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**SEPTEMBER 2025 NEW BOOK SYNOPSES**

**FICTION**

**Leslie J. Anderson      *The unmothers***

Marshall is still trying to put the pieces together after the death of her husband. After she is involved in a terrible accident, her editor sends her to the small, backwards town of Raeford to investigate a clearly ridiculous rumour: that a horse has given birth to a healthy, human baby boy. When Marshall arrives, she finds an insular town that is kinder to the horses they are famous for breeding than to their own people. But when two horribly mangled bodies are discovered in a field—one a horse, one a human—she realizes that there might be a real story here.

**Will Dean      *The chamber***

Six experienced saturation divers are locked inside a hyperbaric chamber. They know that rapid decompression would be fatal and so they work in shifts, breathing helium, and surviving in hot, close quarters. Then one of them is found dead in his bunk. With four days of decompression to go before the locked hatch to the chamber can be safely opened, the group must watch one another's backs at all times. And when another diver is discovered unresponsive, everyone is on edge.

**Virginia Evans      *The correspondent***

Sybil Van Antwerp has used letters to make sense of the world. Most mornings Sybil sits down to write letters, to her brother, to her best friend, to the president of the university who will not allow her to audit a class she desperately wants to take, to Joan Didion and Larry McMurtry about their latest books, and to one person to whom she writes often yet never sends the letter. Sybil expects her world to go on as it always has as a mother, grandmother, wife, divorcée and distinguished lawyer. But when letters from someone in her past force her to examine one of the most painful periods of her life, she realizes the letter she has been writing over the years needs to be read and that she cannot move forward until she finds it in her heart to offer forgiveness.

**Lisa Gardner      *Kiss her goodbye***

Recent Afghan refugee Sabera Ahmadi was last seen exiting her place of work three weeks ago. The local police have yet to open a case, while her older, domineering husband seems unconcerned. Sabera's closest friend, however, is convinced Sabera would never willingly leave her three-year old daughter. At her insistence, missing persons expert Frankie Elkin agrees pursue the search in Tucson. where a video of the young mother surfaces, showing her walking away from the scene of a brutal double murder.

**Ian Hamilton      *The fury of Beijing***

Still reeling from the brutal murder of her close associates, Lau Lau and Chen, Ava Lee embarks on a quest for revenge that takes her from Toronto to Los Angeles to Beijing. Along the way, Ava is aided by some familiar faces and old comrades-in-arms, including Sonny Kwon, Jimmy Li, Lop, and Xu, the mountain master of Shanghai.

**Tami Hoag      *Bad liar***

A murder victim dumped at the end of a lonely country road, face and hands obliterated by a shotgun blast, is not the way sheriff's detective Nick Fourcade wants to start his week. His only lead takes him to the family of a hometown hero, Marc Mercier who left his home for a weekend hunting trip and hasn't been seen since. Meanwhile, sheriff's detective Annie Broussard begins her first day back on the job after suffering a brutal attack by taking on the case of B'Lynn Fontenot, a mother desperate to find her grown son, Robbie, a recovering drug addict. As Annie searches for Robbie and Nick investigates the disappearance of Marc, it becomes apparent that nothing is as it seems in the lives of either man.

**Sarah Hornsley      *Bad blood***

My name is Justine Stone. I left home twelve years ago, never to return. Now my ex-boyfriend, Jake, has been accused of a double murder in the town where we grew up. It's my job as a barrister to make the

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case against him. But to face the courts, I need to know the truth. The real truth about what happened when we were young.

**Daniel Kalla      *The deepest fake***

Liam Hirsch has a loving family, a thriving career as CEO of an AI company, financial security, and a bright future. But when he's diagnosed with a terminal illness, just weeks after discovering his wife's infidelity, his perfect life unravels. As he grapples with his fate, he prepares to face his final days on his own terms. However, unexplained events inside his company make him question everything, including his diagnosis. In a world of deepfake videos, synthetic voices, and digital deception, couldn't these technologies be weaponized against him? What if nothing is as it seems?

**Lars Kepler      *The sleepwalker***

An alarm sounds in the middle of the night for a burglary in progress at a winter-closed campsite in Bredäng, outside Stockholm. The police spot a light in one of the farthest caravans and when the officers open the door they are greeted by a horrific sight. A man has been killed with an axe and brutally dismembered. On the floor lies a young man sleeping with a severed arm as a pillow. He is arrested and identified as seventeen-year-old Hugo Sand, the son of a famous writer. Hugo suffers from a rare sleepwalking condition that is activated by nightmares. He is either the perpetrator or a witness, but claims to remember nothing from the night. Detective Joona Linna contacts her old friend Erik Maria Bark to use hypnosis to try to find out what happened inside the caravan.

