

himself and create a new life from the chaos of the horrific terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001. At age 41, Brandon Moy hates his job, is bored with his family, and has lost interest in everything. He is overwhelmed by middle age, believing that “happiness becomes an issue that only pertains to other people.” With his office destroyed and all his coworkers killed in the collapse of the Twin Towers, he sees this as his opportunity to disappear, then reappear as someone else, to pursue all the excitement and adventures he thinks will make him happy. Brandon is a pampered, soft attorney, ill-equipped to start from scratch, but he hitchhikes to Boston and gets a job as a waiter in a diner—he also commits crimes to survive. He’s handsome, charming, and a skilled liar, and soon he is involved with numerous women, using them for pleasure, shelter, and money. As the years go by and Brandon travels internationally, Martin continues to peel back the layers of his persona—his fears and the elusive dream of happiness—resulting in a fascinating, vivid portrayal of a midlife crisis that threatens to turn into a perpetual crisis. (Sept.)

### The Great Swindle

**Pierre Lemaitre, trans. from the French by Frank Wynne.** Quercus/MacLehose, \$24.99 (448p) ISBN 978-1-62365-903-5

Winner of the Prix Goncourt, Lemaitre’s assured, somber exploration of post-WWI French society opens shortly before the 1918 armistice. Lt. Henri d’Aulnay-Pradelle murders two of his soldiers to provoke a French attack on German territory, then unsuccessfully tries to eliminate the two witnesses, Albert Maillard and Édouard Péricourt. After the armistice, Albert works menial jobs to pay for morphine for Édouard, whose jaw was blown off when he saved Albert from Pradelle. Pradelle, meanwhile, makes his fortune reburying French soldiers in proper cemeteries. Édouard decides to exploit his country’s desire to honor fallen soldiers by contracting to build memorials and then absconding with the down payments. Lemaitre (*Alex*) captures the venal capitalism of the postwar period, in which Pradelle’s company buries German bodies as French soldiers and saws off

corpses’ feet to fit into cheap coffins; meanwhile, politicians speak of honoring the dead, but soldiers like Édouard and Albert live in poverty. Despite his unscrupulous scheme, Édouard proves impossible to dislike. His determination to play a great trick on the society that betrayed him is infectious, and readers cannot help rooting for his plans as they reach their dark, bizarrely joyous fruition. (Sept.)

### Quiver of the Pure Heart

**Burnita Bluitt.** Bookstand Publishing, \$2.99 e-book (274p) ISBN 978-1-5028-3527-7

Bluitt spins a tale of intrigue set in San Francisco during 1989. Blis Dumas faces eviction from the Victorian home she inherited from her grandfather. Determined not to go down without a fight, Blis finds herself not only fighting the development board, and its insensitive director, but also dodging a mysterious stranger hell-bent on scaring her into selling the house. With friends willing to cross the lines of legality to help her, Blis discovers a conspiracy involving corrupt government officials that puts her in imminent danger. Still, she forges ahead, even after her elderly neighbor is murdered. Bluitt provides a few interesting history lessons, and she touches on the social disparities that have checkered San Francisco’s past. She also does a commendable job of keeping much of the dramatic plot revelations secret until the final chapters. The diverse cast of characters is notably one-dimensional, but the sheer number of plot twists makes this an engaging read for those who enjoy suspense. (BookLife)

## Mystery/Thriller

### Quicksand: A Nora Khalil Novel

**Carolyn Baugh.** Forge \$25.99 (288p) ISBN 978-0-7653-7560-5

This atmospheric series opener from Baugh (*The View from Garden City*) introduces Nora Khalil, an officer with the Philadelphia PD assigned to the FBI’s Safe Streets Violent Gang Task Force. When a battle between rival gangs leads to two murders, Nora, whose parents are Egyptian, visits local mosques and uses her Arabic and knowledge of Islamic tra-

ditions in her effort to find the truth and bring the criminals to justice. The team’s only female member, Nora must also contend with sexism and racism. Baugh, who holds a Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania in Arabic and Islamic studies, clearly knows her Philadelphia geography and Muslim culture. Her action scenes crackle, though her character interactions tend to follow formula, as in a subplot about Nora’s overprotective father having a Big Dark Secret and the flirtation between Nora and a white colleague, Ben Calder. Still, readers will look forward to seeing more of the plucky Nora. *Agent: Loretta A. Barrett, Loretta Barrett Books.* (Oct.)

### ★ The Constable’s Tale

**Donald Smith.** Pegasus Crime (Norton, dist.), \$25.95 (304p) ISBN 978-1-60598-861-0

Fans of Eliot Pattison’s Bone Rattler series (*Soul of the Fire*, etc.) will relish Smith’s impressive debut, set in 1759. Royal constable Harry Woodyard looks into a multiple murder at a plantation in North Carolina’s Craven County. Someone shot nine-year-old Andrew Campbell in a field, then rested the boy’s head on a pillow and put a sprig of rosemary under his nose. Andrew’s parents were slain in the house, their bodies also posed; only the baby was left alive. Most people believe that Indians were responsible, though the sparing of the infant’s life is uncharacteristic of similar Indian massacres. When Comet Elijah, a Tuscarora Indian and mentor to Harry, turns up in the vicinity, he’s arrested. Convinced of Comet Elijah’s innocence, Harry undertakes a perilous quest for the truth, which he believes is connected to a Masonic medal he found under the Campbell baby’s crib. Smith balances historical detail and a twisty whodunit plot like a veteran. *Agent: Jennifer Unter, Unter Agency.* (Sept.)

### The Killing Kind

**Chris Holm.** Little, Brown/Mulholland, \$26 (320p) ISBN 978-0-316-25953-8

Former U.S. special operations soldier Michael Hendricks, the hero of Holm’s inventive thriller, was presumed killed in a horrifying attack in Afghanistan that left his unit destroyed. Informing neither the government nor his ex-girlfriend,