

BOOKNEWS from

ISSN 1056-5655, © The Poisoned Pen, Ltd.

Volume 32, Number 14

October Booknews 2020

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

http://poisonedpen.com

4014 N. Goldwater Blvd.

Scottsdale, AZ 85251

480-947-2974



OCTOBER IS THE NEW DECEMBER

Please look for pop up book chats with authors and editors and who knows what from time to time on our Home Page and then moved to Facebook.

Note: All the times are Scottsdale time, 3 hours later than EDT

Watch these virtual events on [Facebook Live](#) or on our [YouTube](#) channel and any time thereafter at a time that suits you. You don't have to belong to Facebook to click in. You also can listen to our [Podcasts](#) on [Google Music](#), [iTunes](#), [Spotify](#), and other popular podcast sites.

Because of printing and paper shortages we urge you to preorder books in this Booknews and anything you see for November and December we have not yet covered. Also shipping will slow down thanks to the election and USPS issues.

THURSDAY OCTOBER 1 5:00 PM

Archer Mayor discusses his new Joe Gunther Vermont thriller [Orphan's Guilt](#) (St Martins \$27.99)

Signed books available

THURSDAY OCTOBER 1 6:00 PM

Smith Henderson and Jon Marc Smith discuss [Make Them Cry](#) (Ecco \$27.99) with Patrick

Books signed by Henderson with a letter signed by Smith available

SATURDAY OCTOBER 3 1:00 PM

Our 31st Birthday!

Val McDermid, there from the beginning, joins us to discuss [Still Life](#) (Grove \$26), a fabulous police procedural with DI Karen Pirie, our October British Crime Book of the Month There will be (virtual) cake

MONDAY OCTOBER 5 6:00 PM Virtual Book Launch Lee Child and Heather Martin in conversation

They discuss [The Reacher Guy](#) (Pegasus \$29.95), Martin's authorized biography of Child that includes 16 pages of photos, most never before seen

Our copies come with a custom designed bookplate that features the Coventry skyline (the city where Lee was born) and hides clues to all 24 sole-authored Reacher books. This limited edition print is shared exclusively with us by Kenilworth Books in Warwickshire. It is signed by both Lee Child and Heather Martin

TUESDAY OCTOBER 6 5:00 PM Virtual Book Launch

Dean Koontz discusses his new novel [Elsewhere](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$28.99)

Signed copies available

WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 7 6:00 PM Virtual Book Launch

Alice Hoffman discusses [Magic Lessons: The Prequel to Practical Magic](#) (SimonSchuster \$27.99)

Signed copies available

Our November Fantastic New Fiction Pick

THURSDAY OCTOBER 8 12:00 PM

Vicki Delany discusses [Tea and Treachery](#) (Kensington \$26) and [Dying in a Winter Wonderland](#) (Berkley \$7.99) plus [A Death](#)

[Long Overdue](#) (Crooked Lane \$26.99) written as Eva Gates

Victoria Laurie discusses [To Coach a Killer](#) (Kensington \$26)

THURSDAY OCTOBER 8 1:30 PM

Stuart Turton discusses [The Devil and the Dark Water](#) (Sourcebooks \$26.99)

Signed bookplates. And for the first dozen orders, a nifty customized tote bag

THURSDAY OCTOBER 8 6:00 PM

Brad Thor hosts a discussion club for his latest Scot Harvath thriller [Near Dark](#)

This event is free but you must register to join the webinar Please email appointments@poisonedpen.com. A zoom link will be sent to you on October 7 here and a zoom link will be sent to you on October 7

Read the book first or suffer spoilers

FRIDAY OCTOBER 9 4:00 PM

Lisa Unger in conversation with **Karin Slaughter**

Unger discusses [Confessions on the 7:45](#) (Park Row \$27.99)

Our October Crime Book of the Month

Signed copies available

SATURDAY OCTOBER 10 9:00-10:00 AM

A writing workshop with Joe Ide

WRITING THE KILLER CRIME NOVEL or How to Increase Your Odds of Getting Published

You must [REGISTER](#) for this event. Or call 888-560-9919

Fee: \$10 which will be donated to The Poisoned Pen Foundation to fund various projects in support of authors

SATURDAY OCTOBER 10 2:00 PM

Sherry Thomas discusses [Murder on Cold Street](#) (Berkley \$16) A Lady Sherlock Mystery

SATURDAY OCTOBER 10 3:00 PM Cozy mini-Con

Anna Lee Huber discusses [A Pretty Conceit](#) (Kensington \$15.99)

Verity Kent Mystery

Alyssa Maxwell discusses [Murder at Kingscote](#) (Kensington \$26) Gilded Age Newport Mystery

SUNDAY OCTOBER 11 1:00 PM Virtual US Launch Party
Ian Rankin discusses [A Song for the Dark Times](#) (Little Brown \$27)

Inspector Rebus

Signed UK edition: [A Song for the Dark Times](#) (Orion \$45)

MONDAY OCTOBER 12 12:00 PM

Lisa Jewell in conversation with Clare Mackintosh

Jewell discusses [Invisible Girl](#) (Atria \$28)

Signed books available

MONDAY OCTOBER 12 6:00 PM

Brian Selton discusses [The Nightworkers](#) (Farrar \$27)

Signed Books available

TUESDAY OCTOBER 13 5:00 PM

Rose Carlyle discusses [The Girl in the Mirror](#) (Harper \$27.99)

Aimee Molloy discusses [Goodnight, Beautiful](#) (Harper \$27.99)

Signed books available for Molloy

WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 14 12:00 PM

John Grisham in conversation with Ace Atkins

John Grisham discusses [A Time for Mercy](#) (Doubleday \$29.95)

Signed books available

Ace's November Spenser is postponed to January 12

WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 14 2:00 PM

David Rosenfelt discusses [Silent Bite](#) (St Martins \$25.99)

A Christmas Andy Carpenter and canine adventure

Signed books available

THURSDAY OCTOBER 15 5:00 PM

Mark Salter in conversation with distinguished foreign correspondent, columnist, and Pulitzer Prize winner Jim Hoagland of the *Washington Post* discussing Salter's [The Luckiest Man: Life with John McCain](#) (Simon & Schuster \$35)

FRIDAY OCTOBER 16 7:00 PM

Rebecca Roanhorse discusses [Black Sun](#) (Saga Press \$27.99)

Our October SciFi/Fantasy Book of the Month

Signed books available

NEW SHIPPING RATES FROM OCTOBER 1

\$3 for one book within the United State

\$1 for each additional book

SIGNED BOOKS

Child, Lee/Andrew. [The Sentinel](#) (Bantam \$28.99). Our copies are Signed by Andrew and include a personal letter to you Signed by Lee.

David Morrell reviews: Ironically, it took an English author to realize the dramatic possibilities of modernizing the wandering gunfighter of American frontier stories. Starting in 1997 with *Killing Floor*, Lee Child introduced Jack Reacher, a former military policeman with a fascination for blues music and prime numbers, a Luddite with a highly developed limbic brain and a compulsion to wander the United States, walking, hitchhiking, or traveling by bus, carrying only cash, a toothbrush, and his passport. He doesn't look for trouble, but he certainly doesn't walk away from it. And one more distinctive element: his appearance. "He was six feet five. 250 pounds. His hair was a dishev-

SATURDAY OCTOBER 17 10:30 AM

Croak & Dagger discuss Ann Cleeves, [The Long Call](#) (\$16.99)

MONDAY OCTOBER 19 5 PM A Poisoned Pen Press Duo

Mary Anna Evans discusses [Wrecked](#) (Poisoned Pen \$15.99)

Faye Longchamp Archaeological Mystery

Sara Johnson discusses [The Bones Remember](#) (Poisoned Pen \$15.99)

Alexa Glock Forensic Mystery (set in New Zealand)

THURSDAY OCTOBER 22 7:00 PM

Hardboiled Crime discusses John Gregory Dunne, [Nothing Lost](#) (Vintage \$14.95)

MONDAY OCTOBER 26 5:00 PM

Andrew and Lee Child in conversation

They discuss [The Sentinel](#) (Bantam \$30), the new Jack Reacher

Signed book available including a special letter to you signed by Lee

WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 28 1:00 PM

John Connolly discusses [Dirty South](#) (Atria \$27.99)

WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 28 5:00 PM

Stephen Spotswood discusses his debut [Fortune Favors the Dead](#) (Doubleday \$26.95)

A debut historical likened to Nero Wolfe/Archie Goodwin mysteries

Our October Historical Fiction Book of the Month

HAPPY HALLOWEEN

We close at 5:00 PM so our staff can enjoy it too

MONDAY NOVEMBER 2 6:00 PM Virtual Book Launch

Janet Evanovich discusses [Fortune and Glory](#) (Atria \$28.99)

Stephanie Plum's new adventure

Real signed books plus a special Thanksgiving card

eled mess. He was unshaved. Children had been known to run screaming at the sight of him."

Most of the Reacher books have been #1 bestsellers. What makes this new Reacher novel (the 25th) a special publishing event is that the series now has a cowriter, Andrew Child, who also writes as Andrew Grant and is Lee Child's younger brother. Booksellers and Reacher fans might wonder if anything has changed. A line from *The Sentinel* will reassure them that nothing has changed. "Someone had sent six guys after [Reacher]. It would be wrong to let the day end with only two of them in the hospital." This time, Reacher arrives in a town near Nashville, where he heads toward one of his favorite destinations, a coffee shop, only to notice that someone is about to be abducted. Reacher being Reacher, he saves the stranger and ends up confronting a conspiracy involving cyber ransom, election sabotage, a Cold War secret, and... Much of *The Sentinel* is humorous as Reacher patiently teaches bad guys about the flaws in their tactics. While there's lots of action, the novel also feels like a procedural as Reacher interviews suspects and delves deeper toward the

truth.... It continues the series without any sense that there's now a coauthor. In a year of drastic change, fans will welcome the consistency."

I add that I spent a few years in and around Oak Ridge, Tennessee, a place that ought to figure into more thrillers.

✎Cornwell, Bernard. [War Lord](#) (Collins \$45). Saxon-born, Viking-raised, and destined to spill blood in 800s-900s England, Uhtred of Bebbanburg stars in Cornwell's long-running "Saxon Tales" series—and the popular Netflix series "The Last Kingdom," based on the books. (Uhtred is named for a historical figure from whose family Cornwell is descended.) This is the 13th and final entry in the series. England is under attack. Chaos reigns. Northumbria, the last kingdom, is threatened by armies from all sides, by land and sea – and only one man stands in their way. Torn between loyalty and sworn oaths, the warrior king Lord Uhtred of Bebbanburg faces his greatest ever battle – and prepares for his ultimate fate....

✎Cummings, Charles. [Box 88](#) (Collins \$36). A spy that can't be caught. 1989: The fall of the Berlin Wall is imminent and the Cold War will soon be over. But for BOX 88, a top secret spying agency known only to an inner circle of MI6 and CIA operatives, the espionage game is heating up. Lachlan Kite, recruited straight from an elite boarding school, is sent to France – the frontline of a new secret war. Kite is tasked with gathering intelligence on a mysterious Iranian businessman implicated in the tragic Lockerbie bombing. But what he uncovers is even more deadly.... 2020: MI5 hear rumors of BOX 88's existence and go after Kite – only for Iranian intelligence to get to him first. Taken captive and subjected to torture, Kite is presented with a simple choice: reveal the truth about what happened in France thirty years earlier – or watch his family die. Past and present merge, as MI5 and BOX 88 are caught up in a race against time to save Kite.

Evanovich, Janet. [Fortune and Glory](#) (Atria \$28.99). Book launch Nov. 2. Yes, this is Stephanie Plum, shedding the numbers and moving on. Her 27th is a grand adventure. When Grandma Mazur's new husband died on their wedding night, the only thing he left her was a beat-up old easy chair...and the keys to a life-changing fortune. But as Stephanie and Grandma Mazur search for Jimmy Rosolli's treasure, they discover that they're not the only ones on the hunt. Two dangerous enemies from the past stand in their way—along with a new adversary who's even more formidable: Gabriela Rose, a dark-eyed beauty from Little Havana with a taste for designer clothes. She's also a soldier of fortune, a gourmet cook, an expert in firearms and mixed martial arts—and someone who's about to give Stephanie a real run for her money. Stephanie may be in over her head, but she's got two things that Gabriela doesn't: an unbreakable bond with her family and a stubborn streak that will never let her quit—both needed because "fortune and glory" will turn into a desperate race against time with more on the line than ever before—could Stephanie finally be forced to choose between Joe Morelli and Ranger?

✎Griffiths, Elly. [Postscript Murders](#) (Quercus \$40). The death of a ninety-year-old woman with a heart condition should absolutely not be suspicious. DS Harbinder Kaur certainly sees nothing to concern her in carer Natalka's account of Peggy Smith's death. But when Natalka reveals that Peggy lied about her heart condition and that she had been sure someone was following her... And

that Peggy Smith had been a 'murder consultant' who plotted deaths for authors, and knew more about murder than anyone has any right to... And when clearing out Peggy's flat ends in Natalka being held at gunpoint by a masked figure... Well then DS Harbinder Kaur thinks that maybe there is no such thing as an unsuspecting death after all. From the sleepy seaside town of Shoreham to the granite streets of Aberdeen, *The Postscript Murders* is a literary mystery for fans of Antony Horowitz, Agatha Christie and anyone who's ever wondered just how authors think up such realistic crimes....

Grisham, John. [A Time for Mercy](#) (Doubleday \$29.95). Clanton, Mississippi. 1990. Jake Brigance, unsuccessful at dodging being assigned a tough case, finds himself embroiled in a deeply divisive trial when the court appoints him attorney for Drew Gamble, a timid sixteen-year-old boy accused of murdering a local deputy, a deputy with a drinking habit who beat Drew's mother so badly Drew thought she was dead. But the deputy is from a local clan who along with many in Clanton, like fellow officers, want a swift trial and the death penalty. Jake's fierce commitment to saving Drew from the gas chamber puts his career, his financial security, and the safety of his family on the line. Immerse yourself in this third visit to Clanton in a case that will remind man of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Ace Atkins joins our virtual event with Grisham on October 14 at 12:00 PM and will underline how Mississippi and the 1990s frame the narrative.

Henderson, Smith/Jon Marc Smith. [Make Them Cry](#) (Ecco \$27.99). Signed by Smith Henderson with a signed letter by coauthor Jon Marc Smith. Patrick thinks this is a terrific novel and reviews: The author of the award-winning novel *Fourth of July Creek* teams up debut author Jon Marc Smith to create this superb, intelligent thriller that will appeal to fans of Don Winslow and J Todd Scott. Diane Harbaugh is a tough, no nonsense DEA agent who heads down to Mexico for a private meet-up with Gustavo Acuña Cárdenas, a major player in the Cartel del Golfo. The gangster fears for his life after it becomes known that he is the last living person who knows the secret location of a border tunnel made by the cartel. Everyone else associated with the project has been assassinated. Cardenas hopes to make a deal with the DEA—protection and a new identity in the States in exchange for insider knowledge about cartel players and activities. On the ground in Tampico, however, Harbaugh discovers that she isn't the only one interested in Cardenas. Soon they find themselves on the run from just about everyone – the cartel, the global intelligence community, and perhaps even their own government. Highly recommended." Seems to us that fans of Don Winslow and T. Jefferson Parker will be especially eager to read this gem.

Hoffman, Alice. [Magic Lessons: The Prequel to Practical Magic](#) (SimonSchuster \$27.99). Hoffman's striking latest entry in her Practical Magic Series turns to 1664 rural England for the origin story of Maria Owens, matriarch of the series' clan of witches. Maria is discovered as an infant by Hannah Owens, a practitioner of the "Nameless Art" who raises Maria and teaches her natural remedies and witchcraft. As a girl, Maria has an innate sense of magic and emulates Hannah's desire to help the scores of women who secretly come to her for help—mostly for problems with their love lives. After Maria is reclaimed at age 10 by her birth mother, Rebecca, another Nameless Art practitioner, Maria comes to understand—like other heroines in Hoffman's "Magic"

books—that love can be unexpectedly overpowering. Maria becomes ensnared in a complicated relationship and has a daughter out of wedlock. As Maria’s story takes her from England to Massachusetts and New York, Hoffman offers an eye-opening account of how single women were treated in the 17th century, particularly when their knowledge or intelligence was deemed threatening.... Hoffman’s redemptive story of a fiercely independent woman adds an engrossing, worthwhile chapter to the series. But what I like in this our **October Fantastic New Fiction Book of the Month** is the love of reading and books that permeates the narrative.

✂Jewell, Lisa. [Invisible Girl](#) (Atria \$28). The disappearance of a teenage girl disrupts the lives of her former therapist, his family, and a lonely neighbor—providing an array of characters set in a posh London neighborhood. Seventeen-year-old Saffyre Maddox has been in therapy with Roan Fours, a child psychologist, for three years for self-harming after the deaths of her parents. When Roan suggests Saffyre is ready to move on, she feels betrayed and begins following Roan and spying on his wife, Cate, and two teenage children. She learns Roan is having an affair but also that multiple sexual assaults are taking place in his neighborhood. When Saffyre disappears, Owen Pick, one of Roan and Cate’s neighbors, is arrested and jailed based on his browsing history after having been placed on leave from his job following sexual misconduct complaints. At the same time, Cate becomes suspicious of Roan’s lies.... A November (already!) Indie Next Pick for a novel that “showcases the many ways that sexism can creep in and affect everyday moments.”

