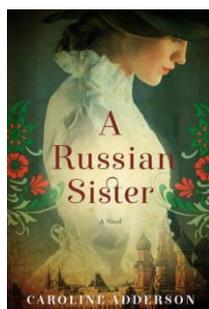


## Spring 2020: FICTION, selected new titles (Literary/ Upmarket – Commercial/ Upmarket – Suspense)

### Literary/ Upmarket



**Caroline Adderson**  
**A RUSSIAN SISTER**

Client: Westwood Creative Artists Ltd.  
Publisher: HarperCollins Canada  
August 2020  
369 pp.

**In this witty and colorfully-peopled novel, Caroline Adderson effortlessly plunges the reader into a nineteenth century Russian tragi-comedy.**

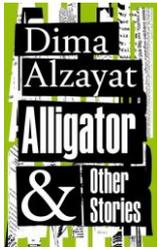
Aspiring painter Masha C. is blindly devoted to Antosha, her famous writer-brother. Through the years Antosha takes up with numerous women from Masha's circle of friends, yet none of these relationships threaten the siblings' close ties until the winter he falls into a depression. Then Masha invites into their Moscow home a young woman who teaches with her – the beautiful, vivacious, and deeply vulnerable Lika Mizanova – with the express hope she might help Antosha recover.

The appearance of Lika sets off a convolution of unrequited love, jealousy, and scandal that lasts for seven years. If the famously unattainable writer has lost his heart to Lika as everyone claims, why does he undertake a life-threatening voyage to Sakhalin Island? And what will happen to Masha if she is demoted from "woman of the house" to "spinster sister"? While Antosha and Lika push and pull, Masha falls in love herself – with a man and with a mongoose – only to have her dreams twice crushed. From her own heartbreak she comes to recognize the harm that she has done to her friends by encouraging their involvement with Antosha. Too late for Lika. She prepares both to sacrifice herself for love and to be immortalized as the model for Nina in Chekhov's *The Seagull*.

A RUSSIAN SISTER offers a clever commentary on the role of women as prey for male needs and male inspiration, a role they continue to play in our century. At the same time the novel is a plea for sisterhood, both familial and friendly. Chekhov's *The Seagull* changed the theater. A RUSSIAN SISTER gives the reader a glimpse behind the curtain to the real-life people who inspired it and the tragedy that followed its premiere.

**Caroline Adderson** is the author of four novels (*A History of Forgetting*, *Sitting Practice*, *The Sky Is Falling*, and *Ellen in Pieces*), two collections of short stories (*Bad Imaginings*, *Pleased To Meet You*) as well as many books for young readers. Published in eleven countries, her work has received numerous award nominations including the Sunday Times EFG Private Bank Short Story Award, the International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award, two Commonwealth Writers' Prizes, the Governor General's Literary Award, the Rogers' Trust Fiction Prize, and the Scotiabank Giller Prize longlist. Winner of three B.C. Book Prizes and three CBC Literary Awards, Adderson was also the recipient of the Marian Engel Award for mid-career achievement. She is Program Director for the Writing Studio at the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity.

Contact: Hannah Nuspliger-Fosh/ Hanna Vielberg



**Dima Alzayat**  
**ALLIGATOR AND OTHER STORIES**

Client: Blake Friedmann Literary, TV and Film Agency Ltd  
Publisher: Picador  
May 2020  
173 pp.

Rights sold: Tantor Media, AUDIO; Two Dollar Radio, US

**'Tremendously assured, wise-cracking and elegiac, with a firm pulse on the magical and mundane. I loved its hard-edged lyricism and the tremendous em-pathetic range and distinctiveness of vision... Will resonate with anyone who has ever felt caught between cultures, places and the interstices of memory and the loaded everyday.'** — Sharlene Teo, author of *PONTI*

**A luminous collection of stories about feeling displaced – as a Syrian, as an Arab, as a woman, as an 'other'.**

Dima Alzayat's haunting, rich and tender *ALLIGATOR AND OTHER STORIES* marks the arrival of a tremendously gifted new talent, chronicling a sense of displacement through everyday scenarios. There is the intern in pre-#MeToo Hollywood, the New York City children on the lookout for a place to play on the heels of Etan Patz's kidnapping, and the "dangerous" women who struggle to assert their independence. Meanwhile a woman performs burial rites for her brother and a great-aunt struggles to explain cultural identity to her niece.

The title story 'Alligator' is a masterpiece of historical reconstruction and intergenerational trauma, told through social media posts, newspaper clippings, and testimonials, that starts with the true story of the lynching of a Syrian immigrant couple by law officers in small-town Florida. Placed in a wider context of US racial violence, the extrajudicial deaths, and what happens to the couple's children and their children's children in the years after, 'Alligator' challenges the demands of American assimilation and its limits.

**Dima Alzayat** was born in Damascus, Syria, grew up in San Jose, California, and now lives in Manchester. She was the winner of a 2018 Northern Writers' Award, the 2017 Bristol Short Story Prize and 2015 Bernice Slotte Award, runner-up in the 2018 Deborah Rogers Award and the 2018 Zoetrope: All-Story Competition, and was Highly Commended in the 2013 Bridport Prize. She is a PhD student and lecturer at Lancaster University.

Contact: Hannah Nuspliger-Fosh/ Hanna Vielberg

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**Kristen Arnett**  
**SAMSON**

Client: Ayesha Pande Literary  
Publisher: Riverhead

Ms available May 2020

**In the vein of Lionel Shriver's *We Need to Talk about Kevin* and *Baby Teeth* by Zoje Stage, Kristen Arnett brings forth a novel about the dynamics within a queer Florida household, specifically between a mother and her son, and the ways in which families can gaslight each other.**

Samandra (Sammie) Lucas is a stay-at-home mother who finds her life increasingly complicated by the unsettling and terrifying behavior of her son, Samson. Her wife, Monika, works longer and longer hours as the household deteriorates, refusing to see anything outside of the perfect queer family they're portraying for the public. Sammie, unused to motherhood and unsure if it's even something she ever wanted, begins engaging in problematic coping mechanisms in order to get through the long days: affairs, voyeurism, and eventually violence. As Samson grows, so do the problems between them, widening the rift in Sammie and Monika's relationship. When a teenaged Samson commits a heinous act in their home, Sammie must make a decision that will affect not only her son's life, but ultimately the trajectory of her own.

Told from early childhood into adulthood, the novel maps the trajectory of truth when it comes to how we expect lesbians to navigate motherhood, subverting ideas about gender roles in families.

**Kristen Arnett** is the NYT bestselling author of the debut novel *Mostly Dead Things* (Tin House, '19). She is a queer fiction and essay writer. She was awarded Ninth Letter's Literary Award in Fiction and is a columnist for Literary Hub. Her work has appeared at North American Review, The Normal School, Gulf Coast, TriQuarterly, Guernica, BuzzFeed, Electric Literature, McSweeney's, PBS Newshour, Bennington Review, Tin House Flash Fridays/The Guardian, Salon, The Rumpus, and elsewhere. Her story collection, *Felt in the Jaw*, was published by Split Lip Press and was awarded the 2017 Coil Book Award. She is a Spring 2020 Shearing Fellow at Black Mountain Institute.

