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OCTOBER 2024 NEW BOOK SYNOPSES**

FICTION

Kate Atkinson

Death at the sign of the rook

Another in the Jackson Brodie series. Marooned overnight by a snowstorm in a grand country house are a cast of characters and a setting that even Agatha Christie might recognize – a vicar, an Army major, a Dowager, a sleuth and his sidekick - except that the sleuth is Jackson Brodie, and the ‘sidekick’ is DC Reggie Chase.

Karen Barrow

Palmyra

An unexpected visitor to a cocoa estate on the island of Trinidad triggers buried memories of the mysterious deaths that plagued a prosperous French Creole family who once lived there. Now a near ruin, the once “Great House” was where Joe, the housekeeper’s precocious eleven-year-old son, bore witness to half-understood incidents and undercurrents in the lives of its residents. Decades later, his reawakened memories begin with the arrival of a handsome young stranger to the property.

Lee Child

Safe enough

Twenty distinct and intimate portraits of humanity at its best and worst, featuring assassins, CIA agents, gangsters, and more. A drug-dealing hit man unburdens his fears to a stranger. An overlooked rookie cop is assigned to the department’s file room. A ruthless killer only kills bad guys. A methodical bodyguard quits his job when he’s outsmarted. A military mission is planned to perfection.

Ann Cleeves

The dark wives

Another in the Vera Stanhope series. A man’s body is found in the early morning by a local dog walker in the park outside Rosebank, a home for troubled teens in the coastal village of Longwater. The victim is Josh, a staff member, who was due to work the previous night but never showed up. DI Vera Stanhope is called out to investigate the death, with her only clue being the disappearance of one of the home’s residents, fourteen-year-old Chloe Spence. Vera can’t bring herself to believe that a teenager is responsible for the murder, but she can’t dismiss the possibility.

Fiona Curnow

Before the swallows come back

Tommy struggles with people, with communicating, preferring solitude. He is protected by his Tinker family who keep to the old ways. A life of quiet seclusion under canvas is all he knows. Charlotte cares for her sickly father. She meets Tommy by the riverside and an unexpected friendship develops. Over the years it becomes something more. But when tragedy strikes each family, they are torn apart.

Barbara Davis

The echo of old books

Rare-book dealer Ashlyn Greer’s affinity for books extends beyond the intoxicating scent of old paper, ink, and leather. She can feel the echoes of the books’ previous owners, an emotional fingerprint only she can read. When Ashlyn discovers a pair of beautifully bound volumes that appear to have never been published, her gift quickly becomes an obsession. Not only is each inscribed with a startling incrimination, but the authors, Hemi and Belle, tell conflicting sides of a tragic romance.

Susan Doherty

Monday rent boy

Somerset, England, mid-1980s. Arthur Barnes and Ernie Castlefrank, are 13-year-old friends and altar boys. Both are routinely preyed on by Father Ziperto, the local Catholic priest. Still, they find adventure and release in the mischief they get up to together, as each tries to survive in other ways. Arthur, a great reader, finds an ally in town bookseller Marina Phillips, who sets him on a path that eventually takes him away to university. Ernie, a gifted mathematician and animal lover, is not so lucky. As he and Arthur age out of the abuse, Ernie notices younger and equally vulnerable boys being recruited. When he tries to blow the whistle, nobody believes him.

Matt Haig

The life impossible

When retired math teacher Grace Winters is left a run-down house on a Mediterranean island by a long-lost friend, curiosity gets the better of her. She arrives in Ibiza with a one-way ticket, no guidebook and

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no plan. Among the rugged hills and golden beaches of the island, Grace searches for answers about her friend's life, and how it ended. What she uncovers is stranger than she could have dreamed.

Elin Hildebrand

Swan song

The last in the Nantucket novels. After 35 years serving as the Chief of Police on the island of Nantucket, Ed Kapenash's heart can no longer take the stress. But his plans to retire are thwarted when, with only three days left to serve, he receives a phone call. A 22-million-dollar summer home, recently purchased by the flashy new couple in town, the Richardsons, has burned to the ground. The Richardsons are far from hurt—in fact, they're out on the water, throwing a lavish party on their yacht—but when news of the fire reaches them, they discover that their personal assistant has vanished. The Chief is well-acquainted with the Richardsons, and his daughter is best friends with the now-missing girl, leaving him no choice but to postpone his retirement and take on the double case.

Leslie Howard

The brideship wife

Inspired by the history of the British “brideships. England, 1862. Charlotte is somewhat of a wallflower. She knows her duty is to marry, but with no dowry, she has little choice. She can't continue to live off the generosity of her sister Harriet and her wealthy brother-in-law, Charles, whose political aspirations dictate that she make an advantageous match. When Harriet hosts a grand party, Charlotte is charged with winning the affections of one of Charles's colleagues, but before the night is over, her reputation, her one thing of value, is at risk. In the days that follow, rumours begin to swirl. Soon Charles's standing in society is threatened and all that Charlotte has held dear is jeopardized, and Charlotte is forced to leave everything she has ever known in England and embark on a treacherous voyage to the New World.

