28 on his birthday. We will be

throwing a party for him. We recommend ordering early to avoid disappointment.

Your next dose of pitch-black comedy, mystery, and mayhem has arrived as Hap and Leonard find themselves in a vicious and ridiculous situation—just as the best friends may finally be calling it quits. When Hap and Leonard are called in on a strange request (subduing a meth-hopped hog) by a desperate young lady, they quickly learn this woman is part of a fringe group: *The Hatchet Girls*, who have pledged their allegiance to a crazed and grudge-bearing leader bent on bloody societal revenge. The timing couldn't be worse to be caught in such a vile, sticky wicket of a case: both boys are wrapped up in their domestic lives: Leonard is in the midst of wedding planning with fiancée, Pookie. And meanwhile, Hap and Brett are hard at work on their new home. Homemaking bliss will have to wait as Hap and Leonard are driven to stop the danger in its tracks and better understand the group's mission and the plans they have already set in place for helter-skelter-esque mayhem.

* Meyer, Nicholas. [Sherlock Holmes and the Real Thing](#) (Penzler \$26.95). Publishes August 26 but Signed for us end of September.

If Meyer's sterling seventh Holmes pastiche (after *Sherlock Holmes and the Telegram from Hell*) is, as he suggests in the acknowledgments, his last, he ends on a high note, serving up his best revamp of the Conan Doyle canon in years. Lady Glendenning, owner of many London properties, is referred to Baker Street by Scotland Yard after her usually reliable tenant, portrait artist Rupert Milestone, vanishes with three months of unpaid rent to his name. When Holmes and Watson accompany Lady Glendenning to Rupert's residence, the sleuths spot several oddities, including "a kiln with no potting wheel or ceramics, an unfinished Venetian cityscape... an oddly situated portrait of the artist as a young man," and blood. Their suspicions of foul play are validated when a male corpse is found nearby, gruesomely concealed inside a snowman, and three other dead bodies promptly turn up. Meyer avoids some of the pitfalls of his previous Holmes outings, firmly rooting the plot in Holmes's investigative acumen instead of his physical derring-do, and he packs the action with devilish surprises. Baker Street regulars will be thrilled.

* Mina, Denise. [The Good Liar](#) (Harvill \$40). A year ago, a father and his fiancée were brutally stabbed in their opulent townhouse, sparking the most high-profile murder investigation in recent history. Blood spatter expert Doctor Claudia O'Sheil's evidence put the killer behind bars – or so everyone believes. Since the trial, Claudia's learned a horrific truth: her evidence and her testimony were wrong. And someone she knows made sure of it. Now, as she takes the stage to give a career-defining speech before London's elite, Claudia faces a devastating choice. Protect her children and her livelihood with her continued complicity or blow the whole conspiracy apart and reveal the truth: not only is the real murderer still out there, they're in the audience. As Claudia steps toward the microphone, she revisits that fateful night. What really happened? And what speech will Claudia give? Unsigned US edition of [The Good Liar](#) (Little Brown (\$29) is our **August British Crime Subscription Club Pick**. And you want to watch the [video](#) or listen to the [podcast](#) of Patrick's and my discussion of this (we hope) series start with Denise.

Miranda, Megan. [You Belong Here](#) (Simon & Schuster \$28.99). For our **August Crime Subscription Club Pick** Miranda has created a Town vs. Gown plot for a small Virginia mountain

college town, not Cambridge or Oxford Universities where this kind of thing rages. Nevertheless the social, financial, and aspirational divides are just as 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. And reawakening ghosts Beckett would rather not deal with. This is a story for readers of Stacy Willingham, Ashley Winstead, Ruth Ware...and JT Ellison who signs her own new book with Megan on August 7.

Rother, Caitlin. [Down to the Bone](#) (Kensington Books \$29). True crime ace Rother pens a deeply engrossing investigation into the many lingering questions surrounding the sudden disappearance of the McStays, a family of four who vanished from their suburban San Diego home without a trace—until until their skeletal remains were found in the Mojave Desert nearly four years later

Sachar, Louis. [The Magician of Tiger Castle](#) (Penguin \$30). Long ago and far away (and somewhere south of France) lies the kingdom of Esquaveta. There, Princess Tullia is in nearly as much peril as her struggling kingdom. Esquaveta desperately needs to forge an alliance, and to that end, Tullia's father has arranged a marriage between her and an odious prince. However, one month before the "wedding of the century," Tullia falls in love with a lowly apprentice scribe. The king turns to Anatole, his much-maligned magician. Years earlier, when Anatole first came to the castle, he was regarded as something of a prodigy. But after a long series of failures he has become the object of contempt and ridicule. The only one who still believes in him is the princess. When the king orders Anatole to brew a potion that will ensure Tullia agrees to the wedding, Anatole is faced with an impossible choice. With one chance to save the marriage, the kingdom, and, of most importance to him, his reputation, will he betray the princess—or risk ruin? Sachar's fans include Alix Harrow, Sarah Beth Durst, and Rebecca Thorne.

Serritella, Francesca. [Full Bloom](#) (Doubleday \$30). The author of debut novel [The Ghosts of Harvard](#) (\$18) returns with a story of romance, mystery, and magical realism by taking you into the glamorous and male-dominated upper echelons of New York City's elite with a woman armed with an intoxicating perfume created just for her. It begins when, reeling from a breakup and overlooked at her job as a lighting designer, Iris Sunnegren finds herself stuck, disconnected, and lonely. Then, a mysterious neighbor, an older Frenchwoman, makes her a gift: a bespoke perfume, and suddenly Iris becomes irresistible. "A delightful premise evolves into a sexy romp, then deepens further into an exploration of trauma, power, and responsibility.... Serritella balances whimsy alongside a melancholic sense of grief. Iris' longing is so intensely rendered that it verges on painful. Readers are gifted with a heartfelt story of ambition and resilience. This novel would make an excellent pick for book groups; in addition to its heady themes, it's sure to spark curiosity about (and within) the world of perfume."—*Booklist*. This is our **August Notable New Fiction Subscription Club Pick**.

Slaughter, Karin. [We Are All Guilty Here](#) (Morrow \$32). Here's excitement—the debut of a new thriller series from Karin. Welcome to North Falls—a small town where everyone knows everyone. Or so they think. Until the night of the Fourth of July fireworks. When two teenage girls vanish, and the town ignites. For Officer Emmy Clifton, it's personal. She turned away when her best friend's daughter needed help—and now she must bring her home. But as Emmy combs through the puzzle the girls left behind, and collaborates with the FBI, she realizes she never really knew them. Nobody did. The tension escalates when 14-year-old Paisley Walker goes missing under similar circumstances to Cheyenne and Madison. “Fans of the Grant County series by Slaughter, will enjoy the familiar rural Georgia scenery and small town secrets, but will find something new in instinct-driven Emmy Lou and her messy, fascinating family.” — *Booklist* Starred Review

* Smith, Sally. [A Case of Life and Limb](#) (Raven \$39). The SIGNED UK edition is sold out. But we can provide an [UNSIGNED UK hardcover](#) (\$28).

1901. Gabriel Ward KC is hard at work on a thorny libel case involving London's most famous music hall star and its most notorious tabloid newspaper, but the Inner Temple remains as quiet and calm as ever. Quiet, that is, until the mummified hand arrives in the post... While the hand's recipient, Temple Treasurer Sir William Waring, is rightfully shaken, Gabriel is filled with curiosity. Who would want to send such a thing? And why? But as more parcels arrive—one with fatal consequences—Gabriel realizes that it is not Sir William who is the target, but the Temple itself. Someone is holding a grudge that has already led to at least one death. Now it's up to Gabriel, and Constable Wright of the City of London Police to uncover the killer. This is the sequel to the delightful [A Case of Mice and Murder](#) (Bloomsbury \$28.99), a 2024 British Crime Club Pick also set within the Temple, 1901, both written by a British lawyer with chambers in the Temple.

Stewart, Jack. [Declared Hostile](#) (Severn River \$17.99). Publishes August 18 and Signed here September 18.

Elite NCIS investigator Emmy “Punchy” King, seasoned in global espionage, uncovers the edges of an intricate international conspiracy following the arrest of a U.S. Marine. Relying solely on her sharp intuition, she starts peeling back layers of a complex mystery that links the U.S. president to a clandestine corporation. Halfway across the world in Eastern Europe, Colt Bancroft and the Black Ponies are thrust into a high-stakes mission to prevent nuclear weapons from falling into the hands of rogue Russian operatives. But their operation spirals into chaos following an ambush by an unexpected adversary. Although separated by continents, their missions are fatally intertwined in this 4th in the Battle Born series by former US Navy Top Gun pilot Stewart, a terrific author who is still flying albeit commercially.

Sullivan, Archer. [The Witch's Orchard](#) (St Martins \$28). Our **August First Mystery Book of the Month** reminds me of the best of Sharyn McCrumb's Appalachians series and of Julia Keller's wonderful books set in West Virginia. Kate Allan Marshall agrees that it is “A riveting mystery, weaving together the darkest secrets of a small community with a beguiling thread of folklore and local legend. Sullivan has crafted a compelling and complex heroine in Annie Gore, whose wits, compassion, and grit are the beating heart of this tense and layered thriller—I couldn't put it down.”

Former Air Force Special Investigator Annie Gore joined the military right after high school to escape the fraught home life of her childhood. Now, she's getting by as a private investigator and her latest case takes her to an Appalachian holler not unlike the one where she grew up. Ten years ago, three little girls went missing from their tiny mountain town. While one was returned, the others were never seen again. After all this time without answers, the brother of one of the girls wants to hire an outsider, and he wants Annie. While she may not be from his town, she gets mountain towns. Mountain people. Driving back into the hills for a case this old—it might be a fool's errand. But Annie needs to put money in the bank and she can't turn down a case. Not even one that dredges up her own painful past. In the shadow of the Blue Ridge, Annie begins to track the truth, navigating a decade's worth of secrets, folklore of witches and crows, and a whole town that prefers to forget... Annie has much in common with Lisa Gardner's Frankie Elkins.

