

BOOKNEWS from

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March Booknews 2020
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Our Podcasts are now downloadable on [Google Music](#) and [iTunes](#)

MARCH MADNESS AND MYSTERY

AUTHORS ARE SIGNING...

Some Events will be webcast on Facebook Live

Check out our new [YouTube Channel](#)

MONDAY MARCH 2 7:00 PM 20th Book Party for Joe Pickett

TICKETS: \$32 includes one copy \$36 includes one copy, admits two
Location: Ina Levine Community Campus 12701 N. Scottsdale
Rd. Scottsdale 85254

CJ Box signs [Long Range](#) (Putnam \$28)

Joe Pickett #20 – so a party!

Can't attend? Order in the usual way at the \$28 price

WEDNESDAY MARCH 4 2:00 PM

Tim Garvin signs [A Dredging in Swann](#) (Blackstone \$25.99) Debut

THURSDAY MARCH 5 7:00 PM A Trio

Don Bentley signs [Without Sanction](#) (Berkley \$27) Debut

John McMahon signs [The Evil Men Do](#) (Putnam \$27)

Russ Thomas signs [Firewatching](#) (Putnam \$26) Debut

SATURDAY MARCH 7 2:00 PM

Betty Webb signs [The Panda of Death](#) (Poisoned Pen \$15.95)

MONDAY MARCH 9

Hosted by Matthew Goldman who signs [The Shallows](#) (Forge \$26.99)

Phillip Margolin signs [A Reasonable Doubt](#) (St Martins \$27.99)

Jason Pinter signs [Hide Away](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$15.95 PBO March 9)

TUESDAY MARCH 10

John Billheimer signs his Edgar-nominated nonfiction [Hitchcock and the Censors](#) (University Press of Kentucky \$45)—an audio visual program complete with movie clips

Billheimer also signs [Primary Target](#) (Mysterious \$28) Owen Allison Mystery

WEDNESDAY MARCH 11 Two for One

Hilary Davidson chats with Patrick about [Don't Look Down](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$24.95 at 6:30 PM)

Deanna Raybourn chats with Barbara about [A Murderous Relation](#) (Berkley \$26) at 7:00 PM

Joint signing to follow

FRIDAY MARCH 13 3:00 PM

Karen hosts

Allen Eskens signs [Nothing More Dangerous](#) (Little Brown \$27)

SATURDAY MARCH 14 2:00 PM

Patrick hosts

Scott Phillips signs [That Left Turn at Albuquerque](#) (Soho \$26.95)

MONDAY MARCH 16 7:00 PM

Natasha Pulley signs [The Lost Future of Pepperharrow](#) (Bloomsbury \$27)

TUESDAY MARCH 17 7:00 PM

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

Jacqueline Winspear signs [What Would Maisie Do?](#) (\$17.99)

WEDNESDAY MARCH 18 7:00 PM

Writers Workshop with Winspear

Our 2020 Writer in Residence **Jacqueline Winspear** on “The Writing Process: Techniques to bring a story to life”

Fee: \$25 Registration Requested Limited to 25

THURSDAY MARCH 19 2:00-4:00 PM

Tea with Rhys Bowen and Jacqueline Winspear

Fee: \$25 Location: Arcadia Farms

Limited to 25. Register at 888-560-9919 or 480-947-2974

This is a tea, not a book signing

SATURDAY MARCH 21 6:00 PM

Wine, pizza, and crime

TICKETS \$32 admits one with one book; \$37 two with one book

Harlan Coben signs [The Boy from the Woods](#) (Grand Central \$29)

Can't attend? Please order in the usual way

SUNDAY MARCH 22 2:00 PM YA Event

Larry Siegel hosts

Kitty Felde signs [Welcome to Washington, Fina Mendoza](#) (Black Rose \$17.99)

MONDAY MARCH 23 7:00 PM Publication Party

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

Our copies come with an exclusive collectible

THURSDAY MARCH 26 7:00 PM

Kathy Reichs signs [Conspiracy of Bones](#) (Scribner \$27) Temperance Brennan

FRIDAY MARCH 27

James Sallis and **Three Legged Dog Play**

SATURDAY MARCH 28 2:00 PM

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

Beautiful photos

SUNDAY MARCH 29 2:00 PM

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

MARCH DISCUSSION CLUBS

Please buy your copy from *The Pen*. Anyone welcome but remember you risk spoilers if you don't read the selection in advance.

Coffee & Crime: Saturday March 14 10:30 AM
Johnson, Sarah E. [Molten Mud Murder](#) (\$15.95) A New Zealand forensics mystery

SciFi Friday: March 20 7:00 PM
O'Malley, Daniel. [The Rook](#) (\$16.99)

Croak & Dagger: Saturday March 21 10:30 AM
Dovalpage, Teresa. [Death Comes in Through the Kitchen](#) (\$15.95)

Hardboiled Crime: Wednesday March 25 7:00 PM
MacDonald, John D. [The Brass Cupcake](#) (\$16)

EVENT BOOKS

Bentley, Don. [Without Sanction](#) (Berkley \$27 March 5). A former Army helicopter pilot and FBI special agent, Bentley delivers his debut novel with the introduction of Defense Intelligence Agent Matt Drake. After an op in Syria went sideways and his best friend was maimed, Drake walked away carrying heavy emotional baggage. Haunted by those he couldn't save and in self-imposed exile from his wife in order to protect her, Matt wants nothing to do with his old life at the Defense Intelligence Agency. But when he's brought back under duress to help stop terrorists from using an untraceable chemical weapon against Americans, Drake feels a lurking sense of obligation, and before he knows it he's back on duty. The seeming purity of Drake's call to serve is contrasted with the petty political infighting within the highest reaches of government. A chief of staff for the president is angling to jam a CIA director who has political ambitions of her own, and Drake's mission falls right in the middle of this elaborate political scheme. "While the flow of the story seems most natural during the shoot'em-up action scenes, this is a novel with an emotional core, and that may be what makes it stand out from other thrillers of a similar ilk and be a page-turner with the kind of small details that lend unquestionable authenticity. Mark Greaney who returns April 13 with *Jack Carr* to host,, writes he absolutely loved this debut which is our **March First Mystery Book of the Month**.

Billheimer, John. [Primary Target](#) (Mysterious \$28). Ten years after California Governor Red Davison engineered the collapse of Owen Allison's consulting firm, Owen crosses paths with the Davison family again. A win in the West Virginia primary is all Red's son Jason needs to capture his party's presidential nomination. Reporter Tom O'Day believes that votes are for sale. Sheriff Thad Reader enlists Owen's help to keep his county clean, but Owen is sidetracked when one of the partners in his failed firm commits suicide and old records are stolen. As the Davison campaign is rocked by the disappearance of an aide, a bomb explodes in Owen's home office. Is the bomber trying to destroy records of the past, or is Owen the primary target? "Billheimer has done it again—with an encyclopedic knowledge of Appalachian history and characters ripped from today's headlines, *Primary Target*

is a taut mystery with a timely warning of the state of politics today."—Craig Johnson. Laurie R. King adds, "All politics is local, and the greatest mysteries are of the human heart—two truths that come together to build an infinitely appealing world around consultant Owen Allison. Billheimer's dry humor and rock-solid characters bring a quiet corner of America into the center of everything. More, please!" I myself have always been partial to the Owen Allison series.

[Hitchcock and the Censors](#) (University Press of Kentucky \$45) is a nonfiction book that traces the rise of movie censorship in the US and Britain and documents its impact on Alfred Hitchcock as he battled and bargained with bluenoses to produce a lifetime of memorable films. Billheimer presents an audio/visual presentation, complete with movie clips, in support of this book which is a 2020 Edgar Allan Poe nominee for Best Critical/Biographical Work.

Bonds, Philip. [Dancing with Sea Lions](#) (Wild Blue Pacific Publishing \$29 March 28). 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

Box, CJ. [Long Range](#) (Putnam \$28 March 2 Ticketed). A good writer will create a victim we can truly mourn. A great writer will create a villain we respect, even like. Box proves himself a master at both in his 20th Joe Pickett thriller—with the added twist of giving you a worthy accidental victim (make it two).

It begins when a retired FBI agent warns the Wyoming Game Warden's longtime falconer friend, Nate Romanowski, that the Mexican drug cartel whose four assassins Nate helped take down in *Wolf Pack* have marked Nate as a target for revenge. The cartel has dispatched Orlando Panfile, an expert marksman, to do the job. Meanwhile, someone takes an astonishing long-range shot at ill-tempered Judge Hewitt in his home that hits Hewitt's wife, leaving her in critical condition. Could it be Panfile? Joe is asked to join the investigation by the new county sheriff, Brendan Kapelow, a guy who'd rather strut than sleuth and seems to be focused on political office. Kaplow find it easier to arrest Nate, a remarkable shooter, than actually investigate, especially after a long-range rifle is discovered hidden in one of Nate's falcon pens. Of course, Joe isn't buying it, and conducts his own unauthorized investigation to help clear Nate. But why does Panfile mount an effort to have Nate freed? Several other odd questions need answering, too.

I am impressed with the way Box skillfully elicits sympathy for Panfile, a stone cold killer if ever there was one. I love Nate trying to be a conventional family man and.... But it's a Box hallmark never to do the obvious! "Clever plotting keeps this conspiracy yarn moving briskly... This is another top-flight crime yarn for Box fans."

Coben, Harlan. [The Boy from the Woods](#) (Grand Central \$29 March 21 Ticketed). 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*. Join us and catch up on his busy TV career, too.

Davidson, Hilary. [Don't Look Down](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$24.95 March 11). Jo Greaver is a model of success. Young and ambitious, she's built a thriving beauty business from nothing. But she has secrets she'll do anything to keep buried. When her black-mailer offers to meet, Jo expects to pay him off—but gets a bullet instead while firing off one of her own. Bleeding and in shock, Jo flees with no one to turn to. When NYPD detective Sheryn Sterling and her partner, Rafael Mendoza, find Andray Baxter murdered in his own home—shot through the heart—everything points to Jo as the killer. Her blood is at the scene, and so are disturbing photos of her taken as a young teen. But Sheryn has doubts. Was the kindhearted Andray really a criminal? Why did he repeatedly report finding spyware in his apartment? Was there something shady about Jo's sister dying a year earlier? This story twists and turns in imaginative and fascinating ways.

Patrick adds, “Aspiring writers would do well to check out Davidson's new book, the second book in her “Shadows of New York” series featuring NYPD Detective Sheryn Sterling, as it really provides a kind of template for how to write a smart intelligent thriller. I've always admired Davidson's work, but she's really upped her game with this fantastic new series.”

Eskens, Allen. [Nothing More Dangerous](#) (Little Brown \$27). Karen reviews: Boady Sanden can't wait to leave the small town in the Ozarks. His mother has withdrawn from life since the death of her husband and fellow students at school, either ignore or bully him. He dreams of going to a better place with bright lights and opportunities. When a black family, with a son his age, moves in next door, Boady's world, as he knows it, starts to unravel. Town secrets begin to surface showing the break between race and class. Boady is forced to make a choice – what's best for him versus what's best for the greater good. Eskens states “I started writing *Nothing More Dangerous* in 1992 with the intention of finding some way to exorcise the ghosts of my youth”. It's an intriguing story with decent people caught up in choices to benefit themselves or the community. *Library Journal* gives this title a starred review, “this powerful, unforgettable crime novel is a coming-of-age book to rival some of the best, such as William Kent Krueger's *Ordinary Grace* or Larry Watson's *Montana 1948*”. **Note: No Signed Firsts. Karen is a fan and is hosting a 3 PM chat with Eskens on March 13. Feel free to bring your own copies or his paperbacks.**

Felde, Kitty. [Welcome to Washington, Fina Mendoza](#) (Black Rose \$17.99 March 22). Things are going from bad to worse for Fina Mendoza. After losing her mother to a terminal illness, Fina, a 10-year-old Latina, and her older sister, Gabby, moved from California to Washington, D.C., to live with her kind but preoccupied Papa, a first-term U.S. congressman. One afternoon, while in the deserted, history-filled, basement-floor Crypt museum under

the Capitol rotunda, Fina hears odd noises; spots a giant, feline-shaped shadow; and catches a “flash of yellow eyes.” A Capitol policewoman informs her that anyone who sees the fabled Demon Cat of Capitol Hill will be cursed with bad luck. Is that why small disasters are piling up? This is a fun read disguised as a book for grade schoolers, it gives keen insight into the everyday workings of the U. S. Capitol and its inhabitants. “The author deftly wraps Fina's quest to solve the Demon Cat mystery into the story of family members doing their best to deal with loss in their separate ways, which are grounded in a strong foundation of love and understanding in this A lively mystery with a touch of spookiness, an intriguing setting, an appealing family dynamic, and an enterprising Latina heroine.”—*Kirkus Reviews*

Garvin, Tim. [A Dredging in Swann](#) (Blackstone \$25.99 March 4). Two investigations start at the same time in Swann County, North Carolina, one by the FBI, the other by the sheriff. The feds want to know who stole three Stinger missiles during a helicopter crash. The sheriff wants to know who hanged a black ex-con in a well. Sheriff's Detective Seb Creek works both investigations and finds himself fighting through lies, secrets, and murder—Including a long-ago axe murder, the ravages of combat, an outdoor gas chamber, a mystery at the bottom of a well, and finally a last killing and an ancient testament. “Tim Garvin delivers the goods with his first Seb Creek novel. Sharp and insightful, this story of a former Marine MP turned small-city cop is a welcome addition to the canon of southern mysteries, and sets the stage for great things to come.”—John Hart. **Five attendees will win a free audio CD and five more a free audio download for any book on Blackstone's Downpour site.**

Margolin, Phillip. [A Reasonable Doubt](#) (St Martins \$27.99 March 9). Oregon criminal defense attorney Robin Lockwood is a former MMA fighter and Yale Law graduate who joined the Portland firm of legal legend Regina Barrister not long before Regina was forced into retirement by early onset Alzheimer's. One day, Robert Chesterfield shows up in the law office with an odd request—he's seeking help from his old attorney in acquiring patent protection for an illusion. Chesterfield is a professional magician of some renown and he has a major new trick he's about to debut. This is out of the scope of the law firm's expertise. When looking up Robert's history, Robin learns that twenty years ago he was arrested for two murders, one attempted murder, and was involved in the potentially suspicious death of his very rich wife. At the time, Regina defended him with ease, even though he was probably guilty, after which he resumed his career as a magician in Las Vegas. Now, decades later, here he is with his new trick—and disappears when performing it. The list of people who would want him dead is a long one. But is he? Pretty neat magic—Phil challenged me to figure out the trick before he explains it. Good luck to you.

McMahon, John. [The Evil Men Do](#) (Putnam \$27 March 5). Best First Novel Edgar nominee McMahon—[The Good Detective](#) (\$17), a 2019 Surprise Me Book of the Month—presents book two. Having survived his tempestuous debut, P.T. Marsh, of Georgia's Mason Falls Police Department, is back for more—including some residue from that first case that just won't go away. Dispatched like an errand boy to wealthy real estate mogul Ennis Fultz's home to find out why he hasn't joined his bridge buddies, Mayor Stems and interim police chief Jeff Pernacek, for their monthly game, Marsh and his partner, Remy Morgan, find Fultz

dead in his bed. It turns out that his passing, devoutly longed for by so many of the people he'd crushed or outwitted on his way to the top, was helped along by the strategic dose of nitrogen somebody substituted for the oxygen he inhaled regularly, especially when he was expecting particular demands on his virility. Marsh and Morgan quickly focus on two candidates who might have made those demands....

