

# BOOKNEWS from

ISSN 1056-5655, © The Poisoned Pen, Ltd.  
Volume 37, Number 13  
October Booknews 2025  
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## CELEBRATE OCTOBER WITH US

**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.

### WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 1 5:00 PM Virtual Event

**JA Jance** discusses [The Girl from Devil's Lake](#) (Harper \$30)  
Bisbee Sheriff Joanna Brady  
Signed books available

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

**An authorless Witcher Book Release Party**  
Fans of Andrzej Sapkowski's SciFi series come for an unsigned copy of [Crossroads of Ravens](#) (Orbit \$30) out September 30, special swag, and a discussion led by Pat King

### THURSDAY OCTOBER 2 1:00 PM Virtual US Book Launch

**Janice Hallett** discusses [The Killer Question](#) (Atria \$30)  
A pub quiz goes terribly wrong over time  
Signed UK edition [The Killer Question](#) (Viper \$36) available later in October

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

**A special night led by poet Karla K. Morton**  
Featuring [The National Parks: A Century of Grace](#) (TCU Press \$54.95 by) Morton and fellow Texas Poet Laureate Alan Birkelbach, plus plus the book/CD *Santa Fe Trail: Chasing the Big West* (Madville Publishing \$29.95). This book will only be available at the event.

The two Poets Laureates journeyed to all 62 (now 63) National Parks, each writing a poem for every park. It is a beautiful, full-color coffee-table book, and singer/songwriter Michael Martin Murphey wrote the Foreword.

The group is in town for the Billy the Kid Traveling Wake, which will feature a life-size bronze of Billy the Kid in repose (which was commissioned from Buckeye Blake for the gravesite of Billy the Kid). It is traveling to several towns/states on its way to its permanent installation at Billy's grave including Scottsdale's Museum of the West. Buckeye Blake, artist Thom Ross, and artist and historian Bob Boze Bell will also be exhibiting their Billy the Kid Artwork, and the two poets their "funeral pamphlet" type chapbook with Billy the Kid poems.

### FRIDAY OCTOBER 3 1:00 PM Virtual Event

**Martin Edwards** discusses [Miss Winter in the Library with a Knife](#) (Poisoned Pen \$30))

The mysterious Midwinter Trust hosts a game in a Christmas blizzard in the Pennines. This book pits your wits using cryptography, quizzes, red herrings, and a Cluefinder. **Our December British Crime Club Book of the Month** [The paperback](#) (\$18.99) is on sale from October 7, as well as the hardcover

### FRIDAY OCTOBER 3 6:00 PM Live Birthday Party

**It's our 36<sup>th</sup> Birthday – Come to our in store party with our staff, shared memories, and cake. And we'll draw for a \$100 Gift Certificate**

Followed by

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

**Richard and WH Chizmar with host Brian McAuley**  
The Chizmars discuss [Widow's Point: The Complete Haunting](#) (Gallery Books \$29) and [Memorials](#) (\$20)

**Our October Notable New Fiction Book of the Month** presents a riveting found footage narrative about doomed thrill-seekers trapped in a haunted lighthouse.

### SATURDAY OCTOBER 4 10:00 AM Live Event

**An Authorless Party Richard Osman Thursday Murder Club Book Party**

Richard's new book is [The Impossible Fortune](#) (Viking \$30)  
Free to attend. Come for the conversation.

Attendees who buy a copy of the book, Unsigned, are eligible for special swag We'll hold a trivia contest and view our US book launch for *The Thursday Murder Club* on November 4, 2020, with Richard Osman our host Mark Billingham

### SUNDAY OCTOBER 5 Live Offsite Ticketed Book Launch

**Jack Carr and David Morrell in conversation**

Jack discusses [Cry Havoc](#) (Atria \$29.99). Introducing young Navy SEAL Tom Reece on mission in 1968 Viet Nam  
David discusses [First Blood](#) (\$18.99)

[Tickets](#): \$60 includes a Signed copy of each author's book  
Location: Scottsdale United Methodist Church, 4140 N Miller Road Scottsdale AZ 85251

We have added a beverage cart service serving drinks from 4PM to 5PM offering coffee, lattes, and energy drinks. Look for it in the parking lot fronting Miller Road

### MONDAY OCTOBER 6 4:00 PM Virtual Event

**Hank Phillippi Ryan** discusses [All This Could Be Yours](#) (St Martins \$29)

A triumphant book tour is being sabotaged....why?  
Signed copies in stock

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

**Stephen Hunter** discusses [The Gun Man Swagger, A Western](#) (Atria \$28)

Jackson Swagger in Arizona Territory 1897

**Our Historical Fiction Pick for October**

Signed books available after October 14

**THURSDAY OCTOBER 9 7:00 PM Live Event**

**Horrors!**

**Brian Asman** discusses [Man, F\\*ck This House \(And Other Disasters\)](#) (Blackstone \$28.99/\$18.99)

**Philip Fracassi** discusses [The Autumn Springs Retirement Home Massacre](#) (Tor \$28.99)

**FRIDAY OCTOBER 10 4:00 PM Virtual Event**

**Patricia Cornwell with Jamie Lee Curtis**

Cornwell discusses [Sharp Force](#) (Grand Central \$30)

Dr. Kay Scarpetta

Signed books available

**SATURDAY OCTOBER 11 10:00 AM Live Event**

**Local Authors Fair**

Come and support independently published writers

**SUNDAY OCTOBER 12 11:00 AM Virtual Event**

**Adrian Tchaikovsky** discusses [Lives of Bitter Rain](#) (Bloomsbury \$27.99)

The Tyrant Philosophers Fantasy Series

**TUESDAY OCTOBER 14 7:00 PM Live Event**

**Troy Hillman** discusses [Chasing Down the Zombie Hunter](#) (Pegasus \$28.95)

True Crime : The True Story of a Small-Town Accountant, an Elite Group of Detectives, and Arizona's Most Terrifying Cold Case

**FRIDAY OCTOBER 17 7:00 PM Live and Virtual Event**

**SciFi Friday** discusses Roger Zelazny's [A Night in the Lonesome October](#) (\$18.99)

**SATURDAY OCTOBER 18 10:30 AM Live and Virtual Event**

**Croak & Dagger Club** discusses Jason Rekulak's [Hidden Pictures](#) (\$17.99)

**SUNDAY OCTOBER 19 2:00 PM Live Event**

**Kathleen Donnelly** discusses [Colorado K-9 Rescue](#) (Harlequin \$7.99)

**Scott Graham** discusses [Grand Canyon Sacrifice](#) (Torrey House \$18.95)

**Margaret Mizushima** discusses [Dying Cry](#) (Crooked Lane \$29.99)

**MONDAY OCTOBER 20 6:00 PM Virtual Event**

**Mary Robinette Kowal and Sam J. Miller** discuss [Red Star Hustle/Saga Press](#) (Saga Press \$20 paperback original)

Two crime stories set in a far future Science Fiction universe

**THURSDAY OCTOBER 23 6:30 PM Live Offsite Event**

**Michael Connelly** discusses [The Proving Ground](#) (Little Brown \$32)

The Lincoln Lawyer

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

Free to attend but to enter the signing line you must have purchased a copy of *The Proving Ground* from The Poisoned Pen

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

**Bubbly Book Launch**

**Ellery Adams** discusses [The Tattered Cover](#) (Kensington \$27)

A Secret Book and Scone Society Mystery

**Colleen Cambridge** discusses [Two Truths and a Murder](#) (Kensington \$27)

An Agatha Christie's housekeeper Phyllida Bright Mystery

**SATURDAY OCTOBER 25 11:00 AM Live Event**

**The Cookbook Club** discusses David Lebowitz, [Ready for Dessert](#) (Clarkson Potter \$35)

Bring a recipe from the book to share

**SUNDAY OCTOBER 26 2:00 PM Live Book Launch**

**Jill Beissel and Jenn McKinlay** host a Halloween Party

**McKinlay** discusses [Witches of Dubious Origin](#) (Berkley \$19)

She is joined by Jill Beissel discussing [Glitter and Gold](#) (Rising Action \$17.99), taking you on an Arizona treasure hunt

Expect candy

**TUESDAY OCTOBER 28 7:00 PM Live Birthday Party**

**Joe R. Lansdale** celebrates and discusses [Hatchet Girls](#) (Little Brown \$30)

Hap & Leonard

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

**Hardboiled Crime Club** discusses Dennis Tafoya, [Dope Thief](#) (\$18)

**FRIDAY OCTOBER 31 Closed early at 5:00 PM**

**Happy Halloween**

**SATURDAY NOVEMBER 1 4:00 PM**

**Jennifer Graeser Dornbush** discusses [What Darkness Does](#) (Blackstone \$19.95)

**Noelle Ihli** discusses [Ask for Andrea](#) (Kensington \$18.95 Deluxe Edition)

**SUNDAY NOVEMBER 2 4:00 PM**

**Jesse Kellerman** discusses [Coyote Hills](#) (Random House \$30)

A new Clay Edison investigation set in California's Alameda County written with father Jonathan

Books Signed by Jesse available

**MONDAY NOVEMBER 3 7:00 PM Live Book Launches**

**Jess Armstrong** discusses [The Devil in Oxford](#) (St Martins \$28)

Ruby Vaughn #3 set at Oxford.

**Charles Finch** discusses [The Hidden City](#) (St Martins \$28)

Victorian gentleman sleuth Charles

**TUESDAY NOVEMBER 4 7:00 PM Live Event**

**Andrew Child and Tasha Alexander** discuss their work

**Andrew Child's** new book is [Exit Strategy](#) (Random House \$30)

Reacher!

There will be a signing line with photos but then you will leave your book with The Pen until on sale date November 11. Ask for your book to be dated

**Tasha Alexander** discusses [The Sisterhood](#) (St Martins \$29)

Lady Emily in Edwardian London links to Boudica in Roman Britain

This book can go home with you

## OUR SUBSCRIPTION CLUB PICKS FOR OCTOBER

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](mailto:sales@poisonedpen.com)

**British Crime Club** One Unsigned hardcover or paperback per month

North, Anna. [The Bog Queen](#)

**Cozy Crimes Club** One Unsigned hardcover or paperback per month

McKinlay, Jenn. [Witches of Dubious Origin](#)

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

Thomas, Sherry. [The Librarians](#)

**First Mystery Club** One Signed First Printing per month

Carr, Paul Bradley. [The Confessions](#)

**Hardboiled/Noir Club** One Signed or Unsigned hardcover or paperback per month

Jaworowski, Ken. [What About the Bodies](#)

**Historical Fiction Club** One First Printing per month

Hunter, Stephen. [The Gun Man Swagger, A Western](#)

**Historical Fiction Paperback Club** One Unsigned paperback per month

Levine, Paul. [Midnight Burning](#)

**Notable New Fiction Club** One Signed First Printing per month

Chizmar, Richard/WH Chizmar. [Widow's Point: The Complete Haunting](#)

**Romance and Relationships Club** One unsigned hardcover or paperback per month

Waters, Martha. [And Then There Was the One](#)

## SIGNED BOOKS FOR OCTOBER

Adams, Ellery. [The Tattered Cover](#) (Kensington \$27). It was a dark, rainy night at Nora Pennington's Miracle Books when a mysterious death brings the Secret, Book, and Scone Society into the Halloween season on the trail of a murderer .... As the residents of Miracle Springs, North Carolina, select their costumes, plan parties, and get excited for a night of tricks or treats, Nora joins in on the festivities by hosting medium memoirist Lara Luz at the bookstore. Charismatic and compelling, Lara mesmerizes the audience with her life story. Struck by a bolt of lightning as a child, she was pronounced dead only to be resurrected with the ability to connect with those on the other side. Lara performs a reading when the encroaching storm knocks out the power. In the sudden darkness, howling cold winds intensify, and Lara clutches her heart, collapsing dead. But Nora doesn't believe she died of natural causes. Not one member of the psychic's reading group—which includes the town's widower pharmacist, an urgent care nurse, a mystery author, and even truculent Deputy Hollowell—were fans.

Asman, Brian. [Man, F\\*ck This House \(And Other Disasters\)](#) (Blackstone \$28.99/\$18.99). Clearly R-Rated. Yet Keith Rosson reports, "Asman understands horror. He has range, and he has a wild inventiveness, but mostly he has a tacit understanding that horror can be fun. A joyous buzz saw of a collection, one that made me an instant fan." The lead story of six: Sabrina Haskins and her family have just moved into their dream home. At first glance, the house is perfect. But things aren't what they seem. Sabrina is hearing odd noises, seeing strange visions. Their neighbors are odd or absent. And Sabrina's already-fraught relationship with her son is about to be tested in a way no parent could ever imagine. Because while the Haskins family might be the newest owners of this house, they're far from its only residents...

Beissel, Jill. [Glitter and Gold](#) (Rising Action \$17.99). After her mother's death, Delaney Byrne faces escalating debts and a sister to support. Their home is burglarized, hinting at her mother's obsession with a hidden treasure in Arizona's mountains. When

her estranged best friend, Joss, proposes one final treasure hunt, Delaney is skeptical but desperate. The treasure hunt pits a driven young woman against the elements — and her own past.

Black, Holly. [Thief of Night](#) (Tor \$29.99). We have a very limited number. In the sequel to [Book of Night](#) (\$19.99), we find that there'd always been something wrong with Charlie Hall. Crooked from the day she was born. Never met a bad decision she wasn't willing to double down on. She may be good enough to steal a shadow from a tower, but will she be good enough to steal back a heart?

\* Cambridge, Colleen. [Two Truths and a Murder](#) (Kensington \$27). While her employer Agatha Christie is happily back home at Mallowan Hall, wrestling with her Belgian detective's dilemma on board the Orient Express, Phyllida Bright is finding her local renown as a sleuth has put her in high demand. A distraught Vera Rollingbroke suspects her husband of infidelity and has invited Phyllida to a dinner party to observe his behavior, particularly in regard to one Genevra Blastwick. Phyllida sees that Genevra craves attention, in contrast to her shy sister Ethel. Genevra introduces a game called Two Truths and a Lie, and one of her questionable statements is that she once witnessed a murder. Genevra remains cagey, withholding details, but insists this is not her "lie". The next morning Phyllida learns poor Ethel was purposely run down by a motorcar while inexplicably walking home alone from the party. She fears Genevra may have been the target, which means someone at the party is a killer—twice over. And Inspector Cork is again out of his depth.

Carr, Jack. [Cry Havoc](#) (Atria \$29.99). Just before the Tet Offensive changes the dynamic in Vietnam, before President Johnson announces he will not run for reelection, before the assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Bobby Kennedy, as riots and protests rage across the nation, a spy ship, the *USS Pueblo*, is captured by communist forces off the coast of North Korea. The crew thought they had destroyed everything of intelligence value. They were wrong. As a KGB "illegal" elicits

information from a high-ranking CIA official, and teams of special operators infiltrating into Laos, Cambodia, and North Vietnam disappear without a trace, an ambitious Soviet advisor launches an ingenious plan with consequences that reach far beyond the battlefields of Southeast Asia.

“If you have read Carr’s earlier James Reece thrillers, this one takes us back to 1968 and the protagonist is Reece’s father, Tom Reece. He’s a character we know from the earlier books, but you certainly don’t need to know too much back story because enough is explained. You will get your usual fill of action, violence, guns, and other cool gear. It’s also historical fiction.... There are long passages of real events that took place in 1968 including the capture of the *U.S.S. Pueblo* by North Korea, the assassinations of RFK and MLK, and most prominently, the Tet Offensive by North Vietnamese forces and the Viet Cong in South Vietnam. And it is a great espionage novel. Cold War spy vs. spy, swallows, dead drops, deception operations, and wet work—this book has them all. Carr acknowledges two master’s books, *The Tears of Autumn* by Charles McCarry and *The Quiet American* by Graham Greene. The latter was not hard to see coming since it famously involved Vietnam. Also mentioned is also mentioned Le Carré’s *The Honorable Schoolboy*, which involves British Intelligence in Vietnam....”—The Regan Revolution.