Taylor, Sarah Stewart. [Hunter's Heart Ridge](#) (St Martins \$29). We first met Vermont State Police Detective Frank Warren and his neighbor Alice Bellows, formerly of the CIA, in [Agony Hill](#) (\$19), an impressive series debut. Now it's November, 1965, and Frank is called to The Ridge Club for what looks like an accidental shooting—a former ambassador, killed while out hunting. With the war in Vietnam picking up, Frank realizes that many of the club's congressmen, industry titans, diplomats, judges and other powerful men could all have motives. Meanwhile Alice is throwing a dinner party. Her old handler and friend Arthur Crannock shows up, unexpectedly. Hmmm. An early season snowstorm descends upon Bethany knocking out power and blocking roads, trapping Alice and the cops at the Ridge Club.... Taylor's slow-building second mystery featuring taciturn detective Franklin Warren of the Vermont State Police paints an evocative portrait of the mid-1960s, complete with arguments about the war in Vietnam and the ambient buzz of nuclear paranoia.

Walker, Joss. [The Book of Spirits](#) and [The Scrolls of Time](#) (\$29.99 each). Chapters #5 and #6 in the marvelous and obviously fantasy series led by CIA Librarian Jayne Thorne whom we first met at work in the Vanderbilt University Library (author JT Ellison, aka Walker, lives in Nashville so....). Through six novels, *The Scrolls* being the final chapter, Jayne pushes her librarian skills and her relationships to the breaking point to counter a deadly gauntlet of riddles, rituals, reliquaries, in quest of a well hidden totem. The fate of magic hangs in the balance. You can order the [whole Jayne Thorne series](#).

White, Randy Wayne. [Tomlinson's Wake](#) (Morrow \$29.99). Publishes August 26, **Signed here September 4**. And here is the answer to the mystery of Doc Ford's friend Tomlinson's disappearance at the end of 2024's book. Did Tomlinson die in the wake of a killer hurricane when his sailboat hit a reef off Honduras' Mosquito Coast?

The answer: “At the outset, Ford, a marine biologist who secretly works for an unnamed government agency, has tracked down his missing Zen Buddhist sidekick, Tomlinson, in the jungles of Honduras. Tomlinson, whose grasp on reality is always tenuous, has suffered a severe concussion after being beaten by a pair of Russian thugs. His explanation for his predicament involves a Mayan shaman, child kidnappers, and a young native boy named Aleto who might be the hereditary king of a lost

Mayan tribe. In the midst of trying to untangle Tomlinson's version of events, Ford meets beautiful archaeologist Dr. Fidelia Brava, wife of Honduras's former leader, and she immediately sets her sights on seducing him. Though Ford is tempted, he doesn't trust her and rejects her advances; then she drugs him with a zombie potion, and it's off to the races. As always, "White delivers Indiana Jones-style escapism" with a darker, rougher voice than usual that exposes Doc Ford in his role as undercover agent/assassin—and White's fascination with the metaphysical world he gives Tomlinson to inhabit.

Willingham, Stacy. [Forget Me Not](#) (St Martins \$29). Let's head to Galloway Farm, a muscadine vineyard in coastal South Carolina less than an hour away from where Claire Campbell grew up—and where her older sister Natalie disappeared 22 years ago just after her 18th birthday. Claire, with no father present and a mother living in a daze and thus neglectful) moved away to Manhattan and became an investigative journalist, but a surprise call from her father forces her back home. As it happens the timing is good since Claire has more or less blown up her journalism career at a mid-tier newspaper in NYC. Broke and still unable to connect with her mother, and learning that Natalie spent a happy last summer at Galloway, Claire takes a seasonal job with housing there. The farm with vineyard appears to be a scenic retreat, and healthful. But then Claire stumbles upon a diary written by Galloway owner Mitchell that tells a different story.

Muscadine is sweet so we are ticketing this event, with guest host Ashley Winstead, so we can serve Mocktails that are spicy instead.

Woodward, MP. [Tom Clancy Terminal Velocity](#) (Putnam \$32) and [Red Tide](#) (Naval Institute Press \$32). Both out in early September and Signed here September 18. Best to preorder!

CLASSICS

I have been listing the Inspector Maigret novels by Georges Simenon being reissued in order. You can [find them here](#), numbered, with new ones coming this fall. Here's look at the [upcoming PBS series](#) rebooting Maigret.

* Edwards, Martin. [Lessons in Crime: Academic Mysteries](#) (Poisoned Pen \$15.99). A new British Library Crime Classics arises as Martin Edwards, the series' editor, delves into the stacks and tomes of the British Library collections and invites you to a course on the darker side of scholarly ambition with an essential reading list of fifteen masterful short stories. With a cohort of writers including Dorothy L. Sayers, Ethel Lina White, Jacqueline Wilson, Michael Innes, and Edmund Crispin, peruse theft, blackmail, murder, and mystery running amok through the hush of the university library, the cacophonies of school corridors, and the simmering tensions of the staff room.

If you want a full length Golden Age campus crime novel, grab a copy of Josephine Tey's [Miss Pym Disposes](#) (Scribner \$19). Tey is one of my favorite Golden Age authors and I recommend [Tey's entire body of work](#), especially [The Franchise Affair](#) (\$18.99), crackerjack suspense in a kind of legal thriller set in a village where reputation is everything, and [Brat Farrar](#) (\$17) with its lost-heir plot.

Ihimaera, Witi. [The Whale Rider](#) (Penguin \$17). This Deluxe Penguin Classics edition showcases New Zealand. Eight-year-old Kahu craves her great-grandfather's love and attention. But he is focused on his duties as chief of a Māori tribe in Whangara, on the east coast of New Zealand—a tribe that claims descent from

the legendary "whale rider." In every generation since the whale rider, a male has inherited the title of chief. But now there is no male heir—there's only Kahu. She should be the next in line for the title, but her great-grandfather is blinded by tradition and sees no use for a girl. Kahu will not be ignored. And in her struggle, she has a unique ally: the whale rider himself, from whom she has inherited the ability to communicate with whales.

Queen, Ellery. [Tragedy of X](#) (American Mystery Classics \$15.95). A man is poisoned in the middle of a crowded New York streetcar and not one of the dozens of witnesses can provide any useful evidence. The police are stumped until they receive a letter from Drury Lane, an old-fashioned thespian, claiming to have solved the crime by reading newspaper reports. He knows the killer's name—but now he has to catch him. Originally published under the Barnaby Ross pen name, The Tragedy of X is one of Ellery Queen's most beloved mysteries; though different in character and style from his usual fare.

Virgil. [The Aeneid](#) (Little Brown \$39.99). Unlike its Homeric predecessors, which arose from a long oral tradition, the Aeneid was composed by a singular poetic genius, and it has ever since been celebrated as one of the greatest literary achievements of antiquity. "This exciting new edition of the Aeneid, the first collaborative translation of the poem in English, is rendered in unrhymed iambic pentameter, the English meter that corresponds best, in its history and cultural standing, to Virgil's dactylic hexameter."

COZIES

Andrews, Donna. [For Duck's Sake](#) (St Martins \$28). Meg is in the backyard of the house her brother Rob, Delaney, and their new baby have moved into, supervising some workmen who are using a bulldozer to start digging out a duck pond. She wants to get away from her own house, which has become the staging site for Caerphilly's first Mutt March, which will be held the next day. Meg thinks it will be more peaceful at Rob's house—and it is until the bulldozers uncover a skeleton whose skull has a hole and a bullet rattling around inside. Bonus points for this title.

Burdette, Lucy. [The Mango Murders](#) (Crooked Lane \$29.99). In the 15th entry in the Key West Food Critic cozy series, food critic Hayley Snow's employer, Key Zest, is throwing the event of the season, a lavish cocktail party catered by Janet Snow, Hayley's mother. As Hayley boards the luxurious cruise, she anticipates a smooth sailing soirée filled with shimmering cocktails, mouthwatering mango-infused delicacies, and new supporters for the e-zine. But as the boat sets sail, the festivities take a tragic turn when an explosion rocks the vessel, plunging the party guests into chaos. In the days that follow, Hayley learns that a local culinary entrepreneur died in the explosion and it was no accident....

Bivald, Katarina. [Just Another Dead Author](#) (Poisoned Pen \$30). Visit the idyllic French countryside this August with our **Cozy Crimes Subscription Club Book of the Month**, a literary treat as well as a mystery to solve. Swedish author Bivald has a wonderful time incorporating actual books into this fiction, not to mention the bad behavior of writers attending a retreat. Possibly because she grew up working part time in a bookshop.

When mystery author Berit Gardner agrees to attend a writer's conference in the idyllic French countryside, she dreams of basking in the sun and nurturing budding talent. But her

vacation takes a dark turn when the keynote speaker—a notorious literary titan known for his biting critiques—drops dead at the end of her lecture. As whispers of foul play swirl, Berit quickly realizes the crime is real. And authors, agents, and aspiring writers may number a murderer. Enter the French Commissaire, who is less than thrilled to have a curious author meddling in her investigation. But as the suspects pile up—each with their own motive for wanting the egotistical writer dead—she reluctantly recognizes Berit’s sharp instincts could crack the case wide open.

Bolton, Ginger. [Sour Crime Donuts](#) (Kensington \$17.95). With Emily Westhill’s popular Deputy Donut Café rolling out seasonal summer treats, everyone in Fallingbrook, Wisconsin, wants a taste. But when a limited batch box turns up near a dead body, Emily and her curious tabby are pitted against the worst kind of customer—a killer.

Brannigan, Ellie. [Death at an Irish Village](#) (Crooked Lane \$29.99). I have enjoyed this series that brings an American to the village as heir to a fixer-upper castle left to her by her maternal uncle. Uncle Nevin also included his illegitimate daughter Ciara and a provision that if the two couldn’t restore the village’s economy and make the castle pay, it goes up for sale. So they by now have learned to work together and operate a bridal venue and sell Rayne’s beautiful designs. Joining a party of villagers cleaning up an old cemetery, a body is found on top of a fake grave. And there may be a link to the family’s ancestors.... [Murder at an Irish Castle](#) (\$22.95); [Death at an Irish Wedding](#) (\$29.99); and new in paperback too: [Death at an Irish Village](#) (\$19.99)

* Brett, Simon. [Major Bricket and the Circus Corpse](#) (Little Brown UK \$28). Meet Major Bricket, an infrequent resident of Highfield House in Stunston Peveril, Suffolk. In the past the Major’s work assignments, frequently in foreign countries, have prevented him from spending much time there and as a result, there is an air of mystery around him while everyone in the village speculates on the nature of his occupation. But now the Major has retired and has come home for good in his open-topped little red sports car... and what a homecoming it is, for lying spreadeagled on his lawn in the summer sunshine is the corpse of a clown. The circus is in Stunston Peveril for the annual village fair, yet none of their quota of clowns is missing....

