

BOOKNEWS from

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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.

MONDAY JUNE 1 1:00 PM Virtual Event

Lev AC Rosen discusses [The Disaster Gay Detective Agency](#)
(Sourcebooks \$17.99)
For Gay Pride Month, a romp of a New York tale

MONDAY JUNE 1 6:30 PM Live Offsite Event

It's World Outlander Day
Location: Scottsdale United Methodist Church, 4140 N Miller Road, Scottsdale 85251

Diana Gabaldon is our host

S.D Coverly discusses [The Arcane Arts](#) (Random House Worlds \$30)
"Coverly" is two authors, Dana Schwartz and Dan Frey
"Dark academia, romance and fantasy join forces in a gripping new book."

Free to attend. No Signing Line for Diana but presigned books available

TUESDAY JUNE 2 5:00 PM Virtual Event

Ayelet Waldman discusses [A Perfect Hand](#) (Knopf \$28)
Signed books in stock

Our June Historical Fiction Pick, full of surprises

TUESDAY JUNE 2 7:00 PM Live Book Launch

Karen Odden discusses [The Artful Dodge](#) (Soho \$29.95)
Starts a new Victorian London mystery series thick with thieves

WEDNESDAY JUNE 3 7:00 PM Live Event

James Byrne discusses [Storm Warning](#) (St Martins \$29)
An absolutely smashing thriller, full of the unexpected, with Dez Limerick in his 4th mission
A Thriller Award nominated series we'd like to see brought to the screen

THURSDAY JUNE 4 7:00 PM Two Live Book Launches A Thrillerfest Hat giveaway awaits you

Brett Battles discusses [Stuart Woods Deep Water](#) (Penguin \$32)
A Stone Barrington tangle of assassination and treachery, much of it in Maine
Graham Brown discusses [Clive Cussler Cold Fire](#) (Putnam \$32)
A NUMA Files adventure pitting Kurt Austen and team against agents who hijacked a US C-17 carrying a terrifying cutting edge laser in the Arctic

SUNDAY JUNE 7 4:00 PM Live Book Launch

Registration is sold out but come and see if any cancellations open a seat

Lisa See discusses [Daughters of the Sun and Moon](#) (Scribner \$29)

An epic novel of three young Chinese women sold by their families into new lives in 1870s Los Angeles pueblo and what they made of them, grounded in See's own family history
We will draw for three sets of a special tea created for this book to those who purchase a copy

MONDAY JUNE 8 6:00 PM Virtual Event

Patrick is our host
Walter Mosley discusses [Ghalen](#) (Harper \$30)

Signed books in stock
The versatile Mosley writes coming of age novel dubbed A Romance in Black

TUESDAY JUNE 9 7:00 PM Live Event

James Rollins is our host
Joseph Eckert discusses [The Traveler](#) (Tor Publishing \$28.99)
A heartwarming father/son time traveling debut
Rollins will sign [Trust No One](#) (Harper \$32) which comes with a special and exclusive extra dust jacket

WEDNESDAY JUNE 10 4:00 PM Virtual Event

Rob Hart discusses [Three Hitmen and a Baby](#) (Putnam \$30)
Assassins Anonymous is back!
Signed books on sale June 16

THURSDAY JUNE 11 7:00 PM Live Event

Scott Graham discusses [The Great Sand Dunes Massacre](#) (Torrey House \$17.95)
The latest in his National Parks Mysteries

FRIDAY JUNE 12 7:00 PM Live and Virtual Event

SciFi Friday discusses Adrian Tchaikovsky's [Alien Clay](#) (\$18.99)

TUESDAY JUNE 16 12:00 PM Virtual Event

Jaclyn Goldis discusses [The Last Time We Saw Her](#) (Atria \$19)
An isolated Azores island, a missing American summer camper, and a reunion ten years later to honor her memory....

WEDNESDAY JUNE 17 7:00 PM Live Event but 6:30 party with French treats

Martin Walker discusses [A Murder in Springtime](#). (Knopf \$30)
Where better to spend it than in the Périgord with Bruno, Chief of Police?

THURSDAY JUNE 18 7:00 PM Live Event

Brad Thor discusses [Choke Point](#) (Atria \$30)
The 25th international mission (Bangkok) for Scot Harvath
An astute plot of great relevance to today
I will give away my reading copy of the recommended companion book: Matthew Campbell's [The Man Who Stole the Gods](#) – different topic, same Southeast Asia location

FRIDAY JUNE 19 7:00 PM Live Event

Hilary Davidson discusses [Every Lie I Told](#) (Blackstone \$29.99)
David R. Slayton discusses [The Silent Paths of Night](#) (Blackstone \$29.99)

SATURDAY JUNE 20th 10:30 AM Live and Virtual Event

Croak & Dagger discusses David Ellis' [Look Closer](#) (\$19)
Could this be a perfect murder in Chicago?

SUNDAY JUNE 21 2:00 PM Live Event

John is our host
Local authors Rory O'Neil Schmitt and Rosary O'Neil discuss [The Blood of the Baroness](#) (Pelican Publishing \$23.99)
Biographical fiction centered on Micaëla de Pontalba by two local authors

THURSDAY JUNE 25 7:00 PM Live Event

Hardboiled Crime discusses Rex Stout's [How Like a God](#) (\$16.99)
MWA Grand Master Stout's early masterpiece

SATURDAY JUNE 27 11:00 AM Live Event

The Cookbook Club discusses Rebecca Firkser's [Galette](#) (\$30)
Sweet and Savory Recipes as Easy as Pie
July will be Yotam Ottolenghi's [Ottolenghi Simple](#) (\$37.99)

SATURDAY JUNE 27 2:00 PM A Live and Lively Trio

Christina Dodd discusses [Teach the Torches to Burn](#) (Kensington \$28)
A Daughter of Montague mystery
Kate Khavari discusses [A Botanist's Guide to Tradition and Treachery](#) (Crooked Lane \$29.99)
1920s British botanist Saffron Everleigh on expedition to Turkey
Jayne Ann Krentz as Jayne Castle discusses [Enter the Nightmare](#) (Berkley \$30)
A new Harmony Novel

HAPPY FOURTH

We will be closed

MONDAY JULY 6 7:00 PM Live Event

Paul Doiron discusses [Storm Tide](#) (St Martins \$29)

Also out in late June joining us for events in early July:

David Ellis with Alex Finlay July 8 5:00 PM Virtual Event

Jessica Knoll July 9 5:00 PM Virtual Event

Ryan Pote and Beau L'Amour July 13 7:00 PM Live Event

Note the specials that come with Pote's book and the Grand Prize

SUBSCRIPTION CLUB PICKS FOR JUNE

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
Kemp, LM. [I, Spy](#)

Cozy Crimes Club One Unsigned hardcover or paperback per month
Postel-Vinay, Danielle. [Murder Most Delicious](#)

Crime Collectors Club Book of the Month Club One Signed First Printing per month
Byrne, James. [Storm Warning](#)

First Mystery Club One Signed First Printing per month
Hanssen, Tiffany. [My Name Was Gerry Sass](#)

Hardboiled/Noir Club One Signed or unsigned hardcover or paperback per month
Hanssen, Tiffany. [My Name Was Gerry Sass](#)

Historical Fiction Club One First Printing per month
Waldman, Ayelet. [A Perfect Hand](#)

Historical Fiction Paperback Club One Unsigned paperback per month
Scarborough, Kelly. [Butterfly Games](#)

Notable New Fiction Club One Signed First Printing per month
Eckert, Joseph. [The Traveler](#)

Romance and Relationships Club One unsigned hardcover or paperback per month
McKinlay, Jenn. [The Summer Share](#)

SIGNED BOOKS FOR JUNE

A note here: All of our Signed Hardcover books are first printings

Andrews, Mary Kay. [Road Trip](#) (St Martins \$30). Maeve and Therese Dunigan are sisters, but the two have been estranged for years. They could not be more opposite: Maeve is the rule-follower and Therese is the rebel. But when their mother's death brings the family back together, the two find that they have inherited a painting, one that could be worth millions and could save each of them from the wolves at their door. The only issue is whether it's real or a fake, and the only way they can prove that theirs is the real McCoy is to solve the mystery of how this portrait of an Anglo-Irish aristocrat made its way to their childhood home in Savannah, GA. This means a road trip to Ireland, to their family roots, and to a mysterious crime that occurred generations ago. With tensions simmering, the two hit the road and find themselves on twisty lanes, in colorful villages, at local pubs, and with handsome men whose gift of the gab is surpassed only by their charm. Can Maeve and Therese actually survive the journey without killing each other? Join Mary Kay Andrews on a road trip that will entertain you for miles.

Battles, Brett. [Stuart Woods Deep Water](#) (Penguin \$32). You may not think that rich and, let's face it, pampered Stone Barrington, NY attorney, would have a sea adventure, but this chapter of his career begins with a shipwreck. Actually a fabulous mega yacht is sabotaged while Stone Barrington and his friend and mega rich client Trenton Sidney are enjoying a sunset drink aboard. By a fluke Stone survives, but not Trenton. When Stone summons his heirs to the mandatory reading of the will—Stone is the executor—tensions and tempers flare. As do suspicions—is one of them responsible for Trenton's death? Meanwhile Stone's long-time friend and colleague Dame Felicity, the head of Britain's MI6, is reported dead. Was an assassination plot afoot? Answers come in New York and also in Stone's Maine retreat, so strategically located. Battles continues to have great fun with writing this series as he does with the Teddy Fay thrillers. We still have a few copies of the most recent one: [Stuart Woods' Blown Away Signed](#) (Penguin \$30)

Benedict, Marie/Victoria Christopher Murray. [A Pair of Aces](#) (Berkley \$30) pairs the two authors yet again in a gripping novel of trailblazing women—actually two, living in the dangerous underbelly of 1930s New York City. One is a Black prosecutor, married and with family who can be threatened. The other a Jewish madam looking to protect her girls. They unite to take down a mob boss.

“These masterful storytellers deliver a deeply satisfying courtroom drama that offers the rare pleasure of seeing justice done. The takedown of Lucky Luciano is exhilarating—but the novel's true force rests in two formidable women working in the shadows to build the case. With clarity, courage, and remarkable honesty, the authors explore the forces that silence the vulnerable. By giving us a glimpse into the soft heart of the infamous brothel owner Polly Adler, and by centering Eunice Carter—a towering legal mind and overlooked American hero—this novel delivers a powerful punch and a much-needed historical reminder of what can be accomplished with grit and determination. Smart fiction perfect for the times.”—Stephanie Dray

Bloom, Amy. [Blunt Instrument](#) (Mysterious Press \$28). This first mystery by an author of other genres is an unusual academic or campus mystery set at Cromwell University with a truly original protagonist, a murder by a bust of Nathaniel Hawthorn, cut throat academic politics, and a failed English professor who's become a PI and called in to discover who murdered an aging English professor by the sharp university President Dr. Cutty. **More in July when this is our First Mystery Club Pick.**

Brennan, Allison. [Whisper Creek](#) (St Martins \$30). After the sudden death of her husband, Ellen McKenna is doing everything she can to keep her Texas farm afloat. She and her family hope to expand their operation, but times are tough and making ends meet is more expensive than she imagined, much less trying to grow. Many of their neighbors in Cooke County have thrown in the towel and agreed to sell their farms to a local businessman, but despite similar pressure, Ellen refuses to let her dreams die. On top of the usual hardships, a series of recent storms has left the region partly flooded, and as the heavy rain begins again one morning, all the members of the McKenna family jump into action to protect their land and animals. Ellen's oldest son discovers an injured dog—and the dog leads him to a man barely clinging to life, the apparent victim of a brutal home invasion. Then, Ellen's younger kids go to check on a nearby neighbor and walk into a threat none of them saw coming. “Fans of *Yellowstone*, Colleen Coble, and Ellen Crosby will enjoy this high-stakes drama rooted in land rights and family loyalty. While the farm-versus-corporation conflict may feel familiar, Brennan delivers relentless suspense and escalating danger.”—*Library Journal*

Brown, Graham. [Clive Cussler Cold Fire](#) (Putnam \$32). Lawyer, pilot, and author Brown imagines a terrifying new weapon, a laser of immense power capable of wiping out ballistic missiles hundreds of miles away. The US C-17 carrying it on a successful test high above the Arctic Ocean suddenly goes dark and vanishes. Hijacked? Crashed? Betting on hijacked, the President, aware that Russian ships are moving and Chinese vessels spotted north of Norway, orders Kurt Austen and his compadre Joe Zavala to send the small research vessel operated by NUMA into the frigid polar waters to lead the search (well imagined by Brown). Is WWII imminent? Or... Brown once again blends cutting edge technology with old-fashioned adventure in a high-stakes thriller with admirable heroes. Clive would be proud.

Byrne, James. [Storm Warning](#) (St Martins \$29). A Starred Review for a Thriller Award nominated series and our **June Crime Club Pick** because it is just SO GOOD:

“Byrne pulls out all the stops in his pulse-pounding fourth adventure for Dez Limerick, an Irish ex-mercenary who juggles guitar-playing gigs and high-profile hacking jobs. This time around, Dez is in Paris working as a bodyguard for a client whom he saves from two assassins, killing one and letting the other—a woman known as Ash—live. Months later, Dez is tapped by the FBI for a case involving the Fuchs Underground Neutrino Collector, a scientific facility in Newfoundland doing complex particle physics research. Fuchs has gone into lockdown and stopped communicating with the outside world after

a visit from donor Petra Alexandris, the CEO of Triton Expeditors, the bank “for much of the world’s military and government infrastructure.” The Bureau’s Hostage Rescue Team recruits Dez to help them infiltrate Fuchs, make sure Alexandris is alive and well, and determine where the orders to seal off the facility came from. The seemingly straightforward mission gets complicated when Ash resurfaces. Byrne brilliantly braids plot threads from previous installments into the action, creating a high-octane page-turner that respects its audience’s intelligence. Readers will be tempted to devour this in a single sitting.” A long sitting—the pace and the layering of the story are just remarkable! Fingers crossed for a streaming deal for this stunning series.

Castle, Jayne. [Enter the Nightmare](#) (Berkley \$30). Best-seller Krentz returns to Harmony, the fabulously fun futuristic planet she created as Jayne Castle. Alice Radstone should have known not to return. Her life before the Hotel of Dreams had been one of a perfectly cloistered teacher at the Ballantine Academy. When the death of her mentor forced her out, she was left to reinvent herself in the big city. Since then, things have not gone well. Ten months ago, after her first trip to the hotel, she woke up in the locked ward of a hospital for the criminally insane and was informed that she had murdered her husband on their wedding night. She has no memory of the husband or the wedding, but after she escapes from the asylum, one thing is certain: She is never going back. Unfortunately, Alice’s second reinvented life is also deteriorating rapidly, which is why she finds herself once more at the Hotel of Dreams—this time hiding in the shadows of her room with a dead body in the shower and two men wearing masks creeping toward the bed to kidnap her. Again. When the enigmatic and decidedly dangerous Owen March shows up and claims he’s there to rescue her, she has no choice but to accept his offer....

Coben, Harlan/CJ Box, eds. [Birds of Prey](#) (Mysterious Press \$26.95). **Signed for us by CJ Box, who contributes a story about...falcons!** This whole collection is terrific including a prequel to her Maine ex-spy series by Tess Gerritsen. Other stories from Kathy Reichs, Ace Atkins, Heather Graham, Harlan Coben, S.A. Cosby, Hank Phillippi Ryan, Robert Dugoni, Allison Brennan, Gregg Hurwitz, Kelley Armstrong, in a hardcover and [Paperback](#) (\$17.95) commissioned by the International Thriller Writers as a fundraiser. You can get Brennan to sign in June and in August by Gerritsen.

