

BOOKNEWS from

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sales@poisonedpen.com tel (888)560-9919
http://poisonedpen.com

4014 N. Goldwater Blvd.
Scottsdale, AZ 85251
480-947-2974



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WORKING WITH YOU

We appreciate your support for the authors and The Pen with your continued patronage. We are reimagining some events and postponing others as we navigate #covid_19 trying to steer the best course for you, authors, and staff.

We urge you to order on line or by phone and use the choices below. And to participate in those events we will run on line, a programming option we have offered for many years and will let authors with new books speak to you.

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OUR REMAINING MARCH DISCUSSION CLUBS ARE POSTPONED

TUESDAY MARCH 17 7:00 PM

Nancy E. Turner signs [Light Changes Everything](#) (St Martins \$27.99)

An Arizona author, Nancy is driving down. We will practice social distancing. You can instead watch the event on [Facebook Live video](#) and YouTube and order a signed copy.

WEDNESDAY MARCH 18 5:00 PM Reimagined

Join Harlan Coben and Barbara on [Facebook Live video](#) (You can watch it at any time thereafter and on our YouTube from March 19)

Harlan is signing a big shipment of [The Boy from the Woods](#) (Grand Central \$29) at home and shipping the books to us, ETA March 26.

Please Preorder to avoid disappointment. Shipping to you will be free.

Ticket holders have been refunded

WEDNESDAY MARCH 18 7:00 PM Cancelled

[Writers Workshop with Rhys Bowen](#)

Attendees will be refunded

SUNDAY MARCH 22 2:00 PM YA Event Postponed

Kitty Felde will rebook

MONDAY MARCH 23 7:00 PM

James Rollins signs [The Last Odyssey](#) (Harper \$28.99)

We encourage you to view the conversation with Jim and Barbara on [Facebook Live](#) or any time thereafter and on You Tube from March 24

Our copies come with an exclusive collectible and FREE SHIPPING within the US

Please check back with us for further details.

THURSDAY MARCH 26 7:00 PM Cancelled

We may set up a Skype event in the store on this date with Kathy Reichs, or reschedule. Please check back with us.

Meanwhile we are shipping [Conspiracy of Bones](#) (Scribner \$27) to her.

Please Preorder now to avoid disappointment

FRIDAY MARCH 27 7:00 PM Cancelled

James Sallis and Three Legged Dog

SATURDAY MARCH 28 Noon Reimagined

Watch William Kent Krueger in conversation with Barbara on [Facebook Live](#) or any time thereafter and on You Tube

He can sign any of his books including [Ordinary Grace](#) (\$14 special price) and [This Tender Land](#) (\$27)

SATURDAY MARCH 28 Postponed

Phil Bonds signs [Dancing with Sea Lions](#) (Wild Blue Pacific Publishing \$29)

SUNDAY MARCH 29 2:00 PM

Sharon Kay Penman signs [The Land Beyond the Sea](#) (Putnam \$34)

The status of this event will change with travel restrictions.

Check back with us

OUR MARCH BOOKS OF THE MONTH

British Crime Club One unsigned hardcover or paperback per month
Thomas, Russ. [Firewatching](#)

Cozy Crimes Club One unsigned hardcover or paperback per month
O'Connor, Carlene. [Murder in an Irish Cottage](#)

First Mystery Book of the Month Club One Signed First per month
Bentley, Don. [Without Sanction](#)

The Crime Collectors Book of the Month Club One Signed
First per month
Swanson, Peter. [Eight Perfect Murders](#)

Historical Fiction Club One Signed First per month
Watson, Sterling. [The Committee](#)

Fantastic New Fiction One Signed First per month
Moore, Graham. [The Holdout](#)

SIGNED BOOKS

Bonds, Philip. [Dancing with Sea Lions](#) (Wild Blue Pacific Publishing \$29). Not a coffee table book filled with amazing photos, although it does have those, but one exploring serious issues involving the species, conservation of the sea lions, and ocean ecosystems.

Boyle, William. [City of Margins](#) (Norton \$27). Patrick reviews: "Boyle's masterful new novel is set in South Brooklyn in the 1990's and revolves around a disparate group of neighborhood characters whose lives intersect in tragic, often darkly humorous ways. Donnie Parascandolo is an ex-cop who works muscle for local mobster, Big Time Tommy Ficalora. Rosemarie Baldini struggles to repay a debt that her murdered husband owed to Ficalora. Her son Mikey seems destined to follow in his old man's footsteps, despite Rosemarie's efforts. When Mikey discovers what appears to be a suicide note in an old paperback book, it leads him to Donnie Parascandola's ex-wife, Donna, who leads a quiet, shattered life following the death of her teenage son. The two characters, Mikey and the much older Donna, are drawn into each other's arms and hatch a plot to escape from the neighborhood at last. Boyle is a singular talent, kind of a modern day Balzac from Brooklyn, drawing his inspiration from film, literature and music. If you like gritty character-driven fiction in the vein of George Pelecanos, Dennis Lehane, et al, don't miss this one."

Coben, Harlan. [The Boy from the Woods](#) (Grand Central \$29). Found as a feral child running free in the Ramapo Mountain State Forest near the suburb of Westville, NJ, with no memory of his past but able to speak English, the boy appropriately named Wilde has returned to the woods to live as an adult after being raised in foster care. He's happiest by himself, innocent of his own history. Then a child, Naomi Pine, goes missing. Not even her father takes this seriously, but celebrity TV lawyer Hester Crimstein has learned through her grandson that Naomi was relentlessly bullied at school. She insists that Wilde put his unique skills to work to find Naomi. As another teen goes missing, journalists and creepy security experts soon come calling, and Wilde, navigating his return to Westville, must uncover—and survive—a terrible secret. Coben fans spend a lot of time in suburbs, not all of them in NJ,

with his characters but from time to time he enjoys leading us all into a more primal landscape as in his 2008 novel *The Woods*.

Jemisin, NK. [The City We Became](#) (Orbit \$28). Five New Yorkers must come together to defend their city from an ancient evil in this stunning new novel by Hugo Award-winner Jemisin. The Starred *Kirkus* review calls the latest novel from science fiction luminary Jemisin "fierce, poetic, uncompromising." Set in Jemisin's hometown of New York City, this work of speculative fiction features five New Yorkers who must come together to defend their city against the Enemy, which Jemisin described, in an interview with *Entertainment Weekly*, as "a dangerous otherworldly tourist...trying to supernaturally gentrify the city to death." Toilet stalls attack, backyard pools become portals, and FDR traffic "becomes a literal, tentacled killer." Magical realism. Koontz, Dean. [Devoted](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$28.99). The thing to keep in mind about the imaginative and prolific Koontz is that he truly loves Golden Retrievers. His are family. So it's no surprise that Kipp, "a uniquely gifted dog with a heart as golden as his breed" is the protector, rather in the spirit of animal totems, to eleven-year-old Woody Bookman. And naturally in a Koontz novel this child, mute from birth, is under mysterious threat. His father died in freak accident. Woody believes some monstrous evil was behind dad's death and is threatening his mom, Megan, and Woody himself. And—he's right. A man has set a depraved plan into motion. Only a force for good like Kipp can stop it...

Leon, Donna. [Trace Elements](#) (Grove \$27). "Throughout her acclaimed Guido Brunetti series, Leon has brilliantly melded topical social issues with timeless considerations of human imperfections and the dilemmas they generate. Here she does so again with a meditative novel that looks at the water crisis in Venice—not flooding this time, but pollution—set against the eternal problem of justice."—Bill Ott. When Commissario Brunetti and his colleague Claudia Griffoni are summoned to the deathbed of a woman whose husband has recently died, apparently in a car accident, they are told, by the dying woman, that "bad money" killed her husband. Is there a crime to be investigated or is this merely a family tragedy? Naturally, Brunetti digs into the matter and finds that the dead man, whose job involved testing the waters in Venice's canals for contamination, may have uncovered a scandal that could threaten every Venetian. Probing, as so often happens in this series, leads to larger and more ambiguous questions, this time about "that beast, justice." Turning to Aeschylus' *The Eumenides* for clarity, Brunetti finds that our moral muddles have been with us for more than 2,000 years. This isn't the first time Brunetti has been forced to decide "which crime to punish, which to ignore," but the burden of that decision has never been greater." As usual, Leon adroitly portrays the complex questions of what constitutes justice and the sad consequences that can result from its pursuit and leaves us with no clear resolution. You can see reading this, an investigation set in broiling summer heat with a city crammed with tourists, why Leon has moved to Switzerland. For the signed UK first: [Trace Elements](#) (Heinemann \$44).

