

# BOOKNEWS from

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## A FIRECRACKER JULY

**AUTHORS ARE SIGNING...**

*Some Events will be webcast on Facebook Live*

Check out our new [YouTube Channel](#)

### TUESDAY JULY 9 7:00 PM

Adrian McKinty in conversation with Diana Gabaldon

**McKinty** signs [The Chain](#) (LittleBrown \$28)

McKinty has annotated a section of the book in an exclusive insert available only with our copies

**Gabaldon** will sign any of her books purchased at the event from The Pen

### WEDNESDAY JULY 10 7:00 PM

**Spencer Quinn** signs [Heart of Barkness](#) (Forge \$25.99)

Chet & Bernie

Attend and be treated to a delightful video, a song for every dog lover

### THURSDAY JULY 11 7:00 PM

**Ace Atkins** signs [Shameless](#) (Putnam \$27)

Quinn Colson

### SATURDAY JULY 13 2:00 PM Mystery Tea

**Alison Gaylin** signs [Never Look Back](#) (Morrow \$26.99)

### SUNDAY JULY 14 2:00 PM

A party with props and prizes!

**Linda Castillo** signs [Shamed](#) (St Martins \$26.99)

Amish Police Chief Kate Burkholder

**Stuart Turton** signs [The 71/2 Deaths of Evelyn Hardcastle](#)

(Sourcebooks \$16.99)

Prize-winning British debut

### MONDAY JULY 15 7:00 PM

Watch a Triple Header at The Pen while you record the All Star Game

**Christina Alger** signs [Girls Like Us](#) (Putnam \$26)

**David Bell** signs [Layover](#) (Berkley \$26 or \$16.99)

**J Todd Scott** signs [This Side of Night](#) (Putnam \$26)

### TUESDAY JULY 16 7:00 PM

**Mark Greaney and Rip Rawlings** sign [Red Metal](#) (Berkley \$27)  
Standalone thriller

### WEDNESDAY JULY 17 7:00 PM

**David Rosenfelt** signs [Bark of Night](#) (St Martins \$27.99)

Andy Carpenter and friends human and canine

### SATURDAY JULY 20

**Daniel Silva ticketed event**—check to see if a few single tickets remain

You may order [The New Girl](#) (Harper \$28.99), in the usual way  
Gabriel Allon

### SATURDAY JULY 27 2:00 PM

**Emily Devenport** signs [Medusa in the Graveyard](#) (Tor \$18.99)

The Medusa Cycle #2

### MONDAY JULY 29 7:00 PM Triple Thriller Threat

**Mark Greaney** hosts and signs [Red Metal](#) (Berkley \$27)

**Jack Carr** signs [True Believer](#) (Atria \$28)

*The Terminal List's* James Reece

**Stephen Hunter** signs [Game of Snipers](#) (Putnam \$27)

Bob Lee Swagger

### JULY DISCUSSION CLUBS

**Coffee & Crime:** Saturday July 13 10:30 AM

Laura Childs, [Death by Darjeeling](#) (\$7.99)

**SciFi Friday:** July 19 7:00 PM

Thomas Olde Heuvelt, [Hex](#) (\$16.99)

**Croak & Dagger:** Saturday July 20 10:30 AM

Philip Margolin, [The Third Victim](#) (\$9.99)

**Hardboiled Crime:** Thursday July 25 7:00 PM:

Frederic Brown, [Madball](#) (\$9.99)

## EVENT BOOKS

Alger, Cristina. [Girls Like Us](#) (Penguin \$26 July 15). Welcome to Suffolk County, the seedy and the gentrified neighborhoods on this part of Long Island. FBI Agent Nell Flynn has returned home to the unbeautiful end of Long Island to sprinkle her father's ashes, close up his house and move on. Her father, homicide detective Marty Flynn, had some good buddies on the force, and it's nice to see them again, but Suffolk County doesn't hold many pleasant memories. Then Marty's last partner, Lee Davis, with whom Nell went to high school, asks for her help on one last case. Two young women have been murdered: "working girls," the cops call them; one of them was undocumented. In their details, though, these murders take Nell back to the murder of her mother when Nell was seven years old. Is there a serial killer at work in Suffolk County? Is there a link to Nell's past? Was her father, despite his drinking and rough habits, a good guy, or...? Nell is a quintessential damaged cop, even if she is FBI: ignoring her own injuries, pushing too hard, taking foolhardy risks, with a strong sense of right and wrong (as her father seemed to have). Her personality serves as backbone to a twisty plot perfect for summer reading.

Atkins, Ace. [The Shameless](#) (Putnam \$27 July 11). "Atkins' signature blend of country noir and southern humor remains on display here, though this time the focus is on the personal traumas in the Quinn family's closets." Once again, ranger-turned-sheriff Quinn Colson and a small group of deputies and law enforcement friends battle corruption and crime in northeast Mississippi. A crooked politician, backed by the Syndicate, is running for governor. The mob and their candidate face a challenge from a truck stop madam who has plans to make the state a place for drug trafficking and prostitution. A 20-year-old crime brings everything crashing down when a podcaster comes to town to investigate the old case of a teenager who supposedly committed suicide. Quinn tries to find the old records of the tragedy handled by his uncle, the late former sheriff, but politicians and criminals unite to stop him. Quinn's attempts to fight corruption in Tibbehah could lead to his death. Lesa, our blogger, writes: "The author follows *The Sinners* with a troubling, violent, plot-driven drama. Fans of Parker or of Lee Child's "Jack Reacher" titles, will relish this series featuring another lone hero battling evil." Patrick is an enthusiast and also Atkins' host. I get him Nov. 20 for a new Spenser.

Bell, David. [Layover](#) (Berkley \$26 July 15). Bell comes up with an intriguing scenario that demands you buy into the psyche of Joshua whose mother decamped early, whose father raised him with love but tight controls, and who works for dad in a job that has him flying all around the country on xanax and liquor to stay calm. He hates flying, finds the job increasingly a dead end, his relationship has gone bust, his world is shrinking. "Joshua's life has become a predictable pattern of departures and arrivals, a lot of his time spent in airports until he meets Morgan on a layover and there is an instant connection." So instant he ditches his flight to Florida and boards hers to Nashville where the beautiful Morgan denies she's ever met him. He's nearly thrown off the plane. The next time he sees her she is on the news as a missing person. Then it gets weirder. "For readers who liked *Faithful Place* by

Tana French and *Emma in the Night* by Wendy Walker." This from Library Reads, a review forum for librarians.

Carr, Jack. [True Believer](#) (Atria \$28 July 29 – before publication date). A 2019 Best First Novel nominee in the Thriller Awards, Carr got my vote in 2018 for outstanding thriller debut—the real deal as he is the real deal, a warrior, SEAL, and sniper who also grasps spycraft. Lee Child agrees: "This is seriously good. I mean—seriously. Both author Jack Carr and main character James Reece are the real deal, the action is razor sharp, the suspense is unrelenting, and the tradecraft is so authentic the government will probably ban it—so read it while you can!" Actually the government gets to redact text so that's part of the book. What what's up with Reece's continuation of *The Terminal List*?

Branded a terrorist for killing corrupt government officials responsible for the murder of his wife and daughter, most wanted ex-Navy SEAL James Reece comes out of hiding to go after an Islamic extremist following a massacre in London. The U.S. officials were part of a conspiracy to conceal the lethal effects of an experimental new drug. In addition to killing Reece's family, they arranged for the troop he commanded in Afghanistan to be sent into a deadly ambush. Reece survived, but his days are numbered thanks to a brain tumor caused by the drug. Weary of living in hiding with so little time left, he agrees to a deal in which he will be pardoned for his crimes if he goes after the people responsible for the London tragedy. The action heats up as the scene shifts from Turkey to Ukraine to Iraq and Reece discovers the main culprit is an ambitious Russian oligarch with ties to organized crime. But the best part of the book is the setup, during which Reece, alone aboard a 48-foot yacht in the middle of the Atlantic, reflects on it all.

Castillo, Linda. [Shamed](#) (St Martins \$26.99 July 14). An Amish grandmother takes two small granddaughters to a deserted neighboring farm in November to harvest walnuts as she has for years. Annie is five. Elsie, a child with Cohen's genetic disease, is seven and special needs. Thinking she spots someone in the deserted farm house, Mary enters it and is butchered—no other word for it—by a man who then kidnaps Elsie. There's a hint from the dying Mary she knows why, but it dies with her. Painter's Mill Chief of Police Kate Burkholder is first on the scene when she spots a blood-splattered Annie running down the road, and mobilizes her department and her FBI Agent lover Tomasetti's to search for Elsie. And preserve the crime scene. It's a race against time for recovering Elsie and a family is keeping back secrets that impair Kate's investigation.... Love the voice of Kate, the pace, the relationships, and Castillo's alarming, unflinching plots.

Doiron, Paul. [Almost Midnight](#) (St Martins \$27.99 July 1). In the landmark #10 for Maine Game Warden Investigator Mike Bowditch, a deadly attack on one of Maine's last wild wolves opens up a path to a deadly conspiracy. Ironically, it begins when Bowditch is on vacation. Billy Cronk, one of his oldest friends and a man he had to reluctantly put behind bars for murder, sends him a summons. Billy wants him to investigate a new female prison guard with a mysterious past, and Mike feels honor-bound to help his friend. But when the guard becomes the victim in a brutal attack at the prison, he realizes there may be a darker cover-up at play—and that Billy and his family might be

at risk. Then Mike receives a second call for help, this time from a distant mountain valley where Shadow, a wolf-hybrid he once cared for, has been found shot by an arrow and clinging to life. He searches for the identity of the bowman, but his investigation is blocked at every turn by the increasingly hostile community. And when Billy's wife and children are threatened, Mike finds himself tested like never before. How can he possibly keep the family safe when he has enemies of his own on his trail? I add this is a splendid book for fans of Castillo as the growing Maine Amish community is a strong plot element. This is a rousing series vividly painting Maine's landscape and unsparing of animals and people. You CJ Box fans want to dive right in and order the [Bowditch series](#).

Gaylin, Alison. [Never Look Back](#) (Harper \$26.99 July 13). Multi-Edgar nominee Gaylin delves into the world of true crime podcasts (see Billy Jensen's actual true crime social media investigation book in August) in a frightening novel about a pair of killer teens. Los Angeles producer Quentin Garrison's *Closure* focuses on a series of 1970s murders April Cooper and Gabriel LeRoy committed. Garrison, investigating to quell his own pain at losing a young sister in 1974 to teen killers, contacts website columnist Robin Diamond. She thinks it's business but he claims Robin's mother may be connected to the spree. She blows him off, but then as she begins to think—although she's sure she knows her mother better than anyone does—she's disturbed. Then really disturbed when a brutal home invasion occurs.

Greaney, Mark. [Red Metal](#) (Berkley \$27 July 16 and July 29). A Starred Review: "Bestseller Greaney (the Gray Man series) and Rawlings, a Marine lieutenant colonel, closely follow more than a score of characters in this outstanding near-future military action thriller. Several years after the Russians lose control of a rare earth mine in Kenya, Colonel Yuri Borbikov, the Russian Special Forces commander who was in charge of the mine, draws up a plan, Operation Red Metal. Borbikov proposes a Russian raid into Europe to destroy America's Africa Command in Stuttgart, Germany, and a simultaneous attack to retake the mine. The Russian president approves, and Red Metal is on. The various battles—fought on land, sea, and in the air—are exciting, realistic, and technically detailed, complete with the high emotions experienced by the combatants. As in the best of this genre, there are no cartoon villains, just dedicated warriors who are given a mission and are determined to carry it out. This is powerful material, required reading for anyone interested in modern warfare."

Hunter, Stephen. [Game of Snipers](#) (Putnam \$27 July 29). Hunt wrote to me that this is his "all out sniper" thriller and wow, it is. The sniper stuff is outstanding. The plot is set up as a duel between the Jihad's bad guy fueled by faith and revenge and Bob Lee Swagger, despite his age and wounds, the only comparable shot to stop him. With the aid of a great back up team. Hunter brings off a brilliant end game for the pair that you won't see coming and which contains some high octane comments on today's world he shoots out like bullets. Actually bullets are key to this so you can learn a lot about them, too. I'm not a gun person but somehow he invests me in the sniper's world every time. Masterful. And with him appears former Navy SEAL and sniper Jack Carr with his own masterful book, as well as Mark Greaney returning to host. What a night for you fans! We once got a permit to shoot in our parking lot for a Hunter event but in July it's a no fly.

McKinty, Adrian. [The Chain](#) (LittleBrown \$28). Debuts here July 9 in a conversation with longtime fan Diana Gabaldon and comes with an extra, a passage annotated by McKinty exclusive to The Poisoned Pen. You won't want to miss the reboot of the award-winning and wonderful author's career. Stephen King calls it "propulsive and original," Dennis Lehane says it's "diabolical" and "unnerving," and Don Winslow calls it "*Jaws* for parents." Earlier this month *The Chain* sold to Paramount in a 7-figure film deal.

Global publishing has brought us fascinating characters and landscapes of other cultures and countries. But I'm fascinated by international authors who craft quintessentially American thrillers such as Lee Child (British). Northern Ireland-born Adrian McKinty, who's done a stint in Australia, really nails it with *The Chain*. The engine of the kidnapping plot is brilliantly conceived—which of us hasn't at some time received a chain letter tagged with dire consequences for breaking the chain?—but it's the vivid characters and their wrenching dilemmas that lift this chiller above the ordinary. Not to mention the true sociopath(s) running the chain. Grab a copy, then turn off your phone.

Quinn, Spencer. [Heart of Barkness](#) (Forge \$25.99 July 10). Chet, the series' good-natured, loyal, and exuberant canine narrator, and his partner and friend, Bernie Little, the owner and sole employee of the Little Detective Agency (based in an unnamed Western state which we know is Arizona), receive free passes to a performance at a local dive of country singer Lotty Pilgrim, whose megastar status is a thing of the dim and distant past. Bernie, saddened by the singer's reduced circumstances, slips a \$100 bill into her tip jar, though he can ill afford to do so. He subsequently tackles the thief who tries to steal it, only to have it plucked from his hand by Lotty's shady manager. When her manager ends up dead and all clues point to Lotty as the murderer, Bernie offers his help, which she hotly refuses. Bernie and Chet, who won't take no for an answer, stumble on a web of murder, fraud, and blackmail, plus enough sorrow to inspire a sheaf of country tunes. Dog lovers, enjoy the meandering plot echoing Chet's short attention span. 9<sup>th</sup> in a series much loved by Tracy of our staff, among others.

Rosenfelt, David. [Bark of Night](#) (St Martins \$27.99 July 17). What a gem! Andy Carpenter's vet, Dr. Dan Dowling, is distressed because somebody's dropped off a French bulldog in perfectly good health and paid to have him euthanized even though a chip implanted in the dog indicates that the man is not the dog's owner. Naturally, Andy overrules the order, takes the dog home, and thinks no more about it—until he realizes that documentary filmmaker James Haley, who's just been shot to death, was the real owner of the bulldog, whose name is Truman, and that the man who ordered Truman's death was almost certainly Haley's killer. It's too late for the police to arrest George Adams, the mob enforcer Dowling's receptionist recognizes as the man who wanted Truman euthanized, because he's already dead, executed along with his wife in suburban Philadelphia. The Paterson, NJ, police, knowing no better, meanwhile arrest Joey Gamble for Haley's murder because he visited Haley that night, his prints are all over Haley's place, and they find the murder weapon in his home. So despite Andy's well-established resistance to the practice of law (he has a large private income), he agrees to defend Joey. The case looks tough because the evidence, though it's all circumstan-

tial, is impressive. So Andy's only chance is to tie Haley's murder to the shooting of Christopher Tolbert, a homeless man in nearby Clifton, and to a total of 18—no, make that 26—oddly similar deaths across the country. One of the best hooks ever by an author who specializes in them, along with a constant stream of appealingly throwaway wisecracks and one of Rosenfelt's most successful portrayals of the professional criminals. Even dog haters will be collared by the nifty plot.