Connolly, John. [A River Red with Blood](#) (Atria \$30). **Our Irish friend has signed not the book but a special woodcut map by artist Rob Ryan of Maine locations within the story that comes with each of our copies while supply lasts.** The map will be roughly four times the size of a hardback book, so it can be folded twice and easily inserted, and John will sign each copy.

This is the twenty-third novel in 27 years, and it is, once again, superb. The novel pulls us into the story on the first page and refuses to let us go until the last page. In Maine’s rural Kennebec River Valley, the body of a young runaway from a “troubled teens” school has been found in the water, seemingly drowned, while a teenage girl has gone missing, believed dead. Now it is up to one man, private investigator Charlie Parker, to find the connection, and bring two evils—one new and one ancient—to an end.... Connolly infuses his thriller with a supernatural element.

Coverly, SD. [The Arcane Arts](#) (Random House \$30). Diana Gabaldon will host our June 1 event which is also World Outlander Day.

“A graduate student and her adviser dive into a taboo branch of magic, igniting a dangerous passion. This is a dark academic Romantasy involving magic and manipulation. “Dark academia, romance, and fantasy join forces in a gripping new book.”—*People*

Ambitious and driven, Ellsbeth Storer has long been determined to study the arcane arts, even before the mysterious death of a loved one draws her to prestigious Newlyn University. Professor Thaddeus Rawlins was once the wunderkind of the field, but in the wake of a horrific tragedy that nearly ended his career, he has resigned himself to the boredom of tenure. Yet when the magnetic Ellsbeth enters his orbit, he finds her impossible to resist. He agrees to oversee her pursuit of a taboo thesis topic: the study of writ magic, the illegal power to control and compel others—and a secret obsession of Rawlins’. As student and professor undertake their illicit research, harmless flirtation crosses into more, something dangerous.

Davidson, Hilary. [Every Lie I Told](#) (Blackstone \$29.99; [Paperback](#) (\$19.99)). Jackie Swift does whatever it takes to succeed. At work, she spins lies to protect questionable clients at a shady public-relations firm. At home, she helps her younger sister, Madi, evade consequences for dangerous choices she’s made about friends and drugs. But Jackie’s professional and personal worlds collide one night when she gets a call from Madi telling her she overdosed. Rushing to the rescue, Jackie stumbles on an awful scene at an Upper East Side mansion. Madi is nowhere to be found, but she’s left behind a dead body. Worse for Jackie, she knows the dead man all too well: He’s her former boss and mentor, and she’s been paid to cover up his crimes in the past.

“Jackie lies for a living, and is the master of helping people evade the consequences of their actions, including her wild and unpredictable sister Madi. In *Every Lie I Told*, Davidson delivers a sizzling, rocket-paced thriller about the dark and dangerous things we’ll do when we’re backed into a corner. Glitzy, edgy, and full of hairpin turns, this is Hilary Davidson at the top of her game.”—Lisa Unger

Dodd, Christina. [Teach the Torches to Burn](#) (Kensington \$28). Who has the audacity to write one book about Romeo and Juliet’s daughter? Let alone three. Now Rosie’s getting married to Escalus the younger, prince of Verona, where murder is the unexpected guest at the wedding. Joining us will be the royal and decorous kin of the groom, the Leonardis, as well as the famously rival families, the upstart Montagues and the snooty Capulets. All will be armed with swords and knives; at least one is skilled with poison. At this joyous event, who could foresee what direful occurrences might befall?

Doiron, Paul. [Storm Tide](#) (St Martins \$29). Out June 30, Signed here July 6. Maine Game Warden Mike Bowditch has been busted back from investigator to field work after his unauthorized venture across the border into Canada in his last case. And his much loved wife is very pregnant. She’s also understanding Mike’s embrace of risk. First he tried to pull the body of wealthy Brian Malloy from his mysteriously burning magnificent home. Malloy and his wife had been suspected of murdering Malloy’s

illegitimate young son rather than pay child support. Then, miles away, accused rapist Axl Deming of a basically criminal family is cut in half by a train. Is someone orchestrating executions of criminals who escaped justice? Is his own name on the list? And what about the safety of Mike's half-wolf?

Eckert, Joseph. [The Traveler](#) (Tor Publishing \$28.99). At precisely 7:52am every morning, Scott inexplicably travels forward in time in ever-doubling intervals. First one day lost in a blink, then two, then four, until weeks, even years, are passing him by in an instant. Meanwhile, his wife is left alone to pick up the pieces of the life they once shared together, and, before long, Lyle, Scott's genius seven-year-old son, will surpass him in age. Because while his dad is rocketing forward in time, Lyle is growing up—graduating early, studying at Berkeley, becoming the foremost scholar of quantum physics, all in an attempt to bring his father back.

“Time travel books—in almost any form—are my favorite thing. I love how the rules change and the consequences etc. in each story. But not since *The Time Traveler's Wife* have I read one that was such an emotional gut-punch. Time travel is a whole different enchilada when the heart of it is a love story—a person who very much wants to be present with those he loves and how having that so fundamentally and radically challenged makes him, and his family, relearn what it means to be in relationship, to share a life.”

Ellis, David. [Keep Them Close](#) (Penguin \$30). The Edgar winning Chicago judge writes of siblings Allison and Luke who have been through a lot together. They've always stood by each other. They'd do anything for each other. When Allison's husband, Finley, is murdered, the investigation threatens to expose the siblings' darkest secrets. An illicit affair. A decades-old accident. A stunning deception. How do these events explain Finley's death? How far will Allison and Luke go to keep their secrets buried? And can the siblings even trust one another anymore? More in July before his virtual event July 8 with his buddy Alex Finlay.

Ellroy, James. [Red Sheet](#) (Knopf \$35) immerses readers in 1962 L.A. in the fraught aftermath of the Cuban Missile Crisis. When Attorney General Robert Kennedy launches a sweeping anti-communist crackdown, Freddy Otash, a drug-addicted LAPD officer, is thrust into the heart of the storm. Otash's initial inquiry focuses on the Creative Trade Workers Alliance, a communist-affiliated union mired in corruption, drug trafficking, and political violence, and soon intersects with the racially charged battle over California's Rumford Fair Housing Act, which disallows discrimination in public housing. Along the way, Otash crosses paths with real-life figures including civil rights leader Tom Bradley and *Playboy* founder Hugh Hefner, as well as fictional union bosses who blur the boundaries between crime and politics. The brutal murder of a communist courier and a string of unsolved homicides deepen the intrigue as Otash navigates betrayals and ideological rifts within the LAPD and beyond, culminating in a tense showdown involving secret safe houses and a shadowy organization known as the Indigenous Cell. Ellroy's dense, slang-laced prose paints a brooding portrait of a city awash in Cold War anxiety. It's a rewarding ride for noir fans.

Graham, Scott. [The Great Sand Dunes Massacre](#) (Torrey House \$17.95). Archaeologist Chuck Bender witnesses a shocking death while conducting a survey at Great Sand Dunes National Park

in Colorado, yet local cops quickly declare the bizarre incident an accident. But when Chuck discovers a series of mysterious artifacts that threaten the lives of film students in the park—including his daughter Rosie—he will stop at nothing to uncover the truth. Is a killer quietly stalking Great Sand Dunes? Are the students the next target? And why does no one seem to care about the young man whose brutal killing started it all?

Greer, Andrew Sean. [Villa Coco](#): (Knopf \$30). The Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Less*, showcases his wit, sophistication, and deep knowledge of focaccia in this tale of a young man, an aspiring archivist, who takes an unspecified job with a charismatic elderly Baronessa known as Coco at her crumbling villa in the Tuscan hills. Amid a chaotic and colorful milieu of gin-swilling princesses, incomprehensible handymen, roaming boar hunters, nuns, and other local wildlife, our young man does his best to catalog the villa's extensive collection of art and antiques—although he notices that things seem to go missing from right under his nose. Despite himself, he tumbles into an affair with a married man, complicating his future plans considerably. And when the Baronessa loses someone close to her, he becomes an unwitting accomplice in the acceleration of Coco's great and final plan: to locate the love of her life and be reunited before it's too late.

Hanssen, Tiffany. [My Name Was Gerry Sass](#) (Atlantic Crime \$27). We're going out on a limb with our **June First Mystery Pick/Hardboiled Crime too**. It's had rave reviews, great, but what really hooked Patrick and me is the voice of hitman-for-hire Gerry Sass who launders money through his radio station WIOA—and is murdered in the first chapter. It doesn't silence him, leading some to call this *The Sopranos* meets *Six Feet Under*.

Here's one of the Starred Reviews: “From its opening pages, public radio host Hanssen's knockout debut, which orbits around the death of a genteel hit man in the 1980s Midwest, hums with suppressed menace. Contract killer Gerry Sass lives a quiet life in Mystic, Iowa, with his teenage daughter Early, taking occasional hit jobs from the Chicago mob and laundering the proceeds through the country music station he owns. That fragile equilibrium shatters when two men kidnap Gerry and kill him in the woods, a murder witnessed by his friend, Father Dan, a milquetoast Catholic priest who survives the encounter by staying hidden. Fearing her deadbeat mother may be the men's next target, an ill-equipped but relentless Early takes off in Gerry's prized Mustang, hell bent on tracking down the killers and avenging her father's death. Meanwhile, Father Dan's guilt over failing to intervene sparks a reckoning with his lapsed faith and his family's ties to organized crime, and the local sheriff attempts to piece together the truth behind Gerry's murder. Fast, funny, and emotionally complex, Hanssen's thriller suggests that guilt and family trauma will catch up to even the craftiest evaders.”

Hart, Rob. [Three Hitmen and a Baby](#) (Putnam \$30). Signed by Rob for us in NY. Assassins Anonymous isn't just a weekly recovery meeting for reformed killers—it's also a family. When Valencia receives troubling news that her brother has gone missing, she wants rush off to LA to find him. But she can't bring her baby girl, Lucia. Enter the other members of Assassins Anonymous—Mark, Astrid, and Booker, who offer to watch the toddler while she's gone. After all, they're three of the deadliest,

most highly skilled people on the planet; what could go wrong? Turns out, a lot.

“Ridiculously funny and surprisingly touching, Hart’s third Assassins Anonymous installment after *The Medusa Protocol* blends high-stakes action with humor as a trio of deadly professionals face their toughest mission yet. The best of the series so far. Both newcomers and returning readers will root for these former assassins as they try to reform themselves.” — *Library Journal*

* Jewell, Lisa. [It Could Have Been Her](#) (Atria \$29) begins with a middle-aged woman finding a lost dog on her country property. Missing is the teenage girl who’d been housing him nearby. Jane Trevally, not wanting to keep the pup, elects to return him to his registered owner (he’s chipped) far away in London. The address is a rundown mansion called Thornwood in the deepest, forested backwaters of Hampstead. Wow, Jane herself has a long ago history with this house. The man who answers the door is not the man she remembers, but Jane remains uneasy. And she glimpses a haunted-looking woman through a window. That’s the set up, where it goes is trademark Jewell. “Alternately cozy and harrowing, it investigates the most toxic family I have ever read.”—Liz Nugent

* Khavari, Kate. [A Botanist’s Guide to Tradition and Treachery](#) (Crooked Lane \$29.99). Saffron Everleigh is newly engaged and full of optimism as she sets off on the adventure of a lifetime for any scientist: a research expedition. She sails to newly formed Turkey with her fiancé, Alexander Ashton, and a bevy of fellow researchers under the watchful and reformed eye of Dr. Henry. With only two other women on board, Saffron soon finds she is right back in the same infuriatingly misogynistic 1920s environment that marked the earliest days of her career. Before the expedition team has even arrived, Saffron has managed to find an enemy in historian Joseph Clark, who frequently torments the assistant that Saffron has taken under her wing, Martin Neill. But when Martin unexpectedly dies, Saffron is targeted as the main suspect. Falling ruins, venomous snakes, and mysteriously blocked passages are thus the least of Saffron’s worries.

L’Amour, Beau. [Skyring Water](#) (Random House \$32). Out June 2, Signed here with Ryan Pote July 13, so best to preorder now. This is a novel of Cold War suspense including unlikely heroes, a nameless woman, and undefeated agents of the Third Reich, set in 1961. Beau coauthored it with his late father Louis L’Amour.

Mosley, Walter. [Ghalen](#) (Harper \$30). Mosley’s latest, is a coming-of-age story with a romantic twist—and the author’s first foray into the romance genre. It concerns Ghalen, a brilliant young Black man living in Los Angeles, who must navigate family drama, heartbreak, and betrayal as he struggles to become his own person in an unforgiving and violent landscape. “I wanted to write a book about Black love, and about Black people being in love,” Mosley says. “My job is to create characters who are real and believable. And, you know, they don’t have to be real, but they do have to be believable.

Mosley spotlights an array of heroes—some quiet, others unexpected. And while it’s not a swoony romance in the traditional sense, the book offers an examination of love in its various forms—from self-love to familial and romantic love—while also exploring racism, violence, and personal freedom. The novel opens in 1999, when Ghalen’s parents-to-be meet at a farm-

ers’ market and fall in love. His father, Robert, is a cook who’s neurodivergent, and his mother, Jamilah, is an aspiring scientist. The pair get married, despite objections from Jamilah’s mother, and have Ghalen, who embodies their hopes for the future. When Ghalen is in grade school, tragedy strikes the family, and he becomes his father’s de facto support system—a role that wears on Ghalen as he gets older. At 16, he heads off to college, but he grows disillusioned and burns to know the real world. When Ghalen falls for Lovely, his best friend’s girlfriend, his passion sets off a series of events that put his life in danger.

Mosley also writes thrillers, science fiction and fantasy novels, coming-of-age tales, and westerns. “I’m very interested in genre,” the author says over Zoom from his home in Santa Monica, Calif. “I just keep coming at them one after another. There are many different ways to tell stories.”

* Nevin, EC. [A Killer Plot](#) (Zaffre \$36). I loved Nevins’ amusing debut [A Novel Murder](#) (\$19), a 2025 British Crime Club Pick, so we are offering some Signed UK editions of the sequel. Jane Hepburn is still recovering from solving the murder at last year’s Killer Lines mysteries festival when she is dragged into another very bookish murder. When a young editorial assistant is found dead at her friend’s launch in a famous Cecil Court bookshop, Jane must use all her knowledge and experience as a writer of crime fiction to solve the mystery.

* Odden, Karen. [The Artful Dodge](#) (Soho \$29.95). This series start gets a Starred *PW* review: “This brilliant historical mystery follows 20-year-old British jewel thief Kit Jameson as she conducts what she hopes is her final heist. In 1879 London, Kit operates alongside an all-female band of burglars who swipe valuables from high-society targets. Kit’s skills come honestly, as her mother was once in the same crime ring. Recently, however, Kit has grown tired of thieving and developed a desire for an honest life. Before she turns the page, however, she must ensure her younger sister, Sarah, is safe and able to support herself working as a servant. Kit’s plans hit a snag when Maggie Wirth O’Connell, the wronged daughter of the original leader of Kit’s crime ring, returns after 20 years in an Australian penal colony to reclaim control of the syndicate and organize a heist targeting the people who sent her away. Knowing of Kit’s abilities, Maggie isn’t about to let her leave the fold. Odden matches vivid details of the hard-knock life in Victorian London with complex backstories for her large cast. Readers will be rapt.”

Ozeki, Ruth. [The Typing Lady, and Other Fictions](#) (Penguin \$30) is a story collection presenting love stories of every kind by the Booker Prize finalist. “The act of writing—on keyboards, in letters, even with disappearing ink—connects Ozeki’s tales as bearing witness to lives lived and as records for readers now and to come.” —*Booklist* (starred review)

Poston, Ashley. [The Someday Garden](#) (Penguin \$20 paperback only Signed). The new head gardener at the enchanting Lilymoor House stumbles upon a secret garden...with a mysterious man trapped inside, in the next magical novel by Poston. For some reason only the paperback is Signed. The [Unsigned Hardcover](#) (\$30).