Koontz, Dean. [Elsewhere](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$28.99). Since his wife, Michelle, left seven years ago, Jeffy Coltrane has worked to maintain a normal life for himself and his eleven-year-old daughter, Amity, in California’s Suavidad Beach. It’s a quiet life, until an aged eccentric emerges from the canyons behind their home. Spooky Ed entrusts Jeffy with hiding a strange and dangerous object—something he calls “the key to everything”—and tells Jeffy that he must never use the device. But a group of heavies crashes in and Jeffy and Amity find themselves accidentally activating the key and discovering an extraordinary truth. The device allows them to jump between parallel planes at once familiar and bizarre, wondrous and terrifying. And Jeffy and Amity can’t help but wonder, could Michelle be just a click away? And we know Jeffy and Amity aren’t the only ones interested in the device. A man with a dark purpose is in pursuit, determined to exploit its grand potential.... Quantum physics, the deep state, a child in peril, innocence versus evil... a book perhaps inspired by our time? And written with Koontz’s trademark gift for language.

Lemmie, Asha. [Fifty Words for Rain](#) (Dutton \$26). This astonishing debut is our **November Fantastic New Fiction Pick**. I so agree with this comment: “From page one, I was rooting for Nori, the illegitimate daughter of a Japanese aristocrat and an African-American soldier. Shackled by family condemnation and the prejudices of post-WWII Japan, Nori must transform from docile young girl into fierce, unapologetic heroine. A wholly immersive coming-of-age epic from a talented young writer—Asha Lemmie pours her passion onto the page.” —Mira T. Lee, author of *Everything Here is Beautiful*. I am a devoted fan of Lisa See’s work and find parallels, especially in some of the themes in *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan* where mothers and grandmothers visit

their own trials on the next generation. So Lisa will be joining Asha and me to discuss the book on November 5. Meanwhile you should 1. Snag a signed first print from The Pen as they are rare; and 2. Read a long piece in the [NY Times](#) on the book.

Maguire, Gregory. [A Wild Winter Swan](#) (HarperCollins \$27.99). Maguire’s latest fairy tale based novel is inspired by Hans Christian Andersen’s “The Wild Swans.” Here’s a rave review: “Maguire (*Wicked*) continues his fabulist fairy tale remixes with this enchanting story, which draws inspiration from the Hans Christian Andersen tale “The Wild Swans.” In the original, a sister saves her seven brothers from the curse of living as swans by sewing them magical shirts; one brother’s shirt isn’t quite finished, and he ends up with a swan wing instead of an arm. Maguire brings this tale to New York City in 1962, where 15-year-old Laura Ciardi is preparing for an important Christmas Eve dinner in the brownstone where she lives with her Italian immigrant grandparents. Between troubles at school, the looming dread of attending a new boarding school in Canada, the expectations of her grandparents, and worries about her absent mother, Laura doesn’t really have time to deal with the boy who crash lands in her bedroom with one huge swan wing for a left arm. But this new challenge turns out to be exactly what Laura needs to find courage to begin moving forward in her own life. Maguire parallels the swan boy’s story of brokenness to Laura’s own struggles overcoming class and cultural differences.”

Martin, Heather. [The Reacher Guy](#) (Pegasus \$29.95). Our copies come with a custom designed bookplate that features the Coventry skyline (the city where Lee was born) and hides clues to all 24 Reacher books. It is signed by both Lee Child and Heather Martin and has 16 pages of seldom seen photos. Martin says, “*The Reacher Guy* is a compelling and authoritative portrait of the artist as a young man, refracted through the life of his fictional avatar, Jack Reacher. Through parallels drawn between Child and his literary creation, it tells the story of how a boy from Birmingham with a ferocious appetite for reading grew up to become a high-flying TV executive, before coming full circle and establishing himself as the strongest brand in publishing.” She explores Child’s lifelong fascination with America, and shows how the Reacher novels fed and fuelled this obsession, shedding light on the opaque process of publishing a novel along the way. Drawing on her conversations and correspondence with Child over a number of years, as well as interviews with his friends, teachers and colleagues, she forensically pieces together his life, traversing back through the generations to Northern Ireland and County Durham, and following the trajectory of his extraordinary career via New York and Hollywood until the climactic moment when, in 2020, having written a continuous series of twenty-four books, he finally breaks free of his fictional creation.

I add that if you chanced to read a piece in the UK’s *Guardian* you learned what a nightmare of a childhood Child had...and how it plays into Reacher.

Mayor, Archer. [Orphan’s Guilt](#) (St Martins \$27.99). I love police procedurals whether British or American or... and here is Mayor with another: “[A] fine police procedural, one with a heartrending backstory within its crystal-clear narrative.” I’ve been a fan of Mayor for years and collect him, so I also know that he has actually worked nearly all the jobs in his Joe Gunther series: not medical examiner per se, but EMT, also fire, police, etc. His research into technology and procedure is impressive and impec-

cable.

This new investigation brings back a bit of the Tag Man and certainly the man's impressive daughter Sally Kravitz who is a private investigator, as well as Vermont ME Beverly Hillstrom's daughter Rachel Reiling who is an ace reporter. They both end up in this case along with the usual Gunther squad. It begins with an innocuous DUI stop. Web designer John Rust is clearly over the limit. And not for the first time. Trooper Tyler Brennan experiences no resistance: indeed a compliant Rust explains he's drinking to get over the death of his brother Peter, a hydrocephalic deteriorating into vegetative state towards the end of his 28 years. Rust had provided uninterrupted meticulous care for Peter. Rust's lawyer, hoping to find some wiggle room for his client, hires Sally to dig in for possible extenuating circumstances. And then skeletons begin to surface, questions arise about Peter's condition, Rust disappears, and.... Mayor provides so much fodder for everyone that fresh complications are still piling up as the tale hurtles toward its final scene.

Molloy, Aimee. [Goodnight, Beautiful](#) (Harper \$27.99). It's no accident that more than one character is reading Stephen King's *Misery* in this crafty page-turner from bestseller Molloy. For starters, plenty of it—misery, that is—awaits newlyweds Sam Statler and Annie Potter after their move from Manhattan to Sam's upstate hometown of Chestnut Hill, N.Y., to be closer to his ailing mother. After a heady first few weeks during which Sam's therapy practice explodes with women eager for face time with the studly psychologist, he disappears—shaking Annie to the core. But, in the absence of clear indications of foul play, his disappearance is a low priority for the local police, especially once they get anonymous tips about his major debts and possible affair with a patient of his. After some accomplished misdirection, Molloy flips the story on its head. The surprising revelations compensate for the book's major weakness—readers not getting to know the most appealing character, spunky Annie, until late in the plot when she's forced to turn detective to search for the husband she still loves despite his considerable flaws. An excellent choice for readers of *The Last Mrs. Parrish* and *The Silent Patient*. I thought it was terrific.

Murray, James/Darren Wearmouth. [Don't Move](#) (Blackstone \$26.99). Brad Meltzer warns: "Afraid of spiders? Don't read this book. I mean it. Walk away now." James Rollins who admits to being scared of spiders, particularly tarantulas, calls this chiller "Spine tingling and wildly paced." See our section on fantasy, scary, and more books for October below.

Nesbø, Jo. [The Kingdom](#) (Harvill \$45). In a rural village deep in the mountains, mechanic Roy leads a quiet, simple life, but when his little brother Carl, an entrepreneur, returns with a proposal for a grand hotel to revive the struggling town, dark secrets from their childhood threaten to resurface. As children, Roy defended his little brother against schoolyard bullies and vicious rumors, but his loyalty to family is tested when greed and betrayal saturate Carl's plans—not to mention when Roy's sister-in-law Shannon catches his eye. The farther he goes to protect Carl, the more Roy finds himself dredging up the town's shocking past. And when the town sheriff starts looking into Roy and Carl's parents' tragic deaths, Roy will have to reckon with how far he will go to protect his brother. "Nesbø's new standalone story, sees him peeling back layers of unnerving secrets surrounding a pair of brothers in Oslo, from their parents' mysterious deaths to their

family's disturbing history and the secrets of their hometown."—*Time*. "As the story unfolds, it builds in dread and depravity. The small-town atmosphere resembles a Peyton Place as envisioned in an unlikely collaboration between Raymond Chandler and Henrik Ibsen. The complex characters and twisting plot will keep readers turning the pages and eager to discuss."—*Library Journal*. Or this: "Echoes of such classic noir authors as Dorothy B. Hughes, James M. Cain, and Jim Thompson ... Nesbø brilliantly uses the insularity of Roy's world, both internally and externally, to accentuate the Shakespearean inevitability of the impending tragedy."—*Booklist* Starred Review

Rankin, Ian. [A Song for the Dark Times](#) (Orion \$45). A Starred Review: "Edgar winner Rankin's excellent 23rd outing for John Rebus takes the retired police inspector from Edinburgh to a remote part of northern Scotland, where his daughter Samantha's partner, Keith Grant, the father of his school-age granddaughter, has vanished. In his search for Keith, Rebus visits a local commune and—of particular interest to Keith—the ruins of a camp built during WWII that held captured German soldiers. An entitled landowner he runs across complicates his quest. Back in Edinburgh, former colleague Siobhan Clarke investigates the murder of Salman bin Mahmoud, a wealthy 23-year-old Saudi. The high-profile case draws in such familiar characters as criminal Morris Gerald Cafferty and Malcolm Fox, the smarmy, ambitious detective introduced in 2009's *The Complaints*. As the two plots converge, the various credible, complex backstories coalesce into a highly satisfying and unified whole. This fresh entry boasts the kind of storytelling that made Rankin famous."

Roanhorse, Rebecca. [Black Sun](#) (Gallery/Saga \$27.99). Our **October SciFi/Fantasy Book of the Month** earns a Starred Review: "The opening of Hugo- and Nebula Award-winner Roanhorse's *Between Earth and Sky* series draws inspiration from the indigenous cultures of North and Central America to deliver a razor-sharp examination of politics, generational trauma, and the path to redemption. Sun Priest Naranpa, the highest religious authority in the holy city of Tova, faces prejudice for her low birth despite her high rank, and her radical desire for her priests to be more accessible to Tova's people makes her an object of resentment. Meanwhile, in the Obregi Mountains, a young boy named Serapio, raised to become the vessel of the god Grandfather Crow and take revenge for the Night of Knives, a massacre committed against his people, sets out to fulfill his destiny. Sea captain Xiala, a Treek who commands powerful sea-born magic, may be her own worst enemy of many, but she proves a welcome friend to Serapio as he voyages across the sea to avenge his people by ending the Sun Priest's reign. All three formidable characters are on a collision course that keeps the pages flying. Roanhorse strikes a perfect balance between powerful worldbuilding and rich thematic exploration as the protagonists struggle against their fates. Fantasy fans will be wowed." Roanhorse makes a compelling point that epic fantasy is mostly Western culture in conception but there are riches to be mined south of our border, as she does so well here in a rousing tale of "politics, generational trauma, and the path to redemption" that makes our **October SciFi/Fantasy Book of the Month**.

Rosenfelt, David. [Silent Bite](#) (St Martins \$27). Lawyer Andy Carpenter can finally take a breath; he's back on dry land after a family Caribbean cruise forced on him by his wife, Laurie, to get into the Christmas spirit. Of course the family's first stop is to

the Tara Foundation, the dog rescue organization that has always been Andy's true passion. But when Andy arrives, his partner, Willie Miller, needs his help. Willie's old cellmate, Glenn Anson, has been arrested for murder. Andy doesn't necessarily believe in Glenn, but Willie does. And Andy believes in Willie, which is why Andy decides to take the case. Once again David Rosenfelt puts readers in the Christmas spirit in a tale that is equal parts mystery and holiday cheer.

Schwab, VE. [The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue](#) (Forge \$26.99). France, 1714: in a moment of desperation, a young woman makes a Faustian bargain to live forever—and is cursed to be forgotten by everyone she meets. Thus begins the extraordinary life of Addie LaRue, and a dazzling adventure that will play out across centuries and continents, across history and art, as a young woman learns how far she will go to leave her mark on the world. But everything changes when, after nearly 300 years, Addie stumbles across a young man in a hidden bookstore and he remembers her name. Shades of *The Time Traveler's Wife* here.

Selfon, Brian. [The Nightworkers](#) (FSG \$27.99). "Selfon's ambitious, character-driven debut tells the interconnected stories of 'a perfectly wonderful, perfectly Brooklyn family of misfits'... Selfon fully fleshes out the major characters' backstories, dreams, and disappointments, and even the minor characters get their moment in the sun. Superior prose is a plus. Fans of literary crime fiction will be enthralled." —*PW* Starred Review. Harlan Coben chimes in with, "A gripping, big-hearted thriller about a family of criminals coming apart at the seams. Whip-smart and surprisingly funny, *The Nightworkers* is a terrific debut about loyalty and the ties that bind." This stylish, noirish debut makes our **November First Mystery Book of the Month**.

Spotswood, Stephen. [Fortune Favors the Dead](#) (Doubleday \$26.95). Our **October Historical Fiction Book of the Month** offers a charming, dazzlingly subversive, refreshingly hopeful modern spin on the classic hardboiled detective novel—and launch of an exciting new series! With all the 1940s finery, quirky murder weapons, and secret tunnels of a game of Clue, this is the perfect transportive mystery. Pentecost & Parker are a female detective duo unlike any you've seen before, determined to keep the hard-boiled streets of Manhattan safe from injustice. It's 1945 and Willowjean "Will" Parker has been the assistant to New York's best – and most unorthodox – private investigator, Lillian Pentecost, for three years. A teenage runaway who spent her adolescence working for a traveling circus, Will now uses her unique set of skills to track down leads, corner criminals, and act as the right-hand woman to Ms. Pentecost, who is battling multiple sclerosis. Knowing she may soon become lead detective because of Ms. Pentecost's illness and unsure she has what it takes, Will does her best to cover up her doubts with a hard-boiled bravado she's picked up from dime-store detective novels. Enter a murdered millionaire, a blackmailing spiritualist, a tight-lipped butler, a swaggering heir, an enigmatic love interest, and the dark secrets they carry, and the game is afoot! These two empowered, differently abled (Pentecost) and queer (Parker) women do not merely survive despite the realities of their marginalized identities in 1940s New York, but rather thrive because of the unique perspectives they bring to their detective work. "Bullets, blood, bodies, and belly-laughs: all the ingredients of a classic mystery novel. Stephen Spotswood hard-boils with the best of 'em!"—Alan Bradley

Unger, Lisa. [Confessions on the 7:45](#) (Park Row \$27.99). Unger is a master at the unexpected and this thriller, our **October Crime Book of the Month**, gives her scope to show her talents. A fellow bookseller writes: "Alfred Hitchcock may have had his *Strangers on a Train*, but *Confessions on the 7:45* leaves it in the dust. Lisa Unger has crafted a sharp and suspenseful take on the theme of spilling secrets. Selena and Martha meet on a train and confess their troubles. Soon after, however, Selena finds her life unraveling and does not know whom to trust. Filled with some of the twisty-turn-iest events readers are likely to encounter on the page, *Confessions on the 7:45* is deliciously intriguing fun."

A Starred review adds: "In this exquisitely crafted psychological thriller from Edgar finalist Unger, Selena Murphy trades confessions with a stranger named Martha while seatmates trapped in a stalled New York City commuter train. Serena has discovered that her husband is sleeping with the nanny. Then the woman continues to contact Serena.... Unger explores the complexities of marriage and the devastation wrought by infidelity using keenly rendered characters and a prismatic narrative. Though disappearance drives the plot, smaller puzzles abound, heightening suspense and connecting seemingly disparate story lines in diabolically clever ways. Unger just keeps getting better." Definitely for *The Girl on the Train* and *Gone Girl* fanciers. I also give Unger points for not using Girl, Woman, Sister, Wife, in the title. Don't miss Unger dishing with Karin Slaughter on October 9.

Walter, Jess. [The Cold Millions](#) (Harper \$28.99). Two brothers become entangled in turn-of-the-century Spokane's labor unrest. It's a fascinating time in history, the early 1900s, where the west is settling but still quite wild. The Dolan brothers live by their wits, jumping freight trains and lining up for day work at crooked job agencies. While sixteen-year-old Rye yearns for a steady job and a home, his dashing older brother Gig dreams of a better world, fighting alongside other union men for fair pay and decent treatment. Enter Ursula the Great, a vaudeville singer who performs with a live cougar, and who introduces the brothers to a far more dangerous creature: a powerful mining magnate who will stop at nothing to keep his wealth and his hold on Ursula. Dubious of his brother's idealism, Rye finds himself drawn to a fearless nineteen-year-old activist and feminist named Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, her passion sweeping him into the workers' cause. But a storm is coming, threatening to overwhelm them all, and Rye will be forced to decide where he stands. In a war impossible to win.

Washington, Bryan. [Memorial](#) (Riverhead \$27). Benson and Mike are two young guys who live together in Houston. Mike is a Japanese American chef at a Mexican restaurant and Benson's a Black day care teacher, and they've been together for a few years—good years—but now they're not sure why they're still a couple. There's the sex, sure, and the meals Mike cooks for Benson, and, well, they love each other. But when Mike finds out his estranged father is dying in Osaka just as his acerbic Japanese mother, Mitsuko, arrives in Texas for a visit, Mike picks up and flies across the world to say goodbye. In Japan he undergoes an extraordinary transformation, discovering the truth about his family and his past. Back home, Mitsuko and Benson are stuck living together as unconventional roommates, an absurd domestic situation that ends up meaning more to each of them than they ever could have predicted. Without Mike's immediate pull, Ben-

son begins to push outwards, realizing he might just know what he wants out of life and have the goods to get it. Both men will change in ways that will either make them stronger together, or fracture everything they've ever known. And just maybe they'll all be okay in the end.

