

BOOKNEWS from

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APRIL IS POETRY MONTH

Store Hours

M-F 10 AM-7 PM Sat 10 AM-6 PM 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.

We also celebrate Pesach, Easter, Earth Day...and Arbor Day.
AND 100 Years of Winnie The Pooh: Pimentel, Annette Bay. [How a Bear Became a Book](#) (see Classics)

SATURDAY APRIL 4 4:00 PM Live Book Launch

Mark Pryor discusses [The Most Mysterious Bookshop in Paris](#) (Kensington \$27)

Hugo Marston opens a bookstore but is still sleuthing—and the murder is a doozy

Mark's audio book publisher will be joining us, a bonus for you audiobook fans

MONDAY APRIL 6 7:00 PM Live Book Launch

John Sandford discusses [Revenge Prey](#) (Penguin \$32)

Lucas Davenport leads a team chasing a team of hit men

TUESDAY APRIL 7 7:00 PM Live Ticketed Event Sold Out
VE Schwab and Cat Clarke writing as Evelyn Clarke discuss [The Ending Writes Itself](#) (Harper \$30)

In a meta mystery, six writers, following the death of their famous host, must compete to finish his final manuscript for a massive payday. While hesitant at first, the competition soon becomes intense, no one is quite who they seem to be, and death stalks his remote private island. A wonderfully twisty mystery and a wickedly satirical look at the world of publishing."

WENESDAY APRIL 7:00 PM Live Event

Shannon Baker is our host

Jess Lourey discusses [The Verdant Cage](#) (Entangled \$22.99)

A Dystopian Young Adult Thriller (for adults too)

Think "Bring Your Teen to the Bookstore"

THURSDAY APRIL 9 7:00 PM Live Event

Ally Condie discusses [The Girls Trip](#) (Grand Central \$29)

This terrific! thriller is perfect for Earth Day Reading as it takes place in a (fictional) National Park in Utah – think Zion or Escalante Parks. Utah is the premier destination for slot canyons in national parks and public lands, featuring famous, narrow, and winding gorges carved into sandstone

"Condie offers a wild, beautiful backdrop to the plot, reminding us that nature, not unlike human passions, can't be controlled or bent to anyone's plan. There's plenty of action, so strap in for a ride."—*Kirkus Reviews*

SATURDAY APRIL 11 10 AM Live Event

Local Author Fair

Come and support independently published authors

SUNDAY APRIL 12 2:00 PM Live Event

A tribute to Anne Perry

Victoria Zackheim discusses [Death Times Seven: A Daniel Pitt Novel](#) (Random House \$30) which follows The Fourth Enemy, the 6th Daniel Pitt

Author and longtime Perry friend Zackheim finished Perry's final novel after Perry died in 2023. Perry was a longtime favorite here and for several years we were hosts to her only events

Zackheim also signs her own mystery: [The Curtain Falls in Paris](#) (\$16.95)

TUESDAY APRIL 14 5:00 PM Virtual Event

CS Harris discusses [When the Wolves Are Silent](#) (Berkley \$30)

Signed books available

1816 London brings Viscount Devlin another devilish investigation

TUESDAY APRIL 14 7:00 PM Virtual Event

Willy Vlautin discusses [The Left and the Lucky](#) (Harper \$25.99)

Signed books available

WEDNESDAY APRIL 15 7:00 PM Ticketed Event

Sadie Kincaid discusses [The Auction](#) (Mira Books \$32)

Deluxe Limited Edition

A Spicy Dark Romance Novel

[Tickets](#): \$35 includes one copy of the book

THURSDAY APRIL 16 7:00 PM Live Book Launch

Spencer Quinn discusses [Cat on a Hot Tin Woof](#) (St Martins \$28)

Chet & Bernie of “the Valley”, that is, Scottsdale, are hired to find a missing cat, an internet sensation called Miss Kitty. A missing witness is a pig

SATURDAY APRIL 17 7:00 PM Live and Virtual

SciFi Friday discusses AG Riddle’s [Labyrinth](#) (\$19.99)

A group of strangers with tinnitus begins seeing numbers—numbers they soon realize form a code that will change the world

SATURDAY APRIL 18 10:30 AM Live and Virtual

Croak & Dagger discusses Robert Thorogood’s [The Marlow Murder Club](#) (\$16.99)

First in a cozy British village mystery series

TUESDAY APRIL 21 7:00 PM Live Book Launch

Douglas & Aletheia Preston discuss [Paradox](#) (Tor Publishing \$30.99)

Cash & Colcord #2, the sequel to [Extinction](#) (\$19.99) and returning us to Colorado wilderness where resurrected Neanderthals are bidding their time....

Our copies are signed by both authors and come with an exclusive extra dust jacket

WEDNESDAY APRIL 22 7:00 PM Live Event

Sulari Gentill is our host

Sally Hepworth discusses [Mad Mabel](#) (St Martins \$29)

A superb and surprising story set in Hepworth’s native Melbourne, Australia

We have one copy of the Australian edition to give away to a book purchaser

THURSDAY APRIL 23 7:00 PM Live Event

Andrew Ludington discusses [Double Shadow: A Splinter Effect Novel](#) (St Martins \$29)

A second mission for Smithsonian Chrono-archaeologist Rabbit Ward sends him back to 68 CE in Judea – a super fun Indiana Jones type thriller

FRIDAY APRIL 23 3:00 PM Live Event

Join Sulari Gentill for afternoon tea

Enjoy a discussion of her work as well as highlights of touring Australia including Tasmania and the Great Bight with Barbara’s photos

FRIDAY APRIL 24 6:00-8:00 PM Live Ticketed Event

A Writers Workshop with Sulari Gentill

Writing settings that are more than a backdrop

Most—perhaps all—novels are set somewhere tangible, even if the location is fictional. But sense of place is not achieved by simply painting the setting like a backdrop to the action. To truly transport readers, it’s necessary to make the location part of both character and plot. Join Sulari Gentill in a workshop that examines how exactly you weave the setting into the narrative in a way that mutually enhances all the arms of storytelling.

[Tickets \\$20 Limit of 20](#)

SATURDAY APRIL 25 Independent Bookstore Day 10 AM-6 PM

Spend \$50, get \$5 off

Spend \$100, get \$10 off

Plus enjoy some special swag, giveaways, and treats

SATURDAY APRIL 25 11:00 AM Live Event

The Cookbook Club discusses [Betty Crocker Found Recipes](#) (Harper \$30)

Vintage comfort food recipes just when we need them

MONDAY APRIL 27 7:00 PM Live Event

Jack Stewart is our host

Brad Taylor discusses [Shadow Strike](#) (Morrow \$32)

This is the 20th Pike Logan Taskforce thriller with a plot hitting current events big time

Our copies come with an exclusive set of postcards showing scenes from Argentina where most of the action takes place

TUESDAY APRIL 28 7:00 P Live Event

Olivia Fierro is our host

Catherine Mack discusses [This Weekend Doesn’t End Well for Anyone](#) (St Martins \$28)

Author Eleanor Dash copes with murder at a mystery writing conference in the Bahamas

WENESDAY APRIL 29 5:00 PM Virtual Event

Patrick and Jen Johans are hosts

Jordan Harper discusses [A Violent Masterpiece](#) (Little Brown \$29)

Our April Hardboiled Crime Pick

WEDNESDAY APRIL 29 7:00 PM Live Event

Joseph Moldover discusses his debut [To the End of Reckoning](#) (Mysterious Press \$26.95) which was, a month early, our March First Mystery Subscription Club Pick with a wildly original narrator and voice

THURSDAY APRIL 30 7:00 PM Live Event

Hardboiled Crime discusses Jim Thompson’s [The Getaway](#) (\$19.99)

A classic heist thriller – the film starred Steve McQueen

FRIDAY MAY 1 7:00 PM Live Event

We host a Memorial Gathering for author and newspaperman Jon Talton

SATURDAY MAY 2 2:00 PM Live Event

[Cozy Con: Choose Your Own Cozy](#) – see our Calendar for authors and details. This is always a good shopping afternoon for Mother’s Day

OUR SUBSCRIPTION CLUB PICKS FOR APRIL

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

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

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

British Crime Club One Unsigned hardcover or paperback per month

Clarke, Evelyn. [The Ending Writes Itself](#)

Cozy Crimes Club One Unsigned hardcover or paperback per month

Bannalec, Jean-Luc. [The Secrets of the Abbey](#)

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

Petrie, Nick. [The Dark Time](#)

First Mystery Club One Signed First Printing per month
TBA

Hardboiled/Noir Club One Signed or unsigned hardcover or paperback per month

Harper, Jordan. [A Violent Masterpiece](#)

Historical Fiction Club One First Printing per month

Perry, Anne. [Death Times Seven: A Daniel Pitt Novel](#)

Historical Fiction Paperback Club One Unsigned paperback per month

Heartfield, Kate. [The Tapestry of Time](#)

Notable New Fiction Club One Signed First Printing per month

Day, Felicia. [The Lost Daughter of Sparta](#)

Romance and Relationships Club One unsigned hardcover or paperback per month

Liese, Chloe. [Happy Ending](#)

SOME SIGNED BOOKS FOR APRIL

Baldacci, David. [Hope Rises](#) (Grand Central \$32). Closing the open ending of [Nash Falls](#) (\$30 Signed), we find Walter Nash, now operating under the alias Dillon Hope, is a man transformed—physically powerful, deadly skilled, and driven by revenge against the global criminal mastermind Victoria Steers, who destroyed everything he loved. To take her down, he must infiltrate her inner circle, proving his loyalty while navigating a dangerous web of deception. But as he draws closer, Nash finds himself unexpectedly drawn to Steers, and what he uncovers will upend everything he thought he knew.

Brown, Taylor. [Wolvers](#) (St Martins \$29). Out in April, Signed here in May. It's a perfect read for April 22, Earth Day.

Award-winning author Brown presents a suspenseful, thrillingly-written tale set at the burning edge of today's Southwest, where once-extinct wolves have returned, the land is tinder-dry and fragile, and desperate men seek to reclaim what they believe is theirs to rule.. "An intense thriller set in the American Southwest. The classic Western anti hero, Trace Temple, discovers what tests us is truly the making of us. Brown once again brings us a beautiful story of survival and the animals that show us the way. She Wolf pack leader, One-Eleven is now one of my favorite characters in literature"—Indie Next.

Clarke, Evelyn. [The Ending Writes Itself](#) (Harper \$30). Our **April British Crime Club Pick** is a debut by this new writing duo of seasoned pros, both much acclaimed for their work. And as publishing aces they are well situated to send up the industry in this wicked, razor-sharp satire. To do that, they drill deeply into each of the authors invited to a weekend at the private and remote Scottish island estate of legendary bestseller Arthur Fletch to such depth that while disparaging the six's characters and talents, some sympathy is elicited for each. Which is needed. This is a thriller, right? So someone has to die. And someone has to be a killer. Thus *The Ending Writes Itself* is a locked-room (ok, castle) mystery set inside the business of writing and publishing.

In its way, meta fiction. It's a bit of a stretch to call it British but I think of Alice Feeney and of Ann Cleeves' islands mysteries here.

Arthur Fletch is famous for his iconic protagonists, the latest being his sleuth Petrarch. And the aging Fletch has announced that this fifth Petrarch will be his final book. He's been holed up on Skelbrae in his grand castle working on the long overdue manuscript. And oddly now he's invited five struggling midlist authors and one yet unpublished writer to spend the weekend on Skelbrae. When they arrive, his terrifying agent and his editor break a surprise: Arthur Fletch is dead, his final Petrarch is unfinished. and, desperate, his agent and editor have devised a cunning plan. The six invitees are given 72 hours to craft the final pages of his book. The reward will be huge for the wining ghostwriter—but first, of course, they also have to sign an ironclad NDA. What could go wrong?

And that is what the remainder of this fiendish and addictive thriller lays out. I can truly say, having just finished it, that you cannot put it down. **We can ship a signed copy anywhere so order one since the event is sold out.**

Condie, Ally. [The Girls Trip](#) (Grand Central \$29). Hope, Ash, and Caro met at an online book club. Over the past two years, they've been there for each other in every way—except in person. When each of their lives reach a crossroads, they decide to meet in real life at the gorgeous Sonnet Resort at Eden National Park. Hope, an actress, has become entirely too famous and needs to get away from it all. Ash, a successful online entrepreneur, isn't sure what has happened to her marriage. Caro, a doctor, has lost a patient and doesn't know if she wants to carry on or start all over.

This is a terrific book in so many ways, not least for the Southwestern canyon country landscape but also for the way Condie handles the characters. Individual stories, braiding them into a glorious whole. I loved it.

Day, Felicia. [Lost Daughter of Sparta](#) (Gallery \$28) is a graphic novel and since they are more and more popular I risk it for our

April Notable New Fiction Pick. Because I am old I remember how much the illustrations enhanced the stories of the Oz Books, the *Flash Gordon Little Big Books* my uncle collected in the 1930s, the classics illustrated by Howard Pyle like *Ivanhoe*, and of course the success of the Sherlock Holmes stories in the *Strand Magazine* illustrated by the incomparable Sidney Paget. In short, everything old becomes new again.

And here it's a tale from antiquity, from Homer. Actor Day and cartoonist MacColl spin an ancient Greek myth into an enchanting and unexpected love story. MacColl's fluid art works hints of ancient Greek design into its stylized linework and clay-red spot color, and the characters are appealingly human—including the gods and monsters.