Contact: Anja Kretschmann



**Tom Benn**  
**OXBLOOD**

Client: Blake Friedmann Literary, TV and Film Agency Ltd  
Ms available May 2020

**The story of a dark criminal underworld explored through the lives of three women**

OXBLOOD is the story of three seething and forgotten mothers – a teen mother, a grandmother, and a great-grandmother, living together in a house in mid-1980s' Wythenshawe, England. Each must contend with the ruinous disappointments of their men. The family's dead patriarchs once ruled Manchester's underworld; now their house harbours an unregistered baby, and is haunted by a ghost of a murdered man – still an otherworldly lover to one of these women.

Nedra must contend with her husband's true legacy as a monster whom she no longer needs to deify in order to live. Carol is visited by both the welcome, intimate ghost of her lover, and by Mac, an ageing criminal enforcer, who may just offer her a real and possible future. Jan meanwhile receives a visit from her brother Kelly, fresh from prison – and soon becomes the only one who can break the cycle of crime and violence, when her dead father's shady associate tries to draw Kelly into his world.

OXBLOOD is the story of three people who have given up on the present, since the present has given up on them. It is a novel of secrets and denial, revealing how these women's identities and ambitions have been predetermined by society, and asking how, perhaps, they might free themselves from the prison of the past.

**Tom Benn** is an author, screenwriter and lecturer from Stockport, England. His first novel, *The Doll Princess*, was shortlisted for the Dylan Thomas Prize and the Portico Prize, longlisted for the CWA's John Creasey Dagger, and was The Daily Mirror's Book of the Week. His other novels are *Chamber Music* (Cape) and *Trouble Man* (Cape). He won runner-up prize in the 2019 International Desperate Literature Prize for Short Fiction. His first film *Real Gods Require Blood* premiered in competition at the Cannes Film Festival, and was nominated for Best Short Film at the BFI London Film Festival.

Contact: Anja Kretschmann



**Graeme Macrae Burnet**  
**KILL YOUR SELF**

Client: Blake Friedmann Literary, TV and Film Agency Ltd  
Ms available May 2020

**A woman investigates her sister's suicide and the potentially deadly persuasive power of a psychotherapist, in this gripping new novel by the Booker-shortlisted author.**

KILL YOUR SELF opens with the author receiving a series of notebooks containing the story of a woman convinced her sister Veronica was persuaded by her psychotherapist A. Collins Braithwaite, to kill herself. And so an intriguing game of cat-and-mouse between therapist and patient, between narrator and reader, even author and reader, begins.

1960s London. The unnamed narrator decides to meet Braithwaite, and try to ascertain whether he did in fact cause Veronica's death. She assumes the name of Rebecca Smyth and begins visiting the therapist. Braithwaite is a domineering and powerful individual, probing 'Rebecca' with blunt and unorthodox questions, in a series of increasingly tense therapy sessions. Was he really responsible for her sister's death?

As the sessions continue, the narrator and her 'Rebecca' persona begin to separate, and her grip on reality slips. Braithwaite knows she is not who she says she is. But does she know anymore?

**Graeme Macrae Burnet** was brought up Kilmarnock, Ayrshire and now lives in Glasgow. His first novel, *The Disappearance of Adele Bedeau* (Contraband, 2014), received a New Writer's Award from the Scottish Book Trust and was longlisted for the Waverton Good Read Award. *His Bloody Project* (Contraband, 2015) won the Saltire Society Fiction Book of the Year Award, and was shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize and the LA Times Book Awards. It has been published to great acclaim around the world.

Contact: Anja Kretschmann



**Kim Echlin**  
**SPEAK, SILENCE**

Client: The Cooke Agency International Inc  
Publisher: Penguin Canada  
Spring 2021  
207 pp.

**From the internationally bestselling author of the Giller Prize–shortlisted novel *The Disappeared* – published in over 20 countries – *SPEAK, SILENCE* is a staggering, powerful and poetic fictional retelling of a singular trial at the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) that created monumental jurisprudence resulting in war-time rape being named a Crime Against Humanity.**

Central to the case at the ICTY is a family of three women: Edina, a lawyer from Foča (in what is now Bosnia and Herzegovina) who has made it her life’s mission to collect the traumatic and horrific testimony from the women of her country; her mother Esma; and daughter Merima. Narrated by Gota, a single mother and journalist whose past is inextricably linked with the region that becomes the focus of her writing, *SPEAK, SILENCE* takes readers from Toronto to Foča all the way to The Hague, as women from all walks of life work to bring about this monumental ruling

For readers of Miriam Toews’s *Women Talking* and Anthony Marra’s *A Constellation of Vital Phenomena*, **Kim Echlin’s *SPEAK, SILENCE*** forces us to reckon with one of the darkest, but often overlooked, times in our recent history and brilliantly illustrates the double-edged sword of needing to move forward as a society without sweeping the painful history under the rug.

Contact: Hannah Nuspliger-Fosh/ Hanna Vielberg

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**Danielle Evans**  
**THE OFFICE OF HISTORICAL CORRECTIONS**

Client: Ayesha Pande Literary  
Publisher: Riverhead Books  
November 2020  
202 pp.

**The award-winning author of *Before You Suffocate Your Own Fool Self* brings her signature voice and insight to the subjects of race, grief, apology, and American history.**

Danielle Evans is widely acclaimed for her blisteringly smart voice and x-ray insights into complex human relationships. With *THE OFFICE OF HISTORICAL CORRECTIONS*, Evans zooms in on particular moments and relationships in her characters' lives in a way that allows them to speak to larger issues of race, culture, and history. She introduces us to Black and multi-racial characters who are experiencing the universal confusions of lust and love, and getting walloped by grief – all while exploring how history haunts us, personally and collectively. Ultimately, she provokes us to think about the truths of American history – about who gets to tell them, and the cost of setting the record straight.

In “Boys Go to Jupiter” a white college student tries to reinvent herself after a photo of her in a confederate flag bikini goes viral. In “Richard of York Gave Battle in Vain” a photojournalist is forced to confront her own losses while attending an old friend's unexpectedly dramatic wedding. And in the eye-opening title novella, a black scholar from Washington DC is drawn into a complex historical mystery that spans generations and puts her job, her love life, and her oldest friendship at risk.

**Danielle Evans** is the author of the story collection *Before You Suffocate Your Own Fool Self*, winner of the PEN American Robert W. Bingham prize, the Hurston-Wright Legacy Award, and the Paterson Prize, and a National Book Foundation 5 under 35 selection. Her stories have appeared in magazines and anthologies including *The Paris Review*, *A Public Space*, *American Short Fiction*, *Callaloo*, *New Stories From the South*, and *The Best American Short Stories* 2008, 2010, 2017 and 2018. She teaches in The Writing Seminars at Johns Hopkins University.

Contact: Anja Kretschmann



**Fiona Foster**  
**THE CAPTIVE**

Client: The Cooke Agency International Inc  
Publisher: Harper Collins Canada  
Winter 2021  
246 pp.