UNSIGNED EVENT BOOKS

Carlyle, Rose. [The Girl in the Mirror](#) (Harper \$27.99). Australian heiress Iris Carmichael, the narrator of Carlyle's assured debut, has always envied her identical twin sister, Summer, who's considered perfect by everyone and is also Iris's mirror image. When Iris looks in the mirror, she sees Summer. Their complicated relationship changes after their father dies and his will stipulates that his \$100 million fortune go to the first of his six competitive children—by his three wives—to produce a grandchild. Meanwhile, Summer, who's married to “wealthy, handsome, charismatic” Adam Romain and a few weeks pregnant, needs Iris, an expert sailor, to help her sail the family yacht from Thailand to the Seychelles. During the trip, Summer accidentally falls overboard and is lost at sea. To secure the inheritance, Iris resolves to “step into” Summer's life, get pregnant, and beat her closest rival. Iris, who tells Adam she lost the baby during the voyage, convinces Adam and her mother that she's Summer, but the suspense grows as her lack of knowledge about her sister threatens to expose the imposture. Carlyle has fashioned a brilliant, intricate plot which makes our **October International Crime Book of the Month**.

Connolly, John. [The Dirty South](#) (Atria \$27.99). Connolly has written a prequel to his splendid, long-running Charlie Parker series and sets it in Arkansas (not an obvious choice for an Irish writer). Here's a well deserved Starred Review: “...noir fans will relish an origin story set in 1999. The murder of Parker's wife and daughter ended his career as an NYPD detective, but the ghosts of his loved ones still literally haunt him, and the tragedy may have turned him into a vigilante who beat a child predator to death. Parker's hunt for his family's killer takes him to impoverished Burdon County, Arkansas, where someone, possibly the same person he's seeking, has been murdering teenage girls. One possible victim, Patricia Hartley, was ruled to have died accidentally, despite the placement of branches in her vagina and throat. During a chance encounter in a Cargill bar between Parker and Evander Griffin, the town's police chief, the conversation turns hostile after they get on the topic of Hartley's death. Parker later learns that Griffin wants the murders hushed up to avoid losing a lucrative business opportunity for the county. Brilliant descriptions of the setting (a lake ‘seemed to consume light’) enhance this intelligent and subtle suspense novel. Connolly is writing at the top of his game.” Isn't it great when someone can inject so much new and electrify readers in an 18th thriller in a series?

Delany, Vicki. [A Death Long Overdue](#) (Crooked Lane \$26.99) written as Eva Gates. “Early in Gates' exceptional seventh Lighthouse Library mystery, Lucy Richardson, the Bodie Island Lighthouse Library assistant director, hosts a reception for the director's 40th college reunion at the library in Nags Head, N.C. An unwelcome guest is disgruntled, demanding Helena Sanchez, a former director of the library, who becomes upset after examining the withdrawal slip inside an old book that's part of a display of library artifacts. After the reception, Lucy, Helena, and a few others go out for a walk along the shore. Helena disappears in the dark, and a short time later the others find her body floating in

the water beneath a pier. Unwilling to leave a murder connected to her beloved library to just the authorities, headstrong Lucy sets out to discover who killed Helena. Lucy and her clever cat, Charles, form an amusing sleuthing team, and the lively and endearing supporting characters add to the fun. Cozy queen Gates is at the top of her game.” And so this is our **October Cozy Crimes Book of the Month**.

Canadian Delany also presents [Tea & Treachery](#) (Kensington \$26). Former Manhattan pastry chef Lily Roberts, the heroine of this well-crafted series launch, has opened Tea by the Sea next door to Victoria-on-Sea, the bed-and-breakfast owned by her 85-year-old British grandmother, Rose Campbell, in North Augusta, a town on Cape Cod. Slimy real estate developer Jack Ford wants the town council to rezone nearby land for a major resort development, but spunky Rose lets him and the council members know exactly how she feels. When Ford sues Rose and winds up dead on her property, Det. Chuck Williams, of the North Augusta PD, regards the aggrieved Rose as the sole suspect. Refusing to be put out of business or bamboozled by a slippery small-town detective, Lily and Rose start their own investigation, aided by Lily's friend. Along the way to the satisfying solution, the women find time to consume a variety of tearoom delicacies, catnip for you culinary cozy fans.

And finally, a third book: [Dying in a Winter Wonderland](#) (Berkley \$7.99). Christmas has arrived in Rudolph, New York, and Merry Wilkinson is looking forward to a much needed rest. But before that can happen, Luanne Ireland walks through her door. Luanne had asked Merry to help make decorations for her wedding, but has suddenly moved the wedding months earlier and is now demanding that everyone follow her lead, regardless of the cost. But that cost is much higher than anyone anticipated—Luanne's fiancé is found murdered at their proposed wedding venue....

Evans, Mary Anna. [Wrecked](#) (Poisoned Pen \$15.99). The aftermath of a hurricane that hits the Big Bend region of northern Florida provides the backdrop for Evans's intricate 13th mystery featuring archaeologist Faye Longchamp. Faye's husband, Joe Mantooth, is doing his part to help by using his new toy—a drone—to document the devastation with aerial pictures. When Faye notices a dark spot in the sea on one of Joe's photos, she calls on Captain Eubanks, her amateur historian friend, to help her identify it. Could it be the silhouette of a long-lost ship? Less than a day later, the captain's body washes ashore. His death is quickly deemed a diving accident by harried police, who are busy trying to control looters and locate people who are unaccounted for. Then someone steals Joe's phone and computer, and destroys his drone. Evans smoothly integrates fascinating historical and archaeological lore into Faye's quest for the truth behind the captain's death. [This long-running series](#) shows no signs of losing steam. As its editor I have loved them all and recommend you read them from the beginning.

✂Huber, Anna Lee. [A Pretty Deceit](#) (Kensington \$15.99). While visiting a titled auntie in Wiltshire who has fallen on post-WWI hard times, former Secret Service agent Verity Kent finds herself on hand for the immediate aftermath of what may be a homicide on the estate grounds. At the least there is a dead body to explain. While Verity and her husband, Sidney, investigate this new mystery, they are also on the trail of an old adversary—the shadowy and lethal Lord Ardmore. At every turn, the suspected

traitor seems to be one step ahead of them. Combine that with priceless heirlooms gone missing, a disappeared staff and a ghost sighting or two, and you have the makings of a historical mystery to delight fans of Agatha Christie or Daphne du Maurier.”

Johnson, Sara. [The Bones Remember](#) (Poisoned Pen \$15.99). In the sequel to [Molten Mud Murder](#) (\$15.95), a hit debut here at The Pen, Alexa Glock, formerly of the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation, is still hanging on to a job in New Zealand, where she has found a post with the Forensic Service Center in Auckland. Her specialty in forensic odontology makes her the perfect person to identify the remains of a man discovered on remote Stewart Island, whose main tourist draws are its native birds and shark cage diving operations. Alexa confirms that the body is that of Robert King, who disappeared while deer hunting in Rakiura National Park 10 months earlier. There’s a bullet hole in his skull. Then a dead man washes up on the beach, a third of his body torn away by sharks. He, too, was shot. Alexa is surprised when the prickly but attractive policeman from Rotorua appears to work the crimes. In a tricky case, the flora and fauna of rural New Zealand turn out to be relevant to the sleuthing. (I am not going to comment on the wild discrepancy in the cover art between these two books).

Laurie, Victoria. [To Coach a Killer](#) (Kensington \$26). “In a fast sequel to Catherine Cooper’s last adventure in [Coached to Death](#) (\$7.99), Cat is stuck on investigating a sociopathic hit woman responsible for a trail of murders tangentially affecting Cat’s life. Take, for example, the killing of Lenny Shepherd. The real estate agent was snatched by the killer years earlier, and Cat wants to get to the bottom of it so she can allay the ignorance of her friend (just friend, she insists) Detective Steve Shepherd about why his ex-wife was killed by such a notorious fiend. Meanwhile, Cat’s love interest, Maks Grinkov, who’s been all but MIA lately, shows up asking Cat for an act of faith. Because of his connection to Canadian Security Intelligence Services, he needs Cat to act as a go-between for him and his handler. Surely Cat—or Catherine, as she formally puts it—trusts him, right? And Cat’s real-life job as East Hampton’s newest life coach is a perfect cover for making handoffs to strangers. Besides, her only recent client, Willem Entwistle, a little person plagued by a curse of bad luck, is hardly occupying all her time. Between Maks’ access to intelligence info and her requisite gay partner in crime, mischievous Gilley Gillespie, it’s only a matter of time before Cat’s sleuthing rouses the killer from hiding. Stay safe, Cat.”—*Kirkus Reviews*

Maxwell, Alyssa. [Murder at Kingscote](#) (Kensington \$26). A murder at a Newport, Rhode Island, “cottage”—as the locals call their mansions—highlights the chasm between rich and poor in 1899. The coastal resort is a playground for the fabulously wealthy, and Emma Cross, editor-in-chief of the Newport Messenger, is familiar with all sides of society, since she’s a poor relation of the Vanderbilt family. Philip King, the son of Mrs. Ella King, owner of Kingscote, has borrowed an automobile for the town’s first motorcar parade and, being a bit intoxicated, gotten into a minor accident that results in a dinner invitation to Kingscote for Emma and Messenger owner Derrick Andrews, who helped rescue the family....The dinner party is interrupted when Kingscote’s butler is crushed against a tree by the car Philip was driving; it’s assumed that a drunken Philip ran him down, and he’s placed under house arrest. Soon after a note to Emma hints that all is not well

with the Kingscote servants, the murder of a footman opens up a new line of investigation... A charming addition to the Gilded Age series that’s laced with social and historical commentary and is based on a true story.”—*Kirkus Reviews*

McDermid, Val. [Still Life](#) (Grove \$26). I am finding procedurals enormously appealing and a welcome change from the deluge of domestic dramas blowing over from the UK. Ann Cleeves’ books, for example, especially the latest, [The Darkest Evening](#) (\$27.99). And here we have Police Scotland’s Karen Pirie, an iconoclast not unlike Cleeves’ Vera Stanhope, landing the case of a man found in the Firth of Forth... but not drowned. He was murdered. He has no ID. Who is he? This unpromising start to a case in time—and this is what I find so engaging—requires Pirie, head of the Historic Cases Unit, and her team which includes a young protégé she wants to test, to work with English cops, and then Irish. So it’s policing on a grand scale and includes a ruthless Assistant Chief Constable in Police Scotland determined to make Pirie the fall guy for what may prove to be a case that cannot be cracked. And makes a wonderful choice for our **October British Crime Book of the Month**... toss in a missing politician, art forgery, and secret identities, and a leisurely pace that lets you savor it all. You need not have read a previous Pirie to enjoy this investigation.

Neville, Stuart. [The Traveller and Other Stories](#) (Soho \$27.95). Since his debut novel, the modern classic [The Ghosts of Belfast](#) (\$9.99), was published a decade ago, Irishman Neville, an Edgar finalist, has published eight other critically acclaimed novels. Now for the first time Neville offers readers a collection of his short fiction—chilling stories that traverse and blend the genres of noir, horror, and speculative fiction, and which bring the history and lore of Neville’s native Northern Ireland to glittering life. The collection concludes with the long awaited novella *The Traveller*, the companion piece to *The Ghosts of Belfast* and *Collusion*. Gerry Fegan appears in four of the tales. Complete with a foreword from Irish crime fiction legend John Connolly, this volume is the perfect indulgence for fans of ghost stories and noir, and is a must-have for devotees of Neville’s prizewinning Belfast novels.

Salter, Mark. [The Luckiest Man: Life with John McCain](#) (Simon & Schuster \$35). Salter draws on the storied facets of McCain’s early biography as well as the later-in-life political philosophy for which the nation knew and loved him, delivering an intimate and comprehensive account of McCain’s life and philosophy. Salter, who co-authored seven books with the late Senator, covers all the major events of McCain’s life—his peripatetic childhood, his naval service—but introduces, too, aspects of the man that the public rarely saw and hardly knew. Woven throughout this narrative is also the story of Salter and McCain’s close relationship, including how they met, and why their friendship stood the test of time in a political world known for its fickle personalities and frail bonds. Glimpses of his restlessness, his curiosity, his courage, and sentimentality are rendered with sensitivity and care. The capstone to Salter’s intimate and decades-spanning time with the Senator, this bio is the authoritative last word on the stories McCain was too modest to tell himself. Salter will be interviewed by Pulitzer Prize winning Foreign Correspondent and columnist Jim Hoagland of the *Washington Post* underlining that this is not a political event!

✂Thomas, Sherry. [Murder on Cold Street](#) (Berkley \$16). Inspector Treadles, Charlotte Holmes's friend and collaborator, has been found locked in a room with two dead men, both of whom worked with his wife at the great manufacturing enterprise she has recently inherited. Rumors fly. Had Inspector Treadles killed the men because they had opposed his wife's initiatives at every turn? Had he killed in a fit of jealous rage, because he suspected Mrs. Treadles of harboring deeper feelings for one of the men? To make matters worse, he refuses to speak on his own behalf, despite the overwhelming evidence against him. Charlotte finds herself in a case strewn with lies and secrets. But which lies are to cover up small sins, and which secrets would flay open a past better left forgotten? In the fifth fun and fabulous addition to her Lady Sherlock series, Thomas plays with the classic locked-room mystery, while at the same time delivering another intriguing cast of supporting characters and a generous measure of the deliciously dry wit. If you are new to the books, start with [A Study in Scarlet](#) (Berkley \$16) and be prepared to binge-read all the rest in this cleverly conceived and brilliantly constructed series.

Turton, Stuart. [The Devil and the Dark Water](#) (\$26.99). Here's another Starred Review: "Set in 1634, this outstanding whodunit from Turton (*The 7½ Deaths of Evelyn Hardcastle*) opens in Batavia, where celebrated investigator Samuel PIPPS, who was working in the Dutch East Indies until his arrest for an unknown reason, is about to be transported to Amsterdam aboard the *Saardam*, along with his longtime sidekick, Arent Hayes. From the dock, a bloody man issues a dire warning to the *Saardam*'s crew and passengers. As the grim figure, who appears to have leprosy, prophesies that the ship won't reach its destination, his clothing bursts into flame. Hayes and another passenger, the governor-general's wife, rush to help the dying man, only to find that his tongue had been cut out, making any speech impossible. The puzzles only continue once the vessel sets sail, including a locked-room murder, the reappearance of the dead leper, and a ghost ship dogging the *Saardam*. As Turton ratchets up the tension en route to the brilliant resolution of the plot, he keeps readers in doubt as to whether a rational explanation is possible. Fans of impossible crime fiction won't want to miss this one."

OUR OCTOBER BOOKS OF THE MONTH

The Crime Book of the Month One Signed hardcover First per month

Unger, Lisa. [Confessions on the 7:45](#)

British Crime Book of the Month One unsigned hardcover or paperback per month

McDermid, Val. [Still Life](#) (Grove \$26)

Cozy Crimes Book of the Month One unsigned hardcover or paperback per month

Gates, Eva. [A Death Long Overdue](#)

Fantastic New Fiction Book of the Month One Signed hardcover First per month

Hoffman, Alice. [Magic Lessons: The Prequel to Practical Magic](#)

First Mystery Book of the Month Club One Signed hardcover First per month

Osman, Richard. [The Thursday Murder Club](#) Signed copies sold out

Historical Fiction Book of the Month One Signed hardcover First per month

Spotswood, Stephen. [Fortune Favors the Dead](#)

International Crime Book of the Month One Unsigned hardcover or paperback per month

Carlyle, Rose. [The Girl in the Mirror](#)

SciFi/Fantasy Book of the Month One hardcover or paperback per month signed when possible.

Roanhorse, Rebecca. [Black Sun](#)

CLASSICS

Kelly, Mary. [The Christmas Egg](#) (Poisoned Pen \$14.99). This British Library Crime Classic opens in London on the 22nd December. Chief Inspector Brett Nightingale and Sergeant Beddoes have been called to a gloomy flat off Islington High Street. An elderly woman lies dead on the bed, and her trunk has been looted. The woman is Princess Olga Karukhin—an emigrant of Civil War Russia—and her trunk is missing its glittering treasure. Out in the dizzying neon and festive chaos of the capital a colorful cast of suspects abound: the downtrodden grandson, a plutocratic jeweler, Bolsheviks with unfinished business... Beddoes and Nightingale have their work cut out in this tightly-paced, quirky and highly enjoyable jewel of the British crime genre. This never-before-republished novel goes beyond the neat puzzles of country house historical mysteries by delivering the darker side of British police procedurals in an evocative urban setting.

Boucher, Anthony. [The Case of the Baker Street Irregulars](#) (Penzler \$15.95). Set in 1939, this worthy addition to the American Mystery Classic series from legendary mystery critic Boucher (1911–1968) pits the Baker Street Irregulars, members of the real-life organization of Sherlock Holmes fans, against Stephen Worth, who has been chosen by Metropolis Pictures to write the screenplay for a major movie based on the Holmes story "The Adventure of the Speckled Band." Worth, "the author of many stupid and illogical mystery novels of the type known as hard-boiled," has expressed a desire to show up the detective as a "cocky bastard." When the Irregulars protest Worth's selection to Metropolis Pictures producer F.X. Weinberg, Weinberg invites them to Hollywood to consult on the film. The Irregulars soon lock horns with the obnoxious Worth, and a fatal shooting follows. Weinberg's publicist, Maureen O'Brien, investigates, with varying degrees of help from the Sherlockians. Boucher tosses in plenty of shout-outs to Conan Doyle's originals, including an envelope containing five orange seeds and a coded message featuring stick figures of dancing men.

Christie, Agatha. [Midwinter Murder: Fireside Tales](#) (Harper \$16.99). It's the perfect time to curl up in front of a crackling fire with these wintry whodunits from the legendary Agatha Christie. But beware of deadly snowdrifts and dangerous gifts, poisoned meals and mysterious guests. This chilling compendium of winter-themed short stories—some featuring beloved detectives Hercule Poirot and Miss Marple—is a nice gift and for many, a wander down memory lane.