Helen of Troy. Clytemnestra. Timandra. Three sisters, infamously cursed by the goddess Aphrodite to betray their husbands, are known the world over thanks to Homer. But few know about the fourth sister: Philonoe. Lost to historical record, ancient texts say she had a different fate than her sisters. But why and how did this happen? She comes to life in "a miracle: a great modern love story with the power of an ancient myth. Thrilling, funny, and gorgeous, it could sit next to books by Madeline Miller."

Harper, Jordan. [A Violent Masterpiece](#) (Little Brown \$29). In the dark, grimy underbelly of Los Angeles, three unlikely people — a defense attorney, a live-streaming influencer and a concierge to the fantastically rich — join forces to investigate a serial killer. Our bookseller and host Jen Johans writes: "Sometimes life reminds you it started with a lightning strike." And sometimes great fiction does too. A noir stylist with a literary bent and a philosophical soul, there's nobody in the crime genre who writes quite like Jordan Harper. Dubbed 'your crime writer's favorite crime writer' by S.A. Cosby, Harper transfixes readers with the sensory overload of his trademark viscerally urgent, creatively dazzling, yet spare prose. Here he is introducing us to a livestreaming nightcrawler cruising the streets looking for blood to sell, from the very opening of this very dark story, Harper paints a lurid picture of L.A. as 'Frankenstein's monster' or 'America with its back up against the wall.' Luring us back into the snarling web of deadly Hollywood excess that fueled his critically acclaimed black bag PR thriller *Everybody Knows*," we follow a central trio of unforgettable characters whose lives intersect as they each unravel a different scandalous thread of the tapestry that is the rich, famous, corrupt, and depraved. With a tone that's as cynical as it is cinematic, this eye-opening, eerily timely, unsettling thriller isn't for the faint of heart, but it's sure to keep edgy noir fans eagerly turning pages into the night.'

* Harris, CS. [When the Wolves Are Silent](#) (Berkley \$30). When a notorious young aristocrat is burned alive on a windswept hill popular with neo-Druids, former cavalry officer Sebastian St. Cyr, Viscount Devlin, finds himself plunged into a murder investigation shadowed by tales of ancient human sacrifices and long-buried secrets. The victim, Marcus Toole, was the only son and heir of a prominent nobleman. His closest friend—Sebastian's own nephew, Bayard—claims to have passed out drunk before the attack and remembers nothing. But when Sebastian and his brilliant wife, Hero, delve deeper into the sordid activities of Bayard and his friends, they come to realize that Bayard may not be as innocent as he pretends. Following a tangled trail that leads from a disaffected former soldier-turned-highwayman to a beauti-

ful, courageous journalist and a Jamaican-born fencing master with ties to a radical political movement, Sebastian begins to suspect that Bayard and his friends are being targeted in revenge, by victims who believe they have no other recourse. Then two more of Bayard's friends are killed, their murders staged to echo the ritual sacrifices of the ancient Celts. With the palace shaken by the fear of riots and one horrifying death following another, Sebastian must race to stop a ruthless plot that threatens the lives of innocents and could rip his troubled nation apart.

Havill, Steven F. [Reverse](#) (Severn \$29.99). Can it really be the 28th Posadas County Novel by our longtime friend who writes so beautifully of southern New Mexico, the Boot Heel? It is a place so real to me now that I expect to detour down to it when driving to Santa Fe in the summer. I can also understand why, after so many years, Undersheriff Estelle Reyes-Guzman who took over leading the series from Bill Gastner when he aged out, is ready to retire. So this may be the final book?

Recovering from a near-death collision with a giant elk, Undersheriff Estelle Reyes-Guzman is back to finish her last month at the Posadas County sheriff's office. It's supposed to be a quiet road to retirement, until a body is found at the bottom of a water-filled quarry. The barely alive figure of the grandson of the wealthiest man in town also lies further down the ravine. Figuring out what really happened is going to take everything that Estelle and her understaffed, overworked team have. Especially when there's a vandal on the loose targeting the local airfield and the department has its own internal issues wreaking havoc. Plunged into another tricky investigation, one Estelle hopes will be her last, she can't help but think her retirement can't come soon enough.... I recommend this series to readers of CJ Box, Anne Hilleman, and Michael McGarrity.

Hepworth, Sally. [Mad Mabel](#) (St Martins \$29). Here is a book that will really stay with you long after you read it. It's nearly impossible to describe its impact without revealing spoilers but I wrote the Indie Next Pick for it thus: "Hepworth once again excels at pulling the rug out from under the reader's figurative feet with the story of octogenarian Elsie Fitzpatrick, whose quiet life on a small Melbourne street is blown up by her discovery of her next door neighbor dead."

Sally set it in her own Melbourne, Australia, home also to the Miss Phryne Fisher Mysteries by the late Kerry Greenwood. And to my nephew, so we have several times visited this port city with a vibrant arts culture, a superb botanical garden to wander for hours, a lively restaurant scene, preserved Victorian architecture/ironwork, a stunning train station, and various universities. It is host to the Australian Grand Prix for Formula One racing, and gorgeous sea coast/beaches.

But Elsie Mabel Fitzpatrick, a gloriously grumpy and independent 81, lives an unremarked life in barely adequate housing on a quiet suburban street. Until fearing her elderly next door neighbor is in trouble, she breaks in and finds his lifeless body. Then whispers start flying and Elsie's secret is out—once upon a headline she was known as Mad Mabel, Australia's youngest convicted murderer. But was she genuinely mad, or merely a scapegoat? Either way she's kept her secret buried for years. As rumors fly, the cops quiz, and the media circles, who is Mad Mabel really? A cold blooded killer with arthritis? Or is now the time to tell her side of her story? You will not fathom it until the very end....

I add that I bought the Australian edition in Mel-

bourne and will give it away to a book purchaser at Sally's event with host Sulari Gentill on April 22. You will find it interesting to compare the two different cover treatments. Like the story, the Australian cover is haunting.

* Horowitz, Anthony. [Deadly Episode](#) (Collins \$48). Ex-Detective Inspector Daniel Hawthorne is dead. Or, rather, the actor playing him in the film adaptation of *The Word is Murder* is. Rising star David Caine has been stabbed, and it seems that everyone on the set had a motive. Caine had just fired his PA. He had fallen out with his director, slept with the screenwriter, humiliated his co-star and dropped his agent days before he was about to sign a multi-million-dollar deal to appear in the next *Spider-Man* movie. But what if Caine's murderer had made a mistake? What if it was the real Hawthorne who was the intended victim? For it turns out that the brilliant detective may have got it wrong ten years earlier. An innocent man has died in jail. And perhaps someone has decided that Hawthorne must pay the price. From the film set on the south coast of England, the story moves to Reeth, in Yorkshire, the village where Hawthorne grew up. A burned-down school, a car accident that isn't what it seems, blackmail and murder in an Elizabethan country house...somehow they combine to unlock the secret of what has happened in Hastings. For once, the local police are helpful. DS Sarah Milnes gives Hawthorne carte blanche to investigate and there may even be a hint of romance in the air. Which leaves his hapless sidekick, Horowitz, on his own, stumbling his way to the truth. [Unsigned US edition](#) (\$32).

* Keefe, Patrick Radden. [London Falling](#) (Doubleday \$35). In the early morning of November 29th, 2019, surveillance cameras at the headquarters of MI6, Britain's spy agency, captured video of a young man pacing back and forth on a high balcony of Riverwalk, a luxury tower on the bank of the river Thames. At 2:24 a.m., he jumped into the river. In a quiet London neighborhood several miles away, Rachele Brettler was worried about her son. Zac had told her that he had gone to stay with a friend, but then he did not come home. Days later, a police car pulled up and two officers relayed the dreadful news: her son was dead. A new True Crime from Keefe asks why a young man from a respectable British family pretended to be the child of a Russian oligarch before jumping into the Thames to his death in 2019. Here is all the intrigue and masterful storytelling of Keefe's *Empire of Pain* and *Say Nothing*, but with an even more accessible (and, yes, sinister) vibe than his previous bestsellers, conveying both a compelling family story as well as the corrupt society / dangerous criminal underworld they unwittingly found themselves in.

Ludington, Andrew. [Double Shadow: A Splinter Effect Novel](#) (St Martins \$29). I thoroughly enjoyed Ludington's imaginative and well researched debut in [Splinter Effect](#) (\$19)—see our April Paperback Picks—and am thrilled he's coming to The Pen on April 23 with the sequel. It definitely “has all the fun of Indiana Jones and the rapid-fire thriller pacing of James Rollins...”—Jonathan Maberry

This one takes our time-traveling Smithsonian chronologist Rabbit Ward (just go with it, he doesn't wear a fedora or carry a whip, but the Indiana Jones parallels are undeniable) to 68 CE when Roman troops occupy Judea and are heading for Jerusalem. Rabbit's been working in the present for some time but then learns that his former adversary Helen is in deep trouble, being framed for a murder she did not commit. Stuck in hiding

she turns to Rabbit for a trip in time to hunt down the mysterious and murderous thief Einar Eshek. When he arrives in the first century he meets a younger Helen who has never met him before, complicating the quest. Will he have to betray her past self in order to save her in 2019?

There's real history here and a code of ethics for time traveling. Any Northwestern University alums should come and support Ludington in his new career writing fiction.

Mack, Catherine. [This Weekend Doesn't End Well for Anyone](#) (St Martins \$28). Mystery writer Eleanor Dash has had to solve two actual murder plots in the past year! And while on vacation. And now she's got a ticket to a relaxing weekend mystery writers conference at an all-inclusive resort in the Bahamas. Three times is not a charm here in “A sun-soaked murder mystery that proves even paradise can't give Eleanor Dash a peaceful vacation! Mack's most entertaining whodunit yet features a cast of suspicious writers who all know how to craft the perfect crime. Absolutely unputdownable—the perfect blend of tropical glamour and deadly intrigue.”—Michelle Gagnon. Fun, satirical too—and get a jump start on your own vacation reading April 28.

Television rights to *Every Time I Go on Vacation, Someone Dies* and its sequels sold in a major auction to Fox TV for development into a series, with Mack writing the pilot script. She splits her time between Canada and the US.

Moldover, Joseph. [To the End of Reckoning](#) (Mysterious Press \$26.95). Although this was our March First Mystery Pick, the author elects to visit us in person on April 29 at 7:00 PM. To repeat my rave review:

Criminal psychologist Moldover impresses with this humane mystery about a stage actor investigating a murder alongside his ailing father. Lukas Moore, 23, has given up the lead in a Broadway revival of *A Streetcar Named Desire* to care for his psychiatrist father, Richard, who's recovering from a traumatic brain injury after a car accident. Lukas's return to his hometown of Faith, N.Y., coincides with a memorial service for Dr. Jason Grant, one of Richard's young colleagues. Grant was last seen a year ago; some of his possessions were found on the shore of a lake upstate, and though his body never turned up, most locals believe he died by suicide. Richard, though, suspects foul play, based in part on a half-remembered conversation he had with Jason about a strange research proposal shortly before he disappeared. With his memory failing but his talent for close observation as sharp as ever, Richard enlists Lukas to help investigate Jason's death in a case that winds up cutting uncomfortably close to home. Moldover draws even minor supporting characters in three dimensions, making the elegant core mystery much more satisfying than the average whodunit.

I add that this is one of the most original narrative voices I have read—Just Go With It.

* Perry, Anne. [Death Times Seven: A Daniel Pitt Novel](#) (Random House \$30). Two violent crimes challenge the investigative skills of young Daniel Pitt and his wife, Miriam, in the 7th and final novel of iconic mystery writer Anne Perry's Daniel Pitt series. Halfway written at the time of her death in 2023, this novel was completed by Perry's trusted colleague, dear friend, and fellow author Victoria Zackheim.

1913: Junior attorney Daniel Pitt must step in for his friend, fellow attorney Toby Kitteridge, whose parents have been brutally attacked. Toby's mother is dead and his father, a

village vicar, is barely alive. With Toby returning to the family home in rural Ipswich, struggling with grief and disbelief, Daniel remains in London to substitute for Toby and defend Peter Ward, on trial for the sexual assault and murder of a young woman. Daniel is convinced that Ward is innocent, yet the evidence seems to prove otherwise. Eager to assist, his pathologist wife, Miriam fford Croft, offers her forensics expertise and exposes a community of fellow pathologists who may have purposefully omitted information from their autopsy reports. Despite Miriam's involvement in the case, Daniel finds himself distracted by his desire to help Toby, who is too distraught to investigate the attack on his parents. And when the evidence points to Toby's father as the killer of Toby's mother, Daniel faces two of the greatest challenges of his young career: proving the innocence of both Peter Ward and Reverend Kitteridge. One mistake in London and a blameless man will hang. One mistake in Ipswich and Toby's father will go to prison for life.

Phillips, Jayne Anne. [Small Town Girls: A Writer's Memoir](#) (Knopf \$28) is the first-ever nonfiction work by Phillips, the 2024 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction winner: a memoir in essays, written at various points in Phillips' career but newly gathered and revised to narrate the arc of her life and literary output... that also serves as a love letter to Appalachia and a warm remembrance of everything that's influenced her. "*Small Town Girls* is a brilliant, wide-ranging book, nostalgic and tough-minded at the same time. Like Willa Cather and Stephen Crane, Jayne Anne Phillips writes prose that reads like plainspoken poetry, full of startling and vivid images that bring a vanished world back to life before our eyes." —Tom Perrotta

Preston, Douglas/Aletheia. [Paradox](#) (Tor Publishing \$30.99). **Our copies are signed by both authors and each comes with an alternate dust jacket you can play with.**

There are so many spoilers possible for this sequel to [Extinction](#) (\$19.99 or in [hardcover](#) \$29.99) that I quote just two celebrated thriller writers. And I take a tiny bit of credit for persuading Doug not to kill off a key character in *Extinction* so that this second chapter becomes *Cash & Colcord #2*, set again in Colorado wilderness where real-life genetic engineering has upended things—a reclusive man is found dead under grisly circumstances where investigation uncovers a trail of bizarre killings, baffling money transfers, and a fanatical secret society—and resurrected Neanderthals now shelter.