Rights sold: Ecco, US

**Sold in a six-figure auction to HarperCollins Canada and Ecco in the US, THE CAPTIVE is an assured, action-packed and heart-stopping debut – a feminist noir story of survival, difficult choices, and the enduring fierceness of a mother’s love.**

Brooke, who lives on a farm with her husband and two young daughters, spots a ‘WANTED’ poster in town bearing the face of a man she recognizes from her childhood – a traumatic period of her life that she guards closely – and it’s not long before she finds the pictured fugitive hiding in her shed. After beating and binding him, she quickly decides on a plan: take the prisoner, and with her family in tow, travel miles through the woods on foot to collect the bounty on his head, solving both her money problems and ensuring that no one from her past can ever threaten her family or her new life again . . . or at least, that’s the plan.

THE CAPTIVE is as and riveting as it is stunningly written, and perfect for readers of *The Outlander* by Gil Adamson and *Winter’s Bone* by Daniel Woodrell.

Contact: Hannah Nuspliger-Fosh/ Hanna Vielberg

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**Zsuzsi Gartner**  
**THE BEGUILING**

Client: Westwood Creative Artists Ltd.  
Publisher: Hamish Hamilton  
Fall 2020

**For fans of Ottessa Moshfegh’s *My Year of Rest and Relaxation*: An electrifying debut in which a lapsed Catholic’s adolescent pretensions to sainthood are unexpectedly revived when a tsunami of needy confessants finds in her a willing listener.**

It all starts when Lucy’s cousin Zoltan, in a hospital following a bizarre accident at a party, offers her a disturbing deathbed confession. As Lucy’s grief takes an unusual turn and strangers begin to unburden themselves to her, Lucy is transformed into a self-described “flesh and blood Wailing Wall.” Then she becomes addicted to the dark stories and finds herself seeking them out.

As the confessions pile up, Lucy begins to wonder if Zoltan’s death was as random and unscripted as it appeared. She clutches at alarming synchronicities and seeks meaning in the stories of strangers. Why do the increasingly bizarre confessions seem connected to one another or eerily echo elements of her own life? Could it be because Lucy has her own transgressions to acknowledge? And then there is that stubbornly resurfacing past, like a tell-tale ribbon of hair snagged on a fish hook.

With ruthless wit and dizzying energy, THE BEGUILING explores blessings and curses, sainthood and sin, mortality, and guilt in all its guises. Weaving together tales of errant mothers, vengeful plants, canine wisdom, and murder, it lays bare the flesh and blood sacrifices people are willing to make to get what they think they desire.

**Zsuzsi Gartner** is the Scotiabank Giller Prize shortlisted author of two widely acclaimed story collections, *Better Living Through Plastic Explosives* and *All the Anxious Girls on Earth*. The inaugural Frank O’Connor International Short Story Fellow for Cork, Ireland in 2016, her fiction has been widely anthologized, broadcast on CBC Radio and NPR, and has won numerous prizes including a 2016 National Magazine Award. She is also the editor of the award-winning fiction anthology *Darwin’s Bastards: Astounding Tales from Tomorrow*. Gartner has been on the faculty of the University of British Columbia’s Creative Writing M.F.A. program and many of the Banff Centre’s writing programs, and is the founder and director of Writers Adventure Camp in Whistler, British Columbia. Excerpts from THE BEGUILING, her debut novel, have appeared in *The Walrus*, *SubTerrain*, and *Maisonneuve*. She lives in Vancouver.

Contact: Hannah Nuspliger-Fosh/ Hanna Vielberg



**Makenna Goodman**  
**THE SHAME**

Client: Union Literary  
Publisher: Milkweed  
August 2020  
121 pp.

**"A delicious, important moral corrective of a novel for our moment of performance, obsessive witnessing, and self-doubt... Makenna Goodman draws a dark and suspenseful tale out of the feelings of envy women have for one another, fanned in this moment of high capitalism – a shame many of us know and feel, that reading this novel somehow helps disperse." – Sheila Heti**

**"Makenna Goodman writes with blazing clarity and admirable wit about the joys and sorrows of raising children. Her depiction of the longing, self-loathing, and quiet rage that accompanies sidelined ambition is brilliantly complex." – Jenny Offill**

**What if you could change your life? Would you do it? How would you do it?**

Alma and her family live close to the land: they raise chickens and sheep, they make maple syrup. Every day Alma's husband leaves for his job at a college while she stays home with their children, cleans, searches for secondhand goods online, and reads books by the women writers she adores. Then, one night, she leaves it all behind – speeding through the darkness, away from their Vermont homestead, bound for New York.

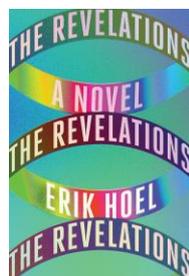
In a series of flashbacks, Alma reveals the circumstances and choices that led to this moment. The joys and claustrophobia of their remote life through the passing of each season. Her fears and uncertainties about motherhood. The painfully awkward faculty dinners. Her feelings of isolation and failure. And her growing fascination with Celeste: the mysterious ceramicist and self-loving doppelgänger whose internet personality begins as inspiration for Alma before turning into a powerful obsession.

Bold, moving, and darkly funny, **THE SHAME** is an ambitious debut about technology, capitalism, motherhood, and the search for meaningful art – a haunting bedtime story and blistering road novel for our times.

**Makenna Goodman** is a freelance editor of fiction and nonfiction, who has developed award-winning and best-selling books on food, agriculture, health, and the environment. She lives in Vermont.

Contact: Hannah Nuspliger-Fosh/ Hanna Vielberg

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**Erik Hoel**  
**THE REVELATIONS**

Client: Harry N. Abrams Inc.  
Publisher: Overlook  
November 2020  
416 pp.

**A stunning debut of rare power – an intense look at cutting-edge science, consciousness, and human connection**

Monday, Kierk wakes up. Once a rising star in neuroscience, Kierk Suren is now homeless, broken by his all-consuming quest to find a scientific theory of consciousness. But when he's offered a spot in a prestigious postdoctoral program, he decides to rejoin society and vows not to self-destruct again. Instead of focusing on his work, however, Kierk becomes obsessed with another project – investigating the sudden and suspicious death of a colleague. As his search for truth brings him closer to Carmen Green, another postdoc, their list of suspects grows, along with the sense that something sinister may be happening all around them.

**THE REVELATIONS**, not unlike its main character, is ambitious and abrasive, challenging and disarming. Bursting with ideas, ranging from Greek mythology to the dark realities of animal testing, to some of the biggest unanswered questions facing scientists today, **THE REVELATIONS** is written in muscular, hypnotic prose, and its cyclically dreamlike structure pushes the boundaries of literary fiction.

**Erik Hoel** received his PhD in neuroscience from the University of Madison-Wisconsin. He is a research assistant professor at Tufts University and was previously a postdoctoral researcher at Columbia University in the NeuroTechnology Lab, and a visiting scholar at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton. Hoel is a 2018 Forbes "30 under 30" for his neuroscientific research on consciousness and a Center for Fiction Emerging Writer Fellow. He lives in Massachusetts.

