

## ★ The Absent One

Jussi Adler-Olsen, trans. from the Danish by K.E. Semmel. Dutton, \$26.95 (400p) ISBN 978-0-525-95289-3

Adler-Olsen, Denmark's leading crime fiction author, outdoes his outstanding debut, *Keeper of Lost Things*, with his second Department Q novel: No one knows how prickly Copenhagen Deputy Det. Supt. Carl Morck, the head of Department Q, which handles cold cases, received the file about the 1987 murder of an 18-year-old brother and a 17-year-old sister in a summer cottage. At the time suspicion fell on six boarding-school friends, but the police could find no evidence. Nine years later, a member of that group, the only one who had been on scholarship, confessed and went to prison. Morck and his misfit assistants, Assad and Rose, discover that the blood lust of those same students, now wealthy leaders of society, has not abated. These men fear only one thing—a homeless woman who used to be part of their gang. An insightful look at ruthless people seduced by violence and hiding behind their wealth fuels the surprise-filled plot. Morck's life is never simple, whether it involves office politics, stymied investigations, or guilt over his paralyzed partner. *Agent: Sarah Hunt Cooke, international rights director at Penguin UK. (Aug.)*



\$15 trade paper (352p) ISBN 978-0-425-24774-7

Fans of historical cozies will best appreciate Slan's first in a new series featuring Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*. Soon after the birth of Jane and Edward Rochester's first son, Jane receives a troubling plea for help from her former pupil, Adèle Varens, now at London's Alderton House School for Girls. Jane travels from Yorkshire to London, where she poses as a German teacher to gain entry to Alderton House, which she discovers is a hotbed of bullying, theft, laudanum drugging, and long-held grudges. The death of one of Adèle's schoolmates and a possible connection to George IV add to the intrigue. Slan (*Ready, Scrap, Shoot* and four other Kiki Lowenstein mysteries) captures neither the voice of *Jane Eyre* nor the timeless appeal of its heroine, but she credibly recreates Regency London and the era of the Bow Street Runners. *Agent: Paige Wheeler, Folio Literary Management. (Aug.)*

### Freak

Jennifer Hillier. S&S/Gallery, \$24.99 (384p) ISBN 978-1-4516-6454-6

Readers are advised to read Hillier's frightening 2011 debut, *Creep*, before this so-so sequel, which features many of the same characters. In the previous book, Abby Maddox, the girlfriend of serial killer Ethan Wolfe, went to prison for nearly cutting the throat of PI Jerry Isaac, a former Seattle policeman. In the year since that assault, the authorities have been trying to link Maddox to Wolfe's murders. With both the mental and physical scars still all too fresh, Isaac is horrified to learn of a new horror from his former Seattle PD colleagues. After strangling a young woman with a zip tie, someone carved "Free Abby Maddox" into her torso. The search for the killer inevitably connects to the previous crimes. Efforts at humor ("There was one simple reason Jerry didn't like cemeteries. They were full of dead people") do little to enhance a familiar serial killer story line. *Agent: Victoria Skurnick, Levine Greenberg. (Aug.)*

### Simple

Kathleen George. Minotaur, \$24.99 (336p) ISBN 978-0-312-56914-3

In Edgar-finalist George's well-con-

structed sixth police procedural featuring Pittsburgh homicide detective Richard Christie (after 2011's *Hideout*), Commander Christie and his crew look into the relatively bloodless murder of beautiful paralegal Cassie Price. Suspicion immediately falls on handyman Cal Hathaway, who discovered the body in the victim's apartment. Suspicion later falls on gubernatorial candidate Michael Connolly, who was having a clandestine affair with Price that might have ruined his candidacy. Political party organizer Todd Simon was supposed to take care of the problem. Despite a confession by a confused Hathaway, Christie senses something wrong, and insists on a closer examination of the case. Christie and company patiently weed through endless interviews, trace evidence, and the complex relationships of many flawed characters, including the malleable Hathaway, weak-willed Connolly, and cocky Simon, who scrambles to stay ahead of the investigation. Series fans should be pleased. *Agent: Ann Rittenberg, Ann Rittenberg Literary Agency. (Aug.)*

### Death of a Schoolgirl: The Jane Eyre Chronicles

Joanna Campbell Slan. Berkley Prime Crime,

### ★ Bloody Winter

Andrew Pepper. Phoenix (IPG, dist.), \$14.95 trade paper (336p) ISBN 978-1-7802-2011-6

Thomas Hardy meets *Chinatown* in Pepper's unsparingly bleak fifth noir historical featuring Scotland Yard's Detective Inspector Pyke (after 2011's *The Detective Branch*). In November 1846, Pyke travels from London to the Welsh mining town of Merthyr Tydfil, to help recover a kidnapping victim, the five-year-old son of an old friend, Cathy Hancock, but strangely it's Cathy's mine-owner husband, Jonah, who has requested his assistance. Two months later, in Ireland, policeman Michael Knox attempts to identify a body found on the Tipperary estate of Asenath Moore, the third Viscount Cornwallis, who claims the man was a vagrant, despite the expensive London suit he was wearing. When Knox persists in pursuing the case against Moore's wishes, he pays a heavy price for his defiance. Pepper brilliantly interweaves Pyke's detective work with Knox's quest for justice, while contrasting the callous cruelty of the rich and powerful to the heartbreaking suffering of the poor and weak. *(Aug.)*