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**JUNE 2024 NEW BOOK SYNOPSES**

**FICTION**

**Linwood Barclay**

***I will ruin you***

How would you react in a life-or-death situation? It's a question everyone asks themselves, but few have to face in real life. English teacher Richard Boyle certainly never thought he would find himself talking down a former student intent on harming others, but when Mark LeDrew shows up at Richard's school with a bomb strapped to his chest, Richard immediately jumps into action. Thanks to some quick thinking, he averts a major tragedy and is hailed as a hero, but not all the attention focused on him is positive.

**Gareth Brown**

***The book of doors***

In New York City, bookseller Cassie Andrews is living an unassuming life when she is given a gift by a favourite customer. It's a book, full of strange writing and mysterious drawings. And at the very front there is a handwritten message to Cassie, telling her that this is the Book of Doors, and that any door is every door. What Cassie is about to discover is that the Book of Doors is a special book that bestows extraordinary powers on whoever possesses it, and soon she and her best friend Izzy are exploring all that the Book of Doors can do, swept away from their quiet lives by the possibilities of travelling to anywhere they want. But the Book of Doors is not the only magical book in the world.

**Janet Skeslien Charles**

***Miss Morgan's book brigade***

1918: As the Great War rages, Jessie Carson takes a leave of absence from the New York Public Library to work for the American Committee for Devastated France. Founded by millionaire Anne Morgan, this group of international women help rebuild devastated French communities just miles from the front. Upon arrival, Jessie strives to establish something that the French have never seen—children's libraries. She turns ambulances into bookmobiles and trains the first French female librarians. Then she disappears.

**Harlan Coben**

***Think twice***

Former basketball star Myron Bolitar has barely restarted his agency for sports stars and celebrities when two federal agents walk into his office, asking for answers. Assuming they want to talk about the highly publicized Callister murders, he's stunned when, instead, they demand to know where Greg Downing is. Greg, a former NBA player-turned-beloved-coach, was an old client of Myron's, one of his very first. The reason for Myron's surprise is simple: Greg Downing died three years ago. But according to these federal agents, Greg is still alive and somehow involved in the Callister case.

**Nicola Cornick**

***The phantom tree***

Browsing antiques shops in Wiltshire, Alison Bannister stumbles across a delicate old portrait supposedly of Anne Boleyn. Except Alison knows better. The woman is Mary Seymour, the daughter of Katherine Parr who was taken to Wolf Hall in 1557 as an unwanted orphan and presumed dead after going missing as a child. The painting is more than just a beautiful object from Alison's past, it holds the key to her future, unlocking the mystery surrounding Mary's disappearance, and the enigma of Alison's son.

**Nelson DeMille**

***Blood lines***

Army Criminal Investigation Agents Scott Brodie and Maggie Taylor have been separated for five months following their last assignment. Now, in Berlin, they are reunited and tasked with investigating the murder of one of their own: CID Special Agent Harry Vance of the 5th MP Battalion, an accomplished counterterrorism agent who had been stationed in western Germany, and whose body was discovered in a city park in the heart of Berlin's Arab refugee community.

**Ian & Will Ferguson**

***Mystery in the title***

Miranda Abbott will once again be a star. After a very long dry spell that followed her network hit series Pastor Fran Investigates, Hollywood has come calling and they want Miranda back. This time to be the female lead in an oddly expensive movie of the week, filming in Happy Rock. Miranda signs on the dotted line, but her trusty assistant Andrew, a whiz with apps and clouds, thinks this all seems a bit fishy.

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When Miranda's co-star makes a grand entrance by crashing through the atrium window at The Duchess Hotel and being very much dead, things go from bad to worse. The great citizens of Happy Rock, including Police Chief Ned Buckley, grumpy bookstore owner and soon to be ex-husband Edgar Abbott, Bea of Bea's B&B, and the malodorous Owen McCune return to help solve the case in this second Miranda Abbott mystery.

**Tana French**

***The hunter***

Cal Hooper took early retirement from Chicago PD and moved to rural Ireland looking for peace. He's found it, more or less: he's built a relationship with a local woman, Lena, and he's gradually turning Trey Reddy from a half-feral teenager into a good kid going good places. But then Trey's long-absent father reappears, bringing along an English millionaire and a scheme to find gold in the town land, and suddenly everything the three of them have been building is under threat. Cal and Lena are both ready to do whatever it takes to protect Trey, but Trey doesn't want protecting. What she wants is revenge.