Penman, Sharon Kay. [The Land Beyond the Sea](#) (Putnam \$34 March 29). **Out March 3 and signed here March 29 2 PM.**

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.

Phillips, Scott. [That Left Turn at Albuquerque](#) (Soho \$26.95 March 14). Financially strapped Southern California attorney Douglas Rigby has stolen thousands from the account of his sole client, aged former TV producer Glenn Haskill, and is desperate to find some way of replacing the funds before his theft is detected. His initial plan—to profit from a drug deal with a gang known as the Devil's Hammers—fails after his less-than-sharp go-between hands over the product without getting the agreed-upon cash in return. That screw-up leads to violence and only places Rigby further behind the eight ball, even as his real estate broker wife, who knows what's going on and has made few recent sales, fears that losing their home will make her a pariah in her field. Rigby comes up with another scheme, centered on art fraud that would also victimize Haskill....

Neither Patrick nor I has an advance copy of this so Patrick says, "I've been a huge fan of Scott Phillips's work since *The Ice Harvest* (a modern noir classic) and am really excited about this new book, not to mention Soho's campaign to reissue some of Phillips's earlier books, such as *The Walkaway* and *Cottonwood*. One of the things I admire the most about Phillips's work is that he follows his own vision, and isn't content to do the same thing twice. Like Charles Willeford, Phillips infuses his hardboiled capers and historical noirs with a welcome dose of the absurd."

Pinter, Jason. [Hide Away](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$15.95 PBO March 9). This is a terrific series launch. Pinter builds a complex plot on dual mysteries. The first is Rachel Marin's transformation from

suburban mom to crack investigator and lethal street fighter—in short, a secret vigilante who was driven from her home to take a new identity and rebuild her life in a small Illinois city near Chicago. The second is the murder of the city's mayor... "Pinter does a masterful job of ramping up suspense about the Marin family's past and the current case, spinning an absolutely riveting plot with a cast of full-bodied, fallible characters, in what seems the start of a promising series. Fans of both domestic thrillers and police procedurals should get in at the start." —*Booklist* (starred review). Pinter's outstanding series launch is a deft combination of domestic suspense and police procedural that recalls the works of Harlan Coben and Linwood Barclay. Both an unstoppable force of nature and painfully human, Rachel is a heroine readers will not soon forget." —*Library Journal*

Pulley, Natasha. [The Lost Future of Pepperharrow](#) (Bloomsbury \$26 March 16). [The Watchmaker of Filigree Street](#) (\$17) captivated readers with its charming blend of historical fiction, fantasy, and steampunk. Now Pulley sweeps readers off to Japan in the 1880s, where nationalism is on the rise and ghosts roam the streets. It's 1888 and Pulley moves the series from Victorian-era London to a haunted, steampunk version of 19th-century Tokyo. Thaniel Steepleton is offered a translator position at the British legation in Tokyo on the same night his lover, clairvoyant Japanese clock maker Keita Mori, returns to their London home after months abroad. The pair travels together to Japan along with Thaniel's adopted, autistic daughter. There, Thaniel meets Takiko Pepperharrow, Mori's wife, a woman Thaniel hadn't known existed. As Thaniel questions his relationship with Mori, Mori uses his ability to see the future to manipulate the affairs of the people around him. After Mori goes missing, it's up to Thaniel to find him as a massive electrical storm strikes Tokyo and ghosts wander the streets. "Pulley's intricate plot, vibrant setting, entrancing magic, and dynamic ensemble of characters make for an un-put-downable historical fantasy. New readers will be pulled in and series fans will be delighted by this tour de force." —*PW Starred Review*

I truly love this and the author's work. A few comments from her help explain why: **Book you're an evangelist for:** [Rebecca](#) by Daphne du Maurier. It's the best book I've ever read. It's so immensely clever; you think it's a silly book about a silly girl who enters into a silly marriage, but really it's a devilishly good investigation into toxic masculinity, toxic femininity, the nature of jealousy, culpability and victimhood; du Maurier was decades ahead of her time. She's one of the most misconstrued writers I've ever come across. She's often written off as a writer of light romance; but today, she'd win the Booker. **Books you'll never part with:** *The Tale of Genji* by Shikibu Murasaki—this is huge, and I can only read it in translation, but it's gorgeous; compelling, romantic, creepy and all from over a thousand years ago in Japan. I think it proves that humans are always humans wherever and whenever they are. [Conclave](#) by Robert Harris—I can't think of another writer who could make an extremely complicated papal election into thriller, but Harris does it, and it's fantastic. *The Fool's Errand* by Robin Hobb—forget Game of Thrones. This is fantasy at its absolute best. *The Birds and Other Stories* by Daphne du Maurier—everyone thinks Alfred Hitchcock came up with *The Birds*; he did not!

Raybourn, Deanna. [A Murderous Relation](#) (Berkley \$26 March 11). Veronica Speedwell and Revelstoke "Stoker" Templeton-

Vane have finally decided to act on their long-standing attraction to each other when an urgent telegram from a friend of the royal family Lady Wellingtonia Beauclerk puts romance on hold in Raybourn's rollicking fifth Victorian mystery. It's October, 1888, and Prince Albert Victor, the heir to the British throne, has given a diamond star marked with his initials to Madame Aurore, who runs the Club de l'Étoile, a "palace for debauchery." Lady Wellingtonia asks the duo to retrieve the gift, which could cause scandal; worse, she has received anonymous letters suggesting that the prince may be involved in the Ripper murders terrorizing London. Stoker and Veronica attend the club's weekly masked ball hoping to find out more. Instead, they encounter the prince dressed up as a woman, Madame Aurore's murdered corpse, and thugs who imprison them in a warehouse. Raybourn delivers fast-paced action, sexual tension, quirky characters, and clever repartee, but she also crafts quiet scenes—most memorably, a meeting with one of the Ripper's future victims—rich with deeper emotion. "The mystery here coincides with the killing spree of Jack the Ripper. There's a touch of the Amelia Peabody series in Raybourn's rollicking fifth Victorian mystery."

Reichs, Kathy. [Conspiracy of Bones](#) (Scribner \$27 March 26). Temperance Brennan is stressed. Following her boyfriend's marriage proposal, she's finally agreed to move in with him. Her mother is planning the mother of all weddings. And her beloved boss has died a tragic death. His replacement still smolders over Tempe's criticism of her from years earlier and exiles Tempe from the lab. Then a friend tips off Tempe that a mutilated corpse has been found. Identity unknown. Cause of death unclear. Though the body lacks a face, hands, and organs, her new boss refuses to ask Tempe for a consult. Tempe vows to discover the truth, but the clues she discovers are disturbing and confusing. Was the faceless man a spy? A trafficker? A target for assassination by the government? And why was he carrying the name of a child missing for almost a decade? Reichs shakes this long series up in various intriguing ways!

Rollins, James. [The Last Odyssey](#) (Harper \$28.99 March 21, 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.... 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 truth 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.

Rollins is a veterinarian, with a background in evolutionary biology and a mastery of hard science and medicine, who harbors a deep-seated depth of feeling and empathy found in those who devote their lives to animals. He has "an insatiable appetite for knowledge who has been piecing together fascinating facts to spin wondrous tales." I add that today a replica of the "Trojan Horse" stands on the bank near the Dardanelles near

modern Hisarlik, a site excavated between 1870-90 by Heinrich Schliemann, some evidence of real events underpinning Homer's tales.

Thomas, Russ. [Firewatching](#) (Putnam \$26 March 5). A taut and ambitious police procedural debut introducing Detective Sergeant Adam Tyler, a cold case reviewer who lands a high-profile murder investigation, only to find the main suspect is his recent one-night stand.... "A pitch-perfect blend of the best of the old and the best of the new—all the traditional strengths and charms are here, with a fresh and relevant twenty first-century edge. I loved it."—Lee Child.

Here's another rave review for our **March British Crime Book of the Month**: "When the remains of Gerald Cartwright, a wealthy, reviled businessman in Sheffield, England, are found bricked up in a wall of the Old Vicarage, Cartwright's home until his disappearance six years earlier, ambitious DS Adam Tyler, the principal investigator in Thomas's excellent debut, is grateful to be assigned the high-profile cold case. The night of the discovery, Tyler is picked up in a gay bar by an attractive young man, Oscar, who happens to be Cartwright's son and only heir. Meanwhile, arson fires are set around Sheffield, disturbing residents and confounding police. They spark memories for Lilly and her companion, Edna, who were volunteer fire-watchers in London during WWII. The pair played a big hand in raising Oscar, who soon becomes the lead suspect in his father's death, after his mother vanished when he was a child. Distinctive characters include feisty DC Amina Rabbani and fire captain Paul Enfield, who are often at odds with each other. Red herrings and uncovered family secrets abound. This stunning police procedural marks Thomas as an author to watch." I'm impressed with how Tyler copes with his identity within the typically paramilitary and homophobic/misogynistic cop shop.

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.

Webb, Betty. [The Panda of Death](#) (Poisoned Pen \$15.95 March 7). California zookeeper Theodora Bentley is now happily married

to Sheriff Joe Rejas. The Gunn Zoo is celebrating the arrival of Poonya, an adorable red panda, who forms a strong bond with Teddy. All appears fairytale blissful in the small Monterey Bay village of Gunn Landing until Teddy's mother-in-law, mystery writer Colleen Rejas, has discovered through DNA testing that Joe has sired a son he knew nothing about. Dylan Coyle, 18, arrives to meet his biological family... and then is arrested for murder. "There is one shock after another First, universally disliked TV producer Cliff Flaherty is found murdered on his boat. Then Teddy's husband, Sheriff Joe Rejas, learns that he has an 18-year-old son, Dylan Coyle, born without Joe's knowledge to his high-school-chem lab partner and senior-prom date, Lauren Ellis (a date made after Teddy, Joe's then-girlfriend, was sent away to school to break up the couple). And then Dylan is arrested for the murder of Flaherty, his mother's former abusive boyfriend. It's enough to send amateur detective Teddy to deep websites suggested by her mystery-writer mother-in-law to try to track down the actual murderer, who will likely kill again. Meanwhile, Poonya, a red panda at the Gunn Zoo, has been made a featured character in the local children's television puppet show, though the show's future dims after Flaherty's death." Enjoy a binge by ordering all [six Gunn Zoo mysteries](#) with their delightful animals and clever plots.

Winspear, Jacqueline. [What Would Maisie Do?](#) (\$17.99 March 17) is an illustrated companion to the best-selling Maisie Dobbs series. Anchored by thirty of Maisie's most timeless quotes, coupled with Winspear's inspiration for each nugget of wisdom, these reflections offer readers additional insight into the world of Maisie Dobbs and invite them to reflect on favorite moments and memories.

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

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 Parascandolo's ex-wife, Donna, who leads a

quiet, shattered life following the death of her teenaged 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."

Bump, Gabriel. [Everywhere You Don't Belong](#) (Algonquin \$25.95). "A comically dark coming-of-age story about growing up on the South Side of Chicago, but it's also social commentary at its finest, woven seamlessly into the work . . . Bump's meditation on belonging and not belonging, where or with whom, how love is a way home no matter where you are, is handled so beautifully that you don't know he's hypnotized you until he's done."
—Tommy Orange, *New York Times Book Review*

The Indie Next Pick: "Young Claude is being raised by his grandma in Chicago's changing South Shore, and folks in his life—his parents, friends, neighbors—are disappearing. There's little he can count on besides his grandma, her friend Paul, and his not-quite girlfriend Janice. The violence that was once at a safe distance is now on their doorstep, with corrupt and racist police coming from one direction and the Redbelters gang from the other. It's hard not to imagine Claude wanting to escape, too, but trouble is likely to follow, even to college in Missouri. Told in episodic bursts and filled with emotional resonance, this powerful debut will stick with you."

Cussler, Clive/Graham Brown. [Journey of the Pharaohs](#) (Putnam \$29). **SIGNED BY BROWN ONLY.** In 1074 B.C., vast treasures disappear from the tombs of Egyptian Pharaohs. In 1927, a daredevil American aviator vanishes on an attempted transcontinental flight. And in the present day, a fishing trawler—along with its mysterious cargo—sinks off the coast of Scotland. How are these three mysterious events connected? And, more importantly, what do they mean for Kurt Austin and his NUMA team? As they search for answers, the NUMA squad joins the agents of the British MI5 to take on a wide-reaching international conspiracy. Their common enemy is the Bloodstone Group, a conglomerate of arms dealers and thieves attempting to steal ancient relics on both sides of the Atlantic. Kurt and his team soon find themselves wrapped up in a treacherous treasure hunt as they race to find the lost Egyptian riches.... **This adventure is the last full collaboration between Cussler (1931-2020) and Brown.**

Dallas, Sandra. [Westering Women](#) (St. Martin's \$26.99). After seeing numerous advertisements for "adventuresome young women of high moral character and fine health willing to travel to the gold mines of Goosetown, California, for a husband" posted all around Chicago, seamstress Maggie and her young daughter join forty-three other women and two pious reverends on the dangerous 2,000 wagon train journey west to California. No one in the wagon train is prepared for the hardships they will face, but each of the women discovers strengths that they didn't know they have. As Maggie gets to know the other women in the wagon train, she quickly discovers that she is not the only one looking to leave behind a past. So, when a dark secret from Maggie's past threatens to catch up with her, it now becomes clear that her band of "sister" travelers will do whatever it takes to protect one of their own. Dallas is the author of the perennially popular [The Persian Pickle Club](#) (\$16.99) as well as fifteen other vividly written books and is the winner of numerous literary accolades

including the Western Writers of America's Spur Award and the Women Writing the West Willa Cather Award. Her latest powerful, emotional, and finely wrought historical novel thoughtfully explores the concept of western girl power on the Overland Trail.

Grann, David. [Killers of the Flower Moon](#) (Doubleday \$25 Later Printings). We have done a special offsite event with Grann, author of this 2017 true crime bestseller and National Book Award Finalist, a twisting, haunting true-life murder mystery about one of the most monstrous crimes in American history. In the 1920s, the richest people per capita in the world were members of the Osage Indian nation in Oklahoma. After oil was discovered beneath their land, they rode in chauffeured automobiles, built mansions, and sent their children to study in Europe. Then, one by one, the Osage began to be killed off. The family of an Osage woman, Mollie Burkhart, became a prime target. Her relatives were shot and poisoned. And it was just the beginning, as more and more members of the tribe began to die under mysterious circumstances. In this last remnant of the Wild West—where oilmen like J. P. Getty made their fortunes and where desperadoes like Al Spencer, the “Phantom Terror,” roamed—many of those who dared to investigate the killings were themselves murdered. As the death toll climbed to more than twenty-four, the FBI took up the case. It was one of the organization's first major homicide investigations and the bureau badly bungled the case. In desperation, the young director, J. Edgar Hoover, turned to a former Texas Ranger named Tom White to unravel the mystery. Grann is also the author of #1 bestseller *The Lost City of Z*.

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.