Kelly, Sofie. [Furever After](#) (\$19). Librarian Kathleen Paulson is in for a spell of trouble when she finds a dead body, and only her reliable magical cats can help her tail a killer.

REPEAT. Mandanna, Sangu. [A Witch’s Guide to Magical Innkeeping](#) (Berkley \$19). “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.”

Maxwell, Alyssa. [Murder at Arleigh](#) (Kensington \$27). April 1903: Emma and Derrick Andrews have been invited to the wedding of her cousin Reggie Vanderbilt and heiress Cathleen Neilson at the Bellevue Mansion, Arleigh. Their hosts are a popular young couple who are leasing the home for the summer—Harry and Elizabeth “Bessie” Lehr. Known for his practical jokes, Harry is the toast of parties, earning a reputation as the court jester of the Gilded Age. However, as Emma soon learns, behind closed doors he is dead serious. Following the wedding, Bessie comes to Emma for help, insisting that her

husband is cruel to her in private, telling her outright he married her only for her money and finds her repulsive. Divorce is unthinkable. Now she believes he is plotting to murder her and make it look like an accident....

Meier, Leslie. [Trick or Treat Murder](#) (\$17.95). Haunted-house parties and ghostly galas....grinning pumpkins, mayhem and murder. It’s going to be one heck of a Halloween for Lucy Stone and Tinker’s Cove. Personally I think it’s early to invest in Halloween reading but them publishing keeps pushing out books and scheduling events months ahead which, again I think, mostly makes it all old news when it happens.

Nichols, Jo. [The Marigold Cottages Murder Collective](#) (St Martins \$28). Nichols—a pseudonym for husband-and-wife team Joel Ross (*The Fog Diver*) and Lee Nichols (*Tales of a Drama Queen*)—introduces a cast of colorful characters who live in a cluster of cottages near the ocean in Santa Barbara. Octogenarian landlady Golda Bakofsky treats her kind if eccentric tenants like family. They include the agoraphobic Hamilton, secretive Nicholas, artist Ocean, nearly divorced Lily-Ann, suspicious new arrival Anthony, and budding playwright Sophie. When a dead man turns up in the cottages’ courtyard and Anthony is arrested for his murder, Mrs. Bakofsky thinks there’s been a miscarriage of justice, so she goes to the police and confesses to the crime. To clear her name, the neighbors band together to solve the case. Robustly drawn characters populate a very California ethos in this new entry in the cozy field.

NEW IN HARDCOVERS

This section illustrates trends in fiction as well as the enormous number of books being published each month, the impossibility of covering more than those we can read, often in the absence of advance copies, and why the Booknews is increasingly too long. I will say that we read all the Event Books and Club Picks and our Paperback Picks so you can rely on what we say about them. The rest....

Ackerman, Elliot. [Sheepdogs](#) (Knopf \$29). Patrick recommends this offbeat offering. Skwerl and Cheese, the two ex-servicemen at the center of Ackerman’s zany new thriller, have a chance to make a cool million and get out of their professional ruts. All they have to do is accept an assignment from a shadowy global network to steal a private jet from a Ugandan airfield and fly it to France. What could go wrong? A lot, it turns out, even with help from a dominatrix, an Amish handyman and an off-the-grid conspiracist.

* Andrews, Claire. [A Beautiful and Terrible Murder](#) (Little Brown \$19.99 – Young Adult and it’s hardcover even at this low price!). Irene Adler is top of her Oxford prep school class, but she’s in disguise as Isaac Holland. As students around her start dying, it grows harder to obscure her own identity, especially as she teams up with her roommate Sherlock Homes. It gets more and more dangerous as Isaac gets framed for the murders, and then someone tries to frame her father, Dean Moriarty... which would lead to Irene getting expelled from the school altogether. Will she and Sherlock solve the crimes first?

Arnott, Robbie. [Dusk](#) (Astra House \$26). An Australian thriller. Paternal twins plunge themselves into danger after joining the hunt for a bloodthirsty puma. Iris Renshaw and her brother, Floyd, are 37-year-old vagabonds who travel from place to

place in search of work, food, and shelter. When they learn of a hefty bounty for a man-killing puma named Dusk, they leap at the opportunity. As they traverse the expansive and unforgiving terrain on horseback, Floyd's chronic back trouble tethers him to Iris. The dynamic is nothing new; their tight-knit bond originates from looking out for each other during their hardscrabble upbringing, when they were raised by violent and alcoholic parents. As the puma continues her slaughter, the twins head farther into the bush along with fellow bounty hunter Patrick. Arnott imbues his descriptions of the pumas and Tasmanian highlands with an air of myth, as the twins pick up local lore on their travels, and the slow-burning narrative gains heat as the twins' attempts to track the puma are jeopardized by the devious Patrick and others. The striking landscape descriptions are a perfect fit for the story's primal treachery and struggles for survival.

Bruno, Anna. [Fine Young People](#) (Algonquin \$29). Fan of campus crime? Donna Tartt? This is a terrific irreverent "secret history" novel set at an elite Catholic prep school in the even more elite enclave of Sewickley where Pittsburgh's robber barons built to escape the city they'd created. Frankie, a good daughter, loyal friend, and model student already accepted at her dream college, whose mom teaches at St. Ignatius, is unmoored when a classmate takes his life after posting about the earlier presumed suicide of star hockey player Woolf Whiting. Able to coast through her final semester, Frankie and best friend Shiv decide to investigate Woolf's death as a journalism class project—inviting inevitable revelations, repercussions, and unearthing of secrets including some in Frankie's own history. Bruno also draws a stunning portrait of both town and school in her Hitchcockian story. Highly recommended.

Carter, Ally. [The Blonde Who Came in from the Cold](#) (Harper \$24.99). "Two former covert agents wake up handcuffed in a shed, then start a globe-trotting trip down memory lane as they escape and try to figure out who's behind it all and what they want. This fast-paced, bantery rivals-to-lovers, second-chance romcom adventure works as a sequel and companion to [The Blonde Identity](#) (\$17.99) which we recommend highly as a series start for Carter's heady cocktail of danger, rouge spies, and lively romance.." We hope for Signed copies. Check with us.

De La Motte, Anders. [The Glass Man](#) (Atria \$29.99). Detective Leonore Asker has just settled in as head of the Department of Lost Souls, a unit for odd cases, when her father contacts her after years of silence. A body has been found on his farm and, as the main suspect, he is desperate for Leo's help. But is her father as innocent as he claims or is he trying to reel Leo into his grip once again? Meanwhile, Martin Hill moves to a secluded estate to write a biography about the business leader Gunnar Irving, intrigued by the fact that the legendary property contains an abandoned astronomical observatory. Soon, Hill discovers that the area has more stories to offer...about mysterious lights and mutilated bodies. And the Glass Man.

Downing, Samantha. [Too Old for This](#) (Penguin \$30). Lottie Jones is a retired serial killer. She went into hiding years ago, and now she spends her time at the local church's bingo night. But when investigative journalist Plum Dixon turns up asking questions... the former Lottie just might have to come out of retirement.

Fielding, Joy. [Jenny Cooper Has a Secret](#) (Random House \$30). I haven't thought about Fielding in forever. And here she is with a new book that "nestles a murder mystery inside a witty novel of friendship and loss." Reeling from her husband's death and best friend's dementia diagnosis, seventy-six-year-old Linda Davidson feels lost and alone. Her beloved daughter Kleo and son-in-law Mick have moved into her house to keep her company, but they bicker. Eager to escape, Linda goes to visit her friend at Legacy Place, a memory care facility for the elderly, where she meets Jenny Cooper, a ninety-two-year-old dementia patient who makes a shocking confession: she kills people. Linda dismisses the so-called secret as the confusion of an ailing mind, but Jenny seems strangely lucid during their visits as she recounts stories of her many victims—mostly men who hurt her. Then a fellow patient at Legacy Place dies. Everyone else sees it as the natural death of an sick old man, but Linda can't help but wonder: is there any chance Jenny's telling the truth?

* Francis, Felix. [Dark Horse](#) (Crooked Lane \$29.99). Dick and Mary's son Felix gets into his stride here in a story that first sets up the outrageous and life-threatening bullying of a young woman jockey by the jockey-ex she rejects, and then hands over an investigation to our old friend Sid Halley, famed jockey now a private investigator, when Imogen Duffy is arrested for the murder of the villainous Liam. Imogen's drama is Irish horse-world based while the murder, investigation, and trial take place in England. Francis like Dick immerses you in the world of steeplechase racing with all its detail and drama. I haven't read one of his books for awhile but this one I truly recommend.

Grodstein, Lauren. [A Dog in Georgia](#) (Little Brown \$29). One of my favorite days on a cruise back in 2011 when you could circle the Black Sea without qualms was spent in Georgia. On the coast and at a glorious botanical garden where we learned the Georgians were warm, honest, hospitable. And it was fun to look at their lovely loopy script, almost like noodles pasted to signboards. Anyway that is the Georgia in this somewhat comedic, somewhat heartrending story where a woman who's lost her way in life and marriage elects to wing off to Tbilisi to help in a search for a beloved missing street dog called Angel. Stopping en route to and fro in Paris. Amy, who has never gotten her life together (model? cook?), or come to terms with her magnetic chef husband's affairs although she has been a roaring success as a stepmother, lands in a Georgian household on her quixotic quest. To the Georgians it makes no sense..... I liked this most of the way through and then felt there wasn't a payoff at the end. But.... enjoy the journey and Grodstein's acerbic prose.

Khaw, Cassandra. [The Library at Hellebore](#) (Tor \$29.99). Khaw brings new meaning to the term "dark academia" with this tale of a school where students never graduate — instead, their professors eat them. Our horror columnist, Gabino Iglesias, wrote that "Khaw keeps readers hooked with the strange allure of Hellebore itself (which, in addition to being populated by terrifying beings, is an enchanting and morphing architectural feat in its own right) and with the tension that at any moment, a student could be devoured." My impression is, not being a horror genre reader, that this is VERY dark.