**Allen Levi      *Theo of Golden***

Questions linger about Theo, a pleasant but mysterious stranger, after his arrival in the southern city of Golden. He arrives early one spring and by chance, or is it, he visits a coffee shop where 92 framed pencil portraits are on display. Inspired, Theo sets out on a mission of purchasing all the portraits one at a time and quietly bestowing them on their 'rightful owners.'

**Stuart Macbridge      *The house of burning bones***

It's not going well for Aberdeen's NE Division: half the force is off sick, all leave has been cancelled, someone has firebombed a hotel full of migrants and there's a massive protest march happening this Saturday. With officers dropping like flies, Detective Inspector Logan McRae has to kick off a major murder investigation with a skeleton staff until the top brass can arrange back-up from other divisions. But, as bad as everything seems, things are about to get much worse.

**Jessa Maxwell      *I need you to read this***

Alex Marks's move to New York City is supposed to be a fresh start. She plans to lay low with her mundane copywriting job but the news of the murder of her childhood hero, Francis Keen, throws her for a loop. Beloved staff writer and the woman behind the famous advice column, Dear Constance, Keen's death is a shock to her countless fans and readers. When Alex sees an advertisement searching for her replacement, she impulsively applies, never expecting to actually get the job. But almost immediately, she begins to receive strange letters at the office and soon, Alex wonders why the murderer has never been found.

**Kimberly McCreight      *Like mother, like daughter***

When Cleo, a student at NYU, arrives late for dinner at her childhood home in Brooklyn, she finds food burning in the oven and no sign of her mother, Kat. Then Cleo discovers her mom's bloody shoe under the sofa. The polar opposite of Cleo, whose "out of control" emotions and "unsafe" behaviour have created a seemingly unbridgeable rift between mother and daughter, Kat is the essence of Park Slope perfection: a happily married, successful corporate lawyer. Or so Cleo thinks. Kat has been lying. She's not just a lawyer; she's her firm's fixer. And in the days leading up her disappearance, Kat has become aware of multiple threats: demands for money from her unfaithful soon-to-be ex-husband; evidence that Cleo has slipped back into a relationship that's far riskier than she understands; and menacing anonymous messages from her past, all of which she's kept hidden from Cleo.

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***Clemence Michallon    Our last resort***

Frida and Gabriel arrive seeking a fresh start at the stunning Ara Hotel in the secluded desert of Escalante, Utah. Once so close they were able to finish each other's sentences, they've grown apart in recent years after a sudden, unspeakable tragedy. Now, at the deluxe resort, they are ready to reconnect. It all feels like paradise, until the dead body of a beautiful young woman who was vacationing at the Ara with her powerful, much older husband is discovered.

***Daniel G. Miller        The red letter***

Hazel has everything she wants. Business is booming at her boutique private investigation firm. She's dating the man of her dreams. Even her perpetually skeptical mother seems impressed. Then the NYPD finds a neighbourhood priest dead along with a mysterious red letter. Hazel investigates the murder as a favour to an old friend and discovers that the priest wasn't the only recent murder victim to receive a red letter and one victim has ties to a psychopath from a past life that Hazel thought she had buried.

***Megan Miranda        You belong here***

Beckett Bowery never thought she'd return to Wyatt Valley, a picturesque college town in the Virginia mountains. Beckett's parents taught at the college and she never imagined studying anywhere else, until a tragedy in her senior year ended with two local men dead, and her roommate on the run. For the last two decades, Beckett has done her best to keep her distance. Then her daughter, Delilah, secretly applies to Wyatt College and earns a full scholarship, and Beckett can only hope that her lingering fears are unfounded. But deep down she knows that Wyatt Valley has a long memory, and that the past isn't the only dangerous thing in town.

***Eugenie Montague     Swallow the ghost***

Things are going well for Jane Murphy, or so it seems. She's making it in New York, a sort of wunderkind at the social media marketing startup where she works. She's put an experimental writer, Jeremy Miller, on the map by helping him concoct a viral internet novel, told in fragments through various fake social media accounts. But privately, Jane feels trapped, ruled by her routines and her compulsions, caught up in an endless cycle of soothing and punishing herself. There is so much that she has to keep hidden, especially from Jeremy as their professional relationship transforms into something more.