Katsu, Alma. [The Deep](#) (Putnam \$27) presents an eerie, psychological twist on one of the world's most renowned tragedies, the sinking of the *Titanic* and the ill-fated sail of its sister ship, the *Britannic*. Is someone, or something, haunting the ship. That is the only way to explain the series of misfortunes that have plagued the passengers of the *Titanic* from the moment they set sail. While some of the guests and crew shrug off strange occurrences, several—including maid Annie Hebbley, guest Mark Fletcher, and millionaires Madeleine Astor and Benjamin Guggenheim—are convinced there's something more sinister going on. And then disaster strikes. Years later, Annie, having survived that fateful night, has attempted to put her life back together by going to work as a nurse on the sixth sailing of the *Britannic*, newly refitted as a hospital ship to support British forces fighting World War I. When she happens across an unconscious Mark, now a soldier, she is at first thrilled and relieved to learn that he too survived the tragic night four years earlier. But soon his presence awakens deep-buried feelings and secrets, forcing her to reckon with the demons of her past—as they both discover that the terror may not yet be over. Here is more evidence of the rising wave of Gothic/ghost/horror fiction.

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.”—Ott. 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).

Mandel, Emily St. John. [The Glass Hotel](#) (Knopf \$26.95). At the upscale glass-and-cedar Hotel Caiette, on an island in British Columbia, bartender Vincent becomes involved with hotel owner Jonathan Alkaitis even as Vincent's half-brother leaves a note on a window advising, “Why don't you swallow broken glass?” The message shatters an executive for the shipping company Neptune-Avramidis. Years later, Vincent vanishes from a Neptune-Avramidis cargo ship even as a Ponzi scheme sends several fortunes to the bottom of the ocean. This is Mandel's next bright puzzler after [Station Eleven](#) (\$16.95), a National Book Award finalist and Arthur C. Clarke Award winner. A Starred Review adds: “Mandel's wonderful novel follows a brother and sister as they navigate heartache, loneliness, wealth, corruption, drugs, ghosts, and guilt. Settings include British Columbia's coastal wilderness, New York City's fashionable neighborhoods and corporate headquarters, a container ship in international waters, and a South Carolina prison....Using flashbacks, flash-forwards, alternating points-of-view, and alternate realities, Mandel shows the siblings moving in and out of each other's lives, different worlds, and versions of themselves, sometimes closer, sometimes further

apart, like a double helix, never quite linking. This ingenious, enthralling novel probes the tenuous yet unbreakable bonds between people and the lasting effects of momentary carelessness.”

Library Reads adds: “A gorgeously written, immersive book about how easy it is to cross lines into questionable moral territory. At its center is Vincent, who loses her mother when she’s 13 and as an adult makes her way into the heart of the Country of Money in New York City. Narrated by a number of well-drawn characters in a shifting timeline. For fans of *A Visit from the Goon Squad* and *The Goldfinch*.”

✉Mason, Tim. [The Darwin Affair](#) (Algonquin \$27.95). Mason whisks us to Victorian London with Chief Detective Inspector Charles Field—a real-life police officer who served as the model for Inspector Bucket in Charles Dickens’s novel *Bleak House*. Field is made aware of an elaborate plot aimed at punishing anyone promoting the new evolutionary science of Charles Darwin. Among those making cameo appearances in this whirligig of a book are Queen Victoria, Karl Marx and Dickens, whose book has made something of a celebrity of Inspector Field. Can Field prove as talented as Dickens’s creation? His abilities are put to the test in his pursuit of a villain described by one frightened witness as “death dressed up like a man.” This terrific historical published last June and we have finally been able to secure Signed firsts from Mason. Yay! Recommended to every member of the Historical Fiction Book of the Month Club—we don’t have enough Signed firsts to make it the March selection.

McBride, James. [Deacon King Kong](#) (Riverhead \$28). The Indie Next Pick: “*Deacon King Kong* is a quintessential New York story. Set in the Brooklyn projects in 1969, a perpetually inebriated deacon called Sportcoat aims a gun at the neighborhood’s main drug dealer in the public plaza and pulls the trigger. Incredibly well-constructed and hilarious at times, McBride’s story entwines a number of storylines that are kickstarted by this central event. The local Italian gangster, the veteran cop, the meddling churchgoers, and the drug pushers all have their own agendas, hopes, and dreams that are affected. And though Sportcoat doesn’t remember his actions and is always under the influence of gut-rot moonshine, I couldn’t help but root for him as I was reading this. His delightful ineptitude and absence of clarity made this book impossible for me to put down. If you’ve never read McBride before, this is a great introduction.” The Sunday *NY Times* of February 15 devoted an entire section to this novel highlighting its deep roots and connections to a version of a city “we wish were true.”

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. He spent a lifetime building up his reputation in the New York investigative scene. His seemingly infallible instinct and inside knowledge of the crime world make him the ideal man to help when Phillip Worry comes knocking. 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. Unsurprisingly, the opportunity to do a simple favor while shocking the prevailing elite is too much for Leonid to resist. 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.

Nemens, Emily. [The Cactus League](#) (Farrar \$27). **How much fun is it to read a debut novel set here in Scottsdale, home to Spring Training? During Spring Training!** It’s filled with local landmarks. And “Here’s the thing about baseball, and all else,” says the narrator in this novel’s first chapter, “everything changes.” Nemens delivers an engaging, eccentric cast of players, coaches, families, and others who inhabit the world of baseball—including a wise, witty, and somewhat omniscient sportswriter-narrator.”[Nemens] works within the quirky register of the heart, writing about one of her great passions: baseball. She crafts a humorous and emotional novel about a star outfielder, and the coaches, fans and criminals who inhabit the same off-kilter world.”—*The Wall Street Journal*. “[A] quirky first novel . . . [*The Cactus League*] showcases a fascinating gallimaufry of characters who swirl around the edges of the springtime ritual. Nemens finds a kind of attenuated hope along with melancholy in these sharply etched character studies that “end not with ‘out three’ but ‘out maybe.’” —*Booklist* Starred Review. “[An] insightful debut . . . each character is brought to life in convincing detail.”—*PW*

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.

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* \(\\$16.99\).](#)

Swanson, Peter. [Eight Perfect Murders](#) (Harper \$26.99). In 2004, Malcolm Kershaw, the narrator of a fair-play crime novel from Swanson, began working at Boston's Old Devils Bookstore, where he posted a list on the store's blog of eight mysteries in which "the murderer comes closest to realizing that platonic ideal of a perfect murder." Years later, FBI agent Gwen Mulvey tells him she's investigating multiple killings that she believes may have been influenced by his blog post. For example, Mulvey is probing the deaths of three people apparently connected only by having a name related to birds, a setup similar to Agatha Christie's *The A.B.C. Murders*, one of the books on the list. Mulvey is also looking into a murder that mirrors the circumstances of James M. Cain's *Double Indemnity* and hopes that Kershaw can give her a lead as to who might be using his list for a campaign of bloodshed. The stakes rise when "Swanson will keep most readers guessing until the end. Classic whodunit fans will be in heaven." Indeed—here is our **March Crime Collectors Book of the Month**.

I add two things: 1. Check out the list of eight murders at the beginning and then be sure to read them first since Swanson's book contains heavy spoilers for all eight—this will well be worth your while. 2. If you are a deep mystery reader you will know at the outset that there is a 9th book missing and what that book is and therefore what Swanson's book is. I'm interested to see it making such an impact which confirms my conviction that much of crime fiction, certainly its reviewers, is hitting a relatively new audience—many of them booksellers judging by its Indie Next Pick for March.

Van Meter, Crissy. [Creatures](#) (Algonquin \$25.95). The cover art of this debut is so beautiful you could frame it. Think of a magnificent coral reef.... "Van Meter's debut is an unwavering triumph...A coming-of-age that's as human as it is wild." —*The New York Times Book Review*. On the eve of Evangeline's wedding, on the shore of Winter Island, a dead whale is trapped in the harbor, the groom may be lost at sea, and Evie's mostly absent mother has shown up out of the blue. From there the narrative flows back and forth through time as Evie reckons with her complicated upbringing in this lush, wild land off the coast of Southern California with a father who deals the island's famed strain of weed and leaves her largely to raise herself. Wit, flashes of anger, love, and the question of how brave one can be if one is to conquer the past.

Watson, Sterling. [The Committee](#) (Akashic \$32). 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. Michael Koryta describes our **March Historical Fiction Book of the Month** as, "a triumph of historical fiction—and a warning from the past. Watson is the rare writer who can address the big ideas—politics and power, love and hate, fear and freedom—without ever losing sight of the characters at the story's heart." Stall is a very human sort of hero and this is a fascinating as well as entertaining story. There is another mirrored issue at play but if I identify it here it's a spoiler. Note: [The Committee](#) (\$17.95) is also available as a paperback.

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. Due in very late March. Woods alas is not traveling our way but has agreed to sign our shipment.

Wrobel, Stephanie. [Darling Rose Gold](#) (Berkley \$26). Out end of March, signed here April 4 for our **April First Mystery Book of the Month**. What would you do if you spent 18 years convinced you were sick, contending with feeding tubes, wheelchairs and more, only to learn that your mother was a really fantastic liar? "The release of 58-year-old Patty Watts from an Illinois prison kick-starts Wrobel's diabolically plotted debut. It wasn't until Patty's daughter, Rose Gold, turned 16 and gained internet access that she realized her mother had been poisoning her since infancy; Rose Gold's undiagnosable illness was actually ipecac-induced vomiting resulting in crippling malnutrition. Rose Gold's testimony not only helped convict Patty, but pitted all of the dying town of Deadwick against her, so it's a shock when Patty finishes her sentence and moves in with Rose Gold—now a 23-year-old single mother to two-month-old Adam. Patty is determined to win back the neighbors and regain control of her daughter's life; unbeknownst to Patty, however, Rose Gold has plans of her own. Rose Gold's past-tense narration, which chronicles her rocky path to independence, alternates with present-tense chapters from Patty's point of view documenting her post-incarceration transformation from predator to prey. Propulsive pacing, a claustrophobic setting, and vividly sketched characters who

are equal parts victim and villain conspire to create an anxious, unsettling narrative, catnip to fans of psychological suspense.”—*PW* Starred Review

Library Reads adds: “Terrific psychological suspense based on an actual case where a mother deliberately made her daughter sick for years. The story is told in alternating perspectives from the points of view of Rose Gold and her mother, Patty, complex characters who are masterfully drawn, seeming sympathetic at some points and unsympathetic in others. For readers who liked [The Silent Patient](#) (\$26.99) and *The Execution of Noa P. Singleton*.”

CLASSICS

Carr, John Dickson. [It Walks by Night](#) (Poisoned Pen \$14.99). With an introduction by Martin Edwards and featuring the Dickson Carr short story “The Shadow of the Goat.” It’s a locked room mystery, a genre at which Carr excelled. In the smoke-wreathed gloom of a Parisian salon, Inspector Bencolin has summoned his allies to discuss a peculiar case. A would-be murderer, imprisoned for his attempt to kill his wife, has escaped and is known to have visited a plastic surgeon. His whereabouts remain a mystery, though with his former wife poised to marry another, Bencolin predicts his return. Sure enough, the Inspector’s worst suspicions are realized when the beheaded body of the new suitor is discovered in a locked room of the salon, with no apparent exit. Bencolin sets off into the Parisian night to unravel the dumbfounding mystery and track down the sadistic killer.

Marquand, John. [Your Turn, Mr. Moto](#) (Penzler \$15.95). During World War I, Casey Lee was one of the best pilots around. Known for his boldness and bravery, he was heralded as a hero. But now the war’s over, the Depression is on, and Americans no longer have time for public heroes, leaving Lee washed up and desperate for work. When a tobacco company suggests he fly from Japan to North America, a feat which has never been accomplished, Lee jumps at the opportunity. Unfortunately, the idea is abandoned soon after he arrives in Tokyo, and he receives the news in the midst of one of the daily drinking binges with which he now passes the time. Stranded in a foreign land with wavering loyalty to his home country, Lee has few friends, but his situation changes suddenly when he meets the intriguing Mr. Moto, a Japanese man who takes a particular interest in the down-and-out pilot. By the time he meets Sonya, Moto’s beautiful Russian colleague, Casey has unknowingly entered into a life-threatening plot of international espionage at the service of Japan’s imperial interests. The first installment in Pulitzer Prize-winner John P. Marquand’s iconic mystery series, *Your Turn, Mr. Moto* was the novel that introduced Japan’s most skillful spy, famously portrayed by Peter Lorre in a series of films. Introduction by Lawrence Block.

Ordered Upon Request: [Your Turn Mr. Moto](#) (\$25.95).

NONFICTION

Note: The February Midmonth Booknews offers a terrific selection of nonfiction for you. Please check it out

Achorn, Edward. [Every Drop of Blood](#) (Grove Atlantic \$28) recalls “perhaps the most fraught moment in our history (even compared with today)—the country torn apart at the end of the Civil War—but does so in such an original way that it offers that rare thing: fresh historical perspective. Achorn tells the story of Lincoln’s second election through the stories of all the people

who were in Washington to witness his soon-to-be-legendary inaugural speech (‘...with malice toward none; with charity for all...’), all of them swirling around the complex figure of Lincoln, who were, in their diversity, a microcosm of all the forces pulling the country apart. It’s brilliant historical narrative, of which Pulitzer Prize-winning historian Gordon Wood says, “No one has ever placed Lincoln’s Second Inaugural in such a full and rich context. Achorn recreates the sights, sounds, smells, and the feel of everything, and his Lincoln was never more real. This is the work of a superb imaginative historian.” The photograph of Lincoln on the jacket is the last portrait taken of him, by the famed photographer Alexander Gardner in his DC studio.

Murdoch, Sierra Crane. [Yellow Bird](#) (Random \$27.99). Investigative reporter Murdoch debuts with a powerful portrayal of an unusual sleuth whose dogged pursuit of a missing person inquiry led to justice. Lissa Yellow Bird received a degree in criminal justice from the University of North Dakota, “though rather than working for the police, she spent much of her adult life evading them.” Despite that checkered background and a history of substance abuse, Lissa became an advocate in tribal court and a go-to resource when people went missing on Native American lands. After Kristopher Clarke, who worked for a trucking company based on the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation, vanished in 2012, Lissa became interested in the mystery. Her investigations contributed to the arrest and conviction, in 2016, of James Henrikson, who had feared that Clarke was going to start his own trucking firm and steal Henrikson’s employees. Murdoch deepens her narrative with a searing look at the deficiencies of law and order on Native American land, corruption, and the abrogation of responsibility by the federal government. Admirers of David Grann’s [Killers of the Flower Moon](#), (see review in signed books above), will be drawn to this complex crime story with similar themes and settings.

Teitel, Amy Shira. [Fighting for Space](#) (Grand Central \$30). Spaceflight historian Teitel tells the riveting story of the female pilots who each dreamed of being the first American woman in space in a dual biography of audacious trailblazers Jackie Cochran and Jerrie Cobb, two fascinating and fearless women. When the space age dawned in the late 1950s, Jackie Cochran held more propeller and jet flying records than any pilot of the twentieth century—man or woman. She had led the Women’s Auxiliary Service Pilots during the Second World War, was the first woman to break the sound barrier, ran her own luxury cosmetics company, and counted multiple presidents among her personal friends. She was more qualified than any woman in the world to make the leap from atmosphere to orbit. Yet it was Jerrie Cobb, twenty-five years Jackie’s junior and a record-holding pilot in her own right, who finagled her way into taking the same medical tests as the Mercury astronauts. The prospect of flying in space quickly became her obsession. While the American and international media spun the shocking story of a “woman astronaut” program, Jackie and Jerrie struggled to gain control of the narrative, each hoping to turn the rumored program into their own ideal reality—an issue that ultimately went all the way to Congress.

