BOOKNEWS from

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A BIG HARVEST OF BOOKS
MST is now in effect. 7:00 here is 9:00 PM EST, 8 PM CST, 6 PM PST
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 NOVEMBER 2 7:00 PM Live Book Launch
Craig Johnson in conversation with A Martinez Johnson discusses Have Courage: Longmire Stories (Penguin $28)
TICKETS: $35 with one copy of the book
COMPANION TICKET: $5 with no book
Tickets will be on sale at the door
Kids may attend free
Both Johnson and Martinez, who wrote the volume of 15 holiday inspired stories' Foreword, will sign the books
Location: St Barnabas Church, 6715 N Mockingbird Lane, Paradise Valley AZ 85253
"Extraordinary. . . . The O. Henry–esque twists that conclude every story in this collection are intricately plotted and expertly written. Like assorted homemade Christmas cookies, each story is an entire and perfect treat." *Library Journal,* starred review

WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 4 1:00 PM Virtual Event
Britain's **Peter James** signs Dead in Three Two One (Macmillan UK $46 Signed UK books available
Unsigned US edition: Dead in Three Two One (Pan $29.99)
Brighton's Superintendent Roy Grace foils another sinister plot

WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 4 7:00 PM Live Event
Charles Finch discusses Midnight in the House of Commons (St Martins $29).
A new chapter for Victorian sleuth Charles Lenox This is a long-running and excellent historical mystery series and if you haven't read it start here and then go back. At one point Charles daringly wrote a Prequel that was so gripping he turned it into a prequel trilogy. But it is best enjoyed mid series and not starting there.

THURSDAY NOVEMBER 5 5:30 PM Virtual Event
Leslie S. Klinger is our host
SJ Rozan discusses A Warning to the Curious (Soho $29.95)
A Judge Dee and Lao Mystery written with John Shen Nen Yee
Books signed by Rozan available

THURSDAY NOVEMBER 5 7:00 PM Live Event
Patrick is our host
Jim Ruland discusses Mightier Than the Sword (Rare Bird Books $22)
What do a gambler, a poet, a punk, and a writer of westerns have in common? Find out as four college professors embark on a crime spree in Northern Arizona in 1993

Adrian Van Young discusses Rough Beast (Black Lawrence Press $21.95)
The lead singer and guitarist of up-and-coming New Orleans black metal band, Bethlehem, is brutally murdered after a disastrous performance on the last stretch of an even more disastrous tour....

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 6 7:00 PM Live Prepublication Event
Olivia Fierro is our host
May Cobb discusses All the Little Secrets (Sourcebooks $28.99)
The Hunting Wife author returns to The Pen with the sequel to All the Little Houses ($19.99)
"Mix a little murder with copious amounts of alcohol and raging hormones and behold—Texas fireworks!"

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 7 10:00 AM Live & Virtual Party
Rhys Bowen is our host
Rhys will conduct a live zoom conversation with Louise Penny
40 TICKETS: $32 includes one copy Louise's new book Miss Wolcott's Ghost (St Martins $30) which comes with a signed book plate
Location: Our Annex
Coffee provided
Games, gifts, One Grand Prize Basket and one Grand Prize Three Pines *café au lait* cup
No streaming for this event

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 7 6:00 PM
The Horror Club discusses Philip Fracassi's The Autumn Springs Retirement Home Massacre ($18.99)

SUNDAY NOVEMBER 8 2:00 PM Live Book Launch
Whitney Clark is our host
Jenn McKinlay discusses Witches of Questionable Intent (Berkley $20)
The sequel to Witches of Dubious Origin ($19)

MONDAY NOVEMBER 9 5:30 PM Virtual Book Launch
JA Jance discusses The Taken Ones (Harper $30)
Seattle's J.P.Beaumont
signed books available

MONDAY NOVEMBER 9 7:00 PM Live Event
Matthew Aldrich discusses The Natural Order (Atria $29)
A debut thriller taking on Big Tech
Adam Plantinga discusses Dark Country (Grand Central $30)
After the bloodshed in Fenton, Arizona, former Detroit cop Kurt Argento reemerges in the small town of Barton, South Dakota

TUESDAY NOVEMBER 10 7:00 PM Live Event
Cozy historicals for you
Colleen Cambridge discusses Death Down the Aisle (Kensington $27)
And writing as Colleen Gleason, Lady Darling Vexes a Villain (Oceanview $29.99)
Dianne Freeman discusses A Christmas Guide to Family and Murder (Kensington $27).

WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 11 7:00 PM Live Event
Stephanie Wrobel discusses Revenge Plot (Berkley $30)
All Arnie Tenderton wants for Christmas is to be a published author
Our **December Crime Club Pick**

THURSDAY NOVEMBER 12 7:00 PM Live Event
JT Ellison is our host
Sara Paretsky discusses Bad Company (St Martins $30)
Either a standalone or the start of a new series and our **November Crime Club Pick**
Ellison discusses You Know Why (Thomas & Mercer $28.99 or $16.99)
A thriller perfect for readers of Laura Dave wherein a husband disappears at the Atlanta airport

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 14 10:00 AM Live Event
Local Authors Book Fair
Support independently published authors

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 14 4:00 PM Live Book Launch
Dirk Cussler discusses Clive Cussler Obsidian Sky (Putnam $34)
A new Dirk Pitt adventure
Attendees only: first 50 will receive a free paperback of *Raise the Titanic*, marking its 50th Anniversary, as a gift from Dirk

SUNDAY NOVEMBER 15 2:00 PM Live Prepublication Event
A Royal Tea celebrating the 20th Her Royal Spyness Mystery
Rhys Bowen discusses To Crown It All (Berkley $30)
40 TICKETS: $32 with one copy of the book
Location: Our anne

MONDAY NOVEMBER 16 7:00 PM Live Book Launch
Jeffery Deaver discusses The Collateral Heart (Putnam $32)
The fiery 17th Lincoln Rhyme & team investigation—arson and worse

TUESDAY NOVEEMBER 17 2:00 PM Virtual Event
A pair of UK giants
Abir Mukerjee discusses The Pinnacle (Little Brown $30)
Ian describes this as "a caper with traces of Hiaasen. He also describes Abir as the author of prize-winning books, historical and high-concept
Ian Rankin discusses The Heights (US edition $29)
A standalone set in a London luxury high rise

TUESDAY NOVEMBER 17 7:00 PM Live Event
Christina Estes is our host
Bruce Borgos discusses The Riddle Maker (St Martins $30)
Nevada Sheriff Porter Beck #4 in another killer plot that edges from Nevada into Arizona

WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 18 6:00 PM Virtual Event
Leslie S. Klinger is our host
Lindsay Faye discusses Raven (Penzler Publishing $27.95)
A Gothic homage to Edgar Allan Poe
Signed books available

THURSDAY NOVEMBER 19 5:00 PM Virtual Event
Brett Battles discusses Stuart Woods' Hostile Intent (Putnam $30)
A Stone Barrington thriller
Signed books available

THURSDAY NOVEMBER 19 7:00 PM Live Event
Hardboiled Crime discusses Lou Berney's November Road ($18.99)

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 20 7:00 PM Live and Virtual
SciFi Friday discusses Kim Stanley Robinson's Years of Rice and Salt ($21)

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 21 10:30 AM Live and Virtual
Croak & Dagger discusses Rob Hart's Assassins Anonymous ($19)

MONDAY NOVEMBER 23 6:00 PM Virtual Event
Spenser!
Mike Lupica discusses Robert B Parker's Framed (Putnam $30)
Signed books available

CLOSED THANKSGIVING DAY

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 28 11:00 AM Live in our Annex
The Cookbook Club discusses Ina Garten's Simply Ina ($40)
Bring a recipe from the book to share

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 28 Live Event All Day
Small Business Saturday
To thank you: a storewide special sale plus giveaways

TUESDAY DECEMBER 1 7:00 PM Live Book Launch
James Rollins discusses A Fist of Molten Fire (Tor $31.99)
The 4th and final volume in the Moonfall Tetralogy
Our copies include postcards of colorful maps of this fantasy universe

WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 2 7:00 PM Live Event
A Tom Clancy celebration
Jack Ryan, Sr. & Jack Ryan, Jr. together in one night
MP Woodward discusses Tom Clancy The Coldest War (Putnam $32) - Jack, Sr.
Jack Stewart discusses Tom Clancy Pressure Depth (Putnam $32) - Jack, Jr.

SUBSCRIPTION CLUB PICKS FOR NOVEMBER
Members get free shipping, a 6-month membership bonus, and sometimes other special bonus items plus priority over first printings for signed books
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
Kleypas, Lisa. Queen of Lombard Street

Cozy Crimes Club One Unsigned hardcover or paperback per month
McKee, Rebecca. Mr. Mendlebee Pandimensional Literary Depository (and Yarn)

Crime Collectors Club One Signed First Printing per month
Paretsky, Sara. Bad Company

First Mystery Club One Signed First Printing per month
T.B.A.

Hardboiled/Noir Club One Signed or unsigned hardcover or paperback per month
Ruland, Jim. Mightier Than the Sword

Historical Fiction Club One Signed First Printing per month
Fredericks, Mariah. Murder on 34th Street

Historical Fiction Paperback Club One Unsigned paperback per month
Malone, Alicia. Murder at the Movies

Notable New Fiction Club One Signed First Printing per month
Scalzi, John. Monsters of Ohio

Romance and Relationships Club One unsigned hardcover or paperback per month
Levine, Jenna. Love You to Death

SIGNED BOOKS FOR NOVEMBER
A note here: All of our Signed Hardcover books are first printings

Aldrich, Matthew. The Natural Order (Atria $29) is a propulsive debut drawing upon the current obsession with extending life to new lengths, if not immortality. A reclusive by nature and necessity billionaire tech visionary, the world's wealthiest man residing in Marin, California,, creates a method to stop aging, putting him in the crosshairs of an extremist group and forcing a tense reunion with his estranged son, who is dying of old age while Paul is about to reach the all-time milestone of 122 by using a protocol known as The Method. In fact, he has unlocked the secret to eternal life and is ready to bring his breakthrough to market. The world is poised to enter a post-aging future. But not everyone wants Paul to succeed, and his enemies are prepared to use violence to keep The Method from launching.

Kirkus Reviews gives it a star: "A gripping and well-paced story full of philosophical questions and emotional gut punches…. The scariest thing about this book is that it seems plausible. That said, while it feels like a portrait of a not-too-distant dystopian future, it's still a very human story—a tale of family and regret, of two men at what might be the ends of their lives, reflecting on what it would mean to do away with death and still feel like there's not enough time."

Armstrong, Jess. The Lost Souls of Saint Oda's (St Martins $29). The 4th in this series is "A high-stakes whodunit darkened by the aftermath of the Great War." It's now 1923. American heiress Ruby Vaughn hoped the new year would bring less murder and far less of the occult, allowing her to spend her days at the rare book shop she runs alongside her octogenarian employer, and exploring her fledgling romance with Ruan Kivell, the intriguing folk healing Pellar she met in Cornwall. But fate often has other plans. Ruby has long believed her entire family died when the Lusitania sank in 1915, however when her solicitor brings news that her mother inexplicably survived the catastrophe and he believes he's found her in a Belgian hospital just across the channel, Ruby dares not hope it's true. Ruby and Ruan set off for Belgium with a simple task—to go to the hospital at Saint Oda's priory, find her mother, and bring her home. However, upon her arrival at the priory, Ruby learns the woman they sought had died and been hastily buried days before. Stunned, Ruby can't let it go and so finds a sinister secret simmering at St. Oda's since 1918.

Baldacci, David. All In (Grand Central $32) brings us a fourth mission for the 6:20 Man, international in scope. When fearless war correspondent Theresa Lee is shot on a storm-swept Manhattan street and the man she was meeting, Bill Walker, vanishes, the 6:20 Man, aka former Army Ranger turned federal investigator Travis Devine, is called in. Theresa is an investigative journalist, Walker a legendary analyst for the Five Eyes alliance that gathers intelligence that could topple governments around the world. A professional hit team has tried to silence one and snatched the other—and Devine has to find out why. From New York's glass-and-steel canyons to the glittering harbors of Australia, Devine is pulled into the orbit of the Woolwine empire—an Australian dynasty whose fortune makes them more powerful than some nations. Partnering with Anais Jones, a driven, Sydney-based homicide detective, he uncovers a lethal convergence of rogue intelligence operations, Russian mobsters, compromised prisons, and a quiet campaign to redraw the global balance of power.

Battles, Brett. Stuart Woods' Hostile Intent (Putnam $30). When Stone Barrington receives a call from Ben Bachetti, asking him to attend an urgent meeting with Centurion Pictures' board of directors, Stone wastes no time in getting to Los Angeles. After all, a date night with Josie Hale is long overdue. There, he learns a company called Zelzah International is attempting a hostile

takeover of a friend's independent film group, and Ben needs the board's help in putting a stop to their malicious antics. While Stone and the board work with Ben to deal with Zelzah, Stone's pilot Faith gets in a bad accident. Suspicious that she was set up, Stone investigates who wants Faith dead. Can he quell two crises as they spin out of control?

Berger, J M. The Pope's Hitman (Crooked Lane $25.99). Berger, a senior research fellow at the Center on Terrorism, Extremism, and Counterterrorism, puts his background to good use in this riveting action thriller, possibly our December First Mystery Pick as it comes to a climax on Christmas at St. Peter's, Rome. While the plot and some characters are outrageous, it strikes me as a blend of Dan Brown, Lee Child, and Thomas Perry's Jane Whitefield.

But it starts at Sunday Mass at Father Francis Loyola's church in Boston which comes to a chaotic end when he's targeted by a sniper. Loyola dodges the attack, runs toward the assailant, and, out of his parishioners' view, snaps the man's neck. During his next confession, Loyola admits to killing the gunman but claims he did so to protect church secrets, including his past as a hired killer for the pope. The dead man, he explains, was wearing the sign of an ancient anti-Christian military order supposedly disbanded centuries ago. Loyola tries to learn more about the dead man as he dodges several other attempts on his life, gradually unearthing an apparent plot to murder Pope Nicholas VI that may have been orchestrated by a former confidante. Berger makes it surprisingly easy to suspend disbelief about Father Loyola's biography, keeping the focus squarely on the plot's breakneck action and giddy twists. Fans of Frederick Forsyth's conspiracy novels will enjoy themselves. The Pope's Hitman ($19.99)

Borgos, Bruce. The Riddle Maker (St Martins $30). This is such a great series, always offbeat and full of surprises as it embraces the new West (and Old). Porter Beck is the sheriff of Lincoln County, Nevada, a vast expanse of desert and mountains best known to the outside world for the top-secret installation called Area 51. Just down the highway sits a weathered mailbox where UFO believers leave messages for aliens. But this time, the message is for Beck. It's a riddle. And when Beck and his team decipher it, the answer leads them to the shrinking waters of Lake Mead and an oil drum chained to the bottom. Inside are the remains of someone missing for more than fifty years, someone tied to Beck by a thread of DNA stretching deep into his own past. This is another absolute corker of a story with great characters and landscape. Highly recommended.

✻ Bowen, Rhys. To Crown it All (Berkley $30) It's hard to believe this is the 20th in this historical series embracing Britain between the World Wars. We've now arrived in 1937 and the coronation of King George VI. Lady Georgiana Rannoch did not expect and invitation. She is less surprised at a coded message from her mother, the Bolter, who has at last realized that sticking with her German lover in Hitler's circle will just not do. The answer: invite Mummy to the coronation and to stay at Eynsleigh, Georgie and Darcy's estate. Of course there are other guests. There's the Nanny for baby James. There's Queenie. And a dead guest found dead in bed….

We also have Signed copies of The Castle in the Glen (Lake Union $28.99), a clever Scottish historical with a pinch of Australia, great local color including a famous writer's ménage in commuting distance from London and a castle on the Isle of Skye.

✻ Cambridge, Colleen. Death Down the Aisle (Kensington $27). Phyllida Bright, amateur sleuth and loyal housekeeper to Agatha Christie, investigates a murder at her friend's wedding, in Cambridge's sprightly sequel to *Two Truths and a Murder*. At the outset, Phyllida heads off to stately Coatesworth Manor to attend the wedding of her friend, Dr. John Bhatt, and Emily Hartparker, a distant member of the Coatesworth family. Shortly after the ceremony, a guest is found dead in the chapel, felled by a blow to the head from a candlestick. Considering the rancor and jealousy that numerous Coatesworth cousins expressed toward each other and their spouses at the rehearsal dinner, Phyllida's list of suspects is difficult to whittle down. As she attempts to do so, she grapples with her feelings about a young woman who has set her sights on Bradford, Christie's handsome chauffeur, and accepts help from Christie herself at a key moment in the investigation. Lively pacing, well-placed clues, and plenty of witty repartee make this whodunit sing.

Cobb, May. All the Little Secrets (Sourcebooks $28.99). In the sequel to *All the Little Houses,* the fallout from an utterly unexpected death reverberates over every margarita and through every pine-lined street down in Texas. Longview is a place quite familiar with social scandal and unsolved crimes, but now that the queen has fallen from her throne, there's more at stake than just pinning a murder on someone. For those who would relish their own empire, like a certain trad wife or a deviously ambitious daughter, the town crown is there for the taking—if you're not taken to jail first. No one is innocent here, not in the land of big hair and bigger mischief.