Eustis, Helen. [The Horizontal Man](#) (Library of America \$14.95). *The Horizontal Man* was Helen Eustis's only crime novel, and she won an Edgar Award for it, combining a wildly disparate

set of elements into an enduringly fascinating work. In its way it is a classical whodunit that stands comparison with old-school practitioners such as Agatha Christie or Dorothy Sayers. This mystery transpires in the rarefied precincts of the English department of a venerable New England college, one very much of the restless postwar moment, echoing with references to Freud and Kafka. Eustis finds comedy high and low in a cavalcade of characters bursting at the seams with repressed sexual longings and simmering malice. Beyond the satire, she stirs up—with a narrative whose multiple viewpoints give the book a striking modernistic edge—a troubling sense of the mental chaos lurking just beneath the civilized surfaces of her academic setting. This new edition includes an introduction from author and Poisoned Pen favorite Charles Finch.

Hansen, Ron et al, eds. [Westerns: Four Classic Novels of the 1940s & 50s](#) (Library of America \$39.95). A terrific present. Or for yourself, rediscover *The Ox-Bow Incident* / *Shane* / *The Searchers* / *Warlock* and learn why I say that “Shane” is the very model for the Jack Reacher thrillers.

Jackson, Shirley. [Four Novels of the 1940s & 50s](#) (Library of America \$40). Admirers of Shirley Jackson (1916–1965) will welcome this collection of her first four novels. *The Road Through the Wall* (1948) satirizes suburban life, slowly revealing the petty jealousies and casual cruelty of the residents of a “nice” neighborhood of a California town. *Hangsaman* (1951) uses razor-sharp wit to chart the fall of 17-year-old Natalie Waite as she slips into an ever-darkening world of madness. In *The Bird’s Nest* (1954), timid 23-year-old Elizabeth finds her many alternate selves at her psychiatrist’s office. *The Sundial* (1958), a creepy gothic horror tale combined with a black comedy of manners, exposes the deplorable nature of the members of the Halloran family as they wait for the end of the world. “These novels are united by the author’s vibrant, eloquent prose; incisive characterizations; intimate understanding of fear; and unerring awareness of everyday evil. Jackson’s psychological weirdness compels, but in large doses it may leave readers feeling emotionally exhausted.”

Or go for the [Deluxe Boxed Set Collector’s Edition](#) (\$75) with all six novels, 21 stories, and the famous story “The Lottery.”

MacLean, Alistair. [Caravan to Vaccares](#) (Harper \$15.99). Originally written as a screenplay and then turned into a novel by MacLean, this classic tale of suspense is set in Provence, where English tourist Cecile Dubois and British agent Neil Bowman investigate a series of mysterious deaths that may be tied to an annual pilgrimage made by gypsies to the holy site of their patron saint, Saint Sarah.

MacLean, Alistair. [The Dark Crusader](#) (Harper \$15.99). Originally published in the U.S. under the title *The Black Shrike*, this thriller centers around efforts by British agent (and physicist) John Bentall to discover what happened to eight scientists (and their wives) who all disappeared after answering job postings in the newspaper. MacLean originally published this under the pseudonym of Ian Stuart in part to prove he could sell books without having to rely on the cachet of his name, but later reissued in under his real name when sales of the book proved disappointing. I think J.K. Rowling might know a thing or two about this as well....

MacLean, Alistair. [Force 10 from Navarone](#) (Harper \$15.99). This sequel to MacLean’s 1957 best-seller (and subsequent movie blockbuster) *The Guns of Navarone* tells the tense tale of ten widely divergent WW II troubleshooters, who are attempting to blow up a key bridge in Yugoslavia.

MacLean, Alistair. [Puppet on a Chain](#) (Harper \$15.99). Assisted by two beautiful (aren’t they always?) female agents, Interpol Narcotics Bureau agent Paul Sherman investigates a vicious heroin smuggling ring in the Netherlands. *The New York Times* called this “one of the best in the Greene-Ambler-MacInnes tradition.” Also available: [Bear Island](#) (\$15.99); [Circus](#) (\$15.99).

Ottolenghi, Rodrigues. [Final Proof](#) (Poisoned Pen \$14.99). The Library of Congress Crime Classics series rescues another gifted author from obscurity with this collection of 12 stories set in the 1890s featuring PI Jack Barnes and his amateur sleuth friend, Robert Leroy Mitchel. Ottolengui (1861–1937), who was also a dentist, makes good use of his expertise in the best entry, the intriguing “The Phoenix of Crime.” The autopsy of a male corpse retrieved from New York City’s East River reveals that the dead man’s face is marked by an unusual skin disease shared by Rufus Quadrant, a wealthy gentleman who died recently and was supposedly cremated. Members of Quadrant’s family swear that the cremation definitely occurred, despite Quadrant’s doctor’s conviction that the body dragged from the water was his patient. The clever solution hinges on an early use of forensic dentistry. Other highlights include “The Nameless Man,” in which Barnes is consulted by a man who doesn’t know his own identity, and “A Frosty Morning,” in which Mitchel must identify the thief of a banknote stolen in the midst of a will reading. Mystery fans devoted to logical deduction will welcome this reissue. Which is as with all the LOC Crime Classics, edited and footnoted by Leslie S. Klinger.

OUR OCTOBER LARGE PAPERBACK PICKS

Abdul-Jabbar, Kareem. [Mycroft and Sherlock: The Empty Birdcage](#) (\$14.95). *LJ* reviews: It’s 1873 and Mycroft Holmes, 27, brother of 19-year-old Sherlock, government minister and confidant of Queen Victoria, has had heart surgery and resigned his diplomatic position. Here, Mycroft and his Trinidadian friend Cyrus Douglas are asked by Chinese businessman Deshi Hai Lin to find his daughter Ai’s missing fiancé. Mycroft is secretly in love with Ai. Meanwhile, Sherlock has dropped out of Cambridge to investigate eight seemingly random murders all over the country with no apparent cause of death. All the victims are marked with notes saying “The Fire 411.” While Sherlock and his bodyguard visit the murder sites of now 11 victims, Mycroft and Cyrus are chasing a Russian arms dealer. When the Queen reveals that one of the murdered is a royal relative, Mycroft and Sherlock reluctantly begin to work together. The third Mycroft tale (after Mycroft and Sherlock and Mycroft Holmes) from coauthors Abdul-Jabbar and Waterhouse is another winner. The Victorian setting is well drawn, the dialog rings true, the period details, both factual and fictive, support a labyrinthine plot including race and class distinctions. It all meshes into a fine tale set prior to the Sherlockian stories we know so well.

Alexander, Tasha. [In the Shadow of Vesuvius](#) (\$17.99). A captivating story of Pompeii in which the city’s mysterious past forms part of the narrative opens in 1902. Lady Emily Hargreaves and

her husband, Colin, agent of the British Crown, are no strangers to unusual murders, but they expect no more than a pleasant vacation when their friend Ivy Brandon invites them to visit Pompeii. They rent a villa and get a scholarly tour of the ruins from Ivy's new friends. Callie Carter is an archaeologist who got her job only because her artist brother, Benjamin, is on hand to chaperone her. While exploring the ruins, they discover that one of the many bodies apparently preserved when Vesuvius erupted is disconcertingly modern. As Emily and Colin investigate the contemporary murder, alternating chapters explore the ancient story of Quinta Flavia Cassandra, a Greek slave and talented poet whose father, a tutor for a wealthy family, buys their freedom in the year 79.

✦Atherton, Nancy. [Aunt Dimity and the Heart of Gold](#) (\$16). This series entry is comforting, the best escape, and right up there with the best written. Atherton sparkles. Just like the ice storm that turns a Christmas party into a pajama party and leads to a discovery! It's almost Christmas in the small English village of Finch—and nearly everyone has the Yuletide Blight. Though many of the villagers regretfully decline their invitations to Emma Harris's annual Christmas bash, Lori Shepherd has no intention of missing it. That evening, a storm strikes. A car skids into the ditch. And an extra guest joins those now spending the night at Anscombe Manor. Emma asks her other guests if they would like a tour, citing there's an old storage room now cleared of junk that puzzles her. Tilly, the newcomer, a woman of astonishing self-effacement and historical knowledge, identifies its purpose. Which leads to a lot of local detective work. And the gradual blossoming of two romances. If you long for a charming read, look no further: Finch is a cozier version of Three Pines. At under 200 pages, this can easily be read before bed. 28th [in the Aunt Dimity Series](#)—all of which are still in print.

Baldacci, David. [Walk the Wire](#) (\$16.99). FBI consultant Amos Decker, the man with the perfect memory, and his FBI colleague Alex Jamison are called to London, North Dakota, where they instantly sense that the thriving fracking town is ripe for trouble. The promise of a second gold rush has attracted an onslaught of newcomers all hoping for a windfall, and the community is growing faster than houses can be built. The sudden boom has also brought a slew of problems with it, including drugs, property crimes, prostitution—and now murder. Decker and Jamison are ordered to investigate the death of a young woman named Irene Cramer, whose body was expertly autopsied and then dumped in the open—which is only the beginning of the oddities surrounding the case. As Decker and Jamison dig into Irene's life, they are shocked to discover that the woman who walked the streets by night as a prostitute was a teacher for a local religious sect by day—a sect operating on land once owned by a mysterious government facility that looms over the entire community. London is a town replete with ruthless business owners, shady government officials, and religious outsiders, all determined to keep their secrets from coming out. When other murders occur, Decker will need all of his extraordinary memory and detective skills, and the assistance of a surprising ally, to root out a killer. This is an excellent story and one fans of CJ Box's non-Joe Pickett thrillers will enjoy.

Camilleri, Andrea. [The Sicilian Method](#) (Penguin \$16). Curmudgeonly Inspector Montalbano is awakened in the middle of the night by Detective Mimi Augello, in great distress because his

tryst with beautiful Genoveffa Recchia was ruined by the surprise return of her husband, Martino. Escaping onto the balcony, Mimi lowered himself to the apartment below and sneaked into the bedroom, where he discovered a corpse. Montalbano scolds Mimi for hastily leaving the scene. The dead man, Carmelo Catalannotti, seemed, according to his talkative cleaning lady, to have no job and many lady friends. He was likely stabbed elsewhere and moved to his blood-free apartment. Montalbano, Mimi, and Fazio, another veteran detective, begin by questioning all the residents and employees in the building—once again a Christie structure comes into modern play. “Montalbano's awkwardness with the opposite sex is on full comic display in his flirtation with the mysterious Antonia, complicated further by his temperamental longtime love, Livia. Unraveling the case of young Nico Dilicata, who reports being shot in the leg, leads Montalbano in a surprising direction. The late Camilleri's antepenultimate novel again combines divinely deadpan drollery with a clever puzzle.”—*Kirkus Reviews*. How I wish the wonderful cast of the Montalbano TV series would reassemble for these later wonderful investigations. Watch them on MHZ-TV.

✦Chevalier, Tracy. [A Single Thread](#) (\$17). It is 1932, and the losses of the First World War are still keenly felt. Violet Speedwell, mourning for both her fiancé and her brother and regarded by society as a ‘surplus woman’ unlikely to marry, resolves to escape her suffocating mother and strike out alone. A new life awaits her in Winchester. Yes, it is one of draughty boardinghouses and sidelong glances at her naked ring finger from younger colleagues; but it is also a life gleaming with independence and opportunity. Violet falls in with the broderers, a disparate group of women charged with embroidering kneelers for the Cathedral, and is soon entwined in their lives and their secrets. As the almost unthinkable threat of a second Great War appears on the horizon Violet collects a few secrets of her own that could just change everything... This book is a treat on every level from the characterizations, the surprises, the unusual as well as better known historical bits, and Chevalier's superb command of language and structure. Highly recommended—one of my favorite novels of 2019.

Freeman, Brian. [Deep, Deep Snow](#) (Blackstone \$16.99). Our first batch of copies will be Signed by Freeman who is having a blitz of a publishing year, first stepping into the Ludlum franchise with [The Bourne Evolution](#) (Putnam \$28 SIGNED) and then bringing us a tenth dazzler for Duluth policeman Jonathan Stride in [Funeral for a Friend](#) (Blackstone \$27.99 SIGNED). And now this atmospheric and deeply affecting tale centered on Shelby Lake, now a young woman deputy in the Mittel County Sheriff's Department but once an abandoned newborn left on the Sheriff's doorstep (to be fair his home resembled a church). A haunting new case arrives: ten-year-old Jeremiah Sloan has gone missing, his bicycle found abandoned in the woods. It's unthinkable to all in the small town that Jeremiah is a victim of stranger abduction, but no matter how hard they work the case, there is no trace of the child, no clue. Shelby takes it hard and never lets it go. Many lives are shattered. Ten years later many threads woven into the story begin to surface and weave together. You won't foresee the outcome. But I will say this is a poignant story of suppressed secrets and escalating mistakes rather than crimes. Freeman is such an interesting author as this excellent book demonstrates well; you could spend October reading all three of his crime novels and be delighted.

Harnetiaux, Trish. [The White Elephant](#) (\$16). What more fun than a Christmas office party that goes horribly wrong? In snowy Aspen, Colorado, where the high-end real estate market is cutthroat and a White Elephant gift exchange can turn competitive rather than congenial in a heartbeat—especially at Calhoun + Calhoun, Claudine and Henry’s agency. Claudine is staging this year’s party at Montague House, a listing that could signal a new beginning, or at least enable C+C to hang on. And how fortuitous that pop star Zara, wounded by a spectacular break up, is on her way to Aspen shopping for a vacation home. That’s the set up for a debut that begins to slide off the expected track when a strange gift, an antique cowboy statue, appears in the White Elephant exchange, a gift with special meaning to Henry and to Claudine and to no one else. As a major snowstorm maroons the party guests and keeps the law from the scene—so Agatha Christie!—a crazy night plays out. This debut was our December, 2019, First Mystery Book of the Month. Order it for this holiday season if you missed out.

Lindsay, Jeff. [Just Watch Me](#) (\$17). This terrific series launch opens with master thief Riley Wolfe, an antihero Dexter fans will relish, using a helicopter to steal a 12-ton statue in broad daylight during its installation ceremony in Chicago. Wolfe also abducts the honoree, a greedy pharmaceutical mogul who developed a cancer treatment he only sells for \$500,000 a dose, before pushing him to his death from the aircraft. But vigilante justice isn’t enough of a rush, so Wolfe seeks “a heist that was beyond impossible, something ridiculous, unthinkable, stupid, totally out of the question,” and finds one after learning that the Iranian crown jewels are scheduled to be exhibited at Manhattan’s Eberhardt Museum. He sets his sights on the exhibit’s prize, the Ocean of Light, a diamond valued at more than \$15 billion—if he can get past the formidable array of security, both electronic and human. His crafty multistep plan is a pleasure to watch unfold. Having warmed readers up with Dexter, it’s no surprise that Lindsay reveals that that Wolfe is capable of killing without any pretense of a moral justification. Lindsay is the bestselling author of [Darkly Dreaming Dexter](#) and [its sequels](#) that spawned the TV series.

✚Meyer, Nicholas. [The Adventure of the Peculiar Protocols](#) (\$16.99). After the murder of British operative Manya Lippman, Sherlock Holmes’s brother, Mycroft, the dead woman’s employer, asks for help in tracing the origins of the papers found on her corpse. Lippman apparently paid with her life for somehow obtaining a French version of the anti-Semitic tract known as The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion, which describe a Jewish plot for world domination. Mycroft is concerned about a possible connection between the documents, the annual meetings of Jews committed to the establishment of a Jewish homeland, and the untimely death of Zionist leader Theodor Herzl, who apparently suffered a heart attack right before he could be interviewed by one of Mycroft’s agents. Holmes and Watson’s pursuit of the truth takes them to France and, via the Orient Express, to Varna and a kind of milk train to Odessa, and finally to a Russian village where a pogrom had been enacted, where their ethics face a severe test. “Meyer cleverly plays with his audience’s expectations, noting at the outset that the case was one of Holmes’s rare failures” since the Protocols still circulate today and gain traction as anti-Semitism rises. I expect Meyer

was stirred by our current world to write this—it’s not a political book but it does make a statement, plus plenty of actual historical figures appear in the story. To add to your enjoyment, watch some version of Agatha Christie’s *Murder on the Orient Express*.

Smith, Martin Cruz. [The Siberian Dilemma](#) (\$17). “Smith’s stellar ninth outing for Arkady, his first since 2013, finds the maverick detective, who serves as an investigator of special cases for Zurin, the Moscow Prosecutor, growing increasingly concerned over his inability to reach his girlfriend, investigative journalist Tatiana Petrovna, after she fails to return to Moscow as scheduled from an assignment. Arkady knows only that she went to Siberia. Meanwhile, Zurin orders Arkady to travel to Siberia to oversee the prosecution of Aba Makhmud, a Chechen terrorist. Zurin directs Arkady to insure that Makhmud, who tried to kill the Moscow Prosecutor, receives a lengthy prison sentence, and threatens to harm Arkady’s stepson if he fails to do so. Arkady is keener to go to Siberia once he learns Tatiana is probably still there, doing a story on Mikhail Kuznetsov, the so-called “hermit billionaire,” who may run against Putin in the next election. The stakes rise after Renko arrives in Siberia and becomes involved in investigating a Russian oligarch’s murder. Smith does his usual superior job of blending plot and setting. This is a must for any crime fiction fan interested in the underside of Putin’s Russia.” If you somehow missed the first Arkady Renko, or want to refresh your memory, order [Gorky Park](#) (\$16).

SCARY AND FANTASTICAL READS

Bardugo, Leigh. [The Lives of Saints](#) (Imprint \$24.99). *The Istorii Sankt’ya* features tales of saints drawn from the beloved novels and beyond. These tales include miracles and martyrdoms from familiar saints like Sankta Lizabeta of the Roses and Sankt Ilya in Chains, to the strange and obscure stories of Sankta Ursula, Sankta Maradi, and the Starless Saint. Out of the pages of the *Shadow and Bone* trilogy, the *Istorii Sankt’ya* is a magical keepsake from the Grishaverse. Which with *Shadow and Bone* is soon to be a Netflix original series. For ages 14-18.