Scott, J. Todd. [This Side of Night](#) (Putnam \$26 July 15). Patrick makes the **July Hardboiled Crime Book of the Month** selection: “Building upon the promise of his first two books, veteran federal agent Scott has created a masterful borderlands epic that takes its inspiration from a real-life tragedy, the 2014 massacre of a busload of Mexican students. The incident drew worldwide condemnation, and seemed to point towards an escalating war between rival factions of a prominent drug cartel. Big Bend County Sheriff Chris Cherry gets involved when five bodies are found in a remote West Texas stretch of the Rio Grande. The DEA suspects law enforcement complicity in a neighboring county, a lingering remnant of the corrupt reign of Cherry's predecessor. Meanwhile, Nemesio cartel leader “Fox Uno” has escaped from an attempted coup in Mexico and slips over the border to seek temporary refuge with his niece, America Reynosa (who is now a brilliant young deputy working for Cherry). With Mexican *sicarios* and rogue American cops seemingly working together to bring down the fugitive cartel boss, it's up to Cherry, Reynosa and Deputy Danny Ford (an Iraq War combat vet with demons of his own) to preserve some semblance of law and order in the Big Bend.”

J. Todd Scott has been a federal agent with the DEA for more than twenty years, working cases investigating international maritime smuggling and domestic meth labs, and led a multi-agency strike force dedicated to attacking Mexican cartel smuggling routes. A posting in Texas provided the backdrop for his thrillers. “...Exciting and roughly lyrical...The author, a real-life DEA agent, gives you everything you could want in a West Texas crime saga: generational conflicts; the sights and smells of an exotic landscape; the ghosts of monsters and loved ones past.”—*Wall Street Journal*

Silva, Daniel. [The New Girl](#) (Harper \$28.99). His event at The Pen July 20 has only a few single tickets remaining, but you can order a signed copy in the usual way. At an exclusive private school in Switzerland, mystery surrounds the identity of the beautiful girl who arrives each morning and leaves each afternoon in a heavily protected motorcade fit for a head of state. She is said to be the daughter of a wealthy international businessman. She is not. And when she is brutally kidnapped across the border in the Haute-Savoie region of France, Gabriel Allon, the legendary chief of Israeli intelligence, is thrust into a deadly secret war with an old enemy that will determine the future of the Middle East—and perhaps the world....

Turton, Stuart. [The 71/2 Deaths of Evelyn Hardcastle](#) (\$16.99 July 14). In this dizzying literary puzzle, the hapless protagonist is doomed to relive the same day over and over unless he can solve a murder at a masquerade ball. “Turton's complex debut blends mystery with *Groundhog Day* and *Quantum Leap*. Guests have been invited to the Hardcastle family manse, the dilapidated Blackheath House in the English countryside, for a masquerade

ball that the Hardcastles are holding for the return of their daughter, Evelyn, from Paris. At the novel's start, several days before the ball, an unnamed protagonist comes upon Blackheath and enlists those inside to find the body of a woman he thinks has just been murdered. He's forgotten his identity, but people at the house think he's Dr. Sebastian Bell, an invitee to the ball. It turns out Bell is the first of eight people—invited guests of the Hardcastles, their associates, staff, and a police officer—whom the main character will inhabit over eight days in a repeating loop. This loop revolves around two mysteries: who killed young Thomas Hardcastle 19 years ago, and who murders Evelyn, his older sister, the night of the ball? As the hero amasses clues about the past and present, a mysterious costumed “Plague Doctor” chimes in to direct the action, explaining the only escape from this loop is to expose the identity of Evelyn's murderer.” You will either love this, possibly agreeing it's a meta-fiction Christie Country House Murder, or be exasperated; either way good things come of shaking up convention.

### JULY BOOKS OF THE MONTH

**British Crime Club** One unsigned hardcover or paperback per month  
Baker, Jo. [The Body Lies](#)

**Cozy Crimes Club** One unsigned hardcover or paperback per month  
Wilson, Andrew. [Death in a Desert Land](#)

**Discovery Club** One paperback or hardcover per month  
Patterson, Jorge Zepeda. [The Black Jersey](#)

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

**Hardboiled Crime Club** One signed First per month  
Scott, J. Todd. [This Side of Night](#)

**History/Mystery Club** One Signed First per month  
Williams, Beatriz. [The Golden Hour](#)

**History Paperback** One per month  
Sullivan, Laura L. [Milady](#)

**Modern First Editions** One Signed First per month  
Vuong, Ocean. [On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous](#)

**SciFi/Fantasy/Horror Club** One Signed First per month  
Miller, Tom. [The Philosophers' War](#) – add the first book [The Philosopher's Flight](#) for a \$44 package

**Surprise Me! Club One Signed First Per Month**  
Sager, Riley. [Lock Every Door](#)

**Thriller Club** One Signed First per month  
McKinty, Adrian. [The Chain](#)

### SIGNED BOOKS

✳️Aaronovitch, Ben. [October Man](#) (Gollancz \$32). Trier is famous for wine, Romans, and for being Germany's oldest city. So when a man is found dead with, his body impossibly covered in a fungal rot, the local authorities know they are out of their depth. Fortunately this is Germany, where there are procedures for everything. Enter Investigator Tobias Winter, whose aim is to get in, deal with the problem, and get out with the minimum of fuss, personal danger and paperwork. With the help of frighteningly enthusiastic local cop, Vanessa Sommer, he's quick to link the first victim to a group of ordinary middle aged men— and to realize they may have accidentally reawakened a bloody conflict from a previous century. But the rot is still spreading, literally

and with the suspect list extending to people born before Frederick the Great solving the case may mean unearthing the city's secret magical history...so long as that history doesn't kill them first.

Baldacci, David. [One Good Deed](#) (Grand Central \$29 on sale July 23). In 1949, Aloysius Archer arrives in the dusty Southern town of Poca City. He has nothing but a handful of dollars, the clothes he's wearing and an appointment with his new parole officer. After his wartime experiences in Italy and a prison sentence for a crime he didn't commit, Archer is looking for a fresh start and a peaceful life. On his first night of freedom, Archer meets local business tycoon Hank Pittleman, who promises Archer handsome compensation to work as his debt collector. Yet Archer takes on more than he bargains for, as he becomes embroiled in a long-running feud between the drought-struck town's most dangerous residents. When one of them dies, the authorities label Archer as their number one suspect. A bloody game is being played above and below the law. Archer isn't a sympathetic hero but he's tough and unstoppable.

✎Beckett, Simon. [The Scent of Death](#) (Random UK \$43). Once a busy hospital, St Jude's now stands derelict, awaiting demolition. Once a place of healing, it's now a burial ground. When a partially mummified corpse is found in the building's cavernous loft, forensics expert Dr David Hunter is called in to take a look. He can't say how long the body's been there, but he is certain it's that of a young woman. And that she was pregnant. Then part of the attic floor collapses, revealing another of the hospital's secrets: a bricked-up chamber with beds inside. And some of them are still occupied. For Hunter, what began as a straightforward case is about to become a twisted nightmare. And it soon becomes clear that St Jude's hasn't claimed its last victim

✎Brady, Tom. [Secret Service](#) (Random UK \$32). To those who don't really know her, Kate Henderson's life must seem perfectly ordinary. But she is in fact a senior MI6 officer, who right now is nursing the political equivalent of a nuclear bomb. Kate's most recent mission has yielded the startling intelligence that the British Prime Minister has cancer – and that one of the leading candidates to replace him may be a Russian agent of influence. Up against the clock to uncover the Russian mole, Kate risks everything to get to the truth.... So glad to see a new book by one of my favorite British authors, a busy journalist who's written some pips!

✎Craven, MW. [Black Summer](#) (Constable \$42.). Jared Keaton, chef to the stars. Charming. Charismatic. Psychopath. He's currently serving a life sentence for the brutal murder of his daughter, Elizabeth. Her body was never found and Keaton was convicted largely on the testimony of Detective Sergeant Washington Poe. So when a young woman staggers into a remote police station with irrefutable evidence that she is Elizabeth Keaton, Poe finds himself on the wrong end of an investigation, one that could cost him much more than his career. Helped by the only person he trusts, the brilliant but socially awkward Tilly Bradshaw, Poe races to answer the only question that matters: how can someone be both dead and alive at the same time?

Davis, Lindsey. [A Capitol Death](#) (Hodder \$46). The US edition is publishing (unsigned) which prompts a reminder that we still have a few of the signed UK edition left. This mystery earns a Starred Review: "An inauspicious death on the eve of Emperor

Domitian's planned return to Rome in 89 C.E. sets the stage for Davis's superior seventh outing for informer Flavia Alba. The powers that be fear that the capricious Domitian will lash out, violently, after the possibly unnatural death of Gabinius, a worker helping to prepare for the imperial triumph to celebrate the emperor's recent military victory in the east. Gabinius apparently jumped to his death from the top of the Tarpeian Rock. But the initial consensus that he was a suicide is shattered by a witness who insists that a second person was near Gabinius at the time. When the question of what actually happened falls to Roman official Tiberius Manlius Faustus, he passes the inquiry on to his wife, Flavia, who finds no shortage of people who wished the dead man ill. Davis does her usual brilliant job of integrating the history of the period, warts and all (Domitian's ostensible victory was actually the result of his paying off the enemy's leaders), with a fast-paced and fair whodunit. This entry reinforces her place at the top of the historical mystery pack."

✎Herron, Mick. [Joe Country](#) (Joseph \$36). Inside Slough House, the London outpost for disgraced MI5 spies, memories are stirring, all of them bad. Catherine Standish is buying booze again, Louisa Guy is raking over the ashes of lost love, and new recruit Lech Wicinski, whose sins make him an outcast even among the slow horses, is determined to discover who destroyed his career, even if he tears his life apart in the process. Meanwhile, in Regent's Park, Diana Taverner's tenure as First Desk is running into difficulties. She wants to remake the service to her own vision, ruthlessly; if she's going to succeed, she might have to make deals with a familiar old devil... And with winter taking its grip, Jackson Lamb would sooner be left brooding in peace, but even he can't ignore the dried blood on his carpets. So when the man responsible for killing a slow horse breaks cover at last, Lamb sends the slow horses out to even the score. And sadly, someone pay the ultimate price.

Lippman, Laura. [Lady in the Lake](#) (Harper \$28). Patrick reviews: "Lippman has really stepped up her game with her last few books. Last year's *Sunburn* was a pitch-perfect reversal of a James M. Cain style noir, and easily Lippman's darkest novel to date. Now, the award-winning author returns with an exquisite and complicated novel that reminded me of the sly, subversive tales of Patricia Highsmith. Set in 1960's Baltimore, the book centers on a female reporter's determination to solve the unsolved murder of a young African-American woman. Maddie Schwartz, has abandoned her pampered but stultifying marriage of twenty years to pursue a more liberated, meaningful life. She soon enters into a passionate affair with a black policeman, and finds work at a local newspaper. Society is changing fast and Schwartz wants to leave her mark, even if she has to give up the comforts she once enjoyed. When Cleo Sherwood's body is discovered in a city park lake, Schwartz seizes the opportunity to make a name for herself. Nobody seems to really care what happened to the young woman, and Sherwood's ghost (who addresses the reader throughout the novel) would prefer to just be left alone. As Schwartz investigates, she finds herself interacting with a wide cross section of Baltimore, but her monomania sometimes gets in the way of the people closest to her and will ultimately lead to tragic consequences. Highly recommended."

✎Lovesey, Peter. [Killing with Confetti](#) (Sphere \$50). As a New Year begins in Bath, Ben Brace proposes to his long-term girlfriend, Caroline, the daughter of notorious crime baron Joe Irving,

who is coming to the end of a prison sentence. The problem is that Ben's father, George, is the Deputy Chief Constable. A more uncomfortable set of in-laws would be hard to imagine. But mothers and sons are a formidable force: a wedding in the Abbey and reception in the Roman Baths are arranged before the career-obsessed DCC can step in. Peter Diamond, Bath's head of CID, is appalled to be put in charge of security on the day. Ordered to be discreet, he packs a gun and a guest list in his best suit and must somehow cope with potential killers, gang rivals, warring parents, bossy photographers and straying bridesmaids. The laid-back Joe Irving seems oblivious to the danger he is in from rival gang leaders, while Brace can't wait for the day to end. Will the photo session be a literal shoot? Will Joe Irving's speech as father of the bride be his last words? Can Diamond pull off a miracle, avert a tragedy? The relevance of confetti is revealed. This is not one of Lovesey's best plots although the reveal at the end will certainly surprise you. The real reason to delight in this book is Diamond Dagger and MWA Grand Master Lovesey's delight in Bath Abbey and the Roman Theater across the way. He revels in the architectures, traditions, histories, stained glass at the Abbey.... You will too.

Also from Lovesey: [The Crimes of Miss Oyster Brown and Other Stories](#) (Crippen & Landru \$45). The Diamond Dagger and multi-other-awards winner will be honored at the 2019 Bouchercon in Dallas. This collection of stories is one way publishers are honoring him. He has the new Peter Diamond, [Killing with Confetti](#) (Sphere \$50), out in July (Signed) in the UK, not in the US edition, and is a guest of honor at Bouchercon this fall. Unsigned paperback edition: [The Crimes of Miss Oyster Brown](#) (\$20).

✎Marston, Edward. [The Unseen Hand](#) (Allison \$42). It is the autumn of 1917, and at the luxurious Lotus Hotel in Chelsea, a maid is disrupted from her morning rounds by a horrifying discovery: instead of the dignified older lady who has been occupying a room, she find the dead body of a much younger woman. Harvey Marmion and Joe Keedy are dispatched from Scotland Yard to investigate, and learn that she seems to have been poisoned. But who is this woman? And what has happened to the previous occupant of the room? With a high profile client to impress, Marmion and Keedy must solve the mystery as quickly as possible, before the reputation of the hotel is damaged beyond repair.

Miller, Tom. [The Philosopher's War](#) (SimonSchuster \$26.99). Robert Canderelli Weekes as a rookie Rescue and Evacuation flier on the front lines of World War I in France. He came to save lives, but has no idea how far he'll have to go to win the war. Thanks to a stunning flying performance and a harrowing shoot-out in the streets of Boston, Robert Canderelli Weekes's lifelong dream has come true: he's the first male allowed to join the US Sigilry Corps's Rescue and Evacuation service, an elite, all-woman team of flying medics. But as he deploys to France during the waning days of the Great War, Sigilwoman Third-Class Canderelli learns that carrying the injured from the front lines to the field hospital is not the grand adventure he imagined. His division, full of misfits and renegades, is stretched the breaking point and has no patience for a man striving to prove himself. Slowly, Robert wins their trust and discovers his comrades are plotting to end the Great War by outlawed philosophical means. Robert becomes caught up in their conspiracy, running raids in enemy territory

and uncovering vital intelligence. Friends old and new will need his help with a dangerous scheme that just might win the war overnight and save a few million lives. But the German smoke-carvers have plans of their own: a devastating all-out attack that threatens to destroy the Corps and France itself. Naturally, Robert is trapped right in the thick of it.

Our **July SciFi/Fantasy Book of the Month**, *The Philosopher's War*, is the electrifying next chapter in Robert Weekes's story, filled with heroic, unconventional women, thrilling covert missions, romance and, of course, plenty of aerial adventures. Luckily I was able to get a matching number of Signed firsts of Robert's first mission, [The Philosopher's Flight](#) (SimonSchuster \$26). Priced singly as marked or we offer both at one price: \$44.

Mosse, Kate. [The Burning Chambers](#) (St Martins \$29) is an epic novel of the French Wars of Religion, packed with historical detail in richly textured stories of love, family, betrayal, faith and war. The first in a planned four-part series, the novel opens with a prologue set in South Africa in 1862—a nod to the eventual 300-year story arc planned for the series. But after this brief tease, the rest of *The Burning Chambers* remains squarely stationed in the late 16th century, starting in the very early days of the violent battles between the Huguenots (French Protestants) and Catholics that wracked France from 1562 to 1598. In the small town of Carcassonne, Minou, the daughter of a Catholic bookseller, works to keep her family afloat as her father grieves the loss of his beloved wife. At the same time, the Protestant Piet Reydon finds himself in Carcassonne to deliver a stolen relic to fellow Huguenot revolutionaries. Piet's path crosses with that of his one-time friend, now a powerful Catholic priest in the nearby city of Toulouse, and then with Minou's, setting off a series of events that is both labyrinthine and expertly plotted. Amidst these comings and goings and encounters, diary entries from an unnamed woman suggest there is more than just a relic missing—there is a will and an inheritance at stake.

Nadel, Barbara. [A Knife to the Heart](#) (Headline \$48). A derelict villa near Istanbul holds dark spirits, secrets and murder. Retired inspector Çetin Ikmen must confront his demons to reveal the shocking truth behind a young girl's death... When historian Suzan Tan is asked to examine the contents of a derelict villa on the Bosphorus, she is intrigued to discover a Ouija board among the artifacts. Forty years ago, a young girl was found with a knife in her heart in this villa. It is said that before her death this very Ouija board spelled out her name. The verdict was suicide—but what if it was a brutal act of murder and her killer was still walking free? Suzan asks Ikmen to solve the case, and despite his reluctance to get involved, he soon finds himself drawn into the mystery. With the help of his friend Inspector Süleyman, Ikmen delves into Istanbul's dark underbelly to uncover a terrifying tale of secrets, lies and murder.