"This thriller should come with a ‹May Day!' disclaimer! Hurricane May Cobb lands in Longview again with some of the scandalous characters featured in her best-selling first in the series, All the Little Houses. After that book's cliffhanger of an ending, this new one gives us even more sex, murder, and ambition, oh my!"

Cussler, Dirk. Clive Cussler Obsidian Sky (Putnam $34). When National Underwater and Marine Agency director Dirk Pitt rescues a team of archaeologists trapped in a cavern by an earthquake, an unexpected artifact is discovered that rewrites history. A two-thousand-year-old silver scroll contains a message in a language more ancient than Phoenician and offering clues to a priceless treasure from antiquity. While they work to decipher the message, another mystery arises. A freighter has disappeared without a trace in the Mediterranean. When Pitt and his partner Al Giordino find the wreck, they discover that the cargo—a large scale particle accelerator capable of creating plutonium and radioisotopes—is missing. In the wrong hands, its use could spell disaster for Western civilization. It's only the first step in a perilous journey….

To mark the occasion we offer the cracking good Graham Brown, Clive Cussler Cold Fire (Putnam) at a sale price of $20). We also have a books signed by Clive.

Deaver, Jeffery. The Collateral Heart (Putnam $32). November 16 book launch so you can ask for your copy to be dated. Here's the 17th for Lincoln Rhyme and his team. When a harrowing arson in Manhattan burns a building to the ground, Rhyme and Amelia Sachs are called to investigate, only to discover in the

rubble a package of clues that teases where the perp will strike next. Rhyme and Sachs work feverishly to unravel the mystery, turning to an unlikely source for help: one of the nation's most popular history podcasters. Along the way they cross paths with Desdemona Vale, a determined detective from Long Island who is in search of the killer of a young woman from her neighborhood. What a great character—we can hope she comes back. As Rhyme's team digs into both cases, it becomes increasingly clear that their suspect's plot might be more complicated than they initially thought. Bonus: there's a hint of further restoration of motion for Rhyme.

Drury, Bob/Tom Clavin. The Phantom: The Untold Story of the American Marine the Nazis Could Not Kill (St Martins $33). Major Pierre "Pete" Ortiz was a Manhattan-born and Paris-educated polymath fluent in five languages. An adventuresome French Foreign Legion veteran specifically recruited by "Wild" Bill Donovan's Office of Strategic Services (the precursor to both the CIA and U.S. Special Forces) upon his enlistment in the Marines, Ortiz was the officer "Wild Bill" instinctively knew he needed and could rely on to complete a string of clandestine missions. So he did. Soldier, spy, scout, saboteur, and French Resistance leader in the heart of Nazi-occupied Europe—the untold story of Marine legend Pete Ortiz.

Ellison, J T. You Know Why (Thomas & Mercer $28.99). Ellison joins us November 12 as host to Sara Paretsky.

Here is a perfect read for fans of Laura Dave's The Last Thing He Told Me ($17.99), but uniquely Ellison. She gives us a dual narrative of suspense with on one side Brooklyn, whose husband surprises their young family with a Christmas trip to Italy, though they have to rush to leave the next day, only to disappear at the airport during their connection in Atlanta. The other side is told by Eden, who on a flight home from a business trip sees the man who murdered her sister Chloe ten years earlier. Both women have secrets, and obviously, Trey does as well. Raves for this twisty but entirely plausible thriller.

Evanovich, Janet. Split Second: Thirty-Two Switcheroo (Atria $30). In a now-or-never moment, Stephanie Plum has made the decision of a lifetime. And she is doing a hazardous baby-sitting gig for her ex-fiancé Ranger has taken a security job for a powerful political figure, and Stephanie is in charge of babysitting one of the figure's family members. Still, Over the years, Trenton's best-known bounty hunter has acquired a long list of enemies. It's an occupational hazard as a bond enforcement agent. The problem is that she now has a mysterious enemy whose name isn't on any list. Disturbing packages, threatening notes, and near misses are keeping Stephanie in the dark and her anonymous tormentor, who wants her dead, in the shadows. Bond jumper Greb Tusi also wouldn't mind getting rid of Stephanie. He's wanted for going on a three-hour rampage—one that he swears "wasn't his fault"—that included mugging an old lady and stealing a hearse.

Faye, Lyndsay. Raven (Penzler Publishing $27.95). Faye writes, "I am wholly unashamed to report that my eighth novel, *Raven*, is a rampantly Gothic ode to Edgar Allan Poe, very loosely structured after *The Fall of the House of Usher*, but crawling with wild passions, tragic invalids, decaying manors (just the one, really), and inner pathos. Raven Helen Allan is a destitute orphan raised in Baltimore, with a knack for the occult and an eye for both sexes, and she is thrown upon the mercy of the cruel, cold world. She is not the first. She will not be the last. Not by far!

This page-turner purports to be the autobiography of Raven Allan, narrating from inside her grave in antebellum America. The daughter of an acclaimed singer, Raven grows up roaming the East Coast with her mother's troupe. When her mother dies, Raven is passed among the homes of her cruel relatives, cutting herself and attempting spells as a way of mitigating her emotional pain. Eventually, she moves in with her opium-addicted aunt, Berenice, in Baltimore, and falls in love with an enslaved girl named Pym Penn. When fluctuations in the shipping industry threaten her family's finances, Raven takes a job (à la Jane Eyre) at the remote, decrepit Moldavia Manor, as a companion to a young woman named Lenore. Her guardian, the handsome and rich Trevanion, is a scientist seeking a cure for Lenore's epilepsy through magic and alchemy—but Lenore has dark secrets and a dangerous jealous streak. Faye's "blend of historical melodrama and surprisingly sweet romance is always engrossing."

✻ Finch, Charles. Midnight in the House of Commons (St Martins $29). This is a long-running and excellent historical mystery series and if you haven't read it start here and then go back. At one point Finch daringly wrote a Prequel that was so gripping he turned it into a prequel trilogy. But it is best enjoyed when you get mid series and not starting there.

This entry in the series has an elegiac feeling. It is by now the spring of 1881 and Charles Lenox has moved into his fifties while his wife Lady Jane, maturing too, is much involved in suffrage/political rather than social issues. Charles had left politics and is committed to running his private inquiry agency while his brother Sir Edward has become Chancellor of the Exchequer in a turnabout of which sibling serves. This is all relevant as the story opens upon the murder of a charismatic Member of the House, once Robert Baddeley. Shockingly, within the House of Commons itself. How can this be? It's a kind of locked-room mystery for Lenox and his team to solve. In so doing they dig deep into the women in his life—more than one including his unbalanced wife. Sex and politics—nothing new. But could the murder possibly ensnare Edward for motives connected with an upcoming Bill before the House?

Deb adds: "Spring is in the air, and so is change, as tensions rise between the haves and the have-nots and the fight for women's suffrage gathers steam. History buffs will find plenty to savor, with cameos from Disraeli, Gladstone, and other major players of the day. But don't be fooled: at its heart, this is a classic locked-room whodunit. When a Member of Parliament is found murdered inside the locked chambers of the House of Commons, Charles is called upon to track down the killer, working alongside the London police. It is a delight to watch a mystery solved using the tools of the time, within the constraints of class and privilege woven into the culture, by sheer wits alone. A thoroughly satisfying read! "

Fredericks, Mariah. Murder on 34th Street (St Martins $29). This astute, humorous, acutely observant and often amusing thriller is our **November Historical Crime Pick**—the crime scene is NY 1932 and Macy's is getting ready for the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. The event's intricate planning falls to Grace Verlander, assistant to the head of Macy's personnel department, and often the smartest person in the room. Grace fills her days

leading up to Thanksgiving juggling the egos and demands of Macy's employees who want to be in the parade and those who don't, deciding where to place balloon animals and floats, and scouring Macy's departments for clothes and accessories for the participants to wear. At least she's found her Santa Claus: Harry Gardner from children's shoes. But Harry begins receiving death threats before he even dons the red suit. A murder during the parade followed by two more deaths prompt Grace to investigate. Enjoy how Frederick's delves into a woman's behind-the-scenes planning of the iconic Parade and her transformation into an amateur sleuth when someone is killed.

And perhaps most of all, her authentic portrait of the world of the world's largest department store, an iconic, legendary institution. I grew up with Marshall Fields in Chicago as the equivalent. This story was evocative and truly spoke to me.

✻ Freeman, Dianne. A Christmas Guide to Family and Murder (Kensington $27). A country Christmas in Victorian England takes a murderous turn. Frances, the former Countess of Harleigh, and husband George are looking forward to a Christmas season enlivened by all the diversions London can provide. But George's sister Fiona and her husband persuade everyone to gather at their Norfolk estate for the holiday. The weather will be chilly, but the prospect of snow delights the youngsters. Instead of a picturesque snowfall, however, Norfolk is hit by pounding rainfall and high winds. In the aftermath of the storm, Frances, Fiona, and the children make an unpleasant discovery in a nearby field—the body of their neighbor. Joshua Penhollow was the local doctor, though not a well-respected one. Indeed, most viewed him as a quack, and even his own stepdaughter held a grudge against him. To find his killer Frances and Fiona comb through a village full of colorful characters and more than a few suspects, hoping to achieve a merry, quiet Christmas after all.

Goldman, Matt. Cold Blade (Severn House $29.99). I love Minneapolis PI Nils Shapiro's investigations beginning with Gone to Dust ($18.99) and its unique flummoxing of forensics. Now in his 6th case, Nils is hired by wealthy businessman Jonathan Willetts to prove that his wife Paige didn't murder one of his employees, Lukas Day. Everything points to Paige's guilt: she had an encounter with Lukas the night he died, and her fingerprints are on the knife found at the scene. As far as the Minnesota Police Department are concerned it's an open and shut case. Nils isn't so sure. After all, Jonathan and Paige have plenty of enemies, do is Paige being set up by a calculating killer? Deception, theft, and stunning secrets convince Nils that perhaps she is.

✻ Griffiths, Elly. The Case of the Christmas Card (Quercus $40). The author of the Ruth Galloway series and many policing knockouts set in Brighton or London turned her hand to time travel back to the Victorian age. Here she pens a festive murder mystery,

No-one is more surprised than time-travelling detective Ali Dawson when Charles Dickens suddenly turns up on her doorstep a few days before Christmas. The Great Writer is as baffled as she is as to how he got there. Ali takes him in, despite being preoccupied with a new cold case around the murdered artist Sylvester Strong. Dickens is a rather demanding house guest. However, as a detective, he shows distinct promise and together they embark on finding the truth behind the appearance of new paintings by the deceased artist. On top of that Nell, the daughter of Ali's best friend Meg, has vanished without a trace. As the whole of London is in full festive swing and preparing for the most special day of the year, Ali and Dickens are exploring the town, desperate to solve not just one but two crime cases. Will they succeed before Christmas Day arrives and more importantly, will Charles find a way back home?

✻ James, Peter. Dead in Three Two One (Macmillan UK $46); Unsigned US edition: Dead in Three Two One (Pan $29.99). If you haven't watched *Grace* on Acorn, there are 5 seasons now, and all terrific. But here is the 22nd investigation for the Brighton Superintendent by UK #1 bestseller James.

Brighton Pride is the biggest date on the city's calendar with half a million people lost in the party. But behind the opulent façade of the Royal Courteney Hotel, a nightmare is checking in. Dritan Dervishi, the cold-blooded consigliere for Albanian mob boss Roel Albazi, has arrived with a beautiful woman on his arm and a lethal secret in his suitcase. He has specifically requested Room 321 – a room with a perfect view of the sea, and a deadly proximity to a target he's been dreaming of for years. Detective Superintendent Roy Grace is already pushed to the limit, coordinating the city's massive security operation amid whispers of a potential terrorist attack. But the threat is more personal than he could ever imagine. Back in a prison cell, his old nemesis Albazi is counting down the seconds to a revenge that will not just take Roy's life, but erase his entire bloodline. And as Roy and his wife Cleo prepare for a night of celebration at the Royal Courteney, they have no idea that they are stepping into a deadly trap.

Grace's last case The Hawk Is Dead ($18.99) is really brilliant and carries you behind the scenes at Buckingham Palace. Highly recommended.

Jance, JA. The Taken Ones (Harper $30). Despite her name, Alaskan PI Twinkle Winkleman is as tough as nails. A skilled mechanic and certified spitfire, she has a nose for trouble. So when a young woman from Anchorage disappears after heading to Seattle for an internship that seems too good to be true, Twinkle is convinced that something dangerous is happening. But both the Anchorage and Seattle authorities dismiss her out of hand. With nowhere else to turn, Twinkle calls on an old friend: private investigator and former homicide cop J. P. Beaumont. While Twinkle and Beau investigate the disappearances, they stumble upon a truly nefarious plot requiring urgent action.

Johnson, Craig. Have Courage: Longmire Stories (Viking $28). Book launch here November 2 with actor A Martinez of *Longmire* and also the Sheriff in *Dark Winds* who signs his Foreword to the book.

Walt Longmire, sheriff of Absaroka County, investigates a series of eccentric small-town crises in fifteen holiday-inspired stories. An old dog mysteriously escapes the animal shelter night after night. A deputy deploys an unexpected diversion during a hostage standoff. The baby Jesus vanishes from a nativity scene. And Walt faces one of his most challenging assignments yet: caring for a 150-year-old sourdough starter, while apprehending a seven-year-old suspect with the diction of a 1930s gumshoe. You fans have been asking for another holiday stories collection—and here it is.

Jonasson, Ragnar. The Body in the Bath (St Martins $29). We have just a handful of copies.

As snow blankets Reykjavík and Christmas approaches,

young detective Helgi Reykdais looking forward to a quiet holiday—until those plans are torn away in a flash. One month after his girlfriend Aníta is killed in a car accident, he returns to work in Reykjavík, haunted by loss and rage. The driver—Helgi's ex-girlfriend Bergþóra, a violent alcoholic whose abuse he kept secret—insists Aníta's death was an accident and walks free. To escape his mounting despair, Helgi throws himself into the unsolved disappearance of his predecessor, Hulda, a retired officer long presumed dead. But as he follows the traces she left behind, the lines between her past and his present begin to blur. When Bergþóra is later found lifeless in her bath, suspicion falls squarely on Helgi whose own colleagues turn against him….

Lupica, Mike. Robert B Parker's Framed (Putnam $30). Martin Quirk is a pillar of the Boston PD. But now an unknown adversary has devised an elaborate plan to ruin his reputation — and his life. His bosses believe the lie. So does the whole city. The BPD won't allow Quirk to defend himself, and clear his name. Enter his friend Spenser....

McKinlay, Jenn. Witches of Questionable Intent (Berkley $20 book launch November 8). Thanks to her training as a librarian and her newfound magical abilities, Zoe Ziakas thinks she has a handle on her job at the Museum of Literature safeguarding the secret collection of enchanted tomes known as the Books of Dubious Origin. But when Jasper Griffin—the colleague she's been crushing on—reports that their most volatile acquisition, *The Book of Shadows*, has been stolen, Zoe's carefully cataloged world unravels. To track down the book, Zoe, Jasper, and the rest of the BODO team plunge into a perilous hunt that takes them from shadowy midnight markets to demon-infested streets, all while wrangling an unpredictable hellhound puppy. But when the thief begins to invoke the book's darkest spells, Zoe faces an impossible challenge: How does she stop a curse that can rewrite reality itself? This book-centered, magic-fueled story the magic of books to change the world and dials it up to 11in this delightful sequel to last fall's Witches of Dubious Origin ($19).

Paretsky, Sara. Bad Company (St Martins $30). In 2023, Sara Paretsky took a trip to Paris to see a friend and returned home to Chicago with an idea for a crime novel. While in Paris, Paretsky stayed in a charming, out-of-the-way hotel that had a quirky, elevated bed that was hard to get in and out of. One morning, while trying to get off the bed, she fell and landed on the floor. As she sat there, feeling dazed and rubbing her hip, she began to picture an older female detective whose body is beginning to fail her. That image inspired Paretsky's new novel.

Deb reviews: "Lily is still here." Four words—that's all it takes to send shockwaves through the CIA, the FBI, and intelligence circles around the world. Welcome to the riveting new thriller from the bestselling, award-winning author Sara Paretsky. Lily is a retired CIA operative, now in her 70s, living a quiet, unremarkable life in Chicago—or so everyone thinks. Decades ago, she was one of the Agency's most admired and berated operatives, prized for her uncanny ability to win the trust of locals in the fictional country of Hayalistan. That trust, and the cover she built, detonates the instant a decades-old photo surfaces in *The New Yorker.* Paretsky delivers a razor-sharp collision of old-school tradecraft and modern intrigue, as Lily wields disguises and Substack with equal cunning to unmask who's stirring up buried secrets, and why. Lily is a phenomenal new character, and Paretsky proves once again why she remains one of the sharpest thriller writers working today."

"Lily will remind fans of Warshawski on a global mission, and Paretsky handles the novel affordances of tradecraft with all the aplomb... most impressive not as an isolated achievement but as a demonstration of Paretsky's unfailing range and ambition." —*Kirkus Reviews* on our **November Crime Club Pick**

Plantinga, Adam. Dark Country (Grand Central $30). After the bloodshed in Fenton, Arizona, former Detroit cop Kurt Argento had to disappear. He reemerges in the small town of Barton, South Dakota, working under an assumed name as a church handyman. While mowing the church lawn one afternoon, Kurt helps 17-year-old Syrian refugee Majed hide from two dangerous-looking men. Majed initially insists he has no idea why he's being pursued, but when the boy's mom is murdered, Kurt knows Majed is in deep trouble. What follows is a harrowing road trip to Oakland and back as Kurt fends off killers intent on kidnapping Majed because he's the only bone marrow match for a billionaire businessman's dying son. Plantinga, a former San Francisco cop, keeps the pedal on the floor from start to finish, continuing to develop his memorable protagonist—a loner with a moral code that lets him get down in the mud when he needs to—into a formidable action hero.