Mosley, Walter. [Trouble Is What I Do](#) (Mulholland \$26). Morally ambiguous P.I. Leonid McGill is back — and investigating crimes against society's most downtrodden. Phillip "Catfish"

Worry is a 92-year-old Mississippi bluesman who needs Leonid's help with a simple task: deliver a letter revealing the black lineage of a wealthy heiress and her corrupt father. But when a famed and feared assassin puts a hit on Catfish, Leonid has no choice but to confront the ghost of his own felonious past. Working to protect his client and his own family, Leonid must reach the heiress on the eve of her wedding before her powerful father kills those who hold their family's secret....

Parks, Alan. [Bobby March Will Live Forever](#) (Canongate \$34.99). July 1973. The Glasgow drugs trade is booming and Bobby March, the city's own rock-star hero, has just overdosed in a central hotel. Alice Kelly is thirteen years old, lonely. And missing. Meanwhile the niece of McCoy's boss has fallen in with a bad crowd and when she goes AWOL, McCoy is asked—off the books—to find her. McCoy has a hunch. But does he have enough time? 3rd in this Glasgow noir series.

Penman, Sharon Kay. [The Land Beyond the Sea](#) (Putnam \$34). Here we are in 1172 Outremer or the Kingdom of Jerusalem and it is (was) a real life *Game of Thrones*. When Pope Urban II called up a military expedition in 1095 to head east to bolster the Christian Byzantine Empire, he did not foresee the consequences which included Europeans establishing kingdoms and warring among themselves and everyone else. The legacy of the Crusades is still with us, the good and the bad. Penman follows up her Plantagenet series with an engrossing saga of King Baldwin IV and his threatened Crusader state. When Baldwin is 10 years old, his tutor, William of Tyre, discovers that the boy has no feeling in one of his arms. Fearing Baldwin might have leprosy, William consults a Syrian doctor, who confirms the diagnosis, drawing wrath from Baldwin's father, King Amalri, who resolves that Baldwin will become a fierce warrior against the Saracens. As Baldwin comes of age and receives treatment, his resilience defies his court's expectations. "Baldwin's success in keeping the would-be Mediterranean and Muslim invaders at bay makes the novel a riveting page-turner, and Penman's well-honed skill for weaving deeply researched details into epic tales is on full display. Fans of medieval historical fiction won't want to miss this." True. It's the characters she brings back to life, all the dynastic, matrimonial, etc squabbles, and the role of the women that speak to me. Delivery of this book may be delayed depending on Penman's event status. Please be patient.

Reichs, Kathy. [Conspiracy of Bones](#) (Scribner \$27). Bestseller Reichs' excellent 19th Temperance Brennan novel, the first since 2015, finds the forensic anthropologist at her breaking point after a series of traumatic events, including the murder of her boss, who was succeeded by a woman who regards Brennan as persona non grata; her mother's cancer diagnosis; and the discovery that Brennan herself has a potentially fatal aneurysm. She begins to doubt her own senses when she thinks she spots a man in a trench coat lurking outside her Charlotte, N.C., home in the middle of the night, but fears that it might have just been a hallucination. She's then rattled to receive grisly images on her phone of an eviscerated male corpse without a face. Hooked by the mystery of who sent the pictures and why, Brennan risks her professional standing by pursuing the matter, despite the opposition of Charlotte's new medical examiner. The trail takes multiple unexpected turns as Brennan pursues leads connected to bioweapons, a ferry sinking, and the Dark Web, in this crackerjack puzzle. CSI junkies who haven't read Reichs before will be hooked. Some of the

early books in the series are coming back into print at the end of April. Yay.

Rollins, James. [The Last Odyssey](#) (Harper \$28.99 March 23, the day before publication). A half mile beneath the frozen (if melting) tundra of (not-for-sale) Greenland, archaeologists find a medieval ship whose hold contains Bronze Age artifacts, including a clockwork gold atlas ringed by silver astrolabe crafted by a Muslim inventor named Ismail al-Jazari who inspired Leonardo Da Vinci. The moving globe reveals Odysseus unexpectedly following an underground river to dark Tartarus (that's ancient Greek for hell), and now the entire war—and terrorist-ridden region—is in an uproar, which puts Sigma Force front and center as extremists plot to bring apocalypse now.... Recall that in the 19th century, scientists uncovered the ancient walls of Troy, posing the question: if Troy was real, how much of Homer's twin tales of gods and monsters—*The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*—could also be awaiting discovery? Rollins goes after what truth is hidden within Homer's tales, marrying nail-biting action with a highly imaginative premise... "This is a thoughtful, nonstop thrill ride that's an exemplar of an escapist page-turner." – *PW* Starred Review.

Rosenfelt, David. [The K Team](#) (St Martins \$29). Here's a new series about a dynamic new investigative team featuring a determined former cop and his loyal German Shepherd. Corey Douglas and his K-9 partner, Simon Garfunkel, have recently retired from the police force. Not ready to give up the life yet, they come up with a proposal for fellow former cop, Laurie Carpenter, and her investigating partner, Marcus. Laurie and Marcus – who help out Laurie's lawyer husband Andy on cases – have been chafing to jump back into investigating on their own, so they are in. They call themselves the K Team, in honor of Simon. Their first job as private investigators comes to them from Judge Henry Henderson, who's known as a very tough but fair judge, and they've all come up against him in court at one time or another. Though it's hard to believe, Judge Henderson is being blackmailed and extorted, and he doesn't want to involve the police.... You can see this is written in the Andy Carpenter NJ universe. Rosenfelt will visit us later in 2020 with another book... he writes with speed.

Steinhauer, Olen. [The Last Tourist](#) (St Martins \$29). Reluctant CIA agent Milo Weaver, a decade late than first we met him, is hiding out in Western Sahara when a young CIA analyst arrives to question him about a series of suspicious deaths and terrorist chatter linked to him. Their conversation is soon interrupted by a new breed of Tourists intent on killing them both, forcing them to run. "A decade ago, the CIA's Department of Tourism, a corps of highly trained assassins, went defunct, but now something similar has emerged from its ruins in bestseller Steinhauer's stunning fourth thriller featuring ex-CIA operative Milo. As chief of the Library, a stealthy espionage operation buried within the UN's bureaucracy, Weaver has been attempting to serve as a reasonably honest broker of sensitive information, but a series of increasingly violent assaults drives him into hiding in the Western Sahara. Milo eventually figures out that he's being pursued by a darkly plausible, utterly ruthless assassins corps created by multinational corporations acting beyond the reach of any country's laws to lock down global dominance. No dummies survive in this twisty shadow realm, and Weaver's wits keep him alive as the complex, layered plot reaches a shrewd, nuanced climax at the World Economic Forum, leaving the reader with the hope that

global elites can't rig the rules of every game. The author does a masterly job of evoking dingy desert cities and the rarified air of Davos, Switzerland. Steinhauer reinforces his position at the top of the espionage genre."—*PW* Starred Review. [Milo first appears in *The Tourist*](#) (\$9.99), [The Nearest Exit](#) (\$16.99), and [An American Spy](#) (\$16.99).

