

# **MANCHESTER PUBLIC LIBRARY MYSTERY BOOK CLUB READING LIST 2026-2027**

The group meets on the last Friday of the month at 10:30 AM - except in November\* & December\* when the date is adjusted for convenience. Club meeting locations may vary. So, stay up to date by subscribing to our email list:  
<http://www.mysterybookfan.com/subscribe/>

| Meet Day               | Book Title                          | Author                           |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Sep 25,<br><b>2025</b> | <b>Murder Takes a Vacation</b>      | <b>Laura Lippman</b>             |
| Oct 30                 | <b>Winter Counts</b>                | <b>David Heska Wanbli Weiden</b> |
| Nov 20*                | <b>And Then There Were None</b>     | <b>Agatha Christie</b>           |
| Dec 18*                | <b>The Mystery of Mrs. Christie</b> | <b>Marie Benedict</b>            |
| Jan 29,<br><b>2027</b> | <b>Not Quite Dead Yet</b>           | <b>Holly Jackson</b>             |
| Feb 26                 | <b>Good People</b>                  | <b>Patmeena Sabit</b>            |
| Mar 26                 | <b>Slow Horses</b>                  | <b>Mick Herron</b>               |
| Apr 30                 | <b>The Big Empty</b>                | <b>Robert Crais</b>              |
| May 28                 | <b>The Valley of the Moms</b>       | <b>Hannah Selinger</b>           |
| Jun 25                 | <b>The Keeper</b>                   | <b>John Lescroart</b>            |
| July 30                | <b>Trespasser</b>                   | <b>Paul Doiron</b>               |
| Aug 27                 | <b>The Fine Art of Lying</b>        | <b>Alexandra Andrews</b>         |

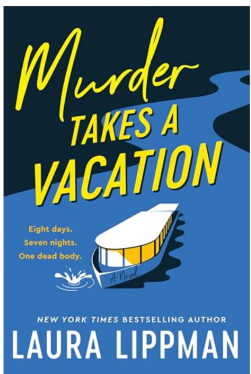
**NOTE: Print JUST PAGE 1, to get the above.** Use scissors to cut away the large margins. Tape it up somewhere handy. OR, fold it and use as a bookmark from month-to-month. With the large print, you might not need glasses!

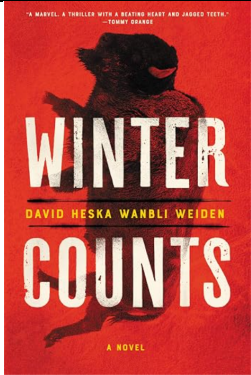
I have a 4 drawer metal file cabinet next to my computer table; a magnet has held the annual list there for quite a few years.

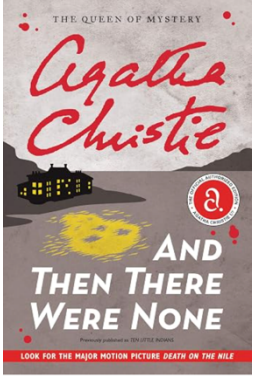
***If you also want a paper copy of the "blurbs" about each book, print all 11 pages.***

## Blurbs for Final List of 12 Books for 2026-27

Each blurb in this document is readily available online by going to the front (or welcome) page of our Mystery Book Club website. Near the top of that front page is a table with our 12 books. Clicking a title will pop up the same blurb as in this document.