"An ancient secret. A modern threat. An eternal paradox. Douglas Preston's fans can celebrate. He and his daughter, Aletheia, have joined forces to create a pulse-pounding new thrill ride."—David Morrell

"This wonderfully original mystery begins with one of the most creative murders in popular fiction and ends—well, I can't spoil it. The pages in between are not to be turned in a hurry, rather, they are to be savored as the plot twists and turns." —John Grisham

Pryor, Mark. [The Most Mysterious Bookshop in Paris](#) (Kensington \$27). Hugo Marston opens a bookshop while cracking crime in a wintry Paris. The weather is terrible—there will in fact be a blizzard for the ages. The bookshop is not yet open although it will be in the end. And the cafe next door serves delicious food. I am killed with envy.

But this return of Hugo Marston, former FBI analyst and head of security at the US Embassy in Paris, is not about crime in

his bookshop. Instead Hugo and the Paris police are investigating first blackmail, then murder(s), at a boutique chocolate emporium (yum) —Éclat de Chocolat—housed in the west wing of a 1700s chateau later converted to a convent. We spend a lot of time there and in the adjacent cemetery.

It begins when Hugo's former boss, the US Ambassador, asks for his help for a friend, a friend who turns out to own Éclat de Chocolat. A blackmail note asking for a huge ransom to be paid or a dark secret that will ruin Éclat will out, has been left in the chateau in the dead of night. What is the secret? No one seems to know. What all do know is the Éclat has just now received a Royal Warrant from the British Monarchy, a ticket to recovering from the near destruction of the business induced by Covid. Owner Claire thinks the secret might relate to how she sources chocolate to make their wares, but Hugo can't buy that. And he's right. I won't go further into this complex plot and all the relationships therein including Hugo's professional relationship with Police Lieutenant Camille Lerens and in time with a new police recruit. And his first hire at the bookshop. And... Just go with it, you will be surprised.

Bonus! We Pryor fans also get to enjoy more of the story of Henri Lefort, the lead of a second series by Mark, who weaves Henri and his family into Hugo's new story.

Quinn, Spencer. [Cat on a Hot Tin Woof](#) (St Martins \$28). Chet (the dog) and Bernie Little (his human and a private eye of little financial acumen but surprising sleuthing success) live here in the "Valley" where they solve some unusual cases brought to the Little Detective Agency. This one centers on a missing Internet Sensation: Miss Kitty. An actual kitty. She lives with teenager Bitty and her mom and has lifted them from broke to real money with bigger scores to come from Social Media stardom. With Miss Kitty gone, her safety, and the income, are gone. Our detecting duo head into the dusty desert where Bitty's father lives with a new woman and a pig which might know something. A possible perp is killed, maybe twice? And could Bernie end up implicated in the crime? This is a story where Chet's nose plays a key role.

Sandford, John. [Revenge Prey](#) (Putnam \$32). Lucas Davenport is "a hero for these perilous times." says the *NY Times*, and who would disagree? He's not a Marvel kind of guy but is still a kind of super hero who battles whatever foe(s) Sandford puts in his path. Here those foes are a team of Russian hitmen after a high-ranking Russian whose defection Putin has taken as a personal insult. So Leonard Summers—not his real name— a former Russian intelligence officer who provided critical information about Russian spies in U.S. government service, must hole up. He, his wife Martha, and son Bernard have spent the past year in a CIA facility near Washington., DC. After the CIA makes a deal with the U.S. Marshal Service's Witness Protection Program (WPP), Leonard's family is transported to Minneapolis. The plan is to hide them in a wooded suburb that resembles their former home and dacha near Moscow. It appears the prep has been perfect, but their handover to the care of Lucas and fellow Marshal Shelby White is greeted by the Russian team. Martha is blown to bits, and neither Leonard nor his son are safe. What happened? It's clear that the Summers family and the Marshals team have been tracked. Who has provided the intel? And now the challenge for Lucas and the WPP team is to ID the leak and get the two Summers men to safety.... It's possible Virgil Flowers might be

drafted into the mission too.

Shen, L.J. [Twisted Pawn](#) (Sourcebooks \$19.99). This is the deluxe edition that comes with a Signed Bookplate, a vellum art print, and a sticker sheet.

Stockett, Kathryn. [The Calamity Club](#) (Spiegel & Grau \$32). Oxford, Mississippi, 1933. Abandoned by her mother one Christmas Eve, eleven-year-old Meg Lefleur has learned the hard way to rely on no one. Now one of the unadoptable “big girls” at the Lafayette County Orphan Asylum, she fights each day to keep her spirit unbowed. Birdie Calhoun, unmarried and outspoken, has come to Oxford to ask her socialite sister to help the struggling family she’s left behind. But as the Depression tightens its grip, Birdie discovers her sister’s seemingly charmed life is a tapestry of lies. Then, Birdie encounters Charlie, a woman running low on luck with little left to lose. When their fates—and Meg’s—converge, Charlie comes up with an audacious plan to claim what’s rightfully theirs. But in a place and time where hypocrisy is rife and women’s freedom is fragile, even the smallest act of defiance can have dangerous consequences.

Straub, Emma. [American Fantasy](#) (Penguin \$30). Newly divorced and pushing 50, Annie slumps onto a cruise ship for a nostalgic four-day excursion with her sister and 3,000 other women to see a beloved ’90s-era boy band. Though she’s skeptical at first, to her surprise, between the slushy alcoholic drinks, the music of her youth, and the thousands of middle-aged women acting like lovesick teenagers, Annie finally reconnects to a long-submerged part of herself. By the time she befriends one of the band members — not just a celebrity but someone also in need of a friend — she feels like anything is possible. But a lot can go wrong on a ship ruled by hormones and hope, frustration and fantasy

Taylor, Brad. [Shadow Strike](#) (Morrow \$32). Our copies come with a set of postcards depicting locations in Argentina where some of the action here takes place. And here is what Brad has to say about *Shadow Strike*:

I spent over two decades in special operations, and I can tell you the threats we face aren’t hypothetical — they’re real, they’re evolving, and they’re closer than most people think. *Shadow Strike* is built on exactly that reality. After its proxies are devastated and its offensive capability pummeled in the latest war in the Middle East, a rogue group of Iranian regime officials hatches a brazen plot to strike back at their enemies once and for all. We’re not talking about one attack — they’ve planned a three-pronged operation: assassinate both the Israeli prime minister and the U.S. Secretary of State at a meeting in Buenos Aires, detonate a dirty bomb in the occupied West Bank, and hit Washington D.C. with a chemical weapons attack.

To pull it off, they need the best. There’s only one assassin with the skills — Abdul Rahman, known in the shadows as the Ghost. When a routine prison transfer is ambushed, the Ghost escapes and is given the assignment. The only Operator who can hunt him down is the man who stopped him before: Pike Logan. As the team races against the clock, Pike learns the stakes are much greater than a single life — the consequences extend into the heartland of America itself. The Ghost may hold the key to an escalation that will upend the worldwide balance of power, and if Pike fails, the fallout won’t just be personal — it’ll be global. This is the twentieth Pike Logan thriller, and I promise you — the stakes have never been higher.” Or, I add, timelier....

Vlautin, Willy. [The Left and the Lucky](#) (Harper \$25.99). Patrick reviews: “Eddie Wilkens’ life is disintegrating. His complicated marriage seems to be over, and his wife has recently fled. Haunted by a guilt that he’s carried for decades, Eddie fills his hours painting houses with his alcoholic friend, Houston, and an aging painter, Cordarrel. At the latest job site, Wilkens notices a timid, somewhat feral child hanging around by himself. Eight years old and small in stature, Russell is constantly bullied by his juvenile delinquent brother, Curtis. Mom works as a stripper and is mostly gone, leaving Russell to fend for himself with the help of his ailing grandmother. Wilkens, identifying with the boy, begins helping him by giving him small tasks, feeding him, and teaching him basic automotive skills. It is a beautifully written book, and I’m proud that it began as a short story in *The Highway Kind*. Check it out, and I bet you’ll agree with me that Vlautin is a national treasure.”

APRIL IS POETRY MONTH

We have a small section of poetry. This one is delightful:

Manda, translated by William Scott Wilson. [Japanese Haiku for Cat Lovers](#) (Tuttle \$16.99) with wonderful, colorful drawings by brush art of various felines by Manda. This little hardcover is a treat and will make a thoughtful gift to feline fanciers as well as poetry lovers.

CLASSICS

Brown, Carter. [Girl in a Shroud / The Girl Who Was Possessed: The Lady Is Available](#) (Stark House \$19.95). A trio of classic pulp fiction noir all investigated by Lt. Al Wheeler of fictional Pine County, California. Carter Brown was the literary pseudonym of Alan Geoffrey Yates, an English-born Australian writer of detective fiction. Between 1954 and 1984 Yates published 215 ‘Carter Brown’ novels and some 75 novella-length stories.

Burnett, WR. [Dark Hazard / The Quick Brown Fox](#) (Stark House \$20.95) are examples of American noir.

* Carnac, Carol. [Murder as a Fine Art](#) (Poisoned Pen \$15.99). Just in, a British Library Crime Classic by the author also writing as ECR Lorac. When a civil servant at the newly formed Ministry of Fine Arts is found crushed beneath a monstrous marble bust after dark, it appears to be the third instance in a string of fatal accidents at the department. Already disturbed by rumors of forgeries and irregularities in the Ministry’s dealings, Minister Humphry David is soon faced with the possibility that among his colleagues is a murderer—though how the bust could have been made an instrument of death is a masterstroke of criminal devilment. Taking charge of the case, Inspector Julian Rivers of Scotland Yard enters a caustic world of fine art and civil service grievances to unveil a killer hiding in plain sight.

AND coming at the end of April from the British Library: Carter Dickson, [The Ten Teacups](#) (\$15.99). First published in 1937, this classic mystery shines on today as one of the great masterpieces of the impossible crime genre. “There will be ten teacups at number 4, Berwick Terrace, W.8, on Wednesday, July 31st, at 5 p.m. Precisely. The presence of the Metropolitan Police is respectfully requested.” The note was delivered to New Scotland Yard, its words evoking a cold murder case and its unsolved mystery of the ten teacups found beside the body. Scrambling to prevent a second killing, the police set up a watertight cordon at Berwick Terrace. But gunfire rings out from the top floor at 5

p.m. on the 31st, and the corpse of one of the celebrity tenants is found in a locked room, shot twice from behind, a smoking gun by their side and on the table – ten teacups. The killer has vanished into thin air, an impossibility which calls for the masterful sleuth Sir Henry Merrivale to enter the fray.

Collins, Mary. [The Fog Comes](#) (Stark House \$15.95). It starts with an evening of cocktails at Anne Horton's Carmel home. Her brother Tom is there, her younger sister Toni, and her boyfriend Lt. Gregg. Bill, Anne's sweetie, drops by, as does Sarah, Tom's ex-wife, and his new fiancée, Marion. And Anne's cousin, Laura, of course, who immediately gets into another verbal brawl with Tom. It's a lively evening and a foggy night, but eventually they all leave. The next morning, Laura's body is found on a seaside bench, brutally murdered. Police chief Wade questions them all, and it is soon revealed that Laura's source of income was due almost exclusively to her blackmailing. The next day, Laura's business partner is also found murdered. But who could have wanted them both dead? The whole family is under suspicion, but why does all the evidence seem to point to Tom?

Pimentel, Annette Bay. [How a Bear Became a Book](#) (Holt \$19.99). In 1926, the very first Winnie-the-Pooh book was published. One hundred years later, generations of kids have grown up with the world's most famous bear. It is also safe to say we are all familiar with Pooh's iconic voice, slow and sweet as honey and full of adorable Pooh-isms. *How a Bear Became a Book* tells the story of how writer, illustrator, and editor came together to craft Pooh's first adventure. But deeper than that, this book introduces our youngest readers to how stories begin and where they can go. As Pooh's voice enters the text, he slowly comes to life in the art. Textually delightful and visually stunning, this is a picture book about the making of picture books, but it is also a masterful story about ideas, storytelling, collaboration, art, and most importantly, honey.

Rohmer, Sax. [The Day ay the World Ended / The Emperor of America](#) (Stark House \$19.95) Rohmer was an English novelist. He is best remembered for his series of novels featuring the master criminal Fu Manchu. But not always....

COZIES

Bernier, Ashley Ruth. [The Bush Tea Murder](#) (Crooked Lane \$29.99/\$19.99). Here is a new cozy mystery set in the US Virgin Islands led by food journalist Naomi Sinclair. Enjoy lush landscapes of this Caribbean island as Naomi, drawn back by her beloved father's illness from her high-powered TV career in Charlotte, NC, digs into her tight community in Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas, where petty theft and murder simmer. And the "subtle tension between Naomi's stateside ambitions and her deep-rooted love for her island home, which adds emotional depth beyond what's typical for the genre." If you have enjoyed the food-centric mysteries of Joanne Fluke, now retired, give Bernier a shot.

Brown, Rita Mae. [Clawed and Dangerous: A Mrs. Murphy Mystery](#) (Random House \$30). It's fall in Crozet, Virginia, and despite the gloom of rain and shorter days, Harry and her BFF Susan plan to cheer things up with a Halloween bash. Withes, ghosts, and headless horsemen abound. And soon, one dead body turns into several. How spooky that the deaths seem to be connected. Maybe this is a book to buy now and lay away until

October.