If you are into horror, another choice is RF Kuang's [Katabasis](#) (Harper \$32) where she writes "a descent into hell. Alice is a Magick Ph.D. student at the University of Cambridge who accidentally killed her professor. To save his soul and secure

herself a coveted letter of recommendation, she must find him in the underworld and pull him out — a perilous task in its own right, and that's before Alice's rival decides to crash her trip."

Kingfisher, T. [Hemlock & Silver Deluxe Edition](#) (Tor \$28.99) is "a dark reimagining of 'Snow White' steeped in poison, intrigue, and treason of the most magical kind." Go below to Nonfiction and check out *The Women of the Fairy Tale Resistance* as well—Kingfisher is a modern incarnation.

Mallon, C. [Dogs](#) (Scribner \$26.99). A debut I could not relate to but is receiving some praise. "Safety and comfort are hard won in Carbon, a town dogged by stories of desperation and brutality, and his own home is a dark vault of troubled and unspoken memory." And, "Narrated by Hal, a member of the high school boys wrestling team, *Dogs* is about tight male friendships, trauma, and one night in which everything explodes. C. Mallon is a new voice steeped in the West to watch."

Mann, Peter. [World Pacific](#) (Harper \$27.99). In 1939, just as the clouds of war are gathering, Richard "Dicky" Halifax—boys' adventure writer of manly bravado and the breeziest of prose styles—vanishes in the Pacific. Halifax was attempting to sail a Chinese junk from Hong Kong to San Francisco as part of the World's Fair festivities on Treasure Island. But while his disappearance upends the lives of those left in his wake back home, both his machinations and his letters to his young readers live on. Hildegard Rauch, an émigré painter and the daughter of Germany's greatest living writer in exile, finds her twin brother in a coma after an attempted suicide. He left a mysterious note that sends her on a search for the truth about her brother's relationship with Richard Halifax and the dangerous secret he entrusted to the writer before his voyage. Simon Faulk, a British intelligence officer, has been assigned to ferret out Nazi spies in California. Told in the alternating voices of these three characters and set against the growing threat of world war and a World's Fair dedicated to peace, this is a quixotic tale that explores the many forms of shipwreck, exile, betrayal, and the stories we tell ourselves in the fight to stay afloat. No surprise from the author of the heralded historical fiction debut [The Torqued Man](#) (\$17)

REPEAT: McCulloch, Amy. [Runner 13](#) (Doubleday UK \$28). I have read some amazing thrillers over the years but this scorcher pitching you headlong into the world of ultra-running and here, into the ultimate test of human endurance, a 250-mile race across the brutally heated Sahara in Morocco with only what you can carry in a pack on your back—food, clothes, medicine, food prep materials, toilet paper, you name it. The prize is enormous for the winner. But death stalks the field. Returning to ultra-running in the wake of a scandal, British runner Adri needs to prove to herself — and her young son — that she's still a winner. She's trained. She's ready. She can even face her past including her ex, the marathon's frankly insane sponsor. But when a fellow runner is badly injured, Adri knows something isn't right. In a race this extreme, can even a dead body can be explained away? This is gold medal storytelling, deeply convincing and immersive. I read it in one marathon gulp. Wow.

Morey, Jo. [Lime Juice Money](#) (Harper \$30). At the outset of Morey's slow-burn debut, former chef Laelia Wyldé leaves the U.K. with her children and boyfriend, Aidrian "Aid" Lynch, to visit her retired botanist father, Ellis, in Belize. On Ellis's birthday, Laelia introduces him to Aid, and senses immediate

tension between the two men. After the gathering, Ellis whispers something to her, but her tinnitus prevents her from understanding it. The same night, Ellis suffers a stroke and falls into a coma, prompting Laelia to move her family into his jungle home while he's hospitalized. As Laelia and her children grow enchanted by life in the jungle, Aid becomes increasingly jealous and volatile. Things take a dark turn when Laelia, who worries that her tinnitus is distorting her grasp on reality, thinks she hears gunshots in the middle. Along the way, Morey weaves in chapters exploring Ellis's past, tracing his journey to Belize and his uncovering of dangerous scientific secrets. Though the pace can drag, Morey's descriptions of the jungle are lush and immersive, and she delivers a chillingly effective payoff.

Newitz, Annalee. [Automatic Noodle](#) (Tordotcom, \$24.99). I mention this "cozy near-future novella" which is the No. 1 Pick for either Indie Next or Library Reads, can't remember which, to illustrate the big shift towards escape reading, fantasy cozy and in other examples in this Booknews, horrific, and away from crime fiction which is too real for the moment we are living in. "This refreshingly sweet and short tale is about a group of AI robots who band together in friendship to support each other—and along the way they open a wonderful little restaurant for the humans who survived a devastating war. This novel is the hopeful kind of science fiction we need right now."

Pears, Iain. [Parallel Lives](#) (Norton \$29.99). I miss Oxford's Pears' art mysteries and remain a fan of his global hit [An Instance of the Fingerpost](#) (\$31.99). Here is his latest: "A Cold War romance reveals a lost world of mid-century art, culture, and political adventurism in the exquisite latest from novelist Pears. Soviet curator Larissa Salmina and British art historian Francis Haskell met and married in the 1960s, but not in the way readers might assume—Salmina was no dissident (she had to be talked into leaving Russia), though she was not starry-eyed about the regime either (she joked that her family was fond of Lavrentiy Beria, the notorious head of the NKVD, because he killed the man who tortured her uncle). Pears uses the seemingly unlikely nature of the couple's relationship to explore the era's contradictions and nuances. Of the two, Haskell felt far more repressed—an Iraqi Jew, he never felt accepted at Eton and Cambridge—and it was the open and free Salmina who "saved" him by drawing him out of his shell. Salmina, meanwhile, was not overly bothered by the political repression of her homeland; while still living there, she cavalierly engaged in small acts of resistance without much apparent concern. Yet the two lovers also had much in common. By constructing a carefully layered account of their milieus, Pears shows that they were living "parallel lives" a continent apart, mostly hinging on their commitment to art—a common cultural currency that spanned Europe. It makes for captivatingly counterintuitive view of the postwar era."

Pekkanen, Sarah. [The Locked Ward](#) (St Martins \$29). "Georgia has been accused of murdering her sister, and her adoptive parents have her locked in a psych ward. The only person she asks to see is her biological twin, who she has never met. The twists and turns will have readers breathlessly rushing through the final pages."

* Schillace, Brandy. [The Dead Come to Stay](#) (Hanover Square \$30). The sequel to [The Framed Women of Ardmore House](#) (\$30) finds autistic amateur sleuth Josephine "Jo" Jones

continuing to rebuild her life in North Yorkshire while tending to her family's crumbling estate. After surviving a fire in the property's main house and struggling to get her freelance editing career off the ground, Jo decides to rent out a room in her cottage. She's happy to take a secretive young man named Ronan Foley as a tenant, but a short time later, he turns up dead. Reluctantly, Jo is pulled into another murder investigation, which means more awkwardness and romantic tension between her and dreamy DCI James MacAdams, even as his colleagues remain largely insensitive to Jo's neurodivergence. As Jo and James question suspects, they unearth a seedy underworld involving refugees and valuable artifacts being smuggled in and out of England. The semi-gothic setting and Jo's ongoing quest for answers about her hazy family history tend to be more involving than the rote mystery plot, but Schillace's characters remain a pleasure to spend time with

* Shepherd-Robinson, Laura. [The Art of a Lie](#) (Atria \$29.99). This is my favorite August release, a story showcasing a London of 1749 evolving towards the Regency and Victorian enclaves familiar to readers of historical fiction; a tale folding real-life figures into the plot and highlighting not one amazing cons but two; a story with a Shakespearean finale that leaves you breathless. A literary aspect highlighting (Sir) Henry Fielding, author of *Tom Jones* and pioneer of policing. And delightfully, one decorated with food, especially introducing ice cream! Shepherd-Robinson's prose is superb, bursting with poetic description and immersive period detail, and she sustains suspense without resorting to cheap tricks. What better for August?

Following the murder of her husband in a violent street robbery, confectioner Hannah Cole is struggling to keep her head above water. The Punchbowl and Pineapple, her stunning shop on Piccadilly, is barely turning a profit, and her suppliers are conspiring to put her out of business. With her inheritance delayed due to bizarre discrepancies in Jonas's accounting, she must earn a living somehow. None other than famed novelist and magistrate Henry Fielding is investigating Jonas's murder, and upon learning that the dead man was an unsavory rogue and a cruel husband, he starts to suspect that Hannah killed him. Even more so when a surprise bank account in Jonas' name and likely illicitly acquired comes to light. Hannah's only ally is the new-to-town William Devereaux, who vows to help her and gives her the exotic idea to serve an Italian delicacy called ice cream. While Hannah tests recipes and delights patrons in Piccadilly with this new treat, William negotiates with Fielding on her behalf. Gradually, though, Hannah begins to question William's motives. Rightfully.

Skye, Evelyn. [The Incredible Kindness of Paper](#) (Atria \$27.99). I read this back to back with the Grodstein reviewed above. There are parallels: the joys and angsts of living in New York City, not finding your place, making and losing connections, reinventing yourself. Here we have Chloe from Kansas, ¼ Japanese and a whiz at making beautiful origami roses out of imported yellow paper and infusing them with messages, and Oliver, once her childhood friend and crush lost to her because of his feckless mother and now a successful NY financial analyst. Chloe loses her beloved job as a high school counselor, Oliver has to contend with rivals at the office. Will that magical link they had through Chloe's paper roses resurface and will they both be brave enough to act upon it? If you like a magical love story this is your book to while away August.

Smith, Alexander McCall. [The Winds from Further West](#) (Pantheon \$27) is yet another example of the versatility of the Scottish author as he follows a young researcher at the University of Edinburgh whose promising career start is upended by a leftist student and a chicken department director. Refusing to apologize he accepts a friend's offer and relocates to the secluded Isle of Mull off Scotland's west coast. Events, wolf cubs, and a resident veterinarian help him forge a new start. But Dr. Neil also learns of the betrayals that sent him to Mull and who he is as he elects how to respond.