Turner, Nancy E. [Light Changes Everything](#) (St Martins \$27.99 March 17). In her warm-hearted latest, Turner returns to the Arizona Territories and the world of Sarah Agnes Prine. This time, the story begins in 1907 and is told by Sarah's niece, 17-year-old Mary Pearl Prine, who rarely leaves home without her pistol and her beloved horse, Duende. Mary Pearl's Aunt Sarah fostered a love of books and learning, and though Mary Pearl loves her large family, she longs to see the world outside her pa's pecan farm, so she's thrilled when she's invited to attend art school at Wheaton College in Illinois. A quick betrothal complicates her plans, but at Wheaton she discovers a love of photography and finds joy in new friendships. After a terrible betrayal from someone close to her, Mary Pearl's future is imperiled, and when range wars threaten her family, she leaves Wheaton to help. Turner's satisfying, immersive, and often heart-pounding tale of one indomitable young woman's frontier life, touched by tragedy and hope, is realistically drawn, and readers will warm to her portrayal of Mary Pearl's chaotic but loving family life.

"Mary Pearl Prine is a western original. Her spirit and pluckiness are infectious. Filled with Arizona Territory detail and language, the story of a young woman too self-confident to be beaten down by frontier challenges, promises to become a Wild West classic." —Sandra Dallas. Nancy's lovely novel, also of AZ Territory and of the Prines, [These Is My Words](#), is and remains a PP favorite.

Woods, Stuart. [Hit List](#) (Putnam \$29). NY attorney Stone Barrington has been the pals of presidents, first the man, then the wife. And now he may well sleep with one if his longtime friend and bedmate Holly wins the election. Stone also dabbles in the workings of the CIA not to mention his former gig at the NYPD thanks to his friendship with the Commissioner and wife. But here Stone is one of the targets of a high tech and skilled assassin who is picking off victims in Manhattan, a target for no obvious reason. So he and his usual cadre flee first to Stone's estate in England, no good; then to his home in Paris, no good; and finally to his estate in Maine, also no good. Considering he flies in his own Gulfstream with some pretty obvious high-level company, it's not surprising the pursuer is able to... pursue. Lots of action here plus the usual .01% lifestyle Stone enjoys and plenty of good food and sex.

MORE CLASSICS

Gilbert, Anthony. [Death in Fancy Dress](#) (Poisoned Pen \$14.99). A Starred Review: "In this standout entry in the British Library Crime Classics series from Gilbert (a pseudonym of Lucy Malleon, 1899–1973), first published in 1933, lawyer Tony Keith and his friend Jeremy Freyne travel to Feltham Abbey at the request of the Home Office, which is unsettled by a baffling rash of suicides of people who had either money or "rank and position." That each of the dead raised large sums of money for various unstated purposes leads officials to believe that a sophisticated blackmailer known as the Spider was responsible for the suicides. Hilary Feltham, the fiancée of a Foreign Office employee, is be-

lieved to be the Spider's next target, and Keith and Freyne hope their presence at Feltham Abbey will avert disaster. A murder occurs, despite their best efforts. The ingenious story line is enhanced by ample doses of wit (of Freyne, Keith states, "when you heard of some white man with the reputation of a lunatic, doing anything particularly futile in some obscure British protectorate, you could bet your boots Jeremy wasn't far off"). Gilbert neatly combines Wodehousian humor with a fair play puzzle.

Follett, Ken. [The Eye of the Needle](#) (\$16). His code name was "The Needle." He was a German aristocrat of extraordinary intelligence—a master spy with a legacy of violence in his blood, and the object of the most desperate manhunt in history.... But his fate lay in the hands of a young and vulnerable English woman, whose loyalty, if swayed, would assure his freedom—and win the war for the Nazis. . .

MacDonald, John D. [The Brass Cupcake](#) (\$16). Ex-cop Cliff Bartells might be the last honest man in Florence City, Florida. After quitting the force over a crisis of conscience, he takes a job at an insurance company buying back stolen jewelry. Cliff is focused on keeping the bottom line down and staying out of the spotlight. But when an affluent tourist from Boston is murdered over a hefty collection of jewelry, Cliff finds himself wrapped up in a case that's making national headlines. With the victim's beautiful niece, Melody Chance, determined to help retrieve the goods, suddenly Cliff has the partner he never knew he wanted. Now all they need is a suspect: someone capable of cold-blooded murder in the name of profit. And that could mean anyone in this crooked town. "All I ever wanted was to touch readers as powerfully as John D. MacDonald touched me. No price could be placed on the enormous pleasure that his books have given me. He captured the mood and the spirit of his times more accurately, more hauntingly, than any 'literature' writer—yet managed always to tell a thunderingly good, intensely suspenseful tale."—Dean Koontz, who writes the Introduction to this edition.

Willeford, Charles. [The Burnt Orange Heresy](#) (\$16). Originally published in 1971, this story of art, ambition and crime by one of the first writers of Florida noir moves along smoothly and delivers a great plot. Willeford's knowledge of art informs the story throughout and his characters are perfectly formed, especially the art critic. Who is fast-talking, backstabbing, womanizing, and fiercely ambitious art critic James Figueras who will do anything—blackmail, burglary, and beyond—to make a name for himself. When an unscrupulous collector offers Figueras a career-making chance to interview Jacques Debierue, the greatest living—and most reclusive—artist, the critic must decide how far he will go to become the art-world celebrity he hungers to be. Will Figueras stop at the opportunity to skim some cream for himself or push beyond morality's limits to a bigger payoff?

MORE MARCH LARGE PAPERBACK PICKS

Dow, David R. [Confessions of an Innocent Man](#) (\$16). Rafael Zhattah, a Houston restaurateur and the narrator of David R. Dow's impressive first novel, "Confessions of an Innocent Man" (Dutton, 293 pages, \$27), has his world turned upside down twice. First, he is unjustly convicted of murdering his wealthy wife. Then, while on death row, he is absolved of guilt and set free to make sense of his life. Revenge on those responsible for his imprisonment is the cause he embraces. "Powerful people had violated a moral code," he decides. "They deserved to pay."

Mr. Dow, founder of the Texas Innocence Network, has written a book that rings with emotional truth: an angry peal that fades into an echoing sadness.

Koryta, Michael. [If She Wakes](#) (\$17.99). The car in which Tara Beckley, a student at Maine's Hammel College, was driving Professor Amandi Oltamu before they parked on a bridge is struck by a car driven by Carlos Ramirez. Oltamu, who was on his way to deliver the keynote address at a talk related to his work on batteries and solar panels, is killed, and Tara ends up paralyzed, conscious but unable to communicate. Insurance investigator Abby Kaplan, who's employed by Hammel, probes the fatal collision. Why Tara chose to stop on a bridge nowhere near her destination is a puzzle. College officials are hoping to avoid any liability for Oltamu's death and Tara's injuries, a prospect that seems likely when Ramirez admits to having been on his cell phone at the time of the accident. But when Ramirez is shot to death, Abby begins to suspect that something more sinister is at work than distracted driving, and that Tara may have some answers. Adept at creating Hitchcockian moments, Koryta keeps the suspense high throughout.

Panowich, Brian. [Like Lions](#) (\$16.99). A Starred Review: "In Thriller Award winner Panowich's excellent sequel to 2015's [Bull Mountain](#) (\$16), the death of the brothers of County Sheriff Clayton Burroughs has left a void in the family business, which includes the production and distribution of meth and moonshine in northern Georgia. Outside criminal elements are looking to expand into this area. Burroughs has vowed to keep the rule of law, but when his wife and newborn son are threatened, he's forced to choose between keeping his family safe or embracing his outlaw roots and taking over as the heir apparent of the region's most ruthless crime family. He must also examine personal issues long buried under alcohol and avoidance. Although the stark economic backdrop of rural Georgia and a cast of richly described characters fuel the narrative, it's the emotional complexity of Burroughs ("He hoarded guilt and pain the way some people did magazines and newspapers") as well as the brass knuckle punch of an ending that will have readers applauding. This is hillbilly noir at its finest." So clearly for fans of David Joy and a definite high recommend from Patrick who is looking into a signing or signed copies of Panowich's April book.