William Kent Krueger

The river we remember

1958. On Memorial Day, as the people of Jewel, Minnesota gather to remember and honour the sacrifice of so many sons in the wars of the past, the half-clothed body of wealthy landowner Jimmy Quinn is found floating in the Alabaster River, killed by a shotgun blast. Investigation of the murder falls to Sheriff Brody Dern, a war hero who still carries the physical and emotional scars. Even before Dern has the results of the autopsy, vicious rumours begin to circulate that the killer must be Noah Bluestone, a Native American WWII veteran who has recently returned to Jewel with a Japanese wife. As suspicions and accusations mount and the town teeters on the edge of more violence, Dern struggles not only to find the truth of Quinn's murder but also put to rest the demons from his own past.

William Kent Krueger

Spirit crossing

The disappearance of a local politician's teenaged daughter is major news in Minnesota. As a huge manhunt is launched to find her, Cork O'Connor's grandson stumbles across the shallow grave of a young Ojibwe woman but nobody seems interested. Nobody, that is, except Cork and the newly formed Iron Lake Ojibwe Tribal Police. As Cork and the tribal officers dig into the circumstances of this grim discovery, they uncover a connection to the missing teenager. And soon, it's clear that Cork's grandson is in danger of being the killer's next victim.

Ruth Mancini

The woman on the ledge

A woman falls to her death from a London bank's twenty-fifth-floor roof terrace. You're arrested for her murder. You tell the police that you only met the victim the previous night at your office party. She was threatening to jump from the roof, but you talked her down. You've got nothing to do with this tragedy. You're clearly being framed. So why do the police keep picking holes in your story? And why doesn't your lawyer seem to believe you?

Heather Marshall

The secret history of Audrey James

Inspired by true stories of courageous women and the German resistance during WWII. Northern England, 2010. After a tragic accident upends her life, Kate Mercer leaves London to work at an old guest house near the Scottish border, where she hopes to find a fresh start and heal from her loss. When she arrives, she begins to unravel the truth about her past, but discovers the mysterious elderly proprietor is harbouring her own secrets.

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Berlin, 1938. Audrey James is weeks away from graduating from a prestigious music school in Berlin, where she's been living with her best friend, Ilse Kaplan. As she prepares to finish her piano studies, Audrey dreads the thought of returning to her father in England and leaving Ilse behind. Families like the Kaplans are being targeted as war in Europe threatens. When Ilse's parents and brother suddenly disappear, two high-ranking Nazi party members confiscate the Kaplans' upscale home, believing it to be empty. In a desperate attempt to keep Ilse safe, Audrey becomes housekeeper for the officers while Ilse is forced into hiding in the attic. Tensions rise in the house and the chance of survival diminishes by the day. When events push Audrey to become embroiled in cell of the anti-Hitler movement, Audrey must decide what matters most: saving herself, protecting her friend, or sacrificing everything for the greater good.

Peter May

The Black Loch

Another in the Lewis series. The body of 18 year-old TV personality Caitlin is found abandoned on a remote beach at the head of An Loch Dubh, the Black Loch, on the west coast of the Isle of Lewis. A swimmer and canoeist, it is inconceivable that she could have drowned. Fin Macleod left the island ten years earlier to escape its memories. When he learns that his married son Fionnlagh had been having a clandestine affair with the dead girl and is suspected of her murder, he and Marsaili return to try and clear his name.

Leanne Moriarity

Here one moment

Aside from a delay, there will be no problems. The flight will be smooth, it will land safely. Everyone who gets on the plane will get off. But almost all of them will be forever changed. Because on this ordinary, short, domestic flight, something extraordinary happens. People learn how and when they are going to die. For some, their death is far in the future—age 103—and they laugh. But for six passengers, their predicted deaths are not far away at all.

Richard Osman

We solve murders

Steve Wheeler is enjoying the routines of retired life. His days of adventure are over. Adrenaline is daughter-in-law Amy's business now. Amy Wheeler thinks adrenaline is good for the soul. As a private security officer, she doesn't stay still long enough for routines. She's currently on an island keeping world-famous author Rosie D'Antonio alive which was meant to be an easy job. Then a dead body, a bag of money, and a killer with their sights on Amy have her sending an sos to Steve.

James Patterson/Maxine Paetro

The 23rd midnight

Another in a Women's Murder Club series. An attention-seeking copycat is recreating murders by a famous killer from the Women's Murder Club's past with devastating new twists. Detective Lindsay Boxer put serial killer Evan Burke in jail. Reporter Cindy Thomas wrote a book that put him on the bestseller list and now Lindsay's tracking an elusive suspect.