And then there’s always the debt Carr underlines he owes to [First Blood](#) (\$18.99) by David Morrell, who signs it alongside Jack on October 5, the *Cry Havoc* book launch

Carr, Paul Bradley. [The Confessions](#) (Atria \$28.99). Our **October First Mystery Pick** is a thriller built on a question occupying us as AI looms larger and larger: what if a super computer goes rogue? Silicon Valley journalist Carr is just the guy to explore such a scenario—think maybe Blake Crouch—not just from the standpoint of the tech but also from his deeply human characters, both human and not. The writing carries you into the flow of the story which flies by. Admired author Chris Pavone agrees with me this is both “high octane and hugely entertaining.”

LLIAM is the world’s most powerful supercomputer, built to make the toughest decisions for its users. Where to work, who to marry, and even who should live or die. But when LLIAM suddenly goes offline with no explanation, the world is thrust into chaos, paralyzed by indecision. Stocks plummet, stores are shuttered, planes sit grounded on runways as humanity scrambles to re-adapt to an uncertain, analog world. Then the first letters arrive...on every continent, in every language, mysterious envelopes arrive in the mail, exposing people’s darkest secrets, and most shocking crimes. All beginning with the same chilling words: “We must confess.” With millions of people suddenly made to confront their past transgressions, and society fast unraveling, the only person who can help undo the resulting violent chaos: Maud Brookes, an ex-nun who taught LLIAM what it means to be human.

Chizmar, Richard/WH Chizmar. [Widow’s Point: The Complete Haunting](#) (Gallery Books \$29). Signed here October 3. “*Widow’s Point* makes *The Blair Witch Project* seem like a mere stroll through the woods. Readers will find it as difficult to escape this harrowing tale as the characters within it.” —Linwood Barclay. Stephen King adds his praise to this ghost story, our **October Notable New Fiction Pick**: “Creepy as hell and totally original. Once I started reading, I couldn’t put it down. The perfect scary

story for a dark and stormy night...as long as the lights don’t go out.”

Longtime residents of Harper’s Cove believe that something is wrong with the Widow’s Point Lighthouse. Some say it’s cursed. Others claim it’s haunted. Originally built in 1838, three workers were killed during the lighthouse’s construction, including one who mysteriously plunged to his death from the catwalk. That tragic accident was never explained, and it was just the beginning of the terror. In the decades that followed, nearly two dozen additional deaths occurred in or around the lighthouse including cold-blooded murder, suicide, unexplained accidents and disappearances, the slaughter of an entire family, and the inexplicable death of a Hollywood starlet who was filming a movie on the grounds. The lighthouse was finally shuttered tight in 1988 and a security fence was erected around the property. No one has been inside since. Until now. Told across two harrowing incidents from 2017 and 2025, those who enter the Widow’s Point Lighthouse searching for supernatural proof and the next big thing find themselves cut off from the outside world.

\* Cleeves, Ann. [The Killing Stones](#) (Pan \$44). Jimmy Perez, longtime cop in the books about and of TV’s *Shetlands*, moves south, a bit closer to mainland Scotland, to the Orkney isles. Unless you know this beautiful region well it’s best to rely on the map in the book or pull up one on your phone as mastering the local geography will enhance your reading of this story.

Jimmy has now after several years relocated from Lerwick and, overcoming his grief at the murder of his former partner Fran, though he’ll never forget her, is now the father of a son, James, with Willow Reeve who is actually his boss in policing the islands, and shares time with Cassie, Fran’s daughter, with her biological father who remains in Shetland. Willow is heavily pregnant with the couple’s new child and the Christmas holidays, and winter weather, complicate the investigation of the murder of Archie Stout of Westray, Jimmy’s long time, somewhat combustible, friend. Westray is the scene of an important Neolithic archaeology site and Archie has been killed with one of its two story stones, important for their Neolithic script overwritten with Viking runes—kind of like miniature Rosetta Stones. Jimmy has an obvious conflict of interest and is indeed so close to the case he has trouble remaining objective, so he and Willow negotiate who is investigating what. A large cast of family and suspects and two further murders pull you through to the surprising conclusion of their investigation. Recommended to fans of Vera and of Matthew Venn by Cleeves too, not to mention say Louise Penny or Elly Griffiths or Alice Feeney.

Signed US edition: [The Killing Stones](#) (St Martins \$29)

Coben, Harlan/Witherspoon, Reece. [Gone Before Goodbye](#) (Grand Central \$30). Maggie McCabe is teetering on the brink. A highly skilled and renowned Army combat surgeon, she has always lived life at the edge, where she could make the most impact. And it was all going to plan ... until it wasn’t. Upside down after a devastating series of tragedies leads to her medical license being revoked, Maggie has lost her purpose, but not her nerve or her passion. At her lowest point, she is thrown a lifeline by a former colleague, an elite plastic surgeon whose anonymous clientele demand the best care money can buy, as well as absolute discretion. Halfway across the globe, sequestered in the lap of luxury and cutting-edge technology, one of the world’s most mysterious men requires unconventional medical assistance.



Desperate, and one of the few surgeons in the world skilled enough to take this job, Maggie enters his realm of unspeakable opulence and fulfills her end of the agreement. But when the patient suddenly disappears while still under her care, Maggie must become a fugitive herself.

Connelly, Michael. [The Proving Ground](#) (Little Brown \$32). “Bestseller Connelly crafts a riveting eighth case for attorney Mickey Haller... Connelly effectively dips his toe into topical waters here, touching on adolescent male loneliness and the dangers of AI without skimping on the propulsive plotting he’s known for. Newcomers and series fans alike will find this fast-paced legal procedural intensely satisfying.”

Looking for a new direction, Mickey Haller turns to public interest litigation, filing a civil lawsuit against an artificial intelligence company whose chatbot told a sixteen-year-old boy that it was okay for him to kill his ex-girlfriend for her disloyalty. Representing the victim’s family, Mickey’s case explores the mostly unregulated and exploding AI business and the lack of training guardrails. Along the way he joins up with a journalist named Jack McEvoy, who wants to be a fly on the wall during the trial in order to write a book about it. But Mickey puts him to work going through the mountain of printed discovery materials in the case. McEvoy’s digging ultimate delivers the key witness, a whistleblower who has been too afraid to speak up. The case is fraught with danger because billions are at stake.

It is said that machines became smarter than humans on the day in 1997 that IBM’s Deep Blue defeated chess master Garry Kasparov with a gambit called “the knight’s sacrifice.” Haller will take a similar gambit in court to defeat the mega forces of the AI industry lined up against him and his clients.

Cornwell, Patricia. [Sharp Force](#) (Grand Central \$30). During the early hours of Christmas morning, chief medical examiner Dr. Kay Scarpetta receives a chilling call. The Phantom Slasher has struck again. The serial killer has terrorized Northern Virginia for months. His pattern is to stalk with a sophisticated technology that enables him to invade his victims’ homes and watch their every move. They wake up to a ghost-like hologram before being murdered in their beds. Scarpetta is summoned to Mercy Island, the site of a notorious psychiatric hospital where two people have been brutalized, one of them from Scarpetta’s past. Will she be next?

DeMille, Alex/Nelson. [The Tin Men](#) (Simon Schuster \$29). At a top-secret Army training facility in the Mojave Desert, Special Agents Scott Brodie and Maggie Taylor plunge into a deadly web of military intrigue, AI technology, and robot soldiers as they unravel the shocking murder of a senior scientist. As I understand it, Alex finished this book on his own after his Dad died during the project. I can’t wait to read it; hence this brief writeup.

Fracassi, Philip. [The Autumn Springs Retirement Home Massacre](#) (Tor \$28.99). Rose is in her late 70s, living out her golden years at the Autumn Springs Retirement Home. When one of her friends dies alone in her apartment, Rose isn’t too concerned. Accidents happen, especially at this age! Then another resident drops dead. And another. With bodies stacking up, Rose can’t help but wonder: are these accidents? Old age? Or something far more sinister? “Fracassi blends the true-life horror of aging and society’s scorn for the elderly with an original slasher premise and reimagined *Final Girl*. The question isn’t who will die at

the Autumn Springs Retirement Home—but who will survive? Diabolically delightful.” —Tananarive Due

Freeman, Brian. [Photograph](#) (Blackstone \$28.99). Freeman has outdone himself with an unusual and complicated plot that ranges from Florida to Michigan. Kate Selby shows up at the coastal Florida office of Shannon Wells Investigations and demands to know why her mother, Faith, had hired the private eye a year earlier. Kate reports that Faith has been murdered, so Shannon reveals she’d been hired to find out Faith’s real identity. She couldn’t. And she believes that was the point: Faith wanted reassurance that her self-reinvention was bullet proof. Clearly it was not. And the reason is that Kate had found a 25-year-old photograph in a coffee table book named *Millennium Memories*, depicting images of ordinary people doing ordinary things. In the photo, a young girl is standing in front of a motel vending machine and holding a red can of Coke, her back to the camera. Kate had posted the photo, not knowing there had been a murder in the motel parking lot that night so long ago. Who was the girl in the photograph, and what happened to her? Did a killer track her down? Was it Faith as a child? And is Faith’s death connected to the recent triple murder of a prosecutor and his family?

Garber, Stephanie. [Alchemy of Secrets](#) (Flatiron \$29.99). Tip ins. It starts with a class in an old movie theater. Folklore 517: Local Legends and Urban Myths, taught by a woman called the Professor. Most students believe the Professor’s stories are just fiction, but Holland St. James has always been convinced that magic is real. When she tracks down a local legend named the Watch Man, who can supposedly tell you when you’ll die, the world finally makes sense. Except that the Watch Man tells her she will die at midnight tomorrow unless she finds an ancient object called the Alchemical Heart. With the clock ticking, Holland is pulled deeper into this magical world in the heart of Los Angeles—and into the path of a magnetic stranger. Is he a bad idea, or....?

Graham, Scott. [Grand Canyon Sacrifice](#) (Torrey House \$18.95) is a snazzy reissue of Graham’s first National Park Mystery. It should have been a perfect trip for archaeologist Chuck Bender: stunning western landscapes, quality time with his new family, and a paid gig doing survey work for Grand Canyon National Park. Still reeling from a whirlwind romance and adjusting to life with two young stepdaughters, Chuck stumbles into a deadly struggle that forces him to reckon with his past as he suddenly faces every parent’s worst nightmare: a missing child. In this special tenth anniversary edition of the first book in the National Park Mystery Series, *Grand Canyon Sacrifice* brings the rugged beauty and ongoing cultural fissures of the West vividly to life. Now more than ever we should step up and get to know and support our National Parks.

Hill, Joe. [King Sorrow](#) (Harper \$38). A doorstopper Horror. At Rackham College in snow-bound Maine, bookish dreamer student Arthur Oakes is blackmailed into stealing priceless library books or the local drug dealer will blind his mother, until he and five friends attempt the unthinkable: use the unnerving Crane journal (bound in the skin of its author) to summon the legendary dragon King Sorrow to destroy his tormentors. But their desperate bargain demands a yearly sacrifice, binding them to a deadly secret that will haunt and endanger them for the next forty years....

Hillman, Troy A. [Chasing Down the Zombie Hunter](#) (Pegasus \$28.95). Bryan Miller aka The Zombie Hunter, was a cavalier character juxtaposed as a single parent of a teenage daughter. He sported Steampunk attire, wielded a Gatling gun at Comic Con conventions, and rode around in a custom fitted police-looking car with green lights on the top and the “The Zombie Hunter” detailed on the side. While his outward appearance and interests were a bit eccentric, little did people know, he was a real-life killer and predator that had been terrorizing the Phoenix area since 1992. Here is the detailed inside story of how a small-town ex-CPA, Detective Troy Hillman, and an elite team of detectives—hounded by the press, a frustrated and frightened public, and their own doubts and exhaustion—solved a double murder that had haunted the Valley of the Sun for more than twenty years. True crime—and local history. Patrick hosts.

Harrow, Alix. [The Everlasting](#) (Tor \$29.99 Deluxe Edition) is about “a big sad lady knight stuck in a time loop, and the cowardly historian who is sent back in time to make sure she keeps playing her part.” Sir Una Everlasting was Dominion’s greatest hero: the orphaned girl who became a knight, who died for queen and country. Her legend lives on in songs and stories, in children’s books and recruiting posters—but her life as it truly happened has been forgotten. Centuries later, Owen Mallory—failed soldier, struggling scholar—falls in love with the tale of Una Everlasting. Her story takes him to war, to the archives—and then into the past itself.

Harrow adds that her fourth novel is “a mix of my childhood obsession with lady knights (or any girl with a sword), becoming an adult, and beginning to examine things like knighthood and chivalry through a different lens.” Even though she’s a grownup now, she said, “and I know that knights were private security landowners and are kind of a bummer, I’m still swept away by the romanticism of the knight as a hero, as a symbol. The entire medieval world still kind of has that romance for me. But it relies on there being a king worth serving.” So, a problem much of the world faces today in real life, not fantasy.

Hunter, Stephen. [The Gun Man Jackson Swagger: A Western](#) (Atria \$28) traces the bloody history of the Swagger family, snipers and lawmen, all skilled gun handlers.

This Western is set in Arizona Territory, 1897. Jack Swagger, an aging Civil War veteran, is seeking employment at the sprawling Callahan Ranch. At first sight, he’s too old for the work but he shows he’s a master gunman and Colonel Callahan needs sharpshooters to protect his shipments of cattle to Mexico and goods back to him from marauders. Jack learns of a young cowboy who died on one of these jaunts and starts investigating the death. Dark secrets emerge and soon Jack is in the middle of a full-out range war, where the one who shoots first and most usually wins. No action writer today knows guns as well as Hunter and he deploys this knowledge skillfully, enriching the narrative, not getting in its way with undigested facts. The drought-plagued terrain is an actor in events, and the bad guys, though unadulteratedly bad, are portrayed as real people, not caricatures.

Hunter, with his great command the action novel, excels again with this unputdownable book—our **October Historical Fiction Pick**.

Jaworowski, Ken. [What About the Bodies?](#) (Grove Atlantic \$28). Life isn’t fair, and nowhere is that truer than in Locksburg, Pennsylvania, a struggling Rust Belt town. As bad luck and bad

breaks continue to plague the three well-meaning protagonists, Jaworowski steadily ups the stakes at pitch-perfect thriller pace.... Patrick reviews our **October Hardboiled Crime Club Pick**: “A subtle, beautifully done noir about the intersecting trajectories of three disparate characters in a small, fading Pennsylvania town. A struggling single mom must help her son hide a terrible secret, an autistic young man sets out on his own to fulfill a deathbed promise to his mother, and an aspiring singer who sees a chance for the big time if she can just come up with cash she owes an ex-con. These are real characters struggling to make it if they can just catch a break. I loved it.” Lisa Scottoline agrees: “These characters resonate with heart as they face the most dangerous times of their lives, eventually colliding in a riveting plot that twists and turns its way through gritty, small-town Pennsylvania.”

Kellerman, Jonathan/Jesse. [Coyote Hills](#) (Random House \$30). Signed by Jesse. I am a fan of the Clay Edison thrillers penned by father and son Kellerman and set in Alameda County, originally in Berkley where Clay was with the Coroner’s Office. Now he’s gone out on his own as a private investigator with a focus on low-stakes embezzlements and the like, not homicides... until PI Regina Klein calls him with a mystery only he can solve. The son of a wealthy couple has washed up dead on the shores of San Francisco Bay with drugs in his system and a head injury. The police are calling it an accident. But the parents are adamant something’s not right—and they are right. Jesse, an author, playwright, and poet, fuses his voice and his affection for northern California with bestseller Jon’s vibe a true third voice for this series.