Tuti, Ilaria. [Flowers Over the Inferno](#) (\$16.95). A serial killer who is not your average SK by a long shot – and a landscape to explore – a wooded area with a small and insular village in the Italian Alps. And another big plus for this 2019 Discovery Club Pick: the lead cop, Superintendent Teresa Battaglia, is not in the common way. She's aging, diabetic, tough, and has an unusual sense of humor which he wields on her subordinates, in particular the new recruit to her team, young Inspector Marini. Who's new school, not old school, and at a disadvantage throughout. I can't say much about the plot without spoilers, but the victims have been brutalized in an animalistic way and clues are scarce (some deliberately made so thanks to the local cops). And yet when you reach the end you will feel compassionate rather than revolted. There's a nice twist to this terrific story, too.

Watson, Sterling. [The Committee](#) (\$16.95). Florida, late 1950s, an era of blacklists, McCarthyism, fear, mirrors much of the US and the world today. A mix of professors, students, and townspeople in Gainesville where some cherish the ideal of a university

is disrupted by the arrival of a shadow group of men known as The Committee who wield the power of government and the police towards their own ideal, even if its tactics include both the murder of reputations—and actual murder. Professor Tom Stall, a war veteran, is a fascinating character to lead us through the plot, a man of principle yet flawed, rising in his career, who becomes pitted against a colleague, the university president, and an old friend turned deadly enemy. The signed hardcover of this thoughtful thriller is our March Historical Fiction Book of the Month.

Webb, Betty. [The Panda of Death](#) (Poisoned Pen \$15.95 Signed). So many conversations have arisen over DNA testing, the secrets it reveals, and the inevitable questions of privacy and of the ethics of connecting to hitherto unknown relatives, that ancestry tests have made it into both true crime (like the Golden State killer collar) and fiction. Webb, a reporter to her bones, also has a personal connection: DNA testing revealed her "rascal" of a father was more of a father than Webb knew. You can read about this backstory, Webb's own statements, and a review of this timely and delightful, cleverly plotted Gunn Zoo mystery [HERE](#).

Winspear, Jacqueline. [The American Agent](#) (\$16.99). We move on from the Bore War into the actual London Blitz of 1940 when the US stood "neutral" and American correspondents like Edward R Murrow reported from London and shaped American thinking. Catherine Saxon is one such, a brave and pretty young woman who one night worked on the ambulance team of Maisie Dobbs and her friend Priscilla. The next day Catherine is found dead in her digs but news of the murder is concealed by British authorities. Scotland Yard comes to Maisie along with Mark Scott of the US Department of Justice, the man who helped her in Munich back in 1938. Robert MacFarlane of the Yard asks Maisie to work with Scott on the mystery of Saxon's death. Maisie, hopeful of passing muster to adopt a young evacuee called Anna, is reluctant but knows her duty.... I have to say here, not at the event, that I cannot see the point of having killed off James and their unborn child only to give Maisie a possible new lover and a living child, but then I don't believe Winspear originally intended to write the series into the new war. And I do think she has some terrific material about 1940 Americans and attitudes here.

MORE NEW BOOKS FOR MARCH

Bohjalian, Chris. [The Red Lotus](#) (Doubleday \$27.95). On a once-in-a-lifetime trip to Vietnam, Austin vanishes, leaving his girlfriend Alexis, the FBI, and his family to deal with the mystery. Amid a sea of misdirection and lies, Alexis, an emergency room doctor, discovers a scheme more sinister than she ever imagined, and it has been happening in her presence all along.

Borsuk, Eric. [American Animals: A True Crime Memoir](#) (Turner \$15.99). "A rare book heist that Danny Ocean may have applauded—except for one mistake." —*Vanity Fair* "A tragicomedy of errors." —*Salon*. Three childhood friends: Warren, Spencer, and Eric. Disillusioned with freshman year of college, and determined to escape from their mundane Middle-American existences, the three hatch a plan to steal millions of dollars' worth of artwork and rare manuscripts from a university museum. The story that unfolds is a gripping adventure of teenage rebellion, from page-turning meetings with black-market art dealers in Amsterdam, to the opulent galleries of Christie's auction house in Rockefeller Center. *American Animals* ushers the reader along

a gut-wrenching ride of adolescent self-destruction, providing a front-row seat to the inception, planning, and execution of the heist, while offering a rare glimpse into the evolution of a crime—all narrated by one of the perpetrators in a darkly comic, action-packed, true-crime caper.

Bouman, Tom. [The Bramble and the Rose](#) (Norton \$25.95). Edgar winner Bouman's third novel is a compact, powerful country noir that reminds me of a Daniel Woodrell or a David Joy. Officer Henry Farrell of Wild Thyme, a small town in Pennsylvania's Endless Mountains, is for sure not your ordinary cop. Which becomes clear when a headless corpse is found in the woods. If this is the work of a man-eating bear, a bear Henry has some affinity with, then why not leave hunting it down to the Game Commission? It turns out the township is no more stranger to criminals than a city and has similar pockets of poverty, aspiration, and predatory activity. Henry, newly married to Miss Julie, faces both bad guys and moral quandaries within a web of local and family connections.

Brown, Carter. [The Unorthodox Corpse / Death on the Downbeat / The Blonde](#) (Stark House \$19.95). Three more thrilling Al Wheeler mysteries, with a new introduction by the author's daughter, Priscilla Yates. "These are all tightly written tales... plenty of action and the plots are straightforward fast reading, laced with humor..." Fans of old school mysteries will enjoy Stark House's republications.

Collins, Max Allan. [Do No Harm](#) (Forge \$27.99). Collins takes us to Cleveland and the 1954 Sam Sheppard case, the controversial murder of the osteopath's wife by whom? Sheppard? An intruder? Interestingly Elliot Ness in retirement lives next door to Sheppard and it is Ness who calls in his old friend Nate Heller of Chicago to dig deeper into the murder than the Cleveland authorities who finger Sheppard for the crime. Heller can't find enough info to prove Sheppard's innocence and has to drop out, but years later Heller gets another chance... F. Lee Bailey plays a big role here along with media figures etc. Collins always produces his own take on a famous crime.

De Palma, Brian/Susan Lehman. [Are Snakes Necessary?](#) (Titan \$22.99). When the beautiful young videographer offered to join his campaign, Senator Lee Rogers should've known better. But saying no would have taken a stronger man than Rogers, with his ailing wife and his robust libido. Enter Barton Brock, the senator's fixer. He's already gotten rid of one troublesome young woman — how hard could this new one turn out to be? Pursued from Washington D.C. to the streets of Paris, 18-year-old Fanny Cours knows her reputation and budding career are on the line. But what she doesn't realize is that her life might be as well... This is the debut for legendary film director De Palma writing with Lehman.

Chung, Maxine M. [The Eighth Girl](#) (Harper \$28.99). The Indie Next Pick: "Alexa Wú suffers from multiple personality disorder — a secret only a few people know, including her best friend Ella, who charges great sums as an escort. When Ella gets in trouble, Alexa runs to London to rescue her. The biggest hurdle isn't the powerful men she'll have to fight, it's her own personas who materialize with terrifying consequences." All of a sudden multiple personality disorder, like Munchausen's Syndrome, is popping up in books. While it's interesting to imagine a single physical person battling with several distinct personalities who can take over

from one another, and wonder what trauma caused a person's persona to split up to cope, I found it exhausting reading.

Davis, Krista. [The Diva Sweetens the Pie](#) (\$15.95). Nothing heats up Old Town quite like the annual Pie Festival, and this year is no exception, especially since Sophie's professional rival, Natasha Smith, is barred from participating. Sophie, meanwhile, has been asked to oversee the pie eating contest. But the drama really rolls out when celebrity judge, Patsy Lee Presley, host of television's most popular cooking show, bites the crust during the competition, and Sophie's friends are suspected of the crime. As the folks of Old Town dish, the tough truth about Patsy's meteoric rise to domestic stardom begins to leak. It turns out that Patsy's sweet exterior hid a secret sour side....