* Sweet, Matthew. [Bookish](#) (Simon & Schuster UK \$28). London, 1946. Gabriel Book is an erudite and unconventional London bookseller married to Trottie, the owner of the wallpaper shop next door. He is also a sleuth who uses the chaotic riches of his stock to crack the puzzling cases that come his way. He does not work alone. Book's shop is a magnet for waifs and strays—some of whom bring mysteries of their own to his door. There's Nora, sometime bookseller and true crime enthusiast; Dog, connoisseur of ginger biscuits and then Jack, whose arrival at the shop forces Book to confront a loose end from his own past.

Strenner, Emma Nanami. [My Other Heart](#) (Penguin \$30). Deb's pick. In June 1998, Mimi Truang is on her way home to Vietnam when her toddler daughter vanishes in the Philadelphia airport. Seventeen years later, two best friends in Chestnut Hill, Pennsylvania, discuss their summer plans before college. Kit, with the support of her white adoptive parents, will travel to Tokyo to explore her Japanese roots. This dizzying adventure offers her a taste of first love and a new understanding of what it means to belong. Sabrina had hoped to take a similar trip to China, but money is tight. Her disappointment subsides, however, when she meets a bold, uncompromising new mentor who prompts Sabrina to ask questions she's avoided all her life. Meanwhile, Mimi purchases a plane ticket to Philadelphia. She finally has a lead in her search for her daughter. When Mimi, Kit, and Sabrina come face to face,

Tingle, Chuck. [Lucky Day](#) (Tor Nightfire \$27.99). "Vera's life was perfect until a catastrophe so gruesome and unlikely that it resembled something out of a horror movie hit, causing her to question everything. Readers follow Vera as she is recruited by a secret government agency to help make sense of the events of that day four years ago and reset the scales of fate." The Indie Next Pick, again underlining the shift towards horror, says "This is such a funky, beautiful horror novel. With luck and the meaninglessness of the universe as the villain and true-to-life queer characters."

Valentine, Danielle. [The Dead Husband Cookbook](#) (Sourcebooks \$27.99). "Maria's husband disappeared nearly 30 years ago, and now she's ready to tell her story. Enter Thea, an editor on the brink of career collapse. Arriving at Maria's country farm in an odd arrangement of secrecy, Thea will have to pick through Maria's story in order to save her career. A fun, fast read."—Library Reads

* Ward, Hazel. [The Game Is Murder](#) (Berkley \$30) comes in a fresh and eye-catching package and 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....” Here’s a fun book for end of summer and I will say the cover packaging is terrific.

Read a fascinating [essay by Ward](#) on metafiction and on classic or Golden Age crime, giving you lots of insights. One paragraph: “Metafiction feels subversive because fiction feels real. Neuroscientists have studied the effects of fiction on the brain and have discovered that the brain cannot tell the difference between, for example, smelling cinnamon or reading the word ‘cinnamon’. The olfactory sensors of the brain light up in the same way for both. Less scientifically, it may be observed that reading suspense fiction makes our hearts race and reading romance fiction makes our eyes leak just as if they were happening to us in real life.”

✱ Wilde, Darcie. [The Heir](#) (Kensington \$27) starts a series about the exploits of a 16-year-old, pre-throne Queen Victoria. The novel opens with the death of Victoria’s father, Prince Edward, and her subsequent cloistered existence at Kensington Palace, where her every move is monitored by her mother, Victoire, and her late father’s assistant, Sir John Conroy. Victoria’s official—and often unwilling—companion is Conroy’s daughter, Jane. The pair are out riding one afternoon when they happen upon a dead man on the palace green. Victoria reports the discovery to her mother and Conroy, who are quick to explain it away as nothing more than a teenager’s overactive imagination. Victoria enlists Jane’s help in uncovering who the man was, what he was doing on the palace grounds, and why their parents are so intent on brushing the situation under the rug. At first, the young sleuths’ exploits call to mind adventurous children’s classics like *The Secret Garden*.

SOME NOTABLE NONFICTION

Al-Rashid, Moudhy. [Between Two Rivers](#) (Norton \$29.99). The events in the Middle East have spurred more interest in learning about its ancient civilizations. We’ve also seen fiction arising from its mythologies. Here’s one study we recommend. Thousands of years ago, in a part of the world we now call ancient Mesopotamia, people began writing things down for the very first time. What they left behind, in a vast region between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, preserves leaps in human ingenuity, like the earliest depiction of a wheel and the first approximation of pi. But they also capture breathtakingly intimate, raw, and relatable moments, like a dog’s paw prints as it accidentally stepped into fresh clay, or the imprint of a child’s teeth. Historian Dr. Moudhy Al-Rashid reveals what these ancient people chose to record about their lives, often in intimate detail.

Duffy, Curtis. [Fireproof: Memoir of a Chef](#) (Dead Sky Publishing \$29.99). With all the drama of *The Bear*, Michelin-starred chef Duffy teams up with Jeremy Wagner here.”With rare intensity and candor, world-renowned, Michelin-starred Chef Curtis Duffy shares his epic journey from child of an outlaw biker father to famed culinary iconoclast. Fans of no holds-barred stories such as Motley Crue’s *The Dirt*, memoirs by celebrity chefs, and brutally honest personal memoirs will love this raw and inspiring true story” that fans of Anthony Bourdain will gobble up.

Hogan, Chuck. [The Carpool Detectives: A True Story of Four Moms, Two Bodies, and One Mysterious Cold Case](#) (Random House \$32) chronicles a group of moms who decided to investigate a cold case double murder.

Harrington, Jane. [Women of the Fairy Tale Resistance: The Forgotten Founding Mothers of the Fairy Tale](#) (Black Dog \$40). Forget about Charles Perrault or the Brothers Grimm as foundational authors of cherished traditional fairy tales. Long before these men there grew a sisterhood of writers, mostly in 17th Century Paris where educated women, mostly young aristocrats forced into arranged marriages, defied the intense patriarchy of Louis XIV France by forming a salon of female storytellers (*conteuses*) using what they called fairy tales to critique the repressive reign. Gender bending and empowering women, they wrote of escape, romance, fantasy, and controlling destiny. Harrington collects and retells 12 of their original stories with excellent commentary, notes, and in a volume of stunning full color illustrations. In a way this reminds me of Lisa See’s *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan* where repressed Chinese women, mostly corralled by found feet, used a secret language written on fans to express themselves and communicate.

Hillsberg, Christina. [Agents of Change: The Women Who Transformed the CIA](#) (Kensington Books \$29). Here’s a different group of pioneering women who cracked the glass ceiling of the 1960s international espionage world up to the challenges of today as told through the eyes of a former intelligence operative herself. “Hillsberg deftly tackles not just the fight for gender equality at the CIA but also the current dilemma the Agency faces when dealing with the culmination of a decades-long culture of sexual harassment and assault.” Or not.... This book was written before the current administration.

Leon, Donna. [Backstage: Stories of a Writing Life](#) (Grove Atlantic \$27). This collection of pieces is not just for fans of Leon and her celebrated crime series for Venice’s Commissario Guido Brunetti, it’s for anyone with a sense of adventure (teaching in Iran in 1979, a Frank Zappa concert in Montreux), an interest in storytelling and writing fiction, living in a tourist hot spot, or, my favorite bits, talking about her favorite books and admiration for Dickens, Scott, and hugely for Ruth Rendell. This is a lovely book to dip in and out of.

And a second shout out to

Burgess, Anika. [Flashes of Brilliance](#) (Norton \$35). “Living in the smartphone era, when it couldn’t be easier to take a picture of any passing fancy, I sometimes like to imagine what social media might have looked like in the mid-nineteenth century. Instagram would be free of digitally saturated sunsets, and the rare mountain view, won by hauling a seventy-five-pound camera through backcountry, could elicit real awe; even stiff, long-exposure portraits might be an improvement on innumerable thoughtless selfies. Flashes of Brilliance takes us back to a time of more daring yet intentional photography, often by amateurs, and does honor to the persistence, artistry, and ingenuity of early innovators in the field. From the catacombs of Paris to the surface of the moon, *cartes de visite* to X-ray imaging, Burgess follows the camera almost anywhere it could go from 1839 to about 1910.” – The New Criterion. Extra fun for me as I have visited some of the locations where these pioneers of photography set to work.

OUR AUGUST LARGE PAPERBACK PICKS

* Atkinson, Kate. [Death at the Sign of the Rook](#) (\$18).

Atkinson's deliciously witty sixth adventure for Jackson Brodie finds the British PI entangled in a weekend-long murder mystery party. Brodie's newest clients are Ian and Hazel Padgett, aging siblings who have discovered, while divvying up their deceased mother's possessions, that one of her oil paintings has gone missing. With the help of his friend, DC Reggie Chase, Brodie digs into the siblings' suspicions that their mother's caretaker, Melanie Hope, swiped the heirloom. Soon, Brodie and Chase's investigation unearths art thefts linked to Burton Makepeace House, a crumbling mansion recently converted into a hotel and managed by the self-aggrandizing Piers Milton. Brodie and Chase head to Burton Makepeace and start poking around while an elaborate "Murder Mystery Weekend" event that Piers has organized is underway; before long, a snowstorm strands the duo with the participants and knocks out everyone's cell reception. "Atkinson keeps things fast, funny, and fair, delivering a twist-filled mystery that will stump armchair sleuths."

Benn, James R. [The Phantom Patrol](#) (\$18.95). In the 19th entry in this brilliant WWII series, it's the winter of 1944, with brutal weather, months after the liberation of France. Billy Boyle, reeling from the carnage there and from unexpected events during his brief R&R in Britain in 2023's [Proud Sorrows](#) (\$17.95), is in Paris where after a shoot-out in Père Lachaise Cemetery he finds a rare work of art. This leads him to suspect a ring of art thieves embracing the worst of French and German actors is smuggling looted art out of France to collectors (watch *The Monument Men* if you missed it). As he goes after the so-called *Syndicat* he's convinced someone at a high level is facilitating the operation and it leads him into very dangerous territory which we came to call the Battle of the Bulge. This excellent series continues to deliver facets of WWII and locations that horrify, entertain, and frankly, amaze. You can start reading it here and pick up any of the backlist as you become hooked. Benn signs the sequel [A Bitter Wind](#) (Soho Press \$28.95) here on September 16.