Pote, Ryan, [The Ghost City](#) (Putnam \$30). Out June 30, Signed here July 13 with a drawing for those who buy the book for a Grand Prize: a first edition 19th century publication of travels by Marco Polo. Leather bound and 24k gold gilded pages. (It

ties into the novel the ghost city). And again for buyers: our first 50 copies each come with An authentic silver Mongol “Golden Horde” coin (1206-1227 AD)—NGC encapsulated and certified. An ancient secret hidden in a forgotten city holds the key to modern riches, hence these items for giveaways, in this exhilarating sequel to [Blood and Treasure](#) (\$20).

Navy pilot-turned-land surveyor Ethan Cain tangles with a sinister Chinese businessman in Pote’s solid if familiar sequel to *Blood and Treasure*. Ethan’s company, Pathfinder Survey Systems, is mapping the sediment of Vietnam’s Mekong River when an explosion almost kills him and uncovers the hull of an ancient Chinese sailboat. Meanwhile, wealthy Chinese construction CEO Shan Zhang is busy stealing the world’s supply of river sand to make concrete to sell. (In an aside that illustrates Pote’s preoccupation with facts and figures, he notes that the illicit sand trade tops \$700 billion worldwide, with demand increasing by 50 billion metric tons per year.) Plot wise, Zhang’s river operations are just the tip of the sand dune, as Ethan’s girlfriend, investigative journalist Lana Foster, discovers when she travels to Antarctica to interview Zhang at his icy, modernist lair. Zhang is planning on killing her because she knows too much about his crooked business—and because he’s a madman with a plan to destroy the world. As in the previous book, Pote is working in the old-school vein of Clive Cussler whose Fargo Series Pote is taking over for a 2027 release.

Rollins, James. [Trust No One](#) (Harper \$32) with our exclusive extra dust jacket. We sold out in March but Jim will now be able to sign his thriller about a group of Exeter UK University students, falsely accused of murder, who battle treachery across Europe to unlock the secrets buried within an ancient book, when he plays host for us on June 9. It’s great stuff.

Score, Lucy. [Mistakes Were Made Deluxe Edition](#) (Sourcebooks \$19.99). Score signed a few copies of her latest which other than these is now out of print.

See, Lisa. [Daughters of the Sun and Moon](#) (Scribner \$29). Those familiar with Lisa’s family story as told in [On Gold Mountain](#) (\$19) will recognize this is a fictional but in many ways similar immigrants’ story.

See starts the story of three women sold by their families in 1870s China and moves them to the pueblo of Los Angeles, giving readers a multifaceted look into life in Lo Sang (as it’s called by the Chinese community). The town’s tiny Chinese population was then dominated by rival tongs, fraternal organizations often connected to crime and extortion. Their constant jockeying for power and influence impacts the lives of all three women. See’s narrative brims with historical detail, including the particulars of Chinese festivals and holidays; ingredients and methods used in traditional Chinese medicine; and the complicated racial dynamics present in a city that was home to Mexicans and Indigenous people as well as Chinese immigrants and white settlers. See writes unflinchingly of the racism faced by people of color and the harsh immigration policies that made life more difficult for Chinese people, especially women, to build a life in the post-Civil War U.S.

Set against this stark backdrop, the women’s friendship—often kept hidden from the men trying to restrict them—blooms beautifully in a harsh environment, like the chrysanthemum tea Petal serves her customers. When simmering tensions, racial and otherwise, boil over on the night of October 24, 1871,

the three women must band together to help one another survive. Poignant and fascinating, *Daughters of the Sun and Moon* is a heart-pounding frontier narrative and a tender tribute to female friendship.

Sepeyts, Ruta. [A Fortune of Sand](#) (Random House \$30). “When Marjorie covertly joins an artists’ residency in Prohibition Era Detroit run by a secretive benefactor, she finds both inspiration and compelling secrets. Intriguing family dynamics and cons-within-cons abound in this novel set among moneyed families with ties to the growing auto industry.”

Slayton, David R. [The Silent Paths of Night](#) (Blackstone \$29.99) is a dark epic fantasy of immersive world building. For Raef, priest of the moon goddess Phoebe and one-time thief, it was too much to hope that resurrection of the moon and his mistress might set the world aright. The Grief still chokes the docks and streets of Versinae with vampiric ghosts, while the nations of Aegea prepare to war against each other. Even worse, Phoebe did not return alone. Something evil came with her. Rerek, a demon who once waged war with the gods themselves, Corpse-Taker and sower of chaos, is back to make sure there is no peace in Aegea, now or ever again. And it has a plan. Raef and his beloved Seth, knight of the sun god Hyperion, are all that stand between Rerek and utter destruction.

* Sullivan, Tim. [The Bookseller: A DS George Cross Mystery](#) (Grove \$27). Exciting news! The British bestseller now bringing his much praised series led by a neurodivergent copper to the US is coming to The Pen. **Mark your calendar for August 25 7:00 PM in a stellar week that brings us Jennifer Hillier, JT Ellison, Tess Gerritsen, and, virtually, Linwood Barclay from Toronto.**

After the body of Bristol bookseller Ed Squire is found in a pool of blood on the floor of his shop, the initial interviews by DS George Cross and his partner, Josie Ottey, seem unusual, raising concerns for the investigative team. Squire’s wife, Victoria, seems unnaturally composed; his elderly father, Torquil, is bereft and distracted; and his niece, Persephone, is discovered cowering in the bathroom. She might be a witness, but she seems too terrified to say anything. Sullivan’s highly readable series continues to resist becoming formulaic as he puts his meticulous detective’s personal life on the front burner from the very beginning, with a cancer diagnosis for Cross’ father, Raymond, on the first page. Cross’ struggle to cope with this development and with the surprising promotion of Ottey, who leaps the queue to become a Detective Inspector ahead of him, counterpoint the intricate investigation. Cross, who’s on the autism spectrum, isn’t naturally emotional, and his travails challenge him to express himself. For her part, Ottey recognizes this and works to support her colleague and former mentor. An additional plot thread follows MCU staffer Alice Mackenzie’s journey to become a detective after having been sexually assaulted by a superior officer. Sullivan rewards series fans with a poignant portrayal of the personal stresses of his heroic team. But the intricate mystery and well-crafted dialogue should also prompt new readers to dive in to previous installments.

Thor, Brad. [Choke Point](#) (Atria \$30). For his 25th for Scot Harvath, Thor moves the mission field to Asia. And after a long, luxury honeymoon, sends Scot’s wife the Norwegian Ninja, back to her own terrific career, a sound series move. Another plus:

Thor does a good job explaining the border war between Thailand and Cambodia. And the final bonus (no spoiler here): imagines a scenario months ago that the Pentagon should have envisioned before initiating hostilities with Iran. Honestly, our war leaders would do well to consult thriller writers.

The action kicks off with a devastating series of bombings tearing across Bangkok. Scores of American citizens, and many others, are dead. The attacks send shock waves around the world. As global assistance pours into Thailand—including the FBI’s famed Evidence Response Team—the president of the United States quietly prepares a response—Scot Harvath. But China has quietly deployed its most elite intelligence unit to Thailand with a goal vital to its national and economic security....

A recommended companion, reviewed in *New in Nonfiction*: Campbell, Matthew. [The Man Who Stole the Gods](#) (Portfolio Penguin \$34). This gem written like a thriller and deeply researched (tons of footnotes) by award-winning reporter Campbell is an ideal companion for its description, history, and post-WWII politics of Cambodia that echo today. Besides, it’s a thriller focused on Dynamite Doug who in the 1960s pulled off an enormous cultural heist at Angkor Wat and related temple ruins and ensnared collectors and institutions.

* Waldman, Ayelet. [A Perfect Hand](#) (Knopf \$28). Here’s a novel carefully researched that nods to Jane Austen and Mrs. Gaskell but transcends both with an ending that may gut you but also make you applaud. While not an actual mystery this book is so remarkable it is our **June Historical Fiction Pick** and a welcome return by an author after quite a gap. Think *Upstairs/Downstairs* Victorian but with *Downstairs* the heavier focus. And there’s room for change,

Alice Lockey, the daughter of a tenant farmer, has worked her way up to the position of lady’s maid in the country house to Lady Jemima, the silly, indulged elder daughter of a lord. She meets Charlie, a valet to a visiting viscount, wealthy but lacking charm or wit, and they tumble into a courtship, but they wish for more. Quickly realizing that securing a marriage between their two employers is the only route to their own, they determine to set up Lady Jemima and the deeply eccentric Lord Wynstowe. This is a tall order, but the young lovers are highly motivated and well positioned for persuading. So despite obstacles Alice and Charlie scheme to endear the Viscount and the Lady. Things, of course, go awry, necessitating trips between town and country. During one of Alice’s errands in London (its urgency due to her wish to spend time with Charlie), the couple meets Emmeline, an administrator for the Society for the Promotion of Employment for Women, with its unfortunate acronym of SPEW, who will play a role in this drama. Ultimately Waldman displays her sleight of hand and writes an ending so interesting and unusual that to say even one word more would be unjust. Witty, frothy, and ultimately wise, this send up of the marriage plot would make Mrs. Gaskell proud.

Among its many rave reviews is this: “a captivating historical drama, an appealing romance, and a story of political awakening, cleverly packaged as a novel of manners. Set in English country estates and the grimy city of London in the 19th century, this rollicking narrative ranges from frivolous upper-class parties and fancy dress to the literal and metaphorical dirty laundry that the service class must process. Even as their schemes

near fruition, however, Alice learns and yearns and grows as she encounters pamphlets by Mary Wollstonecraft and John Stuart Mill.”

And one more: “*A Perfect Hand* works subtly on several levels, exulting in the details of the Victorian setting, exclaiming over Alice and Charlie’s sympathetic romance, and pressing the exceptional heroine toward her best and truest self. With a nod to Jane Austen but a firm focus on the servant class, this versatile novel will stay with readers long past its final pages.”

When the book is read I recommend taking time to read Waldman’s essays on her return to fiction and much more on her [Substack channel](#).

Walker, Martin. [A Murder in Springtime](#). (Knopf \$30). Bruno, Chief of Police in St. Denis, decides that he can’t be impartial where his lover/friend Pamela is involved when a lodger is killed on her back patio, so the force assigns the case instead to their rising star rookie, Fabien. Bruno is happy for Fabien to take the lead. Lately, Bruno’s been distracted: by his faltering relationship, by a meddlesome film crew that’s descended on the Dordogne, by a group of opinionated small business owners Bruno wants to help to organize a logistically complicated night market. He can’t seem to catch a break. But when Fabien realizes that the victim is connected to his own past, Bruno steps back in to help.

The plots in this our bestselling series in paperback intrigue but really, come for the Périgord’s food and wine and special local culture. We recommend you start at the beginning with [Bruno, Chief of Police](#) (\$18), and [read your way forward](#)—maybe as a summer reading challenge?

FOR DAD’S DAY

Our [Gift Card](#) remains a classic gift letting Dad choose whatever sort of book he’d like. Can be emailed anywhere so good for the last minute too.

Robinson, Christian. [Dad](#) (Balzer \$19) is destined to be a classic, an evergreen gift for new fathers, and one of those rare picture books that can resonate with every reader at any age. From Caldecott Honoree and #1 *New York Times* bestselling creator Christian Robinson comes a loving, funny, and profound tribute to all kinds of dads, animal and human. “Fathers of all stripes, feathers, and species take center stage in this captivatingly illustrated, quietly complex picture book. This is a tender, accessible tribute that feels inclusive of the myriad ways dads show up in their children’s lives.”—*Horn Book Magazine*

And we recommend a trio of glorious, fast-paced adventures all listed in Signed books by Brett Battles, Graham Brown, and James Byrne.

And a sweet tale of a widowed dad struggling to do his very best for his daughter in a debut by Andrew Forrester, [How the Story Goes](#) (\$28.99 Signed). You can’t go wrong with one or all of them to brighten Dad’s summer.

WHAT IS HISTORICAL FICTION?

[Read this essay](#) and think about what is on offer from the past or now There is a lot of it in this Booknews, and a good choice for those not a fan of Romantasy or Horror, or even Cozies, the major escape genres of the moment.

Historical Fiction is a story that takes readers to a time and place in the past. How far back in time does an author have to

go for their work to be considered Historical Fiction? A good rule of thumb is a minimum of 50 years. The idea is to take readers out of the events of their lifetime. Most book lovers agree that Historical Fiction is the closest we'll get to actual time travel.

What makes a historical novel believable is its setting. Historical Fiction is set in a real place, during a culturally recognizable time. The details and the action in the story can be a mix of actual events and ones from the author's imagination as they fill in the gaps. Characters can be pure fiction or based on real people (often, it's both). But everything about them — their attitudes and look, the way they speak, and problems they face — should match the era. Of course the key to an author getting all of this right is research. Authors are always allowed artistic license, but the most satisfying works of Historical Fiction have been researched down to every scent, button, turn of phrase, and cloud in the sky.

It wasn't until the early 1800s that Historical Fiction emerged as a contemporary literary genre. Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* (1819) was a leader. By the 1900s Historical Fiction was established as a readers' favorite. And today events from the 1960s and early 1970s qualify. 36 years ago when I opened The Pen the 1920s and 1930s made the cut, with WWII about to start its huge surge.

CLASSICS

Hirschberg, Cornelius. [Florentine Finish](#) (Poisoned Pen Press \$15.99). Hardy is a small-time diamond salesman and ex-cop who knows private deals mean trouble. Against his better judgment he decides to help a rich acquaintance find a special diamond for his wife. Saul finds the perfect gem, but the deal turns deadly when the diamond is revealed to be part of the haul from a violent murder-robbery. Caught between the cops, the mob, a beautiful amateur jeweler, and shady gemologists, Saul must figure out how to clear his name before he becomes the next casualty.

This Library of Congress Crime Classic, edited by series editor Leslie S. Klinger, was a 1964 Edgar Award winner for Best First Novel. [While I looked this up I spied the 2001 Raven Award Winner to be *The Poisoned Pen*.]

Marshall, Paule. [Brown Girl, Brownstones](#) (Penguin Classics \$28). First published in 1959 is this novel about a New York City girlhood that heralded a renaissance in Black women's literature, with a new foreword by Nicole Dennis-Benn. Selina Boyce comes of age in 1940s New York as the daughter of two immigrants from Barbados: a free-spirited father she adores and who dreams of returning to his Caribbean island home, and a disciplined, hardworking mother she admires and who is determined to purchase their Brooklyn brownstone. When her father comes into an unexpected inheritance, Selina is torn between his nostalgia for the past and her mother's ambition for the future, all while negotiating racism, sexuality, Depression-era poverty, and the competing values of African Americans and her West Indian immigrant community.

Other new Penguin Classics: Faulkner, William. [The Sound and the Fury](#) (\$28) and Suetonius. [The Lives of the Caesars](#) (\$20). Plus from Little Brown: Virgil. [The Aeneid](#) (\$22.99).

* Sinclair, Fiona. [Scandalize My Name](#) (Poisoned Pen Press \$15.99). This new British Library Crime Classic, first published in 1960, was Sinclair's stylish debut offering a classic murder

mystery shot through with a chilling vein of the macabre. On the eve of Elaine Southey's 21st birthday, the residents and neighbors of the Southneys' historic north London home prepare for the party under a pall of anxiety, while a grim surprise awaits in the basement flat. There lies the insidious charmer Ivan Sweet — whose malign influence held so many in its grasp — dead in suspicious circumstances. While reactions of horror — and relief — spread through the party, the truth that a murderer remains at large seeps in slow and cold. To bring the ruthless killer to justice, the young Oxford man, Superintendent, Paul Grainger, must untangle the twisted web of Sweet's wrongdoing — and the dark secrets threatening to ruin each suspect's good name.