**Joanna Goodman**

***The inheritance***

Arden Moore enjoyed an affluent life thanks to her husband's high-paying job. But a year after his death, the 36-year-old is a grieving single mother deeply in debt and living paycheque to paycheque with her three children. Then an unexpected call from a well-known estate lawyer in New York offers a glimmer of hope. It is the beginning of a complex legal journey that could mean the difference between a life of abject poverty and unthinkable wealth thanks to her father, deceased billionaire Wallace Barclay.

**Genevieve Graham**

***The secret keeper***

Based on a true story. Twin sisters Dot and Dash Wilson share many things, and while they are practically inseparable, they are nothing alike. Dot is fascinated by books, puzzles, and Morse code, a language taught to both girls by their father, a WWI veteran. Dash's days are filled with fixing engines, dancing with friends, and dreaming of flying airplanes. Almost always at their side is their best friend Gus until war breaks out and he enlists in the army. Determined to do their duty, both girls join the WRENS, Dash as a mechanic and Dot as a typist. Before long, Dot's fixation on patterns and numbers takes her from HMCS Coverdale, a covert listening and codebreaking station working with Bletchley Park in England, to Camp X, a top-secret spy school. But when personal tragedy strikes the family, Dot's oath of secrecy causes a rift between the sisters.

**Kristen Harmal**

***The Paris daughter***

Paris, 1939: Young mothers Elise and Juliette become fast friends the day they meet in the beautiful Bois de Boulogne. Though there is a shadow of war creeping across Europe, neither woman suspects that their lives are about to irrevocably change. When Elise becomes a target of the German occupation, she entrusts Juliette with the most precious thing in her life, her young daughter, playmate to Juliette's own little girl. But nowhere is safe in war, not even a quiet little bookshop like Juliette's Librairie des Rêves, and, when a bomb falls on their neighbourhood, Juliette's world is destroyed along with it.

**Emily Henry**

***Funny story***

Daphne always loved the way her fiancé Peter told their story. How they met on a blustery day, fell in love and moved back to his lakeside hometown to begin their life together. He really was good at telling it, right up until the moment he realized he was actually in love with his childhood best friend Petra. Which is how Daphne begins her new story: stranded in beautiful Waning Bay, Michigan, without friends or family but with a dream job as a children's librarian that barely pays the bills, and proposing to be roommates with the only person who could possibly understand her predicament: Petra's ex, Miles Nowak.

**Rupert Holmes**

***Murder your employer***

Who hasn't wondered for a split second what the world would be like if a person who is the object of your affliction ceased to exist? But then you've probably never heard of The McMasters Conservatory, dedicated to the consummate execution of the homicidal arts. To gain admission, a student must have an ethical reason for erasing someone who deeply deserves a fate no worse than death. The campus of

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this “Poison Ivy League” college, its location unknown to even those who study there, is where you might find yourself the practice target of a classmate and where one’s mandatory graduation thesis is getting away with the perfect murder of someone whose death will make the world a much better place to live.

**Anthony Horowitz**                      **Close to death**

Riverside Close is a picture-perfect community. The six exclusive and attractive houses are tucked far away from the noise and grime of city life, allowing the residents to enjoy beautiful gardens, pleasant birdsong and tranquility from behind the security of a locked gate. It is the perfect idyll until the Kentworthy family arrives, with their four giant, gas-guzzling cars, a gaggle of shrieking children and plans for a garish swimming pool in the backyard. Obvious outsiders, the Kentworthys do not belong in Riverside Close, and they quickly offend every last one of their neighbours. When Giles Kentworthy is found dead on his own doorstep, a crossbow bolt sticking out of his chest, Detective Hawthorne is the only investigator that can be called on to solve the case.

**Quintin Jardine**                      **The cage**

Another in the Bob Skinner series. On a sunny seaside August morning, a woman on maternity leave spots a body wedged in rocks on a Scottish beach. Gavin Ayre's riding gear sparks the assumption that he had been thrown by a panicked horse until an autopsy reveals this was no accident. Soon it becomes clear that Ayre's life was as big a mystery as his death. Detective Superintendent Harold 'Sauce' Haddock heads an investigation that is running into the sand, until a link is revealed between the victim and another man in Spain, with a surprisingly similar name.