Meanwhile, on season, the 2025 Mrs. Murphy is out in paperback. [Sealed with a Hiss](#) (\$19) puts you into Spring. It's in full bloom, and everything is blossoming just right for Harry in Crozet, Virginia. Restorations to the long-shuttered local segregated school are nearly complete, and the school will be renamed to commemorate an important community member. To honor the former students, Harry and her friends are hard at work planning a reunion. The vacant 15 acres behind the school will be perfect for it until a realtor reveals plans to buy and build on the parcel. Then a decades-forgotten car bobs to the surface of a local creek, with a body still in the driver's seat....

Cambridge, Colleen. [In the Spirit of French Murder](#) (Kensington \$27). Can be Signed when Colleen visits us in October.

After moving to post-war France, Tabitha Knight has a new friend in fellow expat and Cordon Bleu student Julia Child, whose culinary tips can come in quite handy. Can it be now that a dark fate that awaits Tabitha's Grand-père and Oncle Rafe. The two host a soiree at their new restaurant, inviting fellow Resistance fighters from the war known as the Nine Bluets. To commemorate the work of the Resistance network, the vase on the dinner table sports nine of the pretty blue flowers. But shortly after the revelers leave the restaurant, one of Grand-père's old friends is found dead on the street...and one of the nine flowers is missing from the vase. When a second member of the Nine Bluets is found poisoned the next day, and a bluet flower is left with the body.

Check our shelves for earlier [An American in Paris](#) mysteries. "One needn't have read the previous books in the series to enjoy this installment, but don't be surprised if readers want to go back and see what they missed. Come for the historical Parisian setting and mystery, stay for the food and wine."—*Library Journal* Starred Review.

Claire, Ann. [A Cyclist's Guide to Villains & Vines](#) (\$18.95). When expat bicycle tour proprietress Sadie Greene guides a group of sophisticated seniors on a stunning trip in northeastern France, she expects some twists, turns, and sudden stops to sip the Riesling, but not a detour leading straight to murder. Start this series with [A Cyclist's Guide to Crime and Croissants](#) (\$17.95)—especially charming reads with traveling dicey right now.

Courage, Rachel Ekstrom. [Death on the Lanai: A Golden Girls Cozy](#) (Disney \$18.99). A series that began with *Murder by Cheesecake* continues with an all-new Golden Girls cozy mystery set on a remote island estate! The invite delivered to 6151 Richmond Street was short on details, only promising to celebrate "the greatest artist of the century" and accompanied by a jewel-encrusted brooch—the whole package a brand of mysterious opulence that another Saturday night of gin rummy just can't match. Blanche Devereaux's passionate dalliances are as plentiful, and surely one can't be expected to remember all of one's suitors. But when the Girls disembark the party's ferry at a small Biscayne Bay island and meet their secretive host, the memories come flooding back: she a Radio City Rockette in her twenties, he the poor artist who could offer her nothing but his love. Fate drove them apart, but Declan, now a famous artist El Toro, professes that Blanche has always been his muse. Featured prominently in his artworks and central to El Toro's return to the apex of the art world, Blanche is thrilled to have been such

an inspiring figure to this man. But a tropical storm that night knocks out power and the next morning Declan is found dead—and all eyes turn to Blanche.

Day, Maddie. [A Poisonous Pour](#) (Kensington \$27). If culinary cozies are a treat, why not one circling wine? It's Memorial Day weekend and Sonoma County's Alexander Valley is buzzing with activity. For widow Cece Barton, business at *Vino y Vida* is going great, as is her romance with new beau, Benjamin. Meanwhile, Cece's neighbor, Richard Flora, is stirring up controversy with his newest article, an exposé of Regan Greene, power-hungry director of a valley district organization. Also in the mix is the town's big classic car show, paired with wine tastings. At the show, Cece spots Regan, who is displaying her restored green '72 Thunderbird convertible. As Cece pours tastes, she witnesses several heated discussions with Regan—including an argument with wine aficionado and new Colinas hardware store owner Greg Jardis. Otherwise, all goes smoothly—until Sunday brings shocking news. Regan has been murdered . . .

Didomizio, Nicolas. [A Murder Most Camp](#) (Sourcebooks \$17.99). Signed here May 2 at Cozy Con but out in April. Mikey Hartford IV has coasted through his twenties in a distracted blur of yachts and sex and partying. But when his father discovers his latest million—dollar impulse buy and changes the terms of his trust, the party's finally over. Now, unless Mikey can make a positive contribution to the world before his thirtieth birthday—one that doesn't involve throwing cash at his problems—he'll never see another yacht again. (Or even so much as a canoe.) So a spoiled nepo baby is forced to work at a struggling summer camp and stumbles into a real-life murder mystery he has no choice but to solve.

Fletcher, Jessica. [Murder, She Wrote: Snowy with a Chance of Murder](#) (\$19). Jessica Fletcher has taken a nasty spill on the ice, leaving her in a wheelchair for several weeks. She tries to work on her latest manuscript but finds herself distracted by a new neighbor moving in across the street. There's good reason for her to be distracted, because soon after unpacking his sparse belongings, Mr. Rymer is out in the front yard, building somewhat risqué (read: naked) snow sculptures. While Cabot Cove debates whether the sculptures are a protected form of art or a public display of lewdness, someone starts destroying them at night. Rymer doesn't seem upset. He just makes new ones. No need to get the police involved over a little snow, he says. Especially when there's plenty more of it and a blizzard in the forecast. The morning after the storm, Jessica looks out the window to see a new sculpture across the street—and the body of Mr. Rymer half-buried in the snow, in this nod to the film *Rear Window*.

Gates, Eva. [Shot Through the Book](#) (Crooked Lane \$29.99 or \$19.99). The upcoming YA book festival at the Bodie Island Lighthouse Library is bringing in renowned authors from all over the world. When bestselling author Todd Harrison unexpectedly visits librarian Lucy McNeil at her Outer Banks beach house after a meeting, she is puzzled by his presence, since they're virtually strangers. After stepping inside to get him a drink, she returns to find him murdered on her deck—killed in the few minutes she left him alone. When Heather Harrison, Todd's widow, shows up in town, her motivations aren't inspired by grief. She's ruthlessly intending to use her husband's tragic death to launch her candidacy for state senator, and her first order of business is to go after

the local police force—and Lucy herself.

Graves, Sarah. [Death By Chocolate Covered Ladyfingers](#) (Kensington \$27). In the latest *Death by Chocolate Mystery* set in Eastport, Maine, local celebrations are in full swing—and Jake and Ellie have their hands full supplying the most decadent of desserts for extended family gatherings, class reunions, and other catered events. The organizers for Eastport High School's Class of '86 reunion thought it would be fun for former schoolmates to dress up in costume for a masquerade ball. Unfortunately, masks cannot hide old grudges born out of teenage angst. Then Cindy Munson's body is discovered murdered on the night of the dance, her husband is arrested, and their six year old daughter may be given over to child protective services.... Not if Jake and Ellie can help it.

Hackney, Stacy. [The Primrose Murder Society](#) (Morrow \$18.99) is billed as a cozy but I think it's more Finlay Donovan or *Only Murders in the Building*. And the building here, a luxe Virginia landmark divided into posh apartments for seniors, is like a main character. See Our April Paperback Picks for more of this adult cozy debut gem.

Harper, Molly. [A Cute Little Murder](#) (Berkley \$19). As teens, Harlow Drake and Lainey Piper built an online fandom solving small-town crimes. Harlow was the star, Lainey the behind-the-scenes genius (and often, Harlow's scapegoat). Years later, Harlow's hosting a hit true crime TV show. Lainey? She's working in forensics. Well, forensic accounting . . . from home. In pajamas. With her cat. But when Harlow faces significant backlash over fumbling a case, she needs a quick win—like a special investigation into the decades-old disappearance of a starlet from a once-glamorous, now decrepit island hotel. The catch? It's bankrolled by Deke and Bryce of DBag Games, who are looking to shed their “frat bro” reputations. As long-time fans, they have one requirement for their funding: Lainey has to play the sidekick again. Lainey is wary, but the offer is a lifeline in a sea of unpaid student loans. As the cold case heats up, a crew member falls over dead, presenting Harlow and Lainey with a more modern mystery with sabotage, hidden staircases, and a killer in their midst.

O'Connor, Carlene. [Murder in an Irish Garden](#) (\$17.95). Everything's coming up roses for Garda Siobhán and her family in quaint Kilbane, County Cork, Ireland—until her brother Eoin hires a mercurial landscape designer known for her killer designs...and a murder investigation blooms out of a deadly gardening competition in this 11th entry in *The Irish Village Mysteries*.

Prose, Nita. [The Maid's Secret](#) (\$20). Here is the charming end to a beloved series set at the Regency Grand Hotel where neurodivergent Molly Gray, an orphan raised by her beloved Gran, has risen to Head Maid and Special Events Manager. And now she's going to marry chef Juan Manuel. Then a kind of Antiques Roadshow comes to film at the hotel, Molly brings in some old trinkets to be appraised, and a heist occurs, a bold art heist. The key to unlocking it and several mysteries lies in a long forgotten diary written by Gran which leads to a charming conclusion for the crime, two love stories, and as said, this series by Canadian Prose.

Sutanto, Jesse Q. [Ms Mebel Goes Back to the Chopping Block](#) (Penguin \$19) is a new standalone for Sutanto wherein a nearly divorced trophy housewife enrolls in culinary school to win back her husband, only to start questioning the strange antics of her classmates. Retirement should mean long-awaited trips to the sapphire waters of Santorini or careening down a sand dune in Dubai. But for sixty-three-year-old Mebel, retirement means her husband of more than forty years announcing that he's leaving her for their private chef. Mebel isn't sure who's the bigger loss.

And why not try a cozy fantasy (aka Cottagecore fiction)?

Publishers are blending two hot trends: cozies and fantasy

Coombe, Amy. [Stay for a Spell](#) (Berkley \$30) is a debut, a bookish cozy fantasy about a cursed princess who must discover what her heart truly longs for in this charmingly cozy romantic fantasy for everyone who's ever lost—or found—themselves in a bookshop.

Corrigan, Moorea. [Thistlemarsh](#) (Berkley \$30). An impoverished orphan, a ramshackle estate, and a beguiling Faerie all collide in this enchanted fantasy novel of revenge, ruin. This cozy debut skillfully sets the fantastical faerie lore against the very real historical backdrop of post-World War I England, perfectly capturing the emotional landscape of the period.

"Thistlemarsh was so easy to get swept into as our main protagonist Mouse comes back to a home she doesn't recognize to meet expectations that seem impossible. This book pulled at my heartstrings with the trauma and grief but it never took me out of the story."—Indie Next

Penner, J. [Death Meets Cute](#) (Sourcebooks \$17.99). Deluxe Edition comes with recipes and is Signed here May 2 at Cozy Con.

After helping her sisters unleash a spell to throw the realm into chaos, bad Iris Weyward, not feeling at all like the villain of her dreams, sets off to the quiet town of Fraywell to build her wicked legacy alone. It's promising: a crooked little cottage, a bad rep for curses and potions, and fear from the neighbors. But when her ogre of a bodyguard disappears, Iris needs new muscle. Luckily a fearsome orc topples into her yard. She can animate him, it's the perfect solution. Only Talon isn't a warrior. He bakes, he's sweet. Can Iris turn him into the enforcer she deserves while not falling for him just as her sisters, whose magic is fading, arrive? Now what?

A SURPRISE...

Muller, Marcia. [The Lost Coast and Other Sharon McCone Stories](#) (Stark House \$15.95). I am not sure where to list this so I am giving it its own section. Stark House is a publisher of classic crime fiction. Has Muller, in the forefront of the 1980s/1990s Womansleuth movement along with Sue Grafton and Sara Paretsky, become a classic? Her bio includes six Anthony Awards, a Shamus Award, the recipient of the Private Eye Writers of America's Lifetime Achievement Award as well as the Mystery Writers of America Grand Master Award, so in one sense, yes. And she hasn't published a full length McCone for some time.

For her fans here is a collection of her short stories set in McCone's San Francisco beat early in her career as a private eye. I really enjoyed revisiting Sharon; you will too.

NEW IN HARDCOVER

Al-Wasity, Heba. [Weavingshaw](#) (Del Rey \$30). Publishers are also blending dark romance with horror and the Gothic. Here's

an example chosen for April by booksellers participating in Indie Next voting: "Fantastic worldbuilding, a slow burn romance to die for, and a ghostly mystery. What more could you ask for? A STUNNING debut. The writing was superb."

Andrews, Ilona. [This Kingdom Will Not Kill Me](#) (Tor Books \$29.99, 5) is epic Romantasy about a woman who wakes up in the city setting of her favorite fantasy series, one she keeps rereading while waiting years for the final novel.. Sort of *Game of Thrones* meets *Outlander*, it appears, and kicks off a *Maggie the Undying* series.

Adams, Ellery. [Invasive Species](#) (Hanover Square Press \$30). Something's not right in Cold Harbor—more so than usual. While this sleepy small town has seen its fair share of monsters in cheating husbands and leering bosses, none are as hungry as Mrs. Smith. The mysterious resident has finally emerged from her crumbling mansion on the hill, mesmerizing the townspeople with her beauty. Her secret? Nine human sacrifices. Natalie Scott is more worried about Mrs. Smith blocking her first real estate sale—the one that will take her from stay-at-home mom to working woman extraordinaire. She's eager to prove herself in a world where the social mores of 1980s suburbia reign, where she's expected to keep a magazine-perfect home and raise beautiful children, all while sticking to her husband's budget. Natalie's two best friends are facing their own demons, and Mrs. Smith and her deep, dark woods are an easy scapegoat for everyone's problems. But Natalie's twelve-year-old daughter, Jill, and her Icelandic housekeeper, Una, can sense something deeper at play. Armed with library books and a whole lot of grit, Jill and Una team up to save the town once and for all. They'll have to confront the question: What does it really mean to be a monster?