Contact: Anja Kretschmann



**Frances Itani**  
**THE COMPANY WE KEEP**

Client: Westwood Creative Artists Ltd.  
Publisher: Harper Collins Canada  
Fall 2020  
293 pp.

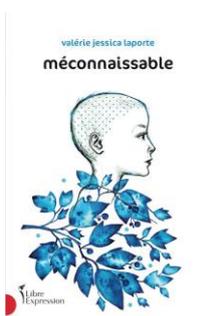
**Six strangers in need of solace come back to life when they join a ‘Company of Good Cheer.’**

Hazzley is at loose ends, even three years after the death of her husband. When her longtime friend, Cassandra, café owner and occasional dance-class partner, suggests that she start up a conversation group, Hazzley posts a notice on the community board at the local grocery store. Four people turn up for the meeting: Gwen, a recently widowed retiree in her early 60s, who finds herself pet-sitting for a cantankerous parrot; Chiyo, a 40-year-old fitness instructor who cared for her unyielding but gossip-loving mother through the final days of her life; Addie, a woman pre-emptively grieving a close friend who is seriously ill; and Tom, antiques dealer and amateur poet who, deprived of home baking since becoming a widower, comes to the first meeting hoping cake will be served. Before long, they are joined by Allam, a Syrian refugee with his own story to tell.

These six strangers are learning that beginnings might be possible at any stage of life. But as they tell their stories, they must navigate what is shared and what is withheld. What version of the truth will be told? Who is prepared to step up when help is needed? Acclaimed author Frances Itani’s moving, funny, and deeply empathic new novel reminds us that life, with all its twists and turns, never loses its capacity to surprise.

**Frances Itani’s** novels include *That’s My Baby*; *Tell*, shortlisted for the Scotiabank Giller Prize; *Requiem*, chosen by The Washington Post as one of the top fiction titles of 2012; *Remembering the Bones*, published internationally and shortlisted for the Commonwealth Writers’ Prize; and the #1 bestseller *Deafening*, which won a Commonwealth Writers’ Prize, was shortlisted for the International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award, was selected for CBC’s Canada Reads, and was published in seventeen territories. Itani lives in Ottawa.

Contact: Hannah Nuspliger-Fosh/ Hanna Vielberg



**Valérie Jessica Laporte**  
**MÉCONNAISSABLE**

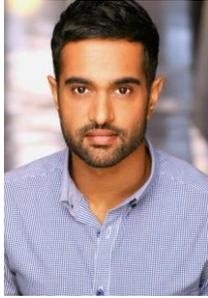
Client: Groupe Librex Inc.  
Publisher: Libre Expression  
March 2020  
160 pp.

**Harsh and sensitive all at once, MÉCONNAISSABLE casts light on the loneliness of a child with an unconventional brain and her need to be herself.**

Struggling with a yearning for authenticity she has always been denied, an autistic child runs away far from home and squats at a campground all summer long. Because she doesn’t fit into the traditional mould of what people expect a girl to look like, she decides to live as a boy, and because her words hurt others, she retreats into silence. This is a time for her to reflect and explore who she could be if she were able to move beyond the artificial limits others put on her. Through these pages, this hypersensitive, gifted and curious narrator gives us an insight into her life, her struggle and her perception of the world and the beings she refers to as humans.

**Valérie Jessica Laporte** is an autistic, 42-year-old mother of three. Through her work as a photographer and designer, she explores her fascination for everyday objects.

Contact: Anja Kretschmann



**Neel Patel**  
**TELL ME HOW TO BE**

Client: Union Literary  
Publisher: Flatiron  
December 2020

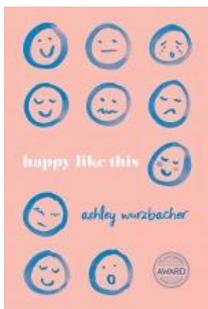
Rights sold: Penguin Random House, INDIA

One year after the death of his father, Akash, a songwriter in Los Angeles, is living a double life, sharing an apartment with his boyfriend while evading his mother's pleas that he find a wife. When Akash learns his mother has sold his childhood home in Illinois in order to move back to London, he returns to pack up his things, honor the death of his father, and mend his strained relationships with his mother and brother. What he doesn't anticipate is running into Parth – a childhood friend with whom he'd shared his first romantic connection. Parth, too, has returned home, managing his parents' motel while they are away in India. What starts as a farewell soon becomes the beginning of a love affair between the two, and Akash must decide between the life he left behind and the one he's since created.

Set against the backdrop of the Trump era, as racial tensions simmer, TELL ME HOW TO BE is a story of betrayal and the journey toward reconciliation. But most of all, it is a testament to the overpowering force of first love and how it teaches us to be in the world.

**Neel Patel** grew up in Illinois, and currently lives in Los Angeles.

Contact: Hanna Nuspliger-Fosh/ Hanna Vielberg



**Ashley Wurzbacher**  
**HAPPY LIKE THIS**

Client: Frances Goldin Literary Agency  
Publisher: University of Iowa Press  
October 2019

IOWA SHORT FICTION AWARD WINNER  
NATIONAL BOOK AWARD 5 UNDER 35 HONOREE

**"Wurzbacher...deploys her encyclopedic command of various ideas, regions, professions and lexicons with the authority of seasoned masters like Adam Johnson. This is a writer at the top of her game; but hopefully she's only just getting started." – The New York Times**

**"I love these dark, lyrical, sinewy stories about women's relationships with their bodies and with each other. It's the sort of theme that could feel irritably well-trod, but that's not the case here at all; these stories surprised me at every turn. And the writing is so gorgeous!" – Carmen Maria Machado, judge, 2019 John Simmons Short Fiction Award**

**"Wurzbacher's incisive, polychromatic story collection centers on the dizzying complexities of female friendships: how they fray and mend over time and are often imbued with the intensity of love affairs." – Oprah Magazine**

The characters in HAPPY LIKE THIS are smart girls and professional women – social scientists, linguists, speech therapists, plant physiologists, dancers – who search for happiness in roles and relationships that are often unscripted or unconventional. In the midst of their ambivalence about marriage, monogamy, and motherhood and their struggles to accept and love their bodies, they look to other women for solidarity, stability, and validation. Sometimes they find it; sometimes they don't. Spanning a wide range of distinct perspectives, voices, styles, and settings, the ten shimmering stories in HAPPY LIKE THIS offer deeply felt, often humorous meditations on the complexity of choice and the ambiguity of happiness.

**Ashley Wurzbacher's** writing has appeared in the Iowa Review, Kenyon Review Online, Prairie Schooner, Cincinnati Review, Colorado Review, Gettysburg Review, and elsewhere. She lives in Birmingham, Alabama, and teaches creative writing at the University of Montevallo. Her debut novel will be published by Atria in 2022.