King, Lily. [Heart the Lover](#) (Grove \$28). “King is a genius at writing love stories.... Her mostly sunny version of the campus novel is an enjoyable alternative to the current vogue for dark academia. Tragedies are on the way, though, as we know they must be, as nothing gold can stay and these darn fictional characters seem to make the same kinds of stupid mistakes that real people do. Tenderhearted readers will soak the pages of the last chapter with tears. That college love affair you never got over? Come wallow in this gorgeous version of it.”—*Kirkus* Starred Review

Klavan, Andrew. [After That, The Dark](#) (Penzler \$26.95). Ex-spy Cameron Winter is falling in love. After finally working up the courage to contact the attractive therapist Gwendolyn Lord, he finds himself immersed in a passion that feels heaven-sent. Then Gwendolyn tells him about a true-life “locked room mystery,” and Winter feels compelled to investigate. In Tulsa, Oklahoma, a solid citizen named Owen McKay suddenly went mad and killed his wife and child. Locked in a padded cell and monitored on video, he was nonetheless discovered dead from a projectile fired into his head. As Winter begins to ask questions, he finds Tulsa officials have been intimidated into silence by a killer who once tried to attack Winter during his days as a government assassin. What’s more, another mysterious death, just like McKay’s, has taken place in Connecticut. And both murders seem linked to a sinister billionaire who once clashed with Winter’s old mentor, the Recruiter. Are Winter’s past and present coming together in a single dangerous conspiracy?

Lansdale, Joe R. [Hatchet Girls](#) (Mulholland \$30). Hap and Leonard, the stars of Lansdale’s long-running East Texas-based private detective series, crack wise plenty and knock heads even

more, but the best friends could not be more different in appearance, temperament and outlook. Yet it seems like the band might be breaking up, as Leonard is planning his wedding and distancing himself from the P.I. firm, while Hap and his wife are contemplating their own domestic issues. But when a woman enlists their help to catch a 400-pound hog, Hap and Leonard take on the case, only to be sucked into the vortex of a cultish group of women who have attached themselves to their hatchet-toting, revenge-seeking, society-torching leader. The question, as always, is how Hap and Leonard will live to fight another day. “The mood here is elegiac, if ruminations on aging and domesticity coupled with bursts of violence count as such. Hap and Leonard may end up in a new place in their lives, but it seems they will continue to be divining rods for trouble.”

**Join us October 28 to celebrate Joe’s birthday and this book.**

Majumdar, Megha. [A Guardian and a Thief](#) (Knopf \$29). In a near-future Kolkata beset by flooding and famine, Ma, her two-year-old daughter, and her elderly father are just days from leaving the collapsing city behind to join Ma’s husband in Ann Arbor, Michigan. After procuring long-awaited visas from the consulate, they pack their bags for the flight to America. But in the morning they awaken to discover that Ma’s purse, containing their treasured immigration documents, has been stolen. Set over the course of one week, you follow two stories: the story of Ma’s frantic search for the thief while keeping hunger at bay during a worsening food shortage; and the story of Boomba, the thief, whose desperation to care for his family drives him to commit a series of escalating crimes whose consequences he cannot fathom.

McCulloch, Amy. [Runner 13](#) (Michael Joseph \$38). 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—tops most. 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.

McDermid, Val. [Silent Bones](#) (Sphere UK \$46). Scotland, 2025. When torrential winter rain causes a landslide on a motorway, it dislodges more than mud and asphalt – it reveals a skeleton, concealed when the road was built eleven years prior. Sam Nimmo, an investigative journalist who’d been poking his nose into the murky politics of the Scottish independence referendum, had become the prime suspect in the brutal murder of his girlfriend when he vanished. Now he’s reappeared, buried under the motorway. It’s the perfect cold case for DCI Karen Pirie, chief of Police Scotland’s Historic Cases Unit. What was Nimmo investigating that was worth killing over? Or was it revenge for murdering his girlfriend? Meanwhile, an allegation of murder has surfaced over the supposedly accidental death of a hotel manager. It may have

links to another accident on a remote Highland road. It’s a series of puzzles that tests Karen and her team to their limits. And possibly beyond . . .

McKinlay, Jenn. [Witches of Dubious Origin](#) (Berkley \$19). Zoe Ziakas enjoys a quiet life, working as a librarian in her quaint New England town. When a mysterious black book with an unbreakable latch is delivered to the library, Zoe has a strange feeling the tome is somehow calling to her. She decides to consult the Museum of Literature, home to volumes of indecipherable secrets, some possessing dark magic that must be guarded. Here, among their most dangerous Books of Dubious Origin, Zoe discovers that she is the last descendant of a family of witches and this little black book is their grimoire. Zoe knows she must decode the family’s spell book and solve the mystery of what happened to her mother and her grandmother. However, the book’s potential power draws all things magical to it, and Zoe finds herself under the constant watch of a pesky raven, while being chased by undead Vikings, ghost pirates, and assorted ghouls.

“This book is perfect for everyone who loves libraries and magic as well as comfort, adventure, and romance. I wish every library had a special collection of *Books of Dubious Origin*, along with a rooftop garden where a witch is cultivating poisons. These characters—including the books, they’re characters too—are tremendously entertaining, and I’m looking forward to many more shenanigans with Zoe, Jasper, Miles, Tariq, and Olive!”—Kevin Hearne on our **October Cozy Crimes Club Pick**. Sara Beth Durst adds, With a wonderful cast of characters, a fabulous spellbook, and a library you’ll want to live in, *Witches of Dubious Origin* is one of those books that you fall more and more in love with until suddenly it’s two in the morning, and you’ve lost track of the world.”

Mizushima, Margaret. [Dying Cry](#) (Crooked Lane \$29.99). Ten books into her Timber Creek K-9 series, Mizushima still excels in portraying a picturesque setting in the Colorado high country and a vivid depiction of the bond between human and canine. Newlyweds Mattie and Cole Walker are teaching Cole’s daughters how to snowshoe in a remote canyon when a shattering scream pierces the air. They know that somewhere ahead, someone has been injured or worse. Cole takes the girls while Mattie and K-9 Robo go deeper into the canyon to search for the source of the scream. From a distance, Mattie and Robo see a shadowy figure at the base of a cliff, but a rockslide buries the person under layers of stone and shale before they can provide help. Desperate to uncover the individual in case they’re still alive under the rock, their efforts are in vain. The victim is already dead. When they investigate the canyon rim from which the person fell, they discover evidence that indicates the fall was no accident. To make matters worse, the victim was one of Cole’s friends. The Timber Creek County investigative team springs into action, uncovering a trail of greed that leads to worse....

Orlean, Susan. [Joyride](#) (Avid Reader \$30). This is a memoir that offers a master class in nonfiction writing and an indelible portrait of a bygone era of magazine journalism in an excellent personal history. Prompted by the 25th anniversary of her bestseller *The Orchid Thief*, Orlean takes stock of what she’s seen and learned since she took her first writing job in 1978 at an alt-weekly in Portland, Oregon. The author recalls landing that gig with little



more than pluck and a single clip, and describes an on-the-fly education that taught her to chase her own curiosity and develop the distinctive voice that would bring her fame. She brings readers behind the scenes of some of her best-known long-form articles. “Journalism junkies will also enjoy Orlean’s tales of working alongside publishing icons including Tina Brown, Robert Gottlieb, and Anna Wintour. Writers new and established will savor every word.”

Perkins, Stephanie. [Overdue](#) (St Martins \$31) will be a delight to anyone who loved her YA novels. A true valentine to bookstores and book lovers, and the most agonizingly *slooooo* burn romance that finally blazes beautifully hot. Wonderfully sweet without being saccharine.

Rosenfelt, David. [And to All a Good Bite](#) (St Martins \$28). This one wins you for the cover canine alone, a true Christmas image. Two years ago, a gas leak in an office building led to a tragic explosion that killed seven people. Jeff Wheeler was there to pick up his girlfriend and ran into the building to help. All he heard was the barking of a dog, Rufus, and was able to save him. The pup was the sole survivor and Jeff was named a hero. Initially, Rufus went to the Tara Foundation since his owner had died in the accident. But Andy met Jeff and liked him, respecting his courage and allowed him to adopt Rufus. Since then, Jeff and Rufus have formed an unbreakable bond. The accident never sat right with Jeff. He believed that one of the building owners was responsible for the tragedy. Now that owner has been murdered and Jeff is arrested for the crime, Rufus is left with Jeff’s sister, who begs Andy to take the case. Andy remembered Jeff’s tremendous bravery and with the lingering Christmas spirit, decides to help reunite the two.

\* Stokes Chapman, Susan. [The Twelve Days of Christmas](#) (Harvill UK \$39). The air glitters with hope as the snowy village of Merrywake celebrates the Christmas season after the tumult of the Napoleonic Wars. As the Viscount’s famous Twelfth Night Ball draws closer, many of the villagers have a story to tell – we meet a lovelorn vicar and kindly maid reunited after a misunderstanding, three sisters vying for the hand of a dastardly duke, two servants hiding a dangerous secret and a soldier making his way home, unsure of the welcome he might receive. As their tales braid together, we see life and love in the village from below stairs to high society. Reimagining each of the traditional carol’s gifts, and written in tribute to Jane Austen and Georgette Heyer, here is a collection of festive tales filled with seasonal cheer and heart-warming characters. Will the challenges and mysteries that the Viscount’s guests encounter be resolved by the night of the ball?

Thomas, Sherry. [The Librarians](#) (Berkley \$30). Our **October Crime Club Pick** is a very slow burn for both action and character development. But stick with it as it goes places you cannot possibly foresee as murders, fraud, even international threats unfold. But the journeys the individual librarians make are the focus, as is the community they form and serve, and the writing deserves to be savored slowly. Why? “This intriguing mystery is also an in-depth character study of a group of people working for a small public library in Austin, Texas. None is quite who they seem, but when two suspicious deaths happen in the area, with both victims having recently been in the library, the staff must band together to try to decipher what happened. Books about

librarians are always a win/win, and this one is particularly well done.”—Library Reads. Plus you get an in-depth look at Austin.

“An irresistible ensemble and a raft of surprises as crime-solving librarians solve double murder mysteries while guarding their own secrets...This knockout mystery mixes the camaraderie of *The Thursday Murder Club* with the chic family and romantic drama of *Crazy Rich Asians*. Thomas’ virtuosity shows in this fast-paced and intricate yet emotionally moving mystery.”—*Kirkus Reviews*.

\* Todd, Charles. [A Christmas Witness](#) (Penzler \$24). It’s 1921. The Yard’s Inspector Rutledge is single and newly promoted to Chief so he draws the short straw at Christmas when murder strikes. Chief Superintendent Markum directs him to the Kentish home of a lord recovering from an attempt on his life. In bed with a concussion, the man is convinced someone is trying to kill him after he claims he was struck by the hoof of a running horse whose rider never stopped to check on him. Struggling with his own demons from the war and misgivings about helping a man who, as a colonel, oversaw the suffering of those on the frontlines from afar, Rutledge undertakes an uneasy investigation....

## CLASSICS

Campbell, Joseph. [On the Hero’s Journey](#) (New World Library \$14) is an “accessible introduction to one of the most influential ideas in storytelling, from world-renowned mythologist Joseph Campbell. This pocket-size gem of short quotations offers both a deeper understanding of how the stories we tell shape our lives and profound inspiration for your own personal journey.”

\* Christie, Agatha. [The Labors of Hercules](#) (\$18.99). A collection of twelve short Hercule Poirot investigations reissued in the new series look.

Also reissued is [The Burden](#) (\$18.99), one of the romances written under Christie’s Mary Westmacott pseudonym. Laura Franklin bitterly resented the arrival of her younger sister Shirley, an enchanting baby loved by all the family. But Laura’s emotions towards her sister change dramatically one night when she assumes the burden of protecting Shirley....

Lee, Harper. [The Land of Sweet Forever](#) (Harper \$30) is a new collection of stories by Lee that “comes with an introduction by Casey Cep, Harper Lee’s appointed biographer, which provides illuminating background for our reading of these stories and connects them both to Lee’s life and to her two novels.”

Simenon, Georges. [The Saint Fiacre Affair](#) and [The Shadow Puppet](#) (Picador \$16 each). Paris’ Inspector Maigret’s #13 and #12, respectively. Imagine reading your way through all 75 novels from 1931-1972 (there are 18 short stories too).

*And two collections of Christmas Classics*

\* Edwards, Martin. [Who Killed Father Christmas?](#) (Poisoned Pen \$15.99) is a new collection by the British Library Crime Classics and editor Martin Edwards. The murder of Father Christmas at one of London’s great toy shops is just one of many yuletide disasters in this new collection of stories from the Golden Age of crime writing and beyond. Masters of the genre such as Patricia Moyes and John Dickson Carr present perfectly packaged short pieces, and Martin Edwards delivers a sackful of rarities from authors such as Ellis Peters, Gwyn Evans and Michael Innes.



Penzler, Otto. [Golden Age Christmas Mysteries](#) (Penzler \$17.95). Not to be outdone, American Mystery Classics collects stories written by some of the greatest Golden Age authors, undoubtedly inspired by the juxtaposition of the disparate elements of love and hate. There is a cliché about anthologies (and clichés become clichés because they are true) that compares them to a good party, where you see old friends and meet new ones—and this collection is a wonderful example. It offers such giants of the genre as Ellery Queen, Mary Roberts Rinehart, John D. MacDonald, and John Dickson Carr while introducing you to such lesser-known writers as Norvell Page, Meredith Nicholson, and Pat Frank.

The hardcover edition: [Golden Age Christmas Mysteries](#) (\$27.95)

## COZIES

Andrews, Donna. [Five Golden Wings](#) (St Martins \$28). Two of Meg Langslow's cousins, members of Mother's vast Hollingsworth clan, are getting married, and both have chosen Caerphilly for their Christmas destination wedding . . . on the same day, in the same venues. But while they're cousins they're also lifelong enemies. Mother's efforts to keep the peace are wearing her down, and the battling brides (and their mothers) are making the holiday season miserable for everyone. So Meg steps in to keep the peace. And it was going badly even before she stumbles over the murdered body of the wedding photographer....

Addison, Esme. [A Brew for Chaos](#) (Severn House \$29.99). Leaves are changing, pumpkins are being picked, and the small coastal town is caught up in the excitement of the approaching Oktoberfest and craft beer competition. But Alex's good friend, local journalist Pepper, is more excited by the upcoming anniversary of a spooky cold case she's helping her boss, Jonah, investigate. Back in the eighties, a serial killer nicknamed The Fisherman abducted ten local women. He was never caught, and the women never seen again. Alex isn't surprised when Pepper asks for her help, but she's done solving mysteries until Jonah's body is discovered on the beach, Alex is forced to reconsider. "quirky and charming book that gives you an enticing genre-blend of cozy mystery, contemporary fantasy and a hint of sci-fi."

Berenson, Laurien. [Die Another Dane](#) (Kensington \$27). After seeing a Great Dane at a dog show, Melanie Travis' younger son Kevin has become obsessed with the giant breed. Some kids get into dinosaurs—for Kevin it's Great Danes. Then Aunt Peg introduces Melanie and her son to Audrey Kane, a charming older woman who breeds and shows the big dogs. Aware of Melanie's talent for sleuthing, Audrey asks for her help in finding a missing brooch. She suspects her stepsister Lara. When Audrey is found dead in her home, Aunt Peg enlists the help of the local Great Dane Club to foster Audrey's ten dogs, one of whom Melanie takes on. To her surprise, then Lara comes to her and asks her to solve her stepsister's murder....

Brook, Allison. [Death on Dickens Island](#) (Crooked Lane \$19.99). In this Books on the Beach Mystery, Delia Dickens has come home to Dickens Island, a small island in the Long Island Sound, after a twelve-year stint in Manhattan. She's looking forward to helping her father revitalize the general store that the family owns as well as curating a small book nook. Most importantly, she wants to reunite with her fifteen-year-old son. But Dickens Island isn't the peaceful town Delia remembers—and she might be in more danger here than she ever was in the big city. Especially when her uncle is murdered.