Nesbø, Jo. [Knife](#) (Harvill \$45). Following the dramatic conclusion of *The Thirst*, Knife sees Harry Hole waking up with a ferocious hangover, his hands and clothes covered in blood. Not only is Harry about to come face to face with an old, deadly foe, but with his darkest personal challenge yet.

✎North, Alex. [The Whisper Man](#) (Joseph \$32). This may well be the August British Crime Book of the Month in the unsigned US edition, but for those who want a signed copy, this is the ticket. Still devastated after the loss of his wife, Tom Kennedy and

his young son Jake move to the sleepy village of Featherbank, looking for a fresh start. But Featherbank has a dark past. Fifteen years ago a twisted serial killer abducted and murdered five young boys. Until he was finally caught, the killer was known as “The Whisper Man.” Of course, an old crime need not trouble Tom and Jake as they try to settle in to their new home. Except that now another boy has gone missing. And then Jake begins acting strangely. He says he hears a whispering at his window....

✦Robinson, Maggie. [Who’s Sorry Now?](#) (Sourcebooks/Poisoned Pen \$26.99 or unsigned trade paperback \$15.99). Scotland Yard Detective Inspector Devenand Hunter finds himself in the middle of a series of upper-class deaths in London. The murderer has decided to extinguish Bright Young People in their favorite night spots, from a sleazy jazz club to the Savoy ballroom. Dev knows someone who can help him navigate the treacherous society waters: Lady Adelaide Compton, a marquess’ daughter and widow of a Great War hero. Unfortunately, Dev put her in jeopardy once, nearly leading him to turn in his warrant card. But when Addie’s sister Cee is nearly one of the victims, she turns to Mr. Hunter, offering her help. He’s reluctant, but she has an ace up her sleeve—flying ace Major Rupert Charles Cressleigh Compton, her late and unlamented husband and part-time ghost. Still trying to earn his celestial wings protecting his widow, Rupert is eager to assist, even if it means that Addie and the Anglo-Indian detective might become something more than friends. *Who’s Sorry Now* is the delicious sequel to [Nobody’s Sweetheart Now](#), sure to please fans of Kerry Greenwood’s Miss Fisher Mysteries. I think we can get Signed 1sts still if requested.

Rozan, SJ. [Paper Son](#) (Pegasus \$25.95). On sale in July—Signed here September 24 with James Sallis. What good news. Lydia Chin and Bill Smith return! And not in NYC where you might expect but in remote Coahoma County, Mississippi, where blood and blues are cooking. And Lydia’s cousin she didn’t know she had sits in a Clarksdale jail needing to be sprung. This is some of Rozan’s best, slyest, most humorous writing and she reveals a multicultural Delta country and a program called “paper sons” for Chinese immigrants I never knew existed. Like me, Ace Atkins likes a hell of a PI story that “takes on a hidden gem of Southern Culture—Chinese history in the Mississippi Delta.” My highest recommendation. I am particularly impressed by the way Rozan brings of a seemingly impossible resolution. **Do secure your copy now while we have first prints.** If you’re able to attend September 24 you can dive in to this gem and then bring it in for signing.

Russo, Richard. [Chances Are](#) (Knopf \$26.95). Signed in July but our **August Modern Firsts Book of the Month**. From the Pulitzer Prize-winning Richard Russo—his first stand-alone novel in a decade. One beautiful September day, three sixty-six-year old men convene on Martha’s Vineyard, friends ever since meeting in college circa the sixties. They couldn’t have been more different then, or even today—Lincoln’s a commercial real estate broker, Teddy a tiny-press publisher, and Mickey a musician beyond his rockin’ age. But each man holds his own secrets, in addition to the monumental mystery that none of them has ever stopped puzzling over since a Memorial Day weekend right here on the Vineyard in 1971. Now, more than forty years later, as this new weekend unfolds, three lives and that of a significant other are displayed in their entirety while the distant past confounds the present like a relentless squall of surprise and discovery. Shot through with Russo’s trademark comedy and humanity, Chances

Are...also introduces a new level of suspense and menace that will quicken the reader’s heartbeat throughout this absorbing saga of how friendship’s bonds are every bit as constricting and rewarding as those of family

Sager, Riley. [Lock Every Door](#) (Dutton \$28). Orphaned and dumped and laid-off 25-year-old Jules Larsen has hit rock bottom. Scarred by the deaths of her parents and the disappearance of her sister years before, she has recently been downsized at work and walked in on her boyfriend screwing another woman on their sofa. She’s been crashing on the couch of her best friend Chloe, desperate to reboot her life. And a chance arrives when responds to an ad for an apartment sitter at a Manhattan luxury apartment building, which turns out to be the Bartholomew, the gargoyle-adorned setting for her favorite book, a bestselling novel published in the ’80s about a 20-year-old orphan who lives in the iconic building. At the interview, Jules agrees to earn \$1000 a week for three months by living in the vacant 12A and by following a strict set of rules which include absolutely no visitors and refraining from interacting with the other residents, rich, some of them celebrities. Jules leaps at it despite Chloe’s reservations. Over the course of five days she breaks some rules and learns the tangled, tragic, and frequent-deaths history of the Bartholomew which many believe to be haunted. Things literally heat up leaving Jules forced to woman up....”Fans of Ira Levin, to whom the book is dedicated, will be delighted by Sager’s clever variation on a typical Levin plot.” I was too, making this our **July Surprise Me! Book of the Month**. I thought it was a Gothic but it kicks in a very real-world surprise in the end game. And doesn’t wrap one plot strand up. No peeking! Library Reads adds, “A slow-burn full of twists and turns and a shocking conclusion. For readers who enjoyed *The Wife Between Us* and *The Woman in the Window*.”

Showalter, Gina. [The Evil Queen](#) (Inkyard Press \$19.99). Dark Fantasy for the YA crowd and up—a book for mean girls and those battling them. Is destiny predetermined? Welcome to the Forest of Good and Evil. Far, far away, in the realm of Enchantia, creatures of legend still exist, magic is the norm and fairy tales are real. Except, fairy tales aren’t based on myths and legends of the past—they are prophecies of the future. Raised in the mortal realm, Everly Morrow has no idea she’s a real-life fairy-tale princess—until she manifests an ability to commune with mirrors. Look. See... What will one peek hurt? Soon, a horrifying truth is revealed. She is fated to be Snow White’s greatest enemy, the Evil Queen. With powers beyond her imagination or control, Everly returns to the land of her birth. There, she meets Roth Charmaine, the supposed Prince Charming. Their attraction is undeniable, but their relationship is doomed. As the prophecy unfolds, Everly faces one betrayal after another, and giving in to her dark side proves more tempting every day. Can she resist, or will she become the queen—and villain—she was born to be?

✦Sykes, SD. [Bone Fire](#) (Hodder \$43). A new medieval mystery for fans of CJ Sansom and for me who finds them fascinating. 361. Plague has returned to England thirteen years after the devastation of The Black Death. As destruction advances towards his estate in Kent, Oswald de Lacy leads his family to the safety of a remote castle in the marshes—where his friend Godfrey is preparing a fortress to survive the coming disaster. The rules are clear: once the de Lacys and other guests are inside the castle the portcullis will be lowered and no-one permitted to enter or

leave until the Pestilence has passed. And then a murderer strikes. Oswald is confronted with a stark choice: leave and face the ravages of the plague, or stay and place his family at the mercy of a brutal killer. With word of his skills as an investigator preceding him, it falls to Oswald to unmask the murderer in their midst. Host, guest, or servant—everyone is a suspect in this poisoned refuge of secrets, deceit and malice. Excellent for fans of Susannah Gregory, Priscilla Royal, Paul Doherty, Minette Walters’ two most recent novels, and Sharon Kay Penman. In September a Robert Harris medieval has just been announced.

✠Tremayne, Peter. [Blood in Eden](#) (Headline \$46). Set in 672 C.E., Tremayne’s gripping 30th whodunit featuring Irish investigative magistrate explores the religious and social tensions of its time when, as an author’s note indicates, “New concepts of Christianity being brought in from Rome resulted in conflicts and confusion as ideas on issues such as property ownership and inheritance began to be influenced.” Amid growing threats to the status quo, Fidelma and her husband, Eadulf, arrive just in time to prevent the angry villagers of Cloichín from hanging Celgaire, an itinerant worker they believed killed Adnan, a farmer who refused to hire Celgaire, and Adnan’s family. Brother Gadra, a priest who stirred up the villagers, doesn’t recognize the authority of what he terms Fidelma’s “pagan law.” Finding the evidence against Celgaire thin, she investigates and soon discovers that Adnan, his wife, and their two sons weren’t all murdered with the same weapon—and that others had better reason to wish Adnan dead. Tremayne carefully builds the suspense.

Williams, Beatriz. [The Golden Hour](#) (Harper \$28) is packed full of intrigue, much of it swirling around the Duke and Duchess of Windsor who have been sidelined to the Bahamas during the war where it is thought they can do no harm. It’s 1941. Newly-widowed Leonora “Lulu” Randolph arrives in the Bahamas to investigate the Governor and his wife for a New York society magazine—American readers have an insatiable appetite for news of the Windsors, that glamorous couple whose love affair nearly brought the British monarchy to its knees five years earlier. What more intriguing backdrop for their romance than a wartime Caribbean paradise, a colonial playground for kingpins of ill-gotten empires? Or so Lulu imagines. But as she infiltrates the Duke and Duchess’s social circle, and the powerful cabal that controls the islands’ political and financial affairs, she uncovers evidence that beneath the glister of Wallis and Edward’s marriage lies an ugly—and even treasonous—reality. In fact, Windsor-era Nassau seethes with spies, financial swindles, and racial tension, and in the middle of it all stands Benedict Thorpe: a scientist of tremendous charm and murky national loyalties. Inevitably, the willful and wounded Lulu falls in love. Then Nassau’s wealthiest man is murdered in one of the most notorious cases of the century, and the resulting cover-up reeks of royal privilege. Benedict Thorpe disappears without a trace, and Lulu embarks on a journey to London and beyond to unpick Thorpe’s complicated family history that begins in 1900. The murder of Sir Harry Oakes has inspired many books as has the Windsor story which over time has lost the romantic sheen it first enjoyed. Vintage Williams and our **July History/Mystery Book of the Month**.

Willig, Lauren. [The Summer Country](#) (Morrow \$26.99). I have to give our June History/Mystery Book of the Month another push. It’s brilliant: Colonial Barbados, racism, immigration, a puzzling inheritance, rebellion and an epidemic. Victorian and absolutely

relevant to 2019! As Willig says, this is full out MM Kaye or Victoria Holt. It opens up an unfamiliar world. AND our copies contain a collector point: there’s a major typo in the dust jacket copy.

## CRIME CLASSICS

*Crime fiction is on the rise having peaked in the late 1990s and then as cycles do, subsided. One sign is an interest in and the republication of classics!*

*British Library Crime Classics*

Bellairs, George. [Surfeit of Suspects](#) (Poisoned Pen \$14.99). “At 8 o’clock in the evening on the 8th of November, there was a terrific explosion in Green Lane, Evingden.” The offices of the Excelsior Joinery Company have been blown to smithereens; three of the company directors are found dead amongst the rubble, and the peace of a quiet town in Surrey lies in ruins. When the supposed cause of an ignited gas leak is dismissed and the presence of dynamite revealed, Superintendent Littlejohn of Scotland Yard is summoned to the scene. But beneath the sleepy veneer of Evingden lies a hotbed of deep-rooted grievances. The new subject of the town’s talk, Littlejohn’s investigation is soon confounded by an impressive cast of suspicious persons, each concealing their own axe to grind. First published in 1964, Bellairs’ novel of small-town grudges with calamitous consequences revels in the abundant possible solutions to its central, explosive crime as a masterpiece of misdirection.

Coming in August: Lorac, EC. [Murder in the Mill Race](#) (\$14.99).

*Other classics*

Boucher, Anthony. [Rocket to the Morgue](#) (\$15.95). Legendary science fiction author Fowler Faulkes may be dead, but his creation, the iconic Dr. Derringer, lives on in popular culture. Or at least, the character would live on, if not for Faulkes’s protective and greedy heir Hilary, who, during his time as the inflexible guardian of the estate, has created countless enemies in the relatively small community of writers of the genre. Fully aware of his unpopularity, Hilary fears for his life after two near misses with potentially fatal “accidents” and calls the police for help. But when an explosive box of chocolates is delivered to his doorstep, it becomes clear that death awaits around every corner as the stalker, who has already killed, will find a way to murder him, no matter how impossible it may seem

A locked room classic. It is also a *roman à clef* with characters based on folks like Robert Heinlein, John W. Campbell, and L. Ron Hubbard—and F. Paul Wilson’s introduction offers a great key for sorting out who’s who. Boucher (a pseudonym), who wrote both science fiction and mystery, knew both of these worlds well; he was the head mystery reviewer for the *New York Times* for several decades, and was a part of the real-life writing group to which the novel is dedicated, which convened at Heinlein’s house. The annual Bouchercon convention, named after Anthony, was, in its infancy, devoted to both sci-fi and mystery fiction; now in its 50th year, and devoted strictly to crime and mystery fiction, the convention is the largest of its kind in the world

✠Heyer, Georgette. [Penhallow](#) (Sourcebooks \$14.99). #10 in the reissued [Country House Murders](#) by the author of superb Regencies. *Penhallow* is Heyer’s most unusual mystery, a psychological

thriller about a family tyrant whose murder has shocking and far-reaching unintended consequences. Hated for his cruel and vicious nature, yet ruling his family with an iron hand from his sickbed, tyrannical patriarch Adam Penhallow is found murdered days before his birthday. His entire family had assembled for his birthday celebration, and every one of them had access and the ways and means to commit the crime. As accusation and suspicion turn in one direction, then another, the claws and backstabbing come out and no one is exempt from the coming implosion. “Miss Heyer’s characters act and speak with an ease and conviction that is as refreshing as it is rare in the ordinary mystery novel.” —*Times Literary Supplement*. I recommend ordering them all for a plunge into Agatha Christie territory. Heyer’s husband, a judge, consulted on plots and any reader of her Regencies knows her characters positively leap to life.

Holding, Elisabeth Sanxay. [The Unlit Lamp and Selected Stories](#) (Stark House \$19.95). A classic 1920s social drama, paired with a collection of six stories from the same period. “Subtle, psychologically nuanced portraits of women making sense of troubled marriages [and] conflicted relationships.”—Sarah Weinman, *Troubled Daughters, Twisted Wives*. Introduction by Judith Rose Ardron.

Jaedeker, Kermit. [Tall, Dark and Dead / The Savage Chase by Frederick Lorenz / Run the Wild River by D. L. Champion](#) (Stark House \$21.95). Three 1950s noir treasures from Lion Books. “Reading these books is like watching late night film noir on late night TV with the lights out.”—Rick Ollerman. “A punch in the gut!”—James Reasoner, *Rough Edges*

⌘Moyes, Patricia. [The Coconut Killings](#) (Felony \$14.95). What could be more idyllic than a Caribbean vacation at a golf resort? Maybe a vacation that isn’t rudely marred by a murder, especially one that seems to have been committed by the resort’s friendly bartender. The murder only serves to heighten the tensions—already plenty high—between the native islanders and the very pale people enjoying the resort, so Henry Tibbett is called in to pour some soothing British oil on the troubled waters. Where Henry goes, of course, trouble follows....

[Who is Simon Warwick?](#) (Felony \$14.95). Lord Charlton, that wealthy old geezer, has shuffled off this mortal coil, leaving all his dosh to his nephew, Simon. Problem is, nobody has actually seen Simon since he was a baby, adopted by Americans after his parents were killed in an air raid. And with all that lovely lolly at stake, it is perhaps not surprising that more than one “Simon Warwick” turns up to claim the cash. Enter Henry Tibbett, charged with sorting the real Simon from the false—a task made no easier when one of the “Simons” turns up dead.