Contact: Hannah Nuspliger-Fosh/ Hanna Vielberg

## Commercial/ Upmarket



### **Katherine Ashenburg** **HER TURN**

Client: Transatlantic Literary Agency Inc.  
Publisher: Knopf Canada  
2021

For fans of Nora Ephron and movies such as *As Good As It Gets*, this novel tells the story of Liz, an editor at a national newspaper in Washington, D.C. Divorced and the mother of a college-age son, she has a full life, including lots of friends and a few gentleman callers. She's also having a clandestine affair with the married publisher of her newspaper. One day, her tidy life is up ended when a submission comes in from Seattle, from the woman who had a secret affair with Liz's husband for the last two years of Liz's marriage and is now married to her ex-husband. Wife Two has no idea that she is sending an essay to Wife One, and Liz manages to keep her identity a secret while she engages in a long-running "edit" of the piece.

The arrival of the essay destabilizes Liz, and she starts acting out in various directions – publishing provocative essays that infuriate her bosses at the paper, breaking up with her publisher/lover, making what her son considers very bad choices with other men, investing in a cache of self-help books about forgiveness. She even has an unexpectedly good time at a Cuddle Party. Meanwhile, the tangled web of Liz's deception with Nicole (Wife Two) tears, and there is a showdown between the two women and Sidney, the husband.

**Katherine Ashenburg** is the author of three books and many magazine and newspaper articles. She wrote for The New York Times travel section and Toronto Life, among others. Her books include *The Mourner's Dance: What We Do When People Die* (short-listed for two important prizes) and *The Dirt on Clean: An Unsanitized History* (one of The Independent's Ten Best History Books of the year and one of the New York Public Library's 25 Best Books of the year), which was published in 12 countries and six languages, including: Profile, UK; Odoya in Italy; Larousse in Brazil; Bellona in Poland; Wisdom Publishing Co. in Korea; and Hougetsu Kamada in Japan.

Contact: Hannah Nuspliger-Fosh/ Hanna Vielberg

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### **Jean Chen Ho** **FIONA AND JANE**

Client: Ayesha Pande Literary  
Publisher: Viking  
2021

**FIONA AND JANE** follows the ebb and flow of friendship between two Chinese American women, from their teenage years into adulthood. Set between Los Angeles, New York City, and Taipei, **FIONA AND JANE** deftly examines the ordinary triumphs and catastrophes of contemporary Asian American women's lives – in gorgeous prose that perfectly captures the nuances of being young brown and female in present day America.

Ho beautifully probes the essence of female friendship, how friends are able to simultaneously share distance and intimacy, in a way that is achingly familiar. While *Fiona and Jane* is firmly based in a world where being Asian American still means being 'other,' the biggest challenges these characters face are the insecurities of young adulthood and the tensions that arise as they explore their sexuality and relationships with lovers, family and friends. For fans of Danielle Evans, Jenny Zhang and Zadie Smith, *Fiona and Jane* is the stunning debut that will establish Jean Ho as a fierce new literary talent.

Born in Taiwan, **Jean Chen Ho** is a Los Angeles-based writer. She is a doctoral candidate in Creative Writing and Literature at the University of Southern California. Her writing has been published in *Guernica*, *The Rumpus*, *The Offing*, *Apogee*, *McSweeney's Internet Tendency*, *VIDA*, *NPR*, *Buzzfeed*, *Bitch Magazine*, and others. Jean has received scholarships from *Kundiman*, the *Tin House Workshop*, *Napa Valley Writers Conference*, *Squaw Valley Community of Writers*, and *Bread Loaf*. She has been awarded residencies to the *MacDowell Colony*, *Vermont Studio Center*, and the *Mastheads*. She is a 2019-20 W.M. Keck and George & Arlene Cheng Research Fellow at the *Huntington Library*, where she is working on an archival project on gender and racial violence in 19th-century Los Angeles Chinatown. Jean is a board member at *Kaya Press*, an independent publisher of experimental writing from the Asian Pacific Islander diaspora.

Contact: Anja Kretschmann

**Jaima Fixsen  
Regina Sirois  
THE SURGEON'S APPRENTICE**

Client: The Jean V. Naggar Literary Agency Inc.  
Publisher: Sourcebooks  
Spring 2021  
Ms available May 2020

**In the vein of Robin Oliviera's *My Name is Mary Sutter* and *The Other Einstein* by Marie Benedict, this debut is an amalgam of real people and events. It is the story of maverick men and one unconventional woman, who believed in scientific medicine before the world believed in her.**

Medicine in mid-19th century London is a grisly business where there is no blissful oblivion before the surgical scalpel parts skin. No one knows this better than the eccentric Dr. Horace Croft, who runs an underground research lab using corpses fresh from the grave as cadavers. Has he gone too far when he brings home the only survivor of a cholera epidemic, an orphan girl named Nora Beady? Raised amidst his experiments, Nora gradually becomes his most skilled and trusted assistant—an unthinkable and unlawful pursuit for a woman. Late at night, under Croft's tutelage, Nora explores the mysteries of nerves and arteries, the architecture of bone and sinew. Croft, too preoccupied by science to heed social mores, has no patience for laws that deprive him of a convenient assistant, until the arrival of a new surgical resident upsets the balance.

Dr. Daniel Gibson is too proper to be trusted, too skilled to dismiss, and too smart to be fooled for long. Though Nora knows it's best not to reveal her expansive knowledge of human anatomy, she isn't going to give up the work that fascinates and fulfills her. But what is the cost of exposure?

**Jaima Fixsen** is the author of the popular *Fairchild Regency Romance* series. When she isn't writing or child wrangling, she's a snow enthusiast. She lives with her family in Alberta, Canada.

**Regina Sirois** is the author of *On Little Wings* (Viking Books for Young Readers, 2013). Her awards include the Grand prize Amazon Breakthrough Novel Award, Indie Next List 2013, runner up young adult book in the New England Book Festival, and voted one of the best books of 2013 by KSL News Utah.

Contact: Anja Kretschmann

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**Laurie Frankel  
ONE TWO THREE**

Client: Henry Holt and Company  
Publisher: Henry Holt  
February 2021

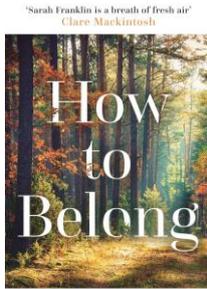
**ONE TWO THREE is a novel about three sixteen-year-old sisters who, when the defunct chemical plant that destroyed their family and their community moves back into town, must right the injustices that are older than they are, not only to find a way out, but to find a way forward.**

Nora gave her three daughters "M" names in an effort to save precious time and keep them straight. As if single parenting triplets weren't enough, her two jobs – Bourne's only therapist and its only bartender – are both in unusually high demand. And then there's the job she can't let go – lead plaintiff in Bourne's class-action lawsuit against Bison Chemical. Seventeen years ago, the Bison plant was pumping toxic chemicals into Bourne's river. Flowers stopped blooming. Pets got sick, then their owners did, too, plant workers died, then an emergence of birth defects. A generation was born not quite whole. Nora assures her daughters they're perfect just the way they are, but she has still spent their whole lives fighting to make Bison pay.