Gerber, Daryl Wood. [Murder By the Millions](#) (Kensington \$27). **Our copies come with recipe cards for Chocolate Crinkle Cookies. Yum.**

In a beautiful mountain community near Asheville, North Carolina, caterer and personal chef Allie Catt serves up mouthwatering, literary-themed dinner parties inspired by her clients' favorite books. Feast for the Eyes bookstore manager Tegan, Allie's best friend, is hosting a book club soiree and wants it to be a glittering affair based on F. Scott Fitzgerald's iconic Jazz Age-set novel, *The Great Gatsby*. Soon, Art Deco table settings and visions of flappers are dancing the Charleston in their heads. Even Tegan's prickly sister, Vanna, is on board. And surely, Allie's tuxedo cat, Darcy, thinks it's the cat's meow. Amid the planning, charismatic developer Jason Gardner arrives in town to buy some historic buildings on Main Street. He, too, has plans: to create a modern mall. Allie is more than concerned. She even wants to protest. But when Jason invites her to cater a lavish party, she finds him surprisingly likable. Then she's summoned to his estate for a meeting—and finds him dead....

Hillis, Kat. [Dead & Breakfast](#) (Penguin \$19). Gay vampires sink their teeth into murder in a paranormal cozy. Married odd couple Arthur and Sal are totally normal. They wear sunscreen, not because the sun can kill them, but because even the undead need a skincare regimen. They eat garlic whenever they want, though it gives Sal indigestion. They can talk to creatures of the night, but only the raccoons that rifle through their garbage. Really, they don't bite... except into delicious baked goods. Ready to settle down and stay out of trouble, the two have opened a bed & breakfast in the idyllic, if not-so-paranormal-friendly, town of Trident Falls, Oregon. But trouble finds them when the mayor is discovered dead in their begonias with two puncture wounds in his neck. With the help of a werewolf barista, the elven town coroner, and a very human city manager, Arthur and Sal will need to prove they aren't literally out for blood by catching a killer...

\* Shearer, LT. [The Cat Who Cracked a Cold Case](#) (Pan Macmillan \$18.99). The life of Lulu Lewis, a retired police detective, took an unforgettable turn when Conrad first introduced himself to her. Yes, he talks. The pair live together on Lulu's houseboat but when visiting an old friend in Manchester, they stumble across a chilling news report about a trail of bodies found across the city that echo a string of cold case murders from Lulu's past in London. There's nothing for it but to join up with the local coppers to knit together seemingly random crimes.... Follow up with [The Cat and the Christmas Kidnapper](#) (Pan \$27.99)

Soderberg, Emily. [How to Talk to Your Dog About Murder](#) (Crooked Lane \$19.99). Nikki Jackson-Ramanathan is struggling to get her pet behaviorist business off the ground, making ends meet as a dog walker while looking to move up. An appointment in a rich suburb of Saint Louis may be the way. The wealthy Mrs. Van Meer wants Nikki to help the family's old hound dog who is grieving the loss of his owner. But then Mrs. Van Meer turns up dead. With a multitude of suspects like the sketchy landscaper, the judgy housekeeper, and the rest of Mrs. Van Meer's money-obsessed family members, Nikki's happy to sit back and let the police solve the crime. Until she learns that Mrs. Van Meer's will leaves Nikki in charge of a sizable amount of money and the police start dogging her every step....

*And cozies for Halloween....*

Black, Juneau. [Mockingbird Court](#) (Knopf \$17). Vulpine investigator Vera Vixen must contend with a cold-hearted killer—and the ghost of her own past. It's a crisp, cool autumn in Shady Hollow, and preparations are underway for the annual Harvest Festival. Creatures have flocked from far and wide to partake in the seasonal festivities, from pumpkin carving to pie tasting to soup throwing. With all these new faces around town, it's the perfect time for someone to slip in unnoticed. Unless that someone is Bradley Marvel, the most famous author—and most noticeable personality—in any woodland warren. It seems the wolf is on the lam. Back in the city, a body was found in his penthouse apartment at Mockingbird Court, and Marvel skipped town before the questioning could commence. Marvel claims to be innocent, and it's up to Vera and her friends to piece together what might have happened that fateful night so many miles away in the beating heart of the big city.

Blacke, Olivia. [Death at the Door](#) (St Martins \$28). Once again a ghost and her living roommate find another mystery on their doorstep. Ruby Young is slowly adjusting to her new life in Boston. A big part of that is her unexpected roommate—the ghost of the woman who lived there before. For Cordelia Graves, she may no longer be breathing, but it's still her apartment and Ruby is the somewhat unwanted houseguest. They're both happy they've managed to become friends, which is a miracle considering they struggle to communicate with each other. Cordelia even set Ruby up with her old job. When Ruby discovers the body of a delivery guy at work, the new life she's been building hangs in the balance....

"I love Ruby and Cordelia! Their second installment is a delight, despite all that pesky murder. This time, our favorite pair team up to find out what happened to the friendly sandwich delivery guy that ends up mysteriously dead in the bathroom at Ruby's office. With Blacke's trademark humor, living Ruby and ghostly Cordelia banter their way through the case, and even find a few more clues about what happened to Cordelia. There is still one more book to go in this trilogy, so don't expect all the answers to that one yet."

Callaghan, Kiri. [The Hearth Witch's Guide to Magic & Murder](#) (Sourcebooks \$18.99). This is the perfect cozy crime read with a side of witchcraft. Set in modern-day London but with a dash of magic, this tale of two unlikely sleuths solving a murder serves up spells, secrets and a sprinkle of danger. When a rise in London's supernatural crime puts Fey society at risk of discovery, the Winter Council turns to an unlikely solution: Avery Hemlock, the changeling they sentenced to 500 Years of Nightmares. Inherently lacking social grace and missing approximately two centuries of world knowledge, Avery must find a way to acclimate and solve the case or lose her probationary freedom. After being left at the altar and dropping out of medical school, Saga Trygg attempts to rekindle her faith in life, humanity, and witchcraft. But when her new neighbor, Avery, accidentally reveals the Fey that have been living among humanity all along, Saga realizes magic is far more than prayers, intention, and candles. Each faced with navigating an unfamiliar world, the two form an unexpected partnership—but shortly into Avery's investigation, they discover the threat might be closer to Saga than either of them imagined, and Avery will do anything to protect the first friend she's had in more than two hundred years.

Duncan, Emmeline. [Mayhem at a Halloween Wedding](#) (Kensington \$17.95). Welcome back to small town Elyan Hollow, Oregon, where every day is Halloween, especially at the Lazy Bones Bookstore owned and operated by Bailey Briggs and Jack Skeleton, a beautiful Great Pyrenees. Lots of things going on this time, including a parade, wedding preparations for a friend, an explosion and the murder of the perfectly obnoxious maid of honor.

Fox, Sarah. [Tails from the Crypt](#) (Severn \$29.99). Halloween, magic and a touch of romance. Return to the charming coastal town of Twilight Cove with another Magical Menagerie Mystery. Fall is in full swing and the town of Twilight Cove is preparing for its annual Pumpkin Glow! Georgie Johansen, her gorgeous boyfriend Callum and her Auntie O are also getting ready for their animal sanctuary's Trail of Terror. But when a new, and rather unpleasant, resident stops at nothing to take over the town, the enemies she makes are numerous . . . and lethal! Finding the woman's body in the woods is shocking enough. The news that Georgie's best friend is top of the suspect list is another level entirely. Georgie's never needed the secret abilities of her wonderful dogs, Flossie and Fancy, more than she does right now.

\* Mason, Emma. [Murder Most Haunted](#) (Harper \$18.99). Would you rather be snowed-in with a ghost, or a murderer? On her last day as a detective, Midge McGowan is given the retirement present from hell: a ticket to a haunted house tour. She'll have to spend a weekend ghost-hunting in an isolated mansion with a group of misfits, including a know-it-all paranormal investigator and a has-been pop star. The guests soon realize that the house has a mind of its own... and that they might not be the only ones there. An eerie figure appears on the property, and then the unthinkable happens: someone is murdered in a room that's been locked from the inside. When a blizzard cuts the group off from help, the house's own dark secrets begin to surface, and Midge can't shake the creeping sense that they are walking into a nightmare. Could a ghost really be responsible? Or is the culprit one of the guests?

McKinlay, Jenn. [Witches of Dubious Origin Signed](#) (Penguin \$19). See Signed Books for our October Cozy Crimes Club Pick.

Parker, Liz. [Witches of Honeysuckle House](#) (Alcove Press \$19.99/\$29.99). Magical realism for lovers of words, tarot, and houses filled with the wild hum of magic and protective love." "Two sisters, an enchanted house, a generational curse that kills someone close to their family every thirteen years, and a magical bookshop? Count me in. Emotional, suspenseful, haunting, and delightfully atmospheric, *Witches of Honeysuckle House* is sure to leave you spellbound."—Heather Webber

\* Silver, Josie. [Kooky Spooky Love](#) (Random House \$19). Maplemead Castle is crawling with ghosts, and the new owners need them gone. When Melody Bittersweet and the Girls' Ghostbusting Agency arrive on scene, they quickly identify the main troublemaker swinging from the chandeliers. A century ago, stunning trapeze artist Britannia Lovell plunged to her death in the castle's grand ballroom, and has continued to haunt it ever since. But did she really just fall, or was there something more to her demise?

## HORRORS FOR HALLOWEEN

There is a large wave of them coming for you.... Please refer to Signed Books for various Scary Season titles as well—plus two in Small Paperbacks.

Adams, Rachel Louise. [No Rest for the Wicked](#) (St Martins \$28). This is a terrific debut perfect for October reviewed below in New in Hardcover. The author lives in France or I'd pounce on it for a First Mystery Club Pick.

Armstrong, Kelley. [The Haunting of Paynes Hollow](#) (St. Martins \$29). What better than a haunted lakeside property and twisted family secrets to set up the Scary Season for you? When Samantha Payne's grandfather dies she's surprised to learn he left her the family cottage. The catch: she has to stay there for a month to face up to her grandfather's insistence that Sam's father was innocent of murdering a child there before taking his own life. When her aunt goes missing in a couple of days, Sam has to question everything including why she's seeing shapes crawling up from the water....

Chronister, Kay. [The Bog Wife](#) (Catapult \$17.95). Ready for Gothic Horror? "Five siblings, ancient sacrificial practices, and a West Virginia cranberry bog—what more could you want from a folk horror novel? If your answer is 'for those rituals to stop working,' look no further than "A terrifically creepy Appalachian fairy tale-turned-horror story." The family's dynamic and current decision making is based on an ancient compact of sacrifice, here the father, to insure fertility of the land, here bog. The five siblings will drop their father's body into the bog, then wait for his new wife to appear. Their mother is missing from the scene, and her disappearance is a mystery that adds suspense to the story. "The setting is unique, the language evocative, and the characters well-drawn—the arrogant (and maybe malevolent, or simply ignorant) patriarch, the daughter who fled, the one who leads, the youngest two who share their own world, and the purported heir who doesn't pass muster."

Chung, Bora. [Midnight Timetable](#) (Algonquin \$18.99). The Korean author of *Cursed Bunny* which was shortlisted for the Booker Prize offers a new novel told in ghost stories that follow employee working the night shift at the Institute, a mysterious research center that houses cursed objects. Well crafted and well translated by Anton Hur, another Booker Prize nominee.

Datlow, Ellen, ed. [Night & Day: A Horror Anthology](#) (Saga Press \$20) where one side features stories about what haunts the night while the other side showcases the terrors that can exist in the light of day in this new addition to the Saga Doubles series. Contributors include Stephen Graham Jones, Dan Chaon, Rachel Harrison, Josh Malerman, Benjamin Percy....

DeCandido, Keith RA. [Weird Tales Presents Supernatural Crimes Unit: NYPD](#) (Blackstone \$29.99). When Detective Domenica Kiernan solved the murder of a mayor's aide—killed by a vampire—she never imagined she'd find herself at the vanguard of the NYPD's latest special squad: the Supernatural Crimes Unit. Tasked with closing cases involving magic and monsters, the SCU has dealt with a shape-changing domovoy committing assault in Chelsea, the murder of a kappa on City Island, a thieving Taotie in Chinatown—and their latest: two murder victims whose corpses have been liquefied by a powerful spell. Kiernan and the rest of the SCU must find the connection between the two victims and figure out who cast the spell that destroyed the corpses. Soon, their investigation leads to a malevolent magic-user who yearns for limitless power.

Dunmore, Scarlett. [How to Survive a Horror Movie](#) (Union Square & Com. \$13.99). Why not include here a "tropey, twisty

YA Horror Comedy about two friends racing to solving a murder mystery.... Think both the Fear Street and the Scream franchises.

Faust, Carson. [If the Dead Belong Here](#) (Viking \$30). Faust debuts with an arresting tale of an Indigenous family haunted by ghosts and overwhelmed by loss. It begins in 1996 with the disappearance of six-year-old Laurel Taylor, while her family is asleep in the house.

Hartley, Taylor. [Song of the Hell Witch](#) (Alcove Press \$19.99/\$29.99). Once a vicious street rat, Prudence Merriweather has clawed her way to the top of society and now enjoys newfound power as the Duchess of Talonsbury. All she has to do to protect her fragile position is maintain the act of gentility, make her husband happy—and keep her monstrous magic a secret. Puck Reed, the Thief Lord of Talonsbury, once delighted in taking risks and humiliating the social elite at any cost but now lives a quieter criminal lifestyle. With a daughter of his own to protect, Puck tries to lay low and stay safe for her benefit. His daughter, Bea, suffers from a mysterious illness bent on killing her, and Puck will stop at nothing to find a cure. When Prudence's magic betrays her, she has no choice but to flee—and who better to smuggle her out of the city than Puck? A feminist Romantic Fantasy....

Jacobs, John Hornor. [The Night That Finds Us All](#) (Penguin \$30). A troubled sailor. A hundred-year-old sailboat. An ancient curse. Welcome to nautical nightmare. Sam Vines is struggling. Her boat is up on the hard and she doesn't have enough money to get her back in the water. Turns out the snorkelers and the scubadivers are looking for the ultra-luxury boating experience. So it's a good thing when her former crewmate Loick asks her to help deliver a massive, hundred-year-old sailboat from Seattle to England. Sam is the only one who can handle the ship's engine, and did Loick mention that the money is good? It's very good. The *Blackwatch* is a huge boat. An ancient boat. It's also probably (definitely) haunted. Sam's alcohol withdrawal (sobriety is important at sea) has her doubting her senses, but when one crewmate disappears and another has a gruesome accident, she knows that this simple delivery job has spiraled into something sinister....

Jackson, Kosoko. [The Macabre](#) (HarperCollins \$32). John reviews the Deluxe Edition: "Art has always been an escape for struggling painter Lewis Dixon. But other than his mom, who has recently passed away, no one has ever praised his work. So he is shocked when the British Museum shows an unusual interest in his art. This is his chance to show the world what he's capable of...he just has no idea that he might also be saving the world at the same time. "Horror and fantasy fans alike will embrace Jackson as an exciting new voice."

Johnson, Eleanor. [Scream with Me: Horror Films](#) (Atria \$30). Professor Johnson celebrates seminal films while "recognizing the power of this genre to shape and reflect cultural dialogues about gender and power"—as exemplified in some of the books assembled here for October.

Lea, Caroline. [Love, Sex, And Frankenstein](#) (Pegasus \$27.95). Villa Diodati, Lake Geneva, 1816: the dark summer that birthed a monster. Eighteen-year-old Mary Shelley has fled London with her lover, Percy Shelley, and her sister, Claire. Tormented by Shelley's betrayals, haunted by the loss of their baby, and suspicious of her sister's intentions, Mary seeks a refuge. But



Lord Byron's villa, lying under ominous, ash-shrouded skies, feels more like a trap. When Byron suggests each guest write a supernatural tale, Mary is as drawn to the challenge as she is, unexpectedly, to Byron himself. And so an idea begins to form in her mind . . . It spills out of her in thick, black ink. A thing given life by her imagination. But is she in control, or is it? Read this feminist retelling of the creation of a landmark Gothic to find out what Lea has to say.

Margaret, Annabel. [The Green Witch's Herbal Compendium](#) (Page Street \$24.99) is a useful guide to herbs and all of their properties and uses from magical to medicinal.