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| <p><b>Friday, Sep 25, 2026</b></p>                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <p><b><i>Murder Takes a Vacation</i></b><br/>by Laura Lippman<br/>(June, 2025)</p>  | <p>Muriel Blossom, I've read, was an occasional minor character in Lippman's 12-book series about Baltimore PI Tess Monaghan. She apparently appears as "assistant" to Monaghan, perhaps an office manager. I have not read any of the books, but did a "search" of Books #1, #4, and #8 and her name did not appear.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">So, minor character there, indeed!</p> <p>In <i>Murder Takes a Vacation</i>, Mrs. Blossom is the lead character. She is now a middle-aged widow, taking a vacation on a Parisian river cruise that turns into a deadly international case...that only she can solve.</p> |
| <p><b>#1 of expected series</b></p>                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <p><b>272 pages</b></p>                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <p><b>PLACE:</b> <i>On a River Seine Cruise Boat</i></p>                            | <p>Mrs. Blossom has a knack for blending into the background, which was an asset during her days assisting private investigator Tess Monaghan. But when she finds a winning lottery ticket in a parking lot, everything changes. She is determined to see the world that she sometimes feels is passing her by.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <p><b>TYPE(S):</b><br/>Cozy Mystery,<br/>Romantic Mystery,<br/>Amateur Sleuth.</p>  | <p>When Mrs. Blossom booked her cruise through France on the MS Solitaire, she did not expect to meet Allan on her transatlantic flight. He is the first man who's sparked something inside her since her beloved husband passed.</p> <p>She also didn't expect Allan to be found, dead, twenty-four hours later in Paris, a city he wasn't supposed to be in.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|  | <p>Now Mrs. Blossom doesn't know who to trust on board the ship, especially when a mystifying man, Danny, keeps popping up around every corner, always present when things go awry. He is convinced that Allan was transporting a stolen piece of art, and Mrs. Blossom knows more than she lets on, regarding both the artifact and Allan's death.</p> <p>Mrs. Blossom's questions only increase as the cruise sails down the Seine. Why does it feel like she is being followed? Who was Allan, and why was he killed? Most alarmingly, why do these mysterious men keep flirting with her? &lt;-- From Amazon</p>              |

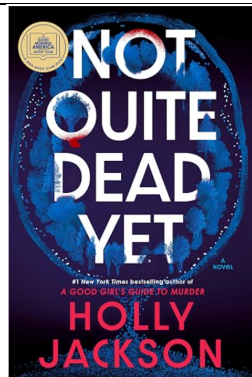
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| Friday, Oct 30, 2026                                                                              | This is a groundbreaking thriller about a vigilante on a Native American reservation who embarks on a dangerous mission to track down the source of a heroin influx.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Winter Counts</b><br>by David Heska Wanbli Weiden<br>(2020)                                    | Virgil Wounded Horse is the local enforcer on the Rosebud Indian Reservation in South Dakota. When justice is denied by the American legal system or the tribal council, Virgil is hired to deliver his own punishment, the kind that's hard to forget. But when heroin makes its way into the reservation and finds Virgil's nephew, his vigilantism suddenly becomes personal. He enlists the help of his ex-girlfriend and sets out to learn where the drugs are coming from, and how to make them stop.                                                                                                                      |
| #1 of 2 featuring Virgil Wounded Horse, an enforcer (like a PI) on the Rosebud Indian Reservation | They follow a lead to Denver and find that drug cartels are rapidly expanding and forming new and terrifying alliances. And back on the reservation, a new tribal council initiative raises uncomfortable questions about money and power. As Virgil starts to link the pieces together, he must face his own demons and reclaim his Native identity. He realizes that being a Native American in the twenty-first century comes at an incredible cost.                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 336 pages                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>PLACE:</b> Rosebud Indian Reservation in South Dakota, and Denver, CO.                         | <i>Winter Counts</i> is a tour-de-force of crime fiction, a bracingly honest look at a long-ignored part of American life, and a twisting, turning story that's as deeply rendered as it is thrilling.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>TYPE(S):</b> Indigenous Fiction, Similar to a PI story [Virgil is not in the Tribal Police].   | <b>Awards: Partial list:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>AMAZON Stars</b><br>4.3 ★★★★★ (2.9K)                                                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Named as one of "The 100 Best Mystery and Thriller Books of All Time" by <i>Time</i> magazine.</li> <li>• Winner of the Anthony Award for Best First Novel</li> <li>• Winner of the Thriller Award for Best First Novel</li> <li>• Winner of the Barry Award for Best First Novel</li> <li>• Winner of the Lefty Award for Best Debut Mystery Novel</li> <li>• Winner of the Macavity Award for Best First Novel</li> <li>• Winner of the CrimeFest (UK) Award for Best Debut Crime Novel</li> <li>• Named a Best Book of 2021 in New Zealand by <i>New Zealand Listener</i></li> </ul> |
|                | <p>"<i>Winter Counts</i> is a book that demands to be read not just because it's engaging, but because it matters. The result is a novel that will satisfy those looking for the adrenaline of crime fiction,...and those who want to enjoy all that with a deeper layer of meaning, a more nuanced narrative. . ." –Gabino Iglesias, Vol. 1 Brooklyn</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