But this is Henry Tibbett #14 out July 23. If you are new to this classic British cozy series, much of it set abroad, then start with [Dead Men Don’t Ski](#) (\$14.95), Henry’s first case. As ever his wife Emmy is his sleuthing and life partner. [Then order more.](#)

Van Dine, SS. Van Dine, SS. [The Greene Murder Case](#) (Felony \$14.95). Members of the Greene family keep dying while the pool of possible perpetrators keeps shrinking (although the servants, each one weirder than the next, remain in the pink of health). Philo Vance—the independently wealthy, staggeringly brilliant, not remotely modest (and did we mention handsome?) amateur sleuth—uses his detective skills to unravel the murders, though sadly not before most of the Greene family has been

bumped off. First published in 1928, Greene topped the year’s bestseller lists, and was made into not one, not two, but an astonishing three films, the first starring William Powell, and the second somebody named Grant Richards. The third, a made-for-TV movie, came out just 16 years ago... in the Czech Republic.

[The Bishop Murder Case](#) (Felony \$14.95). The 4<sup>th</sup> for Philo Vance. After solving the Greene murders, he has taken a well-earned holiday in Switzerland. Returning to New York City he finds his old chum District Attorney Anthony Markham up against a bizarre series of murders inspired by children’s nursery rhymes. The first murder, involving a beautiful young woman and a private archery range, was apparently based on “Who Killed Cock Robin?”; it is followed by more hideous deaths referencing “Mother Goose.” But Philo Vance is not a man to be fobbed off with points to juvenilia. Markham and his colleagues may be worried that a certain Mr. H. Dumpty is riding for a great fall, but Philo Vance suspects a connection to a rather more sophisticated writer.

### LIBRARIANS RECOMMEND

*I like this selection of books for July, in part because these are books powered by story and character that I actually want to read (as opposed to feeling I ought to read), and because librarians, being bookish, like books about books and also linking new books to favorite books.... Ranked top to bottom*

Waxman, Abbi. [The Bookish Life of Nina Hill](#) (Berkley \$16). “Nina likes her bookish life just fine. She works in a bookstore and is on a highly competitive trivia team. She is funny and snarky and great company (says this reader). Suddenly, a father she never knew dies and leaves her with a pack of brothers and sisters and Nina may be forced out of her comfortable reading chair. For readers who enjoyed *Waiting for Tom Hanks* by Kerry Winfrey and *The Bookshop* by Penelope Fitzgerald.”

Whitehead, Colson. [The Nickel Boys](#) (Doubleday \$24.95). “An incredibly powerful story about an abusive boys’ reform school in the 1960s. Whitehead skillfully brings each character to life even as they suffer physical and emotional horrors. For fans of *Panopticon* by Jenni Fagan.”

Wendig, Chuck. [Wanderers](#) (Del Rey \$28.99). “A pandemic is sweeping the nation that causes affected people to sleepwalk. They cannot be awoken and family and friends must accompany them on their journey while the CDC tries to find the cause and cure. For fans of *Cryptonomicon* and *The Windup Girl*.”

Goldin, Megan. [The Escape Room](#) (St. Martin’s Press \$26.99). “Highly successful colleagues Sam, Vincent, Sylvie, and Jules are no strangers to the competitive world of high finance but after they become trapped in an elevator escape room they find themselves having to work together. For readers of Tana French, Karin Slaughter, and Harlan Coben.”

Moreno-Garcia, Silvia. [Gods of Jade and Shadow](#) (Del Rey \$26). “In 1920s Mexico, a young woman unwittingly awakens a Mayan god and is pulled into his quest for vengeance. The odyssey that follows takes her through the jungles to Mexico City and the underworld as she realizes her inner strength and passion. For readers who enjoyed *Uprooted* and *Circe*.”

Hawkins, Karen. [The Book Charmer](#) (Gallery \$16). “Sarah is the librarian in a small Southern town called Dove Pond. Her magic is matching the right book to the right reader at the right time in

their life. Grace is a city girl, new in town and in need of a little magic herself. For readers who enjoyed *The Library of Lost and Found* and *The Storied Life of A.J. Fikry*.

### A FEW SPIES OF SUMMER

Alger, Christina. [The Banker's Wife](#) (\$16). The Swiss are not lily-white and Alger's portrait of the Swiss landscape and society leaps to life. It's a bit of a stretch to call this a spy novel but as the plot turns on secretive and illegal banking and corporate/government malfeasance plus an off-the-books operation to achieve the surprise ending. I remind you of it. In its recommendation the *NY Times* writes, "In Alger's cerebral, expertly paced Swiss thriller, an American expat wife sorts through the conflicting stories surrounding her husband's death and the shady investigations that follow. Tina Jordan, reviewing the book, calls it 'slick, heart-hammering entertainment.'" Recommended to readers of the unusual spy novels of Chris Pavone starting with his Edgar-winning [The Expats](#) (\$16).

Altman, John, [The Korean Woman](#) (Blackstone \$26.99). North Korea's deadliest weapon is sleeper agent Song Sun Young. Married with children and living the good life in New York City, she has waited seven years to activate the mission she was trained to do: infiltrate America's financial infrastructure. She prays the call from her handlers will never come, because she loves her husband and kids and affluent New York lifestyle. But the call does come. During volatile negotiations between the White House and Pyongyang, Song is hurled back into a reality she had hoped to leave behind forever. Unbeknownst to her, the CIA has already broken her cover. Working with "retired" Israeli operative Dalia Artzi, they track the Korean agent as she relentlessly executes her mission.

✎Atkinson, Kate. [Transcription](#) (\$16.99). "Think of it as an adventure," Perry had said right at the beginning of all this. And it had seemed like one. A bit of a lark, she had thought. A Girls' Own adventure." Is it ever possible to transcend the choices of the past? In this superb new novel, it's 1940 when Juliet Armstrong is recruited into the British intelligence service, MI5. She supports an operation by transcribing recorded meetings between a British agent, posing as a member of the Gestapo, and British Nazi sympathizers. At 19 and somewhat naïve but with considerable wit and intelligence, she is soon entangled in espionage, undertaking an active role in the operation and bringing several traitors to justice. When the war ends, Juliet leaves MI5 for the BBC, first in Manchester, and then in London, where she produces programs for the emerging schools educational service in 1950. As Juliet's life tantalizingly unfolds, it becomes apparent that she has made some very provocative choices during the war, and that absolutely nothing is as it seems.

✎Brady, Tom. [Secret Service](#) (Random UK \$32). To those who don't really know her, Kate Henderson's life must seem perfectly ordinary. But she is in fact a senior MI6 officer, who right now is nursing the political equivalent of a nuclear bomb. Kate's most recent mission has yielded the startling intelligence that the British Prime Minister has cancer – and that one of the leading candidates to replace him may be a Russian agent of influence.

Carpenter, Lea. [Red, White, Blue](#) (\$16.95) is a beautifully written spy novel told in short segments, many of them narrated by a nameless CIA officer. See Our July Large Paperback Picks below for more.

Carr, Jack. [True Believer](#) (Atria \$28 July 29 – before publication date). Carr got my vote in 2018 for outstanding thriller debut—the real deal as he is the real deal, a warrior, SEAL, and sniper who also grasps spycraft. Lee Child agrees: "This is seriously good. I mean—seriously. Both author Jack Carr and main character James Reece are the real deal, the action is razor sharp, the suspense is unrelenting, and the tradecraft is so authentic the government will probably ban it—so read it while you can!" Actually the government gets to redact text so that's part of the book. Join us July 29. Meanwhile if you somehow missed [The Terminal List](#) (\$9.99), grab it now.

Coes, Ben. [Bloody Sunday](#) (\$9.99). "North Korean Supreme Leader Kim Jong-un is dying of cancer. With less than a month to live, Jong-un decides to go out in a blaze of nuclear glory and take two American cities with him. All he needs is a couple of long-range missiles, and it so happens that his ally Iran is happy to supply them. Dewey has personal reasons for wanting to quit the spy business, but U.S. president J.P. Dellenbaugh talks him into staying on and dealing with the North Korean threat. CIA newcomer Jenna Hartford, on loan from MI6, has designed a mission to poison Gen. Pak Yong-sik, head of the North Korean armed forces, and force him to divulge Korean secrets in exchange for an antidote for the poison. It's a complicated mission. Coes starts a new series and signs [The Russian](#) (St Martins \$28) for us in August.

Fesperman, Dan. [Safe Houses](#) (\$16.95). Double Agents. Cold War Lies. A Secret Spy Sisterhood. Murder! Fesperman's new novel is a two track story with a tragic collision point. In 1979 West Berlin, Helen Abell, a low-level CIA functionary overseeing safe houses, accidentally overhears and tape records a violent encounter between a much higher ranking officer, Kevin Gilley, and a German woman. Helen intervenes, incurring Gilley's wrath; when the woman turns up dead, Helen seeks to bring Gilley to justice. In general, the resourceful Helen does the best she can to deal with the era's sexism with the help of a sisterhood of CIA women determined to make a difference. In 2014, Helen and her husband have been murdered on their Maryland farm, and their mentally ill son, Willard, confesses to the shooting after he walks to the population sign and lowers the number residing in the community. Helen's daughter Anna, rejecting Willard's guilt, hires the mysterious PI Henry Mattick, a man already surveilling the family, to investigate. Anna is shocked to discover that her mom was once a spy. This is a story for our time when questions about deep, dark secrets within the CIA and FBI are being bruited. Highly recommended as are all of the [superb spy novels](#) by this award-winning author.

✎Herron, Mick. [Joe Country](#) (Soho \$26.95). In Slough House, the London outpost for disgraced MI5 spies, memories are stirring, all of them bad. Catherine Standish is buying booze again, Louisa Guy is raking over the ashes of lost love, and new recruit Lech Wicinski, whose sins make him an outcast even among the slow horses, is determined to discover who destroyed his career, even if he tears his life apart in the process. Meanwhile, in Regent's Park, Diana Taverner's tenure as First Desk is running into difficulties. If she's going to make the Service fit for purpose, she might have to make deals with a familiar old devil. And with winter taking its grip, Jackson Lamb would sooner be left brooding in peace, but even he can't ignore the dried blood on his carpets. So when the man responsible for killing a slow horse

breaks cover at last, Lamb sends the slow horses out to even the score. Like me, John Sandford is a major Herron fan. This is Slough House #6. See Signed Books for the UL edition. I recommend you start reading the series with #1, [Slow Horses](#) (\$9.99). The series has twice won the CWA Dagger Award.

Maden, Mike. [Tom Clancy: Line of Sight](#) (Putnam \$29). Aida Curic is a self-possessed beauty who runs a refugee agency that helps the children of her native Bosnia. Jack finds himself drawn to her, but before he can act on his feelings she's snatched off the streets of Sarajevo by kidnapers. In Jack's desperate search for Aida, he finds himself opposed by everyone from Serbian mobsters to Croatian paramilitary units. The Balkan War may have ended two decades ago, but the region still seethes with ethnic animosities. The deeper Jack plunges into this world the more he faces a disturbing truth, the scars of war fester long after the surface has healed. Mike Maden was a brilliant choice to take over the Jack Ryan Junior franchise when Grant Blackwood exited the series. What he's done is nothing short of incredible, putting a charge into this franchise that, while popular, always seemed to be in the shadows of the Jack Ryan Senior books. That changes now....thanks to Maden putting his own stamp on this series and elevating it to new heights. I think Maden's first for young Jack, [Point of Contact](#) (\$9.99), is a gem and recommend it highly

Parker, T Jefferson. [Swift Vengeance](#) (\$9.99). In its way this 2<sup>nd</sup> investigation by San Diego PI Roland Ford fits the Summer of Spies as Ford drills down to find whoever is knocking off CIA drone operators.

✎Ryan, Jennifer. [The Spies of Shilling Lane](#) (Crown \$27). A cozy, entertaining spy story, one of many similar novels pouring out of facets of WWII and especially of stories of women in the war. Ryan, author of the [Chilbury Ladies Choir](#) (\$16), presents, says [Kirkus Reviews](#), "a social climber in reverse in Mrs. Braithwaite, a recently divorced, not very well-off granddaughter of an earl just deposed from her position as head of the Women's Voluntary Service in her English village during World War II. Raised by her Aunt Augusta, a heartless snob, Mrs. Braithwaite has always been told her family is superior to others. When her WVS nemesis, Mrs. Metcalf, forces her out, Mrs. Braithwaite realizes that a secret Mrs. Metcalf knows about her will always make her vulnerable, so she decides to go to London to tell her daughter, Betty, about the secret, thus denying Mrs. Metcalf the upper hand. Arriving in Wandsworth Common, she meets Mr. Norris, Betty's landlord, and finds out that Betty has been missing for several days in the midst of the Blitz. Undeterred, Mrs. Braithwaite sets about searching for Betty, eventually enlisting Mr. Norris in this quest. As they make their way around war-torn London, unraveling the mystery of what kind of war work Betty has been doing and where she's been, Mrs. Braithwaite engages in some self-reflection. As the story unfolds, she and Mr. Norris become a team, thwarting a group of British fascists and helping a number of other people along the way."

Silva, Daniel. [The New Girl](#) (Harper \$28.99 Signed). See Event Books for more on this month's new Gabriel Allon that begins when a girl is kidnapped from an exclusive private school in Switzerland and shifts to France's Haute-Savoie region, new territory for the legendary Israeli spy.

Steinhauer, Olen. [The Middleman](#) (\$18). Steinhauer's sweeping espionage novel traces the rise and fall of a domestic left-wing

terrorist group. One day in the early summer of 2017, about 400 people disappear from their lives. They leave behind cell phones, credit cards, jobs, houses, families—everything—all on the same day. Where have they gone? Why? The only answer, for weeks, is silence. Kevin Moore is one of them. Former military, disaffected, restless, Kevin leaves behind his retail job in San Francisco, sends a good-bye text to his mother, dumps his phone and wallet into a trash can, and disappears. Special Agent Rachel Proulx has been following the growth of left-wing political groups in the U.S. What she eventually uncovers is...shocking. I'm a serious fan of all of Steinhauer's work. Twice nominated for an Edgar Award, his most popular spy story is [The Tourist](#) (\$15.99) which you should add to your reading list ASAP.

Thor, Brad. [Backlash](#) (Atria \$27.99 Signed). This Scot Harvath is a knockout, front facing Russia and loaded with action propelled by revenge and ambition. But don't read it before you devour [Spymaster](#) (\$9.99)! A challenge for an author writing a long series is keeping it moving forward even at considerable costs.

Wilkinson, Lauren. [American Spy](#) (Random \$29 Signed). I love this February 2019 First Mystery Book of the Month that takes you into less familiar territory. We have half a dozen Signed first left. Wilkinson's unflinching, incendiary debut combines the espionage novels of John le Carré with the racial complexity of Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*. Marie Mitchell, the daughter of a Harlem-born cop and a Martinican mother, is an operative with the FBI in the mid-'80s peak of the Cold War. Marie is languishing in the bureaucratic doldrums of the agency, a black woman stultified by institutional prejudice relegated to running snitches associated with Pan-African movements with Communist links. All this changes when she is tapped by the CIA to insinuate herself with Thomas Sankara, the charismatic new leader of Burkina Faso, in a concerted effort to destabilize his fledgling government and sway them toward U.S. interests. Now the key player in a honeypot scheme to entrap Sankara, Marie finds herself questioning her loyalties as she edges closer to both Sankara and the insidious intentions of her handlers abroad. In the bargain, she also hopes to learn the circumstances surrounding the mysterious death of her elder sister, Helene, whose tragically short career in the intelligence community preceded Marie's own....

#### OUR JULY LARGE PAPERBACK PICKS

Abbott, Megan. [Give Me Your Hand](#) (\$16.99) traces the relationship between Kit and Diane, two smart and driven girls who met in high school and forged the kind of intense bond unique to that time of life, until an explosive secret blew apart their friendship. A decade later, both are rising stars dreaming of scientific glory, when they find themselves working alongside one another in a lab where the stakes are high and the competition is fierce. Each knows too much about the other, and when a new secret emerges, one of them is forced to make an impossible choice: will she save her nemesis, to save herself?

✎Atherton, Nancy. [Aunt Dimity and the King's Ransom](#) (\$15). This 23<sup>rd</sup> Aunt Dimity takes us to one of my favorite English towns: Rye, home to smugglers and literati and a great medieval inn. Lori Shepherd and her husband, Bill, setting off from the English village of Finch for a romantic getaway from their three children. Plans go awry before they reach their destination of Rye when a coastal storm maroons Lori, sans Bill, in an unfamiliar town. Taking refuge in a dimly lit church, Laurie fears for her life

when a strange man garbed in dark clothing approaches her. So begins a series of quick judgments and mishaps that lead Lori and her new friend, a retired bishop, on a quest to discover why the local King's Ransom Inn is haunted. The inn—filled with stranded travelers, including Lori—was once a smugglers' haven. Is the cook, a surly ex-con, using the inn's tunnels and secret passages for criminal pursuits? Is a particularly unpleasant guest a criminal, too? And is the inn truly haunted? You can order the [entire Aunt Dimity series](#).