This is just one of many books to read during March, Women’s History Month.

Walder, Tracy. [The Unexpected Spy](#) (St Martins \$27.99). Walder spins a thrilling tale in her debut memoir of her life in the CIA and FBI. As a sorority student at the University of Southern

California in 2000, Walder visited a job fair and was surprised to find herself interested in a career with the CIA, where she soon found work. Shortly after 9/11, Walder became staff operations officer in the Weapons of Mass Destruction office of the CIA's al-Qaeda detail and later worked on unraveling a terrorist network reaching from Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Russia to France and the U.S. Walder tells her story in rapid prose and, adding to the tension, she includes blacked out blocks of text that had been redacted by the CIA during its vetting of her book. Wanting more life stability, Walder joined the FBI in 2004, which didn't require as much travel but where she did encounter sexism. While there, she worked on a massive counterintelligence case involving Chi Mak, a Chinese spy who is still imprisoned for passing U.S. military secrets to China. She left a year and half after joining, and became a teacher at an all-girls high school in Dallas. Walder's fast-paced and intense narrative opens a window into life in two of America's major intelligence agencies.

LARGE PAPERBACK PICKS TO THE IDES OF MARCH

There is an avalanche of excellent large paperbacks for March as you can see. I've split up the month thus and another set will appear in the second March Booknews

Bailey, Samantha. [Woman on the Edge](#) (SimonSchuster \$16). New mother Nicole Markham approaches social worker Morgan Kinkaid on a Chicago subway platform and urges Morgan to take her baby. Morgan, whose husband, Ryan, recently committed suicide after being convicted of embezzlement, doesn't recognize the woman, yet Nicole calls her by name. Just after Nicole tosses the baby into Morgan's arms, she jumps to her death in front of a moving train. Morgan, in her effort to understand what motivated Nicole to kill herself, discovers that a baby died under Nicole's care when she was working as a nanny. The baby's mother, blaming Nicole, sent her threatening letters, even though the coroner ruled it was a case of sudden infant death syndrome. Meanwhile, Detective Karina Martinez, who earlier investigated Ryan's suicide and always believed Morgan conspired in Ryan's embezzlement, investigates Nicole's death; Karina suspects Morgan of pushing Nicole onto the tracks because Morgan was desperate for a child of her own. The tension becomes unrelenting as Morgan unravels Nicole's story. Thrills for fans of books like [The Girl on the Train](#), etc.

Camilleri, Andrea. [The Safety Net](#) (Penguin \$16). The late Sicilian author's 25th outing for Inspector Salvo Montalbano offers a rich, nuanced mix of plot elements. Besides looking into a mysterious but nonfatal terror attack on a school, Montalbano has an unsought but unshakable obsession with a strange series of home movies belonging to a local resident with a tragic family history. The films show nothing but the same piece of a crumbling wall, each year from 1958 to 1963. He must also deal with a Swedish TV production that's taken over his Sicilian town of Vigàta and made everything look as it did in the 1950s. The rhythms and layers of the aging detective's thoughts, routines, and speech are droll and subtle, and fans will be attuned to Montalbano's attempt to reckon with a serious past mistake. As the cases conclude, with none of the resolutions showing up on official records, readers will feel a pang of loss that this may be one of the last visits they'll have from an old, wise friend. Camilleri died in 2019, having completed several books for posthumous publication. Yay. One of the best TV series ever—watch it on MHZ.

Downing, Samantha. [My Lovely Wife](#) (\$16). Happily married to the love of your life but, yeah, after 15 years getting a little bored? Here's a solution. Abduct a young woman. Kill her. Dump her. Then....a corpse is discovered in an abandoned Woodview, Florida, motel, shocking this debut thriller's 39-year-old unnamed narrator, since he and his wife, Millicent, were the ones who abducted Lindsay as part of a ploy to spice up their marriage. Millicent was supposed to have immediately killed and dumped Lindsay in a swamp, but she now claims that in order to distract the authorities, she changed their m.o. to match that of Owen Oliver Riley, a notorious local serial killer who escaped conviction. Millicent's husband initially relishes the idea of a suspicion-free killing spree, but quickly learns that resurrecting the local bogeyman has consequences. "Downing's tale unfolds slowly and sinuously, building tension about the couples' fate while revealing the origins of their homicidal hobby. The first-person, present-tense narration makes readers feel uncomfortably complicit in all that transpires...." #1 Library Reads and IndieNext. "Truly horrifying in the most delicious way. Samantha Downing sucks you in with a great story, pitch-perfect prose and disturbingly dead-on insights into the dark side of human nature. I hope I never meet her in a dark alley..."—Nick Petrie. Downing signs her second thriller, [He Started It](#) (Berkley \$26), here on April 28 with the wonderful Kate White.

Eliasberg, Jan. [Hannah's War](#) (LittleBrown \$16.99). Eliasberg's fast-paced, insightful debut explores one woman's anxiety about helping to create the world's first nuclear weapon. Dr. Hannah Weiss, a Jew who escaped Nazi Germany, works with the Americans on the atom bomb in 1945 Los Alamos, N.M., where, thanks to her exceptional talent and stable personality, she fends off men's flirtations and chauvinistic assumptions. Hannah is alternately excited by the work and sobered by its implications, feeling a "frisson of energy and enormity up and down her arms and neck" while testing a reactor. Meanwhile, Hannah's colleagues circulate a petition about their concerns over the dangerous weapon, causing military intelligence to open an investigation into possible subversives on the team. The lead investigator, Maj. Jack Delaney, wants to know whether Hannah is actually spying for a Nazi physicist, but Jack's attraction to Hannah's "starchy self-determination" distracts him from the interrogation process as Hannah gains the upper hand, and suspicions, second-guessing, and simmering desire ensue between them. "Clever phrasing and keenly developed characters add substance to the intrigue. Eliasberg's triumphant tale of Hannah transcending anti-Semitism and the pitfalls of workplace romance."

Another rave: "The true strength of *Hannah's War* lies not only in its vivid characters and fast-paced narrative—though both of those elements are notable—but goes deeper by forcing its protagonists, and thus readers, to reckon with complex questions of political allegiance, personal loyalty, vocation and love. Hannah's colleagues, both in Berlin and at Los Alamos, recognize the undeniable power of the knowledge they are pursuing, and its potential to be used for good or for ill. Both Jack and Hannah walk the tightrope of staying true to oneself while concealing vital parts of one's identity in order to survive. And many of the characters, even minor ones, wonder whether love and decency become unaffordable luxuries in wartime. Inspired by true events, with a tightly drawn plot and layered characters, *Hannah's War* is a stunning story of a brilliant woman fighting her own war on several fronts."

Foley, Lucy. [The Hunting Party](#) (\$16.99). An auspicious thriller debut. Nine close friends, four of them couples, gather for their extravagant annual New Year's getaway—this time at Loch Corrin, a remote estate in the Scottish Highlands—a decade after most of them graduated from Oxford. Tensions, sexual and otherwise, first flare during the lengthy, alcohol-lubricated train trip from London on December 30, fanned by charismatic, capricious Miranda—the golden girl most men want to be with and more than a few women long to become. At the Loch Corrin station, they're met by Doug, the estate's odd, though hunky, gamekeeper; at Loch Corrin, they encounter unexpected additional guests: a pair of strange Icelandic backpackers. Things start to go seriously wrong with the arrival of a blizzard that will soon cut off the 50,000-acre spread from the outside world. And then one of them disappears kicking off more crackling suspense. For signed UK copies of Foley's second thriller [The Guest List](#) see Signed Books.

✚Harris, CS. [Who Slays the Wicked](#) (\$16). Napoleon's reign is drawing to a close, and the rest of the European powers are jockeying to fill the void left by France's defeat. The Grand Duchess Catherine of Oldenburg and her retinue are in the middle of a formal visit to London when the body of the sadistic Lord Ashworth is found hacked apart in his bed. Ashworth, known to have exotic sexual habits, has recently married Stephanie, the beloved but troubled niece of Sebastian St. Cyr, Viscount Devlin. So naturally Sir Henry Lovejoy, the local magistrate, calls in Sebastian to help investigate Ashworth's death. Sebastian wishes he could believe that Stephanie did not kill Ashworth, but is worried that she more than regretted her hasty marriage to the dissolute lord. On the other hand, he hears rumors that a certain Russian princess, part of Catherine's household, shared Ashworth's erotic interests and may have played a part in his demise. As Sebastian digs into Ashworth's circle of friends and shady acquaintances, his wife, Lady Hero Devlin, continues on her quest to document the atrocities committed against London's poorest denizens, much to the irritation of her father, Lord Jarvis. 14th in a dazzling [Regency series](#) that really has to be read from book one to this. Harris signs #15, [Who Speaks for the Damned](#) (Berkley \$26), here on April 8. I can't wait.

Havill, Steven. [Less Than a Moment](#) (Poisoned Pen Press \$15.99) provides an update on Miles Waddel's NightZone, his "astromonical mesa-top development," complete with a planetarium, futuristic hotel, and five-star restaurant. The project, dedicated to ensuring a light pollution free zone, is now drawing birdwatchers and ecotourists from around the world. It has also attracted the attention of real estate entrepreneur Kyle Thompson, who has bought a large tract of adjoining land. The purchase has Waddel and most of the residents of the county worried, as the addition of new electric lights would destroy NightZone's *raison d'être*. When Thompson's body is found in a pool of blood at the bottom of a cliff, Undersheriff Estelle Reyes-Guzman suspects he was murdered. The investigation goes down a bunch of false trails until a sudden, violent resolution. As usual, the main pleasure lies in time spent visiting old friends, like former sheriff Bill Gastner and Estelle's large circle of family and friends. This is a paperback original.

Heller, Peter. [The River](#) (\$16). The Indie Next Pick: "Heller can take you on a journey through nature like no other writer. *The River* is the story of two close friends wanting nothing more

than to enjoy their time together on a trip through the Canadian wilderness, and fly fishing has never been so beautifully portrayed nor has the serenity of water and nature. But the peacefulness slowly wanes and the tension begins to build as the trip becomes a race against encroaching forest fires and an attempt to save the life of the mysterious woman they have picked up along the way. Heller has created a story of friendship and survival that should not be missed." Heller is fluid in his choice of genres but consistent in the excellence of his prose. Here's another take: "A love letter to the great outdoors. Both adventure story and elegant nature writing. Two college students on a canoe trip face a wildfire, white-water rapids, and two mysterious strangers. For fans of Tim Johnston and Dave Eggers." I can't recommend his last, [Celine](#) (\$16), a terrific and original mystery, enough.

Kent, Serena. [Death in Provence](#) (\$16.99). This debut and start of a series with British divorcee Penelope Kite who rashly falls in love with an old stone house and property in a small village in the Luberon (fantastic views other than the body in her swimming pool) was our February 2019 Cozy Crimes Book of the Month. I don't think Cozy is quite apt, it's not at all cute, but it does keep sex and violence off the page, the landscape is superb, the food and drink also (I've got to get serious about the region's delicious rosé), and the French realtor and her driving are hilarious. Death by car is an ever present threat and cyclists are at risk. It begins when Penny is fed up with Surrey and her step-children and falls for the Peter Mayle dream. The house she rashly purchases needs serious work apart from the murder investigation. The lawn and garden are disasters. The neighbors and the villagers are not as frank as she would wish. Still, there is immense promise in property and people... take it from there.

And, joy, you can take it to [Death in Avignon](#) (\$16.99/\$26.99). See Some New Books below

Massey, Sujata. [The Satapur Moonstone](#) (\$16.95). I selected the start of Massey's new series, [The Widows of Malabar Hill](#) (\$15.95), set in the 1920s and based upon the life of the fascinating, pioneering, Oxford-educated Cornelia Sorabji, a Parsi who served as the only female lawyer in Bombay, as a 2018 Historical Mystery Book of the Month. This sequel sports a wealth of detail into the princely states that co-existed with British rule, the strictures of purdah and of the Parsi faith, its sympathetic portrait of the British Raj agent at Satapur, extend what we learned to a mesmerizing new level. And of course, there's the nod to Wilkie Collins with the moonstone and its role as a clue.

It's 1922, moving towards the end of the rainy season in the lush, remote Sahyadri mountains, where the princely state of Satapur is tucked away. A curse seems to have fallen upon Satapur's royal family, whose maharaja died of a sudden illness shortly before his teenage son was struck down in a tragic hunting accident. The state is now ruled by an agent of the British Raj on behalf of Satapur's two widowed maharanis, the dowager queen and her daughter-in-law. The royal ladies are in a dispute over the education of the young crown prince, and a lawyer's counsel is required. However, the maharanis live in purdah and do not speak to men. Sir David Hobson-Jones, a top adviser to the governor of India, approaches gender-bucking Perveen on behalf of the Raj's Kolhapur Agency, to negotiate a settlement between Satapur's two maharanis who have divergent views in how the current maharajah, 10-year-old Jiva Reo, should be educated. Despite

her misgivings at working for her country's occupiers—Perveen is much impressed by the work of one Ghandi—and the difficulties of travel for a single female, she accepts the assignment. She's surprised by how sympathetic the Agent, Colin, proves to be. And once admitted to the palace after various difficulties, she soon fears, as does his mother, that the young maharaja is at risk of his life....

Moore, Graham. [The Last Days of Night](#) (\$17). Moore, whose first novel [The Sherlockian](#) (\$15) displayed deep-diving research along with storytelling virtuosity, tackles the “war of the currents,” which pitted Thomas Edison against George Westinghouse in a turn-of-the-century New York legal battle. Fresh out of Columbia Law School, Paul Cravath is trained in research and dealing with concrete facts; he is not used to being at the center of a billion-dollar lawsuit, but that is exactly where he finds himself after agreeing to work with George Westinghouse. The two inventors become locked in a back-and-forth legal dispute after Thomas Edison claims he invented the light bulb and sues Westinghouse, who then issues a countersuit against Edison for violating Westinghouse's own patent. At the heart of the matter is determining who invented the light bulb and whether or not the patent covers all forms of the bulb. Paul hopes to win the case by enlisting the help of Nikola Tesla, but that proves to be a much more unruly prospect than he initially expected, as the eccentric man agrees to help but brings with him new challenges. Amid the bickering of the iconic characters, Paul ends up emerging as the emotional center, trying to hold strands of the case together and stay true to his own moral standards.