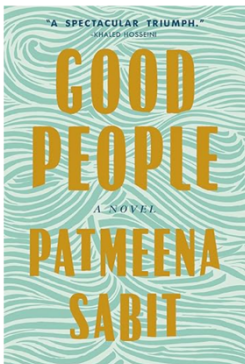
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| Friday, Nov 20 2026<br>(not the LAST Friday of the month)                                     | <p><i>And Then There Were None</i> is Christie's best-selling novel, with more than 100 million copies sold as of 2007; it is also <b>the world's best-selling mystery</b> and one of the best-selling books of all time. Publications International lists the novel as the seventh best-selling title of all time. —Wikipedia</p> <p>Ten people, each with something to hide and something to fear, are invited to an isolated mansion on Indian Island by a host who, surprisingly, fails to appear. On the island they are cut off from everything but each other and the inescapable shadows of their own past lives. One by one, the guests share the darkest secrets of their wicked pasts. And one by one, they die...</p> <p>Which among them is the killer and will any of them survive?</p>  |
| <b><i>And Then There Were None</i></b><br>by Agatha Christie<br>(1939 with a different title) |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Non-Series</b>                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>247 pages</b>                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>PLACE:</b> On an island off the coast of England.                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>TYPE(S):</b> British Horror, Traditional Mystery. The original ngg book [No Good Guys]     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

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| Friday, Dec 18 2026<br>(not the LAST Friday of the month)                                                         | <p>This is a thrilling reconstruction of one of the most notorious events in literary history: Agatha Christie's mysterious 11-day disappearance in 1926.</p> <p>This much is widely known: In December 1926, Agatha Christie goes missing. Investigators find her empty car on the edge of a deep, gloomy pond, the only clues some tire tracks nearby and a fur coat left in the car—strange for a frigid night. Her World War I veteran husband and her daughter have no knowledge of her whereabouts, and England unleashes an unprecedented manhunt to find the up-and-coming mystery author. Eleven days later, she reappears, just as mysteriously as she disappeared, claiming amnesia and providing no explanations for her time away.</p> <p>The puzzle of those missing eleven days has persisted. Author Marie Benedict brings us into the world of Agatha Christie, imagining why such a brilliant woman would find herself at the center of such murky historical mysteries.</p> <p>What is real, and what is mystery? What role did her unfaithful husband play, and what was he not telling investigators?</p> |
| <b><i>The Mystery of Mrs. Christie</i></b><br>by Marie Benedict<br>[pen name for Heather Benedict Terrell] (2021) |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Non-Series</b>                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>336 pages</b>                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>PLACE:</b> England                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