Rasche, Anna. The Cursed Diamond (Park Row $30). Perfect for our **December Historical Fiction Pick**: intrigue, legend, and an infamous gemstone. 2010. Jennie is working as a runner in the Diamond District when a friend's sudden death leaves her with a cryptic note: "Not Safe." Her search for answers leads her to an antique jewelry box, a clue to a century-old mystery and the legend of the Midnight Diamond—a rare blue gem rumored to bring ruin to all who possess it. As Jennie is pulled deeper into a world of secrets and danger, she realizes she is not just chasing a lost treasure; she is uncovering a story that was meant to stay buried. 1910. On an ocean liner bound for New York, heiress Marcella Porter returns home after being disgraced by scandal in London. Her path collides with a charismatic nobleman and the magnificent Midnight Diamond, which she unknowingly smuggles into the city. Mesmerized by its brilliance, Marcella feels an irresistible pull toward the diamond, and when the glittering façade of her charmed life begins to crack

"The clues come fast and furious as Jennie and Marcella race to track down the Midnight Diamond across centuries and locales in this entrancing tale. Marvelously plotted and full of rich details," says Fiona Davis, who has a new book coming in January.

Rollins, James. A Fist of Molten Fire (Tor $31.99). The 4th and final book in the Moonfall Series is launched here December 1 with the illustrator again on hand.

As earthquakes shatter continents and storms ravage the skies, the moon descends—its burning face growing larger each day. Impact is imminent. Extinction is certain. Nyx and her allies have one last hope: two colossal engines buried deep within the planet's core, capable of restoring the world's spin and casting the moon back into orbit. But such power requires a lost key—one sought by others. An undying figure of bronze rises to claim it: an ancient enemy of unmatched strength and cunning, determined to turn Moonfall into a weapon of total annihilation. As war engulfs the Crown, Nyx and her companions must fight their way toward the Fist, a deadly volcanic stronghold hidden beyond the Mýr swamps. Here the story will play out.

Rozan, SJ. A Warning to the Curious (Soho $29.95) offers a madcap dash through the world of séances, prizefighting, cutting-edge technology, Holmesian cameos, and many disguises. "Masterfully constructed, with exquisitely detailed sights and sounds and plenty of wittily delivered jiggery-pokery." — *Booklist* Starred review

London, 1924. Judge Cheng Gao Shang has been sent by Sun Yat Sen's government to look into the death of Dee Ren Jie, the larger-than-life investigator who had kept the local Chinese community safe. But Dee isn't dead; he's hiding out with his friends Lao She and Sergeant Hoong while keeping a close eye on Cheng's activities. Has Cheng actually come to London to track down a shipment of arms covertly sent from England, intended for Sun Yat Sen as he attempts to unify China? Judge Cheng's daughter, Irene, is also in London, and the intrepid, intellectually curious young woman quickly falls in with some very interesting associates. But tragedy soon strikes—or is it something more sinister? To find out, Dee Ren Jie will have to rise from the dead in this action-packed kung fu caper.

Scalzi, John. Monsters of Ohio (Tor $29.99 on sale November 3). In this "surprisingly cheerful tale of a suffering community fighting back against corporate predation," Scalzi serves up delightfully quirky, cozy sci-fi horror alongside a heaping helping of small-town charm, offers a love letter to the author's own rural Ohio small town, and pays homage to the pulp horror of classic scary movies while snarkily commenting that humans are the scariest monsters of all." – *Library Journal* Starred Review for our **November Notable New Fiction Pick**.

Stewart, Jack. Tom Clancy Pressure Depth (Putnam $32). Kudos to Jack for this Starred Review for a new Jack Ryan, Jr., mission. I read every word, riveted. Bravo to Stewart. You need never have read a Clancy to dive into this as it works superbly as a standalone. Jack will be back with us December 2 with MP Woodward for a Jack Ryan, Sr./Jack Ryan, Jr. double event – a first!

"The ship *Meridian Star* departs eastern Russia unknowingly carrying a pair of containers with radioactive cesium chloride. The vessel is hijacked and scuttled in Micronesia near the Mariana Trench, and the crew is murdered. A huge insurance claim results, and Jack, an accomplished deep-sea diver who works for Hendley Associates, is there to investigate. The hostile Chinese learn it's there and want that illicit cargo. Meanwhile, the Naval Undersea Warfare Center discovers a huge, mysterious object in 600 feet of water. At that depth, the pressure is unsurvivable without complex special equipment, which is vintage Tom Clancy. Whatever the strange object is, it's "not a ship…not a submarine…not an aircraft." On the side is a faded hammer and sickle and Cyrillic letters that spell *Siren*.

Ryan teams up with Navy divers, and they look for a way to safely enter and explore the object. They discover that the underwater contraption has thermonuclear warheads attached, left and long forgotten by the USSR. If the warheads explode, they could still achieve their apparent purpose—to trigger a tsunami and destroy Guam, which is strategically important to the U.S. The Chinese know it too, and the race is on to take control. The result is plenty of high-stakes undersea action, where death can come from a bullet, a knife, or a sliced air hose. But there's action on land, too. Navy master diver Carla Bennett and Jack take on a surprise assault in a hotel where Carla shows off stellar fighting skills—better than Jack's. These two aren't the only heroes here, as there's a well-balanced cast of characters, all brave and likable. And of course—*of course*—where there's a bomb, there's a ticking clock. Nail-biting and pressure-packed.

Woodward, M P. Tom Clancy The Coldest War (Putnam $32). Signed here December 2 with Jack Ryan, Jr.'s new author Jack Stewart. Woodward draws on his own Naval Intelligence career to craft his first Jack Ryan, Sr.

The U.S. Navy rules the seas—not only above the waters but below. A large factor in that sovereignty is a network of undersea listening devices scattered around the world's oceans. Through these devices the Americans have been able to track every move the Russians make for years. Now the Russians have found a solution—create a new ocean or at least ocean passage that only they can use. To this end, they have harnessed nuclear power to melt an icy passage above the Arctic Circle. Not only will this allow Russian ships and submarines to travel undetected, it will shift the balance of power among the navies of the world. President Jack Ryan is faced with a insoluble problem. Any attack on the Russian icebreakers will be an act of war, and maybe even worse, because of the nuclear material being used, could lead to an environmental calamity of epic proportions.

Wrobel, Stephanie. Revenge Plot (Berkley $30) brings Wrobel's literary A-game to this double-layered puzzler that deftly mines the craft of fiction writing and the business of publishing "for spectacularly entertaining results." And as the story is constructed around the courses of a Christmas dinner held when an eager author finds himself snowed in with a famous literary agent at her remote Airbnb, it's perfect for our **December Crime Pick of the Month**.

It begins as a straightforward cat-and-mouse game and blossoms into an insightful, sometimes poignant story about ambition, power, and grief. "Publishing insiders will appreciate the morbid take on the industry, while general readers will relish Wrobel's gift for creating tension—especially when the contents of Arnie's manuscript are revealed," says the *PW* Starred Review.

POISONED PEN GIFTS

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Why not sport our logo on exclusive PP items?

We have a new Poisoned Pen Journal(**($24) in sexy red embossed with our Logo.**
And to go with, Poisoned Pens ($12.95) in black and red.
Together they make a handsome gift set.
And did I mention our little Poisoned Pen Lapel Pin ($9.99)?
Poisoned Pen Mugs($12) in Red
Poisoned Pen Drink Koozie ($3) in black
Poisoned Pen Caps ($20) in white.
Poisoned Pen Tees in various sizes and colors.

And the ever popular Poisoned Pen Tote Bags ($15) of beige canvas trimmed in red with red handles which make excellent gift wrap for a selection of books you are gifting.

We do offer free Gift Wrap in December

MORE GIFT IDEAS

✻ Clarke, Susanna. The Bishop of Durham Attempts to Surrender the City (Bloomsbury $16.99). Here is a superb example of **Shelf Wealth** – a beautifully packaged little hardcover with gorgeous endpapers and much more. It's a perfect stocking stuffer for anyone who enjoys a bit of fantasy by the author of *Jonathan Strange and Mr. Norrell* and *Piranesi*. I just ordered more copies before they disappear.

King, Peter. The Game (Norton $39.99). For 40 years, Peter King's unmatched access, curiosity, and passion have made him synonymous with the National Football League. He broke countless stories, giving us the human side of the sport and influencing countless reporters. Players trusted him; coaches and owners revealed information to him. He gathered it all into notebooks and columns that kept fans riveted. Now King has brought all his knowledge and insight together in one place to tell the story of the modern NFL as no one else could. Moving from the mid-1980s, when the league went head-to-head with baseball in popularity, to the present, when it dominates every other entertainment in America, King narrates the NFL's explosive rise from the inside.

Moore, Sam. There and Back Again: The Unofficial Oral History of the Lord of the Rings Films (Atria $30). This is a big book to go with a big subject. Journalist Moore weaves together interviews with many of the films' stars, with the writers and crew (special effects!), and Peter Jackson's battles to get the trilogy made. For example, how did they deal with a real NZ volcano? And when winter closed in? In the end the cast became a true fellowship….bonded and with matching tattoos. I have visited many of the locations in NZ which remain a serious tourist draw…really, I'm not sure if Jackson could have brought this off any place else.

Osmundsen, Megan Sinclair. Mahj + Mix (Andrews McNeel $16.99). Every mahjong table needs someone working strategy, someone bringing snacks, and another mixing drinks. *Mahj & Mix* stirs up game-play basics and strategy tips with 15 pun-filled batch cocktails and mocktails, like the North Negroni and Pung Paloma. Tasty and tactical in one little book.

Woods, Evie. The Lost Bookshop (Deluxe Edition) (Harper $32). Remember when I wrote to you about Shelf Wealth? In an era of advanced printing technology we are seeing many examples of gorgeous packaging. This one is exceptional in its cover, fore-edging painting, and end papers. Plus it's a lovely story about a magical antiquarian Dublin bookshop dealing in rare books. Order quickly before this edition disappears.

Yogerst, Joe. 50 States, 5,000 Family Adventures (National Geographic/Disney $29.99)."We're seeing a huge rise in domestic travel, road trips, RV purchases, and camping," says Allyson Johnson, executive editor at National Geographic Books, a brand practically synonymous with globe-trotting. In October, Nat Geo will release the latest installment in Joe Yogerst's 5,000 Ideas series which highlights kid-friendly activities across the U.S. and Canada, noting a suggested age range for each entry.

CLASSICS

✻ Anthony, Elizabeth. Dramatic Murder: A Lost Christmas Murder (Poisoned Pen Press $15.99). A British Library Crime Classic from 1952. In a tranquil Kentish village, Dr. Sandys and his wife are preparing for Christmas with their guest, Liane 'Lee' Crauford. Festivities start badly when their party is spoiled by an enigmatic widow new to the village, and the atmosphere hits rock bottom when the pompous local nobleman and ceramic-collector Sir Henry Metcalfe unexpectedly dies. Sensing potential villains among Metcalfe's circle, Lee teams up with Detective-Inspector Hugh Gordon to discover the killer playing merry hell with her holiday in this lost vintage mystery that will be **our December History Paperback Club Pick.**

Epicurus. The Essential Epicurean (St Martins $20). Blending key writings from Epicurus and his followers with modern commentary, this collection offers a practical introduction to one of history's most life-affirming schools of thought. For centuries, the word Epicurean has been misunderstood—reduced to indulgence, when its original meaning was far more profound. The Essential Epicurean restores the true spirit of Epicurus' teaching: a philosophy of simplicity, gratitude, and serenity.

Gardner, Erle Stanley. The Case of the Drowsy Mosquito (American Mystery Classics $15.95). Not your typical Perry Mason Novel. When a millionaire enlists Perry Mason to protect his mining interests, the sleuthing attorney and his tireless secretary Della Street trade the Los Angeles streets for the fresh mountain air of San Bernardino. As soon as they arrive at the property, however, things start to go sideways, first with the introduction of an eccentric cast of characters, and then with deception, poisoning, and gunfire. A dizzyingly complex mystery set in the great outdoors, this case combines the fast-paced plots for which Gardner is known with his other great strength as a nature writer.

✻ Gilruth, Susan. Death in Ambush: A Lost Christmas Murder (Poisoned Pen Press $17.99). In a tranquil Kentish village, Dr. Sandys and his wife are preparing for Christmas with their guest, Liane 'Lee' Crauford. Festivities start badly when their party is spoiled by an enigmatic widow new to the village, and the atmosphere hits rock bottom when the pompous local nobleman and ceramic-collector Sir Henry Metcalfe unexpectedly dies. Sensing potential villains among Metcalfe's circle, Lee teams up with Detective-Inspector Hugh Gordon to discover the killer playing merry hell with her holiday in this lost vintage mystery, republished for the first time since 1952 by the British Library of Crime Classics.

Penzler, Otto, ed. Golden Age Masters of Mystery (American Mystery Classics $17.95). For the 100th title in the series, Otto Penzler has compiled an anthology that features the greatest authors in the series to date, including such names as Ellery Queen, Mary Roberts Rinehart, Cornell Woolrich, Phoebe Atwood Taylor, and many more. These tales will puzzle and delight, promising hours of enjoyment for mystery lovers of all stripes. Some, like Clayton Rawson's "Nothing Is Impossible" or Mignon G. Eberhart's "Introducing Susan Dare," feature familiar series sleuths; others, like Stanley Ellin's "Cat's Paw" and "Meredith's Murder" by Charlotte Armstrong, are intriguing standalones.

Simenon, Georges. Maigret's Mistake (Picador $17). #43 in the reprints. In an apartment in the exclusive Étoile district of Paris, the body of twenty-six-year-old Louise Filon is found. She's been shot in the head at close range. Maigret, arriving on the disturbing scene, questions her housekeeper and the building's

concierge. Could Louise's recent exit from poverty be the key to her murder?

Wilson, Emily. The Death of Socrates (Harvard University $30). "An exceptionally lucid introduction to this famous trial and death… The history of the interpretation of Socrates' death, it turns out, is in large part the history of philosophy itself." Wilson's work is primarily concerned with Socrates' posthumous career as (variously) martyr, hero, villain and saint.

BOOKISH BOOKS

Anderson, Meg. The Memory of Borrowed Books (Sourcebooks $18.99) forms "An ode to how much libraries mean to those who need them" blends bookish intrigue, light fantasy, and escapist romance in an irresistible combination. As the librarian of cozy Foxhollow Bay, Mass., Claire Ashford appears to have an enviable life. She lives in a quaint, blue-shuttered cottage near the shore; she has her father, Jack, and her co-worker, Grace, for moral support; and she's flirting with Julian, a brooding patron who passes his days sketching at Foxhollow Library. But lately Claire has been fretting over the fate of the library. News is spreading that the board has plans to sell the historic building to a developer. Yet this library is a trove not just of books but also of local people's memories, held in the volumes of a magical basement archive. One night, while wandering the stacks after hours, Claire discovers a door that shouldn't exist. And behind it lies a secret room filled with books no one else can see.. Buried within these pages is a message the library has been trying to share, urging Claire to uncover the path to saving it. With the demolition looming and time running out, Claire must piece together what the library is trying to show her. But one book keeps calling her back, and in its pages is a memory that could change everything.

Durham, Jonathan. Winterset Hollow (Union Square $19.99) is a British Horror bookish phenomenon that contains a book within a book. See our November Paperback Picks for more.

Pettegree, Andrew. The Bookshop: A History of Bookselling (Basic Books $32) looks at the global history of bookstores from the Dawn of Printing to the 21st Century. "This is the arresting and ultimately optimistic story of the making and marketing of print culture. Here is a book for every book-lover to buy." The place we buy books is an essential part of our reading lives. Bookstores connect books to potential buyers and convert idle browsers into committed readers. Yet, as historian Andrew Pettegree reveals, it took more than five centuries after Gutenberg for bookstores as we know them to emerge. Booksellers have relentlessly sought new ways to get books to readers. Innovators like the squabbling dealers who invented the secondhand bookstore, or Victorian capitalists like W. H. Smith, who built an empire of railroad station book stalls to serve idle passengers, made bookselling what it is today. But with AI a new chapter is opening….

Robinson, Rioghnach. Bad Words (St. Martin's $30). The No. 1 Indie Next Pick is "A feud between an author and the literary critic who wrote devastating pans of his novels goes viral, but their animosity and banter starts to take on a flirtatious tone. This bookish tale takes a nuanced look at criticism, online culture, and intention versus impact, all grounded in rich, real emotions. A swoony, enemies-to-lovers slow-burn romance set amid a snowy NYC." Instead, I found it a chilling example of poisonous behavior on the part of the critic, a young woman showing off her literary chops, echoed then and blown up on social media to the ruin of a promising career start. As it's labeled a rom-com ruin morphs into mutual triumph. I also think the generational gap between me and younger readers opens up here.
Perhaps the fairest of the many raves and reviews posted so far is this by Iman Hariri-Kia: "The freshest literary romance I've read in ages, full of gorgeous prose and agonizing chemistry, culminating in a delicious, torturous slow burn that had me on the edge of my seat. A reminder that the thin between love and hate is a (literal) matter of opinion and for the people who have to write to understand where they went wrong." And Emily Henry gives it a rave.