When a new student arrives at Bourne Memorial High, everyone realizes that in a town where nothing ever changes, suddenly everything has. And when Bison announces plans to reopen the plant, the girls take up their mother's cause in a race to find evidence to stop them. Part small-town mystery, part comic novel, part love story, ONE TWO THREE takes an urgent, ripped-from-the-headlines topic and adds unusual sisters with a profound sense of justice and the wit, wisdom, and strength to fight the longest of odds together.

**Laurie Frankel** is the bestselling, award-winning author of three previous novels, *The Atlas of Love*, *Goodbye for Now*, and *This Is How It Always Is*, the latter of which sold over a quarter of a million copies. A former college professor, Frankel now teaches for a variety of non-profit organizations and writes full-time in Seattle, where she lives with her family.

Contact: Anja Kretschmann



**Sarah Franklin**  
**HOW TO BELONG**

Client: Blake Friedmann Literary, TV and Film Agency Ltd  
Publisher: Zaffre  
May 2020  
400 pp.

**'A tender story about finding your place in the world, about ordinary lives, belonging and being brave. The kind of book that gives you hope and courage. I loved it.'** — Kit de Waal

**Sarah Franklin returns with a compelling tale of lost connection and finding a home, perfect for fans of Tessa Hadley and Maggie O'Farrell.**

Jo grew up in a rural town, but she was always the one destined to leave for a bigger future. When her parents retire from their butcher's shop, she returns to her beloved community to save the family legacy, hoping also to save herself. But things are more complex than the rose-tinted version of life which sustained Jo from afar.

Tessa is a farrier, shoeing horses two miles and half a generation away from Jo, further into the forest. Tessa's experience of the community couldn't be more different. She too has returned, in flight from a life she almost led, nursing a secret and a past filled with guilt and shame. Compelled through circumstance to live together, these two women must confront their sense of identity and reconsider the meaning of home.

**Sarah Franklin** grew up in rural Gloucestershire and has lived in Austria, Germany, the USA and Ireland. She lectures in publishing at Oxford Brookes University and has written for the Guardian, Psychologies magazine, The Pool, the Sunday Express and the Seattle Times. Sarah is the founder and host of Short Stories Aloud, and a judge for the Costa Short Story Award. Sarah lives in between London and Oxford with her family.

Contact: Hannah Nuspliger-Fosh/ Hanna Vielberg

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**Miranda Hill**  
**DISCRETION**

Client: Transatlantic Literary Agency Inc.  
Publisher: Knopf Canada  
Fall 2021

**For fans of top-drawer, compelling historical fiction epics likes *Downton Abbey*, *Upstairs Downstairs* and *Little Women*.**

It all begins in 1890. Lady Ada and Evelyn are traveling by train toward Pittsburgh and two very different futures, one affluent, the other quite the opposite. Ada is reluctantly making a journey toward a marriage to a man she has never met (arranged by her once-respected British family); Evelyn is on her way to work as a domestic servant in one of the city's finer houses. This chance meeting between Ada and Evelyn, and the envy it triggers when they impulsively switch identities, is the beginning of a recurring connection, weaving together their contrasting lives – from the drawing rooms of upper class Pittsburgh homes, to its factories and slums, and then over the border to the golden age of the grand hotels of Muskoka, the destination of a new and glamorous set of "pleasure seekers" – and ultimately impacting their families over several decades of shifting fortunes and remarkable circumstances.

Winner of Canada's most prestigious short story prize, the Writers Trust/McClelland & Stewart Journey Prize, **Miranda Hill's** stories have appeared in the Globe and Mail, Reader's Digest, The New Quarterly among others. Her debut collection *Sleeping Funny*, published in 2012, was one of the bestselling and well-reviewed collections of the year. Hill is also the founder and executive director of the Canadian literary charity Project Bookmark Canada. She lives, writes and works in Hamilton, Ontario. DISCRETION is her debut novel.

Contact: Hannah Nuspliger-Fosh/ Hanna Vielberg

**Jo Owens**  
**A FUNNY KIND OF PARADISE**

Client: The Cooke Agency International Inc  
Publisher: Random House Canada  
Spring 2021  
167 pp.

**A sparkling and heartwarming debut novel based on the author's real-life experience as a full-time care aide, A FUNNY KIND OF PARADISE is the life-affirming story of Francesca, a 70-year-old woman who has had a stroke and is living in an Extended Care facility – for fans of Lisa Genova and *My Name Is Lucy Barton* by Elizabeth Strout.**

Once a fiercely independent businesswoman and overwhelmed single mother of two, now Francesca is voiceless, bedridden, partially paralyzed, and wholly reliant on care aides – and as she speaks in her mind to Anna, a beloved friend who died two years earlier, readers are drawn into Fran's inner world and begin to see the person she was and the person she is becoming, while the lives and dramas of the care aides and fellow patients come into sharp focus, as well as the monotony, indignity, flashes of joy and comedy.

A vividly conjured novel about losses, joys and regrets, and an unlikely opportunity for reinvention – for love, acceptance and closure.

Contact: Hannah Nuspliger-Fosh/ Hanna Vielberg

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**Mary Sharratt**  
**REVELATIONS**

Client: The Jean V. Naggar Literary Agency Inc.  
Publisher: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt  
June 2021  
MS available Summer 2020

**A 15th century *Eat, Pray, Love*, this is the story of the intersecting lives of two female mystics who changed history – Margery Kempe and Julian of Norwich.**

Wife, mother, and entrepreneurial businesswoman, Margery Kempe can no longer go on with her life as she knows it. Her latest business venture, a grain mill, has failed, and she has nearly died giving birth to her fourteenth child. Fearing that another pregnancy might kill her, she makes a vow of celibacy, but she can't trust her amorous husband to keep his end of the bargain. For the past twenty years, she has been haunted by visceral, sensual images of the divine which send her into fits of helpless weeping.

Desperate for counsel, she visits Julian of Norwich and pours out her anguished confession. To Margery's utter astonishment, Julian then offers up a confession of her own. Julian has devoted the past four decades to writing about her visions, *Revelations of Divine Love*. The first book ever written in English by a woman, this is a dangerous text, describing an unconditionally loving God who is both Mother and Father. This radical theology is completely at odds with the established Church's insistence on the reality of eternal damnation.

Taking Julian's book, Margery sets off on the adventure of a lifetime, her travels taking her to Jerusalem, Rome, and Santiago de Compostela. Blazing her trail across Europe and the Near East, she must use all her wits to safeguard Julian's writings and to ward off accusations of heresy for her own outspoken homilies on the divine. Courageous, earthy, and eccentric, Margery must find her unique spiritual path and vocation – not in a cloistered cell like Julian, but in the full bustle of worldly existence with all its wonders and perils.

**Mary Sharratt** is the author of critically acclaimed historical novels, including *Summit Avenue* (Coffee House Press, 2000), *The Real Minerva* (HMH, 2004), *The Vanishing Point* (HMH, 2006), *Daughters of the Witching Hill* (HMH, 2010), *Illuminations* (HMH, 2012), *The Dark Lady's Mask* (HMH, 2016), and *Ecstasy* (HMH, 2018). She is American and has lived in the Pendle region of Lancashire, England, for the past several years.