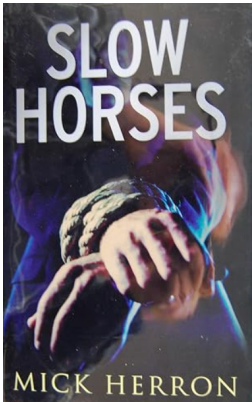
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| <p><b>TYPE(S):</b> Historical Fiction; possibly non-fiction; Autofiction</p> | <p>Agatha Christie novels have withstood the test of time, due in no small part to Christie's masterful storytelling and clever mind that may never be matched, but Agatha Christie's untold history offers perhaps her greatest mystery of all.</p> <p>"A stunning story... The ending is ingenious, and it's possible that Benedict has brought to life the most plausible explanation for why Christie disappeared for 11 days in 1926."—<i>The Washington Post</i></p> |  |
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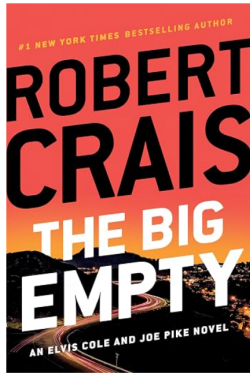
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| Friday, Jan 29, 2027                                                                | <p>The story begins at the annual Halloween event in Woodstock, Vermont, sponsored by the wealthy Mason family. Jet (27) is the black sheep of the family, a failed law student back home living with her parents Dianne and Scott. Dianne serves on the board of the village trustees and Scott runs the family construction business. Jet’s older brother Luke works for the family firm and is married to Jet’s ex-best friend Sophia, whose only topics of conversation these days are their baby and that Scott should retire and let Luke take over the business. Jet’s ex-boyfriend JJ Lim tries to talk to her, but she brushes him off and escapes the party for the quiet of home. Inside, she is eating a Halloween cookie when an intruder attacks her from behind, striking her over the head three times.</p> <p>Jet wakes up in the hospital three days later with a fractured skull, which has been surgically repaired. Unfortunately a tiny bone fragment too deep to remove is pressing against her basilar artery, and the aneurysm will rupture within seven days, killing Jet instantly. Jet’s mother insists that she agree to risky surgery, unable to face the possibility of losing another daughter after Jet’s older sister Emily died in a pool accident when Jet was ten.</p> <p>Jet rejects the idea of surgery that most probably will kill her now and chooses seven more days of life, dedicating her remaining time to identifying her killer. This fast paced thriller is longlisted for the 2026 Gold Dagger Award (British Crime Writers Association).</p> <p><b>NOTE:</b> The book has an American setting but the author grew up in Buckinghamshire, England. She went to the University of Nottingham. She lives in London with her husband and dog. [In other words, not the same name author and U Mass professor living in Cambridge, MA]</p> |
| <b>Not Quite Dead Yet</b><br>by Holly Jackson (2025)                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Non-Series                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 400 pages                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>PLACE:</b> <i>Mainly Vermont?</i>                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>TYPE(S):</b> Domestic Thriller, Amateur Sleuth                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
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| <p><b>NOTE:</b> No author website. But she merits a page in Wikipedia.</p>          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

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| <b>Friday, Feb 26, 2027</b>                                                                                                                                                                | <p>In a haunting debut novel told through a kaleidoscope of perspectives, a private tragedy thrusts one family into the court of public opinion as the media—and their own community—dissect every aspect of their lives.</p> <p>Zorah Sharaf could do no wrong. Zorah Sharaf brought shame upon her family. The truth? Depends on who you ask.</p> <p>The Sharaf family is the picture of success. Prosperous, rich, happy. They came to this country as refugees with nothing more than the clothes on their backs. And now, after years of hard work, they live in the most exclusive neighborhood, their growing family attending the most prestigious schools. Zorah, the eldest daughter, is the apple of her father's eye.</p> <p>When eighteen-year-old Zorah dies under circumstances initially ruled a car accident, questions emerge about what truly happened. The family finds itself thrust into the court of public opinion, with neighbors, community members, and the media scrutinizing their past and speculating about tensions within the household.</p> <p>There is talk that behind closed doors the Sharafs' happy household was anything but. Did the Sharaf family achieve the American dream? Or was the image of the model immigrant family just a façade?</p> <p>Like a literary game of ping-pong, <i>Good People</i> compels the reader to reconsider what might have happened even on the previous page. It's a riveting, provocative story of family—sisters, brothers, mothers, fathers, and the communities that claim us as family in difficult times.</p> |
| <b><i>Good People</i></b><br>by Patmeena Sabit (2022)                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Non-Series</b>                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>386 pages</b>                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>PLACE:</b> <i>Mainly northern Virginia</i>                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>TYPE(S):</b> Literary Thriller, Political Thriller, Psychological thriller, Domestic Thriller<br><br> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