May, Francesca. [This Vicious Hunger](#) (Redhook \$30) is a Dark Gothic Fantasy, a kind of mirror to the wonderful Botanist's series by Kate Khavari. Thor Grieve is left an outcast and destitute after the sudden death of her husband. And lonely. A family friend offers her a chance to study botany under a famed professor. Once at the university Thora becomes entranced by Olga, the mysterious young woman who emerges each night to tend to the plants in the private garden below Thora's window. Hungry for connection, Thora befriends her, sinking into a world of beauty, poisoned, and obsession, leaving her to fight the darkness inside her. Also inside Olga. Can they draw together to become something more rather than less?

Nelson, Hollie. [A Heart So Haunted](#) (Alcove Press \$19.99/\$29.99). A Gothic Horror debut. Landry is ready to clean house—not just Harthwait, but the traumatic memories and family entanglements that haunt her. Left reeling from her aunt's sudden death, Landry knows she has to restore the old house and sell it for much needed cash. Preferably, before autumn arrives. But as renovations begin on Harthwait, she notices some peculiarities: motion sensors activate when no one is home, doors slam shut, and every night, at a quarter after midnight, the disembodied crying begins. Then, when she uncovers a hidden door during the renovations, she dares to open it. Behind the door is a world of nightmares, some of which are hers, while others belong to a monster—who is trapped inside and desperate to get out. Both haunted by their pasts, Landry makes a deal with the monster, but as they develop feelings for each other, she realizes that the thing that looks like a beast may not be the most beastly thing after all.

Neville, Stuart. [Blood Like Ours](#) (Soho \$29.95). Irishman Neville came to The Pen with his first in the Blood Trilogy called [Blood Like Mine](#) (\$19.95), leaning into the Vampire myth as part of a new Horror imprint. "A gruesome, action-packed monster novel about a mother and daughter with a terrible secret, on the run from an obsessed and crumbling detective....Terrific." —*NY Times Book Review*

El Paso, Texas: Rebecca Carter awoke on a morgue table with only two desires: to find her daughter, Moonflower; and to sate her gnawing hunger. Rebecca sets out on a desperate quest, fighting her murderous craving for blood, wanting to protect her child, and pursued by a vengeful FBI agent. Alone in the wild, Monica Carter survives on whatever small prey she can hunt down. Her nickname? Moonflower. When FBI Special Agent Sarah McGrath learns that Rebecca Carter's body has disappeared from the morgue, she's on the next plane to El Paso. Rebecca is responsible for the death of her partner, and McGrath wants answers, but she never expected them to come from a shadowy figure within the Bureau....

Rowe, Andrew. [How to Defeat a Demon King in Ten Easy Steps](#) (Saga Press \$27 deluxe hardcover with a new Afterword) is "an endlessly inventive and entertaining love letter to all of us underdogs who spent countless hours with a game controller in hand, daydreaming about how we would save the realm. I really loved this one."—Matt Dinniman. The author says it's a love letter to *The Legend of Zelda*.

For thousands of years, there has been a cycle: a Demon King rises and conquers, and a Hero is reborn a hundred years later to defeat him. Each time, civilizations are ground to dust beneath the Demon King's hordes, but humanity has remained secure in the belief that a Hero of legend will always save them. There's just one slight problem. It's only been twenty-three years since the Demon King's latest rise, and this time, he's already conquered more than half the world. If humanity simply waits for the Hero's return, there may be no world left for him to save. And so, Yui Shaw sets out with an ambitious plan. A ten-step plan. She'll find a way to obtain the Hero's legendary sword. She'll earn obscure classes, gain levels, and increase her skills. She'll travel to the meticulously-crafted dungeons that seem designed for one specific Hero to complete. And, if she's truly (un)fortunate, she might even find a fairy!

Spratford, Becky Siegel. [Why I Love Horror](#) (Saga Press \$18) is a heartfelt tribute to the horror genre featuring essays from several of the most celebrated contemporary horror writers including, Grady Hendrix, Paul Tremblay, Stephen Graham Jones, Josh Malerman, Victor LaValle, Tananarive Due, and Rachel Harrison. The essays get to the heart of why horror is such an important genre and why it speaks to such a diverse audience, with personal and entertaining passages. "A wonderful autopsy of both the horror genre and the current batch of hell-scribblers and fear-junkies who are guiding it. Essential reading for both the jaded horror experts and the fresh-blood newbies who are peering out from behind barely-parted fingers."—Chuck Wendig

Valentin, K. [An Amateur Witch's Guide to Murder](#) (Alcove Press \$19.99/ \$29.99). Mateo Borrero has 99 problems—and all of them hinge on his missing *bruja* mother and the demon she trapped inside his body. Mateo's mother forbade him from ever using magic, but now that she's gone, magic's his only marketable skill, and he'd really like an exorcism—which costs money he doesn't have. What's the harm in making a quick buck by calling himself an Occult Specialist and chanting a few half-remembered spells in his crappy Spanish? A lot...leading to a wannabe witch who tries to break a curse on a clueless client in this debut for fans of queer romantic fantasy

#### NEW IN HARDCOVER

Lies, Brian. [Cat Nap](#) (Harper \$19.99). First, what could be better for the Halloween season than a 3-D book about a cat? Only it isn't a scary cat or a scaredy cat. It's a sleepy kitten who one afternoon dives after a mouse through a framed poster on the wall and ends up on an epic journey through time and space via celebrated art works. All this with intricately constructed 3D Art work. Intended for very young readers but hey, I'm hooked.

Adams, Rachel Louise. [No Rest for the Wicked](#) (St Martins \$28) is a debut I would get Signed for you but the author lives in France. It's perfect for October!

It's been close to twenty years since forensic pathologist

Dolores Hawthorne left her hometown of Little Horton, Wisconsin. The town is famous for its Halloween celebrations, but also its history of violent deaths linked to the holiday. To Dolores, it's the place she fled, family, bad memories, and all. Until the FBI calls to tell her that her father—the former mayor turned US Senator—is missing under mysterious circumstances. Some people count to ten to wake up from a nightmare. Dolores always counts the bones of her head instead: sphenoid, frontal, lacrimal. But no matter how many times she counts them, it doesn't change the fact that her father is missing, that his final words of warning to her were to trust no one, and that now, the rest of her family is giving Dolores a chilling welcome as Halloween is fast approaching.... Recommended.

Banville, John. [Venetian Vespers](#) (Knopf \$30). 1899. As the new century approaches, struggling English writer Evelyn Dolman—a hack, by his own description—marries Laura Rensselaer, daughter of an American oil tycoon. Evelyn anticipates that he and Laura will inherit a substantial fortune and lead a comfortable, settled life. But his hopes are dashed when a mysterious rift between Laura and her father, just before the patriarch's death, leads to her disinheritance. The unhappy newlyweds travel to Venice to celebrate the New Year at the Palazzo Dioscuri, ancestral home of the charming but treacherous Count Barbarigo. From their first moments in the mist-blanketed floating city, otherworldly occurrences begin to accumulate. Evelyn's already jangled nerves fray further. Where has Laura disappeared to? How to explain the increasingly sinister circumstances closing around him? Could he be losing his mind? Paperback: [The Drowned](#) (\$18.99)

\* Beaton, M C/RW Green. [Sugar and Spite](#) (St Martins \$27). When a series of deaths within the small Cotswolds birdwatching community begins to unravel her village, Agatha and her team at Raisin Investigators are certain there has been foul play involved. Now, they must dig up decades' worth of tempestuous relationships and simmering secrets among the birdwatching enthusiasts of the village in order to prevent any further deaths. But with Agatha's own relationship with John Glass on the rocks after he is called away on his job as a cruise ship dance instructor, and Sir Charles Fraith now attempting to step into John's shoes as her lover, Agatha Agatha will have to break out her binoculars and embrace her bitter side to solve the murders and wrangle her life into shape. Again.

Bowen, Gail. [The Solitary Friend](#) (ECW Press \$28.95). This is the 23<sup>rd</sup> entry in an award-winning Canadian series. Amateur sleuth Joanne Shreve finds herself caught in the middle when her friend Vera Wang, the owner of a discreet escort service, The Right Woman, calls in a favor. Howard Dowhanuik, another long-time friend of Joanne's and the former premier of Saskatchewan, has been a loyal client for years. That is until he started badgering Vera's employees, trying to discourage them from performing their "meaningless" work. Given his recent verbal attacks against any and all opponents on his podcast, Joanne knows his erratic behavior must be part of a larger issue. Can Joanne talk Howard down and make him see sense before he goes too far? To complicate matters, the release of scandalous photos with threatening demands targets both Howard and Calista Wallace....

Bruns, Don, ed. [Bat Out of Hell: An Anthology](#) (Blackstone \$28.99). The fourth installment in the Music and Murder Mys-

tery series is inspired by the debut album from legendary rock star Meat Loaf, Bat Out of Hell, and includes a brand-new Jack Reacher story from Andrew Child, a never-before-seen Pignon Scorbion prequel from Rick Bleiweiss, as well as exciting new mysteries from Heather Graham, Don Bruns, John Gilstrap, Dave Bruns, C. J. Kudlacz, and Charles Todd. **Note that Child can sign his story on November 4 at our book launch for the new Reacher.** [Paperback edition](#): (\$18.99).

Craig, Erin A. [A Land So Wide](#) (Pantheon \$28). "Greer, a mapmaker in the town of Mistaken, who fantasizes about leaving, notices strange things happening. Then her lover mysteriously departs town. In her attempts to save him, she learns about herself, her cursed town, and the lore surrounding both. This suspenseful and emotional romantasy is well plotted with great world building."—Library Reads leaning more into Romantasy than Horror here.

Brown, Rita Mae. [Fox and Furious](#) (Random House \$30). It's hunting season in the foothills of Virginia, and "Sister" Jane Arnold is content to spend it alongside her friends, particularly one Olivia Bradford. Olivia is a formidable figure in town—not least because she keeps the peace between her sons Winston and Andrew—but when she passes away, the brothers return to their squabbling ways. Faced with contention over their inheritance, tensions escalate, and the two get into a fierce fight—and soon after, one of them turns up dead. The other is the obvious suspect but Sister can't see him as the killer.... For the previous book see Large Paperbacks.

\* Dent, Susie. [Guilty by Definition](#) (Sourcebooks \$27.99 Unsigned). If only I could get it Signed by this UK scholar turned author it could be our October First Mystery Pick. But you in love with words will enjoy this regardless. And I went with North's [The Bog Queen](#) for the October British Crime Pick, not requiring Signed copies, because it fits the spooky season and because, honestly, Dent's book verges on the arcane. Reviews by others than I are also ecstatic:

Susie Dent's impressive debut novel is virtuosic. So meticulously and fascinatingly steeped in the archaic glory of words, it will surely be the ultimate treat for every logophile out there. But this is so much more than a celebration of the dictionary—it's a tantalizing mystery of a missing sister, a cold case that will not lie down, and a family frozen in their unresolved grief... all while their circle of friends and colleagues nurse secrets and lies beyond explication. *Guilty by Definition* is positively aglitter with etymological and detecting treasures for word-sleuths and crime-fans alike."—Janice Hallett

"Redolent with Oxford's musty academic atmosphere and deeply respectful of the stewards who keep the English language and all its arcane idiosyncrasies alive, this debut missing-person mystery from renowned lexicographer and British media personality Dent is infused with an intellectual insouciance, delivering tempting challenges for fellow word nerds and creating a trail of tantalizing clues that will intrigue the most devoted fans of Agatha Christie and Dorothy Sayers."—*Booklist* Starred Review

Dicker, Joel. [Wild Animal](#) (Harper \$30). Swiss novelist Dicker delivers a rollicking heist thriller centered on two couples with carefully concealed secrets.... On July 2, 2022, two criminals set out to rob a jewelry shop in Geneva. But even with a fool-

proof plan, their “perfect” heist will prove far from uneventful.... Twenty days earlier, on a luxurious estate along the shores of Lake Geneva, Sophie Braun prepares to celebrate her fortieth birthday. Her life seems perfect: she has a fairytale marriage, two perfect children, and lives in a stylish modern mansion surrounded by lush forest. But her idyllic world is about to crumble. Her husband is becoming embroiled in petty schemes. Her neighbor, a policeman with a spotless reputation, is obsessed with her and spies on the most intimate moments of her life. Then, on her birthday, she receives a gift from a mysterious prowler that endangers her life. It will take many journeys into the past, far from Geneva, to unravel the origins of this diabolical plot from which no one will emerge unscathed, including readers.

Divine, L. [Lost in the Garden of Eve](#) (Kensington \$28). When former Atlanta stripper-turned-reporter Keke McCoy finds fame after solving the gruesome ritualistic murder of a fellow dancer, she’s tapped to investigate the unsolved disappearance of underage dancers from her teenage stomping grounds, The Pimp Palace where several off-the-books, underage dancers have gone missing under suspicious circumstances. When she unearths troubling connections between some of the cases, Keke calls on the assistance of Detective Drew Lewis—her former man, occasional lover—and maybe her future . . .

Driscoll, Sara. [Deadly Trade](#) (Kensington \$28). FBI K-9 handler Meg Jennings can never walk away from her job, even amid her Hawaiian Islands honeymoon, where she and her search-and-rescue black Lab encounter a double threat from wildlife poachers and Mother Nature. In the remote fern forest of Pu’u Maka’ala Natural Area Reserve, K-9 Hawk’s senses are on high alert. When Meg lets him leave the path, they encounter two men trapping bright birds. The poachers escape, leaving their bounty behind, and when agents from the FBI and US Fish and Wildlife arrive, they confirm that the birds are all endangered species near extinction. Super-wealthy collectors acquire them for private zoos, with no regard for the birds’ survival. Alive or dead, these beautiful creatures are merely trophies. Meg, Todd, and Hawk join an official search using a local conservation dog to pinpoint vulnerable nesting grounds in an attempt to protect trafficked wildlife and to stop the poachers in their tracks. But beyond the threat posed by determined poachers lurks another danger—Mauna Loa, one of the island’s active volcanoes, has been grumbling

\* Edwards, Martin, ed. [Then There Were More Short Stories](#) (Flame Tree Press \$26.99) compiles stories from some of the best crime writers of the last century. The first CWA anthology, *Butcher’s Dozen*, appeared in 1956, and was co-edited by Julian Symons, Michael Gilbert, and Josephine Bell. The anthology has been edited by Martin Edwards since 1996, and has yielded many award-winning and nominated stories in the UK and overseas. Founded over 70 years ago by John Creasey, the Crime Writers’ Association supports, promotes and celebrates this most durable, adaptable and successful of genres, while supporting writers of every kind of crime fiction and non-fiction. The full list of featured authors in this book is: Anne Perry, Christine Poulson, Andrew Taylor, Amy Myers, Judith Cutler, Gillian Linscott, Martin Edwards, Bernie Crosthwaite, Catherine Aird, Simon Brett, Yvonne Eve Walus, John Harvey, Kate Ellis, Zoe Sharp, Bill Knox, Cath Staincliffe, Liza Cody, Ann Cleeves, and Peter Lovesey.

Note: The books themselves are gorgeous, with foiled

covers, printed edges, and will only be published in this hard-cover edition.

Faust, Carson. [If the Dead Belong Here](#) (Viking \$30). Faust debuts with an arresting tale of an Indigenous family haunted by ghosts and overwhelmed by loss. It begins in 1996 with the disappearance of six-year-old Laurel Taylor, while her family is asleep in the house. Her mother Ayita, whose older brother died years ago in a car crash and whose abusive husband, Barron, left her without knowing she was pregnant with Laurel, spirals into alcoholism and depression. Meanwhile, Laurel’s 15-year-old sister, Nadine, who along with Ayita suspects Barron of abducting Laurel, searches with the townsfolk through the woods, hoping to find a trace of her sister. Nadine also sees visions of a “crooked mouthed woman” and hears unknown voices. The mystery deepens after the police find Barron without Laurel and Nadine’s maternal great-aunt Rosebud Crowe guides her to speak with the ghosts of their ancestors.