Davis, Mark. [Seven Shoes](#) (Stark House \$15.95). Seven strangers take a suicide jump from Pulpit Rock in Norway, and it's Dr. Elizabeth Browne's mission to find out why. Davis is the exciting new author of two science fiction novels, and this is his first crime thriller. March 2020.

Fredericks, Mariah. [Death of a New American](#) (\$17.99). "Fredericks's wonderfully moving sequel to 2018's [A Death of No Importance](#) (\$9.99) opens in 1912 with lady's maid Jane Prescott helping Louise Benchley, the shy daughter of an upper-class New York family, prepare for her society wedding to William Tyler. The wedding is to take place at the Long Island estate of William's uncle, Charles Tyler, an anti-gang activist famous for his ongoing crusade against the Italian Mafia. There Jane befriends Sofia Bernardi, who's nanny to the Tylers' youngest child, Frederick. Late one night, Jane is roused by Frederick's screams to find Sofia murdered in the nursery. The police believe that Sofia thwarted an attempted kidnapping—a warning to Charles from the Mafia—and paid with her life, but Jane soon discovers that Sofia's death may be much more personal. Fredericks has a sharp eye for the complexities of human nature and how even good people are capable of committing terrible deeds to protect the ones they love. This is a touching portrait of early-20th-century New York in all its glory and ugliness."—PW Starred Review

Fremont, Helen. [The Escape Artist](#) (Gallery \$28). Fremont follows up her bestselling memoir *After Long Silence* with more of growing up in a household where her parents, profoundly traumatized by their lives in the Holocaust, keep deep secrets. Secrets designed to keep the outside world at bay. Secrets that had them raise Fremont and her elder sister as Catholics when the parents were really Jews. But the biggest secret is once Fremont chases when her father dies and in a while she learns that she has been cut out of his will. Disinherited. Wouldn't you never give up trying to find out why?

Friedman, Daniel. [Running Out of Road](#) (St Martins \$26.99). In 2011, Carlos Watkins, the producer of a true crime podcast, reopens one of retired Jewish cop Buck Schatz's old cases: "Chester March is finally about to be executed for killing his missing wife after decades on death row in Tennessee. Buck, at 90 infirm, nearly deaf, and unfettered (i.e., rude), stands firm that March is guilty even as Watkins advances his own agenda. We flash back to 1955 when Schatz was a junior detective with the Memphis PD. "His first contact with March, an affluent white man, makes Schatz instantly suspicious, and his conviction that March is a killer intensifies after he learns of the 1953 murder of a black prostitute, who was seen by another prostitute get-

ting into March's car. Despite the evidence Buck amasses, the district attorney refuses to proceed on the basis of 'testimony of a negro whore and a Jew detective.' Friedman gradually reveals how March eventually ended up facing lethal injection.... John Grisham fans looking for more nuance and deeper characterizations will be rewarded."—*PW* Starred Review. One can also look at this story as satire both of Watkins' constant media push and what he claims to be his moral stance, as well as of how the justice system works for the privileged.

✂Gardner, Ashley. [Death at Brighton Pavilion](#) (Ivy \$12.99). I am partial to Regency Mysteries (as a lifelong Georgette Heyer fan), and to this series by Gardner who also writes a popular Victorian series as Jennifer Ashley. When Captain Gabriel Lacey finds himself standing over a dead body in Brighton Pavilion, bloody sword in hand and no memory of how he got there, he immediately fears he is a murderer. The dead man is Colonel Hamilton Isherwood, a man Lacey clashed with after the battle of Salamanca in Spain seven years before. As Lacey tries to piece together the events of the previous night, he discovers he'd promised to help a Quaker gentleman find his missing son, and that the Society of Friends might know far more about his strange night out than anyone else. With the help of Brewster, Grenville, and his wife, Lacey races to save himself from arrest, even it means bringing to light painful scandals from his own past.

✂Hadlow, Janice. [The Other Bennet Sister](#) (Holt \$28). Why not revisit the world of [Pride and Prejudice](#)? But look at it through the eyes of Mary, the plain middle sister, the marginalized middle daughter of the Bennets who takes refuge in books? Hadlow does a lovely job of imagining how Mary learns to discard family, mostly her mother's expectations and censure, and find her true path. It takes her into bustling preindustrial London. There is a man, but Mary's road may lead outside domestic life and he may not be the man, or the only man, for her. While away a few hours in a world that was transforming even as the Bennets lived in it.

✂Healey, Jane. [The Animals at Lockwood Manor](#) (Houghton \$26). Looking for something truly original? This Gothic/#MeToo novel, set in a grand but fading country manor as the "Phony War" heats up in 1939, fills the bill. The manor is the designated depository for a natural history museum's collection of mostly taxidermied specimens transported Lockwood for safekeeping. Spinster Hetty Cartwright is the collection's supervisor and billeted in the manor. She meets the clearly troubled Lucy Lockwood, a young beauty suffering from "nerves" who finds a few freedoms from the tyrannical grip of Major Lockwood as Hetty challenges him. As the two roam the manor they find things shifted and exhibits gone missing. It's almost as if the house has a will of its own. But despite the Gothic elements (a house is a crucial element in any Gothic) there is actual criminality afoot and Healey writes compellingly.

✂Huie, ML. [Spitfire](#) (Crooked Lane \$26.99). It's V-E Day, 1946, in London. Former spy Livy Nash, consumer of too much booze and bored and resentful with her proofreading job for a sappy Ladies' Advice column in a newspaper, rushes to join the flood of celebrants despite the mess she is. It doesn't go well. But then she encounters Ian Fleming, a wartime operator with a new agenda of his own who sends Livy back to France. Her mission: to identify and kill the traitor who betrayed her courier operation in the war and the fellow spy she loved. Paris is still teeming with

spies but the game has changed and a huge surprise awaits her. Livy is a tough, not always sympathetic heroine and this is not one of those heartwarming tales of women power in the war. She has real grit and when it ends you hope to see more of her.

Kane, Frank. [Living End](#) (Stark House \$9.99). "A story about the music business and how payola was a factor in the 1950's... blending history and taking an issue like this shows that Kane was more than a mystery writer."—Rick Holman, *Pulp Fiction Review*. Black Gat #22

Kemp, Marina. [Marguerite](#) (Viking \$26). This isn't a crime novel but an exploration of how past deeds can warp the present; of how people strive for, and can fail at, establishing a true self, made tougher in a small, rural, community; and of the pernicious effects of gossip. We are in the South of France. Having trained to become a nurse in order to help treat her now deceased sister's meningitis, Marguerite Demers takes a job caring for prideful, cruel Jérôme Lanvier at his dilapidated Saint-Sulpice farmhouse. There, she befriends Suki, an Iranian who wears a hijab, causing the townspeople to call her a "witch doctor." Both women provoke jealousy in stolid farmer's wife Brigitte, who, along with her husband, Henri, works for Jérôme. Suki has long been picked on by gossipy and insecure Brigitte, who slanders her perceived rivals with abandon. Meanwhile, Henri, a handsome, sensitive farmer, is having an affair with Edgar, a writer, and is resigned to life at the farm with Brigitte whom he chose to marry as a youth to the surprise of all—bad fit. As Henri stands up for Marguerite, the pair's connection heightens...and more, while Jerome, in huge pain and dying, turns her into a pawn in his end game with his family. It plays out bringing both hope and tragedy, a very memorable book that can haunt you with its characters and the tough issues it doesn't duck.