**Ariel Lawton**                      **The frozen river**

Maine, 1789: When the Kennebec River freezes, entombing a man in the ice, Martha Ballard is summoned to examine the body and determine cause of death. As a midwife and healer, she is privy to much of what goes on behind closed doors in Hallowell. Her diary is a record of every birth and death, crime and debacle that unfolds in the close-knit community. Months earlier, Martha documented the details of an alleged rape committed by two of the town’s most respected gentlemen, one of whom has now been found dead in the ice. But when a local physician undermines her conclusion, declaring the death to be an accident, Martha is forced to investigate the murder on her own.

**Dennis Lehane**                      **Small mercies**

In the summer of 1974 a heatwave blankets Boston and Mary Pat Fennessy is trying to stay one step ahead of the bill collectors. Mary Pat has lived her entire life in the housing projects of “Southie,” the Irish American enclave that stubbornly adheres to old tradition and stands proudly apart. One night Mary Pat’s teenage daughter Jules stays out late and doesn’t come home. That same evening, a young Black man is found dead, struck by a subway train under mysterious circumstances. The two events seem unconnected. But Mary Pat, propelled by a desperate search for her missing daughter, begins turning over stones best left untouched, asking questions that bother Marty Butler, chieftain of the Irish mob, and the men who work for him, men who don’t take kindly to any threat to their business.

**Gabriel Garcia Marquez**                      **Until August**

Sitting alone beside the languorous blue waters of the lagoon, Ana Magdalena Bach contemplates the men at the hotel bar. She has been happily married for twenty-seven years and has no reason to escape the life she has made with her husband and children. And yet, every August, she travels by ferry here to the island where her mother is buried, and for one night takes a new lover. Across sultry Caribbean evenings full of salsa and boleros, lotharios and conmen, Ana journeys further each year into the hinterland of her desire and the fear hidden in her heart.

**Val McDermid**                      **Past lying**

A new book in the DCI Karen Pirie series. It’s April 2020 and Edinburgh is in lockdown, but that doesn’t mean crime takes a holiday. It would seem like a strange time for a cold case to go hot with the streets all but empty, an hour’s outdoor exercise the maximum allowed but when a source at the National

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Library contacts DCI Karen Pirie's team about documents in the archive of a recently deceased crime novelist, it seems it's game on again.

***Freida McFadden***                      ***The housemaid's secret***

It's hard to find an employer who doesn't ask too many questions about my past. So I thank my lucky stars that the Garricks miraculously give me a job, cleaning their stunning penthouse with views across the city and preparing fancy meals in their shiny kitchen. I can work here for a while, stay quiet until I get what I want. It's almost perfect. But I still haven't met Mrs Garrick, or seen inside the guest bedroom. I'm sure I hear her crying. I notice spots of blood around the neck of her white nightgowns when I'm doing laundry. And one day I can't help but knock on the door. When it gently swings open, what I see inside changes everything.

***Karen Robards***                      ***The girl from Guernica***

On an April day in 1937, the sky opens and fire rains down upon the small Spanish town of Guernica. Seventeen-year-old Sibi and her family are caught up in the horror. Griff, an American military attaché, pulls Sibi from the wreckage, and it's only the first time he saves her life in a span of hours. When Germany claims no involvement in the attack, insisting the Spanish Republic was responsible, Griff guides Sibi to lie to Nazi officials. If she or her sisters reveal that they saw planes bearing swastikas, the gestapo will silence them by any means necessary.

***John Sandford***                      ***Toxic prey***

Gaia is dying. That, at least, is what Dr. Lionel Scott believes. An expert in tropical and infectious diseases, Scott has witnessed the devastating impact of illness and turmoil. Society as it exists is untenable and the direct link to Earth's death spiral; population levels are out of control and people have allowed disarray and disorder to run rampant. While most are concerned about deadly disease, Scott knows that it is truly humanity itself that will destroy Gaia. It's only by removing the threat that the planet can continue to prosper, and luckily, Scott is just the right man for the job. When Scott then disappears without a trace, Letty Davenport is tasked with tracking down any and all leads.