“A fascinating portrait of American inventors... Moore crafts a compelling narrative out of [Paul] Cravath's cunning legal maneuvers and [Nikola] Tesla's world-changing tinkering, while a story line on opera singer Agnes Huntington has the mysterious glamour of *The Great Gatsby*... He conjures Gilded Age New York City so vividly, it feels like only yesterday.”—*Entertainment Weekly*

✎Perry, Anne. [Triple Jeopardy](#) (\$17). Daniel Pitt, along with his parents, Charlotte and Thomas, is delighted that his sister, Jemima, and her family have returned to London from the States for a visit. But the Pitts soon learn of a harrowing incident: In Washington, D.C., one of Jemima's good friends has been assaulted and her treasured necklace stolen. The perpetrator appears to be a man named Philip Sidney, a British diplomat stationed in America's capital who, in a cowardly move, has fled to London, claiming diplomatic immunity. But that claim doesn't cover his other crimes. When Sidney winds up in court on a separate charge of embezzlement, it falls to Daniel to defend him. Daniel plans to provide only a competent enough defense to avoid a mistrial, allowing the prosecution to put his client away. But when word travels across the pond that an employee of the British embassy in Washington has been found dead, Daniel grows suspicious about Sidney's alleged crimes and puts on his detective hat to search for evidence in what has blown up into an international affair. As the embezzlement scandal heats up, Daniel takes his questions to intrepid scientist Miriam fford Croft, who brilliantly uses the most up-to-date technologies to follow an entirely new path of investigation which leads Daniel and Miriam to travel to the Channel Islands to chase a fresh lead. 2nd in a series developing from the Charlotte and Thomas Pitt mysteries. The first is [Twenty One Days](#) (\$17)

Preston, Douglas/Lincoln Child. [Old Bones](#) (\$16.99). The authors launch a new series with two of my favorite characters from the AXL Pendergast thrillers: archeologist Nora Kelly and young Corrie Swanson, now a newly minted FBI agent having aced boot camp but needing seasoning. What better test to give them both than to have them apply science and psychology to an 1847-48 tragedy while upping the stakes with imaginative bonus plot lines? The historical event is the tragedy that befell the Donner Party while it made a push to cross the Sierras into California. The ill-advised route it chose brought disaster when a blizzard befell the settlers. Marooned in some 20 feet of snow they began to starve, some died and, as modern archaeological excavations have confirmed, some ate the others to survive. If you think this isn't the stuff for fiction, ponder the success of Yann Martel's bestseller and movie *The Life of Pi* in 2002.

So being Preston and Child the authors ask, what if there were a third camp, its location lost to time? And what if the historian Clive Benton who brings Nora Kelly into locating and excavating the lost camp has a convincing theory two of the doomed settlers had robbed a third of a fortune in gold coins, now worth mega millions and perhaps hidden at the camp? And... what if Corrie is pursuing an investigation into the murder of a man found in the exposed grave of one Florence Regis—who also has a link to the Donner Party—a case that leads her into the Sierras and to Nora?

I love the bones of the plot, the superb depiction of archeologists at work and the other science behind events. The two strong female protagonists share a dynamic reminiscent of that between Pendergast and his friend on the NYPD, Vincent D'Agosta. So it connects to the Pendergast-verse. Think part Stephen King but rooted in reality. If you have not read Preston and Child, *Old Bones* is an excellent place to begin.

See, Lisa. [The Island of Sea Women](#) (\$17). You may have read many novels of the Second World War. There are so many war-time theaters, so many tragic and often beautiful stories to tell full of courage, dark deeds, love, action, survival. But I bet very few of you—including me until I read this—have any knowledge of what life under Japanese occupation was like for the community of women wresting food and a living for themselves and their families on the inhospitable Korean island of Jeju. Lisa See beautifully portrays the bonds that bind and sunder two women in particular, both of them missing their dead mothers, both caught up in tragedy. You can read this as history. Or as an agenda-free novel of female empowerment and friendship. Or as a war story ranging from the Japanese colonization of Jeju from the 1930s through the war and on to 2008 with its cell phones and easy travel wherein the Jeju women still harbor wounds and seek reconnections. But I also urge you to read the Acknowledgments detailing See's impressive, deep diving research into the incredible culture of the women divers, their biological adaptations, their raw courage and stoic acceptance of risk, and wonder what will be their future. See provides a transportive experience for you in this her 10th novel. I'm a fan of every one of her books from *Gold Mountain*, a family history, through her three mysteries, to her historical fiction. And I will never look at abalone as a benign (and delicious) sea creature again!

✎Todd, Charles. [Black Ascot](#) (\$16.99). Rutledge survived World War I shellshocked and living with the ghostly voice of Hamish, a comrade who died in his arms. While driving home to London

after a difficult case he intervenes in a potential rooftop hostage disaster. And then helps the former soldier find his missing family. The grateful man can only repay Rutledge's kindness by giving him a tip that one of the most wanted men in Britain may be back. Alan Barrington, who was accused of murder over a decade earlier vanished during the inquest, has been missing since 1910. Did Barrington arrange the car crash that killed the woman he loved and nearly did for the man she'd married when left a suicide's widow. Rutledge's boss gives him the unwelcome job of following up the clue, which begins the inspector's unrelenting search for the truth. Rutledge starts out by investigating Barrington's friends, including his lawyer and estate agent, both of whom have known him for years. When each refuses to confirm or deny that he's still alive, Rutledge begins to dig deeper into the lives of the four Oxford friends who loved the dead Blanche, a search that takes him to the Lakes Country as well as covering quite a lot of ground. Love the Catholics' history and architectural legacies. And the arresting moment when Rutledge visits a care center for shellshocked veterans and sees himself in the men. [Order all the Rutledges](#) and read them in order.

Webb, Betty. [Desert Redemption](#) (\$15.99).). "In Jones's electrifying 10th and final Lena Jones mystery, Scottsdale, Arizona., PI Lena is approached by Harold Slow Horse, one of Arizona's leading artists, who insists that she investigate the Kanati Spiritual Center, a compound promoting a mishmash of Native American symbolism and philosophy, where his flighty ex-wife, Chelsea, has taken up residence. Lena reluctantly agrees, and discovers that Chelsea is thriving on the fresh air, sunshine, and gourmet cuisine on offer at the center. When the body of a woman with a possible link to the center turns up in the desert, Lena begins to think that there is 'something more horrific than religious plagiarism going on at Kanati.' Lena gets on a trail that leads her at long last to answers about her troubled past: 'I was an orphan... I'd been found comatose on a Phoenix street at the age of four with a bullet in my head. No one came forward to claim me.' The resolution will satisfy series fans, though they'll be sad to see the last of Lena."—*PW*. I am too but Webb always planned a ten book story arc for Lena—and has seen it through. [Order all 10 Lena Jones'](#) investigations starting with *Desert Noir*.

Wilkinson, Lauren. [American Spy](#) (\$15). Wilkinson's unflinching, incendiary debut, a 2020 Edgar Best First novel nominee and 2019 First Mystery Book of the Month, 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 honey pot 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. Written as a confession

addressed to her twin sons following an assassination attempt on her life, the novel is a thrilling, razor-sharp examination of race, nationalism, and U.S. foreign policy that is certain to make Wilkinson's name as one of the most engaging and perceptive young writers working today. Marie is a brilliant narrator who is forthright, direct, and impervious to deception—traits that endow the story with an honesty that is as refreshing as it is revelatory. This urgent and adventurous novel will delight fans of literary fiction and spy novels alike. Plus I learned so much about Africa and the US role there I didn't know.

MORE URBAN NOIRS FROM AKASHIC

Gore, Ariel. [Santa Fe Noir](#) (\$15.95). Herein Santa Fe and indeed New Mexico are less the Land of Enchantment, per the tourism slogan, than the "Land of Entrapment," where characters are inexorably tied to or haunted by the area's long history and uneasy mix of cultures. One highlight is Hida Vilorio's "SOS Sex," a traditional crime story in which a property appraiser stumbles onto a sex trafficking racket that ties to a long-ago family tragedy of his own. In a more off-beat vein, Cornelia Reed's scathing "The Cask of Los Alamos" retells Poe's revenge tale "The Cask of Amontillado," but this time set at the 1945 test of the first atomic bomb. For many of the selections, however, crime is secondary or even nonexistent, as in Jimmy Santiago Baca's unsettling "Close Quarters," in which a Chicano writer is visited by the ghosts of his ancestors. The quality of the 17 entries varies widely, but the book's diverse group of writers will provide readers with unexpected perspectives on this centuries-old city and its people

Welsh-Higgins, Andrew. [Columbus Noir](#) (\$15.95). This superior Akashic noir anthology gathers 14 dark snapshots of Ohio's capital, a very dangerous place indeed, with heavy drug use and murder touching down everywhere, from the German Village neighborhood to the statehouse. One highlight is Craig McDonald's "Curb Appeal," one of several invoking the homicidal search for housing. In the editor's effective "Going Places," a security man who covers up affairs for the governor gets pulled into a murder plot. In Mercedes King's memorable "An Agreeable Wife for a Suitable Husband," an abused wife who grew up "on a farm in Kentucky, slaughtering hogs" decides she's had enough.

And consider

Hitchens, Joanne. [Bad Company](#) (\$20). A cool anthology of South African crime including stories by such as Deon Meyer.

CELEBRATE ST PATRICK'S DAY

Stories...including two older Akashic urban noirs

Bruen, Ken, ed. [Dublin Noir](#) (\$15.95). Stories by: Ken Bruen, Eoin Colfer, Jason Starr, Laura Lippman, Olen Steinhauer, Peter Spiegelman, Kevin Wignall, Jim Fusilli, John Rickards, Patrick J. Lambe, Charlie Stella, Ray Banks, James O. Born, Sarah Weinman, Pat Mullan, Gary Phillips, Craig McDonald, Duane Swierczynski, Reed Farrel Coleman, and others

McKinty, Adrian/Stuart Neville, eds. [Belfast Noir](#) (Akashic \$16.95). Stories by: Lee Child, Steve Cavanagh, Glenn Patterson, Eoin McNamee, Garbhan Downey, Alex Barclay, Brian McGillo-way, Ian McDonald, Arlene Hunt, Ruth Dudley Edwards, Claire McGowan, and more.

Novels...

Black, Benjamin. [Christine Falls](#) (\$18). Quirk is a surly pathologist living in 1950s Dublin. One night, after having a few drinks at a party, he returns to the morgue to find his brother-in-law tampering with the records on a young woman's corpse. The next morning, when his hangover has worn off, Quirk reluctantly begins looking into the woman's history. He discovers a plot that spans two continents, implicates the Catholic Church, and may just involve members of his own family. He is warned—first subtly, then with violence—to lay off, but Quirk is a stubborn man... First in an award-winning series running so far to 7 books by Booker Prize winner John Banville writing crime fiction as Benjamin Black. Excellent.

Black also penned a WWII thriller imagining Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret whisked to an old Irish estate for safety in [The Secret Guests](#) (Holt \$27).

Bowen, Rhys. [Murphy's Law](#) (\$16.99/\$9.99). As cultural appropriation wars wash around us this is still a wonderful Irish immigrant story by Bowen, boundlessly researched in turn-of-the-Twentieth-Century New York as seen through the eyes of a courageous young woman who fled abuse in her native Ireland for a chance at a new life. As mystery it falls slightly on the cozy side (winner of Agatha and other awards) but the [Molly Murphy Mysteries](#) series, which I recommend as a whole, has elements of #MeToo in Molly's backstory.

Bruen, Ken. [The Guards](#) (\$16.99). The first for Jack Taylor is such a stunner I remember reading it and going, Wow. Still stinging from his unceremonious ouster from the Garda Síochána—The Guards, Ireland's police force—and staring at the world through the smoky bottom of his beer mug, Jack Taylor is stuck in Galway with nothing to look forward to. In his sober moments Jack aspires to become Ireland's best private investigator, not to mention its first—Irish history, full of betrayal and espionage, discourages any profession so closely related to informing. But in truth Jack is teetering on the brink of his life's sharpest edges, his memories of the past cutting deep into his soul and his prospects for the future nonexistent. Nonexistent, that is, until a dazzling woman walks into the bar with a strange request and a rumor about Jack's talent for finding things. Odds are he won't be able to climb off his barstool long enough to get involved with his radiant new client, but when he surprises himself by getting hired, Jack has little idea of what he's getting into. Continue on with [Jack](#) to the most recent: [Galway Girl](#) (Mysterious \$26). Bruen has written various other crime novels as standalones, some of them in overpriced paperbacks from his publisher.

French, Tana. [In the Woods](#) (\$9.99). The first in the internationally bestselling Dublin Murder Squad series (a 2007 First Mystery Book of the Month) is now a Starz TV series. The *NY Times* calls it "Required reading for anyone who appreciates tough, unflinching intelligence and ingenious plotting." As dusk approaches a small Dublin suburb in the summer of 1984, mothers begin to call their children home. But on this warm evening, three children do not return from the dark and silent woods. When the police arrive, they find only one of the children gripping a tree trunk in terror, wearing blood-filled sneakers, and unable to recall a single detail of the previous hours. Twenty years later, the found boy, Rob Ryan, is a detective on the Dublin Murder Squad and keeps his past a secret. But when a twelve-year-old girl is

found murdered in the same woods, he and Detective Cassie Maddox—his partner and closest friend—find themselves investigating a case chillingly similar to the previous unsolved mystery. Now, with only snippets of long-buried memories to guide him, Ryan has the chance to uncover both the mystery of the case before him and that of his own shadowy past. I recommend [all of French's work](#), in series or not.

McKinty, Adrian. [The Cold, Cold Ground](#) (\$15.99). Northern Ireland, spring 1981. Hunger strikes, riots, power cuts, a homophobic serial killer with a penchant for opera, and a young woman's suicide that may yet turn out to be murder: on the surface, the events are unconnected, but then things—and people—aren't always what they seem. Detective Sergeant Duffy is the man tasked with trying to get to the bottom of it all. It's no easy job—especially when it turns out that one of the victims was involved in the IRA but was last seen discussing business with someone from the loyalist Ulster Volunteer Force. Add to this the fact that, as a Catholic policeman, it doesn't matter which side he's on, because nobody trusts him, and Sergeant Duffy really is in a no-win situation. Fast-paced, evocative, and brutal, this first for Duffy is a brilliant depiction of Belfast at the height of the Troubles—and of a cop treading a thin, thin line. Happily [all of the Sean Duffys](#) have been reissued.

Murphy, Catie. [Dead in Dublin](#) (Kensington \$7.99). Starts a cozy Dublin Driver series. Ferrying tourists around Dublin for the Leprechaun Limo Service makes quite a change after years in the military. Still, Megan Malone is enjoying her life in Ireland. She likes the scenery, the easy pace, the quirky, quick-witted locals. Everything—except having one of her clients drop dead at the statue of fabled fishmonger, Molly Malone. Most restaurant critics notch up their share of enemies. Elizabeth Darr, however, was a well-loved international star. She and her husband, Simon, had just had dinner when Elizabeth collapsed, and spoiled seafood is the first suspect. The restaurant's owner, worried her business is doomed, begs Megan to look into it. Between her irate boss and a handsome Garda who's both amused and annoyed by her persistence, Megan has her hands full even before she's cajoled into taking care of two adorable Jack Russell puppies.... IMHO possibly one of the highest energy canines there is.

Neville, Stuart. [The Ghosts of Belfast](#) (\$9.99). John Connolly calls this first of Neville's Belfast Novels, winner of the LA Times Book Prize, "One of the best Irish novels, in any genre, of recent times." Northern Ireland's Troubles may be over, but peace has not erased the crimes of the past. Gerry Fegan, a former paramilitary contract killer, is haunted by the ghosts of the twelve people he slaughtered. Every night, at the point of losing his mind, he drowns their screams in drink. But it's not enough. In order to appease the ghosts, Fegan is going to have to kill the men who gave him orders. From the greedy politicians to the corrupt security forces, the street thugs to the complacent bystanders who let it happen, all are called to account. But when Fegan's vendetta threatens to derail a hard-won truce and destabilize the government, old comrades and enemies alike want him dead. You can order the whole [Belfast Novels](#) series.