Rentzenbrink, Cathy. The Agatha Christie Cure (Viking $32) begins with a curious question: "Have You Ever Wanted to Run Away?" Agatha Christie did, famously disappearing from home for 11 days in 1926 before abruptly reappearing 184 miles away, in Harrogate. And Rentzenbrink did too. Worn out from a grueling schedule of literary events and a marriage in turmoil, as well as difficulties supporting her son, who has learning disabilities, Rentzenbrink turned to Christie, whose works had been her comfort reads since childhood. Rentzenbrink decided to reread all of Christie's books as an escape of sorts for herself, and to do so in publication order to watch Christie's development as an author. Throughout this hybrid memoir, Rentzenbrink splits Christie's writing into eras: "The First Six," "Harrogate," "Aftermath," "Trial by Ordeal," "The Elephant Years," and so on. These eras correspond with events in Rentzenbrink's own life as she muses on her marriage, parenting, her father's cancer, and the death of her brother when they were young. Part biography of Christie, part analysis of Christie's novels, and part memoir. "No wonder she wrote so many books with no internet to lure her off her chosen path." *The Agatha Christie Cure* is perfect for fans of the Queen of Crime or for anyone who's ever found comfort in fiction during a challenging time in their life.

Woods, Evie. The Lost Bookshop (Deluxe Edition) (Harper $32). Why not a little magical realism in a Deluxe package featuring an exclusively designed full-color character art end papers, A stunning foil-stamped case, An exclusive sprayed edge design. All for a story set on a quiet street in Dublin where a lost bookshop is waiting to be found...and three women do. See Gift Ideas for this example of a compelling story so beautifully packaged we can call it Shelf Wealth.

CHRISTMAS CRIMES AND MORE

✻ Anthony, Elizabeth. Dramatic Murder: A Lost Christmas Murder (Poisoned Pen Press $15.99). A British Library Crime Classic—see Classics.

Bellow, Abiola. Only for the Holidays (Soho Teen $13.99). *The Love Hypothesis* meets *The Holiday* in this fake dating YA romance about a city girl and country boy's lives colliding at Christmas

Berenson, Lauren. Peg and Rose Deck the Halls (Kensington $27). Sisters-in-law Peg and Rose are preparing for Christmas in Connecticut, with the annual dog-show fundraiser as a highlight. But when the jingle bell tolls for a party guest, a murder investigation breeds trouble in the latest Senior Sleuths Mystery.

Berry, Tamara. The Claus Conspiracy (Sourcebooks $18.99) This funny, fast-paced holiday cozy finds former PI Amber Winslow slinging lattes and hosting a true crime podcast with her grandmother's friends at Arizona's Seven Ponds Retirement Community. Amber's investigative skill set comes in handy when an amnesiac teen crashes into a cactus near the front gates of Seven Ponds. The car is carrying the body of a man dressed as Santa Claus, a bloody tire iron, and a Post-It note with Amber's name and address on it. The driver—who takes the nickname "Mal" because she knows her name starts with "M"—has no idea how she got there, leading Amber to recruit her Death Comes Calling cohosts and other residents of Seven Ponds to help investigate. Soon, the group unravels a conspiracy involving mall Santas and the Navy SEALs. Witty dialogue, kooky characters, and a touch more grit than the average cozy make this sing. Berry's fans will be delighted.

✻ Connally, Celeste. Murder of a Merry Gentleman (St Martins $28). "Fast, funny, and scrupulously fair, this is an enchanting holiday whodunit." —*PW.* It's London, December, 1815, and Lady Petra Forsyth is concentrating on behaving herself. Thus, she's volunteered to assist the Lady Patronesses of Almack's Assembly Rooms with a series of bachelor-auction dances in the fortnight leading up to Christmas Eve. Over five nights, the families of unmarried ladies will each bid for their daughter to be the evening's hostess and dance with the five eligible bachelors—called the Merry Gentlemen in a nod to the season. However, after only the first evening, Petra discovers the dead body of one of the bachelors, splayed below the ballroom's balcony. The death is declared an accident, but when another bachelor's life is nearly ended a few days later, Petra fears something more sinister may be afoot. So do the patronesses of Almack's who request Lady Petra investigate in this 4th in a Regency era series.

✻ Cordani, Andreina. A Scrooge Mystery (Pegasus $28.95). Almost a year on from his epic reformation, Scrooge is slipping back into bad habits. When a lucrative business opportunity comes his way, he jumps at the chance to make some quick money … to give to the poor, obviously. But then Scrooge sees her. Another ghost, silent and terrifying. Then Bob Cratchit is arrested for the murder of a housemaid, and Scrooge sees only one way to save both his loyal employee and himself: he must solve this crime. Scrooge's investigation takes him from the heights of business on the Royal Exchange to the depths of London's criminal underworld alongside the formidable Widow Tassell, boot-boy Jem, and Tiny Tim. Ever wondered what became of the post-conversion Ebenezer Scrooge? This tale is happy to bring you up to date." Cordani also wrote Murder at the Christmas Emporium ($27.95).

Dilouie, Craig. The Yule Day Slaughter (Orbit $19.99). Horror fans, switch from the Cozy to Slasher Season #2 set on the High Plains where the Hungry Hare returns….

Fluke, Joanne. Candy Cane Murder ($17.95). Joanne has aged out of writing her Hannah Swensen mysteries but you can read the Minnesota baker's investigations still as here with this holiday themed investigation with recipes.

✻ Freeman, Dianne. A Christmas Guide to Family and Murder (Kensington $27 November 10). A country Christmas in Victorian England takes a murderous turn. See Signed Books.

Frost, Jacqueline. Deck the Halls with Boughs of Murder (Crooked Lane $29.99). Another fun novel in this small town series. The characters, the settings, the animals all make for a fun Christmas adventure." New parents Holly White and Sheriff Evan Gray are sleep deprived but incandescently happy to be celebrating their baby's first Christmas. Their family, friends, and neighbors are spoiling the newest addition. Adding to the perfect holiday season is the recent completion of their newly built home. But then they take a sweet trip down memory lane—Candy Cane Lane and Toyland were two of Holly's favorites as a child, and she had been looking forward to sharing them with her baby. There Holly stumbles upon the body of Greysen, the animal keeper, left among the reindeer at the petting zoo.

Gerber, Daryl Wood. A Classic Case of Murder (Kensington $27). In the charming town of Bramblewood, not far from Asheville, NC, Allie's preparing for a special seasonal soiree: a literary-themed dinner party that's a tribute to Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*. It'll take place at the Amber Lantern, the quaint inn recently opened by her best friend's mother, Noeline—and the holiday spirit has even led a Scroogelike local businessman to lend his prized first edition of the 19th-century novella for the event. With the voices of carolers ringing in the air and the community theater staging a special performance, it looks like it will be a happy Christmas—until the priceless book disappears and someone murders the expert who authenticated it.

Glover, Nicole. Death By Christmas Cake (Watkins Media $19.99). "Glover serves up a delectable cozy mystery that melds classic ingredients such as poison with contemporary food influencer drama and nosey podcaster mayhem. I'm ready for another serving!"– Beth Cato

After months of working alongside the legendary chef Shirleen Foster, Keisha Scott is ready for a night of festivities celebrating her boss's famous 12 Christmas Cakes. It's all of Keisha's dreams come true, until the night takes a turn for the worse. Her boss's former collaborator (now rival), Ruby Walton, accuses Shirleen of stealing her recipes. Even worse, Ruby is found dead a short while after their argument, leading the police to arrest Shirleen as the top suspect. Keisha is less convinced, however. Fuelled by her passion for true crime podcasts, and aided by Shirleen's vexing nephew, Virgil, she sets out to clear Shirleen's name in a potential recipe for disaster—or a piece of cake!

Goldberg, Tod, ed. Eight Very Bad Nights ($19.95).Curated by *New York Times* bestselling author Tod Goldberg, this collection of eleven delightful and twisted Hanukkah capers will entertain you through all eight nights of the Festival of Lights.

✻ Griffiths, Elly. The Case of the Christmas Card (Quercus $40). The author of the Ruth Galloway series and many policing knockouts set in Brighton or London turned her hand to time travel back to the Victorian age. Here she pens a festive murder mystery.

Haines, Carolyn. Joy to the Bones: A Sarah Booth Delaney Mystery (St Martins $28) is the 31st and final installment in this sassy case set in the Mississippi Delta. Still reeling from the discovery that her parents' deaths, decades ago, might not have been an accident, Private Investigator Sarah Booth Delaney doesn't know who to believe anymore. Her best friend and

business partner, Tinkie, purposefully kept her in the dark; her lover, Coleman, intentionally lied to her; and her meddlesome ghost-turned-spiritual-guide, Jitty, kept more secrets than she can count. Now, even the people Sarah Booth once trusted more than anything are suspect. Armed with new knowledge about her parents' car crash, Sarah Booth sets out to solve her biggest case yet: her parents' murder—alone if she has to.

✻ Hale, Shannon. Christmas in Austenland: Deluxe Limited Edition (Bloomsbury $29.99) offers festive colorful edges, patterned endpapers, and a foil case stamp and time travel back to Regency England.

Kestrel Klein enters a contest and wins a vacation to Pembrook Park, an immersive Austen experience. Bonus: it's during Christmas, the one holiday where being *too much* is the whole point. Once inside Austenland, Kestrel feels…dare she say, happy? Is it the cozy hearth fires warming her jaded heart? Is it the fun of gentlemen attempting to woo her under the mistletoe? Is it the instant friends who bring her into the fold? She's always worried that unless she can tamp down her too-muchness, she'll never find that found family she craves. Just as Kestrel begins to soften her well-honed defenses, an unexpected visitor disrupts the holiday celebrations. Perhaps it's the chance she needs to find out if her one true love really was meant to be. 3rd in this Romance series.

Karon, Jan. My Beloved: A Mitford Novel ($19). When Father Tim's wife, Cynthia, asks what he wants for Christmas, he pens the answer in a love letter that bares his most private feelings. Then the letter goes missing and circulates among his astonished neighbors. So much for private. But, can a letter change a life?

Lovesey, Peter, ed. The Usual Santas ($17.95) in its first paperback edition. Contributions from Soho Press authors include Cara Black, Mick Herron, and Sujata Massey, Stuart Neville, Helen Tursten and of course the late great Peter Lovesey—a total of 18 sparkling stories with a terrific cover. This is the BEST stocking stuffer.

Macomber, Debbie. A Date with Santa: A Christmas Novel (Random House $27) And An Alaskan Christmas Market ($18.99)

Meier, Leslie. Countdown to Christmas Murder (Kensington $27). With Halloween still a week away, Tinker's Cove, Maine, is already gearing up for its Merrie Olde Christmas extravaganza. Undeterred by a nasty doxxing incident, Chamber of Commerce Chair Corney Clark is teeing up costumes, carolers, and contests, capped by a plum pudding bake-off. But visions of sugarplums don't have sweet associations for all residents. Bank manager Bert Cosgrove remembers his early days working in Cleveland as a buyer for Bag 'o' Bargains, when he procured a contaminated shipment of plum puddings that caused several deaths. Bert, too, becomes the target of internet harassment and is ultimately found dead of a gunshot wound. The police rule his death a suicide, but *Courier* reporter Lucy Stone isn't sure

✻ Meyrick, Denzil. The Christmas Stocking Murders ($17.99). Christmas, 1953. Inspector Frank Grasby and Superintendent Arthur Juggers are investigating a puzzling murder in the remote village of Uthley Bay—a fisherman has been found dead on the beach, a stocking twisted around his throat. Any remaining holiday cheer vanishes when a blizzard isolates the village from the rest of the country. The villagers refuse to talk, leaving Grasby and Juggers chasing false leads in the snow. To make matters worse, Grasby can't stop thinking about stockings. Why does everyone seem to be enjoying strangely high standards of hosiery? Who is the sinister bespectacled man snooping around the hotel? And how can you solve a murder when everyone is a suspect?

O'Connor, Carlene. Bury the Wren (Kensington $27). Amidst the stark, lonely beauty of southwest Ireland's windswept coast, veterinarian Dimpna Wilde wrangles with dark traditions, village folklore, and a killer's motives during the annual Wren Day celebration.

Dingle is a town steeped in folklore, where old traditions like Wren Day linger like mist on the Kerry mountains. On the day after Christmas, St. Stephen's Day, the wren boys—local lads from competing neighborhoods—paint their faces and dress in straw garb to march through town. In times past, the tiny body of a wren would be displayed during the parade. According to legend, the little bird deserved to die for betraying St. Stephen's hiding place to his enemies. These days, Wren Day is a kinder affair, with different groups vying to raise money for charity. But this year's celebration gets off to an ominous start when Dimpna finds a dead wren on her doorstep.

Penzler, Otto, ed. Christmas Mysteries at the Mysterious Bookshop (Mysterious Press $19.95) offers 18 puzzle tales by such as Megan Abbott, Rupert Holmes, Mary Higgins Clark, Andrew Klavan, and Ed McBain. A nice stocking stuffer. This was originally published as *Christmas at The Mysterious Bookshop*.

✻ Shearer, LT. The Cat and the Christmas Kidnapper (Pan Macmillan $18.99). Join Lulu Lewis, a retired detective with a knack for uncovering secrets, and Conrad, her extraordinary talking cat, as Christmas cheer gives way to festive fear . . . Hoping for a relaxing festive break, Lulu sets off with Conrad on her canal boat, The Lark, to the picturesque city of Bath to visit friends. But when the pair arrive, they learn of a ruthless kidnapping plot that is plaguing parents in the area. As the kidnappers fuel panic with further demands, the pair must unravel clues faster than Conrad can charm with his witty banter. That is, if they are to stand any chance of bringing the criminals to justice in time to save the holidays . . .

Swanson, Peter. Do You See What I See?: A Novella (Harper $19.99). flexes his genre chops in this sleek holiday whodunit. Struggling mystery writer Nicholas Child's agent offers him $50,000 to help one of her more successful clients, Marco Tavares, who has hit a wall with the follow-up to his blockbuster third novel, *The Girl at the Door*. Child is hired to read the manuscript—a thriller about a murderous collage artist that Tavares concedes is a mess—and offer suggestions for improving it while staying in Tavares's Cape Cod home in the days before Christmas. Shortly after he arrives, Child realizes Tavares is hosting a holiday get-together populated by guests who have uncomfortable history with him, including fellow writer James Beers, who once accused Tavares of stealing his plot for *The Girl at the Door*. When one member of the party winds up dead, Child, the only outsider, becomes a suspect. He attempts to prove his innocence in a brilliant climax that nods to a golden age classic. In addition to the sharp plotting, Swanson takes good-

humored shots at the mystery genre, as when Child laments "the ever-increasing audience that apparently only read thrillers that had the word girl in its title." It's a yuletide treat.

Tursten, Helen. Up to No Good (Soho Press $24.95). This pocket-sized collection is undeniably cute. For the first time ever, all eleven Elderly Lady stories—plus a brand-new adventure—come together in this long-anticipated edition, which features baking recipes and a cross-stitch pattern.

Unger, Lisa. Christmas Presents ($16.95). Madeline Martin has built a life for herself as the young owner of a thriving business, The Next Chapter Bookshop, despite her tragic childhood and now needing to care for her infirm father. When Harley Granger, a failed novelist turned true crime podcaster, drifts into her shop in the days before Christmas, he seems intent on digging up events that Madeline would much rather forget. She's the only surviving victim of Evan Handy, the man who was convicted of murdering her best friend Steph, and is suspected in the disappearance of two sisters, also good friends of Madeline's, who have been missing for nearly a decade. As Christmas approaches and a blizzard bears down, Madeline and her childhood friend Badger return to a past they both hoped was dead—to find a teen gone missing while Handy is in jail, and to answer questions that have haunted them both. Here is a coupling of a cozy setting with a chilling killer in a seasonal novella.

✲ Upson, Nicola. The Christmas Clue (Union Square $17.99). "Terrific historical detail… this twisted tale still resonates today."—Val McDermid of a Christie-style holiday homicide.

It is Christmas Eve, 1943, when Anthony and Elva Pratt arrive at a snowy English country house to host a murder mystery game, but instead find themselves solving a real murder. The Pratts had planned on a festive game to liven up the dreary wartime atmosphere, where guests using prop weapons as clues would explore the house to solve the whodunnit. It is all fun and games until Anthony discovers the cook's sister Miss Silver beaten to death, leaving the sleuthy couple to solve an all-too-real murder. Snowed-in with a murderer in their midst, the Pratts must investigate the novel's colorful cast.

COZIES

Most November Cozies are found above in Christmas Crimes

Cahoon, Lynn. New Year, New Murder (Kensington $18.95) plus Four Charming Spells; Three Tainted Teas ($17.95 each). A trio of cozies by Cahoon.

Cates, Bailey. Rituals and Rolling Pins (Berkley $9.99). In this Magical Baking Mystery, Savannah's Hedgewitch Katie Lightfoot is determined to solve a decidedly unsavory mystery when she encounters the shocking sight of her friend, reporter and druid Steve Dawes, standing over a dead body. The way the victim is displayed suggests a magical ritual may have been involved. It turns out that the deceased was a true-crime podcaster who covered paranormal cases in Savannah. The situation gets stickier than a pecan bun when Katie discovers Steve knew the victim.