Contact: Anja Kretschmann



**Dianne Warren**  
**THE DIAMOND HOUSE**

Client: The Cooke Agency International Inc  
Publisher: Harper Collins Canada  
June 2020  
384 pp.

**From the author of the internationally published, bestselling (over 50,000 copies sold in Canada!), Governor General's Award-winning novel *Cool Water*, a shimmering new novel about an unconventional woman and her struggle with the expectations that bind her family – for fans of Greta Gerwig's *Little Women* and Ann Patchett's *The Dutch House*.**

Estella Diamond is the youngest child and only daughter of a successful brick-factory owner whose precocious nature leads her to discover something none of her brothers know: their father was once married to an aspiring ceramics artist named Salina, who dreamed big and turned her back on society's conventions – Estella grows up planning her future in the image Salina, but again and again, her plans are derailed by the family patriarchy, until she finally rebels and, years later, ends up left alone in the house her father built when another uncompromising young woman, also named Diamond, enters her world and forces Estella to wrestle with the legacy she helped create.

**Dianne Warren** is the author of the Governor General's Award-winning novel *Cool Water*, as well as the novel *Liberty Street*, three books of short fiction and three plays. *Serpent in the Night Sky* was short-listed for a Governor General's Award for Drama in 1992. In 2004, she won the Marian Engel Award for a woman writer in mid-career. Warren lives with her husband, a visual artist, in Regina, Saskatchewan.

Contact: Hannah Nuspliger-Fosh/ Hanna Vielberg

## Suspense



**Roxanne Bouchard**  
**LA MARIÉE DE CORAIL**

Client: Groupe Librex Inc.  
Publisher: Libre Expression  
May 2020  
384 pp.

Rights sold: Orenda, UK

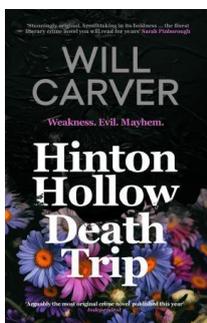
**DS Joaquin Moralès is back in this long-awaited sequel to the critically acclaimed literary crime novel *We Were the Salt of the Sea*.**

Angel's heart skips a beat as the anchor chain clatters over the edge of her lobster trawler. It's caught on something – and it yanks at her ankle and pulls her off her feet. Her wedding dress rides up around her waist as she feels her body being dragged away. She feels the cold air biting into her bare thighs. Angel draws a sharp breath as it dawns on her that someone's trying to kill her.

When Lieutenant Marlène Forest ropes Detective Sergeant Joaquin Moralès in to investigate the disappearance of a woman from her lobster trawler, he's reluctant to get involved. He has enough on his plate dealing with his eldest son, who's just turned up here on the Gaspé Peninsula from Montreal, blind drunk. Angel's body is found two days later. Ever present in the background is the beautiful yet merciless sea, slowly slipping into her winter cloak with every rising autumn tide.

**Roxanne Bouchard** is a writer and teacher of literature. She has published seven novels and received a number of awards, including the 2005 Robert-Cliche Award and the 2007 Archambault Newcomer's Award. Her literary crime novel *We Were the Salt of the Sea* was shortlisted for the France-Quebec Award 2015. It was published by Orenda Books in the UK in 2018 and shortlisted for the 2019 Scott Moncrieff Prize.

Contact: Anja Kretschmann



**Will Carver**  
**HINTON HOLLOW DEATH TRIP**

Client: Blake Friedmann Literary, TV and Film Agency Ltd  
Publisher: Orenda  
July 2020

**Five days in the history of a small rural town, visited and infected by darkness, are recounted by Evil itself in this stunning high-concept thriller.**

It's a small story. A small town with small lives that you would never have heard about if none of this had happened. Hinton Hollow. Population 5,120.

Little Henry Wallace was eight years old and one hundred miles from home before anyone talked to him. His mother placed him on a train with a label around his neck, asking for him to be kept safe for a week, kept away from Hinton Hollow. Because something was coming.

Narrated by Evil itself, HINTON HOLLOW DEATH TRIP recounts five days in the history of this small rural town, when darkness paid a visit and infected its residents. A visit that made them act in unnatural ways. Prodding at their insecurities. Nudging at their secrets and desires. Coaxing out the malevolence suppressed within them. Showing their true selves. Making them cheat. Making them steal. Making them kill.

Detective Sergeant Pace had returned to his childhood home. To escape the things he had done in the city. To go back to something simple. But he was not alone. Evil had a plan.

**Will Carver** is the author of the acclaimed January David series (UK: Arrow), and was featured in the Mammoth Book of Best British Crime 11 alongside Lee Child, Simon Kernick and Val McDermid.

Contact: Anja Kretschmann



**Will R. Dean**  
**THE LAST THING TO BURN**

Client: Blake Friedmann Literary, TV and Film Agency Ltd  
Publisher: Hodder  
early 2021  
248 pp.

**It's MISERY meets ROOM – voice-driven, dark, twisty and topically relevant, a unique and powerful novel for which Hodder has big plans.**

A bit of background on Will Dean: He is a literary crime sensation in the UK and the acclaimed writer of the *Tuva Moodyson* series, set in Sweden (where he lives) about a young, deaf journalist who's struggling to work her way out of her small town. Will's first two novels, *Dark Pines* and *Red Snow*, published by Oneworld, received national review coverage and incredible praise from journalists and fellow authors alike (please see attached press sheet for a snapshot of these), have won or been shortlisted for several awards, and have been included in multiple book round-ups of the year.

This novel is something quite different – a dark, gripping and moving thriller, set in England, about a young woman who has spent the past seven years being held captive in an isolated farmhouse. When she discovers that she is pregnant, she must do everything to protect her child from the monster who kidnapped her and starts to plan her escape with new purpose. But then Lenn, her captor, brings another woman, Cynthia, into the fold. Can 'Jane' save herself, her child and Cynthia?

**Will Dean** grew up in the East Midlands and had lived in nine different villages before the age of eighteen. After studying Law at the LSE and working in London, he settled in rural Sweden where he built a house in a boggy clearing at the centre of a vast elk forest, and it's from this base that he compulsively reads and writes. His debut novel, *Dark Pines*, was selected for Zoe Ball's Book Club, shortlisted for the Guardian Not the Booker prize and named a Daily Telegraph Book of the Year. The second Tuva Moodyson mystery, *Red Snow*, was published in January 2019 and won Best Independent Voice at the Amazon Publishing Readers' Awards, 2019.

Contact: Hannah Nuspliger-Fosh

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**Emily Freud**  
**CLOSURE**

Client: Teresa Chris Literary Agency Ltd  
Publisher: Quercus  
October 2020  
195 pp.

**CLOSURE is a psychological thriller set in London.**

Kate has been sober for six years, and a day at a time, all the things she wished for her life are coming true. When her old best friend Becky reappears after ten years, Kate is plunged back to the drunken night that broke off their relationship, suddenly and without explanation. Step 9 of Alcoholics Anonymous requires Kate to apologise to anyone she may have hurt during her drinking. With Becky back Kate decides it is finally time to carry out her Number 9 with her. She hopes it will give her the closure she craves, so she can finally lay to rest one of the last painful memories of her previous existence. But things become complex as the girls' lives and families clash once more. Has Becky really accepted her apology? Or is she still ravaged by bitterness over what happened all those years ago. As Kate is forced to face up to some home truths, is she right to point the finger at others? Or is this her disease, driving her to self-sabotage, just as she found her happy ending.