Kent, Serena. [Death in Avignon](#) (Harper \$26.99). I loved Penelope Kite's debut in [Death in Provence](#) (\$16.99) where her decision to escape a dull life in Surrey plus her ex plus her two stepkids, for an old farm house and life in the Luberon confronts her with a dead man in her swimming pool the very first thing. The investigation brings her under suspicion but also brings friends in her new village of St. Merlot, a sense of self, and the rekindling of her love of music and playing the cello. Now here she is attending a posh gallery show in picturesque Avignon offseason, fall, so the tourists are mostly gone. Her escort is the handsome mayor of St. Merlot. And their dinner à deux is destroyed by the discovery of one of the four artists, the very British Don Doncaster, at death's door. The next day, Don is dead. His painting were, Penelope thinks, hideous but seemed to sell amazingly well, while the work of the talented Nicolas, represented by the same art dealer/agent, less so. Penny becomes involved reluctantly—the chief of police seems to hate her—which disrupts her life again. Visits from her children with their children further disrupt her peace, but when things get rough she calls in her larger than life friend Frankie who always has her back while thrusting her forward. Kent, British, infuses humor to liven things up more. I will get tired of the continually failed dinner dates with the mayor if this series goes on, as I hope it will, but it's charming, not a cozy but like Peter Mayle, so enjoy.

King, Lily. [Writers and Lovers](#) (Grove \$27)). Things aren't going well for 31-year-old Casey, and the novel on which she has been working for six years is so far from completion that it doesn't

even have a title. She has recently returned to the Boston area, and to chip away at her debt, she works at Iris, an upscale restaurant in Cambridge's Harvard Square. One night, at a book party for the novelist Oscar Kolton, Casey meets another writer, Silas, and later accepts a date with him, which he proceeds to break. Later, Casey encounters Oscar Kolton having brunch at Iris with his two young sons. A 47-year-old widower, Oscar woos Casey, and they start seeing each other. Eventually, Casey dates both men until Oscar invites her over for Sunday dinner so that she can get to know his kids. Now she feels obliged to pick a side: "I've reached the elimination round." Despite Casey's habitual teariness, her wit and chirpy optimism endear you to a young woman trying to find love and artistic success, not necessarily in that order.

The Indie Next Pick: "Casey lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts, waits tables, worries about her debt, and falls for the wrong man and the right one. She dreams, she grieves, and she worries about her health. In spite of it all, she manages to finish her novel. Lily King's assured, closely observed story is a loving portrait of Casey and the writing life. I don't think there's a single unnecessary word in the whole thing. *Writers & Lovers* is a joy to read, a gift from a writer at the top of her game."

Lang, Essie. [Death on the Page](#) (Crooked Lane \$26.99). Only for cozy fans who will enjoy the charming characters and beautiful Thousand Islands setting. After living most of her life in Boston, Shelby Cox returned to Alexandria Bay in the Thousand Islands to discover that the mother she'd thought dead had actually deserted the family for a banker from Georgia. Now Shelby runs the seasonal bookstore in romantic Blye Castle on Blye Island and helps her Aunt Edie, who refuses to discuss her mother, in the main Alexandria Bay store, which they co-own. She's already been involved in one murder investigation, [Trouble on the Books](#) (\$16.99), much to the dismay of Police Chief Tekla Stone and Shelby's boyfriend, Coast Guard Investigative Services Agent Zack Griffin. And now Shelby is finding it a challenge to manage a book signing by popular true-crime author Savannah Page. Thanks to the help of Savannah's fiancé, Liam Kennelly, the event goes uneventfully until a Jenna Dunlap angrily accuses Savannah of having stolen her idea and her research about the unsolved murder of Joe Cabana, who died on Blye Island. Savannah is staying at Blye Castle that night, having gotten permission from the society that runs the place, and when she's found dead at the bottom of a flight of steps leading to a secret passage, her laptop missing, Shelby just can't stop herself from snooping.

Ledwidge, Michael. [Stop at Nothing](#) (Hanover \$26.99). If action/adventure is welcome then this fast-moving thriller that begins when diving instructor Michael Gannon watches an expensive Gulfstream go down in the Bahamas is the ticket. Gannon is the only person on the scene and, finding the six people aboard the plane dead, helps himself to a box filled with hundred dollar bills plus a satchel of uncut diamonds. Cool windfall, yes? Probably a drug deal, yes? No! What Gannon didn't ask was, who were the six dead guys? And he should have. Now we're in real thriller territory with powerful guys pissed off. But then, Gannon hasn't always been a peaceful diving instructor.... For fans of James Patterson and similar....

Patterson, James. [Texas Outlaw](#) (LittleBrown \$27.99). Texas Ranger Rory Yates is not keen for hero status. But it's unavoidable once his girlfriend, country singer Willow Dawes, writes a

song about his bravery. Rory escapes his newfound fame when he's sent to the remote West Texas town of Rio Lobo, a municipality with two stoplights. And now, according to the Chief of Police, it has one too many Texas Rangers. Rio Lobo Detective Ariana Delgado is the one who requested Rory, and the only person who believes a local councilwoman's seemingly accidental death is a murder. Then Rory begins to uncover a tangle of small-town secrets, favors, and lies as crooked as Texas law is straight....

✠Perry, Sarah. [After Me Comes the Flood](#) (Harper \$16.99). Tired of the summer heat, John Cole sets off from his London bookshop to visit his brother, who lives by the sea. But John never arrives. In the dark Thetford forest, his car breaks down, and he loses his way in the woods. At the end of a path, he reaches the door of a grand mansion. The young girl who opens it seems to recognize him. In this eerie debut novel from Perry, a book now published in the U.S. for the first time, a man becomes lost in the woods only to be welcomed by a household of strange but passionate residents. So begins Perry's unsettling debut, which shuttles between fairy story and allegory without ever resolving into a single shape or genre. The house is both magnificent and menacing. This is Perry's debut Gothic where plot matters less than mood here—confusion, uncertainty, and endless possibility unfold over the week of John's stay. Even the sundial in the garden tells "two times at once." What connects this fragile household together? Who is sending Alex cruel poison-pen letters? Why does Eve make John feel "pain set up very low in his stomach...as if hooks had been pushed through his flesh"? And whose place has John actually taken? Like Shirley Jackson, Carmen Maria Machado, and other evocative masters of the gothic, Perry circles closer to answers without ever dispelling the magic. Her work is not for everyone but [Melmoth](#) (\$16.99) became something of a success.

Pisarcik, Ian. [Before Familiar Woods](#) (Crooked Lane \$26.99). Three years after teenagers Mathew Fenn and William Downing died in a burst of violence triggered by heroin and fentanyl, Matthew's mother, Ruth, remains shunned by the townsfolk of North Falls, Vermont. Though everyone in the dying town at least ignores the flood of illegal drugs, Ruth is slowly coming to terms with the fact that she does deserve personal blame; she should have done more to protect her son. Meanwhile, she meets Milk Raymond, an alienated Afghan War vet who's trying to figure out how to be a father to his son, Daniel, who has been traumatized by his mother's addiction. Then Ruth's husband vanishes, along with William's father. And so Ruth is forced into an awkward, tentative, altogether convincing investigation. Familiar landscapes become quietly ominous as the characters set about doing what they have to do. This debut is not an Archer Mayor Vermont story; it's more like David Joy moved up north to write it.

Queally, James. [Line of Sight](#) (Polis \$26). This debut earns a Star: "Crime reporter Queally makes his impressive fiction debut with a hard-hitting crime novel set in Newark, N.J. PI Russell Avery, a once idealistic white journalist bounced from his newspaper job, now fixes things for screwed-up cops. When Keyonna Jackson, a black social justice activist who serves as Avery's conscience, spurs him into probing the shooting death of black teenager Kevin Mathis, a suspected drug dealer, Avery plunges into a miasma of police corruption and reconnects with former girlfriend Dina, a reporter bent on unmasking crooked cops. The deeper he investigates, the more Avery becomes convinced that he's been looking

for heroes and villains in a city that breeds only survivors—and where protecting and serving are too often reduced to doing evil so that good may result. This scalding exposé of human failures, in which friendships go tragically sour, powerfully updates Raymond Chandler’s mean streets.” I have not grabbed a copy of this but should have one very soon and will see if *Line of Sight* can replace *Darling Rose Gold* as our April First Mystery Book of the Month.