Baker, Kylie Lee. [Japanese Gothic](#) (\$30). Baker's hotly anticipated time-bending horror novel toggles between a samurai hiding out from imperial soldiers at a centuries old rural house in 19th-century Japan and an NYU college student who flees to the same house in October, 2026, after killing his college roommate. But he's not the only one seeking refuge there: The first night, he sees a young woman in the yard with "white robes, a sword that gleamed in the moonlight, eyes just as sharp as her blade." She is a young samurai trying to elude imperial soldiers — and for her, it's October 1877. "This story pulses with emotions, creating an overwhelming atmosphere of anxiety as you accompany the protagonists on their quest to unearth the secrets haunting their lives. Lee Baker's work reveals itself in unexpected but satisfying ways."—Indie Next.

Bannalec, Jean-Luc. [The Secrets of the Abbey](#) (St Martins \$29). This series set in the magical French province of Brittany is a Staff favorite. The remarkable setting and clever plot make this entry our **April Cozy Crimes/Traditional Mystery Pick**. See Our April Paperback Picks for earlier Dupins.

It's October but summer weather has carried over to warm days and balmy nights. But a chill has struck Commissaire Georges Dupin, the *café* and *steak frites* loving, grumpy head of a close knit team. Inspector Kadeg's remarkable octogenarian aunt, a picture of health, out of the blue received omens of her death. And more remarkably, suddenly died that afternoon. And when Kadeg heads to her home, a magnificent former abbey on Brittany's Côte des Légendes, he's attacked and critically injured. (Fear not, this is not a supernatural mystery). Was the aunt's

death a murder? This is just one of the impossible questions Dupin and team must answer. Their investigation is a corker but the sheltered world of the abbey and its rich, stunning gardens that lies between two inlets on the wild Atlantic coast, and the enchanting apple orchards, so draw you in you want to slow down and savor them, live in them...not a luxury however for Dupin.

Betley, Matthew. [The Council](#) (Blackstone \$29.99). To most of the world, Owen Pierce is just another handsome, successful Miami lawyer. But to the mysterious, all—powerful organization known as the Council, he’s one of the most dangerous—and useful—assassins in the world. And he owes the Council for help when he lost everything. His targets are threats to peace. But when a mission to take out a Cartel leader goes disastrously wrong, Owen starts to uncover the sinister truth of the Council—and what they’re really after. And with the Council’s master plan in its final stages, that makes him a dangerous liability. Before you can say “Mission Impossible”, Owen and his team go from the Council’s top operative to number one target. But the Council has made one critical mistake. They chose Owen because he lost everything ... so he has nothing left to lose.

Bicks, Caroline. [Monsters in the Archive: My Year of Fear with Stephen King](#) (Random House \$29). A fascinating, first-of-its-kind exploration of Stephen King and his most iconic early books, based on groundbreaking research and interviews with King—all conducted by the first scholar to be given extended access to his private archives. “A master class in craft—and a peek behind the curtain.”—Stephen Graham Jones

Boyle, TC. [No Way Home](#) (Little Brown \$29.99). Things go from bad to worse for a Los Angeles doctor who’s returned to his small Nevada hometown to sort through his dead mother’s estate. Though a cafe meet-cute with a local woman at first promises respite from his grief, the relationship soon morphs into a nightmarish love triangle.

Burke, Caro Claire. [Yesteryear](#) (Knopf \$30). Natalie, a tradwife social media influencer with six children and millions of followers famous for celebrating “real American” values on her aesthetically perfect Idaho farm, doesn’t mind that her idyllic, illusory lifestyle is essentially a reality show where she playacts for the camera, facilitated by nannies, producers and the like. Then one morning comes the time jump: she wakes up and finds herself in the mid-19th century actually living the farming life—and her cosplay life becomes a gritty, grueling reality. Getting a lot of press, unsurprisingly. *The NY Times* adds, “This debut novel takes us one surreal step further to illustrate the deep chasm between our digital selves and our real ones.”

Dini, Elizabeth. [Bearer of Bad News](#) (Gallery Books \$28.99 or in paperback \$19). A February debut by an author living in the Netherlands now catches my eye.

For someone who hates secrets, Las Vegas hairdresser Lucy Rey is about to be faced with a whole bunch of them. After discovering that her fiancé has left her without so much as a goodbye, Lucy finds herself short on funds and desperate for a change of scenery. Enter a most unusual job opportunity: a Bearer of Bad News. Sure, it’s a little strange—the job description has few details, and the bad news is more like a vaguely worded threat—but Lucy can’t say no to the perks: an all-expenses-paid trip to the Italian Dolomites, plus a generous bonus if she

proves she’s delivered the message. Then she learns that her task is just the tip of the iceberg. Launched into a world of betrayal and greed involving eighty-year-old secrets, stolen jewels, and a World War II-era mystery, Lucy is in way over her head—and she’s connected to this story in ways she never could have imagined.

Dunne, Thomas. [Murders and Acquisitions](#) (Blackstone \$29.99). The retired head of Thomas Dunne Books, an imprint at St. Martins Publishing who brought many renowned authors into print over some 50 years, pens a novel skewering publishing, a kind of literary *Succession*. Werther Maybach Myers was little known outside his primary businesses of media, publishing, and world—class money laundering. But with his death, his family’s multibillion—dollar conglomerate—Omnium International—has to change. And his position as the major American stakeholder in the enterprise is now up for grabs. After five generations, few of the founders’ descendants have any interest in the business as long as the money keeps gushing—assuming that even a fight within the family would likely sort itself out. Except sharks are now circling: oligarchs, criminal syndicates, foreign powers. What happens next? Anyone who followed the Summer Redstone dynastic dramas will not find this to be entirely fictional.

Dumas, Luke. [Nothing Tastes as Good](#) (Atria \$29). Horrors! I am not a reader of Horror but zillions are, it’s a booming genre. And we have an ever increasing section of it shelved at the store. Here is a new one with a very human core:

Retail worker Emmett Truesdale has never fit the Southern California mold of six-pack, suntanned masculinity. Over 300 pounds, he carries the weight of his childhood trauma and millennial ennui around his waist and in his soul. After trying every diet under the sun, he remains stuck—in his dead-end job, in love, and in his body. Desperate for help, he enrolls in a clinical trial for a new weight loss product called Obexity. The treatment is as horrifying as the results are miraculous and as Emmett sheds pounds at superhuman speed, every part of his life improves overnight. Unfortunately, Obexity comes with some killer side effects, including lost stretches of time and overwhelming cravings. Worse, people who were cruel to him have started disappearing and when the police warn of a cannibalistic killer on the loose, he fears that Obexity is turning him into a monster. But how can he give it up now that people are finally starting to treat him like he’s human?

More Horror:

Keane, Carter. [Morsel](#) (Tor Publishing \$0). An ambitious property appraiser takes on job deep in the Appalachian woods where she ends up fighting for her life and that of the dog. Spoiler: the dog survives

Kliwer, Marcus. [The Caretaker](#) (Atria \$29). Takes place along the wild Oregon Coast. The Indie Next Pick: “*The Caretaker* is deeply unsettling in the best way, with smart ties to Kliwer’s previous novel while still standing strong on its own. It’s emotionally intense, psychologically rich, and genuinely scary. So good.”

Graham, Heather. [A Cruise to Die For](#) (Mira \$30). There’s nothing really new in setting up a plot since Agatha Christie. Special Agent Chloe McMurray has been asked to do many things in the name of her job. Going undercover on a cruise ship leaving from her home port of Miami, however, is a new one. Not only that, but she’s tasked with posing as the wife of her federal counter-

part, Special Agent Wesley Law. Their investigation? A string of murders and suicides across three states that seem unrelated, until they uncover a deadly technological connection. Every victim was an expert in technology and had some connection to Milestones, a megacorporation with ties to many industries...including the cruise industry. It's a tough ask when the two have never met before. They'll infiltrate the technology events, investigate their fellow passengers and try to uncover what's really going on. But a killer can use tech without lifting a finger—and blow their cover....

Harding, Robyn. [Strangers in the Villa](#) (Grand Central \$29). Travel is a bit dicey right now but you can visit Spain's Costa Brava here when a NY couple shattered by the husband's infidelity go on retreat there to repair a marriage in freefall. Unwisely they invite a pair of Australian travelers into their remote hilltop house.... "Cava, sunshine, and secrets—in *Strangers in the Villa*, Robyn Harding nails the vibe with a lush Spanish setting, a smart, layered structure, and characters so real you'll invite them over for dinner...and then maybe change the locks. If *The Drowning Woman* was your kind of thrill-ride, cancel all your plans. This one delivers that same deliciously wicked mix of sharp twists, shifting loyalties, and a creeping sense of danger just beneath the surface."—Kimberly Belle

Harper, Jane. [Last One Out](#) (Flatiron \$29.99). The disappearance of Sam on his 21st birthday and the devastation it visits upon his parents and sister through the five years that follow is wrenching. But Harper is really painting the slow murder of a small town. Carralon Ridge, a once vibrant village in rural New South Wales, has become a shell of itself, its houses and buildings bought up and left to rot by the mining company operating at its borders. Within a decade, surrounded by industrial noise and swathed in thick layers of dust, the skeletal town is all but abandoned, with just a handful of residents clinging onto what remains. After years of scorning those who left the Ridge behind as it fell into ruin, Sam's mother Ro, a doctor, never imagined she'd become one of them. But everything changed once Sam vanished. Sam had loved Carralon Ridge, and had been working on an oral history of the town to preserve its legacy before the mine destroyed it. Now the weight of Sam's absence has destroyed his family as well. But when Ro returns to Carralon Ridge to be with her husband and daughter on Sam's 26th birthday, she begins to suspect that something important was overlooked in his case. Fans of Harper's *The Dry* will find strong echoes here.

* Harrod Eagles. [Deadly Force](#) (Severn \$29.99). DCI Bill Slider probes the death of a colleague in the sturdy latest installment of Harrod-Eagles' long-running series which I have always admired both for the tricky plots and the lively characters. Well-liked Notting Hill police constable Peter Bentley has been found dead with his head bashed in near a canal on Slider's turf in the West London suburb of Shepherd's Bush. Slider enlists his sidekick, DS Jim Atherton, to help investigate, and they find no shortage of possible explanations. The absence of Bentley's wallet suggests he may have been the victim of a robbery, but the brutality of the crime points to a more personal motive. Slider and Atherton cast suspicion on Bentley's adulterous wife, Sandy, while also considering a well-known local criminal and digging into the tragic death of Bentley's sister a decade earlier for possible clues. Harrod-Eagles' evocative prose (one of Slider's superiors displays a smile "like sunlight glinting off a coffin lid") and skill at captur-

ing policemen's fraternal humor (London beat cops call members of the detective branch "bananas, because they were yellow, bent and went round in bunches") elevate this diverting whodunit.

Henderson, Alice. [Storm Warning](#) (Harper \$30). If like me you immerse yourself in thrillers where the natural world is a main character under threat—see works by Nevada Barr, Craig Johnson, CJ Box, James Rollins, Douglas Preston among others—then Henderson's latest set on Hawaii's Big Island where wildlife biologist Alex Carter's new assignment is to protect the endangered hawksbill turtles from poachers and threats to their nests and breeding by global warming, is for you. When a violent storm surge produced by a massive hurricane spurs Alex and some volunteers to move the turtle eggs to safety up the beach, gunmen arrive and take a hostage. Are these guys poachers, or is something or someone(s) more dangerous at work?

Higashino, Keigo. [Guilt](#) (St Martins \$29). This is a real corker if you persevere to the end and is more about the aftereffects of a crime than a murder itself. Homicide Detective Godai of the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department is assigned to investigate the death of a lawyer, Kensuke Shiraishi, whose body was found on a Central Tokyo riverbank. His investigations leads him to one Tatsuro Kuraki, who claims to have had limited contact with Shiraishi—but, surprising the investigators, Kuraki not only confesses to the lawyer's murder, but another one from thirty years ago for which another man was arrested and died in custody before trial. This brings unexpected resolution to two cases but to Detective Godai Kuraki's confession rings false. And Kuraki's son and the victim's daughter both feel strongly that both the act and the motive he claims are untrue. So where does this now go?

* Horowitz, Anthony. [A Deadly Episode](#) (Harper \$32). See the Signed UK edition in Signed Books for Hawthorne and Horowitz investigation #6.

Johansson, Hanna. [Body Double](#) (Catapult \$27). A chance meeting between two women in a department store cafe leads to an affair of obsession in this captivating novel translated by Kira Josefsson. Perfect for fans of Hitchcock and Patricia Highsmith.

Kutchinsky, Serena. [Kutchinsky's Egg](#) (Scribner \$30). OK, I admit I'm a sucker for things Fabergé. This true story thus caught my eye. When Paul Kutchinsky, heir to a London jewelry dynasty, risked his fortune to create a massive bejeweled egg, the price of failure was his business, marriage, and legacy, according to this spellbinding debut investigation by his eldest daughter, a journalist. She traces the challenging, intricate construction of the first of these artworks, an egg the size of "a small child" that was encrusted with pink diamonds and encased in a gold shell that opened to reveal a diamond clock. The demanding process of making and attempting to profit off the egg—whose sky-high price (initially, £7 million) and persistent mechanical problems made it unsellable—sent Paul into a tailspin of drinking and drugging that broke up his marriage. Eventually, the company and the egg were seized by creditors. Serena unearths the story with a journalist's doggedness and a novelist's flair for detail, bravely seeking answers to childhood mysteries many would leave unsolved.