For Bardugo’s adult debut: [The Ninth House](#) (\$17.99). Galaxy “Alex” Stern is the most unlikely member of Yale’s freshman class. Raised in the Los Angeles hinterlands, Alex dropped out of school early and into a world of shady drug-dealer boy-friends, dead-end jobs, and much worse. In fact, by age twenty, she is the sole survivor of a horrific, unsolved multiple homicide. But at her hospital bed, Alex is offered a second chance: to attend one of the world’s most prestigious universities on a full ride. What’s the catch, and why her? Still searching for answers, Alex arrives in New Haven tasked by her mysterious benefactors with monitoring the activities of Yale’s secret societies. Their eight windowless “tombs” are the well-known haunts of the rich and powerful, from high-ranking politicians to Wall Street’s biggest players. But their occult activities are more sinister and more extraordinary than any paranoid imagination might conceive. They tamper with forbidden magic. They raise the dead. And, sometimes, they prey on the living.

Brooks, Terry. [The Last Druid](#) (Del Rey \$28.99). Celtic Weather Mage, Declan O’Connor, is grieving and blames himself for his mother’s death. When he discovers a breach of the wards of The Stone Order, Declan must work with Clara Hughes; a Traditionalist burdened with human fragility and a spirit he can’t resist. Connin, the Last Druid, and scourge of the Eastern Lands,

launches a desperate bid to escape eternal imprisonment for his crimes against humanity. Determined to escape, he takes a Time Mage hostage and forces The Stone Order to meet his ransom in exchange for their peer's life. Hoping to exorcise his demons and redeem himself, Declan agrees to carry out the Druid's demands even when it means partnering with Clara.

Danforth, Emily M. [Plain Bad Heroines](#) (Morrow \$27.99). Library Reads recommends "A horror-comedy centered around a New England boarding school follows characters across four different time periods exploring themes of sexuality, female agency, authenticity, and self-worth. For readers who enjoyed *Bunny*."

Doctorow, Cory. [Attack Surface](#) (Forge \$26.99). "Following the best sellers *Little Brother* and *Homeland*, Doctorow introduces a new cast of characters in the same world who contend with the ethics of technology and surveillance. Masha Maximov recognized her special skills early, hacking her way into high-paying jobs with black ops firms while still in her teens. She tries to balance her work for these nefarious companies by helping her friends and their causes disrupt the very same systems. First overseas and then in her home town of San Francisco, her bosses go too far when they aim autonomous vehicles at protesters. Can Masha continue to compartmentalize what she does and who she works for or will she fully embrace trying to bend the arc of history toward justice? Thriller readers of all ages will enjoy the cool tech (sunglasses that fool facial recognition software and blurry texts that evade screen shots), Masha's international exploits, and the impassioned arguments for privacy, transparency, and justice."—LJ

Fforde, Jasper. [The Constant Rabbit](#) (Viking \$28). "It is 2022 and, due to the Spontaneous Anthropomorphizing Event of 1965, there are now more than a million human-sized, talking rabbits living in the United Kingdom. The rabbits are polite, and mostly take the lower-class jobs that humans don't want. But right-wing politicians, concerned at how quickly rabbits could procreate if they wanted to, warn about the danger to English culture if rabbits are allowed to leave their government mandated warrens: "Let one family in and pretty soon they'll all be here." Middle-aged Peter Knox is a tiny cog in the large machine of a government agency that surveils rabbits—until a rabbit family moves into his village, and he's informed that he has to start spying on Doc and Constance Rabbit. But the thing is, Peter knows Connie—they went to college together—and Peter doesn't want anything bad to happen to the Rabbits. But he also doesn't want to lose his job. With his trademark quirky flair, Fforde uses Knox to show what can happen when well-meaning people do nothing in the face of fascism. Rabbit causes clearly parallel political stakes in today's world, but with a layer of absurdity... that showcases Fforde's unconventional writing and look at Britain at its very best."—Jessica Howard

Haig, Matt. [The Midnight Library](#) (Penguin \$26). "Few fantasies are more enduring than the idea that there might be a second chance at a life already lived, some sort of magical reset in which mistakes can be erased, regrets addressed, choices altered... Into this ever-popular genre, *The Midnight Library* is a welcome addition... The narrative throughout has a slightly old-fashioned feel, like a bedtime story. It's an absorbing but comfortable read, imaginative in the details if familiar in its outline. The invention

of the library as the machinery through which different lives can be accessed is sure to please readers and has the advantage of being both magical and factual. Every library is a liminal space; the *Midnight Library* is different in scale, but not kind. And a vision of limitless possibility, of new roads taken, of new lives lived, of a whole different world available to us somehow, somewhere, might be exactly what's wanted in these troubled and troubling times."—*NY Times Book Review*

Hoffman, Alice. [Magic Lessons](#) (SimonSchuster \$27.99 SIGNED). See Event Books for our October Fantastic New Fiction Book of the Month. It traces a centuries-old curse to its source as Hoffman unveils the story of Maria Owens, accused of witchcraft in Salem, and matriarch of a line of the amazing Owens women and men featured in *Practical Magic* and *The Rules of Magic*.

Harrow, Alix E. [The Once and Future Witches](#) (Orbit \$28). Harrow, known for her adventurous debut hit, *The Ten Thousand Doors of January*, is back with a tale of witchy women finding their power from both books and the ballot box. Yes, it's the 1890s and James Juniper, Agnes Amaranth, and Beatrice Belladonna, a.k.a. the Eastwood sisters, are here to fight for the right to vote. Along the way, they'll find ancient magics to help turn the tide of the debate and fight back against enemies who would sooner see them six feet under than heading to the polls. Blending folklore, history, and fantasy, *The Once and Future Witches* crafts a gender-neutral, diverse world of sorcery, casting a critical eye on the prejudices and systematic practices that kept many communities oppressed through an expansive, angry and ultimately hopeful historical fantasy novel. Focused on three white sisters and including a diverse cast of secondary characters, this story takes place in an alternate-history 1893 New Salem, 200 years after the (fictional) complete destruction of Salem. The initially estranged Eastwood sisters represent three archetypal witches and women: the Maiden, the Mother and the Crone, though Harrow makes clear that every woman is not just one thing. "Harrow's world-building is intricate, and the plot is full of smaller battles and acts of rebellion, but her protagonists are complex women with clear motivations. Like many other modern stories about witches, *The Once and Future Witches* deals heavily with feminist themes, including women's suffrage, sexual harassment and legal oppression, but Harrow also works to broaden the scope beyond white feminism. Harrow's diverse cast of secondary characters is working toward equity in other spheres, each with their own take on witching: the labor movement and unions, Black civil rights, sex work, and immigrant and LGBTQ+ experiences."

Henry, Christina. [The Ghost Tree](#) (Berkley \$16). When the bodies of two girls are found torn apart in the town of Smiths Hollow, Lauren is surprised, but she also expects that the police won't find the killer. After all, the year before her father's body was found with his heart missing, and since then everyone has moved on. Even her best friend, Miranda, has become more interested in boys than in spending time at the old ghost tree, the way they used to when they were kids. So when Lauren has a vision of a monster dragging the remains of the girls through the woods, she knows...it's a horror.

Hunt, SA. [Burn the Dark](#) (Tor \$17.99). The first in the *Malus Domestica* horror action series portrays Robin, a YouTube

celebrity gone viral with her intensely realistic witch hunter series. But even her millions of followers don't know the truth: her series isn't fiction. Her ultimate goal is to seek revenge against the coven of witches who wronged her mother long ago. Returning home to the rural town of Blackfield, Robin meets friends new and old on her quest for justice. But then, a mysterious threat known as the Red Lord interferes with her plans.... Carry on with [the sequels](#) *I Came with Knives* and new, *The Hellion*.

Maguire, Gregory. [A Wild Winter Swan](#) (HarperCollins \$27.99) will take readers back to an extraordinarily weird Christmas week for Laura Ciardi, a teenage misfit in 1960s Upper East Side. Bullied by mean girls at school who make fun of her eccentric Italian family, all Laura needs is a one-winged swan boy to fly right from the pages of the Hans Christian Anderson's fairy tale into her window on a particularly harsh winter night. This quirky coming-of-age story will remind young and old alike that an ability to embrace difference will be the salvation of us all.

Maniscalco, Kerri. [Kingdom of the Wicked #1](#) (Little Brown \$18.99). A vengeful Sicilian witch forges an unlikely alliance resulting in epic, supernatural consequences. Eighteen-year-old Emilia di Carlo and her twin sister, Vittoria, have a secret: They are *streghe*, trained from a young age to use magic. Emilia is as introverted and romantic as her sister is bold and irreverent, but they share a love of good food and a disregard for their grandmother's warnings about the devil and his brothers. Known as the Malvagi or Wicked, the seven princes of Hell have not been seen in years until tragedy strikes and a foray into forbidden magic accidentally summons the Prince of Wrath: Three witches—including Vittoria—are dead, and Emilia is desperate to avenge her sister and stop the killings. An uneasy truce with Wrath soon blossoms into a tantalizing, dangerous attraction with an uneven power dynamic. Rich worldbuilding constructs a post-unification Kingdom of Italy in which witches, demons, and shape-shifters live—and battle—among oblivious humans in a society strongly influenced by the Catholic brotherhood in its midst. YA reading but why not adults, too? Sicily remains on my must-do destination list assuming travel reboots while I can still do it.

Michel, Lincoln/Nadxieli Nieto. [Tiny Nightmares: Very Short Tales of Horror](#) (Catapult \$16.96). Following Catapult's successful *Tiny Crimes*, these 40 stories of Halloween-perfect flash fiction, all under 1500 words, take their terror from global warming, racism, social media addiction, and homelessness as well as your garden-variety vampire.

Murray, James/Darren Wearmouth. [Don't Move](#) (Blackstone \$26.99 SIGNED). Brad Meltzer warns: "Afraid of spiders? Don't read this book. I mean it. Walk away now." James Rollins who admits to being scared of spiders, particularly tarantulas, calls this chiller "Spine tingling and wildly paced." What we have is a grief-stricken and haunted Megan Forrester, never over tragic loss, facing her ultimate test of endurance. Can she outwit a blood-thirsty arachnid hell bent on ensuring that no one is left alive?

Novik, Naomi. [A Deadly Education](#) (Del Rey \$28) takes a fresh stab at the magical boarding school setting in this inventive and compelling new novel. Already optioned by Universal Pictures, this buzzed-about new fantasy with its wink to all your favorite

series is set in a brutal, otherworldly boarding school. Galadriel Higgins is a student at Scholomance, a dangerous institution full of things that don't just go bump in the night, they tend to maim and murder the students. In such a perilous place, it's important to have friends. Unfortunately, Galadriel is a sarcastic misanthrope with a potent affinity toward mass destruction and death, but she might have to start relying on her non-magical to must fend off encroaching monsters in Darwinian fashion; the unlucky ones get eaten, while the lucky ones are allowed to graduate. In a bid for survival, sorceress El and monster slayer Orion strike up an alliance. The book, which is the first in a planned trilogy, "will delight in the push-and-pull of El and Orion's relationship, the fantastically detailed world, the clever magic system, and the matter-of-fact diversity of the student body."

Racculia, Kate. [Tuesday Mooney Talks to Ghosts](#) (\$15.99) "is so much fun it should be criminal. A mystery hidden in a game, hidden in a romp around Boston, with intrigue, a little romance, and a ghost? Perfection. Racculia has a gift for both humor and creating deeply relatable oddballs. Genuinely funny, whip-smart, and at times profound, it is a novel that reminds us of both the pure joy of play and the importance of finding people who matter."—Erika Swyler. "Funny and exuberant, twisty and captivating. Racculia tells the truth here, about art and life and the many trajectories that talent can take. She's also written the most resonant descriptions of music—how it really works in the head and the heart—that I've ever read. For its darkness and its glee, I loved this novel."—Robin Sloan. I did too when it published in hardcover.

Roanhorse, Rebecca. [Black Sun](#) (Saga \$27.99). The first book in Rebecca Roanhorse's new series, inspired by Pre-Columbian histories and myths. In this well-developed world, Convergence approaches—the rare celestial event when the solar eclipse and winter solstice occur simultaneously—which prophesies the arrival of the Crow God to avenge past injustices wrecked upon the Carrion Crow clan. Through multiple perspectives, the story follows a priesthood's traditions under a cultist threat; a down-on-her-luck Teek captain, whose magical sea-calling abilities mark her as a pariah, and the so-called prophesied avatar on his way to fulfill his destiny. See Signed Books for our **October SciFi/Fantasy/Horror Book of the Month**.

Roberts, Nora. [The Awakening](#) (St Martins 28.99). Coming in November, but smart to order now! The tireless Roberts begins a new trilogy of adventure, romance, and magick. In the realm of Talamh, a teenage warrior named Keegan emerges from a lake holding a sword—representing both power and the terrifying responsibility to protect the Fey. In another realm known as Philadelphia, a young woman has just discovered she possesses a treasure of her own...

Robinson, Kim Stanley. [The Ministry for the Future](#) (Orbit \$28). Established in 2025, the purpose of the new organization was simple: To advocate for the world's future generations and to protect all living creatures, present and future. It soon became known as the Ministry for the Future, and this is its story, a look at how climate change will affect us for decades to come. This is not an apocalyptic view.

Schwab, V E. [The Invisible Life of Addie Larue](#) (Forge \$26.99). The #1 Indie Next Pick for October: "Epic, beautifully written,

heartwarming, and heartbreaking, here is a contemplation on life, death, what it means to make your mark on the world, and why we feel it's important to do so. Addie makes a deal with a demon so she can live her life the way she wants to. But, like most deals, there are strings attached — and these strings make it so she is forgotten by everyone she meets. Dancing about time, the book shows Addie's life over 300 years and takes a closer look at her modern life — after a boy in a bookshop remembers her. Months later, I'm still thinking about this book and how beautiful it is; my words don't even come close to doing it justice. Read this book."

Turner, Megan Whalen. [Return of the Thief](#) (Greenwillow \$18.99). Neither accepted nor beloved, Eugenides is the uneasy linchpin of a truce on the Lesser Peninsula, where he has risen to be high king of Attolia, Eddis, and Sounis. As the treacherous Baron Erondites schemes anew and a prophecy appears to foretell the death of the king, the ruthless Mede empire prepares to strike. The New York Times–bestselling Queen's Thief novels are rich with political machinations, divine intervention, dangerous journeys, battles lost and won, power, passion, and deception. This [YA series](#) “brings to life a world of epics, myths, and legends, and feature one of the most charismatic and incorrigible characters of fiction, Eugenides the thief. Now more powerful and cunning than ever before, Eugenides must navigate a perilous future in this sweeping conclusion. Perfect for fans of Leigh Bardugo, Marie Lu, Patrick Rothfuss, and Sarah J. Maas.”

COZY CRIMES

Alexander, Ellie. [Without a Brew](#) (St Martins \$26.99). Sloan Krause, a beer maven with a nose for brews, is torn between her personal problems and murder in a Washington ski town devoted to all things German. After years in foster care, Sloan has finally found a home with the Krause family—though no longer with their son, Mac, whom she left over his cheating in [Beyond a Reasonable Stout](#) (\$7.99). Otto and Ursula Krause have given Sloan a share in their beer business even though she's taken a job with Nitro, a rival craft brewery. Her boss, Garrett, who inherited the building that houses Nitro, has just added a beer-based B&B. Unfortunately, some of his first guests spell trouble...and possible links to the Nazis surface. “A delight for foodies, craft beer fans, and lovers of twisty mysteries with a bit of humor...”—*Kirkus Reviews*. Order all [4 Sloan Krause Mysteries](#) for an Oktoberfest binge.

Andrews, Donna. [The Gift of the Magpie](#) (St Martins \$25.99). Ornamental blacksmith/general do-gooder Meg Langslow's Christmas activities entangle her with a fellow resident of Caerphilly, Virginia, whose domestic life is even more chaotic than hers. Unlike Meg, who's surrounded by members of her own cheerfully argumentative family as well as the Shiffleys, Caerphilly's somewhat more benign version of the Snopeses, Harvey Dunlop has chosen to surround himself with stuff—objects of dubious value he can't bring himself to throw out. So Meg, her friend Caroline Willner, Meredith Flugleman of Adult Protective Services, and other concerned members of Helping Hands for the Holidays have banded together to strong-arm...er...help and encourage him to go through his house with a shovel and relocate his treasures to an empty building. But when Meg shows up at Harvey's for the main event in the decluttering marathon, her host is unresponsive, brained with a spittoon in his garage. As

Harvey hovers between life and death, Meg plunges into his family history to uncover a motive for the murderous attack

✦Berry, Tamara. [Curses Are for Cads](#) (Kensington \$26). Eleanor Wilde, the American scam psychic who's set up shop as town witch in a quaint English village, is summoned to a remote Scottish castle. There, an unusual assignment to locate a haunted trove of treasure threatens Eleanor's budding romance, her livelihood...and her life!

Budewitz, Leslie. [The Solace of Bay Leaves](#) (Seventh Street \$15.95). When Pepper Reece's life fell apart at forty and she bought the venerable-but-rundown Spice Shop in Seattle's Pike Place Market, her days took a tasty turn. Now she's savoring the prospect of a flavorful fall and a busy holiday cooking season, until danger bubbles to the surface...Between managing her shop, worrying about her staff, and navigating a delicious new relationship, Pepper's firing on all burners. But when her childhood friend Maddie is shot and gravely wounded, the incident is quickly tied to an unsolved murder that left another close friend a widow. Convinced that the secret to both crimes lies in the history of a once-beloved building, Pepper uses her local-girl contacts and her talent for asking questions to unearth startling links between the past and present—links that suggest her childhood friend may not have been the Golden Girl she appeared to be....

Delany, Vicki. [A Death Long Overdue](#) (Crooked Lane \$26.99) written as Eva Gates is our **October Cozy Crimes Book of the Month**. See also Delany's two cozies under her own name in Unsigned Event Books.