✂Berry, Flynn. [A Double Life](#) (\$16). This is a knockout from the author of the award-winning [Under the Harrow](#) (\$16). Claire is a hardworking doctor living a simple, quiet life in London. Nearly thirty years ago, while Claire and her infant brother slept upstairs, a brutal crime was committed in her family's townhouse. Her father's car was found abandoned near the English Channel the next morning, with bloodstains on the front seat. Her mother insisted she'd seen him in the house that night, but his powerful, privileged friends maintained his innocence. The first lord accused of murder in more than a century, he has been missing ever since. When the police tell Claire they've found her father, her carefully calibrated existence begins to fracture. She doesn't know if she's the daughter of a murderer or a wronged man. How far will she go to discover which? Berry does her own spin on the real life story of Lord Lucan, one yet to be, or probably never will be, played out.

Carpenter, Lea. [Red, White, Blue](#) (\$16.95) is a beautifully written spy novel told in short segments, many of them narrated by a nameless CIA officer. Successful banker and stockbroker Noel spied for the CIA for 30 years. During this time, his wife, Lulu, abandoned the family, and Noel was left to raise their precocious child, Anna, alone. When Noel dies, Anna tries to piece together her father's life in the face of accusations that he was really a spy for the Chinese. The nameless CIA agent, who was Noel's protégé and is now missing, is wanted by the CIA for unofficially exfiltrating a Chinese double agent, who was recruited by Noel. Where most thrillers showcase familiar tips on spy craft and weaponry, Carpenter depicts the more esoteric and often byzantine facets of intelligence work. She skips the easy morality of guns, patriotic loyalty, and heroic action to slowly disclose the complexities of the secret world and how it relates to the human heart. Readers should not expect to come away satisfied with pat solutions, but rather to be seduced and enthralled.

Fesperman, Dan. [Safe Houses](#) (\$16.95). Double Agents. Cold War Lies. A Secret Spy Sisterhood. Murder! Fesperman's new novel is a two track story with a tragic collision point. See Spies of Summer above for more of my rave over this superb novel.

Gardner, Lisa. [Never Tell](#) (\$15). In Boston PD's D.D. Warren's latest case, a woman accused of murdering her husband, takes a macabre twist when D.D. recognizes Evie Carter as the suspect in her very first case, the 16-year-old who accidentally shot and killed her father, a renowned Harvard professor. It gets even stranger when not only this case starts unraveling but it seems the murdered husband has ties to a crime involving D.D.'s confidential informant, Flora Dane, herself a survivor of a heinous crime. Book ten in the series (after Look for Me) presents an exceptional, fast-paced, and disturbing cat-and-mouse game with super scary bad guys and dark-web dealings that will keep readers guessing until an ingenious aha moment....

Joy, David. [The Line That Held Us](#) (\$16). Joy pulls no punches in this stark and violent examination of sacrifice and suffering. "Think *No Country for Old Men* meets *There Will Be Blood* — *The Line that Held Us* is beautifully written, perfectly executed, and breathtakingly violent." Two poachers, both trespassing on private land, accidentally cross paths, kicking off this killer plot. Set in North Carolina just before fall, the story opens with Darl Moody. Annoyed by hunting laws, which barely allow men like him who are just trying to feed his family provide a little meat for the dinner table, Darl sets out a few hours before dark to poach wild game. Instead, he accidentally kills a man. While Darl was hunting out of season, Carol "Sissy" Brewer was stealing ginseng. Tragically, Moody mistakenly thought Carol was a boar. An act that leads to violence and tragedy.... Annoyed by hunting laws, which barely allow men like him who are just trying to feed his family provide a little meat for the dinner table, Darl sets out a few hours before dark to poach wild game. Instead, he accidentally kills a man. While Darl was hunting out of season, Carol "Sissy" Brewer was stealing ginseng. Tragically, Moody mistakenly thought Carol was a boar

McCafferty, Keith. [A Death in Eden](#) (\$16). When scarecrows appear in the cliffs above Montana's famous Smith River and a little girl reports being chased by one in the night, state investigator Harold Little Feather is brought in to find the culprit. Are the menacing effigies related to a copper-mining project that threatens the purity of the Smith? That's Harold's initial suspicion, but his investigation takes an ominous turn when a decapitated body is found in the river. As Harold's search leads him back in time through the canyon's history, Sean Stranahan launches his raft upriver. He has been hired to guide a floating party that includes Clint McCaine, the manager of the mine project; Bart Trueblood, the president of "Save The Smith," a grassroots organization devoted to stopping the project; and the documentarian filming their arguments. McCaine and Trueblood grew up on the Smith on neighboring ranches, and as they travel downstream, it's revealed that the two share a past that runs much deeper and darker than their opposing viewpoints. I love this series with its spare-no-prisoners crimes, quirky love story, and glorious landscapes painted by an author you CJ Box and Paul Doiron fans have to love. Keep an eye on the snake! I recommend you order and read your way through [all 7 Stranahans](#).

Nesbø, Jo. [Macbeth](#) (\$16). "One of the pleasures of reading this book is watching Nesbø meet the formidable challenge of assimilating elements of the play unsuited to realistic crime fiction, especially the supernatural... In *Macbeth*, Shakespeare was unusually stingy when it came to sharing his characters' back stories and motivations... What Shakespeare withholds, Nesbø delves into deeply, taking one of Shakespeare's shortest and most enigmatic plays and expanding on what brought his characters to this point in their lives... Nesbø also makes much of one advantage he has over Shakespeare, who during the reign of the Scottish King James, recently targeted for assassination, could not show a Scottish monarch being killed onstage... Nesbø works under no such constraints, and these violent scenes are among the most memorable in the novel. The result is inventive and deeply satisfying, especially to readers already familiar with the plot." — *New York Times Book Review*

Preston, Douglas/Lincoln Child. [Verset for the Dead](#) (\$15.99). After an overhaul of leadership at the FBI's New York field office, A. X. L. Pendergast is abruptly forced to accept an unthinkable condition of continued employment: the famously rogue agent must now work with a partner. Pendergast and his new teammate, junior agent Coldmoon, are assigned to Miami Beach, where a rash of killings by a bloodthirsty psychopath are distinguished by a confounding M.O.: cutting out the hearts of his victims and leaving them-along with cryptic handwritten letters-at local gravestones, unconnected save in one bizarre way: all belonged to women who committed suicide. But the seeming lack of connection between the old suicides and the new murders is soon the least of Pendergast's worries....

Saylor, Steven. [The Throne of Caesar](#) (\$18.99). Veteran Roman investigator Gordianus tries to ease the fears of an obsessed Julius Caesar by locating the cabal that may be plotting against him. On March 10, 44 B.C.E., ancient Rome is abuzz with the warning that Spurinna the haruspex delivered to Caesar a few weeks ago. Though he's been frozen out of the emperor's inner circle, Consul Cicero has a foreboding and seeks the guidance of venerable Gordianus, a retired "Finder," in ferreting out the identities of possible conspirators. Gordianus, who narrates in a leisurely first person, is intrigued but doesn't commit until Caesar himself summons him....The 16th volume in Saylor's Roma Sub Rosa series uses the reader's foreknowledge of history to create a special kind of suspense. Its slow pace and abundant period detail tantalize, as Gordianus has multiple near misses with the truth."—*Kirkus Reviews*. I'm sad to see the end of this brilliant series but Saylor always intended the Ides of March to be...the end.

Wilson, Carter. [The Dead Girl in 2A](#) (Sourcebooks/Poisoned Pen \$15.99). Jake Buchanan is a successful writer with an eight-year-old daughter and an imploding marriage. When he gets on a plane and discovers an instant connection with seatmate Clara Stowe, he's delighted. But when Clara confesses that she's going to Colorado to kill herself, Jake searches frantically for a way to convince her not to go through with her plan. *The Dead Girl in 2A* is the story of what happens to Jake and Clara after they get off that plane and the manipulative figure from their childhoods that has brought them together decades later.

Loss of memory is something Wilson knows a lot about—his father passed away at the young age of 69 from Alzheimer's, and the concept of "memory" is loosely threaded through all of his books. But in *The Dead Girl in 2A*, the memory focus relies on the bittersweet notion of nostalgia—and the horror of not remembering distinct pieces of your childhood.

### SOME TRUE CRIME FOR SUMMER

Callahan, Maureen. [American Predator](#) (Viking \$27). Investigative journalist Callahan provides a chilling true-crime narrative in this detailed study of Israel Keyes, whom she describes as "a new kind of monster, likely responsible for the greatest string of unsolved disappearances and murders in modern American history." In 2012, a multi-jurisdictional search for Keyes, believed responsible for abducting 18-year-old Samantha Koenig from the Anchorage, Alaska, coffee kiosk where she worked, led to him being stopped for speeding in Texas. In his wallet, the police found Samantha's driver's license. Keyes confessed to killing Samantha, but was less forthcoming about other murders he said he'd committed, and the exact number of his victims

was unresolved at the time of his suicide in custody, though he is believed to have killed at least 11 people over 14 years. The text is replete with disturbing revelations such as Keyes having carefully studied books by the FBI's top experts on profiling and serial killers. Through Callahan's access to many of the key players in law enforcement, she has produced the definitive account of a terrifying psychopath, says *PW* in its Starred Review. True Crime, powerful stuff.

Conway, J. North. [King of Heists](#) (Lyons \$18.95). On October 27, 1878, thieves broke into the Manhattan Savings Institution and stole nearly \$3 million in cash and securities—around \$50 million in today's terms. Bringing the notorious Gilded Age to life, Conway tells the story of those who plotted and carried out this infamous robbery, how they did it, and how they were tracked down and captured. The robbery was planned to the minutest detail by criminal mastermind George Leonidas Leslie—a society architect and ladies' man whose double life as the nation's most prolific bank robber led him to be dubbed the "King of the Bank Robbers." The *New York Times* proclaimed the 1878 heist "the most sensational in the history of bank robberies in this country."

Guinn, Jeff. [The Vagabonds](#) (SimonSchuster \$28). I grew up with summer road trips, loving them. My father took us on jaunts from Chicago all the way to British Columbia, the West Coast, the Southwest in our Buick Roadmaster—all before air conditioning and interstates and motel chains. We used actual maps! There were still glaciers in Glacier National Park. Snow covered Yellowstone. Route 66 was becoming the Mother Road. Today millions pile into cars, set their GPS, make on-line reservations, and hit the road. But back in 1914, a road trip wasn't part of our culture. Henry Ford and naturalist John Burroughs went to visit Thomas Edison in Florida and drove (a Ford, naturally) around the Everglades. The next year they added Harvey Firestone, a Ford supplier, and embarked on a summer camping trip. It was hardly roughing it given their support team, but where were paved roads? Gas stations? Restaurants? Motels? The self-styled Vagabonds kept up their summer drives until 1925 when their fame made it burdensome. But those years embedded the automobile and the mobility it afforded into American culture which today has morphed into global mass travel on an unprecedented scale and debates about the ubiquitous automobile. Guinn give us another terrific piece of journalism you can embrace like fiction. And reminds us that Ford seriously considered running for President in 1924 but a trip with Coolidge persuaded him Cal was the better candidate.

Hunt, William R. [America's Sherlock Homes; The Legacy of William Burns](#) (Lyons \$19.99). Burns was director of the FBI, shortly before J. Edgar Hoover. But before he became director, Burns had a long, highly publicized career as a detective for the Secret Service, then led the famed Burns International Detective Agency, which competed with his rival, the Pinkerton Detective Agency.

Lloyd, Keith Warren. [The Great Desert Escape](#) (Lyons \$26.99). 25 determined German U-Boat crewmen tunneled from their Scottsdale, AZ, POW camp, crossed the unforgiving Arizona desert, and attempted to return battle. It was the only organized, large-scale domestic escape by foreign prisoners in U.S. history and sparked one of the country's largest manhunts ever. Betty Webb used this true story and its Papago Park setting for one of

her very best PI Lena Jones investigations, [Desert Run](#) (\$15.95), linking murder in the present to that great escape. I recommend it highly. Patrick plans to set up a program/signing for Lloyd at a later date.

Turner, Erin H. [Outlaw Tales of the Old West](#) (TwoDot \$18.95). Massacres, mayhem, and mischief. 50 stories of rustlers and robbers, crimes of passion, and some of the wannabe outlaws who couldn't quite pull it off, some of the most fascinating—and least known—badmen to roam the lawless West. If you chance to be in Santa Fe there's a room in the [New Mexico History Museum](#) devoted to the fascinating stories of badmen and lawmen that may surprise you.

## SIGNING THEIR LIVES AWAY

*What better time than the month celebrating Independence Day for this reminder?*

Kiernan, Denise/Joseph D'Agnes. [Signing Their Lives Away: The Fame and Misfortune of the Men Who Signed the Declaration of Independence](#) (Quirk \$15.99). If anyone is wavering on voting, regardless of for whom, here's a reminder that this freedom was earned at the cost of "lives, fortunes, and our sacred honor." Not voting IS a vote for the winner of any election.

## NEW BOOKS

✦Aird, Catherine. [Inheritance Tracks](#) (Severn \$28.99). Every time a new DI CD Sloan and Constable Crosby investigation in Calleshire appears, I settle in with a literate, British style with puns, traditional detection. Veteran Aird sets us up with a scene in Berebury's oldest established solicitors' office where a disparate group has been summoned to learn that 1. they are distantly related through a Victorian patent medicine magnate and 2. they are the heirs to a considerable trust he established before the Married Women's Property Act. One man is late, another is missing; without him the trust cannot pay out. Then one of the women dies, apparently of ergot poisoning.... Aird borrows a bit from *Bleak House* but not, you learn, quite as you expect.

Anderson, Kent. [Sympathy for the Devil](#) (\$16.99). Hanson joins the Green Berets fresh out of college. Carrying a volume of Yeats' poems in his uniform pocket, he has no idea of what he's about to face in Vietnam—from the enemy, from his fellow soldiers, or within himself. In vivid, nightmarish, finely etched prose, Kent Anderson takes us through Hanson's two tours of duty and a bitter, ill-fated return to civilian life in-between, capturing the day-to-day process of war like no writer before or since. "Fiction that wounds and stings.... *The Washington Post* joins Patrick in praising this book: "*Sympathy for the Devil* is a wonderful achievement, written fluently and perceptively, and with the kind of unsparing intelligence that is rooted in careful observation.... Kent Anderson has outwritten just about everybody who preceded him in trying to make fictional sense out of the war." Kent Anderson is a U.S. Special Forces veteran who served in Vietnam and a former police officer in Portland, Oregon, and Oakland, California.

✦Baker, Deborah. [The Last Englishmen](#) (\$18). Set in Calcutta, London, the glacier-locked wilds of the Karakoram, and on Everest itself, *The Last Englishmen* is also the story of a generation. The cast of this exhilarating drama includes Indian and English writers and artists, explorers and Communist spies, Die Hards

and Indian nationalists, political rogues and police informers. Key among them is a highborn Bengali poet named Sudhin Datta, a melancholy soul torn, like many of his generation, between hatred of the British Empire and a deep love of European literature, whose life would be upended by the arrival of war on his Calcutta doorstep. John Auden was a pioneering geologist of the Himalaya. Michael Spender was the first to draw a detailed map of the North Face of Mount Everest. While their younger brothers—W. H. Auden and Stephen Spender—achieved literary fame, they vied to be included on an expedition that would deliver Everest's summit to an Englishman, a quest that had become a metaphor for Britain's struggle to maintain power over India.

✦Baker, Jo. [The Body Lies](#) (Knopf \$25.95). Still traumatized three years after being assaulted during her pregnancy near her South London home, the unnamed novelist who narrates this lyrical suspense novel leaps at the offer of a university lectureship in rural Lancashire, even though it means she and her toddler son will be separated from her husband, who can't leave his teaching job in London. The move will indeed change everything—but hardly the way she hopes. For starters, their rose-covered rented house redefines remote. And then there are the unanticipated challenges presented by her creative writing students—in particular, the most talented but also most troubling one, Nicholas Palmer, whose seemingly autobiographical work in progress centers on a young woman who dies under mysterious circumstances. Though Nicholas starts pushing for an inappropriate personal relationship with the narrator, his writing skill makes her loathe to establish firm boundaries—a decision that backfires catastrophically after a Christmas party. Soon she's fighting to save her job, her marriage, and even her life. All too plausible, Baker's powerful tale is at times heart-rending to read—and impossible to put down and is thus our **July British Crime Club Pick** though publishing in late June. Baker is the author of [Longbourn](#) (\$16), a 2013 release heaped with literary kudos where servants take center stage in an irresistibly imagined belowstairs answer to *Pride and Prejudice*. If you missed it, waste no time ordering a copy.