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| <b>Friday, Mar 26, 2027</b>                                        | <p>The first book in CWA Gold Dagger Award-winning British espionage series starring a team of MI5 agents united by one common bond: They've screwed up royally and will do anything to redeem themselves.</p> <p>London, England: Slough House is where the washed-up MI5 spies go to while away what's left of their failed careers. The "slow horses" of Slough House, as they're called, have all disgraced themselves in some way to get relegated here. Maybe they messed up an op badly and can't be trusted anymore. Maybe they got in the way of an ambitious colleague and had the rug yanked out from under them. Maybe they just got too dependent on the bottle—not unusual in this line of work. One</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b><i>Continued on next page ---&gt;</i></b></p> |
| <b><i>Slow Horses</i></b><br>by Mick Herron (2010)                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>#1 of 11 in series</b>                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>320 pages</b>                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>PLACE:</b> <i>London, England - present day (2010, that is)</i> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

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| <b>TYPE(S):</b> Traditional Mysteries, Spy Thrillers                              | <p>thing they all have in common, though, is they all want to be back in the action. And most of them would do anything to get there—even if it means having to collaborate with one another.</p> <p>River Cartwright, one such “slow horse,” is bitter about his failure and about his tedious assignment transcribing cell phone conversations. When a young man is abducted and his kidnappers threaten to broadcast his beheading live on the Internet, River sees an opportunity to redeem himself. But is the victim who he first appears to be? And what’s the kidnappers’ connection with a disgraced journalist? As the clock ticks on the execution, River finds that everyone has his own agenda. &lt;--</p> <p>From Amazon</p> <p>(This and others in the series were the basis of a British TV series also called Slow Horses.)</p> <p>"Herron gets placed with Le Carre frequently because he works with comparatively contemporary portraits of a more plausible British secret service. But the writing register, the scope of the stories, and the nature of the prose are all quite different. I love Le Carre, but I find the Mick Herron books intentionally hilarious. Perhaps we could think of them as complementary to one another rather than in competition." &lt;--</p> <p>Comment from a Reddit discussion</p> |
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| <b>Friday, Apr 30, 2027</b>                                                            | <b>Winner of the 2026 Edgar Award for Best Novel</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b><i>The Big Empty</i></b><br>by Robert Crais<br>(2025)                               | <p><b>Elvis Cole and his enigmatic partner, Joe Pike, race to find a terrifying, unidentified killer in this twisting, unpredictable thriller from #1 New York Times bestselling author Robert Crais.</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>#20 of 20 stories of Elvis Cole and Joe Pike, a pair of Hollywood private eyes.</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>384 pages</b>                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>PLACE:</b> Los Angeles, CA                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>TYPE(S):</b> PI mystery or thriller series.                                         | <p>Traci Beller was thirteen when her father disappeared in the sleepy town of Rancho, not far from Los Angeles. The evidence says Tommy Beller abandoned his family, but Traci never believed it. Now, ten years later, Traci is a high-profile influencer with millions of followers and the money to hire the best detective she can find: Elvis Cole.</p> <p>Elvis heads to Rancho where an ex-con named Sadie Givens and her daughter, Anya, might have a line on the missing man. But when Elvis finds himself shadowed by a gang of vicious criminals, the missing persons cold case becomes far more sinister.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b><i>Continued on next page ---&gt;</i></b></p> |



Elvis calls his ex-Marine friend, Joe Pike, for help, and they follow Tommy Beller's trail into the depths of a monstrous, hidden evil. The case flips on its head, victims become predators, predators become prey, and the question becomes: Can Elvis Cole save them all from this nightmare?

“With his sharp prose, well-drawn characters, and an intricate plot that never ceases to surprise, Robert Crais has crafted another masterpiece, delivering a story that is both a gripping page-turner and a profound exploration of hidden evils in *The Big Empty*, a must for anyone in search of an edge-of-your-seat reading experience that'll stay with you long after turning the final page.” —The Real Book Spy

Friday, May 28, 2027

***Valley of the Moms***

by Hannah Selinger (June, 2026)

**Non-Series**

**292 pages**

**PLACE:** "Hamilton" MA (Based on events in Boxford)

**TYPE(S):** "Suburban Fiction," Domestic Thriller



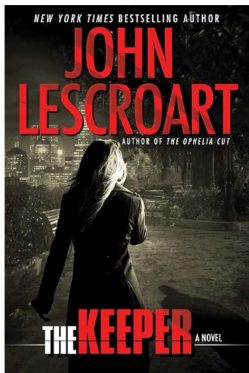
Hamilton, Massachusetts is one of those suburban towns that appears untouched by the outside world where stay-at-home moms wear 2ct diamond studs to the playground, where a million-dollar property is “affordable,” and where the Parent Teacher Organization is a hotbed of controversy. Sure, some people struggle to make ends meet, but residents would say discussing such ugly matters is impolite. Hamilton has been like this forever, and everyone likes it that way. Or: almost everyone.