Martel, Yann. [Son of Nobody](#) (Norton \$29.99). "*The Psoad* is an Ancient Greek epic in free verse that follows a goatherd's son, Psoas of Midea, who leaves his wife and family to fight with the Greeks at Troy." So, an inventive novel is imagined about a clas-

sics scholar who makes an astounding discovery. And then, Indie Next says, “We follow the scholar as he pieces together a lost epic of the Trojan War: not of the mighty kings focused on during *The Iliad*, but of a common foot soldier’s suffering during the ten long years of war.”

Mulhauser, Travis. [Fair Chase](#) (Grand Central \$29). There hasn’t been a gray wolf in Michigan’s lower peninsula in over 100 years, but when one migrates onto the Sawbrook family’s vast acreage, the small community of Cutler finds itself in the throes of a panic. A trail of mutilated chickens and barn cats have peppered the area’s remote outskirts, and concerns about safety are accompanied by the economic and political cost of an endangered species uninvited return to northern Michigan. The Sawbrook siblings—Lucy, Buckner, and Jewell—find themselves at odds with locals, property owners, and the state’s department of resources. When fourteen-year-old runaway, Delos Harris, arrives on the family property claiming to be the siblings’ second cousin, and to have knowledge of the wolf’s exact location, the Sawbrooks are skeptical, but desperate. The state wants the wolf moved, the locals and the developers want it dead, and the Sawbrooks see its return as a decisive victory in their battle to preserve the natural world in northern Michigan. And then a poacher is hired to settle the matter permanently.

I highly recommend the last for the Sawbrooks, the wonderful [The Trouble Up North](#) (\$18.99).

* Perrin, Kristen. [How to Cheat Your Own Death](#) (Dutton \$28). Annie Adams thought she’d solved her last Castle Knoll murder. She was wrong. 1968: Frances Adams is loving her new London life. She’s a psychology student, a diner waitress, and falling for Ford Gravesdown, who understands her like no one else. But one of her new friends, Vera is scared for her life. She’s found out something she shouldn’t know about someone with a lot of power, and before Frances can help her, Vera is found dead, her heart ripped right out of her chest. Present day: Annie Adams needs some time away from Castle Knoll, the quaint English village that’s home to a surprising number of murderers. She’ll spend the summer in the Chelsea House, the London townhome that once belonged to her Great Aunt Frances, for a change of scenery. But when her artist mother’s new protégée is found dead, murdered in exactly the same, gruesome way as Vera all those years ago, Annie realizes Castle Knoll isn’t done with her yet. Fate, it seems, is not so easily escaped. With more secrets to protect, this killer won’t be stopping at just one victim. Annie’s heart is on the line....

Just out in paperback: [How to Seal Your Own Fate](#) (\$19). It begins when local fortune teller and lifelong troublemaker Peony Lane is found dead in the country estate Annie Adams inherited from her Great Aunt Frances. Annie is thrown into a new web of murder spanning decades in the quaint English Village of Castle Knoll that she’ll have to solve with her Great Aunt’s diaries and files, or else risk losing everything she loves about her new life.

Perrotta, Tom. [Ghost Town](#) (Scribner \$28). On hearing that his father has been memorialized in his hometown of Creamwood, NJ, Jimmy Perrini, a literary novelist who has gone commercial, recalls the fateful 1970s summer after his mother’s death. Fast cars, Ouija boards, and strong weed all feature in this powerful story about grief, prejudice, and adolescence.

Roberts, Ava. [The Summer House Murder](#) (Crooked Lane \$29.99). “Tensions simmer and secrets resurface with deadly results. This artfully-plotted shocker offers a fresh take on the inheritance whodunit, exploring the aftermath of a bequest, the power of place, and the cost of turning your back on family. You’ve never met sisters like these ones! Fans of Sally Hepworth will swoon.” —Tessa Wegert. [Paperback edition](#) (\$19.99)

Shaffer, Meg. [The Book Witch](#) (Random House \$30). Rainy March is a proud, third-generation Book Witch, sworn to defend works of fiction from all foes real and imaginary. With her magical umbrella and feline familiar, she jumps in and out of novels to fix malicious alterations and rogue heroes like a modern-day magical Nancy Drew. Book Witches live by a strict code: Real people belong in the real world; fictional characters belong in works of fiction. Do not eat, drink, or sleep inside a fictional world, lest you become part of the story. Falling in love with a fictional character? Don’t even think about it. Which is why Rainy has been forbidden from seeing the Duke of Chicago, the dashing British detective who stars in her favorite mystery series. If she’s ever caught with him again, she’ll be expelled from her book coven—and forced to give up the magical gifts that are as much a part of her as her own name. But when her beloved grandfather disappears and a priceless book is stolen, there’s only one person she trusts to help her solve the case: the Duke. Their quest takes them through the worlds of *Alice in Wonderland*, *King Arthur*, and other classics that will reveal hidden enemies and long-buried family secrets in this genre-defying romp that is a love letter to readers and a strong suggestion for Mother’s Day gifting.

* Spufford, Francis. [Nonesuch](#) (Scribner \$31) presents “a lavish historical fantasy of a secretary and her lover battling time-traveling fascists on the eve of WWII. Unlikely as it seems, I was completely caught up in this by the power of the storytelling and the fascinating characters, plus the vivid history of the London Blitz. And, fair warning, it ends with “To Be Continued....”

The story opens with daring Iris Hawkins enjoying a night out after a day of drudgery at her London financial firm. By chance, she meets brilliant engineer Geoff Hale, who’s besotted with gorgeous Nazi sympathizer Lady Lalage “Lall” Cunningham, and impulsively seduces him. After spending the night with Geoff, Iris sees a nightmarish inhuman figure keeping watch outside his house. She continues seeing Geoff, and the pair are visited by a friendly angel who warns them of a threat greater than Hitler: a cabal of British fascists including Lall are planning to use imprisoned angels, like the one Iris saw outside Geoff’s house, to go back in time and alter history for the worse. Spufford approaches the magical elements with lighthearted humor.... As Iris enters a parallel world called Nonesuch to save London, Spufford sustains the tension all the way to the miraculous finale.”—*PW* Starred Review.

* Sullivan, Emily. [A Murder in Marylebone](#) (Kensington \$27). Widowed Minnie Harper first met in [A Death on Corfu](#) (\$17.95), a 2025 Historical Fiction Pick, has left the island to reestablish her family in turn of the 20th Century in London where anyone respectable dreads a public scandal. So reluctantly Minnie agrees to accompany her reckless sister, Delia, for a night on the town with her Bohemian friends. The evening involves a raucous house party, a visit to a fortune-teller, and an encounter with a flirtatious baron, but none of that unsettles Minnie more than running into

Stephen Dorian, her former employer in Corfu, an author who stirs in her a mix of resentment and attraction. Soon after, Delia discovers the body of her rumored beau in his own home, and Minnie insists on playing by the rules and informing the police. Their parents fear gossip and insist that Minnie discreetly work to help keep Delia out of the investigation....

* Sullivan, Tim. [The Monk: A DS George Cross Mystery](#) (Grove \$27). DS George Cross has always wondered why his mother left him when he was a child. Now that she is back in his life, he suddenly has answers—but this unexpected reunion is not anything he's used to dealing with. So when the body of a monk is found savagely beaten to death in a woodland near Bristol, Cross is eager to throw himself into the case. The problem is, is known about Brother Dominic's past. There are no leads. How can Cross unpick a crime? And why would someone want to harm a monk? But his dogged investigation reveals that while the monk was a much loved and respected friend and brother, he was also a very wealthy man—and he had sacrificed it all for his faith. As the investigation evolves, so do the characters and their relationships to one another. I've recommended a TV series called *Ludwig* where the Autism Spectrum is also critical.

* Swann, Leonie. [Agnes Sharp and the Wedding to Die For](#) (Soho \$29.95). Spring is in the air, and Sunset Hall is abuzz with anticipation of Bernadette's upcoming wedding. But not everyone is feeling celebratory. Namely, her best friend, Agnes Sharp, who isn't a fan of Bernadette's plan to leave the house share and its residents behind. Nevertheless, Agnes and the not-so-sprightly gang of pensioners launch into wedding-planning mode after a spot opens at the high-class Foxglove Manor—in just two weeks. The minimum number of guests to even get the champagne fountain bubbling is twenty—a tall order for a reclusive couple in their eighties. Not to mention the high likelihood that their friend groups might not be compatible: Bernadette was once a police informant, while Jack, the groom, used to make a living in organized crime. Just when they think they have the guest list squared away, a threatening note appears at the house. Agnes and the others decide to handle it themselves, not wanting to cause the betrothed stress. With some assistance from a private investigator (another person to add to the guest list!), Agnes digs into the case of the poison-pen letter, determined to ensure the wedding goes off without a hitch....aside from the bodies they've already had to hide from the bride in this final case for Agnes Sharp.

OUR APRIL PAPERBACK PICKS

Bannalec, Jean-Luc. [An Island of Suspects](#) (\$19). This cleverly plotted series set in France's beautiful, often mysterious, oyster haven province of Brittany, has long been a staff favorite. Our sleuth is the grumpy, dogged, clever Commissaire Georges Dupin (who prefers *steak frites* and gallons of *café* but will eat oysters), and the setting here is Brittany's biggest and most famous island Belle-Île, famed for a local delicacy: Belle-Île lamb. The murder drawing Dupin to this paradise is that of Patric Provost, a rich and powerful landowner loathed by all and apparently the target of a blackmail scheme of one million Euros. But who is the blackmailer? And who the killer? While in general I am in favor of catching killers, how I wish Dupin had failed this time! It was so close...

We recommend the entire series starting with [A Death in Brittany](#). AND for foodies: [Death of a Master Chef](#) (\$18), a

tricky one with fabulous food and set in Saint-Malo, a gateway to Mont St. Michel. The 2026 investigation, [The Secrets of the Abbey](#), reviewed above, is our **April Cozy Crimes/Traditional Mystery Pick** for its baffling crime, a superb setting, and a tie to an American food staple.

Bentley, Don. [Capture Or Kill: A Mitch Rapp Novel](#) (\$19.99) completes the trilogy begun with 2010's [American Assassin](#) (\$19.99) by taking Mitch Rapp back to his fledgling assassin days, picking up where 2012's [Kill Shot](#) (\$19.99) ended. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Congress is questioning the CIA's necessity. Interim CIA director Thomas Stansfield must fight for his agency's survival while explaining why the previous candidate for his job was found murdered in a French hotel—surrounded by booze, cash, and dead men. Worst yet, a brilliantly run sting operation in Moscow has resulted in the arrest of America's most prized Russian asset and the expulsion of his CIA handler. With the CIA's Moscow Station now paralyzed by the catastrophic intelligence failure, Stansfield seeks help from Mitch Rapp, a newly minted assassin in the secretive Orion program. But Rapp has problems of his own.... The next Rapp will be signed here on September 15.

Carr, Paul Bradley. [The Confessions](#) (\$19). This technothriller has been called “Frankenstein in the age of AI...Clever, fast-paced, and deeply unsettling.” You could say it predicts the future of AI although it's already dated. Critics say it reminds them of Michael Crichton. This 20225 First Mystery Pick appealed to me on several levels, starting as ever with the narrative voice.

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, CEO Kaitlan Goss must track down 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. But when Maud receives a letter herself, revealing Kaitlan's own unforgivable sin, the two women are forced into a deadly game of deceit as the world teeters on the brink.

Clayborn, Katie. [The Paris Match](#) (Berkley \$19). April... and Paris. And a thoughtful, unlikely, satisfying love story. Physician Layla Bailey has spent a year moving on from a painful divorce from her college sweetheart. But now her ex's sister is getting married, and in Paris, and invites Layla with whom she's always been close. But now a conversation between them about Layla's younger self choices leads to the bride getting cold feet. Plus the ex shows up with a pregnant partner. What to do? The groom's taciturn best man demands Layla help him fix things. He's a guy with a tough history of his own. The real romance here, in my view, is Layla's and Griff's love affair with Paris. It will make you fall in love with it too.

Connelly, Michael. [Nightshade](#) (\$19.99). Los Angeles County

Sheriff's Detective Stilwell has been "exiled" to a low-key post policing rustic Catalina Island after department politics drove him off a homicide desk on the mainland. But while following up the usual drunk-and-disorderlies and petty thefts that come with his new territory, DS Stilwell gets a report of a body found weighed down at the bottom of the harbor—a Jane Doe identifiable at first only by a streak of purple dye in her hair. At the same time, a report of poaching on a protected reserve turns into a case fraught with violence and danger as Stilwell digs into the shady past of an island bigwig. Crossing all lines of protocol and jurisdiction, Stilwell doggedly works both cases. Though hampered by an old beef with an ex-colleague determined to thwart him at every turn, he is convinced he is the only one who can bring justice to the woman known as "Nightshade." This being Connelly, Stillwell is doubtless right. And he returns in May in [Ironwood](#) (\$32 Signed) where he gets some help from the LAPD's Renee Ballard.

Deaver, Jeffery. [South of Nowhere](#) (\$19) is an absolute zinger with complex plotting, amazing use of various tech, much of it low key like, say, bees, vivid characters and some surprising Shaw family history. You can go in cold with never having read one of his thrillers before.

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

Deaver's pacing is characteristically top-notch, and he ratchets up the suspense with Colter's unresolved questions about a potentially long-lost half sister.

