Afternoon Discoveries: November 11, 2026

Mystery, Thriller, Crime, Horror, & Dark Fiction

AMONG THE LETTERS
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Mystery, Thriller, Crime, Horror, & Dark Fiction

A bride stitched from murdered women rows her maker out to sea, and a mother wakes to the smell of peaches and a stranger at the door. Today's stories come from The Dark, Mystery Tribune, Nightmare, Shotgun Honey, and PseudoPod. A lodge weekend ends with a cleaver, a frozen lake in Maine keeps a secret for the wolves, and a fortune teller reads more than palms. The

back shelf holds a horror critic at the movies with her teen, a subway sighting, and three classics of dread. Each piece asks who is watching in the dark.

All links in today's edition were checked against the linked publication, magazine, or publisher page on November 11, 2026.

Featured Discovery

A Procession of Brides - Carina Bissett

You think you know the story of the monster's mate, the narrator warns, and then she tells the part the films left out. Assembled from the bodies of murdered women, she still hears Sophia, Charlotte, Lucy, and the others inside her, and together they refuse their maker. After a harp string settles that argument, she rows his body out to sea and washes up on a strange shore. Carina Bissett, a Shirley Jackson and Bram Stoker Award finalist, turns the Bride of Frankenstein into a chorus of vengeance. The ending is a warning spoken in many voices.

Read "A Procession of Brides" at The Dark

The Discovery Desk

Peach Season - Oguzhan Kandur

A woman wakes again and again in the dark, sometimes to the sweet smell of peaches and sometimes to a tall stranger standing at the bedroom door. Each short section carries a different date, from 1969 to 2023, and the dates slowly stop making sense. The stranger insists she must act tonight to save someone named Henry. Oguzhan Kandur, a copywriter and narrative designer from Istanbul, builds a psychological thriller out of memory slipping its moorings. The final scene rearranges everything that came before it.

Read “Peach Season” at Mystery Tribune

Pricks - Laura Garrison

After a trauma she would rather not think about, a girl notices her body hair growing back thicker and studded with sharp thorns. One prick numbs her whole arm, and a lick of the blood brings her back. Years later, as a pharmacology graduate student, she tests the venom in secret and finds both a sedative and its antidote. Laura Garrison’s Nightmare flash turns Sleeping Beauty inside out, with a professor rumoured to prey on students cast as the ogre. It is brief, sharp, and deeply satisfying.

Read “Pricks” at Nightmare Magazine

The Note - Brandon Barrows

Under a silvered moon, Harley waits on a jammed printer in the office of a lake house he never really wanted. His wife Willow has a long habit of growing bored, and Harley has finally decided how their story ends.

Then headlights sweep the dirt driveway, and a neighbour who knows too much steps out of her car. Brandon Barrows, a two-time Derringer Award nominee with more than a hundred stories in print, keeps this Shotgun Honey piece cold and tidy. The title grows darker with every paragraph.

Read “The Note” at Shotgun Honey

The Rest and Relaxation Getaway Weekend - Maria Said

The guests at a stone lodge in the Hudson Valley come down to breakfast and find Samantha on the floor with a cleaver in the back of her head. A violinist, his husband, a journalist, a therapist, and a doctor with wealthy patients all have reasons to look guilty. The host who narrates seems to know every guest’s secrets suspiciously well. Maria Said, an infectious disease doctor in Washington, writes a cozy mystery with a wicked smile. Keep a close eye on the red dragon dressing gown.

Read “The Rest and Relaxation Getaway Weekend” at Mystery Tribune

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Thank you for spending some time with this afternoon’s edition. Below this point are six more stories of horror, mystery, and crime, three pieces of criticism and craft, and three special recommendations from the back shelf.

Special Recommendations can be found near the bottom of the article.

More From the Discovery Desk

The Tallow Feast - Damien Kelly

Alma’s mother taught her to render tallow with salt and water, whatever the crafty woman in the market square said. A year after her mother’s death, Alma clears every cross from her walls, lays out a generous supper, and leaves the door open on a howling night. Her nosy neighbour James is the first to step inside, though he will not be the last. Damien Kelly’s folk horror, with full text on the PseudoPod page, treats hospitality as a dangerous craft. A curse, it turns out, can be rendered like fat.

Read “The Tallow Feast” at PseudoPod

Bite-Apple - D. Matthew Urban

On Halloween, a woman thanks the visiting doctor for coming all this way and promises to give Sarah her pills every morning. Then she asks him to help with her grandmother’s favourite game, an apple on a string hung from a hook in the ceiling. The rules forbid hands, so she offers to tie his wrists, only loosely. D. Matthew Urban’s monologue keeps its friendly chatter going while the room grows smaller. The full text appears on the PseudoPod page alongside the audio.

Read “Bite-Apple” at PseudoPod

Offering - Anne Macdonald

At dusk in a lakeside cottage in northern Maine, a woman watches snow whirl over the frozen lake and considers what to do with her husband’s

body. He arrived drunk and looking for a fight, as he did every weekend, but this time she was ready. The ground is too hard for a grave, and the wolves are coming out of the trees. Anne Macdonald, a New England mystery writer, traces thirty years of a marriage across a single cold night. The title explains itself by the final paragraph.