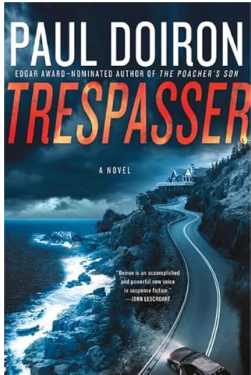
It's not that Anna Plummer doesn't like Hamilton, but she never thought she'd be married with two young kids, comfortable, complacent...and growing more bored by the minute. So, when she realizes her second grader won't be able to attend the "Ziti with Your Sweetie" school dance because she didn't pay for a “Premium” membership, she snaps. She sends an email to the terrifying president of the PTO—and all hell breaks loose.

One year later, Anna is found dead in the frozen Ipswich River. Left to pick up the pieces, her husband, Denny, is shaken to his core. He's no expert, but he's seen enough Dateline to know that the police think he's the main suspect. If they aren't going to get justice for Anna, he will.

Told through the alternating perspectives of Anna and Denny exactly one year apart, and with a shocking concluding twist, *Valley of the Moms* is a gripping look at the underpinnings of grief, the social structures of wealth, and the secrets people keep—even among friends and loved ones.

- Town & Country's Must-Read Books of Summer 2026
- Apple Books June Staff Pick
- Goodreads Guide to Summer's Biggest Mysteries & Thrillers
- Publishers Lunch Buzz Books of the Summer
- CrimeReads Great Mysteries Set in the Boston Area

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| Friday, June 25, 2027                                                               | On the evening before Thanksgiving, Hal Chase, a guard in the San Francisco County Jail, drives to the airport to pick up his step-brother for the weekend. When they return, Hal's wife, Katie, has disappeared without a clue.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b><i>The Keeper</i></b><br>by John Lescroart<br>(2022)                             | By the time Dismas Hardy hears about this, Katie has been missing for five days. The case strikes close to home because Katie had been seeing Hardy's wife, a marriage counselor. By this time, the original Missing Persons case has become a suspected homicide, and Hal is the prime suspect. And the lawyer he wants for his defense is none other than Hardy himself.                                                                                                                                         |
| #15 of 19 featuring<br>Dismas Hardy, and<br>Abe Glitsky                             | Hardy calls on his friend, former homicide detective Abe Glitsky, to look into the case. At first it seems like the police might have it right; the Chases' marriage was fraught with problems; Hal's alibi is suspect; the life insurance policy on Katie was huge. But Glitsky's mission is to identify other possible suspects, and there proves to be no shortage of them. But while he looks into Hal's former lover and other possible suspects, Katie's body is found not three blocks from the Chase home. |
| 320 pages                                                                           | An SFPD Homicide Detective arrests Hal and he finds himself an inmate in the very jail where he used to work, a place full of secrets he knows all too well.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| PLACE: San Francisco, CA                                                            | Against this backdrop of conspiracy and corruption, ambiguous motives and suspicious alibis, an obsessed Glitsky closes in on the elusive truth. As other deaths begin to pile up he realizes, perhaps too late, that the next victim might be himself.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| TYPE(S): Traditional Mystery, Legal Thriller                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|  | <p><b><u>Quick Overview of the Series Until Now:</u></b></p> <p><b>HARDY:</b> Bartender, Lawyer, Asst D.A., <u>Defense Lawyer</u></p> <p><b>GLITSKY:</b> SFPD Cop, Detective, Homicide Chief, <u>Retired</u></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

