

APRIL 2024 NEW BOOK SYNOPSES

FICTION

Aurora Asher

Sanctuary of the shadow

For humans, Salizar's is a place of mystery and wonder. For Harrow, it's a place to hide from those who slaughtered her entire clan. A haven where she can disguise both her abilities and who she really is. Until he arrives. He has no recollection of who, or even what he is. He only knows that he's a monster, with wings and powerful abilities never seen before. But beneath the layers of rage and isolation, one glimpse into those inky black eyes reveals a soul that calls out to the loneliness in Harrow.

David Baldacci

Walk the wire

When Amos Decker and his FBI colleague Alex Jamison are called to London, North Dakota, they instantly sense that the thriving fracking town is ripe for trouble. The promise of a second gold rush has attracted an onslaught of newcomers all hoping for a windfall, and the community is growing faster than houses can be built. The sudden boom has also brought a slew of problems with it, including drugs, property crimes, prostitution and now murder.

C. J. Box

Storm Watch

When a prominent University of Wyoming professor goes missing, authorities are stumped. That is, until Joe Pickett makes two surprising discoveries while hunting down a wounded elk on his district as an epic spring storm descends upon him.

Steve Burrows

A foreboding of Petrels

On suspension and unable to work, DCI Domenic Jejeune finds his attention snared by an unexplained death at an Antarctic research base. Meanwhile, DS Danny Maik investigates a string of arson attacks in Norfolk. When a corpse is discovered in a bird hide, Danny's investigation escalates. It appears the body links the two enquiries, but the men are unable to share information.

Caroline Cauchi

Mrs. Van Gogh

In 1890, Vincent Van Gogh died penniless, unknown, a man tortured by his own mind. Eleven years later his work is exhibited in Paris and his unparalleled talent finally recognized. The tireless efforts of one woman gave the world one of its greatest creative minds. But twenty-eight year old Johanna Van Gogh-Bonger, Vincent's sister-in-law and the keeper of his immense collection of paintings, sketches and letters, has, until now, been written out of history.

Deryn Collier

A real somebody

Based on the true story of the author's aunt. Montreal, 1947. To support her once-prosperous family, June Grant joins a steno pool in a prestigious advertising firm. For June, it's hard to imagine having the kind of life her parents want—the kind of life her sister Daisy has, with a well-off husband and two precocious kids. But Daisy might not be a picture-perfect housewife after all. As June makes her own waves in the advertising world, she probes a hidden side of her sister's life.

Emma Donoghue

Learned by heart

1805, fourteen-year-old Eliza Raine is a school girl at the Manor School for Young Ladies in York. The daughter of an Indian mother and a British father, Eliza was banished to this unfamiliar country as a little girl. When she first stepped off the King George in Kent, Eliza was accompanied by her older sister, Jane, but now she boards alone at the Manor, with no one left to claim her.

Robert Galbraith

The running grave

Private Detective Cormoran Strike is contacted by a worried father whose son, Will, has gone to join a religious cult in the depths of the Norfolk countryside. The Universal Humanitarian Church is, on the surface, a peaceable organization that campaigns for a better world. Yet Strike discovers that beneath the surface there are deeply sinister undertones, and unexplained deaths.

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Ali Hazelwood

Bride

Misery Lark, the only daughter of the most powerful Vampyre councilman of the Southwest, is an outcast, again. Her days of living in anonymity among the Humans are over: she has been called upon to uphold a historic peacekeeping alliance between the Vampyres and their mortal enemies, the Weres, and she sees little choice but to surrender herself in the exchange—again.

Mick Herron

The secret hours

Two years ago, a hostile Prime Minister launched the Monochrome inquiry, investigating "historical over-reaching" by the British Secret Service. Monochrome's mission was to ferret out any hint of misconduct by any MI5 officer. But MI5's formidable First Desk did not become Britain's top spy by accident, and she has successfully thwarted the inquiry at every turn. Now the administration that created Monochrome has been ousted, the investigation appears to be a total bust. Until the eve of Monochrome's shuttering an MI5 case file appears without explanation. It is the buried history of a classified operation in 1994 Berlin—an operation that ended in tragedy and scandal, whose cover-up has rewritten thirty years of Service history.

Tania James

Loot

Abbas is just seventeen years old when his gifts as a woodcarver come to the attention of Tipu Sultan, and he is drawn into service at the palace in order to build a giant tiger automaton for Tipu's sons, a gift to commemorate their return from British captivity. His fate and the fate of the wooden tiger he helps create, mirror the vicissitudes of nations and dynasties ravaged by war across India and Europe.

J. A. Jance

Collateral damage

After spending twenty years behind bars, Frank Muñoz, a disgraced former cop, is out on parole and focused on just one thing: revenge. The wife who abandoned him after his arrest, the mistress who ratted him out for abetting a money-laundering scheme, the detectives who presided over his case all those years ago—they all have targets on their backs.