Stout, Rex. [How Like a God](#) (Titan \$16.99). In the shadowy stairwell of a New York City brownstone, a man stealthily begins to climb. In the pocket of his coat, a loaded revolver. At the top of the stairs, a woman he intends to kill. But who...? This extraordinary novel by Rex Stout, the legendary creator of Nero Wolfe, is a psychological thriller unpublished now for more than 50 years. It is our Hardboiled Crime Discussion Club Book for June.

Yokomizo, Seishi. [She Walks at Night](#) (\$18.95). In this mind-bending new addition to Seishi Yokomizo's bestselling *Kosuke Kindaichi Mysteries*—translated into English for the first time—scruffy sleuth Kindaichi is called to the home of the aristocratic Furugami family, where in the midst of the Musashino countryside and enclosed on all sides by a long earthen wall, a gruesome scandal is brewing. At the centre of the estate is the family patriarch: the drunken, sword-wielding father Tetsunoshin. His mistress, the icy, alluring Lady Oryu, is also housed in the estate along with their illegitimate daughter Yachiyo —beautiful and unstable—and the drink-ravaged Furugami heir, Naoki Sengoku. With each family member holding onto their own dark secrets, tensions between them ride high. But this family feud turns bloody when the mutilated, headless body of Yachiyo's fiancé is discovered in the Furugami estate. "Plenty of golden age ingredients... with a truly ingenious solution." — *Guardian*, Best New Crime Fiction

COZIES

Davis, Krista. [The Diva Hosts a Murder](#) (Kensington \$27). Fourth of July celebrations figure into the Domestic Diva Mystery as Old Town Virginia's occasional sleuth, Sophie Winston—a young Martha Stewart in the making—juggles fireworks, an explosive house party, and homicide....

Gates, Eva. [Whose Body in the Library](#) (Crooked Lane \$29.99) is the 13th in the Lighthouse Library Series. While Lucy McNeil is enjoying her new job as the mother of twin boys and library director, new librarian Nichelle Gilchrest has just arrived at the Bodie Island Lighthouse Library, reporting for duty. But life throws a wrench on Nichelle's first day when she finds a body on the steps—a body that bears a startling resemblance to her father, who disappeared on a fishing trip to the Outer Banks thirty-eight years ago. Fingerprints confirm the dead body is indeed Nichelle's father, now living in Nags Head under the name Brian Saunders. Brian had been befriending older lonely women in exchange for money, but was he working alone? Detective Rhonda Thomas is on the case, and the suspect list is only getting longer.

* Hogan, Michael. [The Dogwalkers' Detective Agency](#) (Pegasus \$28.95). Here's another cozy where British humor and prose may not translate well for you

British TV critic Hogan debuts with a story about a group of dogwalkers turned amateur sleuths. Graphic designer Charlie Boardman has come home to decaying seaside town Framstone to care for his aging mother, and is adjusting to a much quieter life than he led in London. He's on a stroll with his terrier, Ruby, when two other dogs—the pets of his friend Tess, proprietor of Framstone's coffee shop—emerge from the bushes with toupées in their mouths. Charlie follows them back into the brush, where he finds the rotting corpse of Frank Courtney, a retired cop turned pub owner. His curiosity piqued, Charlie sets out to help police find the culprit, with the help of his new friends and fellow dog walkers Viv, Sue, and Malcolm. Despite his inexperience, Charlie proves an effective enough investigator to be blackmailed by Courtney's killer, who threatens to kill Ruby if he and his friends get any closer to the truth. Richard Osman paved the way for elderly group sleuthing. Here is a less sophisticated example.

Lippman, Laura. [Murder Takes a Vacation](#) (\$18.99). This is a gem, a cozy by Lippman I adored. See Our June Paperback Picks.

London, Julia. [Rules for Aging and Larceny](#) (Kensington \$18.95) presents an all-female group of chaotic, elderly thieves come out of retirement for one last heist against a young Crypto-loving DudeBro-type while trying to repair their fractured friendship along the way. Frances, Joan, Edie, and Irene were a girl gang before such things even existed, joining forces in their 20s for a one-time job that revealed a remarkable affinity for crime. They developed a code of honor, taking only from those who deserved it—until misunderstandings and pride drove them apart. Now, one by one, Frances manages to convince her old friends to put aside their grudges and reunite. And where better for a reunion tour than Las Vegas? Their target: Rocco Vitali, a mobster's grandson who's developed a high-tech shakedown. Rocco is a Crypto-loving scam artist, and Edie's beloved granddaughter just lost everything to him, including her self-respect. But the women intend to take it all back—with interest. And four badass seniors will discover how formidable a whole lot of experience can be...

“As you age, you learn the only real difference between being 40 and 70 is how long your shorts should be. And of course, that you have fewer years to mend friendships and, well, live. Happily, *The Last Heist* isn't a story about old ladies doddering into oblivion, but rather it's about four vital women raging with cunning, heart, humor, and a bit of arthritis. Proving there's still a lot of life, and apparently a fear of STDs in the twilight years. If I were to be an old lady in a book, I wouldn't mind being in this one!”—Sue Hincenbergs, author of *The Retirement Plan*

Lumley, Sam. [Coastal Views to Die For](#) (Kensington \$27). June is Gay Pride Month so travel with gay autistic travel writer Oliver Popp along the picturesque Oregon coast where the amateur sleuth investigates what happened to the dead man in the cozy inn's hot tub.

* Nevin, E C. [A Novel Murder](#) (\$19). Our June 2025 Cozy Crimes Club Pick is now in paperback. See our June Paperback Picks.

Perry, Carol J. [It's About Time](#) (Kensington \$18.95) in Salem, Massachusetts, where Detective Pete Mondello has a search warrant for a tenant's apartment. When Lee's aunt Ibbey leads the police to Josh Alper's locked door, she's surprised to learn that her renter has redecorated . . . with what appear to be masterpieces stolen from a museum back in 1972. The paintings may be found,

but Alper—an artist involved with a shady, cult-like group—is officially missing. So Ibbey and her pals, who hold weekly watch parties of their favorite show, *Midsomer Murders*, decide to jump in and do some real-life sleuthing using the skills they've learned from DCI Barnaby. Ibbey, a semi-retired librarian, may be in her sixties, but her tech skills are top-notch . . . and with some help from her friends as well as O'Ryan the clairvoyant cat, that spells trouble for any criminals in Salem.

Postel-Vinay. [Murder Most Delicious](#) (Harper \$30 or in paperback \$18.99) is our **June Cozy Crimes Club Pick** in hardcover. “French food is at the heart of my new novel, a culinary mystery set in Paris. When a renowned French Chef is poisoned, an American sommelier joins forces with a group of neighborhood amateur sleuths—a pâtissier, a café owner, a part-time librarian, and a florist—to solve the murder. It's a race through French cuisine, one filled with food, wine, and friendship. When making the book trailer at the iconic French bistro Balthazar in New York City, we wanted to represent the most delicious French confections: crème brûlée, the Paris-Brest, and profiteroles dripping chocolate. I admit it was hard to resist eating everything before we got it on film! Such temptations are difficult to manage. Luckily, when you read the novel, and experience all the delicious things on offer, you won't have to.”

* Ripley Mike. [Played to Death](#) (Severn House \$29.99) is a second whodunit featuring book editor turned library assistant Roland Wilkes from [Buried Above Ground](#) (\$16.99). Roland is approached at work by Adam Cunningham, an attorney and member of the Hopewell Players repertory, who offers him £300 to read a script titled *Death for Dessert* that his theater troupe is considering performing. Adam loathes the play and is looking for a reason not to stage it—an uphill battle given that the script was written by the father of Councillor Jemma Soulby, a powerful local politician and the Hopewell Players' main producer, who insists the company give her father's work a platform. Eager for an easy payday, Roland agrees to offer Adam his honest thoughts, only to discover that Jemma's father has stolen the entire script from bits of other, more famous texts. Before Roland's findings can halt the production, someone involved with the play is murdered. “Breezy in tone but ingenious in construction, Ripley's playful mystery deserves a standing ovation.” He's also the author of the Mr. Champion Mysteries after Margery Allingham's Golden Age detective.

* Sutton, Polly. [The Body in the Kitchen Garden](#) (Kensington \$28). Visit the seemingly sleepy English village of Pudding Corner in this fresh, witty, fun, and delightfully modern cozy. Pudding Corner is abuzz: the enigmatic Lord Hugh Darlington has returned to his crumbling ancestral home after years away. With his fiancée, he plans to revive the grand Darlington Hall—and who better to help than antique-hunting Daphne Brewster? Daphne is enchanted by the estate's stained-glass windows, regal turrets, and sprawling kitchen garden. But amidst the overgrown greenery, she stumbles upon something far less picturesque: a body. A body that no one can identify. As the shocking murder rocks the village, Daphne dusts off her sleuthing skills—despite the local PC's warnings to stay out of trouble. When Lord Darlington is attacked and a string of burglaries shakes Pudding Corner, it's clear that no one is safe from secrets buried deep and loyalties more tangled than ivy,

SOME JUNE HARDCOVERS

Àbíké-Íyímídé, Faridah. [The Heirs](#) (Feiwel & Friends \$20.99). For Young (and older) Adult readers the award-winning *New York Times* and Indie bestselling author of *Ace of Spades* publishes a mystery about five teen geniuses, their billionaire father, and the aftermath of his murder—perfect for fans of *The Inheritance Games*, *Umbrella Academy*, and *Knives Out!* This printing has a special stained edge!

Andrews, Alexandra. [The Fine Art of Lying](#) (Harper \$30). Andrews's gripping sophomore thriller after her knockout 2021 First Mystery Club Pick [Who Is Maud Dixon](#) (\$16.99) centers on Clare Bast, an impoverished art historian from the Hudson Valley who lands a job at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, where she meets and marries attorney Jed, and is whisked away to his affluent world on Park Avenue. Clare puts her dreams of finishing her PhD on pause when she gives birth to the couple's daughter, and grows frustrated with Jed for failing to stand up to his overbearing family. One night, while admiring the art collection of Jed's boss and his wife at a party they're hosting, Clare meets and starts an affair with charming art dealer Gabriel Prévost. During one of their trysts at Gabriel's brownstone, a stranger breaks in, steals a masterpiece by mid-century painter Blake Webley, and fatally shoots Gabriel. Though Clare flees and tries to erase any trace of her presence, she soon becomes a suspect in both crimes. Convinced that if she finds the stolen painting she can clear her name, she draws on her art expertise and elite connections to find the (surprising) culprit.

Andrews turns her gimlet eye on the lives and lies of New York's ultrawealthy to riotously entertaining, and fairly terrifying effect. You won't be able to put this down.

Arden, Katherine. [The Unicorn Hunters](#) (Random House \$30). I am moved to review this because I am mad for the mysteries set in Brittany by [Jean-Luc Bannalec](#) which we recommend highly. Make them a summer reading project.

Anne, duchess of Brittany, promised her late father that she would not let France annex their tiny nation. Anne has no wish to leave Brittany, as "her whole heart lay in its earth and gray sea, belonged to its people in their wool and lace," but her best hope to save it is through the right marriage. Her upcoming forced wedding to the French king would guarantee the loss of Brittany's independence, so she hatches a desperate scheme: she arranges her own betrothal to the Austrian monarch, who has no interest in annexing Brittany. She must hide her plan from the magical sight of France's royal diviners, so Anne coordinates a hasty wedding by proxy at an abbey in Brocéliande, a forest shielded from divining. She also starts a rumor of a unicorn sighting in the forest, stalling the French emissary with the promise of a unicorn hunt and giving herself an excuse to go to Brocéliande as the maiden bait. The unicorn hunt goes awry when an actual unicorn appears, followed by a man who claims to have been lost in the world of the *korrikaned*, Brittany's fair folk, for centuries. Anne must continue to hold off the French while she waits for her true bridegroom, but strange outpourings of magic and a shadowy nemesis threaten her plans.

Bell, Gavin. [138 Main](#) (Saga Press \$30) is a fabulous thriller that travels across the Midwest when, after 3 killings at addresses at 128 Main Street, it's apparent that someone(s) has conceived a diabolical plan with over 7,000 targets in all 50 states. How does

the perp travel between towns? How is he able to strike no matter the security or surveillance? I'm telling you this is a brilliant concept that I read in one big gulp. Because the first killings are in small towns the local police work them until the FBI sees the pattern and heads up a task force. One small town Illinois policewoman who spotted the killer's signature at her crime scene is asked to join so we see her professional development alongside the FBI work.

Bell lives in Glasgow or I would have snagged Signed copies of this gem but it will read just as well without the signature.

* Benjamin, Melanie. [The Windsor Affair](#) (Random House \$30). Feuding Windsor brothers and their wives—some things, it seems, never change. Benjamin turns to fiction to recreate the cataclysmic events that nearly toppled the monarchy and incited the power struggle between Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon and Wallis Simpson. Told from the perspective of both women, the novel propels readers into the fabulous world of the debonair Prince of Wales, café society of the 1930s, and the glittering private lives of the Windsors.

Biedermann, Nelio. [Lazar](#) (Summit Books \$28). Drawing on his own family's story, Biederman pens "a gothic, intergenerational family saga capturing the rise and fall of an aristocratic Hungarian family against the backdrop of the two world wars." Rave reviews for this debut include "The book's historical scope and occasionally mystical tone...have led readers to compare it not only to Thomas Mann and Joseph Roth's *Radetzky March* but Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*." — Thomas Rogers, *The New York Times*. I've loved several visits to Hungary and have snagged a copy to enjoy this summer.

Chatfield, Michael. [The Ten Realms, The Two Week Curse](#) (Aethon Vault \$30) is "a rip-roaring adventure with a pair of hyper-competent protagonists who make the best of every opportunity in this LitRPG portal fantasy." Matt Dinniman says, "Strap yourself in, collect some monster cores, and let Erik and Rugrat take the wheel." Erik West served as a combat medic alongside his marine buddy Jimmy 'Rugrat' Rodriguez. After being marked with the two week curse, they have just 14 days until they're teleported from their lives. No one else that has been 'cursed' has ever returned. All of them have started seeing stat screens and being able to do things that should only be possible in games. When the curse teleports them to the first realm they're going to have to learn and quickly. Strength is security here and they'll have to use all of their newfound skills and abilities combined with all their training and knowledge to forge their own path. This is the first book in the addictive million-copy bestselling TEN REALMS series, where tactical military science fiction combat meets high-stakes LitRPG progression fantasy..

Dinniman, Matt. [A Parade of Horribles](#) (Penguin \$32). And here is a new book by the guy recommending *The Two Week Curse*, the wildly popular Dinniman. This is Dungeon Crawler Carl #8. As chaos and mass panic spread outside the dungeon in the wake of Faction Wars, Carl and Donut find themselves on the tenth floor, where they're forced to compete in a surprisingly normal set of tasks. Well, normal for the dungeon. Races. Get from point A to point B, and don't come in last. After each race, they pick an upgrade for their vehicle and the track gets more challenging. It all seems a little too normal, a little too simple. And it is.

Eggers, Dave. [Contrappostol](#) (Knopf \$32). Cricket Dib, born on the American prairie, has no particular prospects or ambitions until, in grade school, he realizes he can draw. He soon meets a girl, Olympia Argyros, one year older, who is captivating and brilliant and far more worldly. Recognizing his talent, she convinces him to deface, with profound vulgarity, a popular playground. Under her direction, he does it willingly, already in love, and thus begins a sixty-five-year entwining between Cricket and Olympia, encompassing friendship, working partnership and love affair.

* Everett, CB (Martyn Waites). [The Final Chapter](#) (Atria \$29), Everett takes a leaf from Anthony Horowitz here with a kind of meta fiction. Ten years ago, a bestselling, critically acclaimed literary author disappeared without a trace...and without a final novel. In recent days, that missing manuscript has surfaced, but strangely enough, it's not another genius work of literary fiction, but an espionage novel full of all-too-stereotypical spycraft and James Bond-like twists. His former publisher has asked the author's best friend—and fellow author named C.B. Everett—to annotate the novel with details from real life to give the strange novel context within his larger oeuvre. But as C.B. reads, he finds the espionage thriller is filled with references to events and people who feel a little too familiar, and soon he's wondering if the novel might in fact be a key to his missing friend's disappearance. There's text and subtext aplenty, and C.B. is determined to learn once and for all what happened to his friend through solving the mystery woven into the pages.