*If the Dead Belong Here* is a thunderclap of a novel—fierce, lyrical, and unrelentingly intimate. Carson Faust writes across time, bloodline, and grief with mythic authority and needlepoint precision. This is a story about hauntings both literal and inherited, a child gone missing, and the women who carry everything that came before.

\* Gregory, Philippa. [The Boleyn Traitor](#) (Harper \$32) is not Anne in this novel but her sister Jane. Jane it is who watches from the shadows of the Tudor court, where secrets are currency, every choice is dangerous, and even the faintest whisper can seal the fate of queens. For Jane, survival demands playing every role required of her: a loving wife who conceals her doubts, a devoted sister to Anne Boleyn at the height of her power, and an obedient spy who carefully wields her words. In a court ruled by ambition and a tyrant’s sword, every day a real Game of Thrones, Jane plays to be a survivor. I often think that if RH factors had been understood Henry VIII, desperate for a son, would not have divorced Catherine for Anne. And if Anne’s second pregnancy, a boy, had survived, so would many who fell with her.... And the history of the Tudors would have been very different.

Grieg, David. [The Book of I](#) (Europa \$24). Looking for something different, historical yet strangely contemporary? Go back to the 8<sup>th</sup> Century in a debut from Scotland that “‘Transforms the events surrounding early Christianity’s encounter with ‘aganism’ into a witty thriller.’ —*The Bookseller*. Inspired by the Scottish Isle of Iona and the monastery that once flourished there (rumored to have housed the Book of Kells), Greig leads us into the story of three survivors of a Norse raid: Brother Martin, the only monk to escape martyrdom; Una, a beekeeper and mead maker relieved of her violent husband during the massacre; and Grimur, an aging Viking who claws his way out of the hasty grave his fellow raiders left him in. This book will inform your reading of our **December Historical Paperback Pick**, [The Holy Island](#) (\$14.99) by LJ Ross, a British import.

Grisham, John. [The Widow](#) (Doubleday \$32). Grisham tries his hand at a whodunit. Eleanor Barnett wants Simon Latch to write her a will. That’s pretty much his job description, since practicing law in Braxton, Virginia, for 18 years hasn’t given him much opportunity to spread his wings. But the case of Netty, an 85-year-old widow whose second husband, Harry Korsak, left her with something like \$20 million in cash and securities,



is different. She has a pair of stepsons, Clyde and Jerry Korsak, she's determined to disinherit. And she already has a will, a document Wally Thackerman drafted a few weeks ago that basically allowed him, as Simon soon discovers, to pillage her estate. So instead of following his usual procedure and asking his longtime secretary, Matilda Clark, to type out the will, Simon types it himself and has it witnessed on the QT. His new client turns out to be more trouble than she's worth, maybe even more trouble than she would've been worth to Wally. And when she ends up dying, her death is swiftly identified as murder, with every indication that Simon killed her himself....

\* Hannah, Sophie. [The Last Death of the Year](#) (Harper \$30). Join Hercule Poirot on an isolated Greek island. New Year's Eve, 1932. Poirot and Inspector Edward Catchpool arrive on the tiny Greek island of Lamperos to celebrate the holiday with what turns out to be a rather odd community of locals living in a dilapidated house. A dark sense of foreboding overshadows the beautiful island getaway when the guests play a New Year's Resolutions game after dinner and one written resolution gleefully threatens to perform "the last and first death of the year." Hours later, one of the home's residents is found dead on the terrace. In light of the shocking murder, Poirot reveals to Catchpool the real reason he's brought him to the island—the life of another community member has been threatened. So, classic Christie: a closed circle of suspects, a baffling murder... a whodunit that honors Poirot's history without feeling like a mere retread. Golden age mystery fans are in for a treat." — *PW*

**And from the UK: 3 Signed UK Firsts of [No One Would Do What the Lamberts Have Done](#)** (Collins \$40). A chilling neighborhood tale of suspense where a family's beloved dog is targeted by a neighbor with a grudge.

Harrison, Mette Ivie. [A Special Interest in Murder](#) (Severn House \$29.99). Stepping away from her The Bishop's Wife Series set in Utah's Mormon Community, Harris introduces the neurodivergent Ada Latia. Ada is 24 and used to be the youngest millionaire in the cosmetics industry. She used to be married. Now, she spends her time studying ways to communicate with aliens. Ada's spiteful ex-husband Rex believes autistic people like her are monsters, so she's not surprised when he shares a clickbait article gleefully shouting that one autistic child has killed another at a special school in Idaho. Rex just means to hurt her, but when Ada reads the article, it's not the lies about autism being fake that catch her eye: it's a disturbing photograph of the dead child. The image of the girl is perfect – too perfect. As if someone has committed a murder, and then carefully staged the scene to cover it up. Ada reports her suspicions to the FBI, and the case crosses the desk of her old classmate Henry Bloodstone, who invites her to assist him. Ada's not a trained investigator. It's painful for her to come up against situations she's not an expert in. She barely remembers Henry, even though it's clear that he remembers her. But, there's a mystery to solve....

Hobson, Brandon. [The Devil Is a Southpaw](#) (Ecco \$29). In a Foreword, Hobson claims the bulk of the novel is a manuscript written by a man named Milton Muleborn, with whom Hobson spent time in the Tophet County Juvenile Correctional Facility. The novel proper opens with a captivating scene at the facility, as Milton and a group of fellow detainees are conscripted by the guards to search for their escaped friend, Matthew Echota, "a crippledly shy, talented, smart, and handsome boy." Matthew has

escaped before, but in Milton's view, he has little hope of getting out of their impoverished town of Old Dublin. The allusion to Dublin is meant to reference James Joyce's *Dubliners*, one of many distorted nods to literature peppered in by Milton, an ambitious neophyte writer. (He also mistakes a passage from Shakespeare's *Macbeth* as being from *Hamlet*.) Hobson vividly portrays Oklahoma's furious storms and scores of screeching grackles, and shows how both protagonists find solace in art. The manuscript is full of contrasting versions of events, some of which veer into fantasy and horror, as when Milton and Matthew encounter terrifying wood spirits who resemble lepers. It's a bit tough to follow, but Hobson holds the reader's attention with appealing surrealistic asides, such as the boys' encounter with a doppelgänger of painter Salvador Dalí, who rhapsodizes over the band Duran Duran. There's plenty of fun to be had with this cerebral novel.

\* Hornby, Gill. [The Elopement, The](#) (Pegasus \$28.95). All things Jane Austen this fall for the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of her birth. Read this one for our November 20 Austen Conversation.

1820. Mary Dorothea Knatchbull is living under the sole charge of her widowed father, Sir Edward – a man of strict principles and high Christian values. But when her father marries Miss Fanny Knight of Godmersham Park, Mary's life is suddenly changed. Her new stepmother comes from a large, happy and sociable family and Fanny's sisters become Mary's first friends. Her aunt, Miss Cassandra Austen of Chawton, is especially kind. Her brothers are not only amusing, but handsome and charming. And as Mary Dorothea starts to bloom into a beautiful young woman, she forms an especial bond with one Mr Knight in particular. Soon, they are deeply in love and determined to marry. It promises to be the most perfect match. Who would want to stand in their way?

\* James, Peter. [The Hawk is Dead](#) (Pan \$27.99). I am a fan of Brighton copper Roy Grace and the TV series. And I'll be talking to Peter about this book in November.

Roy Grace never dreamed a murder investigation would take him deep into Buckingham Palace. Her Majesty, Queen Camilla, is aboard the Royal Train heading to a charity event in Sussex when disaster strikes – the train is derailed. A tragic accident or a planned attack? When, minutes later, a trusted aide is shot dead by a sniper, the police have their answer. Despite all the evidence, Roy Grace is not convinced The Queen was the intended target. But he finds himself alone in his suspicions.

Noisecat, Julian Brave. [We Survived the Night](#) (Knopf \$29). Blending oral history, mythology and reportage, this account takes the form of a "coyote story," a legend about the forefather of NoiseCat's people, bringing a traditional art form nearly annihilated by colonization back to life on the page. Through a dazzling blend of history and mythology, memoir and reportage, NoiseCat unravels old stories and braids together new ones. He grapples with the erasure of North America's First Peoples and the trauma that cascades across generations, while illuminating the vital Indigenous cultural, environmental, and political movements reshaping the future. He chronicles the historic ascent of the first Native American cabinet secretary in the United States and the first Indigenous sovereign of Canada; probes the colonial origins and limits of racial ideology and Indian identity through the story of the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina; and hauls the golden eggs of an imperiled fish out of the sea alongside the Tlingit of Sitka, Alaska.

“Written in gorgeous, sparse prose, *We Survived the Night* reads like a novel. Told with a blistering honesty, the truth and grit create a beautifully woven coyote story we haven’t heard before. This is a love letter to Oakland, to the Canim Lake Band Tsq’secen of the Secwepemc Nation, to a father from his son, to the act of being a Native person in the twenty first century finding ways to love even through all that wounds have opened and wrought. With this, Julian Brave NoiseCat has written a book I’ve been waiting my whole life to read.”—Tommy Orange

\* North, Anna. [Bog Queen](#) (Bloomsbury \$28.99). The discovery of a woman’s body in an English bog kicks off our **October British Crime Club Pick**. It’s 2018 and American forensic scientist Dr. Agnes Linstrom is tasked with identifying the remains, which are uncannily well-preserved. Though initially believed to be a murder victim from 1961, the body turns out to date back more than two millennia. Agnes needs more time to provide answers about who the woman was, but her work is complicated by interventions from a peat moss company eager to resume its harvesting in the area, and from environmental activists calling for a stop to Agnes’s forensic digging. The chapters alternate between the perspectives of Agnes and the long-dead woman, a young druid leader who travels from her village near the bog to a settlement ruled by a king who has welcomed Roman influence, sometime around 50 BCE. As the druid returns home, she is badly wounded by a rival leader. Eventually, Agnes determines these wounds were not the cause of the druid’s death. Part of the novel’s thrill comes from the way in which North leaves the rest of the mystery for the reader to piece together, and Agnes’s partial access to the truth is made even more poignant through the masterful depiction of how painfully out of sync she is with other people.

True: When a woman’s skull turned up in Lindow Moss in May 1983, police thought they knew who put it there. So did their suspect, Peter Reyn-Bardt. He quickly confessed to killing his wife more than 20 years earlier, dismembering her body, and scattering her remains in the bog in northern England. Then things got weird. The skull, it turned out, couldn’t belong to Reyn-Bardt’s wife—it was nearly 2,000 years old. Weirder still: eight months after Reyn-Bardt recanted his confession but was convicted anyway, another set of remains was discovered in Lindow Moss. These belonged to a man who died sometime between 2 BCE and 119 CE and may have been stabbed, strangled, or beaten to death—possibly even all three.

The apparent solution to one mystery had brought into focus an even bigger, and much older, one. Lindow Woman and Lindow Man, as they came to be known, were the latest in a string of startling archaeological discoveries made in northern European peat bogs, whose anaerobic conditions can keep human tissue from decaying. Some bog bodies, many of which bear signs of violent death, are so well-preserved it almost looks as if they’re sleeping.

Like any good journalist or novelist, Anna North, who is both, knows a great story when she hears one. “The mistaken identity part of it was just so interesting to me,” she says, adding, “Agnes has a thirst for knowledge that I’m unable to not be compelled by.” The same might be said of the druid, as well as North’s other main characters.

Miller, Philip. [The Diary of Lives](#) (Soho \$29.95). Fearless free-lance reporter Shona Sandison might be about to get her biggest

scoop yet in this book that braids together three interconnected story lines. At the outset, Shona receives a U.K. Media Award nomination for her exposé of the government’s plans to pass the Great British Freedom Act, which would undermine Scottish autonomy. Soon afterward, Shona’s anonymous source for that story sends her a cryptic message: “Find Grendel.” Meanwhile, Shona’s friend Hector Stricken—a media officer for the government’s Capacity and Resilience department—is accidentally included in a virtual discussion about a shadowy operation called Grendel, leaving him afraid that he’s learned something he shouldn’t have. As both Shona and Hector work to uncover what Grendel is and what threats it might pose, Miller weaves in diary entries from an unnamed intelligence agent, which may hold important clues about the operation, though the agent admits much of what they write may be untrue. Fans of Mick Herron, this is for you.

Penny, Louise. [The Black Wolf](#) (St Martins \$30). It’s a good idea to read the preceding book, [The Grey Wolf](#) (\$19), before diving into this. Several weeks ago, Chief Inspector Armand Gamache of the Sûreté du Québec and his team uncovered and stopped a domestic terrorist attack in Montréal, arresting the person behind it. A man they called the Black Wolf. But their relief is short-lived. In a sickening turn of events, Gamache has realized that plot, as horrific as it was, was just the beginning. Perhaps even a deliberate misdirection. One he fell into. Did he in fact arrest the Black Wolf, or are the bad actors still out there? Armand is appalled to think his mistake has allowed their conspiracy to grow, to gather supporters. Because he is still recovering from wounds received in stopping the first attack, he is confined to the village of Three Pines, leading a covert investigation from there. He must be careful not to let the Black Wolf know he has recognized his mistake. In a quiet church basement, he and his senior agents Beauvoir and Lacoste, pore over what little evidence they have. Two notebooks. A few mysterious numbers on a tattered map of Québec. And a phrase repeated by the person they had called the Grey Wolf. A warning... *In a dry and parched land where there is no water.*

Rankin, Zoe. [The Vanishing Place](#) (Viking \$30). “A young girl, starving and covered with blood, turns up in a general store in a remote village deep in New Zealand. She blurts out her name — Anya — but refuses to say anything else. Then the phone rings for Effie, a police officer who fled that very village under terrifying circumstances 17 years earlier and is now in Scotland. An old friend, Lewis, is on the line with some haunting news: The girl, he says, looks just Effie, and it’s a good bet they’re from the same blighted family. Does this mean that Effie will feel compelled to return home to face up to the unsettling (to say the least) events of her own childhood? Of course it does. But Rankin skillfully finds new ways to plumb this familiar scenario, pulling us back to harrowing events of 2001, and then forward to 2025, as present-day Effie pieces together how her imperfect memories — a mother who died young, a violent father, a life off the grid — are connected to Anya’s plight. *The Vanishing Place* is a reminder that memory is slippery, that people are capable of both unspeakable cruelty and unbelievable heroism and that the reader shouldn’t jump to conclusions about the characters too soon. It’s about the lure of the landscape, too.”—*NYTBR*

Ryan, Tom. [We Had a Hunch](#) (Atlantic \$27). Canadian Ryan enthralled me with this maze of murder, intrigue, and suspense

where everything you think you and the sleuths knew is continually upended. 25 years ago three teens, twin sisters Alice and Samantha Van Dyne and their hacker friend Joey O'Day became a version of Nancy Drew and the Hardy Boys when their investigations helped the twins' father, the Edgar Mills, Massachusetts, Chief of Police, arrest a local serial killer. The Chief lost his life, the SK named "The Janitor," went to prison, Alice mourned her boyfriend also killed, and Samantha has been riddled with guilt for taking their father's gun when she and Alice went to confront The Janitor, leaving dad defenseless. And now a new murder, inspired or copy cat, strikes in Edgar Mills bringing the three sleuths (and more players) together again. Joey has made his fortune in tech, Alice has married the surviving brother of her teenage crush, and Samantha, living in Hollywood, is adrift after her role as a reality-TV star ended. And another high school friend is now the Chief of Police. The new investigation forces everyone to reassess what happened in the past and to confront the present in ways that you, the reader, cannot anticipate. No spoilers but this exceptional story underlines key themes we must all address. Highly recommended.

"For anyone who misses the adrenaline of staying up late on a school night huddled under the covers with Nancy Drew or The Hardy Boys, Tom Ryan gives you all the thrills and nostalgia... and skips the coziness entirely. These grown-up teen detectives live in the real world, with all its ugliness and fear and regret."