Goldenbaum, Sally. [A Crime of a Different Stripe](#) (Kensington \$26). When a body is discovered at Sea Harbor's opening reception for the autumn art series, the Seaside Knitters must take a break from stitching baby gear to unravel a series of secrets. With a mysterious murder pitting neighbors against each other, Izzy, Birdie, Nell, and a vulnerable Cass find themselves entangled in a dangerous hunt for answers. Can four best friends somehow tie together scattered clues and pacify a list of potential culprits....

Haines, Carolyn. [A Garland of Bones](#) (St Martins \$25.99). Sarah Booth Delaney has traded in hosting this Christmas season for a road trip with her besties. Each little Delta town has a special Christmas activity, and Sarah Booth's BFF and detective partner, Tinkie, has arranged to rent a limo for the gang and drive to Columbus, MS, to stay in a B&B. Visions of Christmas shopping, parade floats, and romantic rendezvous are already dancing in their heads. But Christmas cheer soon turns to Christmas fear when, at one event after another, people keep getting hurt. And when the woman who hires Sarah Booth to find the villain behind the so-called accidents is nearly killed with an arrow during a holiday mumming, Sarah Booth knows something more sinister is at work.

Ireland, Liz. [Mrs. Claus and the Santaland Slaysings](#) (Kensington \$15.95). Set at the North Pole, this exceptional series launch from Ireland features such delightful characters as Old Charlie, a snowman; Blitzen, a reindeer descended from the Blitzen of “The Night Before Christmas” fame; and Jingles, the elf steward at frigid Castle Kringle. All of them are potential perps in the murder of Giblet Hollyberry, a notoriously unpleasant elf, but the chief suspect is Nick Claus, the acting Santa of Santaland.

Constable Crinkles is soon on the case, along with detective Jake Frost, but it's going to be up to April Claus, Nick's wife, to clear her husband's name. Rumors have circulated since the death of Nick's older brother, Chris Claus, that Nick had something to do with it, because he coveted Chris's job as Santa, and now an elf is dead. April has only a few days to find the killer before Christmas. Meanwhile, she must cope with the quirks of the extended Claus family. This fun, well-plotted mystery is the perfect holiday entertainment." Ireland is doing an event for us on December 5 with other cozy crimes authors.

Meier, Leslie. [Gobble, Gobble Murder](#) (Kensington \$12.95). A Thanksgiving double treat: *Turkey Day Murder*: Tinker's Cove has a long history of Thanksgiving festivities, from visits with TomTom Turkey to the annual Warriors high school football game and Lucy Stone's impressive pumpkin pie. But this year, someone has added murder to the menu, and Lucy intends to discover who left Metinnicut Indian activist Curt Nolan deader than the proverbial Thanksgiving turkey... *Turkey Trot Murder*: Besides the annual Turkey Trot 5K on Thanksgiving Day, Lucy expects the approaching holiday to be a relatively uneventful one—until she finds beautiful Alison Franklin dead and frozen in Blueberry Pond. As a state of unrest descends on Tinker's Cove, Lucy is in a race to beat the killer to the finish line—or she can forget about stuffing and cranberry sauce...

O'Connor, Carlene. [Murder at an Irish Christmas](#) (Kensington \$26). Levelheaded garda Siobhán O'Sullivan is off duty for the holidays, or so she thinks. The six O'Sullivan siblings are spending a snowy Christmas with their oldest brother James's fiancée, violinist Elise Elliot, and her family in a rustic West Cork village, where everyone is looking forward to a sold-out concert by Elise's grandfather, conductor Enda Elliot, and his orchestra. Then Enda is found dead underneath a harp in the concert hall. A broken railing in the second-floor gallery above suggests he may have taken an accidental fall with the harp, but Siobhán suspects foul play. She immediately catches Elise in a lie about Enda, and wonders what else the Elliot family and their friends are hiding. The astute Siobhán wants to learn all she can about Enda's scorned second wife, the much younger violin virtuoso widow, and the adult kids awaiting an inheritance. Fully realized characters enhance this skillfully plotted tale as it builds to a twist ending. This charming combination of Christmas cheer, Irish customs, and a mystery awash in red herrings will be our **November Cozy Crimes Book of the Month** to put you in the holiday mood.

Young, Kate. [On Borrowed Crime](#) (Crooked Lane \$26.99). I wanted to like this bookish series launch framed around a Jane Doe book club but the author works so hard at cozy elements it feels labored rather than fun. Not recommended.

HISTORICAL MYSTERIES

American:

Belli, Kate. [Deception By Gaslight](#) (Crooked Lane \$26.99). As a chill sets in on New York City in the winter of 1888, a jewel thief dubbed the "Robin Hood of the Lower East Side" has been stealing from the city's wealthiest and giving to the poor. Genevieve Stewart—a young woman whose family is part of Mrs. Astor's famed 400 but who has forged a life of her own as a reporter—decides to chase the story, but gets more than she bargained for: a murder victim sprawled in a dark alley in the dangerous Five

Points neighborhood. A handsome neighborhood tough comes to her rescue—but when she encounters the same man at a glamorous ball a few nights later, she realizes he's society scion Daniel McCaffrey. Could this be her Robin Hood? When two more murders rock the Knickerbocker world, it becomes apparent that something much more sinister is afoot than a few stolen diamond necklaces. Genevieve is determined to prove that Daniel is Robin Hood—but she's loath to believe he is a killer as well. Reporter Genevieve is modeled upon Nelly Bly, groundbreaking in her field, and the anchor for what appears to be a Gilded Gotham Mystery series.

Maxwell, Alyssa. [Murder at Kingscote](#) (Kensington \$26). A murder at a Newport, Rhode Island, "cottage"—as the locals call their mansions—highlights the chasm between rich and poor in 1899. See Unsigned Event Books for more.

Thompson, Victoria. [City of Schemes](#) (Berkley \$26). A family of grifters must execute a series of tricky cons to prevent a life-wrecking scandal in post-World War I New York. Elizabeth Miles, an endearingly charismatic con artist, about to marry lawyer Gideon Bates, but she's fearful that news of the wedding might reach nasty businessman Oscar Thornton, who once sought to kill her but who now thinks Elizabeth is dead after she faked her own death. Despite Elizabeth's best efforts to keep the event quiet, word of her impending wedding does reach Oscar, who approaches Gideon and demands that Elizabeth repay the \$250,000 she cheated him out of in an earlier book. Since she doesn't have the cash, Elizabeth must devise a new, intricate scam to get out of the bind she's in. Thompson enhances the caper plotline by having the real-life American Protective League, an anti-immigrant group that disbanded after the armistice in 1918, spawn a fictional successor group that hunts down Americans who aren't sufficiently loyal to their country. Fans of classic grifter stories, such as *The Sting*, will enjoy this Counterfeit Lady series.

British:

Brody, Frances. [Murder Is in the Air](#) (Crooked Lane \$26.99). I am a fan of this Golden Age style series set in Yorkshire where Kate Shackleton has weathered a life transformed by the death of her husband in WWI and succeeded as a sleuth. It's now 1930 and Kate and her fellow private detective Jim Sykes are summoned to the Barleycorn Brewery by its owner, head of the long-running family firm, who feels something is amiss. William Lofthouse, in his sixties, has married a younger bride, now pregnant. He frets that his nephew and heir is away too long traveling in Germany to learn new brewing techniques. His secretary, the admirable Miss Crawford, really runs the business. Soon after Kate and Jim arrive she's killed in a hit and run. Or is it murder? And if so, is there indeed malfeasance afoot at Barleycorn where, in an effort to gin up sales, the young woman working as a wages clerk is entered into the newfangled Brewery Queen contest? This is a pleasant, leisurely paced mystery with Brody's trademark embrace of local Yorkshire place and customs on show. Recommended.

Dunn, Carola. [Mistletoe and Murder](#) (\$16.99). A reissue for the holidays. In December 1923, the formidable Dowager Viscountess Dalrymple has decided that for Christmas the family will all gather at Brockdene in Cornwall at the invitation of Lord Westmoor. Her daughter will be there just before the holidays working on another article for Town and Country about

the estate itself. But the family gathering quickly goes awry. Brockdene, it seems, is only occupied by the Norvilles—poor relations of Lord Westmoor—and Westmoor himself won't be joining them. So daughter Daisy, her husband Detective Chief Inspector Alec Fletcher of Scotland Yard, and their family must spend their Christmas holiday trapped in an ancestral estate with a rich history of lore, ghost stories, rumors of hidden treasure and secret passageways with a family seething with resentments, grudges and a faintly scandalous history. The veneer of civility that pervades the halls of Brockdene, however, begins to wear thin when long-held family secrets threaten to bubble over, and one of the Christmas guests is found savagely murdered. This is a fine series that has evolved over time; it's nice to go back to an earlier entry.

Ellicott, Jessica. [Murder Comes to Call](#) (Kensington \$26). The lean years following World War I can lead to desperate acts—even in the quiet English village of Walmsley Parva. When a series of burglaries seems to culminate in murder, brash American Beryl Helliwell and proper, buttoned up Brit Edwina Davenport (and her dog, Crumpet) are eager to solve the case in Jessica Ellicott's fourth Beryl and Edwina Mystery.... This is a cozy version of the postwar depicted by Huie, below.

Fellowes, Jessica. [The Mitford Scandal](#) (\$17.99). 1928. After the death of a maid at a glamorous society party, fortune heir Bryan Guinness seizes life and proposes to eighteen-year-old Diana, most beautiful of the six Mitford sisters. The maid's death is ruled an accident, and the newlyweds put it behind them to begin a whirlwind life zipping between London's Mayfair, chic Paris and hedonistic Berlin. Accompanying Diana as her lady's maid is Louisa Cannon, as well as a coterie of friends, family and hangers on, from Nancy Mitford to Evelyn Waugh. When a second victim is found in Paris in 1931, Louisa begins to see links with the death of the maid. Now she must convince the Mitford sisters that a murderer could be within their midst...all while shadows darken across Europe, and within the heart of Diana Mitford herself.

Huber, Anna Lee. [A Pretty Deceit](#) (Kensington \$15.99). While visiting a titled auntie in Wiltshire who has fallen on post-WWI hard times, former Secret Service agent Verity Kent finds herself on hand for the immediate aftermath of what may be a homicide on the estate grounds. See Unsigned Event Books for more.

Huie, M.L. [Nightshade](#) (Crooked Lane \$26.99). Huie portrays Livy Nash as a woman, a survivor of WWII missions, suffering PTSD (no one knew what it was) and essentially friendless. Her fellow agent Margot Dupont was the one woman Livy became close to and unhappily Margot disappeared during one of their joint mission into France. Livy is reluctantly in touch with her wartime boss, Ian Fleming, and he summons her when the British pick up Margot's call sign—Nightshade, send with her signature rhythm. Can it be that Margot is still alive? And if so, where? Or this some kind of trick? When evidence arises that a handsome Russian spy might have information about Margot, Livy agrees to her most dangerous mission yet: going undercover as a double agent to spy on the infamous "Red Devil". As Livy is pulled deeper into the shadows of treachery, the possibility of finding Margot alive diminishes as the danger grows. How much will she have to sacrifice to find a friend she thought she'd lost forever? Huie explores the aftermath of the war, of the heroics needed

then, of the struggles of survivors, and the rise of new threats like Russia, against a background where most people would just like to resume normal lives. What if a person can't?

Lovesey, Peter. [Wobble to Death \(Deluxe Edition\)](#) (Soho \$24.95). Lovesey's first mystery written 50 years ago and reissued for the anniversary. It introduces Sergeant Cribb, a London copper. It's 1879. Crowds have gathered at Islington's chilly Agricultural Hall to place their bets on who will become the next world champion in a six-day, 500-mile speedwalking race, the "wobble." When one of the highly favored contenders dies under suspicious circumstances, Sergeant Cribb also has a race on his hands—to pursue a ruthless murderer. The legendary Lovesey mirrors this with his 2020 novel [The Finisher](#) (\$27.95), another race, but set in Bath where Superintendent Peter Diamond works the case.

Upson, Nicola. [The Secrets of Winter](#) (Crooked Lane \$26.99). Upson continues her Golden Age series featuring real mystery writer Josephine Tey of Inverness, Scotland, as her sleuth. Here she Upson imagines Josephine and her lover changing their Christmas in London plans at the behest of the Yard's Archie Penrose, Josephine's childhood friend. Instead they travel to Cornwall to St. Michael's Mount where the Honourable Hilaria St. Aubyn, hoping to bolster the family's finances and thus the upkeep of her family's home, has arranged a party around a famous film star and paying guests. There is much security and secrecy around the star (who is a real one). But there is also what appears to be an accidental death in the small village on the Mount. The only access to it is via a causeway—the tides are terrible—and the arrival of a wild blizzard snows everyone in for a classic country house murder mystery. WWII is moving closer and closer which will change up this fine series from the 1930s into wartime.

Weaver, Ashley. [A Deception at Thornecrest](#) (St. Martin's \$27.99). Amory Ames is alone at her country house Thornecrest, enjoying her last few weeks of peace and quiet as she prepares for the imminent arrival of her baby. Her husband, Milo, is in London on business, and Amory is content to catch up on her correspondence, organize the nursery, and avoid the well-meaning if rather overbearing company of the ladies in the village as they prepare for the Springtide Festival. But then a woman appears on her doorstep, claiming to be *another* Mrs. Ames, Milo's first wife. The seventh sterling addition to Weaver's Edgar-nominated, marvelously entertaining historical series is, in the words of *PW* tailor-made for "those who enjoy escaping into make-believe English villages in the company of pleasant vicars, mildly eccentric aristocrats, and wily village folk."

Wilde, Darcie. [And Dangerous to Know](#) (\$15.95). When the ladies of the ton of Regency London need discreet assistance, they turn to Rosalind Thorne. Lady Melbourne has entrusted her with recovering a packet of highly sensitive private letters stolen from her desk. The contents of these letters hold great interest for the famous poet Lord Byron, who had carried on a notorious public affair with Lady Melbourne's daughter-in-law, the inconveniently unstable Lady Caroline Lamb. Rosalind is to take up residence in Melbourne House, posing as Lady Melbourne's confidential secretary. There, she must discover the thief and regain possession of the letters before any further scandal erupts. However, Lady Melbourne omits a crucial detail. Rosalind learns from the Bow Street runner Adam Harkness that an unidentified

woman was found dead in the courtyard of Melbourne House. The coroner has determined that she was poisoned. Adam urges Rosalind to use her new position in the household to help solve the murder. 3rd in series after [A Useful Woman](#) and [A Purely Private Matter](#) (\$15 each)—with a 4th for November: [A Lady Compromised](#) (\$26).

And on the darker side...

Clements, Oliver. [The Eyes of the Queen](#) (Atria \$27). Agents of the Crown series, a man who will become the original MI6 agent protects England and Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth I from Spain's nefarious plan to crush the Age of the Enlightenment. Only one nation can defy Spain and its ironclad Catholic orthodoxy: Britain, now ruled by a brilliant young Queen Elizabeth I. But although she may be brave and headstrong, Elizabeth knows she cannot win this war simply by force of arms. After her armies have been slashed in half, her treasury is on its knees. Elizabeth needs a new kind of weapon forged to fight a new kind of war, in which stealth and secrecy, not bloodshed, are the means. In this tense situation, Her Majesty's Secret Service is born with the charismatic John Dee at its head. A scholar, a soldier, and an alchemist, Dee is loyal only to the truth and to his Queen. And for her, the woman he's forbidden from loving, he is prepared to risk his life. A visceral and heart-pumping historical thriller recommended to fans of Ken Follett and Dan Brown.

Finlay, Mick. [Arrowood and the Thames Corpses](#) (Harper \$16.99). Victorian private inquiry agents William Arrowood and Norman Barnett, unlike Sherlock Holmes, whom Arrowood both envies and despises, continue to get prosaic clients with prosaic problems. One such problem, however, becomes much more complex. Captain Moon, the owner of a pleasure steamer that operates on the Thames, reports that someone, probably his business rival Captain Polgreen, has been vandalizing his boat when it's docked at night. Arrowood and Barnett agree to talk to Polgreen, who denies the charges and claims instead that it was his vessel that was damaged by Moon. The case takes a much darker turn after Barnett and Moon find two ropes tied to Moon's steamer the morning after their visit to Polgreen: 14 children's skulls are strung along one rope, and a second is affixed to the murdered bodies of a man and two women. The tension builds as the investigators probe who sent Moon this grisly message and why. Finlay's grim depictions of the inhabitants of the more impoverished parts of London evoke Dickens. This is the third dark, and darkly humorous, thriller by Finlay.

Norman, Samantha [Arianna Franklin]. [Death and the Maiden](#) (Harper \$27.99). At long last, the much-anticipated final installment in the late Arianna Franklin's popular Mistress of the Art of Death historical mystery series set in Norman England. England. 1191. After the death of her friend and patron, King Henry II, Adelia Aguilar, England's vaunted Mistress of the Art of Death, is living comfortably in retirement and training her daughter, Allie, to carry on her craft—sharing the practical knowledge of anatomy, forensics, and sleuthing that catches murderers. Allie is already a skilled healer, with a particular gift for treating animals. But the young woman is nearly twenty, and her father, Rowley, Bishop of Saint Albans, and his patron, the formidable Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine, have plans to marry Allie to an influential husband... if they can find a man who will appreciate a woman with such unusual gifts. When a friend in Cambridgeshire falls ill, Allie is

sent to Ely, where her path will cross with Lord Peverill, a young aristocrat who would be a most suitable match for the young healer. But when Allie arrives, all is chaos. A village girl has disappeared—and she's not the first. Over the past few months, several girls from the villages surrounding Ely have vanished. When the body of one of the missing is discovered, Allie manages to examine the remains before burial. The results lead her to suspect that a monstrous predator is on the loose. Will her training and her stubborn pursuit of the truth help her find the killer?