French, Gillian. [Restless Bones](#) (St Martins \$29). It's a second Maine thriller for fingerprint analyst Shaw Connolly. Shaw is called to process the scene. She finds a single print belonging to a long-dead female ex-con; could it be the key to identifying the murderer? As usual, Shaw won't stop looking until she's dredged up more than a few hidden crimes. All the while, Shaw's past won't let her go. Just as the Connolly family begins to find some peace after the arrest of Shaw's sister's killer, Anders Jansen, Shaw receives a request from her state police contact. Anders, in prison awaiting trial, has claimed responsibility for the murders of two other young women whose cases have grown cold over the past decade. But he refuses to help the police unless Shaw agrees to act as a special consultant in the search. Despite her misgivings—Anders's love of malicious mind games is as toxic as ever—Shaw has many reasons not to work this case, but how can she not?

* Grainger, Peter. [Some Sort of Justice](#) (Union Square \$30). Grainger's expert 17th Kings Lake mystery (the second to be published in the U.S., after [An Accidental Death](#), follows DCI Cara Freeman as she probes a politically sensitive murder case. Freeman gets handed a hot potato when her boss, Harry Alexander, asks her to look into the death of Lord Freddie Thorpe. Though officials maintain that Thorpe died by accidental drowning, his sister, Caroline, insists there were inconsistencies in the investigation. Freeman's initial probe confirms Caroline's suspicions, and she unearths evidence that Thorpe's death may be connected to a controversial arms sale and an extortion plot targeting a member of Parliament. Soon, though, Freeman comes to fear she's been set up to fail, with Harry appearing to block her progress at every turn. Grainger expertly balances deep dives into his characters' personal lives with intricate police work, resulting in a suspenseful mystery with palpable emotional stakes. This is everything a procedural should be. Check our June Paperbacks for the series start.

Greer, Andrew Sean. [Villa Coco](#) (Knopf \$30). The June Library Reads Pick: "Our young man" narrates this quirky story of falling in love with Tuscany while doing all manner of work (except the work he was actually hired for, cataloging her belongings) for the wealthy 92-year-old Baronessa. Odd developments, interesting relationships, and excellent storytelling combine for a winning summer read."

Hanks, Gabbie. [Nasty Little Secrets](#) (Zando \$28). A woman's quest to get her brother released from jail takes an unexpected turn in Hanks' impressive debut. Rose Darling's brother William has been behind bars since 2010, when he was convicted of strangling his former girlfriend, Florida teenager Alexandria Hopely, to death. Despite strong evidence against William, including the presence of his semen on Alexandria's body, Rose has spent over a decade trying to prove his innocence. She turned her research into a bestselling roman à clef in which the Alexandria character is killed by her own father. When the real Alexandria's father, Gary, dies by suicide, Rose's reputation plummets. She's grilled about Gary's death during an appearance on a morning talk show in New York City, but deflects by suggesting that Alexandria's murder may be part of a pattern that includes the recent disappearance of another 16-year-old in the same part of Florida. After the interview airs, Rose learns that her teenage sister, Hazel, has vanished, lending her new theory unfortunate credence. She returns to Florida to investigate and finds evidence she'd missed all along. Hanks' plot hits familiar beats, but she exhibits remarkable control for a first-time novelist.

Jack, Gordon. [Poppy Montgomery Gets Even](#) (Mysterious Press \$26.95). This is a debut for the acid-tongued Poppy, a senior with a jaundiced outlook heading a caper that could be called a cozy.

Why jaundiced? Her father? A bully. Her husbands? Losers. Her daughter and grandson? Well, they're probably her fault. And now the police have taken away her license, her daughter wants to put her in a retirement home, and the bossy new fitter-than-thou attendee at water aerobics is taking over her favorite class. But enough is enough, and when her new friend, Ginny, is scammed on a dating site for seniors, Poppy decides it's time to finally get even. With the help of Jeremy, her tech-savvy grandson, Poppy launches a vindictive little caper, scamming the scammers that prey on the elderly online. But when two women at Ginny's retirement home seemingly meet unnatural ends and her newest target is implicated in the murder, suddenly Poppy's fun online con job becomes a matter of life or death. It's going to take the whole gang—Poppy's two new best friends, her in-recovery daughter, and her basement-dwelling grandson—to pull off one last job.

Jakubowicz, Jonathan. [The Adventures of Juan Planchard](#) (Grand Central \$29). Filmmaker Jakubowicz debuts with a raucous political thriller centered on 29-year-old Venezuelan playboy Juan Planchard, a roguish charmer who rejected the collective socialism of the Hugo Chavez government and made a fortune selling currency with the help of corrupt officials. At a poker table in Las Vegas, Juan falls in love at first sight with Scarlet, a high-end escort from California whom he initially assumes to be a college student on vacation. Whisking Scarlet to New York City on his private jet, Juan begins a torrid, drug-fueled love affair that culminates in their reckless marriage. All is bliss for the young couple until an eruption of violence back in Venezuela targets Juan's family, sending him back to Caracas for vengeance.

This wild, fast-paced ride through sex, drugs, revolution, and the morally gray hustle of a man who dares to game the system that destroyed his country is not for the faint-hearted but has strong relevancy.

Johansen, Iris/Roy. [Wait and See](#) (Grand Central \$30). Investigator Kendra Michaels—formerly blind and now with uniquely insightful observational skills in the tradition of Sherlock Holmes—receives a cryptic message from her sometimes-paramour Adam Lynch, she concludes that he must be in extreme danger—the kind where he can't trust his FBI and Justice department colleagues to rescue him. Lynch has saved Kendra's life during past investigations so she's immediately willing to put everything on the line for him. With her heightened senses, honed in the dark before she regained her eyesight in a cutting-edge surgical procedure, Kendra knows she can do what the federal agents cannot. So along with private investigator Jessie Mercado, Kendra is soon following the first intriguing clue to London. What they find there will lead to a chase with deadly stakes because Lynch is willing to risk it all to protect something he believes is bigger than himself

Katzenbach, John. [The Architect](#) (Blackstone \$29.99). “Remember what your name means. I'm so sorry.” Just two weeks before her final architecture exams, Sloane Connolly receives this cryptic handwritten note from her estranged mother. When her calls go unanswered, Sloane returns to her hometown in north-west Massachusetts to discover that her mother has vanished. A thorough search turns up no trace of her—and the police are ultimately forced to give up and rule her disappearance a suicide. As Sloane deals with the aftermath, she distracts herself by taking on a mysterious commission: to design a memorial for six strangers whose connection to her anonymous client—known to her only as The Employer—is deliberately kept in the dark. To complete this project, Sloane must trace the lives of all six individuals and uncover the hidden links between them. With the promise of a multimillion-dollar payday and a prestigious jump start to her career, it's an opportunity too important to pass up. But as the trail pulls her from Maine to Miami, Sloane begins to realize that the memorial is far more than just an academic exercise. The secrets she uncovers begin to weave dangerously into her own family's tragic history

* Kemp, LM. [I, Spy](#) (St Martins \$29). I picked this spy story for the **June British Crime Club** in part for the great characters and their dilemmas, and for the excellent tour of London that Kemp provides. I love seeing the city on this micro level—a different one is painted by Lisa Jewell in her new June novel.

Former and brilliant spy Kendal Carter has been hiding out ever since her cover was blown and her lover was killed. Her disguise: Mom. It's been four years since her daughter Rosie was born. But when their hiding place is discovered, Kendal is forced to turn to old contacts for help. Her longtime friend and ex-handler Rico doesn't miss his chance to pull his best spy back in. Whisking them to London, Rico offers them a luxury safe house in an area with good schools. How can Kendal resist? But there's a catch, of course. Rico wants Kendal to come back to work for his espionage agency Bon Temps. He's offering an assignment with no apparent downside, investigating one of the dads at Rosie's new school who works at one of London's biggest, murkiest tech firms and suspected of being up to no

good. It should be easy enough for someone with her experience, and luckily, *mother* is the perfect cover. This is a clever look inside the dangerous shadow world of private spies and counter-measures, fun but not silly or dismissive as are some romcom versions of the spying life.

Kepnes, Caroline. [You First: A Joe Goldberg Prequel](#) (Random House \$30) the sociopath at the center of Keynes's bestselling *You* series gets a backstory in this addictive thriller. Joe Goldberg is introduced as a 17-year-old runaway working in a New York City bookstore, where he falls in love with nearly every girl he sees. His habitual prowling on Craigslist's missed connections page proves futile until he comes across a post about an “NYC Bookstore Babe” who matches his description. Joe responds immediately and meets Vail Gunderson, a rom-com-loving production assistant on *Sex and the City*. To Joe, she's perfect; the only problem is that she's 24. Determined to woo her, Joe lies about his age, and then, with the help of a charming barista turned mentor, starts shaping himself into an ideal romantic partner. When Vail needs more convincing, Joe proves just how far he'll go for love. Though readers of the *You* novels and admirers of their Netflix adaptations will know where the plot is headed, Kepnes has fun dropping Easter eggs into the narrative and getting creative about the precise details of Joe's burgeoning criminality. The result is a wicked treat for series fans and newcomers alike.

* Kidd, Jess. [Murder at the Spirit Lounge](#) (Atria \$29). Kidd's [Murder at Gull's Nest](#) (\$19) was a 2025 British Crime Club Pick, in part for the 1954 era seaside town, in large part for the former nun Nora Breen turned investigator, and of course for the plot and characters.

And here is Nora back at it again when Dolores Chimes, a famous medium, arrives in Gore-on-Sea and even surly Detective Inspector Rideout is lured in by her promises of messages for the afterlife. But after a reading goes disastrously wrong, Dolores loses her life—and the six sitters at the séance with her fall victim to supernatural deaths themselves in the days following the nightmare of a reading. Determined to unveil the truth, Nora finds herself chasing a ghostly serial killer she believes to be responsible, before the sixth victim—Detective Rideout himself—perishes. Reviewers have called this a cozy but I disagree: traditional mystery is apt.

“The colorful cast of characters, including several carry-overs from the series debut, is complemented by polished, measured prose and rich, affectionate descriptions of the seaside setting and village milieu.”—*Kirkus*

Kurkov, Andrey. [The Lost Soldiers](#) (Harper \$30). The difficulty of solving crimes in a war-ravaged city is at the core of Ukrainian novelist Kurkov's excellent third mystery featuring novice police investigator Samson Kolechko. It's 1919, and Bolsheviks have a precarious hold on power across Ukraine. Samson is ordered to investigate the inexplicable disappearance of 100 Red Army soldiers who vanished from a bathhouse without their clothes or their rifles. Not only is it a bizarre and baffling case, but Samson receives little cooperation from bathhouse workers and endures intense pressure from his superiors to solve it quickly. The pace of the investigation picks up as Samson seeks sources from the streets of Kyiv, including a poet who writes about the corrupt and violent city. Kurkov excels at capturing the profound political instability of war-torn Kyiv, where citizens walk around with three forms of currency in their pockets: czarist kopecks,

Kerensky rubles, and Soviet rubles. These details, and lingering questions about whether daily life under such circumstances might snuff out Samson's tenderness, deepen the tension of the impossible crime at the novel's core.

Kurtz, Catherine. [Feast](#) (Penguin \$30). "Rose-gold" peaches and the "glory of a freshly baked bread" are simple luxuries the heroine craves in Kurtz's tantalizing 19th-century drama fueled by royal intrigue and culinary decadence. Shifting from the English Channel to the French countryside, *Feast* is the story of Minha, a young woman coerced into servitude as a "poison taster" for Duc Nicolas at the majestic Château Bellefalaïse, and her miraculous path to freedom. The daughter of an English sex worker and an Indian spice merchant, Minha was a neglected side note to their short-lived union. The one person who cherished her was her late grandfather, a gardener who introduced her to her favorite fruit. There's also her extraordinary sense of smell, what Kurtz describes as the "mysterious brilliance of a palate," a skill awakened by the heady scents of the London bakery she was born above. Home is an elusive concept, one Minha hopes to re-create through fragments of memory. The staff at the château are hostile toward the poison taster, suspicious of her dark complexion and sensory gifts ever since she detected rat poison in a roasted duck prepared for the Duc's birthday. Who was responsible for the toxin is a question that lingers menacingly in the stifled air of the servants' quarters? One night she stumbles upon a young man hiding in the stables. Weak and starving, he awakens in her a sense of purpose. It is here that Kurtz's thrilling saga plunges into adventure as Minha finds herself falling for this curious stranger whose destiny, she is convinced, is tied to her own. "Minha's difficulties, however, are far from over and it will take all of her ingenuity to escape from Bellefalaïse and find her way home. Readers will devour Kurtz's marvelous debut, cheering Minha as she takes center stage in her own story and, for the first time, truly feasts on life."—Shahina Piyarali

Little, Elizabeth. [Good Girls Die Bored](#) (Random House \$30). Juno Hardwick's a fighter—or at least she thought she was. A year ago, she had a promising career influencing national security policy at the highest levels. Then her father died and her life fell apart. Now she's in Los Angeles, rotting on the couch with her sister during the day, working as a bouncer at a bikini bar at night. So when her best friend Min, a former CIA officer, invites her to join a high-profile security detail, Juno sees a way back to the person she used to be. It's a straightforward job: protect an investigative journalist whose exposés have made her powerful enemies, get her safely through a glittering museum gala and collect a paycheck. Mission accomplished. But from the moment Juno meets her new team—an enigmatic ex-SEAL, a brilliant engineer, a failed actress, a retired FBI agent who hates her guts—something feels off. They're underprepared and out of sync, and the client, who made a career out of exposing other people's secrets, clearly has a few of her own. Meanwhile, Min's playing a deeper game than she's letting on, treating Juno less like one of the players and more like one of the pawns. As the gala approaches, Juno finds herself fighting on two fronts, and while she's used to dealing with enemies on the battlefield, she's not prepared for traitors in her midst.

McCreight, Kimberly. [Someone Else's Husband](#) (Knopf \$30). Gretchen Falk, a Park Avenue sophisticate born into great wealth and blessed with a storybook marriage, knows she lives

a charmed life, and she's not about to risk losing any part of it. That's why she tried to convince Richard, her devoted husband and the father to their three children, not to join his old college friends on an expedition to the imposing peak of Mount Kilimanjaro. Little did she know that the beautiful artist climbing alongside him might prove the far greater danger.

"Multiple sleights of hand propel this pleurably head-spinning thriller. The time-and-place-shifting tale includes an expedition up Mount Kilimanjaro, a posse of wealthy friends whose relationships date back to college and childhood, and intimate glimpses into the oft-tangled territory of marriage."—*Boston Globe*

O'Farrell, Maggie. [Land](#) (Knopf \$32). The June LibraryReads Pick: "A breathtakingly beautiful story set in 1865 of one Irish family as they navigate the world in the years just after the Great Famine as a father and son are helping the British create a detailed map of the country. O'Farrell's rich writing vividly captures both the characters and the wild beauty of the Irish landscape, creating an unforgettable and emotionally riveting narrative that will have readers rapt."

Patchett, Ann. [Whistler](#) (Harper \$30). When Daphne Fuller and her husband Jonathan visit the Metropolitan Museum of Art, they notice an older, white-haired gentleman following them. The man turns out to be Eddie Triplett, her former stepfather, who had been married to her mother for a little more than year when Daphne was nine. Now fifty-three, Daphne hasn't seen Eddie for many years, not since the fateful event that changed the direction of both their lives. Meeting again, time falls away; while their relationship was brief, it had a profound impact on them both, and now that they are reunited, they have no intention of ever being separated again. *Whistler* is a story about two adults looking back over the choices they made, and the choices that were made for them.