* Bennett, SJ. [A Death in Diamonds](#) (\$19.99). I have spurned the series by Bennett featuring elderly Queen Elizabeth II as sleuth up to now. But by taking it back to when she was age 30 in 1957, it becomes catnip for Anglophiles. Those who watched the 2012 Olympics opener with Daniel Craig and the Queen got a glimpse of her sense of humor, which is on display here.

But while the Queen (and recorded events that are true) is the linchpin of this series reboot, the sleuthing is mostly carried out by an excellent woman, a code breaker trained at Bletchley Park during WWII, who although a mere typist becomes part of the Queen's Private Office—in fact, the best part. The other characters, the Queen's family—her mother, sister, and husband, her staff, the dogged policeman, the good and bad guys and gals in a large cast, are well drawn. Plus a very clever plot artfully told; how the two brutal murders that open the story are solved by two women working across an enormous social divide is a mystery until the end. Recommended to fans of Allison Montclair's clever post-war Britain series.

* Bradley, Alan. [What Time the Sexton's Spade Doth Rust](#): (\$18). When Major Greyleigh, a local recluse and former hangman, is found dead after a breakfast of poisonous mushrooms, suspicion falls on the de Luce family's longtime

cook, Mrs. Mullet. After all, wasn't it she who'd picked the mushrooms, cooked the omelet, and served it to Greyleigh moments before his death? "I have to admit," says Flavia, an expert in the chemical nature of poisons, "that I'd been praying to God for a jolly good old-fashioned mushroom poisoning. Not that I wanted anyone to die, but why give a girl a gift such as mine without giving her the opportunity to use it?" But Flavia knows the beloved Mrs. Mullet is innocent. Together with Dogger, estate gardener and partner-in-crime, and the obnoxious Undine, Flavia sets out to find the real killer...which upends her life.

Bivald, Katarina. [Just Another Dead Author](#) (Poisoned Pen \$17.99). See the hardcover review under Cozies; but this gem is more on the traditional mystery end than the cozy end and is a delight for the setting in rural France and all the bookish stuff attached to the murder of an author at a writers' conference. I loved it.

* Burrows, Steve. [A Deceit of Lapwings](#) (One World \$16.99). I love this series led by a birdwatching detective. Trust me, it's amazing. Three murder scenes; two causes of death; one body. It is a case that would challenge Domenic Jejeune even under the best of circumstances. But his DCS's temporary absence means that Jejeune must work under Marvin Laraby, an ex-superior with whom he has a particularly fractious history. Jejeune and Laraby will need to combine their skills to discover why a ruthless land contractor would want to invest in new bird migration software, and what possible interest the death of a birding app developer could be to the British intelligence services. With the appearance of Lindy's ex-boyfriend disrupting Jejeune's private life, and Danny Maik dealing with divided loyalties, is this the case that finally defeats Domenic Jejeune? Seriously—[order them all](#).

Fay, Juliet. [The Harvey Girls](#) (Gallery Books \$18.99). Our **August Historical Paperback Pick** railroads you right into the Southwest of the 1920s where the Santa Fe Railroad, years after Fred Harvey's death, maintains his hospitality chain serving passengers meals on relatively short breaks from the trains. La Posada in Winslow, Arizona, is a surviving example. The Harvey Houses were famed for rapid and impeccable service, great coffee, good food, and a highly trained staff, especially its waitresses who were housed in accommodations, fed, clothed in signature uniforms, and paid a decent wage. The work was hard, often twelve hour days, but respectable and often led to marriages that helped settle the West. Fay gives us two, one from a fine Boston family on the run from an imprudent marriage and brutal husband, the other a Nebraska farm girl needing wages to support her beloved mother and eight siblings. Forced to room together they dislike each other intensely but over time share secrets, secrets that will get them fired—and in danger at the Grand Canyon....

Greaney, Mark. [Midnight Black](#) (\$19). A winter sunrise over the great plains of Russia is no cause for celebration. The temperature barely rises above zero, and the guards at Penal Colony IK22 are determined to take their misery out on the prisoners—chief among them, one Zoya Zakharova. Once a master spy for Russian foreign intelligence, then the partner and lover of the Gray Man, she has information the Kremlin wants, and they don't care what they have to do to get it. But if they think a thousand miles of frozen wasteland and the combined power of the Russian police state is enough to protect them, they don't know the Gray Man....

Mizushima, Margaret. [Gathering Mist](#) (\$19.99). Just days before her wedding to veterinarian Cole Walker, Colorado police Deputy Mattie Wray must fly to Washington's Olympic Peninsula, where a celebrity's nine-year-old son has disappeared from a film set; the skills of Mattie's search-and-rescue dog Robo are needed to comb through the region's rainy forests, trails, and creeks. While working, the search teams learn that other boys have disappeared from the area in the last few years. Then one of the dogs and several searchers are poisoned by arsenic-tainted water. Fearing for Mattie and Robo, Cole flies in to act as veterinarian for all the dogs. When they realize that the missing boy was probably kidnapped and didn't just wander off, their search becomes more desperate. Mattie fears that it will be the cadaver dogs that discover the boy, rather than Robo and the other air-scent dogs. The story of the search, and the setting, are beautifully developed in a mystery that builds in intensity and suspense with the emphasis on search-and-rescue dogs. Mizushima returns with the sequel in October.

* Pooley, Clare. [How to Age Disgracefully](#) (\$18) is a rollicking tale of six wily members of a London Senior Citizens Social Club whose zest for life improves the outlook of their community center's part-time worker. Lydia takes a job managing their club as respite from her condescending husband, who she suspects is having an affair. She expects docile card games and is surprised to meet such a vigorous group of older people leading complex, secret, and well-lived lives of 70 and 80-year-olds at a local senior center. "These thrown together misfits break free from societal stereotypes and face various challenges related to health, love, money and family. Despite these obstacles, they come together to support their threatened community center, connect with one another, and provide plenty of laugh out loud moments. If you enjoyed the characters in Richard Osman's Thursday Murder Club series, you will love the tone, British dialogue and the heartwarming crew."

* Robotham, Michael. [Storm Child](#) (\$18.99). British psychologist Cyrus Haven took in teenager Evie Cormac whom Nottinghamshire police had found hiding in a house with the corpse of a murdered man. After Haven learned that Evie was trafficked into the U.K. from Albania, he informally adopted her, and now occasionally leans on her skills as a human lie detector to help him crack cases. During a visit to the beach one afternoon, Haven and Evie witness the bodies of 17 migrants wash ashore. Most are dead, but the lone survivor suggests that their boat was deliberately rammed. The incident sends Evie into shock, rendering her unable to speak or move, and Haven wonders if the tragedy might somehow be connected to her past. Seeking answers, Haven learns of a master criminal called "the Ferryman"....

Sharpe, Sienna. [A Killer Getaway](#) (Sourcebooks \$17.99). Yet another book set on a sun-soaked island in an eye-wateringly expensive wellness resort. But this one has some excellent variations beginning with why successful Lily Lennox has headed there for the last five years to take a low-pay, poor housing lifeguarding gig at Riovan. Is it coincidence there's a death every time she is there? Maybe this is a question for the attractive and attentive guest Daniel Black? No, this is not a serial killer book, nor a Christie riff. I like the characters, setting, and the concept... sometimes justice isn't perfect but what you can achieve.

* Vassell, Charlotte. [Deadly Inheritance](#) (Simon Schuster UK \$17.99). Britain's Vassell is absolutely terrific—it was no surprise to me she won a 2025 Edgar Allan Poe Best Novel Award for DI Caius Beauchamp's [The In Crowd](#) (\$19), the sequel to [The Other Half](#) (\$18). Excellent plotting and an ace sleuth and a razor-sharp look at the British class system. Now we have imported a third case for Caius (pronounced Keys).

Rosie wakes up at 3am already feeling the twinges of a brutal hangover—an afternoon spent day drinking with her university pals has left her rather the worse for wear. She creeps downstairs for a glass of water—only to stumble onto a shocking, bloody scene in the kitchen. One will. It looks like a botched burglary has left both Rosie's grandmother and her attacker dead. But then Detective Inspector Caius Beauchamp gets a tip about the matriarch's last will. It turns out, this well-heeled family has a nefarious past. A family full of secrets. With his reputation on the line and powerful people pressuring him to close the case, Caius must decide what's more dangerous: the body on the floor or the skeletons in the closet?

Woolcott, Alexander. [Two Gentlemen and a Lady](#) (Steerforth \$17.95). Grab this gem to enjoy before the Dog Days end on August 11.

Here are three charming dog stories set in 1920s Jazz Age New York—back in print for the first time in decades. Featuring illustrations by America's 1st female editorial cartoonist, whose comics career began before she even had the right to vote! Dogs may be man's best friend, but every friendship is different. Prepare to revisit the glamorous 1920s Jazz Age of *The Great Gatsby* and meet Nicholas, a gregarious Airedale Terrier whose arrival in a moneyed Long Island home unleashes complete and total chaos. Verdun Belle, the lady of the title, is a silky-eared spaniel whose loyalty—and litter of puppies—rallies an entire American regiment fighting on the Western Front during World War I. Then there's Egon, a very large German Shepherd, accustomed to summering on the Côte d'Azur, and to managing the diaries and daily activities of his human charges, whether they want him to or not.

MORE AUGUST LARGE PAPERBACKS

* Abell, Stig. [The Burial Place](#) (Harper \$18.99). Abell's sterling third outing for ex-detective Jake Jackson is a taut, atmospheric whodunit that revolves around an archaeological dig in England. Jackson has retired to a bucolic village, where, after a painful divorce, he's built a new life. Nearby, archaeologists have uncovered a haul of "treasure, coins and weaponry" worth £3 million but, due to contested land ownership, may not be able to keep it. The archaeologists start receiving threatening letters signed "Wulfnoth," a royal figure from the 11th century, which decry the desecration of the land and portend violence if it continues. A series of murders on the site ensue. While the first death is a tad unlikely—a reverend drinks hydrochloric acid, mistaking it for water—the subsequent killings are chillingly vicious. As Jackson investigates with the assistance of a team of insightful women sleuths, the potential motives he considers range from greed and revenge to ecological concern. The setting recalls Tana French's *In the Woods*, but Abell's prose is singularly searing and evocative. This will stun series fans and newcomers alike.