Ruff, Matt. [88 Names](#) (Harper \$26.99). Following in the footsteps of Ernie Cline, who hit the geek gold mine with *Ready Player One* (2011), the author of *Lovecraft Country* takes his shot at a near-future gaming world that’s more grounded than most virtual-reality universes but also more complex. Our main protagonist is extreme gamer John Chu, the founder of Sherpa, Inc., a consulting firm that guides new gamers through a variety of mostly VR-based video games. He has good partners in Jolene, a more mature African American gamer who won’t take any of his shit, and Anja, a brilliant young player whose permanent injury has left her on life support, albeit with thought-controlled access to the VR world. Unfortunately, he also has a nemesis in Darla Jean Covington, his virtual ex-girlfriend, who is clearly holding a grudge. The kicker comes when Chu is approached by a man named Smith on behalf of a pseudonymous client named Mr. Jones, who wishes to pay him an astonishing \$100,000 per week for his exclusive services.... Employing a diverse cast of characters and weaving historical facts with an abundance of pop culture references, Ruff’s richly imagined world of next-generation internet is plausible and a bit frightening. The action inside the virtual gaming world is sleek and exciting, but the extrapolation of identity, friendship, and human relationships makes the narrative shine.”—*Booklist* Starred Review

Santos, Richard Z. [Trust Me](#) (Arte Publico \$17.95). A thriller of political and familial intrigue set against the public relations campaign for a New Mexico airport by the NBCC board member. Tim O’Brien calls the book “a suspenseful and thoroughly enjoyable novel that explores the themes of betrayal, deceit, redemption, and cultural collision in modern-day New Mexico.”

Satterthwait, Walter. [Dead Horse](#) (Stark House \$15.95). On May 26, 1935, heiress Emily Davies Vanderbilt—wife of hardboiled mystery author Raoul Whitfield—was found dead at her New Mexico ranch, a supposed suicide. Did she really kill herself... or was she murdered? Satterthwait’s intriguingly speculative novel probes the question. New introduction by Rick Ollerman. The late Satterthwait—he died in February—was a terrifically talented writer but erratic, and will be missed.

Scarrow, Simon. [Pirata](#) (Headline \$15.99). It is AD 25. When young Telemachus joins the crew of the merchant ship *Selene*, he’s delighted to escape the rough streets of Piraeus. He knows little of the dangers of life at sea. And even past hardship has not prepared him for the terror on board when a pirate ship appears. The fight is bloody, but the result is never in doubt. Then the victorious pirate chief, Bulla, offers the beaten men a cruel choice: join us, or die. After surviving a brutal initiation rite, Telemachus impresses his new captain with his resourcefulness and strength, and swiftly rises through the pirate ranks. But dangerous rivals talk of mutiny and murder. While Prefect Canis, notorious commander of the imperial fleet, is relentless in his pursuit of the pirate brotherhood. Enjoy some Roman action/adventure.

Smith, Michael Farris. [Blackwood](#) (LittleBrown \$27). Still bearing psychological scars from his childhood, Colburn, a junkyard sculptor, confronts the traumatic past when he returns to his hometown of Red Bluff, Mississippi, where the sheriff idealistically believes that people will act kindly to the down and out, even though fear and violence pervade the landscape like the ubiquitous kudzu. When Colburn enters a dense thicket in search of missing twin boys, he instead discovers his family’s grim history. Is it grit? Is it lit? Is it a thriller? As with the CWA Gold Dagger long-listed *Desperation Road* and the multi-best-book-nominee *Rivers*, Smith’s new work crosses boundaries. If you are nostalgic for Daniel Woodrell, try Smith. And see the review for Tom Bouman above.

Spillane, Mickey. [Mike Hammer Masquerade for Murder](#) (Titan \$22.99). After Mike Hammer witnesses Wall Street superstar Vincent Colby getting clipped by a speeding red Ferrari, the shaken victim’s stockbroker father hires Hammer to find the driver. But the toughest private eye of them all soon is caught up in a series of bizarre, seemingly unconnected slayings marked by a forbidden martial arts technique. What do a lovely redhead, a short-tempered bartender, an exotic call girl, a murdered police inspector and a movie stuntman have to do with a scheme that might have transformed young Colby into a psychological time bomb? Written by Spillane biographer Max Allan Collins.

Staples, Dennis E. [This Town Sleeps](#) (Counterpoint \$26) is set on an Ojibwe reservation in northern Minnesota, familiar perhaps to readers of William Kent Krueger. The Indie Next Picks finds that it “is not an elegiac or idyllic work but rather a direct, unblinking, poetic novel that draws the reader inexorably into the gray areas of the hearts of those in this story. A queer coming-of-age story bound up in a town mystery, this tale of Marion Lafournier, a young gay Ojibwe man, is a compelling debut. Dennis E. Staples is an author whose voice and storytelling will be appreciated in so many ways for years to come.”

Steinhauer, Olen. [An American Spy](#) (\$16.99). In the bestseller [The Tourist](#) (\$9.99), reluctant CIA agent Milo Weaver uncovered a conspiracy linking the Chinese government to the highest reaches of the American intelligence community, including his own Department of Tourism—the most clandestine department in the Company. The shocking blowback arrived in the Hammett Award-winning [The Nearest Exit](#) \$16.99) when the Department of Tourism was almost completely wiped out as the result of an even more insidious plot. Now, with only a handful of “tourists”—CIA-trained assassins—left, Weaver would like to use this opportunity to return to a normal life, a life focused on his family. But his former CIA boss, Alan Drummond, can’t let the job go. When Alan uses one of Milo’s compromised aliases to travel to London and then disappears, calling all kinds of attention to his actions, Milo has no choice but to go in search of him. Worse still, it’s beginning to look as if Tourism’s enemies are gearing up for a final, fatal blow. For Signed copies of the 4th Weaver, [The Last Tourist](#) (\$29), see Signed Books.

Stone, Victoria. [Problem Child](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$14.95). Stone’s outstanding sequel to 2018’s *Jane Doe* finds Minneapolis attorney Jane, a sociopathic antihero, taking pleasure in destroying the career of a legal colleague who stole credit for her work; she’s also settled in a steady relationship with her sweet boyfriend, Luke. When Luke suggests they move in together, Jane

is so upset she decides to leave town. The news that her 16-year-old niece, Kayla Stringer, “a spooky, cold-blooded bitch” like Jane herself, has disappeared provides her with the pretext to go to Oklahoma, where she first visits her brother, Kayla’s father, who’s indifferent to his daughter’s fate. In her search for the missing teen, she behaves in various socially unacceptable ways. Stone flips the murderous, dead-inside sociopath stereotype on its head with a successful narrator, who, though she doesn’t care for others, is practical and self-aware, showing decadent, almost inappropriate delight, for example, in delicious food. Readers will find vicarious joy in Jane’s petty vengeance and unabashed meanness to anyone who tries to take advantage of her. Stone turns some very dark material into an upbeat tale.

Westlake, Donald E. [Double Feature](#) (Hard Case Crime \$10.95) combines two classic novellas, *A Travesty* and *Ordo*, in their first publication in 40 years. In New York City, a movie critic has just murdered his girlfriend—well, one of his girlfriends (not to be confused with his wife). Will the unlikely crime-solving partnership he forms with the investigating police detective keep him from the film noir ending he deserves? On the opposite coast, movie star Dawn Devayne—the hottest It Girl in Hollywood—gets a visit from a Navy sailor who says he knew her when she was just ordinary Estelle Anlic of San Diego. Now she’s a big star who’s put her past behind her. But secrets have a way of not staying buried.... “These two short novels, one hilarious and one heartbreaking, are two of the best works Westlake ever wrote. And fittingly, both became movies: one starring *Jack Ryan*’s Marie Josée Croze, and one starring *Fargo*’s William H. Macy and *Desperate Housewives*’ Felicity Huffman.”