Payne, Jessica. [Somebody Worth Killing](#) (Penguin \$30). Here's another assassin and mom, but this one is a genuine psychopath unlike the spy in LM Kemp's *I, Spy* above.

Nadia Davis is living the dream as a successful working mom with a career she loves, two adorable little girls, and a devoted husband who has no idea that she's secretly a hired assassin and psychopath who kills certified bad guys. So when Nadia finds out she's been "mommy tracked" by her assassin's agency and is no longer getting the bigger, more exciting jobs, she demands an important mark... somebody worth killing. But it turns out that big kill is the last person she expects—her husband. How is the sweet, kind, teller-of-dad jokes she's promised her life to an evil villain who needs exterminating? Has their whole life together been a lie? Moreover, has her eighty-six-year old Grandma been living one too? Stay tuned.

"Fans of Mr. and Mrs. Smith will adore the cat and mouse game between the sociopathic wife and her unsuspecting husband. All I ask is to be first in line to read the next one!" — Jenna Satterthwaite

Perrin, Valerie. [Tata](#) (Europa \$30). Perrin's spectacular novel [Fresh Water for Flowers](#) (\$18) is one of my favorite debuts, a mystery translated from the French, and so much more. Many critics raved too. Here she is again. When Agnes hears from the local police her Aunt Colette has died, she can't believe her ears. Her father's sister Colette, her Tata, died three years ago and has

been resting in peace in the cemetery of Gueugnon. Agnes is called to identify the body: there is no doubt, it's Aunt Colette. But then, who rests under the stone engraved with Colette's name? And why did she fake her own death? So begins an investigation back in time, as Agnes pieces together the multitude of stories that lie behind her aunt's second death. I can't wait to read it and if you missed her debut, grab it now.

* Ross, LJ. [Hysteria: An Alexander Gregory Thriller](#) (Soho \$32.99). Recently returned from his last case in Ireland, elite forensic psychologist and criminal profiler Dr. Alexander Gregory receives a call from the French police he can't ignore. It's Paris Fashion Week, and some of the world's most beautiful women are turning up dead—each killed in a frenzy, their faces slashed as the world's press looks on. Amid the carnage, one victim survives—but she's too traumatized to speak. Without her testimony, the police are powerless to stop the killer before he strikes again. Can Gregory unlock the secrets buried in her mind before it's too late? [Paperback edition](#) (\$18.99).

Roth, Veronica. [Seek the Traitor's Son](#) (Tor Books, \$29.99). “A stunning science fantasy novel with a virus that can kill or give superpowers, world-altering prophecies, mysterious aliens, secret dads, surprise romance, and a whole lot of trauma. If you're looking for a chunky book with high stakes, great characters, and a propulsive plot, you're in the right place.”

Rowan, Leah. [Marion](#) (St. Martin's Press \$29). *Psycho* gets a feminist facelift in this punchy thriller that reframes Hitchcock's masterpiece as both a revenge fantasy and a surprisingly sweet ode to sisterhood (while more or less ignoring Robert Bloch's original novel). Witty, muscular, and crowd-pleasing to no end, it's ideal poolside or plane-ride company as the weather heats up. “This gripping and darkly entertaining reimagining of *Psycho* will keep readers hooked from start to finish. The story is fast-paced, unpredictable, and full of twists, with a protagonist who is messy, morally complex, and impossible not to follow. Rowan balances suspense, dark humor, and chaos in a way that makes the book both thrilling and oddly fun.”

Rudnick, Paul. [The Tuxedo Society](#) (Atria \$28) is a gay espionage romp from screenwriter and novelist Rudnick, out for Gay Pride Month. After aspiring actor and New York City candle shop clerk Andrew Birnbaum accepts his friend Brock's invitation to an elite gay dinner party, he's asked to work for the Tuxedo Society, a top secret, all-queer counterespionage team within the U.S. government. Members use unconventional skills like flirting, flower arranging, improv comedy, and online sex work to infiltrate the ranks of powerful global figures and uncover their secrets. Tasked with recovering an ancient, possibly magical artifact from a notorious smuggling ring at the behest of the first lady, the men (and one lesbian couple) of the Tuxedo Society circle the globe, learning along the way that the smugglers are more well-connected than they realized. “Readers will forgive the goofy, far-fetched plot on the strength of its feel-good energy and Rudnick's boldly drawn heroes, who subvert the womanizing image of James Bond and celebrate the unique strengths of LGBTQ+ people without reducing them to hollow symbols of empowerment. It's surprisingly patriotic.”

* Steadman, Catherine. [Nine Lives](#) (Random House \$30) is, of course, cat centric. Reeling from a very recent divorce, Frankie has moved into a glamorous London neighborhood. This is a new

chapter in her life. She's decided to put down roots with Blue, the beautiful Persian cat she left her marriage with. But little doubts about her perfect new life start to grow, and when Blue returns one night from slipping into places he shouldn't, Frankie's concerns solidify. Two words are roughly scratched into his collar: help me. Unsettled and unwilling to ignore the incident, Frankie roots out an old unused “cat cam” collar. What slowly begins as a voyeuristic fascination with her neighbors and the secrets they're hiding soon turns into a perilous quest for the truth that threatens to bring untold terrors to her doorstep.

Sten, Camilla. [The Breakup Retreat](#) (St Martins \$28). Island mysteries (thank you, Agatha Christie), are all the rage, especially in the summer season. So if you fancy “An eerie and atmospheric thriller set on an isolated Swedish island—Downright chilling in places, with vibes of *The Guest List* and *The Retreat!* Perfect for fans of Sarah Pearse and Lucy Foley” (Allie Reynolds)—this is for you.

Isobel Anderssen has heard rumors. Nestled deep in the Swedish woods, there is a retreat. Primarily aimed at helping women who have gone through devastating break-ups, the Himlafall Clinic is meant to heal your mind and help you move on. Sometimes people are never heard from again. Armed with a fake story and a contraband phone to record interviews, Isobel is ready to expose Himlafall's founder and get closure for the families of missing loved ones. But when she gets there, nothing goes to plan. Her contact is missing. The founder, Dr. Martina Hastings, knows how to get under Isobel's skin in ways she didn't anticipate. And all the while, the ghosts of the missing haunt her at every turn. It is clear something is going wrong and Himlafall,

Styles, Emma. [The Shark](#) (Pegasus \$27.95). Indie Next picks this: “A ferociously intense, white-knuckle thriller, *The Shark* plunges you into a sun-scorched Western Australian summer where two fearless young women are drawn into a deadly game of cat and mouse with a coastal serial killer.

* Vaughan, Sarah. [Based on a True Story](#) (Harper \$30). A celebrated children's author contends with ghosts from her past in this enthralling thriller. Dame Eleanor Kingman writes a popular series about a mother fox and her cubs; the books, their licensed merchandise, and a splashy Netflix deal have made Eleanor fabulously wealthy. For her 70th birthday, more than 100 guests are scheduled to descend on her Cornwall estate to drink champagne and celebrate her success, and a film crew has been hired to capture the proceedings for a documentary on Eleanor's life. Shortly before the big day, Eleanor receives threatening emails hinting that the sender knows an explosive secret that could shatter her reputation. A shocking death during the party foment questions about who is targeting Eleanor, and whether they plan to take more lives. “Vaughan elegantly toys with readers' expectations as she parcels out details about Eleanor's family and relationships and explores themes of class, power, and the magpie-like nature of authorship. The result is a canny, suspenseful tale with more on its mind than entertainment.”

Ward, Amanda Eyre. [Arrivals and Departures](#) (Random House \$31). . The Perkins family has problems. They're scattered across the globe. Lee, a glamorous reality-TV star, is struggling with her mental health in the spotlight. Reagan, her younger sister, has fallen for a romance scammer. Cord, their charming brother, is one drink away from losing it all. And their mother,

Charlotte, still longs for the love she let slip away a decade ago, a lover who sailed off with her heart to a remote island in Greece. When Reagan disappears, Lee flies first-class to Athens to save her family—again. There, against the glittering Mediterranean and the shadow of the Acropolis, Lee contends with emotional nieces, relentless paparazzi, and her own fragile heart.

Williams, Beatriz. [When You Loved Me](#) (Bantam \$30). Local history insists that a legendary pirate buried his treasure somewhere beneath Windward, the decayed Cooper estate on Winthrop Island, but Lucy Cooper never trusted the fable that broke her family apart. When a widowed Lucy returns with her young daughter to grieve her estranged father, she discovers catastrophe: The property is mired in debt she can't repay, and Ben Ressler has unexpectedly turned up on her doorstep. Thirteen summers ago, the teenaged Lucy never meant to fall in love with Ben, a Dartmouth football star vacationing nearby at the Peabody estate and the object of an all-consuming crush by Laura Peabody, Lucy's best friend. Those few weeks were the best and worst of Lucy's life, dooming her friendship with Laura. Now, after a fatal accident ended his dazzling NFL career, Ben has returned to live quietly in the Peabody's caretaker lodge. He's also the last person who saw Lucy's father alive. As Lucy reconstructs her father's troubling final days, she uncovers his research on the frozen winter of 1717, when a desperately wounded pirate sought refuge on Winthrop Island with an enigmatic healer. To Lucy, this history points the way to a different kind of treasure: how to heal from the fractures of the past and earn a second chance at love. But just as Lucy's long-buried emotions sear to the surface, a shocking turn of events reveals that someone else on the island will kill for the pirate plunder.

* Wilson, Lauren. [Tell Your Friends](#) (Flatiron \$28.99). The eldest daughter of a famous British influencer family considers revealing explosive secrets about her mother in Wilson's sharp sophomore thriller. Crystal Shaw is excited to move to London for journalism school and escape her mother's laser focus on producing the family's popular At Home with the Shaws vlog. In London, Crystal quickly bonds with fellow journalism student Alyssa and invites her back to the picture-perfect Shaw home for Christmas. There, Crystal uncovers unsettling new details about the years-ago death of her older sister and seeks Alyssa's help in sharing the information, which would destroy her mother's reputation and bring At Home with the Shaws to an end. As Crystal weighs whether to besmirch her family name, however, she questions the motives of Alyssa, who seems a bit too excited to ingratiate herself with the Shaw family, and who turns out to have secrets of her own, including a spotty past at boarding school. Wilson delivers solid suspense while exploring the rich if familiar theme of social media's ability to warp reality. Fans of the author's debut will enjoy themselves.

Worley, Olivia. [Man of My Dreams](#) (St Martins \$29). What begins as a whirlwind romance quickly becomes a dark, fast-paced tale of psychological suspense set in a vividly sketched contemporary New York City where the dating scene is tough. And bestselling romance author Ivy Harcourt has had no luck despite her success in publishing. Then she rescues a dog bolting from a park into the street and meets his owner. Liam is handsome, charming, British, an architect. How can he be the same person as the love interest in the book she is writing? The rescue

leads to an instant relationship with this dreamboat. But is he too perfect to be true? That's the set up for a surprising, clever, and twisty suspense story that takes a swipe at the Romance crazy, the dating scene, and the stories people tell about themselves. Recommended. And note this is another entry in bookish novels so prevalent this summer.

NEW NONFICTION

Baker, Theo. [How to Rule the World](#) (Penguin \$32). To be clear, when I enrolled as a freshman at Stanford in 1958, it had just begun to recruit Ivy League professors and research projects and rent out widespread university-owned land to medical and business startups. At our senior class graduation party we wondered where our classmate David Packard's family, the host, had acquired such an estate and money. So reading this memoir about how an increasingly disillusioned freshman coder examined the degree to which the university has been bought by tech bros and ultimately taking down the president over research misconduct, was a surprise I should have seen coming. Baker won a prestigious award for his reporting. But I recommend you read this for answers about how and where we as a country are currently operating.

“Seventeen-year-old Theo Baker showed up for freshman year at Stanford University as a tech-obsessed coder. It seemed like paradise. There were Rodin sculptures next to nuclear laboratories and inventors lounging with Olympians. But Baker soon discovered a culture that embraced corner-cutting, that vested infinite excess and access in the hands of kids with few safeguards to catch bad behavior. Stanford, he realized, was less a school than a business. Its annual budget was nearly twice that of Harvard or Yale and higher than those of 116 countries. The product? Students. Especially those special few identified as the next trillion-dollar startup founders. For them, there were secret societies, “pre-idea” funding offers, and social calls from billionaires, all with the expectation that these geniuses would soon join the ruling elite. At the helm of this business was Marc Tessier-Lavigne, a superstar neuroscientist and wealthy biotech executive. But when Baker joined the student newspaper and started poking around the Stanford president's record, he discovered never-reported allegations of research misconduct in studies published across two decades bearing Tessier-Lavigne's name.” And so....

Campbell, Matthew. [The Man Who Stole the Gods](#) (Portfolio Penguin \$34). This gem written like a thriller and deeply researched (tons of footnotes) by award-winning reporter Campbell is an ideal companion to read with Brad Thor's new thriller [Choke Point](#) reviewed in Signed Books for its description, history, and post-WWII politics of Cambodia that echo today. But it's also for readers of Daniel Silva and much non-fiction about the discovery, theft, and exploitation of art and cultural heritage. Here, that of the Khmer Empire of Southeast Asia and the looting of Angkor Wat and related temple ruins. The focus for such a broad history is on one man, Douglas Latchford, aka Dynamite Doug, who used ruthless, destructive methods in his audacious cultural heists and ensnared not just collectors but powerful institutions like NY's Metropolitan Museum of Art against the turbulent background of the 1960s.

Dolan, Eric Jay. [The Wreck of the Mentor](#) (Liveright \$27.99) is the story of the American whaleship *Mentor*, wrecked in 1832 on a remote reef in the western Pacific. With supplies dwindling, the

eleven surviving crewmen face not only the miseries of shipwreck in unfamiliar territory but also the profound uncertainty of contact with the Indigenous people of the Micronesian archipelago of Palau, who within days approach the deserted men brandishing axes, clubs, and spears. In this gripping saga of cultural collision, tribal wars, and dashed hopes, award-winning historian Eric Jay Dolin vividly reconstructs the *Mentor*'s doomed voyage, the years of perilous captivity, and the delicate negotiations and fraught naval rescue mission that followed.

Jackson, Greg. [Been There Done That](#) (Simon & Schuster \$31) is a reminder we've been in divisive, often dark times, before—and survived. It may be 250 years since this country's founding, but the playbook has remained mostly the same. From the Founding Father's hyperpartisan print war of the 1790s, to the caning of Senator Charles Sumner in 1856, to the thoroughly corrupt presidential election of 1876, and all the way through the yellow journalism and print war of Joseph Pulitzer and William Randolph Hearst, you will recognize how familiar these stories, often filled with humor and told with page-turning narrative, are to our own supposedly unprecedented times.

Nabhan, Gary Paul. [Water in the Desert: A Pilgrimage](#) (Milkweed \$30) is “a refreshing account of a pathbreaking scientist-activist's kinship with other species and cultures and an inspiring guide to the deeply collaborative ethic and practice of care” in biodiversity by an author whose neurodivergence was initially diagnosed as disabilities.

Smith, Maggie. [Dear Writer: Pep Talks & Practical Advice](#) (Washington Square Books \$19). Drawing from her twenty years of teaching experience and her bestselling Substack newsletter, For Dear Life, Maggie Smith breaks down creativity into ten essential elements: attention, wonder, vision, play, surprise, vulnerability, restlessness, tenacity, connection, and hope. Each element is explored through short, inspiring, and craft-focused essays, followed by generative writing prompts, and provides useful tools.