Susan Juby

A meditation on murder

When Buddhist butler Helen Thorpe is loaned out to help Cartier Hightower get her life in order, Helen finds herself working for a young woman entirely unbound by the fetters of good taste or sound judgment. One of Cartier's fellow content creators has recently died in a strange accident. Soon after Helen arrives, another is killed in an equally bizarre way. Cartier begins to drag Helen around on the influencer circuit, where neither of them is particularly welcome. Then comes the terrible incident at the EDM nightclub that turns Cartier into a global pariah, at least according to social media.

Stephen P. Kiernan

The glass chateau

One month after the end of World War II, amid the jubilation in the streets of France, there are throngs of people stunned by the recovery work ahead. Every bridge, road, and rail line, every church and school and hospital, has been destroyed. Disparate factions from Communists, to Resistance fighters, to federalists, to those who supported appeasement of the Nazis, must somehow unite and rebuild their devastated country.

Peter Lovesey

Diamond and the eye

If there's one thing detective Peter Diamond has no patience for, it's a dumb git trying to get involved in one of his investigations—for example, a Philip Marlowe-wannabee private investigator like the self-styled Johnny Getz. But fate has saddled Diamond with this trial. A Bath antiques dealer, Septimus "Seppy" Hubbard, has disappeared without a trace, and his daughter, Ruby, has hired Johnny Getz to find him. When a dead body is discovered in Seppy's locked-up store, the missing persons case becomes a murder investigation, and now Diamond has to collaborate with the insufferable private eye.

Sarah J. Maas

House of flame and shadow

Bryce Quinlan never expected to see a world other than Midgard, but now that she has, all she wants is to get back. Everything she loves is in Midgard: her family, her friends, her mate. Stranded in a strange

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new world, she's going to need all her wits about her to get home again. And that's no easy feat when she has no idea who to trust.

Stuart MacBride ***The dead of winter***

It was supposed to be an easy job. All Detective Constable Edward Reekie had to do was pick up a dying prisoner from HMP Grampian and deliver him somewhere to live out his last few months in peace. From the outside, Glenfarach looks like a quaint village, in the heart of Cairngorms National Park, but things aren't what they seem. The place is thick with security cameras because Glenfarach is the final sanctuary for people who've served their sentences but can't be safely released into the general population. Edward's new boss, DI Montgomery-Porter, insists they head back to Aberdeen before the approaching blizzards shut everything down, but when an ex-cop-turned-gangster is discovered tortured to death in his bungalow, someone needs to take charge.

James McBride ***The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store***

In 1972, when workers in Pottstown, Pennsylvania, were digging the foundations for a new development, the last thing they expected to find was a skeleton at the bottom of a well. Who the skeleton was and how it got there were two of the long-held secrets kept by the residents of Chicken Hill, the dilapidated neighbourhood where immigrant Jews and African Americans lived side by side and shared ambitions and sorrows.

Val McDermid ***How the dead speak***

When human remains are discovered in the grounds of an old convent, it quickly becomes clear that someone has been using the site as their personal burial ground. But with the convent abandoned long ago and the remains dating back many years, could this be the work of more than one obsessive killer?

Paul Murray ***The bee sting***

The Barnes family is in trouble. Dickie's once-lucrative car business is going under—but rather than face the music, he's spending his days in the woods, building an apocalypse-proof bunker. His wife Imelda is selling off her jewelry on eBay, while their teenage daughter Cass, formerly top of her class, seems determined to binge-drink her way through her final exams. And twelve-year-old PJ is putting the final touches to his grand plan to run away from home.

Nick Petrie ***The runaway***

War veteran Peter Ash is driving through northern Nebraska when he encounters a young pregnant woman alone on a gravel road, her car dead. Peter offers her a lift, but what begins as an act of kindness soon turns into a deadly cat-and-mouse chase across the lonely highways with the woman's vicious ex-cop husband hot on their trail. The pregnant woman has seen something she was never meant to see but protecting her might prove to be more than Peter can handle.

J.D. Robb ***Random in death***

Jenna's parents had finally given in, and there she was, at a New York club with her best friends, watching the legendary band Avenue A, carrying her demo in hopes of slipping it to the guitarist, Jake Kincade. Then, from the stage, Jake catches her eye, and smiles. It's the best night of her life. It's the last night of her life.

Robert Rotenberg ***What we buried***

It's been years since Daniel Kennicott's brother, Michael, was shot and killed the night before he was about to depart for Gubbio, Italy. The case, never solved, has haunted Daniel ever since. Long suspecting the killing was tied to Michael's planned trip but overwhelmed with grief, Daniel has put off going there—until now, the tenth anniversary of the murder. As he's about to leave, Daniel learns that his two mentors, detectives Ari Greene and Nora Bering, have been more involved in the investigation of Michael's murder than he ever knew. And they're concerned about Daniel's safety. But why?