Betley, Matthew. [Rules of War](#) (Atria \$27). Former Marine officer Betley brings his deployment experience to the former Marine Logan West thrillers. In a not uncommon recent theme, the premise here is that one of America's top politicians, the Vice President, is a traitor. When the NSA director is assassinated and the Veep goes missing, West swings into action. Meanwhile a shadowy organization is orchestrating global instability—why "shadowy" when in fact we can see actual leaders of government orchestrating it I'm not sure but it makes for higher suspense. Much of the landscape of this book is Venezuela with its current politics.

✦Bowen, Rhys. [Four Funerals and Maybe a Wedding](#) (\$16). . . Lady Georgie writes, "If only Darcy and I had eloped! What I thought would be a simple wedding has been transformed into a grand affair, thanks to the attendance of the queen, who has offered up the princesses as bridesmaids. Silly me! I thought that withdrawing from the royal line of succession would simplify my life. But before Darcy and I tie the knot in front of queen and country, we have to find a place to live as man and wife... House hunting turns out to be a pretty grim affair. Just as we start to lose hope, my globetrotting godfather offers us his fully staffed country estate. Mistress of Eynsleigh I shall be! With Darcy off

in parts unknown, I head to Eynsleigh alone, only to have my hopes dashed. The grounds are in disarray and the small staff is suspiciously incompetent. Not to mention the gas tap leak in my bedroom, which I can only imagine was an attempt on my life. Something rotten is afoot—and bringing the place up to snuff may put me six feet under before I even get a chance to walk down the aisle...” Bowen signs the sequel. [Love and Death Among the Cheetahs](#) (Berkley \$26), on August 10.

Burton, Tara Is. [Social Creature](#) (\$16). “Fans of the cult classic *Poison Ivy* will appreciate the mousy girl–wild girl dynamic on display in Burton’s fiendishly clever debut. At 29, insecure Louise Wilson is a would-be writer living in fear of the dictum, “if you haven’t made it in New York by 30, you never will.” All that changes when she meets 23-year-old socialite Lavinia Williams, who seems to be channeling the free spirit of the late Zelda Fitzgerald (with flapper dresses to match). Larger-than-life Lavinia takes Louise under her wing and introduces her new bestie to a Manhattan she never knew existed, including parties in haunted hotels and secret bookstores and people with names like Beowulf Marmont and Athena Maidenhead, all the while dressing as if for a costume ball that never ends. Only later does Louise experience the hateful, spiteful, jealous side of Lavinia’s personality in what becomes an ingenious dark thriller in the Patricia Highsmith Tom Ripley mode.

Celt, Adrienne. [Invitation to a Bonfire](#) (\$17). The Indie Next Pick: “Adrienne Celt’s *Invitation to a Bonfire* is a propulsive literary thriller masterfully constructed and written with an extraordinary, raw urgency that will leave readers breathless. Inspired by the marriage of Vladimir and Vera Nabokov, Celt explores the love and ambition of two strong-willed women who compete for the passions and artistic control of a literary icon. The novel’s characters are original and vividly drawn, with all the complexity and contradictions of their emotions and intentions fully realized. This is a story that you will not be able to put down, and certainly one of the most memorable and satisfying reads of the year.”

Chiaverini, Jennifer. [Resistance Women](#) (Morrow \$26.99). The Indie Next Pick: “Mildred Harnack, an American woman, moves with her husband to Germany, but while they’re building their life together, the Nazi Party is rising to power. Mildred and her friends can’t stand by and watch their communities be torn apart, so they conspire to resist. The women work together to provide information about the Germans to the American forces, but when their resistance cell is exposed, everyone is at risk. Beautifully written and heavily researched, Chiaverini brings Mildred and her compatriots to life on the page with a vividness that kept me up all night reading.”

Clark, Martin. [The Substitution Order](#) (Knopf \$27.95). Patrick and I are both fans of Virginia author Clark. Patrick is reading this on vacation so while I await a copy, here’s a review: “Prominent Virginia attorney Kevin Moore, the narrator of this exceptional legal thriller from Clark, is reduced to working in a fast-food sandwich shop after a drug and alcohol binge led to the suspension of his law license and the end of his marriage. He’s hoping to keep his head down and wait for reinstatement, but his life is upended when he’s approached at the sandwich shop by a stranger who calls himself Caleb. Caleb represents an organization that monitors the information received by “virtually every group with a disciplinary board” to identify people vulnerable

to being coerced into participating in a fraud scheme. In Kevin’s case, Caleb asks him to agree to a lie—that he committed malpractice a few years earlier by failing to execute a purchase order for land that cost a client millions. When Kevin refuses, he’s set up for a probation violation and framed for even more serious charges. Clark does a masterly job combining Kevin’s plans to get himself out from under with a powerful portrayal of human frailty. John Grisham fans won’t want to miss this one.”

Clarke, Neil. [The Best Science Fiction of the Year](#) (NightShade \$19.99). The latest yearly anthology compiled by Hugo and World Fantasy Award–winning editor Clarke. The 29 stories from big names and new writers span the SF spectrum, and though they vary significantly in their approaches and tones, many are built around the idea of humankind’s often uneasy relationship with advanced technologies

✚Cleverly, Barbara. [Fall of Angels](#) (\$15.95). Our blogger Lesa reviews: “DI John Redfyre of the Cambridge CID, attending a Christmas concert at St. Barnabus College, is intrigued by the most unusual trumpeter soloist, a young woman named Juno Proudfoot. When Juno falls down the stairs after the concert, Redfyre investigates her suspicious death. It’s 1923 England, and civic disorder has wracked the community lately. As more women die, Redfyre finds ties to a small group of determined feminists. Are they suspects or potential victims of a misogynistic killer? The author of the “Joe Sandilands” mysteries set in post-World War I India initiates a new postwar historical series featuring an educated police officer raised as a gentleman whose only flaw is that he’s too mannerly to grill the ladies effectively.... Aficionados of Jacqueline Winspear and Dorothy Sayers will relish this atmospheric historical mystery, with its colorful period details that brilliantly capture post-World War Britain.”

Clifford, Aoife. [Second Sight](#) (Pegasus \$25.95). “This brilliantly crafted, slow-burn crime novel from Australian Clifford slides with delicious subtlety from a story that begins in small-town reminiscences and regrets, moves into amateur investigation blended with personal history and deep secrets, and then takes a plunge into driving thriller territory. Lawyer Eliza Carmody knows she will get little sympathy in her hometown of Kinsale, Australia, because she’s there not only to visit her pregnant best friend, Amy Liu, and her father, Mick Carmody, who’s unresponsive in nursing care after a car accident, but also to develop her case on behalf of Colcart Electric in a class action suit by Kinsale’s residents over a devastating and fatal bushfire. Witnessing a violent fight involving Luke Tyrell, whom she remembers from childhood, leads her to revisit the events of New Year’s Eve 1996, during which her other best friend, Grace Hedland, disappeared. The author tugs hard at universal human emotions as she explores themes of grief and the unreliability of memory. Readers will view everyone Eliza encounters with a blend of suspicion and sympathy,” says a *PW* rave review.

Connolly, Sheila. [The Killer in the Carriage House](#): (St Martins \$26.99). Lesa reviews again: “Kate Hamilton’s hometown of Asheboro, MD, is broke, and she has ideas about saving it from further decline. With the Barton Mansion the focus of the town, Kate envisions an authentic Victorian Village, if the townspeople and shop owners will cooperate. She hopes some documents might help them find financial support. Kate and friends moved them to the closed library, but she is disturbed when a young

man asks to get into the building. The next morning, Kate and a researcher uncover that young man's body. On the surface, he appears to have broken into the library, but both women suspect murder. The focus of this slow-paced cozy is the search for answers to the puzzle that was Henry Barton, owner of the town's shovel factory and the Barton Mansion. Kate comes across as absentminded, and she blurts out secrets to everyone. The mystery might appeal to those interested in historical renovations of towns, but is mostly suggested only for fans of the author."

✠Corry, Jane. [The Dead Ex](#) (\$16). In February 2018, Vicki's quiet life in the seaside resort of Penzance, is about to implode with the arrival of two detectives investigating the disappearance 15 days earlier of her ex-husband, David, a wealthy property developer. In March 2007, Londoner Scarlet will soon be placed in a Dickensian foster home after her beloved single mom's imprisonment for drug dealing. The dual narratives alternate—revealing Vicki's startling past in a very different profession—and eventually converge with devastating impact. For those willing to press on through the somewhat deliberate first half, Corry delivers some good twists. I mention this primarily for Penzance, a charming bit of Cornwall.

Cotterill, Colin. [Don't Eat Me](#) (\$15.95). Laurie R. King is a big fan of Cotterill and his clever if slightly loopy novels set in Laos. This *LJ* review, one of several Stars the book has earned, expresses why Laurie and I are fans: "The 13th entry in Cotterill's popular series sees Siri, the former national coroner of Laos, married and settled down and ready to make a film using a camera that he and his longtime friend Civilai have smuggled across the Mekong River. But when a woman's skeleton is found, Dr. Siri must marshal his group of dedicated friends, plus the loyal customers of Madame Daeng's noodle house, to identify the murderers. In the process, more killings are discovered—not human ones, but those of wild animals taken under cruel conditions to other countries for zoos and medicinal uses. Into this complicated mix comes the slow realization that Judge Haeng may be in some way involved. Cotterill uses subtle humor and historical fact to write a compelling mystery in which marginalized people (the elderly, the mentally challenged, etc.) are integral characters. Fans of Alexander McCall Smith and Boris Akunin will enjoy this gently ironic series. Definitely recommended for its inclusive characters, humor, and a thought-provoking ending."

Coulter, Catherine. [Labyrinth](#) (Gallery \$27.99). On a dark night, Agent Sherlock is driving along circuitous mountain roads in West Virginia when her car is suddenly T-boned at an intersection. As her car spins out of control, a man's body slams against her windshield and then—blackness. When she finally comes to, Sherlock has no memory of the accident, nor of the moments that led right up to it. But what she does know is that the man she hit is a local CIA analyst...and now he's missing. Meanwhile, in the small town of Gaffer's Ridge, Virginia, Special Agent Griffin Hammersmith has just rescued a kidnapped woman who claims her captor admitted to the murder of three teenage girls. However, the man she accuses is related to the local sheriff and a member of a very powerful family. Special Agent Hammersmith reaches out to Sherlock for help, and they soon realize that the disappearance of the CIA analyst is actually connected to the string of murders. But how? While waiting for the new Julia Keller Bell Atkins West Virginia mystery [Cold Way Home](#) (St Martins \$29 Signed) in August, try this.

Dahl, Alex. [The Heart Keeper](#) (Berkley \$16). Told by two suffering mothers, this sad, wild, alarming tale from Norwegian author Dahl is all too plausible. Alison and her husband are grieving over the drowning of their five-year-old daughter, Amelie. Alison is close to losing it, despite therapy and her heavy use of pills and alcohol. Meanwhile, Iselin, a single welfare mother, has waged a seven-year battle caring for her daughter, Kaia, who was born with a life-threatening heart problem. Then Kaia receives a new heart from a girl who drowned. As she begins to blossom into a happy, active child, Iselin's burdens lift. When Alison hears about the phenomenon of cellular memory whereby organ recipients can take on characteristics of donors, she becomes obsessed with finding the bearer of Amelie's heart. On learning it's Kaia, she quickly insinuates herself into Kaia and Iselin's life, as best friend, benefactor—and keen observer of Kaia's emerging Amelie-isms. To Alison it's clear: Kaia is more her child than Iselin's, and she alone deserves the girl. This psychological thriller may also be a horror story, but one that feels natural—if utterly unhinged.

Dalcher, Christina. [Vox](#) (\$16). This book had a huge push from Berkley when it published. Here's the *LJ* take: "Jean McClellan was a neurolinguist and mother of four before the Pure Woman movement swept the nation. Now, like all women, she wears a counter that tracks every word she speaks—no more than 100 a day. If she goes over the limit, she's painfully shocked. Her son's superior attitude only emphasizes that her daughter is speaking less and less. What happens to society when 50 percent of the population's voices, along with their ability to even learn language, are taken away? This work begs comparison to Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, as both feature religious governments forcing women to become subservient, but here the focus is on technological control, rather than fertility. Neurolinguistics and technology balance a compelling narrative shot through with genuine emotion."

Davidson, Craig. [The Saturday Night Ghost Club](#) (Penguin \$16). Growing up in 1980s Niagara Falls—a seedy but magical, slightly haunted place— Jake Baker spends most of his time with his uncle Calvin, a kind but eccentric enthusiast of occult artifacts and conspiracy theories. The summer Jake turns twelve, he befriends a pair of siblings new to town, and so Calvin decides to initiate them all into the "Saturday Night Ghost Club." But as the summer goes on, what begins as a seemingly light-hearted project may ultimately uncover more than any of its members had imagined. Like all coming of age stories, the tale alternates between warmth and sadness.

The Indie Next Pick: "Good ghost stories are never really about ghosts. They are about memories, lessons learned, unfinished business, broken promises, potential unfulfilled, unthinkable tragedy, and everything that happened before we came on the scene. *The Saturday Night Ghost Club* is about all of these things and more. A heaping scoop of '80s nostalgia provides a solid and comfortable backdrop for the story of a kid growing up and learning that adults (even familiar loved ones) have complicated lives and histories of their own."

Disher, Garry. [Under the Cold Bright Lights](#) (Soho \$26.95). Australian Disher writes really good cop novels. This one, a standalone, is a standard dysfunctional life, broken marriage, and compulsion to work a case concept putting 50-ish Alan Auhl into

cold cases after his retirement from Homicide. There's a trio of them to work, one involving some of the random boarders at the big house where his ex-wife still drops by for a bit of sex. I'm hoping this really is a one-off.

Fay, Juliette. [City of Flickering Light](#) (Gallery \$16.99). I was struck by this tale of three friends, performers, who jump off a moving train in Flagstaff, Arizona, to escape their exploiter Mr. Chandler in favor of making it to Hollywood where by July, 1921, "flickers" are all the rage, because my own PPS author Donis Casey publishes something of a similar tale in November called [The Wrong Girl](#)—with an entirely different story line once the great escape is made in northern Arizona. Fay, noted for her bestselling women's fiction, bases part of the story on the real death of William Desmond Taylor and upon the burgeoning Hollywood culture, the spin PR men give to celebrities with messy lives, gay lives, addicted lives, and the trials of being poor and unnoticed amidst the glitter. But mostly this is lively and funny and you can't resist the two gals and one guy who, once bonded, stay that way.

Fitzpatrick, John S. [Sherlock Holmes: Adventures in the Wild West](#) (Riverbend \$14.95). A long-lost manuscript by Dr. Watson was found in the basement of a Montana library. It describes several previously unknown mysteries that Sherlock Holmes and Watson solved in the late 1800s in the American West, ranging from Montana to California.

Frear, Caz. [Stone Cold Heart](#) (Harper \$26.99). After a brief stint in the Mayor's Office following her impressive debut in [Sweet Little Lies](#) (\$16.99), Detective Constable Cat Kinsella is back at the London Metropolitan Police, wisecracking with her partner Luigi Parnell and trying to avoid the wrath of the boss, DI Kate Steele. Cat is also concealing her family dynamics and actions that would put paid to her policing career. What comes her way is a murder of such complexity and moral quandaries as to force her to keep examining her ethics, or lack of them, as a cop. Dead is a young woman from Australia working as a temp. Economics forced her to share a flat and her mate turns out to be a guy with a long record. A party hosted by her boss is the last place Naomi was seen. It spins off from there and I can only say that outside of Caz, the other cops, and the dead woman, there is no other decent person in the story. I do wonder what Frear's experience with London living is like to have inspired such a cast. And the resolution(s) promise further ethical quagmires ahead, all the stuff of crime fiction. For fans of Tana French, below.