***T.J. Newman           Worst case scenario***

When a pilot suffers a heart attack at 35,000 feet, a commercial airliner filled with passengers crashes into a nuclear power plant in the small town of Waketa, Minnesota, which becomes ground zero for a catastrophic national crisis with global implications. The International Nuclear Event Scale tracks nuclear disasters. It has seven levels. Level 7 is a Major Accident, with only two on record: Fukushima and Chernobyl. There has never been a Level 8. Until now.

***Janika Oza              A history of burning***

At the turn of the twentieth century, Pirbhai, a teenage boy, is taken from his village in India to labour on the East African Railway for the British. One day Pirbhai commits an act to ensure his survival that will haunt him forever. Pirbhai's children are born and raised under the searing sun of Kampala during the waning days of British colonial rule. As Uganda moves towards independence and military dictatorship, Pirbhai's granddaughters, Latika, Mayuri, and Kiya, are three sisters coming of age in a divided nation. As they each forge their own path for a future, they must carry the silence of the history they've inherited.

***Jo Piazza                Everyone is lying to you***

Lizzie and Bex were best friends in college. After graduation, Bex vanished, leaving Lizzie confused and devastated. Fifteen years later, Bex is now Rebecca Sommers, a "traditional" Instagram influencer with millions of followers who salivate over her perfect life on her ranch with her five children and handsome husband, Gray. Lizzie is a struggling magazine writer, watching reels while her young children demand her attention. Out of the blue, Bex calls Lizzie with a career-making proposition—an exclusive interview with her about her multimillion-dollar business venture and an invitation to MomBomb, the high-profile influencing conference. At the conference, Bex goes missing and Gray is found brutally murdered. Lizzie

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must learn who her old friend has become and who she has double-crossed to try to find her, clear her name, and maybe even save her life.

**Karin Slaughter**      ***We are all guilty here***

Welcome to North Falls, a small town where everyone knows everyone. Or so they think until the night of the fireworks when two teenage girls vanish. For Officer Emmy Clifton, it's personal. She turned away when her best friend's daughter needed help and now she must bring her home. But as Emmy combs through the puzzle the girls left behind, she realizes she never really knew them. Nobody did.

**Holly Smale**      ***I know how this ends***

Margot Wayward is in manically gleeful self-destruct mode. Following the implosion of a ten-year relationship, she's wilfully derailing her successful career, joyfully taking down men on dating apps, and living in total chaos. Until one day, when Margot has a vision of herself with a man she's never met before. She doesn't believe in fate. But when Margot meets single-dad Henry, the vision comes true: exactly as she'd foreseen it. As her future continues to reveal itself, a glimpse at a time, Margot realizes she knows exactly what's going to happen, and when.

**Patrick Tarr**      ***The guest children***

With the mounting terror of the German Blitz on London in 1940, thousands of British "guest children" are sent abroad to escape the bombing. Among them are Michael and Frances Hawksby, who are shipped off to Canada to stay with relatives. Years later, as WW II finally comes to an end, their surviving family members realize that no one has heard from them since they were sent away.

**Stuart Woods**      ***Near miss***

Stone Barrington is enjoying some downtime in New York City when a chance encounter introduces him to a charming new companion. Too bad she also comes with a persistent ex-boyfriend intent on retribution. As Stone dodges each disturbance, it becomes clear that there's an even more treacherous game being played behind the scenes.

**Katie Yeo**      ***Maggie: or a man and a woman walk into a bar***

A man and a woman walk into a restaurant. The woman expects a lovely night filled with endless plates of samosas. Instead, she finds out her husband is having an affair with a woman named Maggie. A short while after, her chest starts to ache. She finds out the pain in her breast isn't just heartbreak, it's cancer. She decides to call the tumour Maggie. Unfolding in fragments over the course of the ensuing months, she embarks on a journey of grief, healing, and reclamation. She starts talking to Maggie (the tumour), getting acquainted with her body's new inhabitant. She creates a "Guide to My Husband: A User's Manual" for Maggie (the other woman), hoping to ease the process of discovering her ex-husband's whims and quirks. She turns her children's bedtime stories into retellings of Chinese folklore passed down by her own mother, in an attempt to make them fall in love with their shared culture and to maybe save herself in the process.