OUR MARCH SMALL PAPERBACK PICKS

Brennan, Allison. [Cut and Run](#) (St Martins \$8.99). Lucy Kincaid #17. FBI Agent Lucy Kincaid must reconstruct an old crime to find a missing child in the present day, while her husband helps an investigative reporter find the truth after a confessed killer recants his testimony.

Cussler, Clive/Dirk. [Celtic Empire](#) (\$9.99). Dirk Pitt #25. The murders of a U.N. science team in El Salvador, a deadly collision in the Detroit waterways, and an attack on the Nile are all linked to the ancient story of fugitive Egyptian princess. *PW* concluded their review saying “The authors overly rely on convenience to get Pitt and company out of jams, but then again, that does keep the plot barreling along toward its satisfying finish. This series remains as fresh as ever.”

Deaver, Jeffery. [The Never Game](#) (\$9.99). Colter Shaw #1. Hired to locate a missing young woman from Silicon Valley, Colter Shaw finds himself tracking a madman who stages scenes from his favorite game.

Ricciardi, David. [Rogue Strike](#) (\$9.99). Organizing a missile attack on a gathering of al Qaeda leaders in Yemen, CIA agent Keller and his partner discover they have been set up when the missiles stop responding to their signals and land on a civilian group. *Kirkus* ended their review with “This yarn has a Category 5 hurricane in the Caribbean, a nasty sandstorm and pitched battle in a Roman coliseum in Libya, and of course the proverbial ticking clock. Plenty of bodies fall from high-velocity lead poisoning, and the tension in this well-plotted thriller to continues right to the end. Fun fare by a talented storyteller.”

Sandford, John. [Neon Prey](#) (\$9.99). Lucas Davenport #29. When a seemingly minor investigation leads to the discovery of trophies from a score of murders, Lucas Davenport follows the trail to an enigmatic killer, who has been able to operate below the radar for years.

Slaughter, Karin/Lee Child. [Cleaning the Gold](#) (Harper \$7.99). Going undercover for an assignment at Fort Knox to solve a 22-year-old murder, Will Trent investigates chief suspect Jack Reacher, who would bring down a dangerous criminal ring at the heart of America’s military in this original novella by two best-selling authors.

Thompson, Victoria. [Murder on Trinity Place](#) (\$7.99). Gaslight Mysteries #22. Horrified when a neighbor they spotted behaving in uncharacteristic ways is found murdered during the New Year’s celebrations of 1900 at Trinity Church, Frank and Sarah Malloy search for answers to the crime in the victim’s past.

LATE MARCH SMALL PAPERBACKS

Allan, Barbara. [Antiques Ravin](#)’ (Kensington \$7.99). Trash ‘n’ Treasures #14. Newly elected country sheriff Vivian Borne and her appointed deputy—her daughter, Brandy—must solve a series of creepy crimes plaguing an ill-fated Edgar Allan Poe festival.

Bruns, David. [Rules of Engagement](#) (SimonSchuster \$9.99). When a terrorist hiding in North Korea organizes a cyber-attack on the world’s three most powerful navies, the head of U.S. Cyber Command and a trio of Naval Academy experts race against time to prevent losing American military control.

Cartmel, Andrew. [Vinyl Detective: Victory Disc](#) (Titan \$7.99). When a priceless record of the Flare Path Orchestra turns up, the Vinyl Detective is hired to find the rest of their highly sought-after recordings and soon discovers that the battles of the last World War are far from over.

Cass, Laurie. [Gone with the Whisker](#) (Berkley \$7.99). Bookmobile Cat #4. When the grand finale of the Fourth of July fireworks show leads to the discovery of a dead body—one of the bookmobile’s most loyal customers, librarian Minnie Hamilton and her rescue cat, Eddie, must sniff out the clues to catch the scent of a killer.

Chamberlain, Diane. [The Stolen Marriage](#) (\$9.99). Impulsively ending her engagement to another man in order to marry a mysterious stranger from a small North Carolina community in 1944, Tess rapidly discovers she is trapped in a loveless relationship and is treated with suspicion by secretive neighbors before she discovers her talents as a nurse during a devastating polio outbreak.

Connelly, Michael. [The Drop](#) (\$9.99). Harry Bosch #17. LAPD detective Harry Bosch simultaneously investigates a killer who has been operating undetected for 30 years and a political conspiracy that has its origins in his police department.

Drake, Rebecca. [Only Ever You](#) (St Martins \$9.99). Jill Lassiter and her husband David become the prime suspects after their three year-old daughter Sophia goes missing for the second time in three months.

Ehrhart, Peggy. [A Fatal Yarn](#) (Kensington \$7.99). Knit and Nibbles #2. When the town’s mayor, who is in support of removing trees to make way for power lines, is murdered, Pamela Paterson

and her Knit and Nibble club must unravel the clues to save one of their members from being accused of the crime.

Erickson, Alex. [The Pomeranian Always Barks Twice](#) (Kensington \$7.99). Caring for an elderly Pomeranian named Stewie at the behest of his owner Mr. Fuller, who is too old to continue caring for him, Liz Denton and her son Ben go up against a rival rescue group and Mr. Fuller's sour-faced son, which results in a murder for which Ben is accused.

Hollis, Lee. [Death of a Blueberry Tart](#) (Kensington \$7.99). Food and Cocktails #11. When her mother becomes a prime suspect in the murder of her old high school rival, Hayley Powell must delay her honeymoon to investigate, while her mother, Sheila, decides to do her own amateur sleuthing with the help of some old friends.

Jackson, Lisa. [Envious](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Discovering they are half-sisters, Bliss, Katie, and Tiffany – three very different, independent women – try to escape the shadows of their past in order to have new future with the men in their lives.

Jensen, Louise. [The Date](#) (Grand Central \$7.99). Recently separated from her husband, Ali has been persuaded by her friends to go on a date with a new man. By Sunday morning, Ali's life is unrecognizable. She wakes, and she knows that something is wrong. She is home, she is alone, she is hurt and she has no memory of what happened to her. Worse still, when she looks in the mirror, Ali doesn't recognize the face staring back at her.

Kavanagh, Emma. [I Am Watching](#) (Kensington \$7.99). Isla Bell is excited at the prospect of a jailed killer finally agreeing to participate in her research on the crimes he committed, but things get complicated when bodies start showing up again.

Kelly, Diane. [Dead in the Doorway](#) (St Martins \$7.99). House-Flipper #2. When her new purchase, a ramshackle white Colonial, comes with a dead body inside, home improvement maven and house-flipper Whitney Whitaker, along with her feline partner-in-crime Sawdust, discover the home's former owner was a gourmet baker with a to-die-for secret recipe.

Martin, Kat. [Pivot](#) (Kensington \$7.99). Three women – Meri, Melanie, and Michelle – who bonded as girls growing up in foster care come together to fight for their lives and loves when danger once more threatens them at every turn.

McKevett, GA. [A Bitter Brew](#) (\$7.99). Savanna Reid #24. P.I. Savanna Reid launches a discreet investigation into the apparent assisted suicide of Dr. Jennifer Liu's friend Brianne, but when Dr. Liu encounters the same unique mixture of lethal drugs in a second body, the two must uncover a poisonous killer.

Pessin, Al. [Sandblast](#) (Kensington \$8.99). To stop a terrorist mastermind from launching an attack more destructive than 9/11, Pentagon Covert Ops runner Bridget Davenport sends Afghan-American Lieutenant Faraz Abdullah to infiltrate the Taliban by any means necessary.

Schaffer, Bernard. [Unsettled Grave](#) (Kensington \$9.99). In this sequel to *The Thief of all Light*, newly promoted detective Carrie Santero links a recent discovery in the Pennsylvania woods to a decades-old case involving the childhood secret of her mentor Jacob Rein.

Stage, Zoje. [Baby Teeth](#) (\$7.99). An ailing woman fights to protect herself from her young daughter's manipulative schemes to

eliminate any rival to her father's affections in this chilling debut that echoes that old classic *The Bad Seed*.