**Emily Freud** was born in North London, where she lives with her husband and two children. Her love of character and story led to a career in television, producing on some of the most acclaimed documentary series in recent years, including Emmy winning *Educating Yorkshire*, *SAS: Who Dares Wins* and *First Dates*.

Contact: Hannah Nuspliger-Fosh/ Hanna Vielberg



**Hannah Mary McKinnon**  
**SISTER, DEAR**

Client: Transatlantic Literary Agency Inc.  
Publisher: Mira Books  
May 2020

Rights sold: Hodder, UK

**“SISTER DEAR by Hannah Mary McKinnon is a brilliant, breathless thriller that crackles with suspense and heart- thumping twists. I finished this absorbing, creepy and downright sinister novel in the wee hours of the night. And the ending...perfection! It is McKinnon’s best book yet.” – Heather Gudenkauf, New York Times bestselling author of *The Weight of Silence* and *Before She Was Found***

**Beauty. Wealth. Success. She’s got it all. And it should’ve been mine.**

Everything is slipping through Eleanor Hardwicke’s fingers. When her beloved father dies, her world is further shattered by a gut-wrenching secret: the man she’s grieving isn’t really her dad. Eleanor was the product of an affair and her biological father is still out there, living blissfully with the family he chose. With her personal life spiraling, a desperate Eleanor seeks him out, leading her to uncover another branch on her family tree – an infuriatingly enviable half-sister.

Perfectly perfect Victoria has everything Eleanor could ever dream of. Loving childhood, luxury home, devoted husband. All of it stolen from Eleanor who deserves it just as much. Now she plans to take it back. After all, good sisters are supposed to share. And quiet, docile little Eleanor has been waiting far too long for her turn to play.

**Hannah Mary McKinnon** is the author of the critically acclaimed domestic suspense tale *The Neighbors* (MIRA, 2018) and the national bestseller *Her Secret Son* (MIRA, 2019). She lives in the Toronto area with her family.

Contact: Hannah Nuspliger-Fosh/ Hanna Vielberg

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**CJ Parsons**  
**THE GOOD SAMARITAN**

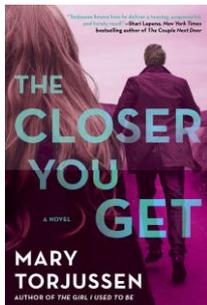
Client: Teresa Chris Literary Agency Ltd  
Publisher: Headline  
October 2020  
381 pp.

**THE GOOD SAMARITAN is a domestic thriller set in London.**

Carrie Haversen is a lonely single mother whose inability to read facial expressions has left her socially isolated. Terror enters her life when the one person she loves – her daughter Sofia – is abducted from a playground. So when a friendly stranger brings the child safely home, Carrie believes the darkest chapter of her life has ended – and an amazing new one has begun. Because she embarks on a romantic relationship with her daughter’s saviour, as well as a close friendship with the woman who led the search for Sofia. For the first time, Carrie doesn’t feel like a lonely outsider. But one of these good Samaritans may know more about the abduction than they’re letting on. And Carrie’s inability to read people could end up putting both her and Sofia in mortal danger.

**CJ Parsons** lives with her daughter in London, where she works as a TV news producer. She has a degree in psychology and years of experience as a crime reporter, so has witnessed first-hand the disturbing forces that drive people to kill, something that has informed her writing to this day. This is her debut novel.

Contact: Hannah Nuspliger-Fosh/ Hanna Vielberg



**Mary Torjussen**  
**THE CLOSER YOU GET**

Client: Blake Friedmann Literary, TV and Film Agency Ltd  
Publisher: Berkley USA  
April 2020  
352 pp.

Rights sold: WF Howes, AUDIO; Canelo, UK; AST, RUSSIA

**'A twist that will knock your socks off.'** — Gillian McAllister

**'Plays with all of your expectations. Not to be missed!'** — Shari Lapena

**Brilliantly addictive thriller – a couple's pact to start a new life together begins to unravel**

Ruby and Harry are married, but not to each other. They are in love and want to be together, so they make a pact to tell their spouses, meet at a hotel afterwards and start a new life. Ruby tells her husband then flees to the hotel but Harry doesn't show up. His phone is switched off and Ruby can't track him down.

Heartbroken and confused, Ruby tries to rebuild her life. And then things start to happen to her. Little things, that make her feel she's going mad. She has no-one to confide in, no-one to reassure her. She longs for Harry and their secret affair. What Ruby doesn't know is that her affair wasn't a secret. Emma, Harry's wife, was suspicious almost from the start and she's not going to let anyone break up her marriage.

Told from the perspectives of two very different women, *THE CLOSER YOU GET* is a gripping slice of psychological suspense that will keep you hooked to the final page.

**Mary Torjussen** has an MA in Creative Writing from Liverpool John Moores University and worked for several years as a teacher. She writes dark, gripping thrillers. Her debut novel *Gone Without a Trace* has been optioned for television by Ecosse Productions.

Contact: Hannah Nuspliger-Fosh/ Hanna Vielberg



**Bridget Walsh**  
**THE STANHOPE VENUS**

Client: Blake Friedmann Literary, TV and Film Agency Ltd  
Publisher: on UK submission  
312 pp.

**First in a series of richly engaging London – set Victorian crime novels, by an exciting debut novelist and Little Brown Crime Fiction Award winner.**

Late Victorian London, and the intrepid and outspoken Minnie is scraping a living as a writer for the Variety Palace Music Hall. Her world revolves around wilful monkeys, incompetent mesmerists, and a boss who thinks he knows it all. But everything changes when Minnie's actress friend Rose turns up dead. The police dismiss it as a loose woman's suicide, but Minnie believes otherwise and joins forces with private detective Albert Easterbrook – 'The Champion of the Labouring Classes' – to uncover the truth. The two quickly become close, but a secret from Minnie's past threatens any chance of a future together. And when an intriguing item of jewellery – a 'Stanhope' – is found in Rose's belongings, linking her to a prospective MP who dies shortly after, the lack of investigation smacks of a police cover-up...

*THE STANHOPE VENUS* is the first in a series of enthralling, pacy historical crime novels featuring the detective skills of Minnie Ward and Albert Easterbrook. Perfect for fans of Sarah Waters, Elizabeth Macneal and Stacey Halls.

**Bridget Walsh** has a PhD in 'Murder in the Victorian Domestic Sphere'. The manuscript of *THE STANHOPE VENUS* won the UEA Little, Brown Award for Crime Fiction 2019. The first three chapters of the second book in the series *THE INNOCENTS* are also available, with descriptions for the following titles *THE SPIRIT GUIDES* and *THE TWIXTER* as well.

Contact: Anja Kretschmann