French, Tana. [The Witch Elm](#) (\$17). Toby is a happy-go-lucky charmer who's dodged a scrape at work and is celebrating with friends when the night takes a turn that will change his life—he surprises two burglars who beat him and leave him for dead. Struggling to recover from his injuries, beginning to understand that he might never be the same man again, he takes refuge at his family's ancestral home to care for his dying uncle Hugo. Then a skull is found in the trunk of an elm tree in the garden... Despite its rave reviews, this was not my favorite French. So I quote reviewer Janet Maslin: French "is in a class by herself as a superb psychological novelist for whom plot is secondary. She is not a crime writer per se; her books just happen to involve deaths and detectives, whose talk and jockeying and gamesmanship she captures perfectly... French's intense interest in identity and self-deception might make this a slow-building book for some. But if you read her as carefully as you should, it's a seductively detailed

start in which every bit of dailiness is made to matter... French's pacing goes pedal-to-the-metal for the book's last section. Get ready for the whiplash brought on by its final twists and turns. Despite the speed, none of the final revelations feel rushed or artificial. And French never loses sight of the idea she voiced in her very first sentence. Luck haunts this story every step of the way."

Gailey, Sarah. [Magic for Liars](#) (Tor \$25.99). The Indie Next Pick: "When Ivy was a child, her sister went off to a school for mages, leaving her feeling abandoned in the non-magical world. So when her sister's boss turns up at Ivy's detective practice a couple of decades later and asks her to solve a murder, she's less than enthused. Mixing noir tropes with the classic setting of a school for practitioners of magic, *Magic for Liars* is by turns intriguing and unsettling. I was on the edge of my seat the whole way as Ivy attempted to comb through the lies and resist her own temptation to get too deeply embroiled in the mystery."

Gerber, Daryl Wood. [A Soufflé of Suspicion](#) (Crooked Lane \$26.99). The residents of the small, unincorporated Napa Valley enclave of Nouvelle Vie are celebrating harvest time. Tourists flock to the area to participate in crush week—when the newly picked grapes are pressed. Along with the usual "hoedowns, hayrides, and farm tours," this year Mimi Rousseau's inn, Maison Rousseau, will be the venue for the Sweet Treats Festival, a week-long food fair complete with baking contests. When festival organizer Renee Wells is murdered, her sister, Camille Chabot, is included in the list of suspects. Unfortunately for Mimi, who owns Bistro Rousseau, Camille happens to be the bistro's head chef. The only way for Mimi to get her business back on track is to find the murderer. Start with the first French Bistro cozy, [A Deadly Éclair](#) (\$15.99).

Gould, Howard M. [Last Looks](#) (\$16). *Last Looks* is more than just a fun ride—it's a new spin on a Hollywood P.I. mystery. With a blend of humor and suspense that calls to mind Harlan Coben and Robert Crais, Howard Michael Gould brings to life the quirky Charlie Waldo, a former cop confined to 100 worldly possessions and the claustrophobia of his own guilt over a former case gone bad. His journey back to the world is a ride well worth taking."—Gregg Hurwitz. "Gripping, smart and funny, *Last Looks* features a wholly new and compelling hero in former detective-turned-PI Charlie Waldo. With razor sharp dialogue, hardboiled intrigue, and a plot that hums along at high speed, Howard Michael Gould's remarkable debut thriller is not to be missed."—Harlan Coben

Hamilton, Ian. [The Mountain Master of Sha Tin](#) (Anansi \$19.95). Here is Ava Lee in the Triad Years, hotfooting it to Shanghai where her mentor Uncle's protégé, Xu, the man who now has her back, is wretchedly ill. A turf war has broken out in Hong Kong where Sammy Wing, an elderly Triad boss displaced by Xu, has enlisted his nephew Carter, the new Mountain Master of Sha Tin, in a plot—kidnapping six of Xu's men and threatening to kill them—to regain control of Wanchai. With Xu sidelined, Ava Lee must broker a settlement, spurred on by the delivery from the Wings of a box containing six severed fingers, and notice of a 12-hour deadline. This installment in one of my favorite series is all action, not nuance, more or less like a Western range war/shoot out or a Mafia turf war. The Triads are none of them good guys so it's all about loyalties and family and Ava Lee keeping her balance in a misogynist culture.

Heywood, Joseph. [Ice Hunter](#) (Rowan & Littlefield \$18.95). Conservation officer Grady Service feels a special connection to the Mosquito Wilderness in Michigan's heavily forested Upper Peninsula, so when a serial arsonist shows up there, as well as the body of a man belonging to a notorious family of poachers and ex-cons, he takes the affronts personally. A second-generation officer of the Department of Natural Resources and a Vietnam veteran, Grady uses his tracking talents to corral the killer. Heywood, author of such thrillers as *The Snowfly* and *The Berkut*, builds his surrounds slowly, peopling them with memorably idiosyncratic characters and conveying an overall sense of reverence for nature. An engaging read and promising series debut for readers of Paul Doiron.

Hoag, Tami. [The Boy](#) (\$16). Back after a long hiatus, Hoag's detectives Nick Fourcade and Annie Broussard are investigating a break-in at the home of Genevieve Gauthier that has left her seven-year-old son dead but Genevieve inexplicably unharmed. Why would the murderer leave any witnesses? Why does the boy's 13-year-old babysitter vanish the next day? Is Genevieve victim or perpetrator? "Hoag puts on quite the juggling act here, dazzling us with multiple theories about the boy's murder, numerous potential suspects, and plot twists that keep us just slightly off-balance. A welcome return for a compelling investigative duo."—*Booklist*

Jackson, Joshilyn. [Never Have I Ever](#) (Harper \$26.99). It was supposed to be book club as usual: a group of suburban mothers gathering to talk over a glass of wine or two and then going home to bed. But when new neighbor Angelica Roux shows up at hostess Amy's door, it doesn't take long for all hell to break loose. The booze flows freely, and soon the women are engaged in a game: What is the worst thing you did today? This week? This month? In your life? There are many women in the gathering with secrets to protect, but none more than Amy, who, as a teenager, committed a terrible crime that almost destroyed her. Saved by her love for diving, and then by meeting her husband and stepdaughter, Amy has worked hard to build a normal, stable life; she even has a new baby. Angelica has come to threaten all of this; she clearly knows about Amy's past and will expose her to her loved ones if Amy doesn't pay her. As Amy tries desperately to outscheme Angelica, she also realizes just how much she has to fight for.... I am so beyond tired of "domestic suspense" I quote other reviewers to be fair to those who enjoy them.

James, Miranda. [The Pawful Truth](#) (Berkley \$26). Murder on a college campus leads an informal investigator into interdepartmental drama that smacks of reality TV. In addition to his library duties and his role as doting granddad, Charlie Harris has enrolled in an early medieval history course offered by young, charismatic professor Carey Warriner. Charlie feels a bit out of place—his fellow classmates are half his age—except for Dixie Bell Compton, another "mature" student. When Charlie hears an angry exchange between her and their professor, his interest is piqued. He's even more intrigued when she shows up at his office asking for a study partner. Charlie turns her down and is saddened to learn just a few days later that Dixie has been killed.

Karjel, Robert. [After the Monsoon](#) (\$16.99). A thriller set in the terrorist- and pirate-infested world of the Horn of Africa—where the sea caresses the desert, alliances shift like sand, and a Swedish detective can count on nothing but his own shrewdness to

survive. A Swedish army lieutenant drops dead on a shooting range in the desert. Was it an unfortunate accident—or something more nefarious? Ernst Grip, an agent of the Swedish security police, is sent to the Horn of Africa to find out. Once he's on the ground, however, he quickly discovers he's on his own. No one wants him snooping around—especially not the U.S. Embassy's CIA station. Which is no surprise, given that military transport planes are leaving from the base carrying untraceable pallets loaded with cash. What's more, Grip's investigation is complicated by another dangerous situation. Somali pirates have kidnapped a wealthy Swedish family during the adventure of a lifetime: a sailing trip from Sweden to the Great Barrier Reef. Why, Grip wonders, is no one back home willing to pay the ransom in order to save these innocent lives? "Every corner of this rich, rewarding novel features one or another subversion of stereotypes—the Somali-Ukrainian lounge pianist who's a superb spy, the bookish tween girl who's braver than her alpha-male father—chief among which is that the main character is gay... "Karjel's characters, however, are nuanced, their relationships complex and the background texture evocative; his subversions are of a delicious flavor."—Chris Pavone

Lapena, Shari. [Someone We Know](#) (Penguin \$27). I make the same comment I made re Joshilyn Jackson above except this is a cut below, playing upon the trope (as we recently see so vividly in real life) of what parents will do to protect their spoiled, entitled, impulsive, or sociopathic children. It's soccer mom taken to an extreme and it begins when one set of neighborhood parents learn their son has been out at night breaking into the houses of neighbors to hack into their computers and send "harmless" messages. Their impulse is to protect him while the kid thinks it's all just a lark....

Larison, John. [Whiskey When We're Dry](#) (\$16) "plunges readers into the American West while simultaneously reimagining the mythic frontier. It examines issues of gender and race through the story of 17-year-old Jesse Harney and begins in the spring of 1885, when she dresses in men's clothes, mounts her horse, and sets out west in search of her big brother, an outlaw on the frontier."—*Southern Living* on a book much esteemed by Patrick.

✠ Lovesey, Peter. [Killing with Confetti](#) (Soho \$27.95). A new Peter Diamond with a loving focus on Bath Abbey. See Signed Books above for more.

✠ McElwain, Julie. [Betrayal in Time](#) (Pegasus \$25.95). The Regency's Bow Street sends for Kendra Donovan, the "American ward" of the Duke of Aldridge, to look into the strangling murder of English spymaster Sir Giles Holbrooke. Sir Giles was found lying naked on the floor of an abandoned London church with his tongue cut out. Only the Duke and his heir know that Kendra went down some kind of wormhole at the ducal castle while on a 21<sup>st</sup> Century case, and they accept that the FBI profiler has unusual skills. During the autopsy, bizarre markings slowly appear all over Sir Giles's body, possibly forming a message from the killer. Kendra's investigation, assisted by a Bow Street runner, her maid, and an irreverent journalist, get on a trail that leads them deep into dysfunctional families and foreign espionage—and to more ritualistic murders. A Starred Reviews says, "One of the series' delights is how Kendra, who operates with a shocking degree of independence for a single woman in the era, must repeatedly find ways to use her forensic knowledge and instincts about homicide

that don't send polite society reaching for the smelling salts." True. But such a smart woman would by book four stop saying things like "okay" and "Unsub" which completely break her cover. I don't know if McElwain does this to remind readers that Kendra is a 21<sup>st</sup> Century woman or whether, despite her careful research into the era, she's tone deaf on its speech. No Starred Review from me who prefers CS Harris, but I have no quarrel with the plot or pacing.

Mosley, Walter. [John Woman](#) (\$16). Patrick writes: "A brilliant and provocative *tour de force*. Just the kind of unapologetically intellectual novel that we need today. Mosley is a national treasure." A convention-defying novel by the prolific and always amazing Mosley, *John Woman* recounts the transformation of an unassuming boy named Cornelius Jones into John Woman, an unconventional history professor—while the legacy of a hideous crime lurks in the shadows. At twelve years old, Cornelius, the son of an Italian-American woman and an older black man from Mississippi named Herman, secretly takes over his father's job at a silent film theater in New York's East Village. Five years later, as Herman lives out his last days, he shares his wisdom with his son, explaining that the person who controls the narrative of history controls their own fate. After his father dies and his mother disappears, Cornelius sets about reinventing himself—as Professor John Woman, a man who will spread Herman's teachings into the classrooms of his unorthodox southwestern university and beyond. But there are other individuals who are attempting to influence the narrative of John Woman, and who might know something about the facts of his hidden past

Nesbø, Jo. [Knife](#) (Knopf \$27.95). A new Harry Hole. See Signed Books Above for more. Read the [WSJ review](#) of Knife if you are a subscriber.

Nieh, Daniel. [Beijing Payback](#) (Harper \$26.99 may be signed). "College basketball player Victor Li, the narrator of Nieh's remarkable debut, has little to concern him beyond his next game, until his restaurateur father, Vincent Li, is killed in a burglary at home in L.A. Sun Jianshui, a 30-ish immigrant who was raised by Vincent before he married and left for America, tells Victor that his father was part of a criminal enterprise formed when Vincent was a young man in China in the years after Mao's death. According to Sun, Vincent was murdered for refusing to import a dangerous product called Ice. A letter from Vincent to Victor that Victor finds among his father's papers instructs him to accompany Sun to Beijing and destroy the syndicate. The rich cast includes beautiful young courtesans, Chinese thugs, Russian gangsters, French journalists, and corrupt police in Beijing. Nieh, a Chinese-English translator, has a real gift for language; one character has "a voice that sounds the way strawberries taste." This impressive blend of crime and coming-of-age marks Nieh as a talent to watch," says the *PW* Starred Review. Jade Chang adds, "Daniel Nieh deftly recasts the immigrant novel as a sharp revenge thriller. The clash between past and present, between the homeland his father escaped and the new home he dreamt up for his family, is richly layered and deeply affecting."

I read debuts for voice and Nieh's captured me. While he doesn't drill down as deeply into character as a more seasoned writer would do, lessening the emotional impact, he presents an exciting, noteworthy thriller and credits one of my all time favorite authors, Nicole Mones, with mentoring. Mones, greatly

missed by me, calls *Beijing Payback* "a propulsive nail-biter that roars with seamless confidence into a China most Western authors can barely penetrate. Fun, fascinating, insightful, and unforgettable."

Patterson, Jorge Zepeda. [The Black Jersey](#) (Random \$27). *Murder on the Orient Express* meets the Tour de France—someone's killing off cyclists one by one. Marc Moreau, a professional cyclist with a military past, is part of a top Tour de France team led by his best friend, an American star favored to win this year's Tour. But the competition takes a dark turn when racers begin to drop out in a series of violent accidents: a mugging that ends in an ankle being crushed, a nasty bout of food poisoning, and a crash caused by two spectators standing where they shouldn't. The teams and their entourages retreat into paranoid lockdown even as they must continue racing each day. Marc agrees to help the French police with their investigations from the inside and becomes convinced that the culprit is a cyclist who wants to win at any cost. But as the victim count rises, the number of potential murderers—and potential champions—dwindles. Marc begins to have the sickening realization that his own team has been most favored by the murderer's actions, and in the final stages of the race Mark himself emerges as the only cyclist left who could possibly beat his best friend and win the Tour... Can he pass up the glory?

**Our July Discovery Book of the Month** gets more stars: "Men, mountains, machines, speed, greed, and murder... Making a *tour de force* of the Tour de France, Jorge Zepeda Patterson does for cycling what Dick Francis did for horse racing. Warning! Strap on your helmets! This is no tale for wimps."—Alan Bradley. "*The Black Jersey* is a joy from start to hair-raising finish line, even for someone like me who prefers a good meal to any kind of competitive sport. Bravo!"—M. L. Longworth

✦Penrose, Andrea. [Murder at Half Moon Gate](#) (\$15.95). When Lord Wrexford discovers the body of a gifted inventor in a dark London alley, he promptly alerts the watchman and lets the authorities handle the matter. But Wrexford soon finds himself drawn into the investigation when the inventor's widow begs for his assistance. It seems her husband's designs for a revolutionary steam-powered engine went missing the night of his death. The plans could be worth a fortune...and very dangerous in the wrong hands. Joining Wrexford in his investigation is Charlotte Sloane, who uses the pseudonym A. J. Quill to publish her scathing political cartoons. She doesn't mind tapping her extensive network of informants critical to her work to track down an elusive killer. "Penrose deftly combines a Regency romance with a tricky mystery that delves into social unrest and the darker side of this storied period."—*Kirkus Reviews*

Petterson, Pet. [Out Stealing Horses](#) (\$16). A "masterpiece of death and delusion in a Nordic land" (*The Guardian*). At age sixty-seven, Trond has settled in an isolated part of eastern Norway to live out his life in solitude, but a chance encounter with his only neighbor stirs up long-dormant memories. Trond recalls the fateful July morning when he and his friend Jon impulsively stole a ride on horses at a nearby farm, an adventure shrouded by Jon's inexplicable grief. Trond soon learned of the tragic events that befell Jon the day before, which would haunt them both forever. The atmospheric nostalgia and profound vision of *Out Stealing Horses* make it an achingly good read

✂Robotham, Michael. [Good Girl Bad Girl](#) (Scribner \$26). Annoyingly I don't have an Advance Reading Copy (ARC) of this new book (with new publisher) by one of my favorite authors. Here's the *Kirkus* Starred Review: "Evie Cormac is an enigma. No one knew who she was when she was found in a secret room in a north London home, weighing less than a child half her age, which was determined to be 11 or 12. Only a few feet from her hiding place was the decomposing body of a man who had been tortured to death. Given a new name, she ended up in Nottingham's Langford Hall, a high security children's home, after a series of foster homes. Now, six years later, she's eager to be declared an adult, so Cyrus must evaluate her for possible release. Evie is rude, unruly, self-destructive, prone to occasional violence, heartbreakingly naïve, and very, very broken. She also seems to be able to tell, with remarkable consistency, when someone is lying. This intrigues Cyrus, who wrote a thesis on human lie detectors, aka "truth wizards." When Cyrus makes an impulsive choice to temporarily foster Evie, it brings a basket of challenges to his already complicated life. Meanwhile, Cyrus is assisting his mentor, Chief Inspector Lenny Parvel, in the investigation of the suspicious death and possible rape of 15-year-old Jodie Sheehan, who was called the "golden girl of British skating." Some shocking revelations lead Cyrus and the police down a rabbit hole of dark family secrets, and Evie can't help but involve herself in the investigation. It's the careful and often poignant interplay between Cyrus and Evie that elevates this consistently stellar yarn."