Parris, SJ. [Conspiracy: A Giordano Bruno Thriller](#) (Pegasus \$26.95). This *PW* Starred Review places Parris firmly in the CJ Sansom realm. "In Parris's brilliant fifth Giordano Bruno thriller, Bruno, an Italian expatriate and free thinker who has served as an operative for Elizabeth I's legendary spymaster, Francis Walsingham, travels in 1585 to Paris to ask a friend of his, Fr. Paul Lefèvre, to intercede with the pope to reverse his excommunication for reading forbidden books. Lefèvre agrees to consider Bruno's request, but within a week the priest is found floating in the Seine barely alive with his skull smashed; shortly before, he delivered a fire-and-brimstone sermon meant to "shake Paris to its foundations." At his friend's request, Bruno is brought to Lefèvre, who utters the word Circe before dying. Bruno's curiosity about the murder and the cryptic last message gets official sanction when the French king summons Bruno and asks him to investigate. Parris is, as always, adept at maintaining a fraught atmosphere, and effortlessly integrates the whodunit plot with the power politics of the time. This superior blend of religious schisms and murder should win Parris new fans."

MORE NEW BOOKS

Akhtar, Ayad. [Homeland Elegies](#) (Little Brown \$28). The author turns his own phenomenally successful American story inside out, eloquently exposing fault lines that persist for those viewed as outsiders in their country of birth. Taking the literary form of a reality drama, the novel explores the socio-economic upheavals that created Trump's America through the astonishing family saga of an American Muslim playwright of Pakistani ancestry. A narrator named Ayad, born in New York and raised in Milwaukee with a firm belief in American exceptionalism, struggles to reconcile the complicated truths behind the United States' obsession with wealth as holy pursuit and its fanatic consumerism.

The author writes: "I'd been putting together a picture of our nation for some time, a country riven by divides — racial, rural and urban, but above all, a country haunted by money, by its worship and its almighty power. I encountered a poem by Giacomo Leopardi entitled 'To Italy,' in which the poet addresses the Italian nation, his fellow citizens. I wondered if there was a voice possible in which I, too, could address my current American nation, as a whole, address my fellow citizens. The question ignited something in me, and within days, I was hearing what I imagined was such a voice. As I started to write, I found that the writing was increasingly pouring out of me, sometimes unbidden, paragraphs and paragraphs almost without interruption."

Banville, John. [Snow](#) (Hanover \$27.99). On a pitilessly snowy December morning in 1957, a body is found in the library at Ballyglass House, owned by the aristocratic Osborne family and located in southeast Ireland's County Wexford. The corpse, which has been worked over with a knife, is that of Father Tom Lawless, a parish priest and frequent visitor to Ballyglass House,

where the elements forced him to spend the night before his body was discovered. As Strafford and his junior officer conduct the business of interviewing the Ballyglass House residents and staff, they find that no one has an alibi for the night of the murder, nor is there evidence of forced entry. Snow represents the first time that Banville has wrested credit for a mystery novel from his crime-writing alter ego, Benjamin Black, possibly because he's enjoying winks at the reader and his "good running joke about its unmissable resemblance to an old-school mystery. Yet it can't be said that the introspective and self-doubting Strafford is a familiar sort of literary detective. And since this is set in 1950s Ireland working out what must be the base crime and the perp is no stretch. Enjoy the language.

Barde-Cabucon, Olivier. [Inspector of Strange and Unexplained Deaths](#) (Pushkin Vertigo \$14.95). Everyone has secrets. Especially the king. When a gruesomely mutilated body is found on the squalid streets of Paris in 1759, the Inspector of Strange and Unexplained Deaths is called to the scene. The body count soon begins to rise and the Inspector is brought even further into a web of deceit that stretches from criminals, secret orders, revolutionaries and aristocrats to very top of society. In the murky world of the court of King Louis XV, finding out the truth will prove to be anything but straightforward. I am hooked on the 12 episodes of *Nicolas le Floch* found on MHZ-TV which portrays a kind of policeman, a bankrupt marquis working as the Commissaire of the Chatelet, in the same France, that of Louis XV. This book is a welcome find, for example, for fans of Abir Mukherjee even if he's over in India.

Box, CJ, ed. [The Best American Mystery Stories 2020](#) (Houghton \$16.99). The annual volume gets CJ as its editor for a nice run through outstanding new short fiction.

✶Bradford, Barbara Taylor. [In the Lion's Den](#) (St Martins \$28.99). The second in Bradford's House of Falconer series about a retail dynasty. By 1889, James Falconer, soon to turn 21, has made himself indispensable to commerce impresario Henry Malvern while dreaming of founding his own retail empire. As in the first installment, [Master of His Fate](#) (\$8.99), James' extended family is still warm and supportive. Till the attraction brewing between James and Alexis, Henry's daughter, resolve their differences and merge their quest for her father's good graces. To Alexis' extreme resentment, James has effectively usurped her status as Malvern's chief deputy since Alexis has chosen to remain, grieving, in the Kentish cottage her late fiancé, Sebastian Trevalian, built for her before his untimely demise. While avoiding her own family, Alexis is still involved with Sebastian's clan, which inhabits the large Trevalian country estate nearby—and she's hurt when the Trevalians avert a potential scandal, involving an unwed mother, without her help. Surely there will be a third installment?

Brown, Sandra. [Best Kept Secrets](#) (\$15.99). Alexandra Gaither is a beautiful lawyer who finally has the power to get what she's always wanted: justice. Armed with new evidence that could lead to an arrest and a conviction, Alex revisits the remote Texas town where her mother died twenty-five years ago. There she confronts the three powerful men who were with her mother the night she died: her former lover, his best friend, and the father figure to them both. Each is charming, each is a suspect, and each has secrets to hide. But none of them can stop Alex's determined search for the truth.

Browning, M E. [Shadow Ridge](#) (Crooked Lane \$26.99). Echo Valley, Colorado, is a place where the natural beauty of a stunning river valley meets budding hipster urbanity. But when an internet stalker is revealed to be a cold-blooded killer in real life the peaceful community is rocked to its core. It should have been an open-and-shut case: the suicide of Tye Horton, the designer of a cutting-edge video game. But Detective Jo Wyatt is immediately suspicious of Quinn Kirkwood, who reported the death. When Quinn reveals an internet stalker is terrorizing her, Jo is skeptical. Doubts aside, she delves into the claim and uncovers a link that ties Quinn to a small group of beta-testers who had worked with Horton. When a second member of the group dies in a car accident, Jo's investigation leads her to the father of a young man who had killed himself a year earlier. But there's more to this case than a suicide, and as Jo unearths the layers, a more sinister pattern begins to emerge.... Small town Colorado is a hot mystery venue—think of Margaret Mizushima's K-9s in Timber Creek, for instance.

Enger, Thomas/Jorn Lier Horst. [Death Deserved](#) (Orenda \$15.95). This outstanding series launch from Horst (the Inspector William Wisting series) and Enger (The Henning Juul series) introduces 40ish Alexander Blix, a psychologically wounded Oslo homicide detective. When former star athlete Sonja Nordstrøm fails to keep a video appearance for her new tell-all autobiography, journalist Emma Ramm, an ambitious celebrity blogger in her 20s, visits Nordstrøm's apartment, where she finds the author gone and signs of a struggle. One of the police officers called to the apartment is Blix, who's unnerved to see Emma, with whom he's connected by a traumatic incident 19 years earlier. Emma doesn't recognize Blix, who, despite anti-leaking warnings from his by-the-book boss, ends up consulting Emma, herself a troubled soul, about what's initially a missing person case. After the case mushrooms into a succession of eerily planned and executed homicides of amoral celebrities, Blix and Emma concoct a brilliant but dangerous scheme to catch the culprit. A devilishly complex plot, convincing red herrings, and well-rounded characters help make this a winner.

Flagg, Fannie. [The Wonder Boy of Whistle Stop](#) (Random \$28). Library Reads says, "Revisits the small town of Whistle Stop, Alabama. Dot, the postmistress, sends out a yearly Christmas letter and brings the former residents up to speed with one another. Each chapter focuses on a different year, from the '30s through the present day, tied together with Dot's annual letter. For readers who enjoyed *Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Café*.

French, Tana. [The Searcher](#) (Viking \$27). The *PW* Starred Review: "After 25 years as a Chicago cop, Cal Hooper, the protagonist of this superb standalone from Edgar winner French, decided he needed a change. So he moved to a village in the West of Ireland, "no bigger than the little end of nothing," where people leave their doors unlocked. After three months, his prosaic new life ends when he's sought out by 12-year-old Trey Reddy, who has learned of Hooper's former profession. Trey fears something bad has happened to his 19-year-old brother, Brendan, who hasn't been seen in about six months. Because their mother, Sheila, is convinced Brendan took off on his own, Trey hasn't gone to the police, though the boy's certain his brother wouldn't have done that. Despite Hooper's cynicism ("Anyone could do anything," he thinks), he agrees to look into the matter, starting with questioning Sheila. The more Hooper digs, the more he finds that his

new community conceals dark secrets. Insightful characterizations, even of minor figures, and a devastating reveal help make this a standout. Crime fiction fans won't want to miss this one.

Gaiman, Neil. [The Neil Gaiman Reader](#) (Harper \$40). 52 pieces in all—of selected fiction from the multiple-award-winning, #1 *New York Times* bestselling author Gaiman, curated by his readers around the world, and introduced with a foreword by Booker Prize-winning author Marlon James, and spans Gaiman's career to date.

Hobson, Ben. [Snake Island](#) (Arcade \$25.99). Australian author Hobson makes his U.S. debut with this bleak but powerful crime novel set in an unnamed town in rural Victoria. Vernon and Penelope Moore, a retired couple, haven't seen or talked to their only child, Caleb, since he went to prison two years earlier for attacking and nearly killing his wife. But upon hearing that Caleb has been assaulted by Brendan Cahill, a friend of Caleb's wife with anger issues and enough connections to bribe his way into the prison, Vernon reaches out to his son, and decides to see whether he can resolve things with a sit-down with Brendan's father, Ernie. Things do not go well, because of the obstinacy of both Vernon and Ernie, and due to external events, including a car accident involving a kangaroo. Meanwhile, a compromised police officer becomes involved in the dispute, as does Brendan's brother, who would rather focus on fatherhood than his family's criminal activities. Little goes right for any of them, and the violence only escalates. Hobson does a terrific job of portraying multiple broken people unable to find ways out of their unhappiness. Go for the noir.

Johnston, Antony. [The Exphoria Code](#) (Pegasus \$25.95) introduces a major new techno-thriller series featuring an MI6 cyber-espionage specialist. Brigitte Sharp is a brilliant but haunted young MI6 hacker who has been deskbound and in therapy for three years after her first field mission in Syria went disastrously wrong. Despite her boss's encouragement, Bridge isn't ready to go back in the field. But now one of her best friends has been murdered, and Bridge believes his death is connected to strange "ASCII art" posts appearing on the internet that carry encrypted hidden messages. On decoding the messages, she discovers evidence of a mole inside a top-secret Anglo-French military drone project—an enemy who may also be her friend's killer. Her MI6 bosses force her back into the field, sending her undercover in France to find and expose the mole. But the truth behind the Exphoria code is worse than anyone imagined, and soon Bridge is on the run, desperate and alone, as a terrorist plot unfolds and threatens everything she has left to live for. Drawing on cutting edge technology and modern global threats, Brigitte Sharp is a highly credible female spy.

Lewes, Elizabeth. [Little Falls](#) (Crooked Lane \$26.99). After tours as a medic in Iraq and Afghanistan, Camille Waresch, the narrator of Lewes's outstanding debut, has returned to her hometown of Little Falls, Washington, to care for her 15-year-old daughter, Sophie Scott, whom she abandoned as a baby to her parents when she joined the army. Camille's drinking is under control, but her PTSD frequently surges, affecting her fractious relationship with the defiant Sophie. Her county property inspector job suits her, as she's mostly in the field with little contact with people. But during a routine inspection on an isolated ranch, Camille finds the tortured corpse of 19-year-old Patrick Beale hanging in

an outbuilding, reminding her of a soldier's body she came across during combat. Camille initially looks into the murder to quiet her nightmares, but her investigation intensifies when she learns Patrick dated Sophie. When Sophie disappears, the mentally fragile Camille is tested to her limit. The tight, well-constructed plot complements the searing portrait of Camille as she deals with the guilt she feels over her daughter and her general rage at the world. Lewes is off to a strong start," says *PW* and also I. It's interesting that there is an uptick in small town landscapes for fiction which, while books had to have been written before the pandemic, is a trend sure to be heightened by it.

Macmillan, Gilly. [To Tell You the Truth](#) (Morrow \$26.99). **WARNING: this maybe the November British Crime Club Pick.** And it gets a rave I agree with: "Bestselling mystery writer Lucy Harper, the insecure heroine of this outstanding suspense novel from Edgar finalist Macmillan (*The Nanny*), is the creator of capable and astute DS Eliza Grey, based on an imaginary childhood friend. In 1991, when Lucy was nine years old, she snuck out of her home with her three-year-old brother, Teddy, to see a Summer Solstice celebration taking place in the woods outside Bristol. Lucy returned in the early hours of the morning; Teddy did not. Lucy's only emotional support during the difficult period that followed was her imaginary friend, Eliza, who gradually evolved into her fictional police detective. In the present, trouble begins when Lucy's publishers all reject her new novel—because Eliza isn't in it. Lucy's rapacious husband, Dan, is also angry at her decision, as it signals a loss in income. When Dan disappears, the police consider Lucy a suspect. Who can she trust? Herself? Her creation? This deliciously multilayered tale provides genuine, shocking surprises that culminate in a satisfying and unexpected conclusion. Macmillan is a master of misdirection."

Maguire, Gregory. [Wicked](#) (HarperCollins \$30). Maguire's groundbreaking *New York Times* bestseller redefined the land of Oz, its inhabitants, its Wizard, and the Emerald City, viewing the world created by L. Frank Baum through a darker and greener lens. Brilliantly inventive, *Wicked* offered a radical new portrait of one of the most feared and despised villains in all of literature: the universally maligned Wicked Witch of the West who, in Maguire's imaginative retelling, isn't nearly as black-hearted as we imagined. Now readers old and new can indulge in this classic with a special 25th anniversary hardcover edition.

Mantel, Hilary. [Mantel Pieces](#) (Harper \$26.99). From the twice Booker Prize winner and internationally bestselling Hilary Mantel, a collection of writing—essays, book reviews, memoir—from over thirty years contributing to the *London Review of Books*. The publisher calls it, "Constantly illuminating, always penetrating, and often very funny, interleaved with letters and other ephemera gathered from the archive." You probably already know that Mantel had good odds of winning a third Booker for 2020 but...did not.

Moretti, Kate. [The Girls of Brackenhill](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$15.95). In 2019, Hannah Maloney, the heroine of this riveting thriller from bestseller Moretti, is living in Virginia with her fiancé, Huck, when she receives a phone call letting her know that her aunt Fae has been in a car accident. Though Hannah hasn't spoken to Fae in 17 years, she's listed as Fae's emergency contact. After Hannah and Huck arrive at Brackenhill, her aunt

Fae and uncle Stuart's castle home in the Catskills, Hannah learns that Fae has died from her injuries, and Stuart is gravely ill with cancer. Hannah and her sister, Julia, used to spend summers at Brackenhill, until the summer 17 years earlier that Julia disappeared. When Hannah's dog uncovers a human bone on her aunt's property, the police, led by police officer Wyatt McCarran, who was Hannah's first boyfriend in their teens, investigate, though Hannah is sure the bone is her sister's. Meanwhile, Hannah has disturbing dreams and episodes of sleepwalking, and she's again attracted to Wyatt. Flashbacks to the summer Julia vanished heighten the suspense. Fans of gothic mysteries with a touch of the supernatural will be richly rewarded.

Mytting, Lars. [The Bell in the Lake](#) (Overbook Press \$27). "Perfect for fans of Kieran Millwood Hargrave's *The Mercies*, this Norwegian bestseller is an atmosphere-lover's dream. Set in the secluded village of Butangen in 1880, *The Bell in the Lake* chronicles its residents' lives, all centered around a 700-year-old church and its mystical bells. Mytting effortlessly captures the push and pull between history and modernity, stringing his story with tension and moments of rare beauty. This novel is achingly real, as if one could step into the pages and find themselves looking up at the towering wooden staves, of the old wooden church with its pagan effigies and supernatural bells. When the pastor makes a deal that brings an outsider, a sophisticated German architect, into their world, the village and Astrid are caught between past and future, as dark forces come into play.

Oates, Joyce Carol. [Cardiff by the Sea](#) (Grove \$26). The four novellas in this spellbinding collection from Oates carefully tread the boundary between psychological and supernatural expressions of the macabre. In the title story, a sinister gothic confection, a young woman inherits a house from the grandmother she never knew, prompting her to explore the harrowing family history that led to her adoption as a toddler. "Phantomwise: 1972" evokes the work of Lewis Carroll in its account of a heroine, Alyce, enmeshed in a skewed reality. In "The Surviving Child," a new wife caring for her stepson is haunted by the palpable presence of the boy's mother, who killed both herself and her young daughter. Oates masterfully digs into the turbulent psyches of her characters and makes it ambiguous to the reader how much of the strange worlds they navigate are projections of their own anxieties and longings—especially in "Miao Dao," with its teenage heroine.

O'Connor, Scott. [Zero Zone](#) (Counterpoint \$26) "is a surprising literary thriller about art and damaged people in the traumatic aftermath of a cult-like experience at a desert art installation that ended in violence. While it builds to a suitably harrowing climax, *Zero Zone* quickly reveals itself to be a meditation on art in the body of a thriller. One of the central questions of the book is that of artistic responsibility: Does Jess bear any responsibility for what happened inside and under the influence of her art installation? O'Connor takes the power of art very seriously, showing how Jess transforms her grief and pain into art that sometimes has dramatic effects on observers, positive and negative. As the novel goes on, Jess realizes that she can't completely distance herself from how her art plays out in the world, as well as the people it affects in strange and unpredictable ways. It's a hard, painful lesson, but one very much in line with the novel's empathy for damaged people searching for "peace, or something like it."