Flower, Amanda. The First Ladies' Guide to Murder (Kensington $27). 1894, Washington, DC. The only daughter of former President Ulysses S. Grant, Nellie has left England after being granted a divorce from her abusive husband. She plans to hide away with her three children at the home of her mother, Julia Dent Grant. However, Julia, the unofficial queen mother of Washington's elite, has other ideas—and convinces Nellie to attend a White House dinner in honor of the current president, Grover Cleveland. The lavish event turns somber when First Lady Frances Cleveland discovers that her prized Tiffany brooch is missing. Young maid Kitty Thorn is accused of theft and dismissed on the spot. The next morning, Kitty is found drowned, her death ruled a suicide. Frances calls upon Nellie and Julia to prove otherwise....

✲ Kelly, Vanessa. Murder at Enscombe Park (Kensington $27) is another trip to Austenland for you—plus a good mystery revolving around a diabolical scheme I thoroughly enjoyed.

Emma Knightley, her husband George, and her father and his new wife have journeyed to Enscombe Park, the grand estate where Jane and Frank live with his uncle, who adopted Frank as a boy. Upon their arrival, they are concerned to find Jane wan in pregnancy, Frank bruised from a mysterious accident, and Mr. Churchill in an ill temper. Then there are the unwelcome additional houseguests including Miss Caroline Bingley and her married sister, and a distant cousin from the West Indies. Emma worries this might all be too much for Jane, but it is Mr. Churchill who is decidedly out-of-sorts. And soon found dead on his library floor in a very unnatural way. Still, it's put down despite objections as a heart seizure. Emma is not convinced. Then the will is read and all, especially Frank the heir, are surprised by its unexpected revelations. Emma's sleuthing skills are as sharp as ever—and she has a little help.

Malone, Alicia. Murder at the Movies (Running Press $18.99). I gave this a rave in October and now it is our **November Historical Fiction Paperback Pick**. For those who remember the charm and community of movie palaces and the wonderful films of say Alfred Hitchcock, this is a winner. For those too young, it's a kind of time travel. Plus small town New England is charming too.

McKee, Rebecca. Mr. Mendlebee Pandimensional Literary Depository (and Yarn) (Berkley $30). I love it when staff is passionate about a book and recommends one for a Subscription Club. So Deb chose this "mesmerizing debut" about a magical bookstore and its staff for our **November Cozy Crimes Club** which can also be Traditional Mysteries**.** "The characters' journey is like an adult version of Seanan McGuire's Wayward Children series, while the story and the choices and chances they face will draw comparisons to Matt Haig's *Midnight Library* and Alix E. Harrow's *Ten Thousand Doors of January*."

I admit I cannot resist "An atmospheric fantasy bringing to life the familiar hum of magic from your favorite bookstore." But Deb really won me with this line: "And the books that fly out of the crates and shelve themselves where they need to be? Priceless." She adds it has excellent misfit characters, a cat, and is both a mystery and a romance.

Living at the center of the universe, Mr. Mendlebee's Repository is home to lost things, forgotten objects, and dark and dangerous items best left unseen. With help from the yeti-like Book Keeper, wizened Yarn Weaver, fish-out-of-water clerk, and Muriel the cat, the seaside store keeps the universe spinning as it should while opening its doors only to those who need it most, with one caveat: Once you've visited, you may never

return. But when Violet, repository resident and personal friend to Mr. Mendlebee, starts seeing ghosts, the store allows its first repeat customer: Rachel, a young woman who may be the key to unlocking the secrets hiding within Mr. Mendlebee's. Haunted by an echoing knock that sounds from nowhere, the bookstore's staff enlists Rachel's help to discover what's rotten at the heart of the repository.

Meier, Leslie. A Matter of Pedigree ($17.95). In a break from her Lucy Stone Mysteries, Meier goes with an upscale Rhode Island enclave, a newly wealthy empty-nester-turned-sleuth called Carole Capobianco, and her nosy dog, Poopsie, to solve a baffling murder.

Murrin, Orlando. May Contain Murder ($17.95). "If you enjoy Iron Chef and The Great British Bake Off, but often think to yourself, this would be so much better if only there was a murder or two tossed in, why I've got the book for you." —*Parade.* I add that that when I read Murrin's debut in Knife Skills for Beginners ($17.95) I thought it was very British and slightly annoying.

While his flooded house undergoes repairs, chef-turned-writer Paul Delamare has been offered an accommodation upgrade—an all-expenses-paid trip aboard a private superyacht in the company of Xéra, one of his dearest friends. Paul will help Xéra work on her memoirs as Maldemer glides its sumptuous way to the Caribbean. The scenery is stunning, the luxury is unparalleled, but the hired chef, meanwhile, seems completely out of her depth. Much as Paul adores Xéra, a Parisian socialite to whom he was introduced by his late lover, Marcus, he has little in common with the other guests, a motley crew consisting of Xéra's new husband and his grasping family. When Xéra's priceless new necklace goes missing, Paul falls under suspicion. But there's far worse in store, as one of the passengers is found dead

O'Connor, Carlene. Murder in an Irish Cottage ($17.95) is a reprint of a 2021 small paperback of the 5th in this cozy village mystery series.

Perry, Carol J. Double Knot Untied (Kensington $18.95) is new in a paranormal cozy series set in Haven House Inn on Florida's Gulf Coast. A celebrity wedding goes off without a hitch despite the pair of 19th century ghosts who turn up, until the twin brides' talent agent is killed by poisoned cookie….

Point, Rosie A. Murder on the Menu: Book 1 (Adams Media $15). Welcome to the oceanside town of Periwinkle Point, Maine! It's where cozy mystery meets word search fun**.** Olivia Owens loves living by the ocean with its rugged coastline, small town charm, and *mostly* friendly neighbors. She has big dreams for her family's local seafood spot and can't wait to take over. But when a fancy new restaurant plans to open in town and the owner winds up dead, it's up to Olivia to solve the case and clear her mother's name. Puzzle along and figure out whodunit

NEW IN HARDCOVER

Blaeser-Wardzala, Amber. Another Name for Red (Knopf $30) is a **debut** by an Anishinaabe writer, beadwork artist, and jingle dress dancer of the White Earth Nation in Minnesota who grew up in southeastern Wisconsin and earned an MFA here at ASU. She also earned a residency in Alaska at Dana Stabenow's StoryKnife writers retreat which I support with an annual scholarship. Blaeser-Wardzala paints a vivid and compelling story of a family, a community, and a young woman still coming to terms with her grief as she sets out to uncover the truth about her missing sister.

Middle Sister is haunted by everyone in her community who has disappeared—as well as those who remain. Her ex-best friend and ex-boyfriend are walking relics of the girl she used to be, while her family—her activist mother, checked-out father, and attention-starved younger siblings—are reminders of the elder sister she can never live up to. Then there's John Smith, the infamous white man with red cowboy boots living on stolen reservation land, whose obsessive attentions are as repellant as they are compelling. But most of all, there are the thousands of unacknowledged missing and murdered Indigenous women, including Older Sister, whose year-long absence from the reservation has torn her remaining family apart. With local authorities proving useless, Middle Sister decides to start an investigation of her own,

Vanessa Lillie calls this "A powerful debut that is both fearless and heartfelt, an unflinching exploration of the missing and murdered Indigenous women crisis as well as the tireless pursuit of justice for those we love." Anna North adds, it "has a thriller's pace and an elegiac heart. Middle Sister's guilt, rage, and underlying strength propel the reader through this story of a missing young woman, whose tragic disappearance is part of something much bigger."

Bondurant, Matt. North Country (Blackstone $28.99) is a fine read for fans of Paul Doiron and Tom Franklin. North Chazy, New York, is the heart of the North Country, a frigid region nestled against the Canadian border, characterized by the beautiful landscapes of the Adirondacks and Lake Champlain—plus a steady stream of Quebecois drugs flowing south, spirited by snowmobile across the ice. Tom Kaiser, fresh off a dishonorable discharge from the Air Force, returns to North Chazy for his ailing father's final days. It's an uneasy homecoming—ever since his little sister was lost under the ice in mysterious circumstances when they were children, Kaiser has felt a terrible presence swimming in the deep. Needing work, Kaiser falls in with Donnie LeClair, a slumlord, loan shark, and aesthete whose private collection of landscapes would rival a modest museum's. Kaiser earns his keep roughing up unsavory locals who are late on their rent. But his true value is his aptitude for satellite telemetry, allowing him to find gaps in border surveillance, a useful skill for working with a Montreal kingpin who wants to move large quantities of ecstasy into the US. As Kaiser spirals through the underbelly of drugs and crime, he finds the roots of evil run deep.

"Bondurant's absorbing novel about intersecting lives in a small town and the ripple effect of fateful decisions is infused with pathos and driven by intriguing characters and excellent plot twists."—*Booklist*

Boyd, William. Cold Sunset: A Gabriel Dax Novel (Grove $28). Boyd has had a long and distinguished career including being nominated for the Booker Prize, and has won many literary awards, including the James Tait Black Memorial Prize, the *Los Angeles Times* Book Award for Fiction, and the Costa Book Award. He was named a *Granta* Best Young Novelist in 1983, and in 2005, he was awarded the CBE

And here we are in 1964, when Cold War Moscow is smoldering with secrets. Travel writer-turned-spy Gabriel Dax has been tasked with delivering a mysterious Blanco drawing to Kit Caldwell, the triple-agent and celebrated "defector" now leading the well-heeled life of a Hero of the Soviet Union. But Caldwell is convinced that the KGB suspects him of treachery. He wants Gabriel to do the impossible and smuggle him over the Russian border to Finland. When Gabriel is ordered to help by his enigmatic handler Faith Green, he is pulled into a web of shifting loyalties and dangerous escape plans. As tensions rise and trust fractures, he is forced to confront the fine line between devotion and deception….

✲ Bradley, Alan. Numb Were the Beadsman's Fingers (Random House $30). I shed many tears learning that this lovely Canadian author who for some years lived on the Isle of Man has died. So this is the last Flavia de Luce in an extraordinary award-winning series with a unique heroine. I've always been glad to have arranged for Alan's earnest request: a virtual event with his hero the late Peter Lovesey during Covid so my background is completely fake. Watch it HERE or listen to it HERE

I can't wait to read it but here's a blurb for you.

In the cloisters of Golgotha House, a mere binocular's-squint away from Buckshaw, a nun lies dead. When her fellow sisters prepare her corpse for burial, they discover that their companion has been living a shocking lie for years. The truth about her past, and the dark reasons she harbored for escaping it, are impossible to fathom. Charged with cracking this mystery is the firm of Arthur W. Dogger & Associates (Discreet investigations)—consisting, of course, of the inimitable young Flavia de Luce and her faithful partner-in-detection Dogger. Working under the eye of a glowering Mother Superior, Flavia and Dogger must uncover a decades-old crime and a secret that lies an ocean away—along with a trail of deception that lies closer to home.

Davis, Fiona. The Next Chapter (American Girl Publishing $30). For Teen and Adult readers, the next chapter of Samantha Parkington's story—now an adult searching for justice after her legacy is stolen in New York City. It's 1920, and 25-year-old Samantha Parkington is working hard to educate women in New York about suffrage and encourage them to vote in their first presidential election that fall. But when Samantha's large inheritance, including her childhood Mount Bedford home, is stolen in a shocking scheme, she goes from socialite to shop girl overnight and experiences a very different side of New York City living in a boarding house. Searching for clues regarding the theft of her inheritance, she infiltrates the business of a notorious criminal in New York City. Determined as ever, Samantha will do whatever it takes to find answers and save her family's legacy. Fiona has a new novel set in NYC coming in late January.

De Gramont, Nina. Peregrine Hill (Simon Schuster $28). We are in the Gilded Age in the tradition of Edith Wharton. Isabel Bishop lost her husband and three of her children to shipwreck, leaving only her young daughter Mariah and her elderly mother to scramble. When Isabelle captures the attention of John Whitten, one of New York's wealthiest men, she dares to hope that fortune might finally favor her. But Whitten's interest is not in Isabelle—it's in eighteen-year-old Mariah, still reeling from a romantic but disastrous scandal. When Whitten discovers the secret mother and daughter have tried to keep buried, he uses it to his advantage, threatening to expose them unless Mariah accepts his proposal. For the sake of their survival, Isabelle makes a devil's bargain: She will urge her daughter into a marriage she knows could destroy her. Mariah quickly realizes her husband's home is a gilded cage. Yet even under his watchful eye, she begins to carve out passions of her own, Here are "two women—one a young, wealthy matron imprisoned in her marriage; the other, a low-born maid. What unites this unlikely pair is a literary ambition that will either save them from the golden cage they exist in or doom them to servitude forever. The Gilded Age springs to vivid life in these pages," says Nita Prose.

De Los Santos, Marisa. The Trusted (Blackstone $29.99) is a rare U.S. police procedural. In the charming, tight-knit community of Sheppley, Pennsylvania, Detective Lina Cordova and her partner Aaron Cash are still reeling from their failure to get justice for Tally Frost—wife, grieving mother, and Sheppley society queen who disappeared a year earlier—when another high-profile case hits their desks. A body is discovered in a remote hunting cabin, shot through the head. The victim was a man plagued by a controversy that once rocked Sheppley to its core. There is no shortage of suspects, and they include people Cordova and Cash know well. The daughter of a Filipino doctor and a mother from an old-money Sheppley family, Ivy League–educated Lina Cordova is acutely aware of the social dynamics and prejudices of her hometown, while young Aaron Cash is a recent transplant, an escapee from an abusive home life in rural Tennessee. As their twisty search for the truth takes them to ever darker and more complex places, the two are forced to grapple with their own painful losses, as well as impossibly hard questions: How far would we go for the people we love? Are some secrets better left hidden? Can murder itself be a form of justice?

Freitas, Donna. Wolves of Summer (Soho $29.95) centers on the mystery of a twelve-year-old girl who vanishes one night in the summer of 1979. A richly layered novel, Wolves of Summer at nearly 500 pages is also about existing as a teenage girl in a world prowled by male predators, the way wealth protects those who have it, the impossible tug-of-war between childhood and adulthood, and the unique experience of life in a tight-knit, small coastal community. Readers will practically feel the hot sand and cool Rhode Island ocean water as they feverishly flip the pages, sucked in by the important and complex questions this novel poses around consent, culpability, and growing up female." —Kristin Offiler

Greenwood, Kerry. Murder in the Cathedral (Poisoned Pen $34.99) is the final novel from the late Australian author Greenwood who created an iconic sleuth in Phryne Fisher. When Phryne is invited to Bendigo to witness the investiture of her old friend Lionel, who is being made a Bishop, her expectations of the solemn and dignified ceremony do not include a murder in its midst. Phryne is soon working with local Constable Watson and eagle-eyed Inspector Mick Kelly to identify the perpetrator. It becomes quickly apparent the murder victim had been an overzealous deacon with a nose for trouble. Nobody seems very inclined to mourn his passing. Applying her quick wits and magnetic charm, Phryne and her expanding team of sleuths discover murky layers of church politics, social scandals, business scams, and blackmail. Soon, possible suspects begin to form a long list, all with excellent motives for killing the

deacon. See Our November Paperback Picks for the simultaneous paperback edition given how pricey this hardcover is. The cover art is in the original tradition, not the TV Phryne one.

Note: We have several Phryne Fisher hardcovers as published by Poisoned Pen Press in stock though out of print, all with the original Art Deco covers. They are long out of print. You can weed them out to order by searching through this LISTING.

✻ Griffiths, Elly. The Killing Time (Penguin $30). We met time-traveling detective Ali Dawson in The Frozen People ($20) taking us back into the Victorian era. Ali's cold case team investigate crimes so old, they're frozen—or so their inside joke goes. Nobody knows that her team has a secret: they can travel back in time to look for evidence. The latest assignment sees Ali venture back farther than they have dared before: to 1850s London to clear the name of Cain Templeton, an eccentric patron of the arts. Rumor has it that Cain is part of a sinister group called The Collectors. Ali arrives in the Victorian era to another dead woman at her feet and far too many unanswered questions. She soon finds herself trapped, unable to make her way back to her beloved son, Finn, who is battling his own accusations in the present day. Imaginative yet filled with telling detail so good for historical mystery buffs too.

Gwynne, John. The Wolves of War (Orbit $30) is a blockbuster epic fantasy inspired by Slavic mythology and packed with ancient magic, heroic sacrifice, and thrilling adventure.

Hamilton, Laurell K. A Glimmer of Death (Putnam $30). "I am Meredith Gentry. Princess of the realm of faerie, private investigator in the mortal land of Los Angeles, mother of triplets, and lover to my men—the royal guards sworn to protect me. With a family and a court to support back home, I can't say no to a job investigating a string of magical attacks against up-and-coming Hollywood actresses. Not when the case raises old nightmares from my own past. This time when I find out who is responsible for all this pain, I can make him pay. But affairs in the land of faerie keep interrupting my hunt." Find out how and what next in this first in a two-book conclusion to the Merry Gentry series.

✻ Harkaway, Nick. The Taper Man: A Novel of John Le Carré's Universe (Viking $32). For the first time—George Smiley crosses the Atlantic into the perilous world of Cold War America. It's 1965, After the nuclear standoff in Cuba, and with Vietnam even now becoming a major conflict zone, the Cold War is colder than ever. The Circus, home of British intelligence, has one formidable clandestine asset in Moscow: a senior officer in the Red Army who is privy to deep Soviet secrets. But when a British agent is shot on a routine visit to Helsinki, George Smiley uncovers a counter-intelligence operation which puts all that in jeopardy. The trail leads not to Berlin or Vienna but to Los Angeles, where Smiley's nemesis, the Russian master spy known only as Karla, may have a long-term, low profile agent—a Taper Man—poised to expose London's man in Moscow. Hunting the traitor in the heart of US intelligence, Smiley must reckon with American's stark internal divisions over race, patriotism and belonging as he tries to find an answer to the present crisis in the secrets of the past. Meanwhile Roy Bland, a daring but fragile Circus spy presently in Leningrad without the protection of diplomatic cover, must push his luck to breaking point to reveal the Russian end of the operation and rescue a defector whose time is running out—and get Smiley the last piece of Karla's puzzle. I always see Alec Guinness as Smiley. And Harkaway is Le Carré's son.