Rowbottom, Alli. [Jell-O Girls](#) (\$17.99). In 1899, Allie Rowbottom's great-great-great-uncle bought the patent to Jell-O from its inventor for \$450. The sale would turn out to be one of the most profitable business deals in American history. More than 100 years after that deal was struck, Allie's mother Mary was diagnosed with the same incurable cancer that had claimed her own mother's life. Determined to combat what she had come to consider the "Jell-O curse" and her looming mortality, Mary began obsessively researching her family's past, determined to understand the origins of her illness and the impact on her life of Jell-O and the traditional American values the company championed. Before she died in 2015, Mary began to send Allie boxes of her research and notes, in the hope that her daughter might write what she could not. "Rowbottom weaves together her family history and the story of the classic American dessert to produce a book that alternately surprises and mesmerizes....*Jell-O Girls* is dark and astringent, a cutting rebuke to its delicate, candy-colored namesake.... Rowbottom has the literary skills and the analytical cunning to pull it off. Like a novelist, she can imagine herself into the emotional lives of others, while connecting her story and theirs to a larger narrative of cultural upheaval.... The writing is lush yet alert to specific.... Gorgeous." —*NY Times*

Ryan, Jennifer. [The Me I Used to Be](#) (Morrow \$15.95). "Here's an intoxicating blend of hair-raising suspense, betrayal, and true love with this gripping contemporary set in the rich vineyards of Napa Valley. Evangeline Austen served four years in prison for a theft she didn't commit; her arresting officer, Lt. Chris Chambers, is now confident she's innocent. Evangeline is released on parole as news comes of her father's death, and she helps Chris set a trap for the true criminals exchange for her prison time being expunged from her record. At home on her family's ranch, Evangeline finds her relatives judge her harshly, but then they learn the

disturbing truth about the crime and fret when they find out she's cooperating with the police. During Evangeline's fight to clear her name, she and Chris fall in love, but Darren's machinations could cost them everything. The strong characters—particularly Evangeline—are so skillfully created that they leap off the page, and the spot-on pacing will keep readers' hearts in their throats as the shocking climax approaches."

✂Setterfield, Diane. [Once Upon a River](#) (\$17). One stormy night a stranger stumbles into the Swan Inn, near death from unexplained injuries, but soon becomes less astonishing than the bundle in his arms—a drowned little girl. Local nurse Rita tends to the stranger and confirms to the assembled people that the child is already gone. But when the child wakes up only a few hours later, the inn's patrons start talking about the miracle child who died and then lived. As the story spreads from house to house, claims are made for the child: the parson's housekeeper believes it's her sister; the young and wealthy couple cry that it's their kidnapped daughter; and a scoundrel says she's the daughter his wife took away from him. What is the truth? And where does the mythical ferryman Quietly fit into the story? "Setterfield's latest novel is set near the river Thames and surrounding villages. The heart of the story is the relationships that twist and turn, as if they also follow the river." Setterfield's last was a less successful effort involving events arising from the wanton killing of a rook (crow), but her magical [The Thirteenth Tale](#) (\$17) remains an all-time favorite debut I can't recommend highly enough, especially if you enjoy a Gothic tinge to fiction.

Simenon, George. [Maigret's Anger](#) (Penguin \$13). During a quiet spell in June, Maigret is called to investigate the disappearance of a reputable businessman, a nightclub owner with properties in Montmartre and on the Champs-Élysées. Things take a dark turn when the man's body is discovered near the famous Père Lachaise cemetery. There's no trace of the man having any enemies, and Maigret struggles to find any clues to the perpetrator—and loses his temper when his own reputation is threatened by the case. #61 in Penguin's republication program for this classic series.

Smith, Alexander McCall. [The Second-Worst Restaurant in France](#) (Knopf \$25.95). Renowned Scottish cookbook writer Paul Stuart is hard at work on his new book, *The Philosophy of Food*, but complicated domestic circumstances, and two clingy cats, are making that difficult. So when Paul's eccentric cousin Chloe suggests that he join her at the house she's rented in the French countryside, he jumps at the chance. The two quickly befriend the locals, including their twin-sister landladies, who also own the infamous local restaurant known to be the second-worst eatery in all of France. During their stay, the restaurant's sole waitress gives birth mid-dinner service and the *maitre d'* storms off after fighting with the head chef. Paul is soon drafted to improve the gastronomy of the village, while Chloe, ever on the hunt for her next romance, busies herself with distracting the handsome but incompetent chef. Could he be husband number six? With all this local drama to deal with, Paul finds it next to impossible to focus on his writing, and that's before he learns that Chloe's past is far more complicated than he'd ever imagined. Paul will have to call upon all his experience—with food and with people—to bring order back to the village. This is only so-so but hey, it's France, food, and for fans of Smith's many and diverse fictions.

Stradal, J Ryan. [The Lager Queen of Minnesota](#) (Viking \$26). Beer and pie—two ingredients for a summer read. I point this sophomore novel for Stradal out as he authored a popular Modern Firsts Book of the Month, [Kitchens of the Great Midwest](#) (\$16), and shows its success was no flash in the pan. Edith and her sister, Helen, are young Minnesotans in the 1950s, and though the unassuming Edith gains temporary fame for her scrumptious pies, Helen becomes obsessed with making beer after her very first sip. Both women marry, and while Edith and Stanley Magnusson struggle to make ends meet, Helen manipulates her ailing, beer-loving father by selling him on her capacity to make a beer of her own. After he dies, she takes Edith's inheritance along with her own. Helen's husband, Orval Blotz, is heir to his family's failing brewing empire, and while Helen uses her inheritance and persistence to bring Blotz Beer back to popularity, Edith has difficulty forgiving Helen for her betrayal. The sisters lose track of one another for decades, but Edith's teenage granddaughter, Diana, is drawn, seemingly by fate, into the brewing business. "This is not a story of drinkers and drinking, but is rather a testament to the setbacks and achievements that come with following one's passion. This story about how a family business succeeds with generations of strong and determined women at the helm makes for a sometimes sad, sometimes funny, but always winning novel." A Starred Review from *Kirkus* adds, "This is an ultimately hopeful and heartwarming story that never feels sentimental or trite. Readers will love watching these truly original characters overcome their challenges and take care of each other. An absolutely delightful read, perfect for a summer day."

Sullivan, Laura L. [Milady](#) (Berkley \$16). Everyone who's read Dumas's immortal *The Three Musketeers* knows Milady de Winter as a major villain in their swashbuckling careers played out in the court of Louis XIII. There's the *Eminence Rouge*, Cardinal Richelieu, and in time the *Eminence Gris*, Cardinal Mazarin, plus their troops of guards. There's Queen Anne daring an affair with the dashing Duke of Buckingham, an English enemy. We know the combative, ambitious young D'Artagnan, come to Paris from Gascony, to make his fortune. And the three King's Musketeers: noble Athos, sly Aramis, and giant, genial Porthos. But what if Athos is not noble but once married to Milady and like his fellows, a drunk and a seducer? Did D'Artagnan rape Milady as a careful reading of Dumas indicates? Is she a woman who, far from being a seductress, preferred female friends? Did she love George Villiers, the Duke of Buckingham? Is she English by birth? Can she tell us her own story? Order our **July History Paperback Book of the Month** and find out. You might want to reread *The Three Musketeers* first.

Verdon, John. [White River Burning](#) (\$16.95). A Starred Review: "In Verdon's outstanding sixth outing for ex-NYPD homicide detective Dave Gurney, White River, N.Y., cop John Steele, who is white, is killed by a sniper on the first anniversary of the controversial shooting of Laxton Jones, a black motorist. Jones was shot by a white police officer, who later claimed self-defense and was cleared of wrongdoing by the authorities. Jones's death prompted the creation of the Black Defense Alliance, which alleged that he was probing rampant corruption in the White River PD and was deliberately gunned down. Steele was shot while attempting to

maintain order at a demonstration organized by the BDA, and the chief of police believes the shooting was payback for Jones's. Brought in by the district attorney to consult on the case, Gurney has his doubts after Steele's widow shares that shortly before her husband's murder, he received a text message warning that he would be shot and the BDA would be blamed. The twisty plot builds up to a logical and satisfying reveal"

The *NY Times Book Review* adds: "John Verdon writes grown-up detective novels, by which I mean stories with intelligent plots, well-developed characters and crimes that have social consequences. White River Burning, featuring the author's brainy gumshoe-for-hire, Dave Gurney, checks all these boxes . . . While keeping inside the lines of a classic whodunit plot, Verdon enriches the formula with a probing analysis of the way a community rips itself apart."

Walters, Minette. [The Last Hours](#) (\$18.99). June, 1348: the Black Death enters England through the port of Melcombe in the county of Dorsetshire. Unprepared for the virulence of the disease, and the speed with which it spreads, the people of the county start to die in their thousands. In the estate of Develish, Lady Anne takes control of her people's future—including the lives of 200 bonded serfs. Strong, compassionate and resourceful, Lady Anne chooses a bastard slave, Thaddeus Thurkell, to act as her steward. Together, they decide to quarantine Develish by bringing the serfs inside the walls. With this sudden overturning of the accepted social order, where serfs exist only to serve their lords, conflicts soon arise. Ignorant of what is happening in the world outside, they wrestle with themselves, with God and with the terrible uncertainty of their futures. Lady Anne's people fear starvation but they fear the pestilence more? And overturning the status quo. This is the first of two novels Walters pens arising from her home county. Look for [The Turn of Midnight](#) (Mira \$27.99) in late August.

Wendig, Chuck. [Wanderers](#) (Del Rey \$28.99). "Wendig pulls no punches in this blockbuster apocalyptic novel, which confronts some of the darkest and most divisive aspects of present-day America with urgency, humanity, and hope. The day after a comet blazes over the west coast of North America, Benji Ray, a disgraced former CDC epidemiologist, is summoned to meet Black Swan, a superintelligent computer designed to predict and prevent disasters, which has determined that Benji must treat an upcoming pandemic. That same morning, Shana wakes up to find her little sister, Nessie, sleepwalking down the driveway and off toward an unknown goal, one of a growing number of similar travelers who are unable to stop or to wake. Shana in turn becomes one of many shepherds, protecting the travelers from a crumbling American society that's ravaged by fear, dogma, disease, and the effects of climate change, while Benji grapples with his daunting assignment and questions about Black Swan's nature and agenda. Wendig challenges readers with twists and revelations that probe issues of faith and free will while crafting a fast-paced narrative with deeply real characters. His politics are unabashed—characters include a populist president brought to power by neo-Nazis, as well as murderous religious zealots—but not simplistic, and he tackles many moral questions while eschewing easy answers. This career-defining epic deserves its inevitable comparisons to Stephen King's *The Stand*, easily rising above the many recent novels of pandemic and societal collapse."—*PW* Starred Review

Wilson, Andrew. [Death in a Desert Land](#) (Atria \$28). In 1928, John Davison, a British intelligence operative, persuades the now divorced Agatha Christie to look into a suspicious death. Two years prior, in 1926, age approximately sixty, Gertrude Bell, a “famous adventurer and Arabist,” died of barbiturate poisoning in Baghdad in an apparent suicide. Davison tells Christie that one of Bell’s former servants recently came across letters that Bell had written to her father, but never sent, letters that suggest Bell was in fear of her life. And that if she died unexpectedly, her murderer should be sought at Leonard and Katherine Woolley’s dig at Ur, a major archaeological site Bell had recently visited. Christie, eager to leave England and her public self behind, takes the Simplon Orient Express to Stamboul, another train to Baghdad, and an inferior line to Ur. There she finds a poisonous atmosphere centering on Katherine. Mrs. Woolley, whose sanity is in doubt, was at odds with Bell during their time together. Hmm. Soon the bludgeoning death of another visitor to Ur pushes Christie to use her novelist’s skills to piece all this nefarious stuff together. “Wilson cleverly riffs on one of Christie’s own novels en route to a crafty and satisfying solution. Wilson strikes gold again.”—*PW* Starred Review for our **July Cozy Crimes Book of the Month**, reminding us this is Wilson’s 3<sup>rd</sup> mystery featuring Agatha. *Death is a Desert Land* is not precisely a cozy, yet it’s filled with fascinating stuff, some of it real, some imagined, and all explained in Wilson’s Afterword. I add that Ur is where Christie eventually meets Max Mallowan, presumably in a 4<sup>th</sup> (or 5<sup>th</sup>) book yet to come. You fans of historicals and Christie should snatch this one up.

#### **JULY SMALL PAPERBACKS**

*It’s a small selection after the large list for June*

Barrett, Lorna. [Poisoned Pages](#) (\$7.99). Booktown #12. Tricia Miles, mystery bookstore owner and amateur sleuth, throws a housewarming cocktail party in her new apartment, but when one of her guests is poisoned and dies. Tricia’s left to wonder if her cooking is to blame or if there’s something much more sinister at play.

Blackwell, Juliet. [Bewitched and Betrothed](#) (Berkley \$7.99). Witchcraft #10. When Lily Ivory stumbles on the uniform of a former prisoner from Alcatraz and SFPD inspector Carlos Romero’s cousin is kidnapped, Lily suspects something dangerous has been unleashed on the ghost-ridden island of Alcatraz.

Cass, Laurie. [Booking the Crook](#) (Berkley \$7.99) Bookmobile Cat #7. Minnie Hamilton and her rescue cat, Eddie, cruise around lovely Chilson, Michigan delivering happiness and good reads in their bookmobile. But when one of their favorite customers doesn’t turn up to collect her books. Minnie, at Eddie’s prodding, checks on the woman and finds her lying dead in her snow-covered driveway.

Davis, Krista. [The Dog Who Knew Too Much](#) (Berkley \$7.99) Paws & Claws #6. America’s favorite dog comes to pet-friendly Wagtail for some rest and relaxation, but Holly quickly discovers that this perfect pup is a total scamp who takes every opportunity to run off and misbehave when during an outdoor treasure-hunting game, the star dog and Trixie, Holly’s beloved Jack Russell terrier, stumble across a dead body.

Finder, Joseph. [Judgment](#) (\$9.99). At a conference in a Chicago hotel, Juliana Brody, a judge in the Superior Court of Massachusetts, meets a gentle, vulnerable man and in a moment of weakness has an unforgettable night with him. But back home in Boston, it becomes clear that this was no random encounter. Juliana discovers that she’s been entrapped, her night of infidelity captured on video. Strings are being pulled in high places, a terrifying unfolding conspiracy that will turn her life upside down.

Gardiner, Meg. [Into the Black Nowhere](#) (\$9.99). In southern Texas, on Saturday nights, women are disappearing. One vanishes from a movie theater. Another, from her car at a stoplight. A mother is ripped from her home while checking on her baby. Rookie FBI agent Caitlin Hendrix, newly assigned to the FBI’s elite Behavioral Analysis Unit, fears that a serial killer is roaming the dark roads outside Austin.

Parker, T Jefferson. [Swift Vengeance](#) (\$9.99). Roland Ford #2. Returning hero and private investigator Roland Ford is on the trail of a mysterious killer who is beheading CIA drone operators and leaving puzzling clues at each crime scene. His troubled friend Lindsay Rakes is afraid for her own life and the life of her son after a fellow flight crew member is killed in brutal fashion. Even more terrifying is the odd note the killer left behind: “Welcome to Caliphornia. This is not the last.”

Woods, Stuart. [A Delicate Touch](#) (\$9.99). Stone Barrington #48. When an old acquaintance reaches out to Stone Barrington requesting assistance, the job seems easy enough. She needs an expert in an esoteric field, someone with both the knowledge and careful dexterity to solve a puzzle. But the solution to one small problem blows the lid open on a bigger scandal going back decades, and involving numerous prominent New Yorkers who would prefer the past stay buried.