Turknett, Josh. [The Genius and the Imposter](#) (Penguin \$30). **This book is a clarion call to Keep Reading.**

Turknett rewrites the story of human intelligence and potential. Drawing on decades of neuroscience and neurology research along with his own clinical case files, neurologist Josh Turknett reveals two competing forces inside every human brain. One is the source of your extraordinary capabilities. The other has spent your whole life trying to convince you they don't exist. The science shows that we have tragically underestimated the potential of every human brain. It shows that intelligence isn't born, but built through learning, and it never stops.

Wohlleben, Peter. [The Hidden Life of Trees](#) (\$18.99). A new paperback of the 2016 edition provides an illuminating account of the forest, and the science that shows us how trees communicate, feel, and live in social networks. After reading this book, a walk in the woods will never be the same again. “Breaks entirely new ground ... [Peter Wohlleben] has listened to trees and decoded their language. Now he speaks for them.”—*The New York Review of Book*

Zoller, Elise. [Standing on Main Street](#) (\$39.95). With historic Route 66 celebrating its Centennial in November, here is a series of painting of iconic scenes along the Mother Road by realist painter Zoller. I drove Route 66, or rather was a passenger at age ten in 1950, on a journey home to Chicago from Phoenix with

family. And drove it from California to Chicago in 1960 before the new interstate system began to lure travelers away.

For you unfamiliar with Route 66, who have never stopped in Winslow for standing on the corner (the Eagles rocked it), here's some info: U.S. Route 66 or U.S. Highway 66 (US 66 or Route 66) was one of the original highways in the United States Numbered Highway System. Established on November 11, 1926, with signage erected the following year, the highway ran from Chicago, Illinois, through Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona before terminating in Santa Monica, California, covering 2,448 miles (3,940 km).

OUR JUNE PAPERBACK PICKS

Abbott, Megan. [El Dorado Drive](#) (\$19). In the winner of the 2026 *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize for Fiction, the three Bishop sisters grew up in privilege in the moneyed suburbs of Detroit. But as the auto industry declined, so did their fortunes. Harper, the youngest, is barely making ends meet when her beloved, charismatic sister Pam—currently in the middle of a contentious battle with her ex-husband—and her eldest sister, Debra, approach her about joining an exciting new club. The Wheel offers women like themselves—middle-aged and of declining means—a way to make their own money, independent of husbands or families. Quickly, however, the Wheel's success, and their own addiction to it, leads to greater and greater risks—and a crime so shocking it threatens to bring everything down with it.

Cavanaugh, Kate. [Thanks for Watching](#) (Inimitable Books \$16.95). Sharply observed and full of dark humor, Kate Cavanaugh's debut psychological thriller offers a fresh take on the classic closed-circle mystery with 10 influencers trapped together on an island without Internet. The novel begins with Michelle Monroe, a previously successful influencer whose career is sputtering. Once-plentiful brand deals have vanished, fans have left her, and even her trolls have lost interest. As eviction from her fancy apartment looms, Michelle receives an invitation for an exclusive brand-deal trip to promote an energy drink at an isolated villa in the middle of the ocean, and she jumps at the second chance for social media relevance. But the luxury “vacation event” soon turns deadly as the influencers, all of whom harbor jealousies and grudges against one another, start dying one by one in increasingly bizarre and horrible ways. Although there is more than a dash of the absurd in the way that the self-obsessed influencers react to the deaths of their frenemies (mostly by plotting ways to use leverage death for clicks), Cavanaugh creates real tension in the novel by puncturing the familiar comfort of an Agatha Christie-style mystery with biting social satire.

* Chibnall, Chris. [Death at the White Hart](#) (\$20). A 2025 British Crime Club Pick, a debut by the creator of Broadchurch, etc, is set at a coastal village. Noted for its picturesque landscape it's now a disturbing crime scene where a man is found dead, tied to a chair in the middle of the road, a stag's antlers on his head. The gruesome scene stuns the town, especially when the victim is identified: Jim Tiernan, who ran the White Hart pub. Tiernan's pub is at the center of village life and he knew everyone's secrets. Detective Nicola Bridge grew up in Fleetcombe and has now returned, for the good of her family, from a life away in Liverpool. DC Harry Ward is ten years younger and, despite his newcomer status, determined to earn Nicola's trust. Because they don't have long to crack the storybook façade and find out just what the people of Fleetcombe have to hide. Can she?

Conrad, Chelsea. [The Secret Attic](#) (Poisoned Pen Press \$17.99) is creepy and atmospheric with a sprinkling of dark humor, exploring the horrors involved with sifting through one's past and confronting grief. Conrad captures the toxic mother-in-law dynamic effortlessly, then takes it to a whole new level of disturbing. It begins when Addison Lowe and her husband Luke travel to from Austin to Rockside Bay on the Oregon coast to sort out and sell up his mother Barb's big house. Barb had always hated Addison but who knew how much, or what she was capable of. The murder of crows Addison spots is a clue of sorts. This is a book about possessiveness, revenge, also about hoarding and how what you leave behind can damn you. Great final twist too. No peeking.

Davis, Fiona. [The Stolen Queen](#) (\$19) is another stunning and well researched novel on two time tracks and places, the one Egypt both in 1936 and dropping back to the reign of a female pharaoh called Hathorkare (Hatshepsut), a woman erased by her contemporaries from history, the other at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in NY where Diana Vreeland in setting up its costume institute that has become the legendary funding instrument with its First Monday in May Met Gala (watch the movie by that title, it's great). A theft from the Met's Department of Egyptian Art is the engine setting off this brilliant novel.

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

* Lewis, David. [A Beacon in the Night](#) (\$18.95). New Year's Eve 1940 during the London Blitz. Caitrin Colline, a former Welsh policewoman first met in the wonderful [A Jewel in the Crown](#) (\$17.95), meets her friend Florence Simmonds at the Blind Stag pub, managed by Caitrin's flirtatious but thuggish friend Teddy Baer. Unbeknownst to her friends, Caitrin is an operative for 512, an all-female counterespionage group led by war widow Bethany Goodman. As Churchill threatens to shut 512 down due to budgetary constraints, German bombers target British cathedrals, hospitals, and aristocratic houses with uncanny accuracy. Caitrin has learned that Florence and Teddy may be involved in the placement of homing devices that lead the Nazi bombers to their targets, and she infiltrates Teddy's inner circle to thwart the scheme. While some of Caitrin's motives are strained—notably, her fierce determination to recover her mother's ring from petty thieves rather than fight the Nazis who killed her fiancé—the action moves at a swift pace, the dialogue is sharp, and the well-placed historical details evoke the harrowing realities of

English life during WWII. With a fierce heroine and nail-biting plot, this will delight fans of Jacqueline Winspear and Susan Elia MacNeal. It certainly does me.

Lippman, Laura. [Murder Takes a Vacation](#) (\$18.99). Last June's Cozy Crimes Club Pick tours you around Paris and north on the Seine towards Normandy on a river cruise. As reviewer Oline Cogdill puts it, we have here “an homage to the joys of travel, of discovering new passions, of never giving up — with a bit of a nod to *The Maltese Falcon*. It also is a valentine to aging well, to older women who often feel invisible, and a plea to not fade away.” And for you Private Eye Tess Monaghan fans, she's in the story a bit, on the phone, as our heroine Muriel Blossom, a Baltimore widow, is her former assistant.

In the decade since Muriel's husband died, she's carved out a pleasant but bland existence with her daughter's family. Boring! And then she picks up a scrap in a parking lot that turns out to be an \$8 million lottery ticket. The lottery folk say it's hers and allow her to accept the payout anonymously. So we meet Muriel upgraded to first class on a flight to London where she'll transfer to a Paris flight, spend a few days with her best friend Elinor, and then they'll board the boat. On the plane she's seated next to the charming Allan, who, after he points out the late arrival has caused her to miss her connection, takes her to dinner in London. When she arrives in Paris, she learns that Allan has suspiciously died. The police arrive to question Muriel, since she was in one of the most recent photos on Allan's phone. Enter American stranger Danny Johnson, who ingratiates himself with Muriel and warns her she might be in danger. On the, Muriel's stateroom is ransacked, a man attempts to mug her, and she learns Danny is lying about his identity.

* Mackintosh, Clare. [Other People's Houses](#) (\$17.99), the latest in her Ffion Morgan, Welsh cop, is IMHO the best of Mackintosh's plots: multifaceted in narrators, twisty with a truly surprise ending, and she pillories both the affluent who live on the exclusive, high end, “safe” enclave The Hill, and one desperate housewife living at the bottom whose efforts to belong are comic, pitiable, and in their way deeply sad. And they matter because Allie is the ex-wife of DS Leo Brady and mother of his beloved young son Harris. She's also the enemy of DC Ffion Morgan, Leo's investigative partner and lover who by now has partially overcome her terror of commitment but is as headstrong as ever as a cop. Leo is based out of Britain's Cheshire, Ffion over the border in Wales, but they overlap. Mackintosh's excellent story avoids clichés associated with this scene of the crime(s) structure.

Michallon, Clemence. [Our Last Resort](#) (\$18). We are in a posh resort in Utah's Escalante Canyon in a head-snapping suspense story that “lures readers in with a luxurious, lush setting, her beautiful prose and a distant crime before dropping a bombshell. Thought-provoking and shocking, *Our Last Resort* tests the bounds of family and reminds us that, no matter how hard we try, we can never forget our past. Readers will be thinking about this one for a long time! A perfect summer read.” —Mary Kubica. The story revolves around a brother and sister ready to reconnect between dips in the pool and hikes on spectacular desert trails. It all feels like paradise—until the dead body of a beautiful young woman who was vacationing at the Ara with her powerful, much older husband is discovered. When the local police arrive and suspicion quickly falls on Gabriel, Frida is forced to revisit memories from their upbringing in a cloistered cult in upstate

New York, their dramatic escape, and the scandal that followed. Frida's belief in Gabriel's innocence never wavered at the time, but now even she can't ignore the evidence mounting against him.

* Murray, Jo. [Dissection of a Murder](#) (Dutton \$19). The stakes couldn't be higher for up-and-coming junior barrister Leila Reynolds as she prepares for her first murder trial in Murray's razor-sharp debut. Adding stress, the victim is respected Crown Court judge Anton Smythe. The defendant is Jack Millman, a client whom Leila unsuccessfully represented years earlier in an assault case, resulting in him going to prison. Why he insists she be his barrister again is a mystery, as is what happened the night the judge died. The scene of the crime is Jack's flat, but he refuses to explain, saying he'll only tell the truth in the witness box during trial. As if Leila's job isn't hard enough, the case's prosecutor is King's Counsel Julian Kesler, Leila's husband and former mentor, who knows all her strategies because he taught them to her. It becomes clear to Leila that she can win the case or keep her marriage, but she can't do both.

All the while, she avoids tipping her hand to her spouse, who has been acting suspiciously in recent weeks, leading Leila to worry he's having an affair. Compounding her stress are anonymous threats from someone who seems not only familiar with her every move, but also with explosive secrets from her past. Former barrister Murray lays out her intricate plot with the aplomb of a seasoned lawyer steering a jury to a verdict, shedding light on procedural idiosyncrasies and gender inequality within the British legal system en route to a jaw-dropping final twist. Readers will find this criminally captivating No wonder Apple TV+ has snapped up *Dissection of a Murder* to be the basis for season 2 of its hit show *Presumed Innocent*.

* Nevin, E C. [A Novel Murder](#) (\$19). I really loved this quiet but amusing debut, our British Crime Club Pick last June. Our heroine Jane Hepburn is tall, shy, socially disastrous, and modestly off but she's determined to be a published author despite years of neglect and discouragement by her literary agent. Bravely she goes off to the Killer Lines Crime Fiction Festival and its assemblage of star authors in the town of Hoslewit, manuscript in hand, hoping again against hope. And what a lot of surprises result including the murder of said literary agent. And lucky us, we get the sequel this month, Signed from London: [A Killer Plot](#) (Zaffre \$36).

* Sullivan, Tim. [The Bookseller](#) (\$17). When the body of a bookseller is discovered lying in a pool of blood in his Bristol bookshop, the police have one question: How did the man meet such a violent, murderous end in this peaceful place? Bookselling may be a quiet profession, but it's full of ambitious characters who know the value of a rare book and the importance of careful plotting. With their extensive reading, they might know enough to get away with murder. But will book learning be enough to fool the tenacious DS George Cross? Rapidly becoming an iconic British detective, the neurodivergent Cross generally has razor sharp focus, but here he seems distracted and needing to rely on those around him—something entirely foreign to him. Note: Sullivan visits The Pen August 27 and we will have all his [DS Cross books](#) then available for him to sign then.

Thor, Brad. [Edge of Honor](#) (\$19). After six months abroad enjoying his honeymoon with the Norwegian Ninja who is on

leave from the Norwegian Intelligence Service, Scot Harvath is feeling rested at last. He's resigned from the Carlton Group, his longtime private intelligence agency employer, he has some \$50 million as a cash cushion, he and she have traveled the world for fun with a full break from politics. But they're a bit restless and have returned to the States to celebrate the Fourth of July. As Thor writes in the Afterword (don't peek at the rest of it), his goal with this his 25th book! was "to create a patriotic thriller set in the nation's capital around the Fourth of July." One of his favorite holidays. In the novel other players have other plans for Scot as the stunning opening action scenes reveal—Thor's mastery of weapons and action orchestration are on full display. Then it turns out that Norway's Prime Minister is coming to DC which calls Sólvi back to work and the story rolls on from there. Check in Signed Books for Thor's [Choke Point](#) (Atria \$30, the sequel and the 25th mission for Scot Harvath, moving him to Asia and particularly, Bangkok.

Walker, Martin. [An Enemy in the Village](#) (\$19). When Bruno, Chief of Police of St. Denis, stumbles upon a motionless figure in a car parked at a scenic overpass on the ridge of the Vézère valley, he's ready to investigate. Inside, he finds a suicide note and the dead body of Monique, a successful businesswoman who rented châteaux to wealthy expats. It seems like an open-and-shut case but Bruno suspects something more sinister in her death. And he's right. . . . Oddly, after he delivers Monique's final messages to those most important to her, malicious gossip about Bruno begins to spread through the village. One thing leads to another, and soon Bruno faces pressure to resign from the job. Despite this disturbing turn of events, ex-Army Bruno, never one to turn down a fine meal with good company in the French countryside, investigates. In the course of inquiry, he meets Laura—and her dog, which happens to be the same breed as his beloved basset hound. Walker has teased us before with suitable women for Bruno, who really ought to have a wife and children. We'll see if the sequel, *A Murder in Springtime* (Knopf \$30), reviewed above in Signed Books and Signed here on June 17, says more.

MORE JUNE PAPERBACKS

* Abell, Stig. [A Twist in the River](#) (Harper \$18.99). A big seller in the UK gets this June publication from Harper. Former London detective Jake Jackson finds his new life in the country threatened when women start disappearing. When young nurse Claire Davidson goes missing on the riverbank, the only clues left behind are her phone and shoes. This case sparks an online frenzy. Amateur investigators descend on the rural idyll. Everyone has a theory. Is Claire Davidson just the story of a swim that went wrong, or could there be truth to the conspiracies? But when another woman is discovered dead in the river, signs point to murder.

While the police procedural is rare here in the US right now when Romance(tasy) and Horror rule, the UK is producing many excellent policing novels and series which seem more believable coming from there when I look at the mess that achieving justice has become here in the US.

Ayatsuji, Yukito. [The Clock House Murders](#) (Pushkin Vertigo \$18.95). This press is bringing you varied Japanese crime fiction in translation. Some are Classics as shown by the Yokomizo novel in Classics. And some more contemporary. Here's a locked room puzzle wherein Brilliant detective Shimada Kiyoshi must

save a team of paranormal investigators from the magazine CHAOS, trapped in an abandoned house, as they are picked off one-by-one! And it goes down in the mysterious Clock House—a remote mansion built by notorious architect Nakamura Seiji for a long-dead clock enthusiast—is haunted by the ghost of a young girl, who died there 10 years earlier.