Eskens, Allen. [The Quiet Librarian](#) (\$19.99). This gripping not to say moving contemporary story of the fallout from the savagery of the Balkans War takes me back to Dan Fesperman's brilliant first novel *Lie in the Dark* for a deeper understanding of that conflict and those caught in it. Eskens toggles his tale between present day Minnesota and the war in Bosnia. In early 1990s Yugoslavia, Nura Divjak lives with her Muslim parents and younger brother in a farmhouse near Tuzla (in what is now Bosnia). When her family is murdered by Serbian soldiers, Nura joins the Bosnian army and falls in love with a fellow soldier named Adem. During an ambush, Nura is captured and meets a woman named Amina Junuzovic in prison. After Adem dies in battle, Amina helps Nura escape, and together, the pair flee to the United States, where Amina gives birth to Sara, the daughter of a Serb who raped her, and Nura reinvents herself as a meek librarian named Hana. Thirty years later, when Amina is thrown off her balcony, "Hana" becomes Nura once again, determined to hunt down the killer before he comes after Dylan, Amina's grandson...

This is more than a detective story despite the presence of a cop often at odds with Hana.

Hackney, Stacy. [The Primrose Murder Society](#) (Morrow \$18.99). What a delight, a something like *Only Murders in the Building* with a hint of Finlay Donovan, maybe the *Gilmore Girls*. "Well-

drawn main characters, humor, numerous plot twists, a charming depiction of a mother-daughter relationship, the senior apartment frame, and the theme of learning to trust again distinguish this satisfying cozy," says *Booklist*. But I think it's deeper than many cozies as it depicts grief, resilience, hands across generations, and the lies people tell themselves to survive. And it has an HEA (from Romance, Happy Ever After). **So, out now but our May Cozy Crimes Club Pick and highly recommended for Mother's Day gifting.**

Lila Shaw stopped trusting anyone the minute her husband went to jail for white-collar crime, taking their country club lifestyle with him. Now Lila is broke, friendless, and losing her house—and to make things worse, her true-crime-obsessed daughter, Bea, was just expelled from fourth grade. Desperate for a fresh start, Lila agrees to temporarily move in and clean out an abandoned junk-filled apartment in Richmond's palatial Primrose building. The luxurious Virginia landmark is filled with retirees who start their days early drinking bourbon and gossiping, in that order. Soon after Lila's arrival, the Primrose is thrown into chaos. The owner of the building's splendid penthouse has died and in his final days he set up a two-million-dollar reward for any resident who helps to solve the 21-year-old murder of his granddaughter at the Primrose. A fan of all detective stories and true-crime podcasts, Bea is inspired to investigate. They really could use the reward money, so Lila reluctantly agrees, in a questionable attempt at family bonding. She's certain the killer is long-gone after all these years anyway. That is, until another resident is murdered... and Lila becomes the prime suspect.

Hiaasen, Carl. [Fever Beach](#) (\$19) is another laugh out loud look at America today, wrapped around a mystery by a master storyteller. "The afternoon of September first, dishwater-gray and rainy, a man named Dale Figgo picked up a hitchhiker on Gus Grissom Boulevard in Tangelo Shores, Florida. The hitchhiker, who reminded Figgo of Danny DeVito, asked for a lift to the interstate. Figgo said he'd take him there after finishing an errand." Imagine what follows.... Figgo's already messy life is about to get more complicated, thanks to two formidable adversaries Viva and Twilly, who are plunged into a mystery—involving dark money and darker motives—they are determined to solve, and become entangled in a world populated by some of Hiaasen's most outrageous characters roaming into the depths of Florida at its most Floridian: a sun-soaked bastion of right-wing extremism, white power, greed, and corruption.

* Khavari, Kate. [A Botanist's Guide to Rituals and Revenge](#), (\$19.99). Saffron Everleigh returns to Ellington, the family estate, when her grandfather has a heart attack. Bill Wyatt, a dangerous man from her past, is there, posing as her grandfather's doctor. Claiming she owes him for burning notes to a deadly poison and ruining a lucrative sale, Bill orders Saffron to locate information on her late father's project which may interest a new buyer. He gives her less than a week, or her family will pay the price. With help from her beau Alexander and best friend, Elizabeth, Saffron chases down clues only to repeatedly run into dead ends. The situation grows more complicated when a medium arrives and begins holding séances to communicate with loved ones lost in the Great War, including Saffron's childhood sweetheart. Is Madame Martin in league with Bill? When she discovers secrets about her family during her search for information to appease Bill, Saffron wonders if this is a fight she can win. This 1920s

series is welcome for fans of Deanna Raybourn's historical mysteries.

Ludington, Andrew. [Splinter Effect](#) (\$19). Ludington debuts with a rip-roaring thriller about a time-traveling treasure hunter who journeys to Justinian Constantinople in hopes of recovering the menorah of the Temple of Jerusalem. In 2018, the menorah has been lost for centuries-making it a hot commodity for adventurers like Dr. Robert "Rabbit" Ward, who works as a chrono-archaeologist for the Smithsonian, embarking on missions to the past sponsored by wealthy donors. On Rabbit's first attempt to recover the menorah, he made an enemy of the influential Kahan family by abandoning their 20-year-old son, Aaron, in 455 CE Rome as it was being sacked by the Vandals. Since then, Rabbit has traveled alone on a series of successful assignments, but his credibility has been shaken by the interference of an unknown female time traveler in his most recent missions. Skeptical donors give Rabbit a final chance to prove himself by retrieving the menorah from its last known location in 535 CE Constantinople. He faces steep odds, however, with another traveler after the same object, and indications that he's become the target of a shadowy adversary.

"The thrill-a-minute chase scenes in pursuit of priceless artifacts will recall the breakneck pace of *National Treasure* and *The Da Vinci Code*. The heart of this story is Rabbit's desperation to fix the things and people that he broke even if he has to outrun shadowy criminal time-looters and shady government agencies looking for scapegoats, in the past and in the present."—*Library Journal* starred review for a debut by a fellow Northwestern University alum.

Mullen, Kelly. [This is Not a Game](#) (\$19) is a debut with a well crafted closed-circle whodunit, Agatha Christie style. Septuagenarian Mimi MacLaine mostly keeps to herself on Michigan's idyllic Mackinac Island, so she's surprised to receive an invitation to an auction at the home of her wealthy neighbor, Jane Ireland. Mimi's surprise turns to shock when she discovers a note inside the invitation threatening to expose an undisclosed secret unless she makes a high bid on a valuable manga. Horrified, Mimi turns to her estranged granddaughter, Addie, for help. A lifelong mystery fan, Addie is the creator of *Murderscape*, a popular multiplayer video game; Mimi hopes that Addie's passion for puzzles might help loosen her from the jam. Addie agrees to help, but after she and Mimi arrive at Jane's home, they find her dead, and immediately wonder if her blackmail plot has gotten her killed. Soon, a storm traps Addie, Mimi, and several more of Jane's auction guests in her mansion, and the body count starts to balloon. Mullen makes the most of her classic set up, playing scrupulously fair with readers while leavening the bloodshed with dashes of wry humor.

* Perrin, Kristen. [How to Seal Your Own Fate](#) (\$19). Heiress Annie Adams is settling into her new life as owner of the Gravesdown Estate near the English village of Castle Knoll. The grounds, along with a vast 17-bedroom country house, were left to Annie by her great-aunt Frances, who spent her life cataloging the transgressions of her friends and neighbors in a series of personal diaries. Past and present collide when Peony Lane—a local fortune teller who, back in 1965, predicted Frances's murder—suddenly arrives at the estate. She tells Annie that she needs to investigate the life and death of Olivia Gravesdown,

a member of the family that once owned Annie's estate who died under suspicious circumstances many years earlier. A few hours later, Penny is found dead in Annie's solarium, an ornate knife protruding from her back. Chapters following Annie's investigation and detailing her complicated love life alternate with excerpts from Frances's 1967 diaries, which illuminate Frances's own romantic entanglements and touch on a horrific car accident that claimed the lives of three members of the Gravesdown family. Perrin mixes gothic and cozy tropes with a steady hand.

* Ross, LJ. [Holy Island](#) (Sourcebooks \$18.99). This is the US edition of the first investigation for Northumberland's DCI Ryan—Maxwell Charles Finlay-Ryan but referred to as Ryan throughout. We find him on Lindisfarne, the Holy Island of St. Cuthbert (later removed to Durham Cathedral away from Viking raiders) taking a sabbatical from his work in homicide. It's a few days before Christmas when he gets a local call that a young woman has been found dead in the ruins of the Priory. He's on the scene and so his three months leave is over and he's named, or rather asks to be, the SIO. It's a small community, cut off from the mainland by a tidal causeway, so odds are the killer is a local. Things grow more pressured for Ryan when Dr. Anna Taylor returns to Lindisfarne as a police consultant, forcing them to work together. So, murder, romance, and history past and recent fuse. This is a winner for readers of Ann Cleeves (*Vera*) and of traditional British mystery. The series will take you to other landmarks as well.

LJ Ross visits us on May 12 when buyers of her books will each receive a free chapbook of opening chapters defining her three series.

SOME APRIL PAPERBACKS

Battles, Brett. [Stuart Woods' Blown Away](#) (\$19). As I said when the hardcover published, Battles is writing Woods better than Woods, especially when former CIA op Teddy Fay, now a Hollywood player in Peter Barrington's film company, is in action. This is my favorite, a complex case developing out of a celebrity birthday party in Palm Springs that uncovers layers of deceit, treachery, and sabotage...also murder. Even if you've never read Woods, go with this. Any backstory explains itself. Out in February but I overlooked it, a Stone Barrington [Stuart Woods' Finders Keepers](#) (\$19)

* Bauer, Belinda. [The Impossible Thing](#) (\$17). A UK Gold Dagger winner is often overlooked here in the US...but not here at The Pen. This two track story centers on the prized guillemot eggs found on the Bempton cliffs in North Yorkshire and sought by collectors. In the 1920s A neglected and rejected young girl, Celie Sheppard lives at Metland Farm and gets an egg so she can have a omelette. Her find changes her family's fortunes. Skip up to 2023 and neurodivergent Patrick Fort who finds an egg in the attic and puts it up for sale online. A break in follows and the egg is stolen. What next?

Berry, Lucinda. [Her First Lie](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$16.99) is the prequel to Berry's [The Perfect Child](#) (\$15.95).

Boyd, William. [Gabriel's Moon](#) (\$18). In this excellent and unusual 1960s spy story, Gabriel Dax is a young man haunted by the memories of a fire that took his mother's life. Every night, when sleep finally comes, he dreams about his childhood home in flames. His days are spent on the move as an acclaimed travel

writer, capturing the changing landscapes of Europe in the grip of the Cold War. When he is offered the chance to interview Patrice Lumumba, newly elected president of the People's Republic of the Congo, he is drawn into the orbit of Faith Green, an enigmatic and ruthlessly efficient MI6 handler, he becomes "her spy," unable to resist her demands. But amid the peril, paranoia, and passion consuming Gabriel's new covert life, there will also be revelations closer to home that may change his own story, and the fates of those around him. Highly recommended.

* Brinkworth, JD. [The Pie & Mash Detective Agency](#) (Berkley \$19). If you are a dedicated Anglophile and partial to somewhat broad British humor, this debut by a pair of women "who both recently graduated as private detectives from a suspiciously cheap online detecting course" proceeds along those lines. Jane Pye and Simon Mash are a millennial couple with a little extra time on their hands. Jane was recently let go from her position as a back-end programmer, having never been quite sure what that meant. And Simon's career as a corporate collaboration consultant seems to be less collaborating and more scrolling the internet in search of matching velour tracksuits and well-balanced charcuterie boards. When they sign up for a private detective class on a whim, they quickly realize they've bitten off more than they can chew. It goes from there....

Butcher, Jim/Kerrie L. Hughes, eds. [Paranormal Payback](#) (Ace \$19). In this urban fantasy collection, our heroes get what's due to them—with a supernatural flair. But the injustices that have been holding them back might cost them more than they realized. Butcher contributes a brand new Dresden Files Story. Other authors include Holly Black, Kim Harrison, Kevin Hearne, Tanya Huff, Faith Hunter....

Casey, Jane. [The Secret Room](#) (Harper \$18.99). Ireland's Casey is a favorite. As is this policing series. Here's why shown in an old-fashioned locked room mystery wrapped in a deeply moving love story. 2:32 p.m. Wealthy, privileged Ilaria Cavendish checks into a luxury London hotel and orders a bottle of champagne. Within the hour, her lover discovers her submerged in a bath of scalding water, dead. At first glance it looks like an accident. No one went in with her. No one came out. But all the signs point to murder. For DS Maeve Kerrigan, the case is a welcome distraction. But when shock news hits close to home, affecting her partner, DI Josh Derwent, she has to solve this impossible murder.

Child, Lee. [No Middle Name: Reacher: Stories](#) (\$20) contains a Reacher novella combined with 11 previously published stories..

Collins, Fiona. [Five Days in Venice](#) (Alyson \$16.99). When bestselling romance novelist Olivia Sackville arrives at Venice's prestigious winter literary festival, she's prepared for everything except seeing Leo Greene—Britain's number-one crime author and the man who's forever turning her life upside down. The festival's demanding schedule keeps throwing them together, and in a city like Venice, there's no escaping the past—or each other. While Leo seems determined to prove he's changed, Olivia battles against the magnetic pull between them—twenty years of almost-love have taught her that falling for Leo Greene only leads to heartbreak. Between champagne receptions and foggy canal walks, their undeniable chemistry resurfaces. But with both harboring devastating secrets and the scars of old betrayals still fresh, they must decide if their story deserves a second draft—or if some loves are better left unfinished.