* Ashley, Jennifer. [A Silence in Belgrave Square](#) (Penguin \$19). "The Kat Holloway Mysteries are extraordinarily well-written

and enjoyable visits to Victorian England, full of detail of lives both “Upstairs” and “Down.” The characters including cook Kat Holloway are vivid with all the virtues and defects of human beings in any age. John and I are fans of this series, here in its eighth entry. Kat knows that her beau and confidante Daniel McAdam has a talent for dangerous work as a Scotland Yard agent. Now one last assignment will free him—he risk his life one last time, masquerading as a secretary to an elderly viscount who could be the mastermind behind the recent plots against the Queen and her government.

* Bamford, Emma. [Eye of the Beholder](#) (\$18.99). This excellent author for fans of Ruth Ware excels again. When Maddy Wight is hired to ghostwrite the memoir of world-renowned cosmetic surgeon Dr. Angela Reynolds, she thinks it might just be her chance to get her career back on track. She travels to Angela’s remote estate in the Scottish Highlands to learn everything she can but the deeper she digs, the more elusive the doctor becomes. Then the enigmatic Scott, Angela’s business partner, leaps to his death off the cliffs at the memoir’s launch. Heartbroken Maddy returns to London and soldiers on until one day she sees Scott entering the Tube station just in front of her.... “In tribute to Alfred Hitchcock’s *Vertigo*, Bamford pens a perilous and nuanced thriller on the dangers of the beauty industry and the lengths people will go to to get what they want...Highly recommended for fans of *Vertigo* and readers who enjoy the intricately plotted novels of Ruth Ware, Sarah Pearse, and Riley Sager.” —*Booklist*

* Brynolf, Becky C. [I Found A Body](#) (Crooked Lane \$19.99). Brynolf’s witty and original debut centers on the fallout from a 2019 murder. Influencer Kylie May is livestreaming from the English countryside in hopes of convincing her followers that she cares about nature when she stumbles on the nude corpse of a woman named Lana Cottrell. DS Mona Hendricks, a rising star on the Avon and Somerset police force, is put in charge of the subsequent investigation. Mona is also going through a messy divorce and raising a 13-year-old daughter who’s a big fan of Kylie. Nine years later, the case remains unsolved, and an unemployed Mona is living in a tiny bedsit, relying on the help of a cane to get around. Then Kylie, whose recent posts have criticized the police handling of the Cottrell case, shows up and asks Mona to join forces with her so they can finally bring Lana’s killer to justice. “Brynolf makes brilliant use of the story’s dual timelines, adding to the mystery with each shift between past and present, and she plays scrupulously fair with her placement of clues. Richly nuanced characters and acerbic insights into the vanity of social media stardom are a bonus.” [Hardcover edition](#) (\$29.99).

Cavanagh, Steve. [The Devil’s Advocate](#) (Atria \$20). Ambitious District Attorney Randal Korn lives to watch prisoners executed. Even though he alone knows they are not guilty. An innocent man, Andy Dubois, faces the death penalty for the murder of young girl. Korn has already fixed things to make sure he wins a fast conviction. The one thing Korn didn’t count on was Eddie Flynn. Slick, street smart, and cunning, the former con artist and now New York lawyer has only seven days to save an innocent man.

* Chase, Eve. [The Midnight Hour](#) (Random House \$18) traces the story of an eccentric British family across two decades. In 1998 London, model DeeDee Parker is a loving mother to her bi-

ological teen daughter, Maggie, and her young adopted son, Kit. One day, DeeDee disappears from the family’s bohemian home on the Portobello Road without explanation. Maggie, frantic and suddenly responsible for her younger brother’s well-being, takes Kit for a walk, during which a handsome stranger named Wolf rescues the boy from being hit by a car. Wolf and Maggie soon fall into a tentative relationship, and Wolf clues the siblings into his work as an antiques dealer. Flash forward to 2019, and Maggie is a bestselling novelist living alone in Paris. When she learns that a remodel of the family home has unearthed human remains, she returns to London to warn Kit that life is about to heat up....

Crais, Robert. [The Big Empty](#) (\$18). Hired to find the father of celebrity “The Baker Next Door” Traci Biller ten years after his disappearance, Los Angeles PI Elvis Cole uncovers a nefarious plot that puts his life and those he contacts at risk—even his wingman Joe Pike. Our reviewer friend Oline Cogdill says this “is vintage Crais, with a plot that starts simple then turns dark, taking myriad twists leading to an unpredictable finale.”

Gaylin, Alison. [Robert B. Parker’s Buzz Kill](#) (\$20). After a near-death experience, Sunny Randall is ready to lighten her load as a PI, that is until she is called upon by billionaire media magnate Bill Welch to investigate the disappearance of his son, Dylan, the cofounder of the Gonzo Energy Drink company. Lazy, unscrupulous and a notorious partier, Dylan isn’t exactly reliable. But Dylan’s mother, Lydia, insists this time is different. She knows him. He’s her son. And she believes he’s in serious danger. Unable to turn down the Welches’ life-changing offer, Sunny takes on the case and starts by working to unearth all the skeletons in his closet. There are a lot!!

Hill, Joe. [20th Century Ghosts 20th Anniversary Edition](#) (Harper \$19.99). Stock up early for the Scary Season.

Karsten, Jan. [Hamburg Noir](#) (Akashic \$17.95). This terrific tour of the world through story collections continues with one of my favorite cities. “Hamburg, the metropolis on the River Elbe, has always been an important trading city, a gateway to the world, a center for musicals, and a tourist magnet. But there are other sides to Hamburg [and] the editor of this volume shows this in his fourteen short stories by renowned authors... These are short crime stories, but they are also character and milieu studies, masterfully and pointedly told, despite and precisely because of their brevity, and they cast a spotlight on Hamburg’s dark side. “The many facets of Hamburg’s ambivalent identity, forged over centuries, are on full display in the stories collected in this anthology. This book assembles some of the city’s finest and best-known writers, luminaries in the world of crime fiction and German literature, featuring multiple recipients of the German Crime Fiction Award and the Hubert Fichte Prize, among others. Relative newcomers rub shoulders with established authors, some of whose work now spans decades.... The fourteen stories in this collection all look to where good (crime) fiction has always looked: toward lesser-known settings and living situations, repeatedly drawing our attention to lives overlooked, the lost souls and the powerless who have slipped through the cracks of commerce.

* Meyer, Nicholas. [Sherlock Holmes and the Telegram from Hell](#) (\$17.95). June, 1916. With a world war raging on the continent, exhausted John H. Watson, M.D. is operating on the wounded full-time when his labors are interrupted by a knock on his door,

revealing Sherlock Holmes, with a black eye, a missing tooth and a cracked rib. The story he has to tell will set in motion a series of world-changing events involving Germany, Mexico, and J. Edgar Hoover. For the next in series see Signed Books above.

Nishizawa, Yasuhiko. [The Man Who Died Seven Times](#) (Steerforth Press \$17.95). “A subversively cozy Japanese crime novel with an ingenious *Groundhog Day* twist: a teenager’s time-loop race to solve—and possibly prevent—his grandfather’s murder!” Contemporary Japanese legend Yasuhiko Nishizawa makes his English-language debut with this slick, funny murder mystery which adds a sci-fi twist to an age-old setup: a murder in a wealthy family with an inheritance at stake.

O’Connor, Melissa. [The One and Only Vivian Stone](#) (Gallery Books \$18.99). “A perfect read for fans of *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel* and *Lessons in Chemistry*. After her grandmother’s death, thirty-something Margot DuBois prepares to sell the house quickly so she can go back to her predictable life in Santa Barbara. There, no one knows she used to write and how not succeeding wrecked her confidence. While cleaning out the attic, she comes across eight unlabeled cassette tapes. Unable to use the damaged tape player, she calls in a favor from Leo—her first love and first epic heartbreak—and they strike a deal: he’ll fix the player if he can hear what’s on the tapes. When they manage to listen, the two are shocked to hear the voice of comedic legend Vivian Stone of Hollywood’s Golden Age. Why did she record these tapes and how did Margot’s grandmother get them? Margot and Leo fall down a memory lane of their own. Margot is inspired by Vivian’s tenacity and courage to keep fighting for the life she wants, but everything changes when Vivian reveals a secret tied to her past.

* Penrose, Andrea. [Murder at King’s Crossing](#) (\$17.95). Celebration is in the air at Wrexford and Charlotte’s country estate as they host the nuptials of their friends, Christopher Sheffield and Lady Cordelia Mansfield. But on afternoon of the wedding, the festivities are interrupted when local authorities arrive with shocking news: a man has been found murdered at the bridge over King’s Crossing . . . his only identification an invitation to the wedding.

Quartey, Kwei. [The Whitewashed Tombs](#) (\$18.95). Vicious hate crimes are rocking the LGBTQ+ community in Accra, and prejudice and politics threaten to stymie PI Emma Djan’s investigation. Ghanaian author Kwei Quartey tackles a real-life—and deeply personal—issue as an anti-gay bill threatens to tear Ghana apart.

Quinn, Kate. [A Song of War](#) (Harper \$19.99). Seven authors including Quinn write stories imagined out of the epic of the Trojan War.

Rasche, Anna. [The Stone Witch of Florence](#) (\$18.99). This transportive historical fiction take you to 1348 Florence where Ginevra di Gasparo is summoned to harness her ability to heal the sick through the hidden powers of gemstone. Inevitably this had labeled her as a witch and exiled her, but now the same men who expelled her want her back. “When a thief steals holy relics from churches in Florence during the outbreak of the Black Plague, one woman formerly accused of witchcraft and exiled is brought back to investigate by a deceitful, powerful bishop. A fascinating historical read.”

Resau, Laura. [The Alchemy of Flowers](#) (Harper Muse \$18.99). A broken woman. A mysterious job ad. A chance to heal in French castle gardens—but strange things are growing behind the ancient stone walls.

* Richell, Hannah. [One Dark Night](#) (Atria \$18.99). On Halloween, a group of teenage students meet in the woods near Sally in the Wood, a road steeped in local lore and rumored to be haunted by the ghost of a murdered girl. By the end of the night, one student will be dead. Urban legends feature here, as does the class structure of a small British community.