Patterson, James. [Three Women Disappear](#) (LittleBrown \$27.99). Accountant Anthony Costello has a talent for manipulating both numbers and people, turning losses into profits, enemies into allies—and vice versa. When Costello is found murdered in his own home, three suspects had motive. All three had access to his home. And all three women are missing. Are they in the wind—or in the grave? Eyes are on Detective Sean Walsh, whose personal connection to the case is stronger than leads to solve it. Neither the powerful bankroll behind Costello nor Walsh's vengeful superior officer can budge the investigation, yet as Walsh continues to dig, he uncovers even more reasons the women have to stay hidden—from the law, and from each other.

Penzler, Otto. [The Big Book of Espionage](#) (Vintage \$26). State secrets. Double agents. Leaks. Penzler brings you all this and more with his latest title in the Big Book series. No need to wait for the government to release redacted information, Otto is ready to declassify confidential matters. Great stories from Lee Child and Charles McCarry are pulled from the shadows and into the light. So pull your fedora down, adjust your fake moustache, and get ready to settle in with some of the greats.

✚Schott, Ben. [Jeeves and the Leap of Faith](#) (LittleBrown \$28). The Drones club's in peril. Gussie's in love. Spode's on the war path. Oh, and His Majesty's Government needs a favor... I say! It's a good thing Bertie's back, what? From the mean streets of Mayfair to the scheming spires of Cambridge, we encounter a joyous cast of characters: chiseling painters and criminal bookies, eccentric philosophers and dodgy clairvoyants, appalling poets and pocket dictators, vexatious aunts and their vicious hounds. But that's not all: Who is ICEBERG, and why is he covered in chalk? Why is Jeeves reading *Winnie-the-Pooh*? What is seven across and eighty-five down? How do you play Russian Roulette at the Savoy? I really enjoyed Schott's previous tribute to Wodehouse, [Jeeves and the King of Clubs](#) (\$16.99, and expect to find this second homage another charming piece of escapism. Give them both as gifts.

Saenz, Eva Garcia. [The Silence of the White City](#) (Vintage \$16.95). A police inspector in Vittoria in Spain's Basque region investigates the apparent resurgence of serial murders from 20 years earlier, especially perplexing since the killer is in prison. During the summer festivals in Vitoria-Gasteiz, capital of Spain's Basque region, Inspector Unai "Kraken" López de Ayala is called to a double murder scene at a cathedral. It eerily resembles the sensational crimes that were committed in the area 20 years earlier, all at prehistoric sites. A prominent archaeologist, Tasio Ortiz de Zárate, was arrested at the time and convicted of the crimes thanks to evidence supplied by his twin brother, Ignacio, a policeman. Since Tasio has been in prison ever since, Unai has to wonder whether Tasio was innocent. "In the stunning first in Sáenz's White City trilogy, a mélange of offbeat police procedural, Basque legends, and world mythology" combines with "fascinating local color, a handsomely crafted plot, and exquisite characterization." I revisit this July release for those missing travel and because the Basque region is a personal favorite.

Swann, Christopher. [Never Turn Back](#) (Crooked Lane \$26.99). Private school English teacher Ethan Faulkner, the narrator of this unsettling thriller set in Atlanta from Swann (*Shadow of the Lions*), returns home one morning after spending the night

with a colleague, Marisa Devereaux, to find his troubled sister, Susannah, awaiting him. Susannah often disappears from Ethan's life for months at a time, and they share the trauma of having witnessed their parents' shooting murder when he was 13 and she was 10. Ethan made a promise to his dying father to look after Susannah, but his ambivalent feelings about her have meant he hasn't done as good a job as he might. His more immediate concern is Marisa, who becomes obsessed with him and infiltrates his life, befriendng Susannah. Susannah's subsequent kidnapping raises the stakes, as does a murder, in which Ethan becomes a suspect. Haunted by the unknown gunmen who killed his parents, Ethan discovers a link between them and the new murder. Faulkner has a gift for language ("The twin memories of my parents are like a pair of blades scissoring my heart"), and smoothly quotes the likes of Robert Frost and Shakespeare.

Taylor, Patrick. [An Irish Country Welcome](#) (Forge \$26.99). In the close-knit Northern Irish village of Ballybucklebo, it's said that a new baby brings its own welcome. Young doctor Barry Laverty and his wife Sue are anxiously awaiting their first child, but as the community itself prepares to welcome a new decade, the closing months of the 1960s bring more than a televised moon landing to Barry, his friends, his neighbors, and his patients, including a number of sticky questions. A fledgling doctor joins the practice as a trainee, but will the very upper-class Sebastian Carson be a good fit for the rough and tumble of Irish country life? And as sectarian tensions rise elsewhere in Ulster, can a Protestant man marry the Catholic woman he dearly loves, despite his father's opposition? And who exactly is going to win the award for the best dandelion wine at this year's Harvest Festival? But while Barry and Dr. Fingal Flahertie O'Reilly and their fellow physicians deal with everything from brain surgery to a tractor accident to a difficult pregnancy, there's still time to share the comforting joys and pleasures of this very special place. I'm all for escapism this month.

Tedrowe, Emily Gray. [The Talented Miss Farwell](#) (Custom House \$26.99). A *PW* Star: "*Catch Me If You Can* meets Patricia Highsmith in this electrifying page-turner of greed and obsession, survival and self-invention, that is a piercing character study of one unforgettable female con artist. It's based on a true story although the con in real life went to support a horse breeding operation. At the end of the 1990s, with the art market finally recovered from its disastrous collapse, Miss Rebecca Farwell has made a killing at Christie's in New York City, selling a portion of her extraordinary art collection for a rumored 900 percent profit. Dressed in couture YSL, drinking the finest champagne at trendy Balthazar, Reba, as she's known, is the picture of a wealthy art collector. To some, the elusive Miss Farwell is a shark with outstanding business acumen. To others, she's a heartless capitalist whose only interest in art is how much she can make. But a thousand miles from the Big Apple, in the small town of Pierson, Illinois, Miss Farwell is someone else entirely—a quiet single woman known as Becky who still lives in her family's farmhouse, wears sensible shoes, and works tirelessly as the town's treasurer and controller. No one understands the ins and outs of Pierson's accounts better than Becky; she's the last one in the office every night, crunching the numbers. Somehow, her neighbors marvel, she always finds a way to get the struggling town just a little more money. What Pierson doesn't see—and can never discover—is that much of that money is shifted into a separate account

that she controls, "borrowed" funds used to finance her art habit. Though she quietly repays Pierson when she can, the business of art is cutthroat and unpredictable. But as Reba Farwell's deals get bigger and bigger, Becky Farwell's debt to Pierson spirals out of control. How long can the talented Miss Farwell continue to pull off her double life?" With no review copy I will wait for the book to arrive at the store—and find out.

Walschots, Natalie Zina. [Hench](#) (Morrow \$27.99). The Indie Next Pick: "*Hench* is absolutely terrific! Walschots has found a fresh, original, feminist angle on the tropes of superheroes and supervillains in this smart, lively novel. Anna is barely subsisting from temp job to temp job — even supervillains need someone to do their data entry — when she becomes collateral damage in a superhero's intervention. Injured and jobless, she fights back by collecting data on the negative effects caused by superheroes. As Anna's research goes viral, she's tapped for a new job with the supervillain, giving her an opportunity to use her skills to fight back against the so-called forces of good. Very highly recommended!

Weinberger, Andy. [Reason to Kill: An Amos Parisman Mystery](#) (Prospect Park \$16). Jobs have been sparse lately for elderly L.A. PI Amos Parisman, the narrator of Weinberger's appealing sequel to 2019's *An Old Man's Game*, until he receives a phone call from 75-year-old Pinky Bleistiff, the manager of a klezmer group called Dark Dreidel, whose members have been disappearing: first the drummer, then a violinist, and finally Risa Barsky, "the lady singer." Amos soon discovers that the attractive 35-year-old Risa is much more to Pinky than just another songstress. Then, Pinky is murdered. His death is followed by that of Risa's on-again, off-again boyfriend. Amos must discover the truth behind these crimes in a bid to keep an innocent person from going to prison. The tight plot is enriched with Amos's wry observations...Descriptions of Amos's tender yet increasingly fragile feelings for his dementia-stricken wife add poignancy.

Woods, Stuart. [Shakeup](#) (Putnam \$28). "New York attorney Stone Barrington returns to the Washington, D.C., hotel where he's staying for the inauguration of his longtime paramour, Holly Barker, as president—only to find the body of Patricia Clark, the incoming secretary of commerce's wife, lying on the floor of his suite. The chief suspect is the victim's husband, Dan Clark, with whom she was going through a contested divorce. Holly soon dismisses Dan from her cabinet. Stone and his New York City police commissioner pal, Dino Bachetti, help investigate the Clark case and subsequent related murders. Meanwhile, Stone and Holly contrive to meet discreetly for sex as often as possible. Fortunately for Stone, more than one attractive, willing woman is available when Holly isn't around. Better yet, nobody gets jealous. Woods's alternate universe—in which the first female U.S. president is succeeded by the second female U.S. president—provides perfect escapist fare."

Wortham, Reavis Z. [Rock Hole](#) (Poisoned Pen \$12.99). This is a reissue of Wortham's first mystery with an introduction by Joe R. Lansdale—and well worth buying for the Lansdale prose which is just amazing! Lamar County, Texas: Summer, 1964. Life is idyllic for ten-year-old Top Parker, who has come to live with his grandparents in the rural community of Center Springs. Yet while Top runs the woods and countryside with his near twin cousin, Pepper, his Grandpa Ned—also known as Constable Ned in these

parts—witnesses the spreading menace of a deranged killer. Out of his element, Ned reaches out to neighboring law enforcement and then the FBI. Local news sources tag the budding serial killer “The Skinner,” and the label is chillingly accurate. Beginning with the torture and killing of small animals, the monster quickly moves to humans, displaying their mutilated corpses as gruesome trophies, with no apparent pattern to grab hold of. Lamar County cowers. Meanwhile, Constable Ned is convinced that a vendetta is involved, and though the why of it is murky, he can no longer deny that something horrific and dangerous is heading for the Parkers. A start here of a great and unusual series I absolutely loved editing.

OUR OCTOBER SMALL PAPERBACK PICKS

Brady, Eileen. [Saddled with Murder](#) (Sourcebooks \$7.99). Dr. Kate Vet #1. Veterinarian Kate Turner is overworked, unappreciated, dealing with two dissatisfied clients and a complicated personal life. But when both dissatisfied clients pass away within two weeks of each other and Kate’s ex-boyfriend is mugged and robbed after they have a heated argument in the hospital parking lot, Kate’s life really becomes complicated.

Brennan, Allison. [Cold as Ice](#) (St. Martins \$8.99). Lucy Kincaid #17. When the psychopath she put away is released from juvenile detention with a clean slate and is determined to make her life a living hell, FBI Agent Lucy Kincaid is the only one who can stop this woman before she finishes her deadly game.

Burdette, Lucy. [A Deadly Feast](#) (\$7.99). Key West Food Critic #9. Key West food critic Hayley Snow’s plans to celebrate Thanksgiving with her family and her police officer fiancé, Nathan Bransford will have to wait when Hayley picks up a distraught phone call from her friend, Analise Smith, who wants Hayley to investigate when one of her customers turns up dead.

Cameron, Marc. [Tom Clancy Code of Honor](#) (\$9.99). Jack Ryan #26. When an old college friend-turned-humanitarian is arrested in Indonesia amid false accusations, President Ryan assigns the Campus team to find answers at the same time he receives an ominous warning.

Coco, Nancy. [Have Yourself a Fudgy Little Christmas](#) (Kensington \$7.99). Candy Coated #8. When a mysterious note leads her to a dying woman who names her friend, Frances, as her killer, fudge shop owner Allie McMurphy knows that’s impossible and must wrap up this case before the trail runs cold. *Kirkus* concluded with “Two nasty murders, charming surviving characters, plenty of Christmas cheer, and enough fudge recipes for a major sugar rush.”

Connelly, Michael. [Night Fire](#) (\$9.99). Bosch and Ballard #2. After receiving a notebook with details about a 20-year cold case, homicide detective Harry Bosch teams up with LAPD detective Renée Ballard only to later discover some disturbing clues about his late mentor. *PW* gave this a star saying “Connelly is without peer when it comes to police procedurals, and once again proves that he’s the modern master of the form.”

Eaton, J C. [Broadcast 4 Murder](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Sophie Kimball #7. When her radio host mother finds the dead body of the station’s programming director, it is up to Sophie Kimball to solve this crime that is linked to the past. Here’s what *Kirkus* said “Fans who like their mysteries with a healthy dose of humor will enjoy Eaton’s latest comedy of errors.”

Hauty, Chris. [Deep State](#) (\$9.99). When a controversial populist candidate is elected president over an increasingly partisan America, the assassination of the White House chief of staff reveals a far-ranging conspiracy that implicates insiders’ at the most hidden levels of government

Kellerman, Jonathan. [The Museum of Desire](#) (\$9.99). Alex Delaware #35. When a crime of unprecedented malice occurs in a deserted Bel Air mansion, LAPD Lieutenant Milo Sturgis and psychologist Alex Delaware try to find links among the victims and how they were killed.

Taylor, Brad. [Hunter Killer](#) (\$9.99). Pike Logan #14. After a suspicious attack ends a friend’s life in a lawless region of South America, Pike Logan teams up with Jennifer Cahill to investigate a crew of Russian assassins that may be targeting Taskforce members.

Ware, Ruth. [The Death of Mrs. Westaway](#) (\$9.99). After erroneously receiving a mysterious letter about a large inheritance, Harriet “Hal” Westaway attends the deceased’s funeral and realizes that something is very, very wrong. *PW* ended their review with “Evocative prose, artfully shaded characters, and a creepy, claustrophobic atmosphere keep the pages of this explosive family drama turning.”

NEW IN SMALL PAPERBACKS

Berry, Tamara. [Potions Are for Pushovers](#) (Kensington \$7.99). Eleanor Wilde #2. Fake medium Eleanor Wilde is implicated in a poisoning murder that her apprentices believe is actually the work of a werewolf, a theory that is complicated by the disappearances of local animals.

Blake, Bethany. [Brushstroke with Death](#) (Kensington \$7.99). Owl & Crescent #1. An artist and art teacher with a magical gift for solving murders, Bethany Blake and her owl Rembrandt team up with a handsome, mysterious detective to find out who killed a much despised restaurant owner.

Childs, Lisa. [The Runaway](#) (Kensington \$7.99). Rosemary Tulle has come to Halcyon Hall desperate to find her younger sister Genevieve, but staff at the former asylum for the insane insists that the seventeen-year-old ran away.

Crawford, Isis. [A Catered New Year’s Eve](#) (\$7.99). Mysteries with Recipes #15. Sisters Bernie and Libby are contacted by a long-estranged family member, who asks for their help uncovering the truth about the suspicious long-ago deaths of their father and his business partner.

Driscoll, Sara. [No Man’s Land](#) (Kensington \$9.99). F.B.I. K-9 #5. For Meg Jennings and her K-9 companion, Hawk, exploring the ruins of a deserted building is an exciting way to sharpen their skills without the life-or-death stakes they face as part of the FBI’s Human Scent Evidence Team. But deep in the echoing rooms of an abandoned asylum, Hawk finds the body of an elderly woman.

Elliott, Lauren. [A Page Marked for Murder](#) (Kensington \$7.99). Beyond the Page #5. As the big Fire and Ice festival fast approaches, bookstore owner Addie Greyborne finds herself reading the clues in her Massachusetts town to find a rare edition of a book that could be related to a recent murder.

Erickson, Alex. [Death by French Roast](#) (Kensington \$7.99). Bookstore Café #8. Bookstore manager and amateur sleuth

Krissy Hancock decides to solve a cold case involving her friend's brother, who died thirty years ago.

Fletcher, Jessica. [Murder She Wrote the Murder of Twelve](#) (\$7.99). Murder, She Wrote #51. Jessica Fletcher tackles an Agatha Christie-style mystery when a sudden blizzard traps her in a hotel with hostile strangers who are barely tolerating each other during the nuptials of a bride and groom from rival families.

Fluke, Joanne. [Christmas Sweets](#) (Kensington \$7.99). Gathered together in one volume are three yuletide tales of mystery, murder, and romance including Fluke's "The Twelve Desserts of Christmas," Laura Levine's "Nightmare on Elf Street," and Leslie Meier's "The Christmas Thief."

Loudon, Margaret. [Murder in the Margins](#) (Berkley \$7.99). Open Book #1. Hit with a bad case of writer's block, American gothic author Penelope Parish heads to England where she, while working in a bookstore, gets embroiled in a murder investigation that leads to new friendships and new tricks to help her finish her novel.

Patterson, James. [The River Murders](#) (\$9.99). Includes "Malevolent" in which Mitchum must track down a ruthless mastermind intent on destroying everything he holds dear as well as two previously released Mitchum tales "Hidden" and "Malicious."

Staub, Wendy Corsi. [Dead before Dark](#) (Kensington \$7.99). Re-release. Through her television appearances, famed psychic Lucinda Sloan helps police capture America's most elusive serial killers. But once the notorious murderer known as the Night Watchman discovers Lucinda "sees" murders after they are committed, he decides it might be fun to play a little game with her.

Stuart, Amy. [Still Water](#) (\$9.99). After a mother and her son disappear from their town, Claire is hired to find them, but in her search she uncovers the tragic family history of their main benefactor and a disturbing secret about why the police are not interested in solving the case.