O'Connor, Carlene. [Murder in an Irish Cottage](#) (Kensington \$26). The fifth in An Irish Village Mystery series. In a remote—and superstitious—village in County Cork, Ireland, Garda Siobhán O'Sullivan must solve a murder where the prime suspects are

fairies... Family is everything to Siobhán: her five siblings; her dear departed mother for whom the family business, Naomi's Bistro, is named; and now her fiancé, Macdara Flannery. So precious is her engagement that Siobhán wants to keep it just between the two of them for a little longer. But Macdara is her family, which is why when his cousin Jane frantically calls for his help, Siobhán is at his side as the two Garda rush from Kilbane to the rural village where Jane and her mother have recently moved. Unfortunately, tragedy awaits them. They find Jane, who is blind, outside the cottage, in a state. Inside, Aunt Ellen lies on her bed in a fancy red dress, no longer breathing. A pillow on the floor and a nearby teacup suggest the mode of death to their trained eyes: the woman has been poisoned and smothered. Someone wanted to make sure she was dead. But who? Devout believers in Irish folklore, the villagers insist the cottage is cursed—built on a fairy path. It turns out Ellen Delaney was not the first to die there.... Order the first four in [An Irish Village Mystery](#) series for a cozy treat.

Taylor, Patrick. [An Irish Country Cottage](#) (\$1.99). This is the latest in Taylor's [Irish Country Books](#). The New Year brings challenges and changes to the colorful Irish village of Ballybucklebo. The Christmas holidays have barely passed before a fire engulfs the humble thatched cottage housing of Donal Donnally and his family. Although the family escapes the blaze more or less unsinged, Donal, his wife, their three small children, and their beloved dog find themselves with nothing left but the clothes on their back. Good thing Doctors O'Reilly and Laverty are on hand to rally the good people of Ballybucklebo to come to their aid. Look for books by Maeve Binchy as well.

REPEAT RAVES

Stabenow, Dana. [No Fixed Line](#) (Head of Zeus \$2.99). The *PW* Starred Review: "A plane crash in the Alaskan wilderness kicks off Edgar winner Stabenow's excellent 22nd Kate Shugak mystery after 2017's [Less Than a Treason](#). Former State Trooper Jim Chopin, Kate's beau, is called out of retirement to go to the crash site, where he discovers two survivors, children who don't speak English. When the children turn out to be trafficked refugees kept by a drug-smuggling pedophile, PI Shugak, who operates from the national park that contains the crash site, investigates. She goes up against powerful foes from both inside and outside Alaska, including two goons sent by the smuggling ring. As plenty of villains have learned over the decades, this is a woman who shouldn't be underestimated and has plenty of fight left in her. Stabenow's affection for her characters, in particular Chopin, shines through, as does her fondness for the Alaskan country she knows so well. Fans will hope this series goes on forever." *Booklist adds*: "Stabenow's prose is as smooth as ice, her characters as lifelike as real people, her plot intricate without being unnecessarily complicated. Here she employs shifting points of view—Kate's, the children's, the villains'—to tell the story from different angles, trusting the reader to piece together the larger picture. A fine entry in a series that's deservedly a fan favorite."

Vidich, Paul. [The Coldest Warrior](#) (Pegasus \$25.95) "is a terrifically paced page-turner with convincing red herrings and a surprise ending. These feats are not to be understated. But Vidich also succeeds in crafting incisive portraits of characters, who face their own internal and domestic conflicts. Gabriel struggles to understand his daughter and keep a hold on his marriage, while

the CIA and FBI agents who orbit around him grapple with the emotional and physical damage their own webs of deception have wrought. Without ever slowing the pace or detracting from the novel's central mystery or action, Vidich still manages to carve out time in his taut narrative to provide snapshots of men trapped in personal cold wars of their own making. This focus on character gives the novel a cinematic quality, updating the spy genre while still tipping its hat to the beloved tropes that fans know and crave." This publisher is shifting to a new distributor which will allow us to get signed copies of authors like Vidich in the future. It isn't as easy to do this as it may seem.

TWO VIEWS OF MODERN CORNWALL

James, Rebecca. [The Woman in the Mirror](#) (St Martins \$26.99). I mentioned *Rebecca* by DuMaurier in the March Event Books review of Natasha Pulley. And here is a modern Gothic set in the Duchy complete with a mansion simmering with secrets and a family haunted by them from 1806 to today. No good Gothic lacks a more or less haunted house and here is one literally so. The prologue sets it up and then we move around from 1947 when Alice Miller travels from London to Cornwall to be governess to Captain Jonathan de Grey's twin children at Winterbourne Hall to present day Manhattan when art gallery curator Rachel Wright learns to her surprise she is a de Grey and the sole heir to Winterbourne. So of course she travels to Cornwall and becomes enmeshed in the de Grey's tragic history...a history powered by rage that pursues the family generation by generation. I thought of this for the British Crime Book of the Month for March but one final twist in the plot put me off... still I recommend it to club members.

Waites, Martyn. [The Old Religion](#) (Blackstone \$26.99). Talk about a contrast! This "dark heart of Cornwall" pulse-pounder by Waites, who is writing again as himself rather than his pseudonym Tania Carver, is also fuelled by rage: Waites' own at Brexit and what he believes will be the devastation it will visit upon rural areas like Cornwall, so dependent on EU subsidies, that voted against their own interests to leave it behind without considering the very real consequences. What we have is not a mansion but the dying village of St. Petroc. It's the kind of overlooked community that people can fade into—hide—and Tom Killgannon is one of them. Ex-undercover copper, he's in British Witness Protection, aware that some very bad people are after him. Then he meets Lila, a 17-year-old runaway, when she breaks into his house and absconds with all his new ID plus money. So Tom's danger level rises, and Lila's as well because something sinister is going on in the traveler's (gypsy) community where she's taken refuge. Refuge it isn't, as danger is on the wing from... well, just consider the title of this book.

SOME NEW BOOKS UP TO THE IDES OF MARCH

There are so many books publishing in March I will do a second Booknews. This one covers Event Books, Signed Books (more might arise), Paperback Picks for the first half of the month, some Nonfiction. And an Irish reads feature for March 17

Adams, Lyssa Kay. [Undercover Bromance](#) (Berkley \$16). An Indie Next Pick for you: "Steamy, spicy, and tender, if this book were a gourmet meal it would be worth a thousand bucks for sure. Lyssa Kay Adams has outdone herself; her sophomore novel in the Bromance Book Club collection is even better than her debut. Liv is a firecracker, taking nothing from nobody. Mack is a big

softie with a heart of gold. When they team up to take down a famous and powerful chef with a history of abusing women, there is nothing these two won't risk — including their hearts. Please read this lovely romance; you will not regret it and it will make you a better person. And if you are a man, this should be required reading — study up, dudes.”

Adler-Olsen, Jussi. [Victim 2117](#) (Dutton \$28). Karen reviews: Refugees are dying in the Mediterranean Sea as they attempt to leave their homeland to find a safer place for their families. For the reporting newspaper, Victim 2117 is simply the latest statistic. However, it's quite a different matter for Department Q. The victim is a reminder for one of the department members, resurrecting painful memories from another time. Some descriptions of the treatment of prisoners in Saddam Hussein's prisons are unpleasant, but demonstrate the challenge of making the best decision for all. Adler-Olsen is at the top of his game, creating a story of suspense, populated with vivid, sympathetic characters and providing a labyrinth of twists and turns bringing the story to an end.

Akunin, Boris. [She Lover of Death](#) (Grove \$26). Erast Fandorin infiltrates a dangerous circle of suicidal poets. Naive young Masha Mironova arrives in Moscow at the turn of the century determined to shed her provincial Siberian upbringing. Reinventing herself as the reckless and daring Columbine, she soon falls in with a subversive group of poets known as the Lovers of Death. At the home of their leader, the Doge, these seductive bohemians conduct nightly séances to determine who shall be Death's next lover. Once named at a séance, the chosen member must await three signs from Death before taking his or her own life. The resulting string of suicides have drawn media attention and sparked widespread hysteria in Moscow. As the group's numbers dwindle, the dashing investigator Erast Fandorin goes undercover to join their ranks. “[Akunin's) novels feature a Slavic Sherlock Holmes who speaks Japanese and English, is skilled at martial arts and has ladykiller good looks...Millions of readers have been seduced.”—*Wall Street Journal*. [Order earlier Fandorins](#) for more fun.

Altman, Mark A/Edward Gross. [Nobody Does It Better: The Complete Uncensored, Unauthorized History of James Bond](#) (Forge \$29.99). I could have put this massive oral history of the legendary movie franchise under Nonfiction above, but somehow James Bond seems to belong here. Go behind the scenes of the franchise, read reflections of the casts, crews, critics, and filmmakers on the only gentleman secret agent with a license to kill (the original black ops, right?). From Russia—with love—to Vegas, from below the bright blue waters of the Bahamas in search of a missing nuclear weapon to the top of the Golden Gate Bridge, from below the seas in Stromberg's new Noah's Ark of Atlantis into orbit with Hugo Drax, the amazing, true story of the birth of James Bond through the latest remarkable James Bond adventures as well as the Spy mania classics that enthralled the world—it's Bond and Beyond

☞Ambrose, Marty. [Claire's Last Secret](#) (Severn \$28.99) finds Claire Claremont, Mary Shelley's stepsister, living in near-poverty in 1873 Florence, Italy, with her niece and grand-niece, though her memories of reckless youthful passion provide solace. Claire has kept her valuable letters from Lord Byron and Percy Shelley, which ruthless men in Last Secret made clear were worth murder-

ing for. Claire's not out of danger yet. Moreover, she's learned that her illegitimate daughter with Byron, Allegra, did not die of disease in a convent as she was told decades ago. Accompanied by friends, Claire embarks on a desperate search for Allegra across Italy, but those offering answers are often not what they seem. Ambrose ratchets up the suspense over the fate of Allegra and the truth about mad, bad, and dangerous-to-know Byron. This is a very short supply publisher. Ordered Upon Request but please hurry before we can't.

Bauermeister, Erica. [The Scent Keeper](#) (St Martins \$16.99). The February Reece Witherspoon Pick delights with a young girl with a unique talent for identifying scents who embarks on a journey of self-discovery when she's ripped from her intensely isolated childhood home on an otherwise uninhabited island in the Pacific Northwest. Her father teaches Emmeline to read, to forage for food, and to hone her sense of smell. Emmeline doesn't question their isolation, as she's known nothing else. She adores the long days learning from her father, listening to fairy tales, and watching him use his mysterious machine. The machine produces “scent-papers” that her father stashes inside small glass bottles, each paper preserving a one-of-a-kind scent. When tragedy strikes, Emmeline is forced to relocate to the mainland. She is taken in by a kind, childless couple in a seaside village. Similar to a wild animal suddenly brought into captivity, 12-year-old Emmeline struggles to adapt. As she slowly establishes a new life, beginning school and navigating adolescence, questions about her father, her absentee mother, and her own identity continue to grow. The more she learns about her past, the harder it becomes to reconcile her childhood with her future. Think of this as an olfactory adventure. “This coming-of-age story delights the senses, immersing the reader in the sights, sounds, and scents of the wilderness and city life. Fans of Mary Simses and Jennifer Close will fall in love with Bauermeister's plucky heroine, the layers of family secrets, the lush settings, and the painfully tender relationships.”—*Booklist*

Berry, Quan. [We Ride Upon Sticks](#) (Pantheon \$26.95). The Indie Next Pick; “This is such a fun romp! It has everything you could possibly want in a book: field hockey, witches, and '80s bangs that have literally taken on a life of their own. Set in Salem in the 1980s, we follow a group of high school field hockey players as they struggle with their new dark powers and attempt to end their losing streak. One of the strangest, most satisfying books I have read in a long time!”

Bouman, Tom. [The Bramble and the Rose](#) (Norton \$25.95). A headless stranger is found in the woods of Wild Thyme, a small town in the Endless Mountains of Pennsylvania. All signs point to a man-killing bear, and Officer Henry Farrell would just as soon leave this hunt to the Game Commission. But doubts arise when he discovers the victim was a retired investigator. What drew the investigator to sleepy Wild Thyme? Before Henry can find answers, his own nephew disappears into the hills. Then an old flame dies under suspicious circumstances, leaving Henry as the prime suspect. Torn between protecting his family and clearing his name, Henry fights back.

☞Brittney, Lynn. [Murder in Belgravia](#) (Crooked Lane \$26.99). I'm a year late in reading this series debut by British author Brittney who has an impressive command of 1915 London detail: geography, class/social ranking, professional skills (a

lot medical), and its sexual underbelly told in a frank but not voyeuristic way. I like the women organized into an unorthodox investigative team for Scotland Yard by Chief Inspector Beech. One is a doctor, another trained in law, another an aristocratic widow. And on the men's team are an aging and meticulous policeman with a formidable memory and a young one removed from the Front by the near destruction of his boxing hand but otherwise an impressive physical specimen eager to learn and with a stout moral compass. Dial Mayfair 100 and you get them. And the household of Lord Murcheson more or less does that when he, going mad from shell shock and drugs, is murdered after stomping on his pregnant young wife so hard she loses the baby and possibly will her life. An excellent read for fans of historical and of British mystery...and of the two together.

Childs, Laura. [Lavender Blue Murder](#) (Berkley \$26). Tea maven Theodosia Browning and her tea sommelier Drayton Conneley are guests at a bird hunt styled in the precise manner of an English shooting party. Which means elevenses (sloe gin fizzes), gun loaders, the drawing of pegs, fine looking bird dogs, and shooting costumes of tweed, herringbone, and suede. But as gunshots explode like a riff of Black Cat firecrackers, another shot sounds too close for comfort to Theodosia and Drayton. Intrigued but worried, Theodosia wanders into the neighbor's lavender field where she discovers their host, Reginald Doyle, bleeding to death. His wife, Meredith, is beside herself with grief and begs Theodosia and Drayton to stay the night. But Theodosia awakens at 2:00A.M. to find smoke in her room and the house on fire. And that's just the start of this new Tea Shop Mystery set in Charleston, NC.

Chow, Jennifer. [Mimi Lee Gets a Clue](#) (Berkley \$16). In a series launch from Chow, Mimi Lee has just opened Hollywoof, a pet grooming salon in a beach town near L.A. As an opening-day present, her sister gives her a Persian cat, whom Mimi names Marshmallow. No ordinary cat, Marshmallow can hear, understand, and communicate thoughts to humans, dogs, and other cats. Meanwhile, when friends bring their Chihuahuas to Hollywoof, Mimi notices the dogs all have health issues, and further investigation reveals they all came from the same breeder. A cozy, indeed, with an appeal to pet lovers.

Christie, Michael. [Greenwood](#) (Hogarth \$28). The Indie Next Pick: "Trees: They provide shelter, sustenance, and sanctuary for vast numbers of creatures. They create the very air we breathe. And they are under threat. For generations, the Greenwood family lives with, destroys, fights for, and monetizes these gentle giants until their very existence is absorbed into the class system designed and upheld by the one percent. This is a sweeping arboreal saga full of blood, greed, heart, and humanity. *Greenwood* will fell readers worldwide."