Jodi Picoult

By any other name

Young playwright Melina Green has just written a new work inspired by the life of her Elizabethan ancestor Emilia Bassano. But seeing it performed is unlikely, in a theatre world where the playing field isn't level for women. As Melina wonders if she dares risk failure again, her best friend takes the decision out of her hands and submits the play to a festival under a male pseudonym.

1581. Young Emilia Bassano is a ward of English aristocrats. Her lessons on languages, history, and writing have endowed her with a sharp wit and a gift for storytelling, but like most women of her day, she is allowed no voice of her own. Forced to become a mistress to the Lord Chamberlain, who oversees all theatre productions in England, Emilia sees firsthand how the words of playwrights can move an audience. She begins to form a plan to secretly bring a play of her own to the stage—by paying an actor named William Shakespeare to front her work.

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Ruth Reichl

The Paris novel

When her estranged mother dies, Stella is left with a one-way plane ticket and a note reading Go to Paris. But Stella is hardly cut out for adventure; a childhood trauma has kept her confined to the strict routines of her comfort zone. When her boss encourages her to take time off, Stella resigns herself to honouring her mother's last wishes. Alone in a foreign city, Stella falls into old habits, living cautiously and frugally. Then she stumbles across a vintage store where she tries on a fabulous Dior dress. The shopkeeper insists that this dress was meant for Stella and, for the first time in her life, Stella does something impulsive. She buys the dress and together they embark on an adventure.

J.D. Robb

Connections in death

Homicide cop Eve Dallas and her billionaire husband, Roarke, are building a brand-new school and youth shelter. For expert help, they hire child psychologist Dr. Rochelle Pickering whose brother, Lyle, pulled himself out of a spiral of addiction and crime with Rochelle's support. Lyle is living with Rochelle while he gets his life together, and he's thrilled to hear about his sister's new job offer. But within hours, triumph is followed by tragedy. Returning from a celebratory dinner with her boyfriend, she finds Lyle dead with a syringe in his lap, and Eve's investigation confirms that this wasn't just another OD.

Elif Shafak

There are rivers in the sky

This is the story of one lost poem, two great rivers and three remarkable lives all connected by a single drop of water. In the ruins of Nineveh, that ancient city of Mesopotamia, hidden in the sand, lie the fragments of a long-forgotten poem: the Epic of Gilgamesh.

In Victorian London, an extraordinary child is born at the edge of the dirt-black Thames. Arthur's only chance of escaping poverty is his brilliant memory. When his gift earns him a spot as an apprentice at a printing press, Arthur's world opens up far beyond the slums, with one book soon sending him across the seas: Nineveh and Its Remains.

In 2014 Turkey, Narin, a Yazidi girl living by the River Tigris, waits to be baptized with water brought from the holy city of Lalish in Iraq. The ceremony is cruelly interrupted, and soon Narin and her grandmother must journey across war-torn lands in the hope of reaching the sacred valley of their people.

In 2018 London, brokenhearted Zaleekhah moves to a houseboat on the Thames to escape the wreckage of her marriage. Zaleekhah foresees a life drained of all love and meaning until an unexpected connection to her homeland changes everything.

Karin Slaughter

This is why we lied

For GBI investigator Will Trent and medical examiner Sara Linton, McAlpine Lodge seems like the ideal getaway to celebrate their honeymoon. Set on a gorgeous, off-the-grid mountaintop property, it's the perfect place to unplug and reconnect. Until a bone-chilling scream cuts through the night. Mercy McAlpine, the manager of the Lodge, is dead. With a storm raging and the one access road to the property washed out, the murderer must be someone on the mountain.

Bryn Turnbull

The Berlin apartment

Berlin 1961: When Uli Neumann proposes to Lise Bauer, she has every reason to accept. He offers her love, respect, and a life beyond the strict bounds of the East German society in which she was raised and which she longs to leave. But only two short days after their engagement, Lise and Uli are torn apart when barbed wire is rolled across Berlin, splitting the city into two hostile halves. Soon, Uli and his friends in West Berlin hatch a plan to get Lise and her unborn child out of East Germany.

Buck Turner

The keeper of stars

1962. Twelve years removed from the summer when she first gave her heart away, Dr. Elizabeth (Ellie) Spencer, Professor of Astronomy at Indiana University, receives a mysterious package. Inside the unmarked box is a novel written by Ellie's first love, Jack Bennett. It tells the story of a young man and woman who meet at the water's edge and fall madly in love, only to have their romance cut short by

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forces beyond their control. Ellie quickly realizes this is no ordinary story; it's their story. Captivated by Jack's words, she immerses herself in the pages, reliving the adventures they shared that magical summer. To her astonishment, hidden among the tales of star-gazing and stolen kisses is a detail that has her questioning everything.