✻ Higson, Charlie. King Zero: A James Bond Novel (Blackstone $29.99). It's Bond for a new age. Le Chiffre. Dr. No. Goldfinger. James Bond has faced them all. But now the world is changing, and even 007 has no idea what's coming for him. It starts with a murdered agent in the Saudi desert. Only a traitor could have known enough to bring him down. But even James Bond can't guess at the secret that was worth killing him to keep. As Bond follows the trail across the globe, he doesn't realize the countdown has already begun. And hiding in the shadows is a man with more power than he could ever have imagined.... Higson moves up to adult Bond from writing the Young Bond series.

Higashino, Keigo. Laplace's Witch (Yen Press $24). A genre blend of mystery and science fiction from the late Edgar nominee opens when a body is found in a hot-spring town, dead from hydrogen sulfide poisoning, geochemist Shusuke Aoe is brought in by the police to investigate. The death is written off as an accident, but something doesn't add up, and at the scene, Shusuke comes across a young woman searching for her missing friend. Two months later, he finds himself examining an almost identical incident in a completely different part of Japan. Are the cases related? Did the victims know each other? As these thoughts swirl around his head, Shusuke encounters the same young woman he met at the first crime scene. And before his very eyes, mysterious events begin to happen around her…

Ike-Njoku, Nneoma. The Water House (Summit Books $28). An unexplained tragedy. A handsome stranger. A house of ghosts and memories. In this fresh take on the Gothic tale, a young Nigerian woman returns to the family mansion where her brother died—only to find the past ready to consume her—perfect for readers of Tananarive Due and Silvia Moreno-Garcia. Gothics are a hugely popular genre right now and stand in a long tradition like books by Poe and DuMaurier. Martin Edwards has written quite a few.

Keane, Mary Beth. Whale Harbor (Scribner $29). The November Good Morning America Book Club Pick is a multigenerational saga inspired by the author's family history, following eleven brothers as they are set on different paths between Ireland, England, Montana, and New York.

Kearsley, Susanna. Every Secret Thing (Sourcebooks $32.99). Paperback ($18.99). Diana Gabaldon and I are fans of Canadian Kearsley's wonderful and imaginative historical fiction. Here she moves it up **to "**a decades-old murder, a brave journalist, and the echoes of WWII converge in an irresistible, page-turning masterclass in historical suspense." You will gather no reading copy has yet come my way.

When journalist Kate Murray is approached by a stranger desperate to reveal the truth about a long-buried crime, her life is upended, and a dangerous journey begins. A tangled web of betrayal, loyalty, and courage draws Kate in as she follows the trail from present-day London to the shadowy alleys of wartime Europe. The answers lie in her own family's hidden past, but with every step, she awakens powerful enemies. To bring a killer to justice, Kate must risk not only her career—but her life

Kemmerer, Brigid. Captive Traitor King Deluxe Edition (Avon $32). "Book 2 in the Braided Fate series finds Ky, Jory, and Asher in a high-stakes, fragile alliance where betrayal is lurking around every corner and dark secrets could tear them apart. Kemmerer delivers a sequel full of magic, royal intrigue, and love."

King, Wesley. Wolf Season (Atria $29) is an adult fiction **debut** offering a lightly supernatural police procedural by Canadian author King. After seven years away, Everett Johnson returns to his hometown of Killdeer, Montana, when his father, Dale, goes missing. Dale, Killdeer's long-running sheriff, has vanished while investigating the murder of a teenage girl from the reclusive Armel family—a group of women who've isolated themselves on their farm ever since the mysterious deaths of their menfolk. On the request of his brother Connor—now Killdeer's acting sheriff—Everett informally joins the investigation, attempting to find Dale and crack the Armel case in the process. Soon, he crosses paths with Bernadine Armel, the murdered girl's older cousin and his secret lover from many years earlier, who broke off their relationship because of conflicts between their families. King gives Everett a smart balance of insider and outsider perspectiveson Killdeer, and uses flashbacks to parcel out reveals that feel both surprising and inevitable. Meanwhile, he conjures a menacing atmosphere from page one.

✻ Mahmood, Imran. When the Birds Don't Sing (Bantam $31). A man revisits his traumatic adolescence after the death of his wife in this arresting dual-timeline thriller from this British barrister. In the present, Yorkshire mycology professor Caleb Silver is mourning his wife and fearing that old skeletons might burst out of his closet. In flashbacks to 1980s Montana, Silver grows up alongside his charismatic childhood friend, Honey Childs, and their soft-spoken new companion, Malai Khan. The '80s timeline peaks with a deadly fire at the friends' school. In the aftermath, the friends drift apart, with Malai and Honey both holding on to secrets about the blaze. Forty years later, Silver becomes convinced his wife's death is tied to that long-ago tragedy, and he embarks on a harrowing path toward revenge. Packed with smart cultural allusions (John William Waterhouse's *The Lady of Shalott* crops up throughout) and characterized by sharp psychological insight, this patient novel builds to a surprisingly moving climax.

Margolin, Phillip. Conspiracy Theory (St Martins $29). Five years ago, Gloria Hale, the President's wife, was assassinated by a lone gunman, who was himself killed in a shootout with a security guard while trying to escape. At the same time and hotel, a young lawyer, Marsha Hart, disappears in the chaos after the shooting, only to have her murdered body turn up a few days later, her murder never solved. Michael Harris is a D.C. area lawyer with a second career as a novelist, but after a very successful debut, his subsequent legal thrillers have been less and less successful. With one more book due under his contract and desperate to revive his flagging career, Harris is stumbles across the voluminous research done by a recently deceased former Secret Service agent obsessed with proving that the First Lady's assassination was a conspiracy. Thinking he might be able to turn one of these wildly unlikely theories into his next book, Harris begins to look into the matter. He doesn't turn up anything but his inquiries might have set something into motion—leading to another murder, a fire destroying the original evidence, and an attempt assault of Harris himself.

McPhillips, Fiona. The Party in the Woods (Flatiron $29.99). This powerful mystery follows Dublin music teacher Annie Fagan, whose life is upended when the remains of her long-missing Trinity College classmate are discovered. Seán Salinger, the charismatic son of a prominent Irish banker, was the center of Annie's college friend group. His 2001 disappearance at a rave triggered one of the largest missing persons searches in Ireland's history. As the cold case returns to the spotlight following the discovery of Seán's remains in the mountains outside Dublin, Annie is drawn back into uneasy contact with her former lover Fran; her best friend Rachel; her troubled friend Moe and his partner Ciara; and the ever elusive Ozzy. Flashbacks reveal the group's tangled bonds, culminating in the night Seán, drunk and alienated, disappeared into the woods during a party. With suspicion falling on Moe, now a recovering addict with no alibi, Annie tries to protect him, while Ciara's conviction that Moe is being framed pushes Annie to reexamine her friends' motivations. McPhillips mines tension from class divides and corrosive secrets, grounding the action with Annie's self-questioning yet resolute voice. Emotional depth and sharp social insights make this a riveting tale of friendships turned sour.

Morris, Kevin. C. Untamed Coast (Ballantine Books $31). I've been sitting on this **debu**t for awhile trying to decide what to say and what book to select for our November First Mystery Pick. I give debuts extra attention. It's an adventure story but it enfolds greed and murder ranging from the 1930s to the present. It has a great landscape as this review shows.

"In this salty, action-packed novel, Kevin C. Morris writes thrillingly of the wild seas and stunning beauty of the Alaskan coast with sharp detail drawn from his own experience. Inspired by long-buried history, *Untamed Coast* spins a tale of lonely miners and hardened fisherfolk drawn to desperate measures in harrowing conditions. The insatiable greed for gold propels this story across the decades from the 1930s to the present, in a compelling tale of shady disappearances, murder, and one man's solitary pursuit of the truth."—Kate Manning.

I agree with Cate Quinn: "It's Kevin C. Morris's vivid evocation of Alaska's savage beauty that truly shines, inviting you to marvel at the raging seas and looming glaciers, the soaring eagles and breaching whales. You'll be booking a ticket to the Inside Passage before you've flipped the final page!"

Openshaw, Alice. On the Killer's Trail (Crooked Lane $29.99). "Bad things happen to good people in this classic New England mystery, where a fearless female police officer must uncover the dark secrets threatening to destroy a quaint village in Maine."—Paula Munier on this **debut**.

Thirty-one-year-old Police Sergeant Penny Maclean has fallen into a routine at work. Speaking at school assemblies, chasing runaway dogs—it's all beginning to feel stale. So when the popular wife of a local doctor is found dead on Halloween night, Penny jumps at the chance to investigate dark doings in rural Maine. Also in paperback: On the Killer's Trail ($19.99)

Oyebanji, Adam. Line of Descent (Astra Publishing $29). From the author of *Esperance*, an inventive, twisty thriller set aboard a hurtling spacecraft—perfect for fans of Blake Crouch, Rob Hart, and Andy Weir. *Archimedes* has been en route to Tau Ceti for more than a century, a fifth-generation bubble of humanity. Discipline is tight, so when a junior officer claims they've been abducted from outside one of the ship's bars and released 24

hours later with no memory of what happened, officer Faisal Vasconcelos suspects drunkenness rather than crime. The seemingly routine investigation soon plunges Faisal into a dark mix of politics, terrorism and murder. With senior commanders battling for control of the ship, factions agitating to turn the vessel around, and a dead body drowned in an artificial womb, Faisal's alleged kidnapping case turns into something that could blow the ship apart. Literally.

"[A] sci-fi mystery that cleverly combines a believable distant future with a fair-play whodunit...Oyebanji's worldbuilding is vast and detailed without ever overwhelming the mystery, on the way to a deeply satisfying resolution. James S.A. Corey devotees will be thrilled." The author lives in Edinburgh.

Patterson, James/Nancy Allen. The Murder Trial (Little Brown $32). Eighteen-year-old Janelle Thompson is used to seeing her adoptive parents in the news. Her father is a rising political star. Her mother is the mind behind his first major campaign. Then one Friday night, the whole family makes headlines. Her parents are missing, declared dead—and all the evidence points to Janelle. A perfect family destroyed by a daughter barely old enough to vote. From her cell at Westfall Justice Center, Janelle swears she's innocent, that she loved her parents. If only she could convince someone—anyone—that she's telling the truth.

Rankin, Ian. The Heights (Little Brown $29). A standalone! The Heights is a gleaming, high-end high-rise looming over Hyde Park. Newly built from steel and smoked glass, a billionaire's playground offering sumptuous suites for the global elite. But when a night concierge is found murdered in the lobby, the building's rarefied atmosphere is shattered, and the gilded lives within come under intense police scrutiny. In a world designed to keep prying eyes out, where the residents are not used to being held to account, born-and-bred Londoner Detective Gillian Gish must find a way past their power, wealth and unimaginable influence….

Ian says he has one more Rebus in him for 2027 which is the 40th Rebus anniversary. And we host a virtual event with Ian and Abir Mukherjee November 17 at 2:00 PM MST

✲ Seddon, Holly. The Sleeper (Atria $29). Librarian Maya is traveling home from Edinburgh to London when her sleeper train is struck by lightning. She wakes the next morning in a version of London she doesn't recognize. Not only is a stranger living in her apartment, but her husband Arthur has disappeared. Worse, in this reality, the Berlin Wall never fell, the Cold War never ended, and Britain is an authoritarian Soviet state. Maya's parents did not kiss by the falling Berlin wall while on their gap year travels, and so Maya was never born. Confused, alone, and with nowhere to go, Maya stumbles across the resistance movement, in which librarians like her play a key part. Sent undercover into the heart of government, Maya must navigate this terrifying world while desperately trying to find the people she loves—and a way home.

Sherwood, Jesse. We Were Never Meant to Survive This (Blackstone $29.99). **Debut**. An adrift programmer sets off for an unassuming week with what turns into a ragtag survivalist retreat (in the Catskills, perfect!)—what could go wrong? Jaime, a web developer, is disillusioned by humanity's immersion in the digital world and his own hand in its creation. When a colleague returns from a survival school hidden in the Catskill Mountains, Jaime decides what the hell, why not? Making fire with sticks, butchering animals, crafting a bow—these are just a few things Jaime learns. All the while, the school's enigmatic founder, A, whispers of Day Zero, her prophecy that the world will end and be born anew. As the other students become more fervent, the day arrives and civilization outside of the school collapses, just as A had foreseen. In the aftermath, as A's grip tightens and she forces her followers into obedience, Jaime begins to understand that she will do anything to sculpt her vision into reality, even as blood begins to spill. This is a cautionary and propulsive tale perfect for an era where—from the porch each morning—we can see the end of the world. Echoes of Cormac and Orwell pervade a thriller that races at a breakneck pace while tackling big questions head-on.

Sigurdardottir, Yrsa. The Depths: A Chilling Locked Room Mystery (Hodder UK $31). The bestselling Icelandic author pens a chiller. Just how low do people sink to get away with murder? A human skull unearthed on the outskirts of Reykjavík. A neighborhood dispute turned deadly. A daughter, trapped at sea, looking for answers. What police officers Týr and Karó don't know is that these events are all linked through a terrible tragedy, many years ago, when a trawler caught fire on the waves, the crew trapped inside. The answers lie buried at the bottom of the cold Icelandic Sea.

Sutanto, Jesse Q. An Edge Sharp Enough (Harper Voyager $30). Edgar winner Sutanto of Indonesia switches from mystery to the first book in a dark fantasy duology packed with political intrigue and dark magic in a world called Tchu-Morrokhai. There an assassin, a scholar, a con man, and a guard in a race to rediscover powerful lost magic and save their world f rom the plans of the Dark Empress.... Fans of say James Rollins' world building will delight in this propulsive story.

Thomas, Scarlett. The Runner (Simon Schuster $28). "*Catch-22* meets *The White Lotus* in this thrillingly absurd tale of heretics, heisters, and hit men... It's a wild ride." Jay has been hunted since he was twenty years old. A contract on his life has been traded like a commodity, rising and falling with Bitcoin for decades. On the run once again with no passport and air miles as his only currency, Jay will have to choose between love and survival, and run for his life. While staying at an all-inclusive resort, surviving off of the points he accrued in a previous, more successful life, Jay meets Ellie, a beguiling fellow runner who may even be faster than he is, and is harboring secrets of her own. When an assassin appears poolside, Jay is on the run again, but this time with Ellie, as they find themselves on a catamaran helmed by a sinister and reckless crew.

Part thriller, part romantic suspense, Thomas's latest novel begins in Cyprus… this quirky, exciting tale takes in exorcism, dictators, high finance, con artists and marathons along the way." —*The Guardian*

Thompson, Hunter/Ralph Steadman. The Curse of Lono (Simon Schuster $30). Tasked with covering Hawaii's largest annual running event, the Honolulu Marathon, Hunter S. Thompson and Ralph Steadman quickly abandon conventional sports reporting. What begins as race coverage erupts into an odyssey of excess and an obsession with Lono, the Hawaiian god of rain and fertility. As Thompson's reportage fractures into the surreal, Steadman's illustrations intensify their descent, transforming their time on the islands into a hallucinatory exploration of Hawaiian myth and dark Americana. The result is *The Curse of Lono*, a Gonzo classic of immersive journalism and illustrated nonfiction.

Trench, Virginia. Mr. Disappear (Crown $28). To catch a serial con artist, three women will stop at nothing to beat his dangerous game. He's everything they want him to be: a confidante, a sexy escape, a thrill—all that and more can be theirs . . . for a price. His victims never saw the con coming. And it worked every time. Until now: the predator just became prey. What began as a Reddit true crime thread has escalated into a full-tilt hunt for the man behind countless masks. But are the women driving the search a match for a master criminal? One is an ex-journalist chasing her ticket back into the industry, another a woman with a personal motive that must remain secret, and the third? His current target. Can they outfox the ultimate swindler before he strikes again?

"*Mr. Disappear* is an absolutely stellar thriller—creepy, inventive, and wickedly clever. Trench brilliantly channels the psychological menace of Patricia Highsmith's *The Talented Mr. Ripley* and the addictive suspense of Lisa Jewell. The characters leap off the page, and you can't help but root for them all—good and bad."—JT Ellison

✲ Upson, Nicola. The Voices of the Dead (Crooked Lane $29.99). Josephine Tey is one of the best of the Golden Age of Mystery writers producing masterpieces like Brat Farrar, The Franchise Affair, and her most famous if not best detection: The Daughter of Time ($18 each). Luckily Upson has taken up Tey as a sleuth and now in her 12th Tey lands us in 1941 London and bases her plot on a real war-time action. In the aftermath of the Blitz, Detective Chief Inspector Archie Penrose supervises the transportation of the National Gallery's most precious paintings to their new sanctuary in the slate mines of north Wales. Vacationing in the area is Josephine Tey as well as Noel Coward—who is preparing his defiant new play, in which Margaret Rutherford plays a clairvoyant. But when a woman's grave is discovered amid the debris of a collapsed roof in the mines, Archie and Josephine are plunged into a forty-year-old mystery. As secrets emerge, a new death threatens to tear apart the close-knit Welsh community. Paperback:. The Voices of the Dead ($19.99). This historical series is highly recommended for its blend of plot and portraits of real people.