Collins, Max Allan. [Do No Harm](#) (Forge \$27.99). MWA Grand Master Collins's Zelig-like PI, Nate Heller, who's tackled most of 20th-century America's greatest unsolved mysteries, gets involved in the Sam Sheppard murder case. When the Cleveland doctor reported having found his wife, Marilyn, bludgeoned to death in their bedroom in 1954, Heller happened to be in the city, spending time with his old friend Eliot Ness, who invited him along to the crime scene to help determine whether the killing was the work of the serial killer whom the two men had been chasing for years. The m.o. established that another murderer was

responsible, but Heller noted multiple oddities, including the failure to preserve the crime scene and indications that Sheppard's family was covering up his guilt. The doctor was eventually convicted of the crime, a verdict many felt the evidence didn't support. Three years later, Perry Mason creator Erle Stanley Gardner asks Heller to reassess the case, a request that leads to a creative solution of the notorious mystery. "This is a superior and inventive effort," says one Starred Review.

Crouch, Blake. [Recursion](#) (\$17). The *LJ* Starred Review: "Scientist Helena Smith focused on memory research when her mother was diagnosed with Alzheimer's, hoping to enable others with memory loss to record their recollections and retain connections to their lives and loved ones. She did not anticipate that the technology her team developed would allow users to travel back into those memories and change the entire fabric of reality. The results of their invention begin to manifest as False Memory Syndrome (FMS), which causes additional sets of memories suddenly to appear and coexist simultaneously (not always comfortably) in people's minds. Det. Barry Sutton is drawn to investigate the phenomenon and its origins when he fails to prevent the suicide of an FMS victim. He and Helena join forces to find a way to save humanity from the monstrous creation. This latest technological thriller from Crouch is completely engrossing."

"Crouch isn't just a world-class thriller writer, he's a Philip K. Dick for the modern age. *Recursion* takes mind-twisting premises and embeds them in a deeply emotional story about time and loss and grief and most of all, the glory of the human heart."—Gregg Hurwitz

Dare, Abi. [The Girl with the Louding Voice](#) (Penguin \$26). As the only daughter of a broke father, Abi Dare is a valuable commodity. Removed from school and sold as a third wife to an old man, Adunni's life amounts to this: four goats, two bags of rice, some chickens and a new TV. When unspeakable tragedy swiftly strikes in her new home, she is secretly sold as a domestic servant to a household in the wealthy enclaves of Lagos, where no one will talk about the strange disappearance of her predecessor, Rebecca. No one but Adunni...As a yielding daughter, a subservient wife, and a powerless servant, fourteen-year-old Adunni is repeatedly told that she is nothing. But Adunni won't be silenced. Here is a powerful story about a young woman finding her voice in the middle of Nigeria, in a society and world that wants people like her to remain silent.

Daugherty, Christi. [Revolver Road](#) (St Martins \$27.99). Intrepid Savannah reporter Harper McClain is on Tybee Island, where she has been lying low since receiving a threatening phone call from "a man who knew far too much about her mother's murder" 16 years earlier. On the resort island, she eventually gets drawn into the disappearance of eminent musician Xavier Rayne, who was staying there. Xavier's bandmates describe him as moody and contemplative, taking off for hours or days at a time. But this time is different: the band was supposed to go on tour to support a new album. Writing about Xavier keeps Harper's mind off her impending doom and provides front-page stories for her Savannah newspaper. Then everything implodes, and Harper is on the run, tracking a killer while another killer tracks her. With help from her newspaper colleagues and ex-beau Luke Walker, she's determined to solve Xavier's disappearance and put her own dark past behind her. "In lesser hands this complex tale of love and revenge might falter, but Daugherty never sounds a false note."

You would do well to order the first [two for Harper McClain](#) and read them first.

Dietrich, Karen. [Girl at the Edge](#) (Grand Central \$15.99). A debut I have not read. Thus: “Teenager Evelyn Gibson reveals: “Six months before I was born, my father walked into Ponce de Leon Mall in St. Augustine, Florida. When he walked out, eleven people were dead. My father is a murderer.” Her father, whom she has never met, is now on death row in a Florida state prison. Her mother, a preschool teacher, has since remarried, and the couple have always tried to provide a supportive and positive environment for Evelyn, but are unaware of her struggles to understand her father’s actions and her own darkly disturbing thoughts. As Evelyn says, “I am alone in this, and that’s how it has to be because who wants to stand with the girl at the edge, staring down into the nothingness below? Who wants to be there to see the moment she lets go?” Original metaphors and nice descriptions bolster this extended monologue of a potential killer,

Doctorow, Cory. [Radicalized](#) (\$16.99) is a timely collection consisting of four SF novellas connected by social, technological, and economic visions of today and what America could be in the near, near future.

Dorriccott, Fran. [The Final Child](#) (Titan \$14.95). Erin and her brother Alex were the last children abducted by ‘the Father’, a serial killer who only ever took pairs of siblings. She escaped, but her brother was never seen again. Traumatized, Erin couldn’t remember anything about her ordeal, and the Father was never caught. Eighteen years later, Erin has done her best to put the past behind her. But then she meets Harriet. Harriet’s young cousins were the Father’s first victims and, haunted by their deaths, she is writing a book about the disappearances and is desperate for an interview. At first, Erin wants nothing to do with her. But then she starts receiving sinister gifts, her house is broken into, and she can’t shake the feeling that she’s being watched. After all these years, Erin believed that the Father was gone, but now she begins to wonder if he was only waiting....

Erdrich, Louise. [The Night Watchman](#) (Harper \$28.99). “Erdrich’s fiction has always been informed by her Anishinaabe roots, but this novel is truly personal. Drawing on her grandfather’s letters, written while he was tribal chairman, Erdrich recreates a shameful chapter in America’s history when Congress introduced a bill to terminate the treaty rights of Native tribes, which would force assimilation and pave the way for a land grab. Members of the Turtle Mountain band of Chippewa, led by the fictional Thomas Wazhushk, a night watchman at the local jewel-bearing plant, travel to Washington to protest. With him is his sharply observant niece Patrice Paranteau, who supports her family on wages from the plant yet yearns for an education and a future unfettered by men and babies. In Erdrich’s hands, daily life on the reservation comes alive, the crushing poverty and lack of opportunity tempered by family cohesion and the wisdom of the elders. She acknowledges the scourge of alcoholism and exposes traffickers who prey on naive girls drawn to the cities...”

—*Kirkus* Starred Review

Ferencik, Erica. [Into the Jungle](#) (\$16.99). A Starred Review. When the teaching job that lures scrappy 19-year-old foster care survivor Lily Bushwold, the narrator of this ferocious fever dream of a thriller from Ferencik, from Boston to Cochabamba, Bolivia, falls through, she decides to stay on. In Cochabamba,

Lily falls hard for handsome mechanic Omar, and then, through the stories he tells, for the remote Amazonian jungle where his clan has lived for seven generations. So when Omar’s brother Panchito arrives from Ayachero, the tiny village Omar left years earlier, to ask Omar to return to lead the hunt for the jaguar that has killed their four-year-old nephew, Lily begs to go with him—pythons, tarantulas, and menacing neighboring Tatinga tribe be damned. And that’s not the half of it, Lily discovers once in Ayachero. Ferencik delivers an alternately terrifying and exhilarating tale.”

Fowler, Therese Anne. [A Good Neighborhood](#) (St. Martin’s Press \$27.99). Library Reads says, “When a local businessman removes several old trees to build a mini-mansion, he isn’t seen favorably by his new neighbor Valerie, an ecology professor. When their teenagers begin to secretly date, you know it’s not going to end well. Told from multiple viewpoints (including the neighborhood chorus), this heart-wrenching novel explores class, race, and what it means to be a good neighbor. For those who enjoyed *Commonwealth*, *The Hate U Give*, and *A Place for Us*.”

Fox, Candice. [Gone By Midnight](#) (Forge \$27.99). I am a real fan of Fox’s [first two Crimson Lake mysteries](#). You may recall she appeared at The Pen in March of 2018 with James Patterson with whom she has written. And I look forward to this one. When eight-year-old Richie Farrow goes missing from his hotel room while on vacation in Crimson Lake, Queensland, in Australian author Fox’s intense third Crimson Lake novel, his mother, Sara, asks Ted Conkaffey, a former Sydney homicide detective, to help find Richie. The local police reluctantly work with Ted, who was once a suspect in a child’s attempted murder, and his quick-witted partner, Amanda Pharrell, a convicted killer who served eight years in prison. As Amanda and Ted question witnesses and suspects, they discover that many of them are less than truthful, leading the pair to consider a myriad of scenarios to explain Richie’s disappearance. Complicating their investigation is Ted’s decision to look after his two-year-old daughter for his ex-wife and a budding relationship with his veterinarian. “Quirky, non-nonsense characters complement the suspenseful plotting, which includes a multitude of twists.”

Gaus, PL. [Blood of the Prodigal](#); [Broken English](#); [Cast a Blue Shadow](#); [Clouds Without Rain](#) (\$16.95 each). I’m delighted that Ohio University Press is rereleasing four of Gaus’ Amish Country Mysteries. They are terrific in their own right and bolster our understanding of the world Linda Castillo so edgily portrays in her Amish mysteries. Gaus sets his series in Holmes County, home to the largest Amish and Mennonite settlements in the world. His Old Order Amish community is led by Bishop Eli Miller. Professor Michael Branden and Sheriff Bruce Robertson lead the sleuthing. High recommended, all four. They come, or the first one does anyway, with an exclusive interview with the author, discussion questions for reading groups, and a detailed map and driving guide to Holmes County, Ohio, with everything one needs to visit the iconic scenes depicted in the story.

Goodman, Carol. [The Sea of Lost Girls](#) (Harper \$16.99). Tess and Harmon Henshaw are both professors at Haywood, an elite boarding school in Boston. Tess’s 17-year-old son, Rudy (from a previous relationship), is a student at Haywood and lives in a dorm on campus. When a text from Rudy comes at three o’clock in the morning, Can you come get me?, she knows something is

terribly wrong. The next morning, her worst fears are confirmed when the headmaster (and her boss) informs her that student Lila, Rudy's girlfriend, is dead. Tess will do everything to protect her son, and while the police are gathering clues, she scrambles to uncover everything she can, and is shocked to discover Rudy may not be the only person of interest. Her husband, Harmon, also had a relationship with Lila. He was helping her research a historical paper about Haywood. Secrets and lies hidden for decades now threaten to be revealed, and the truth may be more surprisingly complex. Goodman is good on writing suspense with, often, an academic setting.

✎Healey, Jane. [The Animals at Lockwood Manor](#) (Houghton \$26). A debut novel for fans of Sarah Perry and Kate Morton: when a young woman is tasked with safeguarding a natural history collection as it is spirited out of London during World War II, she discovers her new manor home is a place of secrets and terror instead of protection. The Indie Next Pick: "During WWII, Hetty Cartwright arrives at Lockwood Manor to take care of specimens from a natural history museum in London. The hosts of the large manor, the controlling Major and his anxious daughter, Lucy, welcome Hetty and the specimens but don't fully understand her. As time passes, there are ghosts, unexplained visitors, fears, and moving animals that make the job of safekeeping the animals and fossils difficult. This book is a page-turner, a thriller, a love story, and a moving story with surprises."

Kent, Serena. [Death in Avignon](#) (\$16.99/\$26.99). First, see my review of [Death in Provence](#) in Our Large Paperback Picks to the Ides of March above. Read it first. Then dive into the gorgeousness of Provence with Penelope Kite again. She is by now finally settling into her delightful new life, complete with a gorgeous love interest in the mayor of St. Merlot. When Penelope and the mayor attend a glamorous gallery opening, Penelope's biggest worry is embarrassing herself in front of her date. But the evening takes a horrifying turn when a controversial expat painter, Roland Doncaster, chokes to death. A tragic accident? Or a malicious plot? Reluctantly drawn into the murder investigation, Penelope discovers that any number of jealous lovers and scheming rivals could be involved. And with dashing art dealers to charm, patisseries to resist, and her own friends under suspicion, Penelope will need to keep her footing...and her head.

✎Lovesey, Peter. [Bertie and the Crime of Passion](#) (\$16.95). Bertie, amateur sleuth and the Crown Prince of Wales, loves food and women. This is why Bertie enjoys his frequent trips to Paris, a city that is known not only as the City of Lights, but also as the city of romance and fine cuisine. In 1891, however, Bertie's yearly Paris vacation becomes much more eventful than he had anticipated when, soon after his arrival, he learns that the future son-in-law of his old friend, Jules d' Agincourt, was recently murdered at the Moulin Rouge. Unable to resist practicing his detective skills, Bertie resolves to assist the Sûreté, the French police force, in solving the ongoing case. He enlists the help of the reluctant Sarah Bernhardt, renowned actress and Bertie's long-time friend, and together, Bertie and Sarah travel around Paris following possible leads, questioning witnesses, and even apprehending the murder weapon. When the Sûreté discovers that the victim's fiancée has a much older lover who was present at the scene of the murder, they immediately arrest him on the suspicion that the murder was a crime of passion. Bertie's instincts tell him that this man is innocent, but the Sûreté is convinced he

is the killer. With the threat of the guillotine looming over the innocent man's head, it is up to Bertie to find the real killer and close the case. The 3rd and final volume in this wonderful series. You can get them all in one volume: [Bertie: The Complete Prince of Wales Mysteries](#) (\$31.95).

✎Mantel, Hilary. [The Mirror and the Light](#) (Holt \$30) traces the final years of Thomas Cromwell, the boy from nowhere who climbs to the heights of power, offering a defining portrait of predator and prey, of a ferocious contest between present and past, between royal will and a common man's vision: of a modern nation making itself through conflict, passion and courage. The story begins in May 1536: Anne Boleyn is dead, decapitated in the space of a heartbeat by a hired French executioner. As her remains are bundled into oblivion, Cromwell breakfasts with the victors. The blacksmith's son from Putney emerges from the spring's bloodbath to continue his climb to power and wealth, while his formidable master, Henry VIII, settles to short-lived happiness with his third queen, Jane Seymour. Cromwell, a man with only his wits to rely on, has no great family to back him, no private army. Despite rebellion at home, traitors plotting abroad and the threat of invasion testing Henry's regime to the breaking point, Cromwell's robust imagination sees a new country in the mirror of the future. All of England lies at his feet, ripe for innovation and religious reform. But as fortune's wheel turns, Cromwell's enemies are gathering in the shadows. With this volume Mantel brings to a close the trilogy she began with her peerless, Booker Prize-winning novels, [Wolf Hall](#) and [Bring Up the Bodies](#) (\$18 each).