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Wilbur Smith/David Churchill Legacy of war

The war is over, Hitler is dead and yet his evil legacy lives on. Saffron Courtney and her husband Gerhard only just survived the brutal conflict, but Gerhard's Nazi-supporting brother, Konrad, is still free and determined to regain power. As a dangerous game of cat-and-mouse develops, a plot against the couple begins to stir. One that will have ramifications throughout Europe.

Further afield in Kenya, the last outcrop of the colonial empire is feeling the stirrings of rebellion. As the situation becomes violent, and the Courtney family home is under threat, Leon Courtney finds himself caught between two powerful sides - and a battle for the freedom of a country.

Diane Saxon Find her alive

Responding to reports of deadly screams in the Ironbridge Gorge, Detective Sergeant Jenna Morgan is first on the scene to investigate. As the search intensifies, Jenna soon discovers her sister Fliss's severely injured Dalmatian, Domino and the naked, tortured body of an unknown woman.

Benjamin Stevenson Everyone on this train is a suspect

When the Australian Mystery Writers' Society invited me to their crime-writing festival aboard the Ghan, the famous train between Darwin and Adelaide, I was hoping for some inspiration for my second book. Fiction, this time: I needed a break from real people killing each other. Obviously, that didn't pan out.

Charles Todd The cliff's edge

Restless and uncertain of her future in the wake of World War I, former battlefield nurse Bess Crawford agrees to travel to Yorkshire to help a friend of her cousin Melinda through surgery. But circumstances change suddenly when news of a terrible accident reaches them. Bess agrees to go to isolated Scarfdale and the Neville family, where one man has been killed and another gravely injured. The police are asking questions, and Bess is quickly drawn into the fray as two once close families take sides.

John Verdon The viper

Tennis bad boy Ziko Slade is serving twenty years for the murder of small-time criminal Lenny Lerman. What begins as a cursory review of the case as a favour to Dave Gurney's wife's friend soon spirals into something much more complicated.

Sam Weibe Invisible dead

Dave Wakeland isn't the usual PI. A 29-year-old ex-cop, he makes a habit of bad ideas. Chelsea Loam falls squarely into that category. Chelsea disappeared eleven years ago, leaving a trail leading towards career criminals and powerful men. Taking her case quickly starts to look like a good way to get killed.

Rebecca Yarros Iron flame

Everyone expected Violet Sorrengail to die during her first year at Basgiath War College. But Threshing was only the first impossible test meant to weed out the weak-willed, the unworthy, and the unlucky. Now the real training begins, and Violet's already wondering how she'll get through. It's not just that it's gruelling and maliciously brutal, or even that it's designed to stretch the riders' capacity for pain beyond endurance. It's the new vice commandant, who's made it his personal mission to teach Violet exactly how powerless she is—unless she betrays the man she loves.

NON-FICTION

Suzanne Heywood Wavewalker: breaking free

Aged just seven, Suzanne Heywood set sail with her parents and brother on a three-year voyage around the world. What followed turned instead into a decade-long way of life, through storms, shipwrecks, reefs and isolation, with little formal schooling. No one else knew where they were most of the time and no state showed any interest in what was happening to the children. Suzanne fought her parents, longing to return to England and to education and stability.

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Donna Leon

Wandering through life: a memoir

Following a childhood with her New Jersey family and frequent visits to her grandfather's farm, Leon got her first taste of the classical music and opera that would enrich her life. She also developed a yen for adventure. In 1976, she made the spontaneous decision to teach English in Iran, before finding herself swept up in the early days of the 1979 Revolution. After teaching in China and Saudi Arabia, she finally landed in Venice. Leon details her decades-long love affair with Italy. Some things remain constant throughout the decades: her adoration of opera and her advocacy for the environment. Yet as Leon inspects the cracks in the wall of a friend's bedroom, caused by vibrations from the enormous cruise ships making their way down Venice's canals, she admits regretfully that mass tourism has rendered the city less and less appealing.

Mike Rowe

The way I heard it

The book collects thirty-five fascinating stories “for the curious mind with a short attention span.” Five-minute mysteries about people you know, filled with facts that you didn't. Movie stars, presidents, Nazis, and bloody do-gooders—they're all here, waiting to shake your hand, hoping you'll remember them. Delivered with Mike's signature blend of charm, wit, and ingenuity, their stories are part of a larger mosaic—a memoir crammed with recollections, insights, and intimate, behind-the-scenes moments drawn from Mike's own life and career.

Tobias Rose-Stockwell

Outrage Machine: how tech is amplifying discontent, undermining democracy, and pushing us towards chaos

Throughout history, new technologies have disrupted our capacity to make sense of the world, from the printing press to the telegraph, from radio to television. Outrage Machine explores the serious recent disruption caused by social media, and how it has triggered an urgent society-wide crisis of trust. Drawing from deep historical context, as well as cutting-edge research, author, designer, and media researcher Tobias Rose-Stockwell shows how social media has bound us to an unprecedented outrage machine, training us to react rather than reflect, and attack rather than debate.