Wilding, Rose. Cherry: A Novel (St Martins $29). *PW* calls this a "riveting, Talented Mr. Ripley-esque thriller. Fallen nineties pop star Isobel has done everything she can to reinvent herself. Gone is the girlish make-up and provocative manner. When she lands a job working for a middle-class family, she decides to embody the perfect nanny. Ally has always prided herself on running a successful business and being a good parent to her two children. But when her husband announces that he is leaving them to work in Indonesia for six months, and hires Isobel without consulting her, she is left angry and struggling with her chronic illness. The women soon become tangled in a dangerous web of obsession and infatuation. Someone is going to die. T Wilding's marvelous evocation of the late 20th century plunges readers headlong into the characters' experiences with party drugs, sexual experimentation, and a fickle music industry. The result is a blood-soaked riot."

Wilson, Adam. Fail Sons (Soho Press $29). For those who remember that Ted Williams went for a cryogenic after life, separating his head from his body, here in Scottsdale in 2002 where both still reside, a darkly humorous novel. David Yarno sums it up: "Not only have I never read a road novel about transporting a cryogenically frozen corpse, but I don't think I've read a road novel that digs this deep into the long silences and "mutual discomfort" of a drive with a family member who you don't really like. That's what's going on in Wilson's funny and moving narrative of two estranged brothers united by a determination to fulfill their late father's wish to keep his body on ice, in the event that he can one day be revived. Wilson's writing on family and filial piety is funny and moving, and he's equally good at sending up the stereotypes that fuel America's cultural and political divisions, as when the narrator worries his N95 mask–wearing brother will get them clocked in red states as 'blue-pilled soft boys out to repo their assault rifles, raise the capital gains tax, and put Joe Rogan in a public stockade.'

Wilson, Jeffrey/Brian Andrews. Dark Horse (Blackstone $29.99) is something a bit different from this co-author duo. Eva Dasher is a rising star at Dark Horse Studios—a Nashville-based production company that secretly doubles as one of the CIA's most effective predictive units. By day, she and her team of creatives spin cinematic scenarios for film and television. By night, the intelligence community uses those same stories to predict geopolitical chess moves and plan clandestine operations around the globe. But when Eva returns from a trip to Hollywood to find her colleagues slaughtered, her office ransacked, and her fiancé vanished, fiction crashes into reality. Hunted across the country by assassins who seem to know her every move, she's forced to rely on her wits, her training, and a man she doesn't trust in order to survive.

Yarros, Rebecca. Peculiar Stars (Special Edition) (Amazon Publishing $32.99). This is a decorated edition (sprayed edges, etc) of an enemies-to-lovers, second-chance romance novel by Yarros propelled by a cyclone striking a sailing yacht and stranding passengers and crew on an island for 18 months. There are no dragons!

OUR NOVEMBER PAPERBACK PICKS

Durham, Jonathan. Winterset Hollow (Union Square $19.99) is a British Horror phenomenon. When Eamon and his two closest friends, Caroline and Mark, journey to Addington Isle, they hope to explore the island that inspired their favorite book, *Winterset Hollow*—a timeless tale about a tribe of animals preparing for their yearly end-of-summer festival. But when the trio break into the author's apparently abandoned estate, they discover that much of what the world believes to be fantasy is real, and that the truth behind their beloved story is darker and more dangerous than they ever imagined. In fact, making it through the final chapter might just cost them everything. This edition features the complete version of the book within the book, *Winterset Hollow*, as written by Edward Addington!

Greenwood, Kerry. Murder in the Cathedral (Poisoned Pen $17.99) is, sadly, the final investigation for Australia's Miss Phryne Fisher following the death of author Greenwood.

When Phryne Fisher is invited to Bendigo to witness the investiture of her old friend Lionel, who is being made a Bishop, her expectations of the solemn and dignified ceremony do not include a murder in its midst. Phryne is soon working with local Constable Watson and eagle-eyed Inspector Mick Kelly to identify the perpetrator. It becomes quickly apparent the murder victim had been an overzealous deacon with a nose for trouble.

Nobody seems very inclined to mourn his passing. Applying her quick wits and magnetic charm, Phryne and her expanding team of sleuths discover murky layers of church politics, social scandals, business scams, and blackmail. Soon, possible suspects begin to form a long list, all with excellent motives for killing the deacon. Could the murderer be his own wife? A visiting dignitary? The mysterious organist? The angelic Brookes? The unemployed teacher? And why is the Bishop's Court being burgled?

Kellerman, Jonathan/Jesse. Coyote Hills ($20). I am a fan of the Clay Edison thrillers penned by father and son Kellerman and set in Alameda County, originally in Berkley where Clay was with the Coroner's Office. Now he's gone out on his own as a private investigator with a focus on low-stakes embezzlements and the like, not homicides… until PI Regina Klein calls him with a mystery only he can solve. The son of a wealthy couple has washed up dead on the shores of San Francisco Bay with drugs in his system and a head injury. The police are calling it an accident. But the parents are adamant something's not right—and they are right. I thought this story was going in one direction that included a complex assessment of where bodies could enter the waters of San Francisco Bay, but gradually it turned into something else which, frankly, I found horrifying although I learned a new vocabulary. Jesse, an author, playwright, and poet, fuses his voice and his affection for northern California with bestseller Jon's vibe into a true third voice for this series.

✲ Montclair, Allison. Fire Must Burn ($16.99). London, 1947. After recent events detailed in An Excellent Thing in a Woman ($ 16) have left the normally steadfast Iris Sparks thoroughly shaken, she's looking forward to some peace. With The Right Sort Marriage Bureau doing well, she and business partner Gwen Bainbridge are due a holiday. Until Iris's former boss enlists their help for a secret mission. Iris, who left British intelligence after the war, is being recruited for her Cambridge connection to one Anthony Danforth. She hasn't seen Tony in almost ten years, yet she and Gwen must manipulate him into hiring their marriage service. Tony's suspected of being a Soviet operative, and an undercover agent posing as his perfect match could discover the truth. Despite her reluctance at being dragged back into the world of espionage, Iris agrees. After all, Tony was once a very good friend. If he's innocent, she'll happily prove it. If not? Well, no one ever said being a spy was easy . . .

Those who enjoy reading Kerry Greenwood's Phryne Fisher Mysteries, and Dorothy Sayers, will adore this warm and witty historical mystery! The nature of the investigations changes book to book but the fidelity to actual history, the clever and twisty plotting, the British voice and the humor remain constants. This is one of my very favorite British crime series. New book Death Comes to the Marriage Bureau (Severn House $29.99 SIGNED) in January 2027.

Penny, Louise. The Black Wolf ($19). Several weeks ago, Chief Inspector Armand Gamache of the Sûreté du Québec and his team uncovered and stopped a domestic terrorist attack in Montréal, arresting the person behind it. A man they called the Black Wolf. But their relief is short-lived. In a sickening turn of events, Gamache has realized that plot, as horrific as it was, was just the beginning. Perhaps even a deliberate misdirection. One he fell into. Still recovering from wounds received in stopping the first attack, Armand is confined to the village of Three Pines, leading a covert investigation from there. He must be careful not to let the Black Wolf know he has recognized his mistake. In a quiet church basement, he and his senior agents Beauvoir and Lacoste, pore over what little evidence they have. Two notebooks. A few mysterious numbers on a tattered map of Québec. And a phrase repeated by the person they had called the Grey Wolf. A warning…. Will he heed it? Will we? This is Book #20 and #21 published October 20.

Petrie, Nick. The Dark Time ($19). Katelyn Thorsen, known as KT to her friends and enemies, is an independent journalist who receives a very specific death threat. Fortunately, Milwaukee's Peter Ash has arrived in Seattle to protect KT at the request of his girlfriend, journalist June Cassidy, herself a tough lady. From the moment of his arrival, he's thrown into a maelstrom of violence trying to protect KT and her daughter and discover the source of the death threat. Even after June and Peter's best friend Lewis show up to help, this challenge may prove beyond these experienced warriors. This is an absolute zinger of a thriller with a brilliant concept that is a warning now being sounded. Highly recommended.

Quinn, Cate. Before I Disappear (Sourcebooks $18.99) unveils a corkscrew of a plot. Criminologist April Anderson wakes up in a remote motel with a new name, a new identity, and absolutely no memory of how she got there. Told she's under police protection as the victim of a disturbing crime, she'll have to stand as a witness on a major trial that she knows nothing about. April isn't sure who to trust — the cop guarding her from an unknown threat, or the fiancé secretly tracking her. As April's memories start coming back in waves, she discovers a side to herself she didn't know existed. A side she'd rather stay hidden. With the trial drawing closer, the need for her to remember everything that happened to her the night of the crime becomes vital to her survival—if she can survive to tell it.

Ramage, Eliana. To the Moon and Back ($20) is a debut heralding one young woman's relentless quest to become the first Cherokee astronaut. Steph Harper is on the run. When she was five, her mother fled an abusive husband—with Steph and her younger sister in tow—to Cherokee Nation, where she hoped they might finally belong. In response, Steph sets her sights as far away from Oklahoma as she can get, vowing that she will let nothing get in the way of pursuing the rigorous physical and academic training she knows she will need to be accepted by NASA, and ultimately, to go to the moon. Spanning three decades and several continents, we follow her turbulent journey, along with the multifaceted and intertwined lives of the three women closest to her.

Ranelli, Alessandra. Murder at the Hotel Orient ($20) is a debut with a sharply plotted nod to the Golden Age classics but with a fresh, modern edge—it's spicy! *The Grand Budapest Hotel* moves to Vienna in this spicy whodunnit inspired by a real love hotel, which legend claims has existed forever, luring lovers inside for a night of debauchery. In the modern city, American ex-pat Sterling Lockwood is the loyal Concierge at the infamous Hotel Orient. Cameras are forbidden, aliases are required, and every guest has something to hide. For those seeking illicit liaisons, Sterling is the perfect concierge. Sultry and poised, she's the ultimate keeper of secrets, including her own. But when dawn

breaks and two guests are found dead in their suite, Sterling must break the Orient's sacred code of discretion, turning detective to find a killer and clear her own name. Alongside Fernando, her quick-witted friend and bellhop, she will risk everything to solve this double murder haunted by the past, in a city with a fetish for nostalgia.

Reichs, Kathy. Evil Bones ($18). Small creatures—a rat, a rabbit, a squirrel—have been turning up throughout Charlotte, North Carolina, mutilated and displayed in a bizarre manner. But one day, as Tempe is relaxing at home alongside her aimless, moody great-niece Ruthie, she's diverted by a disturbing call. The perp is upping the ante. This find could be human. Tempe visits the scene and discovers that the victim is a dog. Someone's pet. As one who has always found animal cruelty abhorrent, Tempe agrees to help apprehend the person responsible, and she acquires an equally outraged ally in semi-retired homicide detective Erskine "Skinny" Slidell. Needing a better understanding of possible motives, Tempe seeks input from a forensic psychologist. The doctor has no definitive answer but offers several possibilities, warning that the escalating pattern of aggression suggests even more macabre discoveries—and a shift in the perp's focus to humans. And then it happens—a woman is found disfigured and posed in a manner that mimics the animal killings.

✲ Smith, Sally. A Case of Life and Limb ($18.99). Gabriel Ward KC is hard at work on a thorny libel case involving London's most famous music hall star and its most notorious tabloid newspaper, but the Inner Temple remains as quiet and calm as ever. Quiet, that is, until the mummified hand arrives in the post... While the hand's recipient, Temple Treasurer Sir William Waring, is rightfully shaken, Gabriel is filled with curiosity. Who would want to send such a thing? And why? But as more parcels arrive—one with fatal consequences—Gabriel realizes that it is not Sir William who is the target, but the Temple itself. Someone is holding a grudge that has already led to at least one death. Now it's up to Gabriel, and Constable Wright of the City of London Police to uncover the killer. This is the sequel to the delightful A Case of Mice and Murder ($18.99), a 2024 British Crime Club Pick also set within the Temple, 1901, both written by a British lawyer with chambers in the Temple. I urge you to read it first.

Thor, Brad/Ward Larsen. Cold Zero ($19). CIA officers Kasey Sheridan and Walter Ho attempt to shield Chinese physicist Dr. Chen Li and his secret weapon from America's enemies. At the outset they are relaxing with Li on an escape plane after smuggling the scientist out of China with a copy of Sky Fire, his game-changing military software. Then Chinese forces hack Hemisphere Airlines Flight 777 as it crosses the Arctic Circle, and the plane crashes on polar ice. As the 10 survivors attempt to stay alive in a freezing storm, the world's superpowers try to locate the wreckage and secure Li's secret weapon: the Chinese send an ice breaker, the Russians a state-of-the-art submarine, and the Americans a fast attack sub. Sheridan teams up with one of her fellow passengers, a former fighter pilot, to save the injured Chen and keep possession of Sky Fire, while Chinese, Russian, and American spies maneuver in the background. Meanwhile, the elements—and a polar bear—close in.

✲ Whyte, Nicola. Murder Like Clockwork ($18.99 . In this London-based version of *The Paris Apartment* meets *Only Murders in the Building*, Whyte continues the adventures of the delicious cast of 10 Marchfield Square ($18.99) characters. Elderly heiress and landlady Celeste van Duren has a big heart and opens the doors of her residential square to those she deems deserving. No longer rookie sleuths, her cleaner Amanda and failing writer Lewis are set to work the morning Amanda finds a corpse in the back bedroom of Mr. Petrov's elegant home, the one he rarely visits. The pristine walls and floor are covered in blood, and she flees the house in panic. Fifteen minutes later, the police arrive ... and find nothing. No body. No blood. The only thing slightly out of the ordinary is the clock in that back bedroom, which is now running four minutes slow. With no victim, the police are convinced there was no murder, but Audrey knows better although how the clean up was performed in under half an hour is a mystery. Stick with this and find out! And read the first in series, highly recommended by Deb.

MORE IN PAPERBACK

There is a very long list of paperbacks for November. You can search for more of them than noted here at https://bookshop.org/shop/poisonedpen

First, imported from the UK and not otherwise available:

Howard, Catherine Ryan. Burn After Reading ($13.99). This is a terrific story by the Irish bestseller opening in Sanctuary, Florida, where ghost writer Emily may burn to death in a house fire. She's there to write a book helping to prove that Jack Smyth did not kill his wife before dashing into a burning home to save her—too late for Kate. It had been hailed as a hero before the autopsy showed Kate was dead long before the fire began. Jack has signed a book deal now, a year later, to tell his story, show he's innocent. Is Emily about to learn that some stories should never be told?

And reprinted, a classic:

Blauner, Peter. Slow Motion Riot (Dead Sky Publishing $19.99) is the no-holds-barred story of Probation Officer Steve Baum and his head-on collision with a young murderer named Darryl King, who becomes his client and then an unlikely hero in their dangerously-divided community. A suspense narrative and a portrait of a city on the edge, this winner of the Edgar Allan Poe award for best first novel is ripe to be introduced to a new generation of readers. Especially fans of crime novelists like Dennis Lehane and highly recommended by Patrick and me who wish Blauner would come up with a new book soon—he's so good.

And new: remember no publisher listed indicates it's a paperback reprint

Brackston, Paula. The Cathedral of Lost Souls ($19) is Book 2 in The Hecate Cavendish historical ghost series after The Haunting of Hecate Cavendish ($19). Hereford, England 1881. After the fire and the tumultuous events in the cathedral library, Hecate is determined never again to come so close to losing the beloved *mappa mundi*. She has shown herself to be the greatest threat to the Essedenes and their plans and they will stop at nothing to be rid of her. With the help of her archeologist father, and the support of the redoubtable and loyal Inspector Winter, she must take the fight to her enemies. But the numbers of Embodied Spirits are growing with terrifying speed, and an atmosphere of violence and danger has taken hold of the ancient city of Hereford. Hecate dare not trust anyone beyond her inner circle.

✻ Brower, Beth. The Unselected Journals of Emma M Lion, Volume 1 ($15) and its sequels were published by a small press and recommended by me back in August. Now Penguin has snapped up the series and is publishing these slim volumes all at once. I recommend ordering the whole set in the Penguin editions with the September 23, 2026 publication date, they really are slim but dense and a delight for fans of Victorian fiction.

ByeongMo, Gu. The Old Woman with the Knife ($18.99) is a much praised story of a sixty-five-year-old female assassin who faces an unexpected threat in the twilight of her career—this is an international bestseller and the English language debut from an award-winning South Korean author. At sixty-five, Hornclaw is beginning to slow down. She lives modestly in a small apartment, with only her aging dog, a rescue named Deadweight, to keep her company. There are expectations for people her age—that she'll retire and live out the rest of her days quietly. But Hornclaw is not like other people. She is an assassin. Double-crossers, corporate enemies, cheating spouses—for the past four decades, Hornclaw has killed them all with ruthless efficiency, and the less she's known about her targets, the better. But now, nearing the end of her career, she has just slipped up....

Collins, Max Allan. Quarry's Reunion (Titan $18.99). Since his first appearance in 1976, Max Allan Collins' quintessential killer-for-hire, Quarry, has starred in 17 novels, two films, a graphic novel, and a Cinemax TV series. Here he reaches a milestone: a series that has continued for 50 years. To celebrate, MWA Grand Master Collins is taking Quarry somewhere he's never gone before: back home, to the town in Ohio where he grew up, before his tour of duty in Vietnam and his even bloodier experiences Stateside. Why? An old high-school girlfriend summons Quarry for his 50th reunion – but old times take a back seat when bullets start to fly.