✎Marcantonio, Patricia. [Felicity Carrol and the Perilous Pursuit](#) (Crooked Lane 26.99). A debut in Victorian mystery that has charm and a lively voice for Felicity Carrol. A brilliant savant, interested in nearly everything, she's unable to win any affection or praise from her wealthy father who gave her over to servants to raise, and now wants her to marry well and be a proper Victorian matron. Luckily his neglect is such and his purse rich enough that Felicity freely pursues her unorthodox studies, mostly in science. Her life is redirected when her mentor in this, an Earl, is murdered at the British Museum. Stolen: his priceless manuscript of Arthurian lore. Then another noble is murdered and his tapestry of an Arthurian scene stolen. Inspector Jackson Davies of the Yard is on the case and quickly finds Felicity to be both meddlesome and a highly qualified forensic investigator. That's the set up. There are some first novel flaws but it's fun to read. The major problem is that Marcantonio has no idea of the way titled persons are addressed. For example, our first victim is not Earl William Kent but William, Earl of Kent. Or William Kent, Earl of Similarly you'd never call the handsome Duke, Duke Philip Chaucer. Apparently neither the editor nor copy editor had a clue either.

Felicity, now orphaned, goes on to another mission, tracking down the man she believes to be Jack the Ripper, in [Felicity Carrol and the Murderous Menace](#) (\$26.99). It takes her to Placer, Montana, and to a surprising theory. These are both entertaining mysteries, if far-fetched.

Mason, Jamie. [The Hidden Things](#) (\$16). 14-year-old Carly Liddell, the heroine of this thriller, has successfully fought off an intruder who forced his way into her family's suburban home. The day after the incident, the video is uploaded to YouTube and becomes a viral hit. The video also shows the corner of a painting

hanging in the family foyer—17th-century Dutch master Govaert Flink's *Landscape with Obelisk*, part of the haul from the infamous heist at Boston's Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in 1990. The author builds tension by carefully doling out the story of how John Cooper, Carly's new stepfather, came to possess the stolen painting. Meanwhile, John must contend with two people who recognize the painting in the video and have scores to settle with him. "The danger the increasingly unlikable John doesn't count on, however, is the one represented by the whip-smart, courageous Carly—hands down, the best part of the book. Those with an interest in the real-life museum theft may want to check this one out."

O'Connor, Carlene. [Murder in an Irish Cottage](#) (Kensington \$26). **Our March Cozy Crimes Book of the Month** (see St Patrick's Day reads above) gets this enthusiastic review: "O'Connor's exceptional fifth Irish Village mystery takes Kildane, County Cork, garda Siobhán O'Sullivan and her fiancé, DS Macdara Flannery, to the remote village of Ballysiogdun. At the cottage of Ellen Delaney, Macdara's aunt, they're greeted by Ellen's grown daughter, Jane, who says she returned home from a weekend in Dublin to find her mother dead. A broken window points to a break-in; other evidence suggests Ellen was poisoned and smothered. Siobhán and Macdara must work to gain the trust of the superstitious locals, who wanted Ellen's cottage destroyed because it posed a danger being in the middle of a fairy path. O'Connor does a fine job depicting the complex relationship between the spunky Siobhán, who's troubled by Jane's failure to provide an alibi for her well-timed weekend away, and the reserved Macdara, who's reluctant to acknowledge his cousin may have something to hide. Cozy readers will have a hard time putting this one down." Exactly!

Patterson, James. [The Inn](#) (\$16.99). Former Boston police detective Bill Robinson now owns the Inn at Gloucester, whose full-time residents include Sheriff Clayton Spears. All's peaceful until bad guy Mitchell Cline comes to town, which compels Bill and his inn-mates to band together....

Reid, Taylor Jenkins. [Daisy Jones and the Six](#) (\$17). Sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll in the 1960s and '70s. "Mimicking the style and substance of a tell-all celebrity memoir, the book is narrated by a character whose identity is a secret until the end. The central figure, free-spirited yet distinctly complicated Daisy Jones, grows up as the daughter of a famous artist and a French model, crashing her 14-year-old underage self into clubs on L.A.'s Sunset Strip and, increasingly, consuming large quantities of both legal and illegal drugs. When she finds her forte in singing and songwriting, Daisy's world changes. Signed to Runner Records, she soon meets label mate and tortured singer-songwriter Billy Dunne. Billy goes from not wanting Daisy in his band to writing some of their biggest hits with her, and their chemistry is explosive. But Billy nearly ruined his marriage to true love Camila by being unfaithful, drinking, and drugging, and he won't throw away his second chance with her—although he tries to get Daisy into recovery, as he sees her heading down the same dark path that he went down. Add in a colorful cast of backup musicians, all of whom have their own demons (particularly Billy's overshadowed brother, Graham, and his on-again, off-again girlfriend and band mate, Karen), and Reid creates both story line and character gold."—*Kirkus* Starred Review

Ruggero, Ed. [Blame the Dead](#) (Forge \$27.99). At the start of this exceptional WWII mystery and series launch from Ruggero Lt. Eddie Harkins, an MP who was once a Philadelphia beat cop, comes across a murder scene near Palermo, Sicily. In the confusion of a German air raid at dawn that August 1943 morning, someone shot Capt. Meyers Stephenson, a surgeon, in the back of the head at close range. Harkins, who gets assigned to oversee the murder investigation, soon learns that Stephenson had plenty of enemies in the army hospital where he'd been working, including members of the nursing staff whom he routinely sexually harassed. Stephenson was also suspected of killing a nurse who supposedly choked to death on her own vomit after getting drunk with him. Harkins's determination to find justice for the dead man and expose the horrific treatment of the nurses places him at odds with the hospital's commander. "Ruggero plays fair with his readers and makes the carrying out of a homicide inquiry in wartime both exciting and plausible. Fans of James Benn and Owen Parry will be pleased."

Russell, Kate Elizabeth. [My Dark Vanessa](#) (Morrow \$27.99.). "A *Lolita* for the #MeToo era, it's unsettling, but not necessarily for the reasons you might think. The narrative shifts from 2000, when Vanessa gains admission to an elite New England prep school, to 2017, when she tries to come to terms with her experience, her role in it, how it's affecting her present, and the choices she faces to find resolution and move forward. For fans of *Notes on a Scandal* (Heller), *Trust Exercise* (Choi), and *His Favorites* (Walbert)," says Library Reads. It's the #1 March Indie Next Pick but not a book I enjoyed reading nor characters to spend time with. What is the point of portraying the ruined life of Vanessa and the exculpatory behavior of the professor who grooms, then seduces her, as well as the people, family and fellow students, etc, Vanessa lets down, to no resolution?

Schaitkin, Alexis. [Saint X](#) (Celadon Books \$26.99). A family vacation to a Caribbean island goes terribly wrong and the tragedy casts a pall over the life of Claire, who is only seven years old when her college student Allison disappears on the last night of their family vacation at a resort on the Caribbean island of Saint X. We follow Claire into adulthood and along her pursuit of truth and resolution, while her life becomes increasingly affected by her obsessive search for the answers to the mystery that occurred on Saint X. Working in New York, she encounters Clive Richardson, one of the men originally suspected of murdering her sister, now also alienated from his former life and driving a taxi. As Claire doggedly shadows Clive, hoping to gain his trust, waiting for the slip that will reveal the truth, an unlikely attachment develops between them, two people whose lives were forever marked by the same tragedy. In the end we learn what happened to Alison, how the people who could have alerted her family or altered her fate failed her, and are reminded that teenagers run more on impulse and hormones than brain power. This is getting a lot of hype as an Indie Next Introduces first novel; it's not a mystery but, like *My Dark Vanessa*, a portrait of how a young life can be warped by events it is not prepared for.

Shannon, Samantha. [The Priory of the Orange Tree](#) (\$20) starts an epic high fantasy series. The House of Berethnet has ruled Inys for a thousand years. Still unwed, Queen Sabran the Ninth must conceive a daughter to protect her realm from destruction—but assassins are getting closer to her door. Ead Duryan is an outsider at court. Though she has risen to the position of lady-

in-waiting, she is loyal to a hidden society of mages. Ead keeps a watchful eye on Sabran, secretly protecting her with forbidden magic. Across the dark sea, Tané has trained to be a dragonrider since she was a child, but is forced to make a choice that could see her life unravel. Meanwhile, the divided East and West refuse to parley, and forces of chaos are rising from their sleep. Shannon's first standalone novel takes place in a women-led world of dragons and mage-craft.

Simenon, George. [Maigret's Childhood Friend](#) (Penguin \$15). When a long lost friend pays a visit to Maigret's office, he is shocked to learn that the man's roommate has been murdered. With the help of his old friend, Maigret delves into the life of the victim and finds a complex web of relationships that leads him to the culprit. #69 in Penguin's reprint program—truly a long term commitment for the publisher to bring back this prolific and bestselling French author.

Skelton, Douglas. [Thunder Bay](#) (Arcade \$25.99). Ambitious Scottish journalist Rebecca Connolly, the sympathetic heroine of this exceptional thriller from Skelton has a nose for a good story and a talent for getting people to talk. Disobeying her budget-conscious editor at the Highland Chronicle, she travels to the Hebridean island of Stoirm, seeking an exclusive story on Roddie Drummond. Stoirm also happens to be the home Rebecca's father left years ago and never talks about. Roddie, who was acquitted of the murder of his girlfriend, Mhairi Sinclair, 15 years earlier, has returned to Stoirm to attend his mother's funeral. Tension in the community is high following Roddie's arrival, with many keen to unleash their anger on him, believing he got away with murder. As Rebecca pries into the islanders' private lives, she brings to light ugly, hidden secrets, as well as revelations about her family history best left undisturbed—intensifying the hostile atmosphere. Powerful flashbacks help build to the spectacular conclusion. Exquisite language, credible characters, and unrelenting suspense—excellent. We can't get it signed by the UK author. I did think of it as the March British Crime Club Pick in the spirit of Ann Cleeves' Shetland Mysteries and highly recommend it to those who enjoyed them and the TV series.

Stratford. [Red Letter Days](#) (Berkley \$17). Phoebe Adler's dreams of becoming a famous screenwriter are derailed when she is blacklisted and becomes entangled in Joseph McCarthy's relentless search for any American citizen considered to be part of the Red Menace. Phoebe manages to relocate from 1950s NYC to London, where she hopes to clear her name while continuing to pursue her writing career. Phoebe's future seems to take a turn for the better when she strikes up a friendship with fellow American exile Hannah Wolfson, who now works as a television producer in England and flirts with danger by hiring blacklisted writers. However, neither Phoebe nor Hannah realize that the danger from which they thought they had escaped, still looms in the shadows....and that their fight is only just beginning. Stratford, author of the terrific historical novel [Radio Girls](#) (\$16), based her character of Hannah Wolfson on Hannah Weinstein, who headed her own television production company in England in the 1950s.

Szymiczkowa, Maryla. [Mr. Mohr Goes Missing](#) (Houghton \$15.99). Set in 1893 Cracow, this debut and series launch from Polish author Szymiczkowa (the pen name of writing duo Jacek Dehnel and Piotr Tarczynski) introduces Zofia Turbotynska, a

38-year-old professor's wife, who finds household management, novel reading, and the search for social prestige insufficient outlets for her prodigious energy. At a nursing home run by nuns that she visits to promote a charitable cause, she becomes involved in the search for a missing resident, Antonina Mohr, a judge's widow. Zofia questions the home's staff and residents, hiding her unofficial investigation from both the mother superior and her husband. After Mohr's suspiciously pink-hued corpse is found in an attic, Zofia pressures the resident doctor until an autopsy reveals cyanide poisoning. The strangling of one of the home's impoverished residents complicates the puzzle. The preface offers helpful context on place and period, while the translation showcases the novel's deliciously ironic voice. For readers who like colorful locales and tongue-in-cheek mysteries.

Unferth, Deb Olin. [Barn 8](#) (Graywolf \$16). Unferth's sixth book has a nigh-unforgettable premise: Two auditors for the American egg industry hatch an improbable plot to steal a thousand chickens from a farm in the dead of night. They assemble a team, gather their supplies, and head to the farm in question, where (predictably) a chain of disasters ensues. The author employs a wide range of voices—including, at one point, a chicken explaining what she thinks will happen when she dies—to furnish a heist story that's unlike anything else.

Washburn, Kawai Strong. [Sharks in the Time of Saviors](#) (MCD \$27). Another Indie Next Pick: "*Sharks in the Time of Saviors* is one of the best pieces of contemporary fiction I've had the pleasure to read. The fact that the book takes place in Hawaii makes it even more special. The author provides the reader with a unique 'chicken skin' experience. The book captures contemporary Hawaii's history over the past 20+ years, including the socioeconomics of race and being Hawaiian, income disparity, housing issues, family issues, and the diaspora that affects so many families in Hawaii who are unable or unwilling to deal with the cost of living. Truly a master work of art."

OUR SMALL PAPERBACK PICKS TO THE IDES OF MARCH

The bulk of March small paperbacks publish March 31! So here are reviews for those coming out through the 20th.

Brown, Dale. [The Kremlin Strike](#) (\$9.99). When a new administration initiates countermeasures to Russian aggression, Brad McLanahan and the Iron Wolf Squadron find themselves confronting dangerous adversaries on the untested battlefield of space. *PW* raved about this saying "As usual in this long-running series, the combat scenes stand out, though readers should be prepared for characters straight from central casting. Brown reinforces his position at the top of the military action genre."

Connelly, Michael. [The Poet](#) (\$9.99). Reissue. When his homicide-detective brother suddenly kills himself, Jack McEvoy, crime reporter for the *Denver Post*, undertakes an investigative report into police suicides, only to uncover a sinister pattern that leads to a devious serial cop killer called "the Poet." *Kirkus* originally wrote about this "Connelly wrings suspense out of every possible aspect of Jack's obsessive hunt for his brother's killer. Prepare to be played like a violin."

Connolly, Paul. [Tears Are for Angels](#) (Stark \$9.990). A young woman, seeking information on the death of her best friend, finds a drunken wreck of a man. Together, they come to terms to

avenge her death. One of three novels Tom Wicker wrote as Paul Connolly in the early 1950s.

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.”

Elliot, Laura. [Guilty](#) (Grand Central \$7.99). On a warm summer’s morning, thirteen-year-old Constance Lawson is reported missing. A few days later, Constance’s uncle Karl Lawson finds himself the prime suspect when he is swept up on a media frenzy created by journalist Amanda Bowe. Now six years later, when Amanda, who has a successful career, a loving husband, and a baby, receives a phone call that turns her world into a nightmare, could the person behind her new troubles be Karl?

Flower, Amanda. [Death and Daisies](#) (\$7.99). Magic Garden #2. Wrongly suspected in the death of an imperious parish minister who was trying to drive her from Duncreigan, Fiona Knox worries about the impact of rumors on her new shop and starts to question her bewitched sister’s innocence. *Kirkus* ended their review with “a surprising killer, oodles of local color, and a touch of mysticism all add up to a charming read.”

Lehane, Dennis. [Since We Fell](#) (\$9.99). Retreating from the world in the aftermath of a traumatizing reporting assignment, Rachel finds happiness with a raffish businessman before witnessing activities surrounding a conspiracy that tests the limits of her fragile psyche. *Kirkus* was just one review source that loved Lehane’s latest masterpiece saying “what seems at the start to be an edgy psychological mystery seamlessly transforms into a crafty, ingenious tale of murder and deception – and a deeply resonant account of one woman’s effort to heal deep wounds that don’t easily show.”

Murray, James S. [The Brink](#) (\$9.99). In this sequel to *Awakened*, when the bloodthirsty creatures that wreaked havoc underneath New York spread throughout the world, Tom Cafferty and his team battle a secret organization that is holding nations hostage using information about how to save humanity.

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.”

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.