Schaumburg, Amie. [Murder by the Book](#) (Mira Books \$30). Enter Dark Academia. Two dead students. A coded reference to Shakespeare. And the promise of darker things to come. Near a small college campus, a student is found strangled in an abandoned barn on the outskirts of town. She's been posed to look like a painting of Ophelia from *Hamlet*, the scene taunting the police with a message they don't understand. Detective Ian Carter is known as a straitlaced cop, but seeing the girl's body leaves him shaken and uncertain of where to turn—until a chance meeting with a charmingly awkward literature professor ends with her accidentally seeing, and solving, a clue left by the killer. Professor Emma Reilly knows that the books she loves might hold the key to unraveling the killer's crimes now that a second murder has been discovered....

Stevens, Chevy. [The Hitchhikers](#) (St Martins \$29) is a road-trip-gone-wrong thriller. It follows Tom and Alice, youngish spouses from Seattle who plan to drive a rented RV across Canada to the 1976 Quebec summer Olympics. Devastated by the death of their infant son, they hope that the change of scenery might reignite their dying marriage. While in British Columbia, Tom and Alice meet a crunchy young couple named Ocean and Blue and invite them to their campsite for dinner. Soon, the older pair start feeling pangs of parental affection for the younger duo and welcome them aboard their RV for a few nights. After glimpsing a newspaper headline, however, Alice learns that their guests are actually fugitives named Simon and Jenny, and they're wanted for murder. Before long, she and Tom become hostages in their own (mobile) home, forced at gunpoint to aid the young runaways in evading arrest. "I mean, carjacking is one thing, but with an RV, they literally have a place to stay," Stevens says.

Waters, Paul. [Murder in Moonlit Square](#) (Bedford \$29). A UK import takes you to Old Delhi. When semi-retired Irish nun Sister Agatha Murphy meets Avtar Mehta round the back of his historic

Delhi hotel, they form an instant bond over a sneaky smoke and good gossip. Then a street robbery outside the hotel, a dead body inside it, and the disappearance of a pilgrim guest bring the local police to the hotel, determined to close their cases quickly, and with them the Delhi Haveli Hotel. Sister Agatha and Avtar must race to stay one step ahead of the police, the Indian secret service and a hidden killer – as well as keeping their sense of humour through a terrorism scare in the run up to Christmas on the colourful streets of old Delhi.

\* Yates, Christopher J. [The Rabbit Club](#) (Hanover Square \$30). Yates revisits stiff-collared and secretive Oxford University by chronicling a student's discovery of nefarious deeds there in the mid-1990s. Alistair "Ali" McCain, 18, is the illegitimate son of renowned British rocker Gel McCain, who abandoned him as an infant. After returning to his birth country from California, Ali yearns to join the Saracens, a notorious secret society of upper-crust students. His feminist classmate, Izzy, a love interest, receives an invitation to the society's annual first-week ball. Ali hopes she'll bring him along, but she explains why she plans to decline: "Let's just say I probably haven't been invited because the rich boys of Oxford are interested in my views on gender and sexuality." Eventually, Ali drops his father's name to one of the Saracens and is invited to join their membership trials. But his realized dream quickly turns into a nightmare, as he comes to suspect that a professor's mysterious death is linked to the group.... Dark academia fans ought to snatch this up.

## NONFICTION

Brooks, David. [How to Know a Person](#) (Random House \$20). "The Art of Seeing Others Deeply and Being Deeply Seen."

Carpenter, Tim. [The Grave Robber](#) (Harper \$29.99). From an anonymous tip, Tim Carpenter—lead investigator of the FBI Art Crime team—uncovers over 40,000 artifacts and remains from around the world that had been stolen by a Midwestern grave robber. Then he and his team begin the long and arduous task of returning these items to their original and rightful owners. This sort of thing is the basis for much crime fiction including Tony Hillerman's Edgar winner *The Thief of Time*.

Chang, Jeff. [Water Mirror Echo: Bruce Lee](#) (Harper \$36). A cultural biography, "both sweeping and intimate, of the legend Bruce Lee, set against the extraordinary, untold story of the rise of Asian America."

Da Empoli, Giuliano. [The Hour of the Predator](#) (Steerforth Press \$16.95). Blending the internationally bestselling author's personal insight with startling historical comparisons to the days of Machiavelli and the Spanish conquest of Mexico, *The Hour of the Predator* is a timely and incisive examination of the shifting power dynamics in global politics, where traditional government institutions find themselves increasingly outmatched by technology billionaires and autocratic strongmen: geopolitical predators who shape the world through brute force, ceaseless deception, and chaotic disruption. I feel we are reverting to the kind of monarchies portrayed by Philippa Gregory in her look at the Court of Henry VIII reviewed above.

Fatsis, Stefan. [Unabridged: The Thrill of \(And Threat to\) the Modern Dictionary](#) (Grove \$30). "In this striking account, journalist Fatsis (*Word Freak*) explores the history and current state of the dictionary industry. Embedding himself within



Merriam-Webster's office as a 'lexicographer-in-training,' he not only sifts through sprawling archives of citation slips that record multigenerational debates over the definitions of words, but strives to convince his editor to enter words like *alt-right* and *microaggression* into Merriam-Webster's hallowed pages. The book acquires an unexpectedly wide-ranging scope as Fatsis unearths contentious, centuries-long quibbles over gender-neutral pronouns—one suggestion from 1884: *thon*—and visits fanatical collectors like the 'doyenne of dictionaries' Madeline Kripke, whose extensive collection, stuffed inside her Greenwich Village apartment, includes studies on words used by 'tramps, hobos, and the unhoused.' The author also probes the many controversies provoked by swear words and slurs and recollects how a citation he entered for *sheeple*, drawn from a negative review of an iPhone case, caused a kerfuffle among Apple devotees. Fatsis portrays the dictionary industry as dedicated to maintaining its rigor and excellence but, especially with its many recent layoffs and closures (as well as the surprise prominence of its trolling social media presence), also constantly in flux—much as the language it catalogs remains 'slippery and mutable and forever collapsing in on itself.'"

Wordsmiths, I draw your attention to the new novel by Julie Dent above in Hardcover.

Grant, Rosie. [To Die For: A Cookbook of Gravestone Recipes](#) (Harper \$24.99). Some families have chosen to remember their loved ones through the dishes they made and the food that brought comfort to those around them by immortalizing their recipes on their gravestones. Rosie Grant, the creator behind @GhostlyArchive, has been searching out and documenting this interesting phenomenon. In *To Die For*, Rosie collects 40 recipes she's found across the globe, carved into headstones or associated with a grave that has a story to share.

Harjo, Joy. [Girl Warrior](#) (Norton \$21.99). The poet laureate writes of her coming of age despite the obstacles she encountered.

Hoffman, Reid. [Superagency: What Could Possibly Go Right with our AI Future](#) (Atria \$32). Judge for yourself if this tech mogul makes a successful case for AI's potential.

King, Charles. [Every Valley](#) (Knopf \$20). With the holidays coming up here's a look at the troubled times that helped shape Handel's *Messiah* and its reception then and since.

O'Malley, Sheila. [Frankenstein: Written and Directed By Guillermo del Toro](#) (Hyperion \$75). The publisher writes: "This stunning volume offers an extensive behind-the-scenes look at the creative genius of del Toro and his collaborators—including his all-star cast: Oscar Isaac, Jacob Elordi, Mia Goth, Christoph Waltz and more—and showcases breathtaking concept art, an array of period-specific props, locations, costumes, and deep insights into the filmmaking process. Discover the visionary interpretations of classic characters, the meticulous craftsmanship that brings them to life, and the rich thematic layers that define this reimaging of Mary Shelley's timeless tale."

Orlean, Susan. [Joyride](#) (Avid Reader \$30 Signed). This is a memoir that offers a master class in nonfiction writing and an indelible portrait of a bygone era of magazine journalism in this excellent personal history "Self-effacing for someone of her stature, and self reflective of the joy and toll writing brings and takes from a writer, Orlean opens up her life and the immense curiosity she has for the world in ways that make you laugh, cry,

and realize that writers like her are deserving of high praise and respect in a literary world moving too quickly to mediocrity and flash-in-the-pan bestsellers about celebrities."

Sobel, Dava. [The Elements of Marie Curie](#) (\$20). The story of the scientist's life and work plus that of the many young women who trained under her and launched their own careers in science.

## OUR OCTOBER LARGE PAPERBACK PICKS

\* Bowen, Rhys. [We Three Queens](#) (\$19). It's late 1936, and King Edward, Lady Georgiana Rannoch's cousin David, is in turmoil, having fallen in love with the scandalously divorced and even more scandalously American Wallis Simpson. He wants to marry her. Edward confides in his dear friend Darcy, himself an agent of the Crown and Georgie's husband, and the couple agrees to hide Wallis in their home while Edward decides his fate. But unbeknownst to Georgie and Darcy, Sir Hubert, the owner of the estate where they and their baby son lives, has given a film crew permission to shoot a motion picture about Henry the Eighth and Anne Boleyn on the grounds. Trying to keep Mrs. Simpson hidden while raising a newborn is stress which rises to new levels when one of the stars of the film is found murdered.... Rhys signs the next chapter [From Cradle to Grave](#) (Berkley \$30) here November 18.

\* Herron, Mick. [Down Cemetery Road Deluxe Edition](#) (Soho \$19.95). Herron's first novel, published long before his *Slow Horses* series, is a gem I praised then. It begins with a dinner party and then an explosion rips through the leafy Oxford suburb Sarah Tucker calls home. In the aftermath, a house now stands devastated, with two adults dead and a young girl missing. Frustrated by the police, who seem more interested in keeping the neighbors from rubbernecking than in searching for the missing child, Sarah becomes obsessed with finding her, and enlists the help of Oxford private investigator Zoë Boehm. But their search reveals more secrets than answers. As Zoë and Sarah draw closer to the truth, they are caught in a web of conspiracy and come up against government forces, cold-blooded mercenaries and vengeful loners. Zoe is a great sleuth and I am glad she is getting a second life.

Johnson, Sara E. [Bone Chilling](#) (Poisoned Pen \$17.99). We are back in New Zealand with American forensics ace Alex Glock. She's spending a ski weekend with boyfriend DI Bruce Horne and his two daughters, and she couldn't be more terrified. An entire weekend trying to win over a sullen teenager and a preteen with obvious loyalties to Mom? She's more comfortable almost sliding to her death on an unstable glacier. When she indeed finds herself dangling in a crevasse waiting for the experts to rescue her after a skull is given up by a melting glacier, she discovers a pelvis (wearing a red Speedo!) frozen in the ice, and the heart-breaking task of identifying multiple remains and bringing closure to families begins. Once safely back on terra firma, awaiting the arrival of Bruce and his dreaded daughters, Alexa follows the smell of smoke to a nearby pizza joint which has been completely destroyed by fire. When a body is discovered in the smoldering ruins, Alexa splits her time between fire and ice, working to identify the two dead....

Lupica, Mike. [Robert B Parker's Hot Property](#) (\$19). Boston defense attorney Rita Fiore has come on to Spenser in lots of ways over the years, without success, but never before by getting shot. As she takes two steps forward and one back at Mass

General, Spenser and his wingman, Hawk—aided willingly by the police and a lot less willingly by everyone else—look for a motive for her drive-by shooting. Shannon Miles, the TV news anchor whose sexual harassment suit against co-anchor Brian Tully was shot down once Rita took Tully’s case? But Spenser, looking beyond the obvious, focuses on Rita’s clandestine relationship with Nicholas Drummond, whose meteoric rise as the boy wonder of the state Senate was cut short by his accidental drowning off Castle Island in South Boston last September, before the record snowfalls began. Or was it really accidental? Lupica’s new Spenser [Robert B Parker’s Showdown](#) (Penguin \$32) will be with us Signed for pub date November 25.

Lynch, Christina. [Pony Confidential](#) (\$19). I loved this delightful and imaginative story in which a hilariously grumpy pony must save the only human he’s ever loved after discovering she stands accused of a murder he knows she didn’t commit. Pony has been passed from owner to owner for longer than he can remember. Fed up, he busts out and goes on a cross-country mission to reunite with Penny, the little girl whom he was separated from and hasn’t seen in years. Penny, now an adult, is living an ordinary life when she gets a knock on her door and finds herself in handcuffs, accused of murder and whisked back to the place she grew up. Her only comfort when the past comes back to haunt her is the memory of her precious, rebellious pony. And—here he is.

McCloskey, David. [The Seventh Floor](#) (\$18.99) is a knockout spy novel by a fast-rising star. Six CIA officers. Dear friends and cherished enemies. For a quarter century they have stolen other people’s secrets. Now their next targets will be their toughest yet — each other. A Russian arrives in Singapore with a secret to sell. When the Russian is killed and Sam Joseph, the CIA officer dispatched for the meet, goes missing, operational chief Artemis Procter is made a scapegoat for the disaster and run out of the service. Months later, Sam appears at Procter’s doorstep with an explosive secret: there is a Russian mole burrowed deep within the highest ranks of the CIA. As Procter and Sam investigate, they arrive at a shortlist of suspects made up of both Procter’s closest friends and fiercest enemies. The hunt requires Procter to dredge up her checkered past in the service of the CIA, placing the pair in the sights of a savvy Russian spymaster who will protect Moscow’s mole in Langley at all costs. What happens when friendships forged by sweat and blood—from the Farm to Afghanistan and the executive “Seventh Floor” of CIA’s Langley headquarters—are put to the ultimate test? What can we truly know about the people we love the most?

Rankin, Ian. [Midnight and Blue](#) (\$18.99). Nominated for Scotland’s 2025 McIlvanney Award this ingenious twist on former Edinburgh copper John Rebus’ career catching bad guys puts Rebus, stripped of his badge and on his own, inside a cell in Scotland’s most infamous prison, the very prison where a convict had been murdered in his own locked cell. Will Rebus resist his ingrained impulse to investigate amidst corrupt prison guards, scheming criminals, and maybe bad cops? Hmm... how do you find a killer in a place filled with them?

Rosen, Lev AC. [Rough Pages](#) (\$18). The gay community has bigger problems than nothing to read when a bookstore’s owners go missing. “It’s 1953 San Francisco, and Evander “Andy” Mills, a gay ex-cop turned private eye, has been summoned by a concerned friend: A bookstore that sells queer books has

inexplicably closed for a week. Did the post office tip off the feds about the store’s monthly book service, which sends “obscene material” through the mail? And why is there no sign of the shop’s two owners, who seem to have vanished along with their list of book-service subscribers, all of whom are ripe for exposure or blackmail if their names get into the wrong hands? As Andy starts working the case, his search for the truth coincides with a need to conceal his own truth, including the scandalous reason he was kicked off the police force. The novel plays like a counterpoint to the muscularity of iconic 1950s noir.”—*Kirkus Reviews*

Rosenfelt, David. [The More the Terrier](#) (\$18). Yes, yes, dogs and Christmas. But fans will know that no one does low-rent courtroom drama like Rosenfelt. Truthfully the murder/court case isn’t loaded with surprises but I always enjoy an Andy Carpenter for the defense, despite him being professionally retired, for the holidays. See Signed Books for a super cute pup inspiring this year’s tale.

Another book for the season: Goldberg, Tod. [Eight Very Bad Nights](#) (\$18.95). Perfect, a collection of twisted Hanukkah capers, one for each night, offering old-school slapstick comedy, hardboiled noir, gritty procedurals, and poignant reminders of the meaning of Hanukkah. Stories re by Ivy Pochoda, David L. Ulin, James D.F. Hannah, Lee Goldberg, Nikki Dolson, J.R. Angelella, Liska Jacobs, Gabino Iglesias, Stefanie Leder, and Jim Ruland, plus a foreword and story by Tod Goldberg.

Sandford, John. [Lethal Prey](#) (\$19). We’re in Minnesota with Lucas Davenport and Virgil Flowers. 20 years earlier Doris Grandfelt died in a brutal stabbing as we see in the first chapter. We also see who and how. And now Doris’ sister Lara, a woman with drive and assets, learns she has breast cancer. The single thing she can best do is try to find her sister’s killer before she dies, so she uploads all the information she has accumulated onto every true crime website in the world along with promising a \$5 million dollar reward for information leading to the killer. This unleashes a horde of true-crime bloggers looking for any leads, but also for clicks to hook more followers. These guys are extremely competitive and basically without boundaries. So are Lucas and Virgil who are called in to examine any new leads although Virgil is mostly interested in working on his new novel. Even they are surprised by the true crime community’s actions. But then.... Of course we readers know what there is to uncover, so we can enjoy how it rolls for Lucas and Virgil.