Jane Urquhart

In winter I get up at night

In the early morning dark, Emer McConnell rises for a day of teaching music in the schools of rural Saskatchewan. While she travels the snowy roads in the gathering light, she begins another journey, one of recollection and introspection. At the age of 11, she was terribly injured in an enormous prairie storm that shifts her trajectory forever. As she recovers, separated from her family in a children's ward, Emer gets to know her fellow patients. The children are tended to by three nursing sisters and two doctors, whom the ever-imaginative Emer comes to call Doctor Angel and Doctor Carpenter. Emer's tale grows outwards from that ward, recounting the stories of her mother's entanglement with a powerful yet mysterious teacher; her brother's dawning spirituality, which eventually leads him to the priesthood; the remarkable lives of the nuns who care for her; and the passionate yet distant love affair of Emer and an enigmatic man she calls Harp—a brilliant scientist whose great discovery has forever altered millions of lives around the world.

D.K. Wall

Jaxon with an x

During a raging snowstorm, a deputy rescues a teenager stumbling along the side of a highway. Battered and starving, the boy reveals only his name—Jaxon with an X. Ten years earlier, six-year-old Jaxon Lathan disappeared from a small North Carolina mountain town. The sheriff thought he had solved the crime, but the boy's return leads to a house of secrets, a mass grave, and the horror of missed opportunities. As the victims are identified one-by-one, the story of what really happened comes to light.

Chris Whitaker

All the colours of the dark

1975 is a time of change in America. The Vietnam War is ending. Mohammed Ali is fighting Joe Frazier. And in the small town of Monta Clare, Missouri, girls are disappearing. When the daughter of a wealthy family is targeted, the most unlikely hero emerges. Patch, a local boy with one eye, saves the girl, and, in doing so, leaves heartache in his wake.

NON-FICTION

Dr. Amy Attas

Pets and the city

New York City's premier "house call veterinarian" takes you into the exclusive penthouses and four-star hotel rooms of the wealthiest New Yorkers and shows that, when it comes to their pets, they are just as neurotic as any of us. When a pet is sick, people are at their most authentic and vulnerable. They could have a Monet on the wall and an Oscar on the shelf, but if their cat gets a cold, all they want to talk about are snotty noses and sneezing fits. That's when they call Dr. Amy Attas. Dr. Amy shares all the funny, heartbreaking, and life-affirming experiences she's faced throughout her thirty-year career treating the cats and dogs of New Yorkers from Park Avenue to the projects.

Douglas Brunt

The mysterious case of Rudolf Diesel: genius, power, and deception on the eve of World War I

September 29, 1913: the steamship Dresden is halfway between Belgium and England. On board is one of the most famous men in the world, Rudolf Diesel, whose new internal combustion engine is on the verge of revolutionizing global industry forever. But Diesel never arrives at his destination. He vanishes during the night and headlines around the world wonder if it was an accident, suicide, or murder.

After rising from an impoverished European childhood, Diesel had become a multi-millionaire with his powerful engine that does not require expensive petroleum-based fuel. In doing so, he became not only an international celebrity but also the enemy of two extremely powerful Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany and John D. Rockefeller, the founder of Standard Oil and the richest man in the world.

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Ben Macintyre

The siege

On April 30, 1980, six heavily armed gunmen burst into the Iranian embassy on Prince's Gate, overlooking Hyde Park in London. There, they took 26 hostages, including embassy staff, visitors, and three British citizens. A tense six-day siege ensued, in which police negotiators and psychiatrists sought a bloodless end to the standoff, while the SAS laid plans for a daring rescue mission: Operation Nimrod. This mission marked a fundamental turning point in global history, when Middle Eastern terrorism arrived in the West. Britain had experienced IRA terrorism before, but never an international terrorist incident on this scale. It was a precursor to the brutal Iran-Iraq War that would follow, in which millions perished. Yet there exists to this day no full account of the week-long siege and gripping rescue.

Arthur J. Magida

Code name Madeline: a Sufi spy in Nazi-occupied Paris

Raised in a lush suburb of 1920s Paris, Noor Inayat Khan was an introspective musician and writer, dedicated to her family and to her father's spiritual values of harmony, beauty, and tolerance. She did not seem destined for wartime heroism. Yet, faced with the evils of Nazi violence and the German occupation of France, Noor joined the British Special Operations Executive and trained in espionage, sabotage, and reconnaissance. She returned to Paris under an assumed identity immediately before the Germans mopped up the Allies' largest communications network in France. For crucial months of the war, Noor was the only wireless operator there sending critical information to London, significantly aiding the success of the Allied landing on D-Day. Code-named Madeleine, she became a high-value target for the Gestapo. When she was eventually captured, Noor attempted two daring escapes before she was sent to Dachau and killed just months before the end of the war.