***Helen Simonson***                      ***The Hazelbourne Ladies Motorcycle and Flying Club***

It is the summer of 1919 and with all the men returning from the front, Constance Haverhill has been asked to give up her cottage and her job at the estate she helped run during the war. While she looks for a position as a bookkeeper or, horror, a governess, she's sent as a lady's companion to an old family friend who is convalescing at a seaside hotel. Constance is swept up in the social whirl of Hazelbourne-on-Sea after she rescues the local baronet's daughter, Poppy Wirrall, from a social faux pas. Poppy wears trousers, operates a taxi and delivery service to employ local women, and runs a ladies' motorcycle club (to which she plans to add flying lessons). She and her friends enthusiastically welcome Constance into their circle. But things are more complicated than they seem in this sunny pocket of English high society as the country prepares to celebrate its hard-won peace.

***Vivica Sten***                      ***Tonight you're dead***

Soon to be divorced, attorney Nora Linde is finding her way as a single mother, and even falling in love again, when she's asked by her childhood friend Detective Thomas Andreasson to help in a disturbing investigation. Marcus Nielsen, a university student, has apparently committed suicide, but it's what he's left behind that's so suspicious and damning: his research into the Coastal Rangers, an elite military group where, in 1976, a young cadet died under questionable circumstances, a sadistic sergeant went free, and a case went cold. When two of Nielsen's contacts are also found dead and diaries of their tortuous training turn up missing, Thomas and Nora are certain that whatever happened three decades ago is unforgivable.

***Amy Tintera***                      ***Listen for the lie***

After Lucy is found wandering the streets, covered in her best friend Savvy's blood, everyone thinks she is a murderer. Lucy and Savvy were the golden girls of their small Texas town: pretty, smart, and enviable. Lucy married a dream guy with a big ring and an even bigger new home. Savvy was the social

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butterfly loved by all, and if you believe the rumours, especially popular with the men in town. It's been years since that horrible night, a night Lucy can't remember anything about, and she has since moved to LA and started a new life. But now the huge hit true crime podcast "Listen for the Lie," and its too-good looking host Ben Owens, have decided to investigate Savvy's murder for the show's second season. Lucy is forced to return to the place she vowed never to set foot in again to solve her friend's murder.

**Colm Toibin**

**Long Island**

Eilis Lacey is Irish, married to Tony Fiorello, a plumber and one of four Italian American brothers, all of whom live in neighbouring houses on a cul-de-sac in Lindenhurst, Long Island, with their wives and children and Tony's parents, a huge extended family that lives and works, eats and plays together. It is the spring of 1976 and Eilis, now in her forties with two teenage children, has no one to rely on in this still-new country. One day, when Tony is at his job and Eilis is in her home office doing her accounting, an Irishman comes to the door asking for her by name. He tells her that his wife is pregnant with Tony's child and that when the baby is born, he will not raise it but instead deposit it on Eilis's doorstep.

**Amor Towles**

**Table for two**

Table for Two includes six short stories and a novella. The six stories, all set in New York, mostly take place around the turn of the Millennium and consider the fateful consequences that can spring from brief encounters and the delicate mechanics of compromise that operate at the heart of modern marriages.

The novella follows Evelyn Ross, the character from Rules of Civility, to Hollywood in 1938, with the intention of returning home to Indiana. But as her train pulls into Chicago, where her parents are waiting, she instead extends her ticket to Los Angeles.

**Iona Wishaw**

**Lightning strikes the silence**

Another in the Lane Winslow series. A warm June afternoon in King's Cove is interrupted by an explosion. Following the sound, Lane goes to investigate and discovers a secluded cabin and, hiding nearby, a young Japanese girl injured and mute, but very much alive. At the Nelson Police Station, Inspector Darling and Sergeant Ames, following up on a report of a nighttime heist at the local jeweller's, discover the jeweller himself dead in his office, apparently bludgeoned, and a live wire hanging off the back of the building. As Lane attempts to speed the search for the girl's family with her own lines of inquiry, Darling and his team dig deeper into a local connection between the jeweller and a fellow businessman that leads across the pond to Cornwall and north to a mining interest on the McKenzie River.