Barelli, Natalie. [The Housewife](#) (Poisoned Pen Press \$18.99), “Jodie can’t go to the police with suspicions about how her husband’s first wife died, because she’s hiding something too. The secrets are on a collision course, with an early twist that only breeds more questions. The suspense builds steadily and the payoff genuinely delivers, keeping readers second-guessing right up to the last page.”

Burke, James Lee. [Don’t Forget Me, Little Bessie](#) (\$18). Burke returns to the Holland family for the 5th time and with a woman as a lead. At the beginning of the twentieth century, as America grapples with forces of human and natural violence more powerful than humanity has ever seen, Bessie Holland yearns for the love that she has never known. She finds a soul mate and mentor in a brilliant but tormented suffragette English teacher. Watching the vast Texas countryside being destroyed by an oil company and a menacing figure with a violent past, Bessie is prepared to defend her home and her family. But when she accidentally kills an unarmed man to defend her father Hackberry, she must flee to New York. There, her older brother introduces her to boys who will grow into gangsters, but as children admire and respect Bessie’s spirit and fortitude as she is cast into a gangland that yearns for justice and mercy.

Carbo, Christine. [The Confession Artist](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$16.99), Carbo wrote a set of mysteries set in Glacier National Park that we liked. Now she’s starting something new with Crosbie Mitchell, a Montana ex-cop turned private eye. A killer is posting sketches of victims on social media, giving his targets a choice to confess their sin or sins in six days—or die. Crosbie, believing herself to be nobody from Flathead Valley, is surprised and horrified to see a sketch that looks like her. And it has one unmistakable detail she can’t ignore. And she can’t play the killer’s game as she has more than one secret....”

“Christine Carbo has written a terrific mystery full of intricate plots and intriguing twists that capture the reader and hold on to them to the end. She has created, in Crosbie Mitchell, a flawed but inspiring protagonist with the tenacity to resolve the mystery while putting others first. *The Confession Artist* is a tense and wild ride that lives up to its promise, a page-turner that will grip you from beginning to end...”—Alan Eskens, echoed by Lou Berney.

Coben, Harlan/Reece Witherspoon. [Gone Before Goodbye](#) (\$19.99). Maggie McCabe is teetering on the brink. A highly skilled and renowned Army combat surgeon, she has always lived life at the edge, where she could make the most impact. And it was all going to plan ... until it wasn’t. Upside down after a devastating series of tragedies leads to her medical license being revoked, Maggie has lost her purpose, but not her nerve or her passion. At her lowest point, she is thrown a lifeline by a former colleague, an elite plastic surgeon whose anonymous clientele demand the best care money can buy, as well as absolute discretion. Halfway across the globe, sequestered in the lap of luxury and cutting-edge technology, one of the world’s most mysterious men requires unconventional medical assistance. Desperate, and one

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

* Dent, Susie. [Guilty By Definition](#) (\$17.99). Lexicographer Dent takes you to Oxford with a linguistic mystery to solve. After a decade abroad, Martha Thornhill has returned home to the city whose ancient institutions have long defined her family. But the ghosts she had thought to be at rest seem to have been waiting for her to return. When an anonymous letter is delivered to the Clarendon English Dictionary, where Martha is a newly hired senior editor, it’s rapidly clear that this is not the usual lexicographical enquiry. Instead, the coded letter hints at secrets and lies linked to a particular year. The date can mean only one thing: the summer Martha’s brilliant older sister Charlie went missing. When more letters arrive, Martha and her team pull apart the complex clues within them, and soon, the mystery becomes ever more insistent and troubling.

* Edwards, Martin. [Hemlock Bay: A Rachel Savernake Golden Age Mystery](#) (\$18.99). Fans of Edwards, the multi-award and Diamond Dagger winning editor of the British Library Crime Classics know that he loves mysteries of the Golden Age and enjoys writing them himself. Rachel is an enigmatic 1930s heiress with Holmesian skills and here they are on display during a summer stay in a new resort in Lancashire called Hemlock Bay. She decides on this when her sort of Watson, reporter Jacob Flint, relays a fortune teller’s warning someone will be murdered there. But you already know that from the book’s opening line “My new year’s resolution is to murder a man I’ve never met.” I add that Martin presents a Cluefinder so when you’ve finished the book you can score how well you caught his careful placement of clues to the solution to the crime.

Evanovich, Janet. [The King’s Ransom](#) (\$19 –Signed \$30) is enormous fun—I feel this is a time when fun is sorely needed—and seriously constructed as a big heist story with solid history behind it, history of the Rosetta Stone and of Egyptian artifacts. The premise is that successful recovery specialist Gabriela Rose’s ex’s cousin Harley, a hapless but charming guy, and clueless, has been set up to take the hit as head of a private bank that insured some treasures like the Rosetta Stone without resources to pay out claims should the treasures be lost, stolen, or destroyed. The action is well executed. The recovery efforts take Team Rose to London, Cairo, Paris, Athens, and Milan, each of which Evanovich renders with dazzling precision. “Gabriella is an ideal action protagonist: resourceful, daring, shrewd, and sexy. The result is a swift and enjoyable adventure.”

Flynn, Vince. [Denied Access](#) (\$20) 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: when his Swiss girlfriend Greta's grandfather receives a box containing the head of a former Cold War comrade along with a note promising that Greta's head will be next, Rapp finds himself on the frontlines in a showdown between the American and Russian intelligence services.

Goldis, Jaelyn. [The Last Time We Saw Her](#) (Atria \$19). An exotic location that thrums with dread, a long-lost treasure, and a documentary exploring a mysterious death set the stage for Jaelyn Goldis's latest page-turner. Ten years ago, a group of teenage American summer campers came to São Miguel, an island in the lush and isolated Azores archipelago, for a rugged five-week hiking and heritage trip. But a clue surfaced related to a local legend of buried treasure that would turn everything in the finder's life to gold. The summer devolved into a frenzied treasure hunt, and culminated in the disappearance of "it girl" camper, Sydney Azulay. Sydney was never seen again, rumored to have been murdered, and the treasure never found. Now Sydney's father is hosting a memorial service on São Miguel, and Sydney's closest circle returns to honor her memory. They've also all agreed to participate in a documentary probing what really happened to Sydney. But there are eerie sightings of a woman on the island who looks just like Sydney. And when the documentary filming reveals new, explosive truths the group begins to implode. Old feuds and betrayals reignite—and then one of them turns up dead.

* Grainger, Peter. [An Accidental Death](#) (Union Square \$17.99). A long running British series began here with the first case for the King's Lake Squad of Norfolk. I absolutely loved the new one as shown above under New in Hardcover, where we see that DC Smith has moved from the police into private work, so I am delighted to start now with Kings Lake Investigation #1 while he's still on the squad.

The team is faced with the apparently accidental drowning of a sixth form student in the Norfolk countryside. As a matter of routine, or so it seems, the case passes across the desk of Detective Sergeant Smith, recently returned to work after an internal investigation into another case that has led to tensions between officers at Kings Lake police headquarters. As a former Detective Chief Inspector, Smith could have retired by now, and it is clear some of his superiors wish that he would do so. With a new trainee detective in tow, Smith begins to unravel the truth about what happened to Wayne Fletcher. This series excels in presenting both the politics and procedures of British policing and the whole justice system. While much much slower and filled with detail much of what Grainger writes reminds of the Harry Bosch investigations. .

* Gray, Claudia. [The Fatal Unpleasantness at Netherfield](#) (Knopf \$19). In her 5th Jane Austen adjacent mystery with amateur sleuths Jonathan Darcy and Juliet Tilney, Gray sends them to Netherfield Park where Jonathan's Uncle Charles Bingley's brother-in-law, Mr. Hurst, is found dead from poisoning. This sad event is however a chance for our sleuths to reunite. Jonathan has recovered from the wound he received in a duel three months prior, during a disastrous London Season. But his parents aren't over the shock, and they remain convinced that, no matter how many murderers have been caught via their investigations, Jonathan must end his association with Miss Juliet Tilney—particularly now that she is a young lady of ruined reputation. Juliet, still reel-

ing from her newfound ruination, is happy to be back in the thick of an investigation. The reunion with Mr. Darcy is difficult—Juliet has missed Jonathan terribly, but she is tormented by the knowledge that his parents will never approve their match. Adding to her troubles are the scheming Caroline Bingley Allerdyce and her daughter Priscilla, whose machinations threaten any hope Juliet might have of societal rehabilitation. Still, murder is a pressure cooker with who knows what will result?

* Grimes, Martha. [The Red Queen](#) (\$17). Wow, a new book by the legendary Grimes, now in her 90s. And yes, Richard Jury returns as well in his 26th investigation. As do Melrose Plant/Lord Ardry, and Sergeant Wiggins. For longtime Grimes fans this is time spent with old friends. I don't recommend this book to new readers and even fans will find it tough going.

The premise: It takes a minute for patrons in a Twickenham pub called 'The Queen' to notice when whiskey distillery owner/real estate magnate Tom Treadnor is shot on a bar stool. There's a noise like a popping cork, but no one sees a shooter or a gun. The police discover the killer shot through a window, and using red paint, changed the bar's sign from 'The Queen' to 'The Red Queen'. The local police pass the case to New Scotland Yard, and Detective Superintendent Richard Jury and his assistant Sergeant Wiggins arrive to investigate. Jury and Wiggins interview Treadnor's wife Alice as well as Treadnor's business partner; butler; stableman; kitchen staff; co-workers; friends; and acquaintances. Treadnor seems to have had multiple personas, behaving genially sometimes and irritably other times; being environmentally conscious one week and exploitative the next week; being a good horseman one day, and a clumsy horseman another day; etc. The detectives learn that almost no one in Treadnor's circle has an unshakeable alibi, and several people benefit from his death. So there are a number of possible suspects. Which all serves to discombobulate the sleuths and the reader. The point really is to enjoy time once again spent with aging old friends.

* Huber, Anna Lee. [A Bitter Cut](#) (Penguin \$19). July 1833. Lady Darby and her dashing husband, Sebastian Gage, are settling into their newly renovated home at Bevington Park in Warwickshire with their young daughter. With the breach between them and Sebastian's father recently healed, they've agreed to help host a country house party for friends and family to share in their joy. Kiera is also anxious to help promote a match between her brother, Trevor, and the woman he's fallen in love with, inviting her family to join them. However, Kiera swiftly discovers that the would-be bride's family is not without their detractors. Her brother is unpleasant. Her mother is abrasive. And her father—the prosperous industrialist Jeremiah Birnam—is brusque, discourteous, and, at times, downright rude. So when Mr. Birnam's secretary is found murdered with Birnam standing over her body, many are content to allow him to take the blame. But neither Kiera nor Sebastian believes he's guilty.

Kraus, Daniel. [Angel Down](#) (\$18). A 2026 Pulitzer Prize winner. Private Cyril Bagger has managed to survive the unspeakable horrors of the Great War through his wits and deception. But his survival instincts are put to the ultimate test when he and four other grunts are given a deadly mission: venture into the perilous No Man's Land to euthanize a wounded comrade. What they find amid the ruined battlefield, however, is not a man in need of mercy but a fallen angel, seemingly struck down by artillery fire.

This celestial being may hold the key to ending the brutal conflict, but only if the soldiers can suppress their individual desires and work together.

* Lloyd, Catherine. [Chelsea Girls](#) (Kensington \$18.95) is a glamorous and revealing biographical novel for readers of Allison Pataki and Fiona Davis, starring one of Swinging London's defining figures, Dame Mary Quant (1930-2023), who made history with the miniskirt, slashed hemlines, and transformed more than fashion, for herself, for her friends, and for a generation—the mini skirt; hot pants. Lloyd writes “A lively, entertaining window into the story behind the styles, expectations, and new freedoms that reshaped women's lives on both sides of the Atlantic.” Years ago when Phoenix created and hosted a program called UK/AZ, I was lucky enough to sit with Mary at dinner at the Phoenix Art Museum.

Mackintosh, Clare. [The Butler](#) (Podium \$16.99). The South of France is stunning, though not without its imperfections, from pickpockets to burglars to the occasional cold-blooded killer. But in his twenty-five years of service, Baxter—with a spotless reputation as a polished, well-mannered butler—has never run into any issues catering to the ultrawealthy. Until now. Baxter's latest assignment is at Villa Sérénité, where Alec Prescott is hosting a colorful cast of characters, including his ex-wife, his much younger lady friend, and some Hollywood hotshots, after the Cannes Film Festival. But it doesn't take long for a week of sun, wine, and a family birthday celebration to devolve into bickering and backstabbing. And soon, secrets aren't the only thing floating to the surface. The unflappable Baxter now finds himself assisting the gendarmes in a murder investigation.

Patterson, James. [Four Blind Mice](#) (\$14) and [Lion & Lamb](#) (\$14), two reissues.

Rosen, Lev AC. [The Disaster Gay Detective Agency](#) (Sourcebooks \$17.99). Brandon is a hopeless romantic. So when a handsome stranger named Jon checks in at the hotel he works at and invites Brandon to his room, Brandon ignores the advice of his crew—a group of loveable and messy queer twenty-somethings—and accepts. What follows is a tale as old as time: they hook up, Jon promises to text, Brandon falls in love, and Jon ghosts. Case closed—or is it? When Jon checks out early, leaving behind a bag of belongings and his cell phone, Brandon takes the phone and sets out to find him, thinking that this must at last be his Cinderella story. But it isn't.... Prince Charming is next seen fleeing a murder scene. Rosen leans on humor and heavily on sex in this tale.

Library Reads Picks for June adds: “When Brandon leaves his front desk duty and sleeps with a handsome hotel guest who then disappears, his campy group of friends gets pulled into a murder mystery they might just regret. This is a light-hearted wild goose chase with spying dog walkers, tattooed assassins, and a love-lorn desk clerk certain that his one night stand was anything but.”

* Ross, LJ. [Hysteria: An Alexander Gregory Thriller](#) (Sourcebooks \$18.99), Recently returned from his last case in Ireland, elite forensic psychologist and criminal profiler Dr. Alexander Gregory receives a call from the French police he can't ignore. It's Paris Fashion Week, and some of the world's most beautiful women are turning up dead—each killed in a frenzy, their faces slashed as the world's press looks on. Amid the carnage, one victim survives—but she's too traumatized to speak. Without her

testimony, the police are powerless to stop the killer before he strikes again. Can Gregory unlock the secrets buried in her mind? This trilogy begins with [Imposter](#) (\$17.99).

Scarborough, Kelly. [Butterfly Games](#) (She Writes Press \$18.99) is our **June Historical Fiction Paperback Pick**. If you read Annemarie Selinko's megaseller *Desiree* translated from the German in 1953 and written in the form of a diary from 1794 to 1829 by a Frenchwoman, Desiree Clary, born in 1777 in Marseilles who fell in love with Napoleon and became engaged to him. He went on to marry Josephine while Desiree eventually married Napoleon's Marshal Jean Baptiste Jules de Bernadotte who, after Waterloo, eventually became King of Sweden in 1818. Thus Desiree became the Queen.

Scarborough imagines life in the early 1800s under the Bernadottes, basing her novel on a true story. In the opulent world of the Swedish royal court, Jacquette Gyldenstolpe walks a dangerous tightrope between romance and political intrigue. Neglected by her parents and ostracized by the people around her, the young countess falls in love with Prince Oscar, heir to the Swedish throne—but their passionate affair has far-reaching consequences for the new Bernadotte dynasty, which is already challenged by threats from inside Sweden and beyond. By the time Jacquette learns that the Butterfly Game is not for the faint-hearted, it is too late...she harbors a dangerous secret.

Varghese, Annja. [A Kiss of Crimson Ash](#) (Orbit \$19.99). Inspired by medieval India, the lush, atmospheric worldbuilding of Anuja Varghese's trilogy-launching *Romantasy* feels vast, complex, and lived in. Add in juicy political intrigue and genuinely hot romance and this hits all the right notes.