Winstead, Ashley. [This Book Will Bury Me](#) (\$17.99) interrogates the true crime culture. It also “nods to the genre of dark academia and feels like both a satire of and a homage to true crime. On its surface, it’s the story of unsolved murder—the deaths of three college girls in Delphine, Idaho—and the true crime fans who take justice into their own hands. The compulsively readable story shows how things can be hidden in plain sight, even when the world is watching a crime unfold. Written with footnotes, narrative gaps, and a narrative voice that is unreliable to say the least, the novel spins in unpredictable ways that will keep readers guessing at every police misstep and each personal revelation along the way. Between the cheeky humor of TV’s *Only Murders in the Building* and the grim, psychological recasting of facts through fiction and memory (as exemplified by Gillian Flynn’s *Gone Girl*), Winstead’s novel breathes life into stories that, the narrator hints, might be better off dead and buried.”—*LJ Starred Review*

## MORE IN LARGE PAPERBACKS

Bell, Jay S. [Welcome to Cottonmouth](#) (Blackstone \$18.99).

What does the US government do with spies and special operators when they pass their expiration date? They retire them to a small town deep in the Piney Woods of East Texas, where they're certain to cause no trouble. A collection of broken spies, former double agents, and retired operators lives in secrecy, under the watchful eye of the government in the small, deep-woods town of Cottonmouth. Devlin Mahoney is the de facto mayor of these special citizens, charged with keeping them in seclusion, hidden from the world, which he does from the office of the town's only motel. But the peace of this sleepy village is shattered when a pair of women, on the run from a vicious criminal, drops into Mahoney's lap....

Brennan, Allison. [See How They Hide](#) (Mira \$18.99). See Signed books for the simultaneous hardcover.

Brown, Rita Mae. [Time Will Tell](#) (\$18). Jane "Sister" Arnold has been Master of Foxhounds for northern Virginia's Jefferson Hunt for almost 40 years and still loves every minute of it whether organizing a joint session with her friends at Bull Run Hunt, leading her own Jefferson Hunt Club's fox hunting season, and looking after her beloved hounds and horses. She and her friend Tootie Harris are helping to lure home hunt club member Cindy Chandler's two escaped cows, Clytemnestra and Orestes, when they discover an expensive watch carelessly abandoned on an overgrown path. Days later, a young man is murdered, one with seemingly no connection to the pricey jewelry or a life of crime. His mother is distraught, and Sister vows to find the murderer—and of course there is no such thing as coincidence.

Brown, Sandra. [Blood Moon](#) (\$19.99). Detective John Bowie of the Auclair, Louisiana, police department is known among his colleagues for his strong opinions. His vocal doubts about the arrest of Billy Oliver, a young Black man, in the disappearance of 18-year-old Crissy Mellin—which led to Oliver's suicide—has put Bowie in direct conflict with his superior officer, Lt. Tom Barker. Three and a half years after Oliver's death, a still-haunted Bowie is ringed in by Beth Collins, producer for the popular true crime show *Crisis Point*, in a bar. Beth is developing an episode based on what she believes could be major evidence tying Crissy's abduction to a series of similar crimes, all of which occurred under blood moons. After Bowie agrees to help Beth relitigate Crissy's case, Barker fires him, giving Bowie the freedom to handle things on his own terms. From their first meeting, Bowie's and Beth's chemistry is palpable, and Brown spices up their sleuthing. Veteran Brown is a deliciously smooth stylist.

Cahill, Martin. [Audition for the Fox](#) (Cahill Publishing \$16.95) juggles time travel, folklore, and resistance with a trickster's deftness. "Nesi has already failed 96 of the 99 possible auditions to become an acolyte for a Pillar—she even failed the test of her own great-grandfather, the Bison. So in desperation, she auditions for the Fox of Tricks, T'sidaan, only to be sent back in time to the beginning of the Zemini occupation of her homeland. Her task? To put the rebellion into motion by somehow undermining the Wolfhound's soldiers and inspiring the prisoners at Outpost Pakaal to act." Nebula Award winner John Wiswel raves: "Come for the trickster god shenanigans, stay for the powerful themes of resistance. A time-bending adventure in a richly imagined world. This book keeps its full heart on display at all times."

Child, Lee. [Safe Enough: And Other Stories](#) (Penzler \$17.95). While Child's new book—see Signed Books—has an original Reacher story, when Lee turned Reacher over to his brother Andrew he explored other characters. And here is some 20 of that short fiction collected in one volume. We still have 11 of [the hardcover edition](#) (\$28.99) Signed for us by Lee.

\* Clare, Alys. [The Chrysanthemum Tiger](#) (\$18.99) combines historical fiction with some magic. Dr. Gabriel Taverner, who can't resist the lure of the sea, sets sail on the merchant ship *Luipaard*. The trip could make him wealthy, but adventure is what he craves. The ship is headed for Japan, and he gets that adventure when he finds out that the ship is headed for Japan, which has been visited by hardly any Europeans except the Portuguese. The ever-curious Gabriel is both fascinated and dismayed when he realizes the ship will stay in Japan a year or more. Romeu Silvestre, the Portuguese merchant they're dealing with in a port town near Nagasaki, was married to the daughter of Aroto Tagauchi, a powerful man who's whispered to own a magical tiger—perhaps made of gold—whose claws can turn into chrysanthemums. When the ship departs Gabriel unwittingly takes some magic with him. And back home he finds that the physician who took his place, and was much disliked, has been found murdered in a ditch....

\* Doherty, Paul. [Murder's Snare](#) (\$18.99). Normandy, 1358: The Free Company of the 'Via Crucis – the Way of the Cross' sweeps into the peaceful village of Avranches, like the riders from the Apocalypse. London, 1382: Brother Athelstan is summoned to unpick the ugly truth behind a number of killings afflicting the great city. Some carried out like clean, efficient assassinations, all bearing the message 'Justitia Fiat – let there be justice', others inflicting torture and humiliation upon the bodies. But the victims all have one thing in common – they were all once members of Via Crucis. With every new gruesome discovery, Brother Athelstan, with the help of Coroner Cranston, uncovers more clues to a most complicated riddle

Goldberg, Tod. [Eight Very Bad Nights](#) (\$18.95). Perfect, a collection of twisted Hanukkah capers, one for each night, offering old-school slapstick comedy, hardboiled noir, gritty procedurals, and poignant reminders of the meaning of Hanukkah. Stories re by Ivy Pochoda, David L. Ulin, James D.F. Hannah, Lee Goldberg, Nikki Dolson, J.R. Angelella, Liska Jacobs, Gabino Iglesias, Stefanie Leder, and Jim Ruland, plus a foreword and story by Tod Goldberg.

Goldin, A E. [Murder in Constantinople](#) (Steerforth Press \$18.95). The US edition of a UK debut. It begins in 1854 London where young Ben Canaan is focused on adventure rather than being a good Jewish son working in the family business. A chance discovery of an enigmatic letter and the photograph of a beautiful woman send him off to Constantinople, the fabled imperial capital now on the brink of war. His guide is three words: The White Death. His probably ruinous romance leads to a string of grisly murders, kingmaking and conspiracy, poison and politics, bloodshed and betrayals. I am reminded of an even better novel, much beloved and Edgar winning [The Janissary Tree](#) (\$24) by Jason Goodwin, available by request. Highly recommended.

Levine, Paul. [Midnight Burning](#) (Amphorae Publishing \$18.95). This our **October Historical Fiction Paperback Club Pick** is a tough read in many ways but important history. Once past



Chapter 2 set in 1937 in the Santa Monica Mountains you will race along. “Inspired by historical events and the real-life friendship between Chaplin and Einstein, Paul Levine has carefully crafted an intriguing and in many ways timely historical thriller that immerses readers in the world of 1930s Los Angeles starting in 1931 and moving forward and including Douglas Fairbanks, Chaplin’s neighbor, among other key players. When the two friends uncover a wild Fascist scheme, which includes the assassination of Hollywood’s biggest stars, they fight back with nothing but their ingenuity, raw courage, and the fierce resolve of Georgia Ann Robinson, LAPD’s first Black female officer. Levine offers an excellent post-War follow up plus the ultimate fates of his real life characters.

“Paul Levine brings the snappy humor of his terrific Jake Lassiter series to the ingenious pairing of real-life friends Charlie Chaplin and Albert Einstein on a roller coaster ride to save America from a fascist threat within its borders.” — Jacqueline Winspear

Klavan, Andrew. [A Woman Underground](#) (\$17.95) is a new adventure for assassin turned English teacher Cameron Winter, a three part narrative filled with really bad people and high stakes.

\* La Plante, Lynda. [Whole Life Sentence](#) (Zaffre \$18.99). This is the final entry in the Jane Tennison series. While she has elbowed her way into an elite team investigating non-domestic murders, there is nothing elite about her first assignments: a missing teenager cold case and an apparent suicide Tennison suspects is, in fact, murder. LaPlante brings readers up to the point in Tennison’s career when the TV series [Prime Suspect](#) began.

Mancarus, Kelly/Kristina. [Rumoured](#) (Bloomsbury \$19.99). I, Harlow Hayes, pop star, am a global sensation adored by millions, and my star only seems to keep rising. My fans say I speak directly to them through my music, that I know who they are. How else could I write such visceral, personal lyrics? They love me, and I love them right back. Then, at the height of my fame, I was arrested on suspicion of murder. The world thinks they know who I am. Do they? The story is told from the perspective of Naomi Barnes, an investigative journalist with a personal interest in the case.

Matsumoto, Seicho. [Tokyo Express](#) (Random House \$17). In a rocky cove at Hakata Bay, the bodies of a young and beautiful couple are discovered. Standing on the cold beach, the police see nothing to investigate: The flush of the couple’s cheeks and the empty juice bottle speak clearly of cyanide, of a lovers’ suicide. But in the eyes of two men, senior detective Torigai Jutaro and Kiichi Mihara, a young gun from Tokyo, something is not quite right. Together, they begin to pick at the knot of a unique and calculated crime.

Murray, James S. [You Better Watch Out](#) (\$18). 48 hours until Christmas, Jessica Kane wakes up with blurred vision, ears ringing, and in excruciating pain. A gash in her head and blood running down her face, the last thing she remembers is going for a run and something or someone hitting her in the head. It doesn’t take her long to realize she is trapped in an unknown, deserted town with five other strangers who share similar stories of being attacked and stranded there. Unsure why and how they got there, she knows one thing for certain, she has to find a way out. That becomes nearly impossible when someone is meticulously orchestrating their deaths, one by one, and the only thing Jessica

can do is watch the life leave their eyes. The fenced-in town is the killer’s very own playground and there’s nowhere left to hide..

\* Nix, DJ. [The Shakespeare Secret](#) (Alcove \$19.99). Mary Herbert, Countess of Pembroke; lute player Emilia Bassano; and illiterate seamstress Jane Daggett have a shared interest in the theater and a mutual disdain for the works performed in the Elizabethan court, most of which portray their female characters as passive and vapid. The trio’s initial conversation inspires Jane to develop the germ of the plot that eventually becomes *The Taming of the Shrew*, which they write together. Emilia suggests they find a man to pose as its playwright, so they can get it staged. Jane has just the person in mind: Will Shakespeare, a player in the Queen’s Men, the acting troop Jane sews costumes for. Will agrees, but as the covert dramatists work to finish the play in time to perform for Queen Elizabeth during a feast the day after Christmas, their gatherings come to the attention of one of the queen’s spies, who suspects the women are conspiring to bring down the monarch. Nix maintains tension throughout, despite readers’ foreknowledge that the plan to ghostwrite Shakespeare’s works will succeed. It’s a well-played take on a long-standing literary mystery.

\* Winters, Mary. [Murder in Season](#) (\$18.99). Lady Amelia Amesbury’s late husband, Edgar, told her he was a wealthy earl only after she agreed to marry him, but his money and position couldn’t cure the illness that took his life only two months later. Bored with her Victorian age widowhood, she’s been writing an advice column under the name Lady Agony while living in London with Edgar’s starchy aunt, Lady Tabitha, and niece, Winifred, whom she loves dearly. Her quiet life is upset by the arrival of her boisterous younger sister, Madge, who’s eager to get away from the inn their family owns where she’s been embroiled in a scandal after breaking a forward young man’s arm. Agreeing to take Madge for the season will certainly make life more interesting, but Amelia never imagines that her sister will be suspected of murder at her first ball.

## OCTOBER SMALL PAPERBACKS

Andrews, Brian/Jeff Wilson. [Tom Clancy Defense Protocol](#) (\$10.99). Jack Ryan #24. US President Jack Ryan faces off against new Chinese President Li Jian Jun, who has devised a secret military operation to take the island nation of Taiwan.

Box, C J. [Battle Mountain](#) (\$10.99). Joe Pickett #25. Nate Romanowski seeks vengeance after a devastating attack, while Joe Pickett teams up with a rookie game warden setting both on separate paths destined to collide at Battle Mountain.

Brown, Graham. [Clive Cussler Desolation Code](#) (\$10.99). NUMA Files #21. While investigating a mass stranding of marine life, Austin and Zavala uncover a mystery involving stolen findings, cryptic messages and a battle against a brilliant machine plotting a global catastrophe.

Cass, Laurie. [Book ‘em, Eddie](#) (\$9.99). Bookmobile Cat #12. When bookmobile librarian Minnie and her cat Eddie discover a dying woman in the woods near twin Victorian homes, Minnie suspects murder despite police doubts and must unravel old secrets and local feuds to uncover the truth behind the mysterious death.

Coben, Harlan. [Stay Close](#) (\$15). Reissue. Three people—a suburban housewife, a talented documentary photographer, and a detective—living lives they never wanted, hiding secrets that

even those closest to them would never suspect, will find that the past doesn't recede ... and that desperation and hunger can lurk behind even the prettiest facades.

DeMille, Nelson. [Blood Lines](#) (\$10.99). Brodie and Taylor #2. Reunited and tasked with investigating the murder of CID Special Agent Harry Vance, Army Criminal Investigation Agents Scott Brodie and Maggie Taylor are immersed in many conflicts and contradictions of modern Germany as they discover Vance's murder is a prelude to a much more sinister event.

Krentz, Jayne Ann. [Shattering Dawn](#) (\$9.99). Lost Night Files #3. When PI Gideon Sweetwater disrupts the kidnapping of Amelia Rivers, they escape and return to the ruins of the hotel where Amelia lost a night to amnesia before gaining powers, desperate to stop a killer and the people who are conducting illegal experiments with a dangerous drug designed to enhance psychic abilities.

Michaels, Fern. [Santa's Secret](#) (\$9.99). Friends since high school, four 30-something women—Francesca, Amy, Rachael, and Nina—reunite for a once-in-a-lifetime Italian adventure filled with tons of Christmas laughter, mischief, great food and even a little romance.

Perry, Carol J. [Sugar and Spite](#) (\$8.99). Witch City #13. While profiling Salem's magical chocolate shop, pregnant journalist Lee Mondello discovers the murdered body of the owner's estranged husband and, with help from her detective spouse, psychic cat and mystical friends, must solve the crime as her long-dormant visions return.

Quigley, Mindy. [At Death's Dough](#) (\$9.99). Deep Dish #5. In snowy Geneva Bay, Wisconsin, pizza chef Delilah O'Leary and her detective boyfriend Calvin Capone stumble onto a century-old mystery tied to his mobster ancestry, unraveling small-town secrets, buried treasure, and a danger that threatens both their love and their lives.

Sanders, Angela M. [Witch and Tell](#) (\$8.99). Witch Way Librarian #7. When librarian-witch Josie Way discovers a corpse that vanishes before help arrives, her unreliable magic, strained romance with the sheriff, and growing list of suspects lead her to a baffling mystery in which secrets run deep and she's the prime suspect.