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| Friday, July 30, 2027                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b><i>Trespasser</i></b><br>by Paul Doiron<br>(2011)                                                                    | In Paul Doiron's riveting follow-up to his Edgar Award-nominated novel, <i>The Poacher's Son</i> , Maine game warden Mike Bowditch's quest to find a missing woman leads him through a forest of lies in search of a killer who may have gotten away with murder once before.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>#2 of 16 in the Mike Bowditch, game warden series</b><br>[We read Book #1 in 2016; group rating 92]                  | While on patrol one foggy March evening, Bowditch receives a call for help. A woman has reportedly struck a deer on a lonely coast road. When the game warden arrives on the scene, he finds blood in the road--but both the driver and the deer have vanished. And the state trooper assigned to the accident appears strangely unconcerned.                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 320 pages                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>PLACE:</b> <i>Mud Season in the wilds of coastal Maine.</i>                                                          | The details of the disappearance seem eerily familiar. Seven years earlier, a jury convicted lobsterman Erland Jefferts of the rape and murder of a wealthy college student and sentenced him to life in prison. For all but his most fanatical defenders, justice was served. But when the missing woman is found brutalized in a manner that suggests Jefferts may have been framed, Bowditch receives an ominous warning from state prosecutors to stop asking questions.                                                                           |
| <b>TYPE(S):</b> Traditional Mysteries, Police Procedural (in the sense that a game warden is a law enforcement officer) | For Bowditch, whose own life was recently shattered by a horrific act of violence, doing nothing is not an option. His secret investigation reopens old wounds between Maine locals and rich summer residents and puts both his own life and that of the woman he loves in jeopardy. As he closes in on his quarry, he suddenly discovers how dangerous his opponents are, and how far they will go to prevent him from bringing a killer to justice. <-- From Amazon                                                                                  |
|                                      | Doiron's second thriller featuring Mike Bowditch makes effective use of Maine's 'mud season,' that time when the weather is unpredictable and new life struggles to emerge from the snow, as a metaphor for Mike's internal struggle to put his life back on track. Doiron's sense of place, and of the people of Maine, adds lush nuance to this suspense-filled read. Well-paced, with an interesting array of elegantly rounded characters, this effort more than lives up to the promise of Doiron's debut. (RT Book Review (Top Pick, 4 ½ stars)) |

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| Friday, Aug 27, 2027                                                       | <p>In the beginning, there was art.</p> <p>It was Clare Bast's love of art that saved her from a bleak, predictable life in upstate New York, and drew her to the cultured world of Manhattan's Upper East Side where she met Jed, her doting, affluent husband.</p> <p>Despite her best efforts—including a half-finished PhD, abandoned when her daughter Sadie was born—Clare secretly can't help but feel like an imposter in Jed's one-percent, Park-Avenue life.</p> <p>When the well-connected wife of Jed's new boss introduces her to influential friends—a curator here, a gallerist there, an aficionado abroad—Clare feels an essential part of herself coming alive again. And when she discovers that an important work painted by the subject of her unfinished dissertation is hanging in the brownstone of a seductively attractive dealer, she believes fate is leading her where she belongs . . . until she finds herself at the scene of a gruesome murder and a stolen masterpiece. Caught in the perfectly wrong place at the perfectly wrong time, every clue the investigation uncovers points back to her.</p> <p>Suddenly, Clare is trapped inside a dark and treacherous art world filled with unscrupulous dealers and international criminals. What, exactly, has she gotten herself into . . . and how is she going to get herself, and her family, out?</p> <p><b>"Alfred Hitchcock is long gone and so, sadly, not able to mount a film version of Alexandra Andrews' psychological thriller, <i>The Fine Art of Lying</i>. But with its privileged, extraordinarily rich Manhattan bluebloods, insights into the contemporary art market and, most essential, torridly illicit sexual couplings, <i>Lying</i> leads with the ingredients that served the Master of Suspense so well in, for instance, <i>Dial M for Murder</i>." —Boston Herald</b></p> |
| <b><i>The Fine Art of Lying</i></b><br>by Alexandra Andrews (May, 2026)    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Non-Series</b>                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>320 pages</b>                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>PLACE:</b> New York City Upper East Side... and New York's "art world." |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>TYPE(S):</b><br>Psychological Thriller, Suspense Thriller.              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
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