Phillips, Mike. [The Dancing Face](#) (Melville House \$19.99 reissue). A blistering thriller about a Black university professor and his plot to liberate a looted and priceless Benin mask from a London museum ... stealing it will gain the attention that Gus wants to evoke. Reprinted from its original edition in the 1990s.

Rail, Evan. [The Absinthe Forger](#) (\$19.99) is an astonishing true crime story about an eccentric grifter who blew up the lucrative black market for vintage bottles of the legendary drink of artistic renegades, absinthe. Thought to be hallucinogenic and banned globally for a century, absinthe is once again legal and popular. Yet it is still associated with bohemian lifestyles, just as when it was the favorite drink of *avant-gardists* like Toulouse-Lautrec and Van Gogh and Baudelaire. And today, when vintage, pre-ban bottles are discovered, they can sell for exorbitant prices to private collectors. But such discoveries are increasingly rare. Which is why the absinthe demimonde of rich collectors was electrified when a mysterious bon vivant claimed to be in possession of a collection of precious, pre-ban bottles. Is his secret tranche of 100-year-old bottles real? And just who is the shadowy person selling them? And what about rumors of another secret cache, hidden away in an Italian palazzo? Journalist Evan Rail sets out to discover all.

Shimada, Soji. [The Tokyo Zodiac Murders](#) (Steerforth \$16.95). Astrologer, fortune teller, and self-styled detective Kiyoshi Mitarai must solve a macabre murder mystery that has baffled Japan for 40 years—in just one week. With the help of his freelance illustrator friend, Kiyoshi sets out to answer the questions that have haunted the country ever since: Who murdered the artist Umezawa, raped and killed his daughter, and then chopped up the bodies of six others to create Azoth, ‘the perfect woman’? With maps, charts, and other illustrations, this story of magic and illusion—pieced together like a great stage tragedy—challenges the reader to unravel the mystery before the final curtain falls.

Smith, Ian K. [Beyond Midnight: An Ashe Cayne Novel](#) (Harper \$18.99). In the fifth installment of the Ashe Cayne series the smooth Chicago private eye stumbles into the city’s internecine (and deadly) world of politics. The death of immigrant Juquin Escobar has been ruled an accidental drowning in Lake Michigan. The only problem is he never drinks and never swims. When the CPD informs his nephew Ivan Ramirez and closes the case he refuses to believe it’s true. Convinced of foul play Ivan is referred to Ashe Cayne by his friend and socialite Penny Packer. Retracing Juquin’s steps leads Ashe straight into a web of secrets and lies...and more murder.

Tremblay, Paul. [Horror Movie](#) (\$19.99) chronicles the creation and aftermath of a fictional, disastrous cult-classic ’90s film. Here is a special paperback edition with stenciled artwork on the edges

of the Tremblay bestseller—a chilling twist on the “cursed film” genre.

Tsujimura, Mizuki. [Lost Souls Meet Under a Full Moon](#) (Scribner \$18). Dive into magical realism. “Lost Souls” meet a mysterious teenage “Go-Between” who arranges meetings between the living and the dead. Tsujimura creates “an indelible page-turner in which the living and the dead are given one last chance for closure. This one is perfect for fans of Studio Ghibli, *The Midnight Library*, *Before the Coffee Gets Cold*, and *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue*.”

Urquhart, Alaina. [The Butcher Game](#) (\$19). Destruction follows the ruthless serial killer, Jeremy Rose, the Bayou Butcher, as he heads north to evade capture for his horrific crimes. As he seeks safe harbor with a former friend, he remains focused on unfinished business with forensic pathologist Dr. Wren Muller, the only target who’s ever escaped him—twice. But not this time. This is packed with intense true-to-life details from autopsy technician and Morbid podcast co-host Urquhart.

Van Alst, Theodore C. [The El](#) (Knopf \$17). From the co-editor of the bestselling anthology [Never Whistle at Night](#) (\$17) comes a semi-autobiographical novel that follows a group of teenage gang members as they trek across Chicago to a momentous meeting, inspired by the cult classic *The Warriors*. An ordinary day in August 1979 dawns hot and humid in Chicago. Teenager Teddy is living with his dad after being kicked out of his mom’s house due to his gang activity. But Teddy has thrived in the Simon City Royals, and today, he’ll be helping to lead a posse of the group’s younger members south across the city to Roosevelt High School to attend a gathering of gangs forming “the Nation”—a bold new attempt at joining forces across racial lines. This holds particular importance for Teddy, as his branch’s only Indigenous member. But when the meeting breaks up in gunshots and police sirens, Teddy must guide the Royals back across hostile territory, along secret routes and back alleys, and stop by stop on the thundering tracks of the El. “Cool and real as hell.” —Tommy Orange, bestselling author of *There There*

Wright, Snowden. [The Queen City Detective Agency](#) (\$18.99) evokes the atmosphere and tension of the 1980s American South, “emphasizing the rage and emotions of a woman of color who’s faced with the political clout of ruthless white power brokers.” —*Library Journal*. “Snowden Wright knows Meridian, Mississippi like my grandmother knew her garden plot. *The Queen City Detective Agency* crackles with southern-fried banter that’ll make you laugh, gasp, and cry, all on the same page. Here is a novelist at the height of his game.” —Eli Cranor echoed by Ace Atkins and many more who enjoy Southern Noir.

OUR AUGUST SMALL PAPERBACK PICKS

Alexander, Ellie. [Laying Down the Latte](#) (St Martins \$9.99). Bakeshop #21. A fortuitous invitation from one of Carlos’s former colleagues, Valentina, has baker Jules Capshaw and her crew venturing to the coffee capital of the world for a tasting tour and an immersive weekend at her family’s organic coffee farm. Except Jules’ tranquil weekend quickly turns into a nightmare when one of Valentina’s employees is found dead in the pulping machine.

Baldacci, David. [The Edge](#) (\$10.99). Travis Devine #2. Sent to a small coastal town in Maine to solve the murder of a CIA opera-

tive who was in possession of countless state secrets, ex-Army ranger Travis Devine must unravel a long history of secrets while evading those who want him dead. This is a terrific book, one of Baldacci’s best.

Day, Maddie. [Murder at Cape Codders](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Cozy Capers #7. A new costume shop has opened on Main Street in Westham, Massachusetts. But when its owner Shelly discovers her elderly boyfriend Enzo—a Broadway star who retired to Westham—dead of unnatural causes, Halloween suddenly gets a lot scarier. Now can Mac and the members of the Cozy Capers Book Group put down their weekly book selection and find a malice-making murderer who’s hiding in plain sight.

Newman, TJ. [Drowning: The Rescue of Flight 1421](#) (\$10.99). When Flight 1421 crashes into the ocean six minutes after take-off, the surviving passengers believe they are the lucky ones until the plane starts to sink to the ocean floor, trapping them inside, and they must wait to be rescued as both air and time run out.

Penny, Louise. [The Grey Wolf](#) (\$10.99). Gamache #19. A missing coat, an intruder alarm, a note for Chief Inspector Gamache reading “this might interest you,” a puzzling scrap of paper with a mysterious list—and then a murder all propel Gamache and his team toward a terrible realization: something much more sinister than any one murder or any one case is fast approaching.

Rekulak, Jason. [Hidden Pictures](#) (\$10.99). Hired as nanny in an affluent New Jersey suburb, Mallory enjoys the stability of the job and bonds with Teddy, a sweet, five-year-old boy who is never without his sketchbook until his drawings suddenly become increasingly sinister.

Sager, Riley. [The Only One Left](#) (\$10.99). In 1983, home-health aide Kit McDeere arrives at a decaying Hope’s End to care for Lenora Hope, helping her write about the events leading up to her family’s massacre in 1929, and soon discovers this seemingly harmless woman could be far more dangerous than she first thought.

MORE AUGUST SMALL PAPERBACKS

Barrett, Lorna. [A Controversial Cover](#) (Penguin \$9.99). Booktown #18. Tricia Miles investigates when a famous children’s book author and area native is found shot in the head right before an event at the local library.

Bell, Ted. [Spy](#) (\$10.99 reissue). Alex Hawke #4. Sent on a dangerous political mission to South America, intelligence operative Alex Hawke is challenged to employ his unique training as well as his agency’s latest high-tech gadgetry in order to survive.

Conte, Cate. [Claws Out: A Cat Cafe Mystery](#) (St Martins \$9.99). Cat Café #9. When renowned cat-romance author Jasmine Prescott’s longtime friend and fellow author Vivi St. Clair is found murdered at a cat literary festival in Provincetown, Maddie, who is there with her traveling cat café truck, must dig deeper into the tangled web of secrets, rivalries, and feline-friendly drama to uncover the killer.

King, Stephen. [Skeleton Crew: Stories](#) (\$11.99 reissue). Featuring the short story “The Monkey” (now a major motion picture) and the novella “The Mist,” which was both a feature film and television series, as well as many other haunting now classic tales by King.

Patterson, James. [Alex Cross Must Die](#) (\$10.99). Alex Cross #31. Detective Cross and his partner John Sampson are hot on the trail of the Dead Hours Killer, who is targeting commercial pilots.

Patterson, James. [Confessions of the Dead: From the Author](#) (\$10.99). The arrival of a mysterious teen girl disrupts the idyllic peace of Hollows Bend, leading Sheriff Pritchett to investigate a wave of shocking crimes that lead him closer and closer to a lake that doesn't appear on any map.

Robb, JD. [Passions in Death: An Eve Dallas Novel](#) (\$10.99). Eve Dallas #59. Homicide Detective Eve Dallas hunts a killer who turns a bridesmaids' party into a murder scene.

Steel, Danielle. [Joy](#) (\$9.99). Abandoned by her free-spirited mother and raised by an emotionally distant father, Allegra finds solace in books and love, only to face the harsh realities of war and its impact on her husband, who returns from Afghanistan nearly unrecognizable.

Wilton, Traci. [Mrs. Morris and the Day of the Dead](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Salem B & B #10. When Salem B&B owner Charlene Morris investigates the case of a missing woman over a haunted Halloween weekend, she may find herself playing host to a whole new ghost.