Dara, Maxie. A Grim Reaper's Guide to Living Twice ($20). Jack McCoy was a thief and a liar. Then he died. But Jack McCoy never let a little thing like reality stop him. Now he's committing the ultimate identity theft, living a new life in Margaret Chen's body while his own lies six feet under. Keeping up appearances as a geriatric grim reaper for S.C.Y.T.H.E. is a full-time job, but when Jack is sent to collect the soul of an old friend, his criminal past catches up with him and suddenly he's planning the heist of his (after)life with a gang of misfits he never thought he'd see again. Now the only woman he's ever loved depends on his success in stealing a priceless list of souls from S.C.Y.T.H.E., but someone keeps beating him at his own game. 3rd in the S.C.Y.T.H.E Mysteries.

✻ Dunn, Matt. The Armchair Detectives (Grand Central $18.99). For fans of Richard Osman, a comedic British style cozy. They might be over the hill but they're far from six feet under and now there's a murder to solve! Meet Martin Maxwell. As a former government operative, at eighty-four-years young he always pictured a retirement sipping shaken-not-stirred martinis on a far-flung island. But in need of some care after a new hip, he finds himself at Twilight Lodge on the decidedly cloudy English coast. From the outside, it's a picture-perfect place to recuperate. But when popular resident Elsie dies unexpectedly, Martin suspects foul play. She's the third death in less than two weeks....

Friedman, Robert Douglas. Final Copy (Stark House $15.95). I agree with Joyce Carol Oates that this is an engaging classic noir updated, told in crisp sentences with humor. It also riffs on New York magazine culture. The production isn't great, small type, a slim volume, so it's not a November Pick, but I recommend it.

The Gotham Express' gifted investigative reporter left to become a small time PI when its founder and editor stole his girl. Now Jonathan of the big ego and small moral compass has been brutally killed and his estranged wife comes to ask for David's help. An attempt to gun them both down in David's office convinced him to say yes. With the hitman on the loose it's urgent to unravel the web of secrets Jonathan had spun….

Gerhardsen, Carin. Gideon's Ring (Mysterious Press $17.95). Dawn, Stockholm's Hammarby neighborhood. A naked young woman is spotted by the side of the road. Later, she shows up outside piano technician John Gideon's apartment, unable to tell anyone who she is or what has happened to her. The neighbors tell stories of girls—dozens of them—that have walked in and out of his place for several years. And John Gideon is not opening his door. An already-puzzling case for Hammarby detective Conny Sjöberg and his team soon becomes even more intricate with a fatal assault and the discovery of a dead infant. And as the tension mounts, the cracks within the force begin to show. With his colleagues' long-festering conflicts and long-buried secrets rising to the fore, Conny Sjöberg struggles to stay neutral and close the case before it destroys the department.

✻ Grainger, Peter. Time and Tide (Union Square $19.99). The 7th in the fabulous DC Smith/Kings Lake Investigations opens on a quiet Monday morning when an unexpected appointment unsettles the delicate balance at Kings Lake Central. A new Detective Inspector takes up the post, while veteran investigator Detective Sergeant D.C. Smith, chooses this moment to submit his resignation. With just months left before retirement, Smith must confront not only his own future, but also the uncertain fate of the department he will leave behind. Meanwhile, a body is discovered on the Norfolk salt marshes: a stranger dead after a prolonged and violent murder. What appears at first to be a straightforward case gradually reveals its complex origins in the previous century. The investigation takes the team into the dark world of organized crime, as they cross paths with mobsters, boxers, and an aging starlet, each of whom has something to hide. The case unfolds through careful, methodical work, and with it come growing strains within the squad—heightened by the presence of the new DI and the specter of Smith's impending retirement. I recommend Grainger's whole series along with Tim Sullivan's DC George Cross investigations set in Somerset and Clare Mackintosh's Wales and London procedurals, especially her brilliant It's Not What You Think ($29.99).

Gray, Shelley Shepard. E is for Englischer (Kensington $18.95). After a lifetime working and living in bustling Millersburg, Ohio, 60-something Amish couple Mervin and Ruthie Miller have started anew in bucolic Walden—as "Gentlemen Farmers." When 25-year-old Ella Pendleton is fired from her job at Millersburg Quilt and Sew, she doesn't know where to turn. Serendipity comes in the form of a invitation from the Millers' daughter Bethany, who knows her parents are struggling with farm life and could use some help. It's the perfect opportunity for Ella: a

picturesque change of scenery could lift her spirits, especially amid the holidays and the chill of winter. In return for the Millers' hospitality, Ella promises to help Ruthie learn to knit. Ella settles into the Millers' *dawdi haus* and quickly realizes that the farm has them in over their heads. Charmed by Ruthie's adorable, clueless, needy sheep, Ella volunteers to look after them. Her days soon fall into a routine. And then burly, handsome, hard-working Russ Tate comes along. Russ is a 30-year-old Amish carpenter who's been hired to remodel the Millers' bathroom. He's quiet, keeps to himself—and has no business crushing on an English young woman. And yet.... This wholesome romance may appeal to you fans of the darker mysteries of Linda Castillo set in the same Ohio Amish country.

Irving, John. Queen Esther ($20). Irving returns to the world of his bestselling classic novel and Academy Award–winning film *The Cider House Rules*, revisiting the orphanage in St. Cloud's, Maine, where Dr. Wilbur Larch takes in Esther—a Viennese-born Jew whose life is shaped by anti-Semitism.

Lehane, Con. The Red Scare Murders ($19.95). "PI Mick Mulligan is an engagingly dogged and wry protagonist, his murder investigation's supporting cast varied and interesting. But the real star is New York City in the summer of 1950, with a cab strike led by dueling communists and mobsters, and ordinary people still expecting a fair shake. A picture of America which these days feels like 'fake history.' But isn't."—David Downing

Liss, David. The Death and Birth of Iliana Marek (Tachyon $18.95). Edgar winner Liss, author of many brilliant novels, "not only plays enchantingly with the best of the crime-noir conventions, but he delves smartly into the enduring theme of serious literature—the universal quest for self, for identity. *The Death and Birth of Iliana Marek* is both narratively compelling and richly thought-provoking."—Robert Olen Butler

Who is Iliana Marek? Is she the bully who alongside her foster father police chief Bryce Hillard, controls and terrorizes Tylor, Florida? Or is she the reborn guardian angel of Dan Gibson, a social pariah responsible for the suicide of Faye Kristic, a death which he cannot remember ten years later. Dan's once-promising future is in tatters. He lives in an apartment on his estranged parents' property, works at a convenience store with a terrible boss, and is addicted to prescription drugs. But ten years after Faye's death, Iliana suddenly takes Dan's side, and a lot of bad people start dying fast. As Dan becomes entangled in the ensuing chaos, he needs to finally discover what part he played in the death of Faye Kristic,

Mara, Andrea. Hide and Seek ($20). The game of hide and seek is over, and everyone has gone home, but Lily Murphy hasn't been found. Her parents search the woods and try to stay positive, but their daughter remains missing despite all rescue efforts. Years later, Joanna and Mark Stedman move into a new neighborhood; it seems the perfect place to raise their three kids—until they learn that Lily Murphy used to live in their house. From that moment onwards, a sense of dread seems to follow Joanna from room to room. As Joanna unravels the secrets at the heart of this close-knit community, her own dark past begins to resurface. Because Joanna thinks she knows what really happened to Lily. Also out from Mara: No One Saw a Thing ($20)

Margolin, Phillip. False Witness ($19) is an excellent legal thriller. A lawyer who was set-up, imprisoned, and disbarred, only to be vindicated and reinstated, is determined to find out who set her up and cover their tracks with a trail of dead bodies. Defense Attorney Karen Wyatt exposed corruption in the police force and the District Attorney's office while getting her client exonerated in court. But in doing so, she put a target on her back. Meanwhile she is practicing as a defense attorney with a client who is either guilty of a heinous murder, or is a too-trusting patsy for an acquaintance set-up for a crime he didn't commit. Portland attorney Margolin goes all out adding in a deadly criminal drug gang, a powerful, corrupt figure hiding in the D.A.'s office, and a Congressman who turned up with an unbelievable story after disappearing for days.

Margolin give us a new legal drama in Conspiracy Theory (St Martins $29) where, searching for a plot for his next legal thriller, D.C. area lawyer and novelist Michael Harris stumbles across a conspiracy theory that may have put his own life at risk.

Pearson, Mary E. The Last Wish of Bristol Keats ($19.99) is the conclusion to this Romantic duology with its focus on Fairy/Folk Tales. After Bristol Keats nearly loses her beloved King Tyghan to the monsters her mother had unleashed, their love deepens to a whole new level. Together, Bristol and Tyghan work to understand and reconcile their differences, moving forward with their common goal of saving Elphame. But when a daring rescue attempt turns into a disaster, and a beloved knight dies, Bristol is forced to confront the fact that her mother is more powerful than she could have ever imagined—and more dangerous.

Robbins, Lori. Murder in the Fifth Position (Level Best Books $17.95). Karen Odden recommends a mystery set in the world of ballet, very much a closed circle like a Christie and filled with rivalries, jealousy, ambition, envy. The narrator is ballerina Leah Siderova who was present the night that Leland Vanderhof, donor of the Vanderhof Prize for Choreography, which Leah wishes to win despite tough competition. The crime scene is a glittering party where all the candidates were present, but all alibied. Then a second murder occurs. Luckily Leah's significant other is Homicide's Jonah Sobol…but wait, who is his glamorous new partner? Leah has much to choreograph in real life here.

✲ Ross, LJ. High Force (Sourcebooks $18.99) is the 5th for DCI Ryan whose cases take him to iconic British landscapes—here again in Northumberland and so excellent for readers of Ann Cleeves. Detective Chief Inspector Ryan's worst nightmare has just become a reality. Notorious serial killer "The Hacker" has escaped prison and kidnapped one of his best detectives. No one knows The Hacker's brutality like Ryan—he lost his sister and nearly his own life bringing the man to justice the first time around. Will he be able to stop him a second time?
We recommend you read the whole DCI Ryan series in order.

✲ Stonex, Emma. The Sunshine Man ($20). Birdie Keller wakes one freezing January morning to the news she's been waiting eighteen years to hear. Jimmy Maguire, the man who killed her sister, has been freed from jail. She leaves for London with a pistol and a plan: to find this man and make him pay. But every story has two sides and Jimmy can sense he's being hunted "An ambitious revenge thriller . . . What makes this thought-provoking book well worth the read is the delicate and perceptive chronicling of how good intentions, childhood misunderstandings, throwaway comments and split-second decisions can pave the way for disaster." —*The Guardian*

Suggett, Kayleigh. Burn After Cheating (Severn River $18.99). A Deb Pick from an Independent Publisher likened to an Elle Cosimano mystery, filled with sharp detecting and sexual tension. Harry Kim died in a locked apartment. No signs of forced entry, windows too small to fit a well-fed Chihuahua. Clean scene. The cops call it an accident. But Verona's best friend Runi isn't buying it—and once Verona starts snooping around, neither is she. Choir boys like Harry always have the dirtiest secrets. And when the tune of his squeaky-clean life turns out to be less *Hallelujah* and more *Highway to Hell*, this "accident" starts looking a lot like murder. Plus, Harry's stalker ex-girlfriend Ashlyn had been leaving dead animals on doorsteps and threatening anyone Harry dated. Verona wouldn't be surprised to find a "Honk If You Love Sociopaths" sticker on her serial-killer-looking van. The impossible murder? Solvable. Hot divorce lawyer Quentin shadowing her stakeouts instead of going home to his girlfriend? Deliciously problematic. Still, Verona's got a killer to catch.

Tizzard, Gemma. The Nightingales of Boston (Gallery Books $19). 1942: Alice, an aspiring wife and mother, is hiding a happy secret and decides an evening at the Cocoanut Grove nightclub with her boyfriend George is the perfect way to celebrate. Inez, a young reporter, knows the Cocoanut Grove is as popular with the rich and famous as it is with young revelers, and she's eager for a hot tip. Nina, the ambitious head nurse at a nearby hospital, is halfway through her shift and hopes it will be a quiet night. But when a single spark at the club quickly explodes into a blazing inferno, all three of their lives change in an instant.

Unger, Lisa. Served Him Right ($18.99). Ana Blacksmith has gathered her closest friends and sister Vera for a brunch to celebrate her recent breakup from her boyfriend Paul. But when shocking news about Paul arrives, all eyes are on Ana, the angry ex with a bad reputation. Suspicions only intensify when Ana's best friend falls deathly ill after the brunch. But Ana is not the only one who had a score to settle with Paul. As the investigation unfolds, rumors of a secret network that uses ancient methods to obtain justice begin to emerge....

BIOS AND MEMOIRS

Biden, Joe. Promise Me, America (Little Brown $42)
Binelli, Mark. Just a Shot Away: Martin Scorsese's Life (Heinemann $32.99)
Burke, Daniel. American Pope: Leo XIV's Road from the South Side of Chicago to Vatican City (Flatiron $32.99)
Burton, Levar. Take My Word for it: A Memoir (Random House $32)
Actor, library advocate, and *Reading Rainbow* star Burton reflects on his life
Cher. Cher: Part Two: The Memoir (Harper $36)
Fabricant, Florence. Salty, Not Sweet: A Life in the Food World (Running Press $32)
For decades, Fabricant's authoritative voice in the *New York Times* and in her 13 cookbooks has helped shape how we eat, cook, and think about food
Dent, Judi. Is It Too Late to Make a Run For It? (St Martins $31)
With Brendan O'Hea, a discussion the life and career of the legendary actress.
French, Paul. The Last Emperor of China (St Martins $31)
In the 1920s he and the Empress were sequestered in the Forbidden City
Includes black-and-white illustrations throughout and colored endpapers
Hoffman, Dustin. Look at Me (Simon Schuster $35)
Knight, Keltie. The F✲ CK Them Theory (Blackstone $32)
Done with being the bigger person?
Maclachlan, Kyle. Fictional Selves: A Memoir (Crown $34)
Morrell, Tarajia. Desire Feeds the Feast: A Memoir (Zebra $28)
Nelson, Willie. The Last Leaf: Reflections on Late Life (Penguin $30)
Orlean, Susan. Joyride ($20).
An account of her writing life and journeys to extraordinary places
Pope, Francis. The Private Diary of Pope Francis (Random House $18)
Excerpts from nearly 30 years of the late pope's private journals will be published worldwide next month, with editing and commentary by a cardinal who knew him well.
Shalhoub, Tony. We Thought They'd Never Leave (Gallery Books $)
A memoir about food, family, recipes, and the stories we pass down around the table.
Shatner, William. Wisdom & Worries: Reflections on Life, Death, and Everything Inbetween (Open Road Media $18.99)
Smith, Brandie. In the Company of Pandas: My Life with the World's Favorite Bear (Atria $30)
Woodward, Bob. Secrets: A Reporter's Memoir (Simon Schuster $32)

NEW NONFICTION

Alagona, Peter S. Start with a Bear (Harper $29.99)
Humans, Grizzlies, and the Power of Stories on a Crowded Planet
Byrne, Rhonda. Thought Rules: Thought Creates Everything (Harper $24.99)
Clegg Sarah. Perilous Enchantment (Atria Books $30)
A compendium of fairies and fairy lore through the centuries, told through a magical year in search of the fae
Corn, David. How Russia Won: Donald Trump, Vladimir Putin (Harper $35)
Gleick, James. The Telephone: A New History (Dutton $35)
Kuehn, Christine. Family of Spies: A World War II Story of Nazi Espionage… ($18.99)
O'Donnell, Patrick K. Revolutionary Snipers: Washington's Frontier Commandos (Grove $30)
Richter, Andy. Elf Unwrapped: Behind the Scenes of a Modern Christmas Classic (Harper $30)
Robinson, Kim Stanley. The Best Journey in the World: An Antarctic Story (Little Brown $45)
Interweaving memoir, some never-before-published photographs, and good old-fashioned ice adventure, Kim Stanley Robinson takes readers along on the Arctic journeys that have happened before and the journeys that may never...
Rubenstein, David M. Speaking of America: Great Conversations (Doubleday $32.95)

AND COOKBOOKS

Adarme, Adrianna. A Cozy Kitchen Cookbook (Clarkson Potter $40)
Berg, Mary. Mary's Comfort Classics: Food to Fill You (Anchor $32)
Chambers, Caroline. What to Cook When You Don't Feel Like Cooking (Union Square $35)
Dewitt, Dave. Southwest Table: Traditional Cuisine from Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona (Globe Pequot $29.95)
George, Alex. In the Mood to Bake: Extraordinary Treats (Countryman Press $35)
Jinich, Pati. Pati Jinich Foods of La Frontera: Recipe (Harper $35)
Koenig, Leah. The Dessert Table: 100 Joyful Jewish Sweets (Norton $39.99)
Lacorte, Cortney. Oversharing: Anytime Snacks, Everyday Dinners and Cooking for Company (Union Square $35)
Lester, Melissa. The Comfort of Books and Tea (Hoffman Media $35.95)
A Gentle Guide to Reading and Teatime
Onwuachi, Kwame. All Hours: Crazy Good Food for Whatever, Whenever (Knopf $40)