Coben, Harlan. [Nobody's Fool](#) (\$19.99). Sami Kierce, a young college grad backpacking in Spain with friends, wakes up one morning, covered in blood. There's a knife in his hand. Beside him, the body of his girlfriend. Anna. Dead. He doesn't know what happened. His screams drown out his thoughts—and then he runs. Twenty-two years later, Kierce, now a private investigator, is a new father who's working off his debts by doing low level surveillance jobs and teaching wannabe sleuths at a night school in New York City. One evening, he recognizes a familiar face at the back of the classroom. Anna. It's unmistakably her. As soon as Kierce makes eye contact with her, she bolts. For Kierce there is no choice. He knows he must find this woman and solve the impossible mystery that has haunted his every waking moment since that terrible day.

Connolly, John. [The Children of Eve](#) (\$20). Wyatt Riggins, the boyfriend of rising Maine artist Zetta Nadeau, has gone missing, leaving behind a cell phone containing a single-word message: RUN. Private investigator Charlie Parker is hired to find out why Riggins has fled, and from whom. Parker discovers that Riggins, an ex-soldier, has been involved in the abduction of four children from Mexico: three girls and a boy, all belonging to the cartel boss Blas Urrea—except Urrea's family is safe and well in Mexico, which means the abductees cannot be his children. Yet whoever they are, Urrea wants them back, and has dispatched his agents to secure them, even if it means butchering everyone who stands in their way. One of those agents is Eugene Seeley, a clever, ruthless solver of other men's problems. The other is an unknown woman. Every child has a mother. Now Charlie Parker will face one unlike any other.

But he survives (spoiler) and returns in June in [A River Red with Blood](#) (\$30 with a nifty Signed map) or the [Signed UK edition](#) (\$44).

Coryell, Tasha. [Matchmaking for Psychopaths](#) (Berkley \$19). Will her story ends with a funeral? When Lexie's fiancé runs off with her so-called best friend on her birthday, her carefully crafted fairy-tale life shatters. Having survived horrors in her past, she was determined to finally get her happily-ever-after—and she's not giving up yet. To distract herself, Lexie throws herself into her unusual job: matchmaking psychopaths (a specialty her clients are blissfully unaware of). But the loneliness is crushing. So when a gorgeous, overprotective new client named Aidan insists they're soul mates, and another intriguing client, Rebecca, seems perfect to fill the best-friend-shaped hole in her life, Lexie can't help but find the attention comforting—despite her own professional boundaries. Then a human heart appears on Lexie's doorstep. As more threatening packages arrive and her fiancé mysteriously disappears, she must confront a terrifying question: did she inadvertently match herself with a killer?

Cosimano, Elle. [Finlay Donovan Digs Her Own Grave](#) (\$19). With Finlay headed to TV screens on Peacock with Tina Fey, this is a timely paperback release of her 5th investigation. Finlay and her nanny/partner-in-crime, Vero, have not always gotten along with Finlay's elderly neighbor, Mrs. Haggerty, the community busybody and president of the neighborhood watch. But when a dead body is discovered in her backyard, Mrs. Haggerty needs their help. At first a suspect, Mrs. Haggerty is cleared by the police, but her house remains an active crime scene. She has nowhere to go—except to Finlay's house, right across the street. Finlay and Vero have no interest in getting involved in another

murder case—or sacrificing either of their bedrooms. But then the investigation widens to include Finlay ex, Steven, so the two are motivated to uncover Mrs. Haggerty’s secrets before the police start to uncover theirs.... [Read the whole series](#), now up to six books.

Everett, Percival. [James](#) (\$20). The Pulitzer Prize and numerous other awards winner is an action-packed reimagining of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, both harrowing and darkly humorous, told from the enslaved Jim’s point of view • In development as a feature film to be produced by Steven Spielberg.

Flowers, Ashley/Alex Kiester. [The Missing Half](#) (\$19). Two women haunted by their sisters’ unsolved disappearances band together to find what happened. his edition includes a bonus chapter set five years later, when Nic and Jenna’s story appears on the *Crime Junkie* podcast—featuring a cameo by Margot from *All Good People Here!*

Friss, Evan. [The Bookshop: A History of the American Bookstore](#) (\$20) is “A spirited defense of this important, odd and odds-defying American retail category.” —*New York Times*. Friss has done a remarkable amount of research, meticulously delving into archives from the 18th century to the present, as well as municipal records, oral histories, diaries, letters, catalogs, and buckets of receipts. He has also conducted interviews with various booksellers. Each chapter is set in a different, carefully chosen bookshop, and delves into the particular cultures they gave rise to and provided homes for. As I often say, a bookstore should reflect its community and its customers, making every single independent shop unique.

Graham, Genevieve. [The Chambermaid’s Key](#) (Simon & Schuster \$18.99). If you are a fan of Nita Prose’s Molly the Maid series, now come to its conclusion, then fellow Canadian Graham offers a darker story, two tracks, 1929 and present day, set in Toronto’s Dominion Hotel. Which is actually the Royal York where I have stayed several times and is a city landmark located across Front Street from the train station, extremely handy for rail travelers. The 1929 story brings you Rosie Ryan from a hardscrabble neighborhood whose ambition to become a chambermaid at the brand-new Dominion—maybe in time the head Housekeeper. How her plans are derailed by a charming waiter and a wealthy gangster who runs the city and leads to the discovery of a decades old murder during a major hotel renovation is the story. Plus an ending not unlike that of the Prose series.

* Harman, Sarah. [All the Other Mothers Hate Me](#) (\$19). “A hilarious, well-plotted thriller that goes racing through the streets of London, powered by frantic maternal desperation.” Plus it’s about a missing child, not normally the stuff of hijinks. Florence Grimes is a thirty-one-year-old party girl who always takes the easy way out. Single, broke and unfulfilled after the humiliating end to her girl band career, she has only one reason to get out of bed each day: her ten-year-old son Dylan. But then Alfie Risby, her son’s bully and the heir to a vast frozen food empire, mysteriously vanishes during a class trip, and Dylan becomes the prime suspect. Florence, for once, is faced with a task she can’t quit: She’s got to find Alfie and clear her son’s name, or risk losing Dylan forever. The only problem? Florence has no useful skills. Certainly shes’s no Sherlock. And indeed, all the

other moms hate her. Plus Dylan, is he really innocent? “If you like quirky characters, scrappy fighters, and a high dose of hijinks, this is your cup of tea! Who am I kidding? This book is everyone’s cup of tea.” —CrimeReads

Havill, Steven F. [If it Isn’t One Thing](#) (\$16.99). When a pickup truck pulling a horse trailer collides with a loaded semi, it seems like a straightforward accident. Posadas County, NM, Undersheriff Estelle Reyes-Guzman presumes the most complicated part of the clean-up will be getting thirty tons of unsplit firewood off of Posadas County’s state highway. But the plot thickens when the mangled vehicles are wrenched apart and the pickup’s deceased driver is not who Estelle was expecting. Who is the dead man – and where was he heading with his cargo, a prized stallion whose owner is frantic to get him back? Just as Estelle gets her teeth in the case, she’s called to a domestic incident between a local volatile couple, which has led not just to death – but to the injury of a fellow cop. Understaffed and overworked, Estelle finds herself plunged into two tricky investigations, which will take her across the border into Mexico.... See Signed Books for the sequel.

Heartfield, Kate. [The Tapestry of Time](#) (Voyager \$18.99). I’ve reached back to 2025 for a book I always meant to read...and now have...for our **April Historical Fiction Paperback Pick**. The hook: The Bayeux Tapestry which I went to see a few years ago in Normandy and which is either now or soon to be on loan to England for a bit.

This tale with a tinge of fantasy is set in France where some Nazis are obsessed with the tapestry. Kit and Ivy Sharps’ historian father was convinced it was a tool for prediction with some parts created before 1066, not a simple record of the actual events. Since the Nazis are itching to invade Britain, hope the tapestry will aid them. But it has been relocated for its safety. Ivy has joined the SOE, a secret unit set up to conduct reconnaissance and espionage. And so she is dropped into Normandy on a special mission. Kit works as an archivist in Paris. Can they work together to deploy the Second Sight that runs in the family to thwart the Nazis? If it is not mere superstition but true psychic power? Go with the fantasy parts, and you can view the tapestry [ON LINE](#) while Normandy’s Bayeux Museum is closed.

Kaufman, Elizabeth. [Ruth Run](#) (\$18). This debut presents a non-stop oddball thriller for our era of digital crime, very well written and paced. Twenty-six-year-old Ruth excels at microchip design but decides to get rich the old-fashioned way: robbing banks. She becomes a cybercriminal and devotes five years to siphoning more than \$250 million out of the banking system using a hacked firewall chip that she created and only she knows how to access. Then one night an alarm goes off and she realizes she’s been discovered. Five hours later she’s on the run, chased across California and the West by a slew of government agents who see her as both a high-level national security threat and a potential intelligence asset. They’ll catch her dead or alive—whatever it takes to make sure no one else discovers what she knows. Each of these men is obsessed with the woman he’s hunting, certain he knows what makes her tick. But Ruth, always a step ahead, armed with her ironic wit and a reluctant dog—my favorite character.

Mack, Catherine. [No One Was Supposed to Die at This Wedding](#) (\$18). Eleanor Dash, bestselling author of the Vacation Mysteries series, seems to bring murder on wherever she travels. Now

Emma Wood, Eleanor's best friend since childhood, is starring in the movie adaptation of *When in Rome*, Eleanor's first novel. Emma is also marrying her co-star Fred Winters, is cast as Connor Smith, Eleanor's ex. Filming wraps and they invite the whole cast and crew to their wedding at nearby Catalina Island. Could there be a storm headed their way? Of course there is? But the wedding goes on until Emma receives a note that says "Someone is going to die at the wedding." And someone does.... For the sequel see *Signed Books*.

Miller, Joanna. [The Eights](#) (\$19). Historical fiction set at Oxford for fans of Jacqueline Winspear's novel and authors like Dorothy L. Sayers. It follows the unlikely friendship of four women in the first female class at Oxford, opened in 1920 for the first time in its 1000 year history. Their unshakable reliance on each other in the face of male contempt and rife misogyny, and their coming of age in a world forever changed by World War I where ghosts do not always remain dead, form the core of the novel.

Natsukawa, Sosuke. [The Cat Who Saved the Library](#) (\$17.99). "In the midst of proliferating book bans, libraries shuttering, and threats to reading freely, Natsukawa undoubtedly provides another necessary hero." —*Booklist*

Nanami loves to read and happily spends much of her free time in the library, cocooned among the stacks. Then one day, Nanami notices that, despite the library being as deserted as ever, some of her favorite books, including literary classics like *Arsène Lupin*, *Gentleman Thief* and *Anne of Green Gables* are disappearing from the shelves. When she alerts the library staff, they dismiss her concerns. But just as Nanami is about to return to her reading, she spots a suspicious man in a gray suit. Eager to discover what he's up to, she follows him. The chase is cut short when Nanami suffers an asthma attack. By the time she catches her breath, the man has disappeared and all that is left behind is a mysterious light filtering through the library's familiar passageways. That's when Tiger, the talking tabby cat who saves books, comes to the rescue. Are Nanami and Tiger prepared to face the dangerous challenges that lie ahead? Why are faceless gray soldiers burning books in a stone castle? And what happened to Rintaro, the socially withdrawn hero who helped Tiger save books in a second-hand bookshop? At a time of increased book bannings worldwide, Sosuke Natsukawa urges us not to underestimate the power of great literature—and to be prepared to defend our freedom to choose.

Pliego, Ande. [You Are Fatally Invited](#) (\$19). When renowned anonymous author J. R. Alastor hires former aspiring writer Mila del Ángel to host a writing retreat at his private manor off the coast of Maine, she jumps at the chance—particularly since she has an axe to grind with one of the invitees. The guest list? Six thriller authors, all masters of deceit, misdirection, and mayhem. Last or and Mila have masterminded a week of games, trope-fueled riddles, and maybe a jump scare or two—the perfect cover for Mila to plot a murder of her own. But when a guest turns up dead—and it's not the murder she planned—Mila finds herself trapped in a different narrative altogether. With a storm isolating the island, and the body count rising, Mila must outwit a killer who knows literally every trick in the book until only one remains. You will note the similarity here to Agatha Christie and to Evelyn Clarke's *The Ending Writes Itself* above in *Signed Books*.

Swann, Leonie. [Big Bad Wool](#) (\$19.95). The sheep of Glenkill

grew up listening to their shepherd, George, reading Agatha Christie mysteries to them. Now, they take the skills of deduction they learned and apply them to the mysterious cases of death in and around their flock. With one solved mystery under their wooly belts in [Three Bags Full](#) (\$19.95), the time has come for the sheep of Glenkill to explore Europe. Together with their new shepherdess, Rebecca, they move into their winter quarters in the shadow of a French chateau. But their new home is far from idyllic. A number of sheep from a previous flock have disappeared, and deer are dying unnatural deaths in the forest. The strange goats from the neighboring pasture have a theory: a werewolf. Could that be real, or just a fantasy? When a human falls victim, it becomes clear that even fantasies can be fatal. And the last thing the sheep want is to lose another shepherd. With the help of the goats next door, they follow the werewolf's trail in a desperate attempt to save both themselves and Rebecca with sheep logic, courage, and woolpower.

This clever, tense mystery features the ultimate amateur sleuths as they ponder curious human motives, attempt to change their fortunes by eating tarot cards, and borrow a harebrained scheme from a not-so-secret spy in an attempt to thwart the beast that's been stalking them.