**NON-FICTION**

**Manni Coe**

**Brother. do. you. love. me**

Reuben, aged 38, had been living in a home providing specialized care for adults with learning disabilities. For months he had been non-verbal, cut off from everyone he loved. In despair, he sent his older brother a text message: 'brother. do. you. love. me.' Immediately, Manni left his home in Spain and took Reuben out of care and moved them to a cottage in the countryside. In the stillness of winter, they began a simple routine of walking, inching a little further each day, from the front drive to the village then into the woods and fields. In the evening, Reuben would take out his felt-tip pens and draw, pouring colourful images of his favourite characters from films and books onto the page. And as the slow months turned towards spring, on a journey full of frustration and pain, joy and revelation, Reuben and Manni discovered that it is never too late to rebuild the bonds of brotherhood.

**Zipora Klein Jakob**

**The forbidden daughter**

In the Kovno Ghetto in Lithuania, Nazi law forbade Jewish women from giving birth. Yet despite the fear of death, Dr. Jonah Friedman and his wife Tzila, choose to bring a daughter into the world, a little girl they name Elida—meaning non-birth in Hebrew. To increase their child's chance of survival, the Friedmans smuggle the baby out of the ghetto to a non-Jewish farm family when Elida is only three months old. It is the beginning of a life marked by constant upheaval. When the Nazis raze the entire Kovno Ghetto, Jonah and Tzila are among those killed. Their only child is left orphaned, dependent on

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the kindness of strangers. Despite her circumstances, Elida grows up, changing families, countries, continents, and even names, countless times. Surviving the war and the Holocaust that stole her parents, the young woman never gives up hope. In her lifelong pursuit to find love and belonging, she works to rebuild her identity and triumph over her terrible circumstances.

**Wayne Johnston**

***Jennie's boy***

For six months between 1966 and 1967, Wayne Johnston and his family lived in a wreck of a house across from his grandparents in Goulds, Newfoundland. At seven, Wayne was sickly and skinny, unable to keep food down, plagued with insomnia and a relentless cough that no doctor could diagnose. To the neighbours, he was known as "Jennie's boy," a backhanded salute to his tiny, ferocious mother, who felt judged for Wayne's condition at the same time as worried he might never grow up. Unable to go to school, Wayne spent his days with his witty, religious, eccentric maternal grandmother, Lucy. During these six months of Wayne's childhood, he and Lucy faced two life-or-death crises, and only one of them lived to tell the tale.

The book is the author's tribute to a family and a community that were simultaneously fiercely protective of him and fed up with having to make allowances for him. His boyhood was full of pain, yes, but also tenderness and Newfoundland wit. By that wit, and through love, often expressed in the most unloving ways, Wayne survived.

**Erik Larson**

***The demon of unrest***

On November 6, 1860, Abraham Lincoln became the fluky victor in a tight race for president. The country was bitterly at odds; Southern extremists were moving ever closer to destroying the Union, with one state after another seceding and Lincoln powerless to stop them. Slavery fuelled the conflict, but somehow the passions of North and South came to focus on a lonely federal fortress in Charleston Harbor: Fort Sumter.

At the heart of this are Major Robert Anderson, Sumter's commander and a former slave owner sympathetic to the South but loyal to the Union; Edmund Ruffin, a vain and bloodthirsty radical who stirs secessionist ardor at every opportunity; and Mary Boykin Chesnut, wife of a prominent planter, conflicted over both marriage and slavery and seeing parallels between them. In the middle of it all is the overwhelmed Lincoln, battling with his duplicitous secretary of state, William Seward, as he tries desperately to avert a war that he fears is inevitable, one that will eventually kill 750,000 Americans.

Drawing on diaries, secret communiques, slave ledgers, and plantation records, Larson gives us a political horror story that captures the forces that led America to the brink, a dark reminder that we often don't see a cataclysm coming until it's too late.

**Vaclav Smil**

***Numbers don't lie: 71 things you need to know about the World***

From earth's nations and inhabitants, through the fuels and foods that energize them, to the transportation and inventions of our modern world and how all of this affects the planet itself, Professor Vaclav Smil takes us on a fact-finding adventure, using surprising statistics and illuminating graphs to challenge lazy thinking. Packed with 'well-I-never-knew-that' information and with fascinating and unusual examples throughout, we see how it is too soon to judge shale gas, that vaccination yields the best return on investment, and why electric cars aren't as great as we think (yet). There's a wonderful mix of science, history and wit, all in bite-sized chapters on a broad range of topics.