Read “Offering” at Mystery Tribune

Ellie - Gregory Meece

A bank robber with a shaved head and a fake goatee is sure nobody will ever connect his face to the job. The teller with curly hair and wire-rim glasses fills his bag without a flinch and tells him, almost kindly, that he will not get away with it. He ditches the car, wades a creek, and walks straight into four waiting officers. Gregory Meece, a longtime educator who writes from Pennsylvania, gives Shotgun Honey a twist about names and memory. The ending makes you smile and wince at once.

Read “Ellie” at Shotgun Honey

Fortunes - Tom Busillo

Two career thieves visit a storefront fortune teller who lost her bank teller job to a self-service kiosk. They want the bank’s layout, and she bargains for seven and a half percent before she picks up the pen. Her drawing is not what they expected, and the curtain behind her is hiding company. Tom Busillo, a Philadelphia writer, builds this Mystery Tribune heist around one double cross after another. Few twists in today’s edition move quite this nimbly.

Read “Fortunes” at Mystery Tribune

A Face in the Crowd - Watt Stevins

On a sunny August morning, a man in a crisp white shirt collapses on a busy downtown street, and a young woman is swept along by the panicking crowd. Her hands will not stop trembling, and she scrubs them four times in a public washroom. She has a new job, a supervisor named Phoebe, and a meeting in ten minutes. Watt Stevins writes about the psychological and the banal, and this flash plays with both. Read it twice to see how carefully it hides its hand.

Read “A Face in the Crowd” at Mystery Tribune

Beyond the First Shelf

The H Word: Everything Old Is New Again - Alexandra Heller-Nicholas

Horror film critic Alexandra Heller-Nicholas once tried to inoculate her toddler against the world’s frights, with mixed and very funny results. Now that child is a teenager, and their trips to the multiplex have become a ritual. Kane Parsons’s Backrooms sparks long talks that wander from Peter Watkins and Tarkovsky to Jacques Tati’s Playtime. Her column in Nightmare is a warm essay about influence flowing in both directions between generations. It is also a fine argument for watching scary movies together.

Read “The H Word: Everything Old Is New Again” at Nightmare Magazine

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On Mole Men and Other Inspirations - Brendan Flaherty

Twenty years ago, waiting for the A train in Manhattan, Brendan Flaherty watched a small bearded man climb out of the subway tunnel dressed entirely in green like Robin Hood. That glimpse of a so-called mole man stayed with him through years of wondering about the people who live below the city. In this CrimeReads essay he traces how the memory shaped Eddie, a drifting character who chases his own vision into an old cemetery. The piece is funny, eerie, and generous toward strangers. It is a lovely look at where fiction quietly begins.

Read “On Mole Men and Other Inspirations” at CrimeReads

Virginia Trench on Psychological Thrillers and the Dark Sides of Motherhood - Virginia Trench

Virginia Trench expected motherhood to bring serene contentment, and instead she met screams, bites, exhaustion, and a feeling that something in her had broken. In this CrimeReads essay, the author of Mr. Disappear explains how writing suspense became a kind of postpartum therapy. She considers why bad mothers frighten audiences in stories from Psycho to Sharp Objects, and why judged mothers who finally snap are so satisfying. The tone is candid, funny, and sharp. Readers of domestic thrillers will recognize every pressure she describes.

Read “Virginia Trench on psychological thrillers and the dark sides of motherhood” at CrimeReads

Special Recommendations

The Adventure of the Speckled Band - Arthur Conan Doyle

Helen Stoner arrives at Baker Street shivering with fear, two years after her twin sister died crying out about a speckled band. Their stepfather, the violent Dr. Grimesby Roylott, keeps a cheetah and a baboon loose on his crumbling Surrey estate. Now Helen has been moved into her late sister's bedroom, and in the night she has heard a low whistle. Arthur Conan Doyle counted this among his favourite Sherlock Holmes stories. A bell-pull that rings nothing remains one of the great clues in detective fiction.

Read "The Adventure of the Speckled Band" at Wikisource

Markheim - Robert Louis Stevenson

On Christmas Day, Markheim enters an antique dealer's shuttered shop claiming he needs a present for a lady. Within minutes the dealer lies dead, and Markheim is alone among ticking clocks, mirrors, and his own racing thoughts. Footsteps seem to move through the empty house, and then a visitor appears who knows him far too well. Robert Louis Stevenson wrote this tale of conscience around the time he was writing Jekyll and Hyde. It is a gripping seasonal read with a moral sting.

Read “Markheim” at Wikisource

The Kit-Bag - Algernon Blackwood

Johnson, private secretary to a celebrated barrister, is relieved that the trial of the murderer John Turk is finally over. He plans a Christmas holiday skating and skiing in the Alps and borrows a kit-bag for the trip. The bag arrives at his gaunt Bloomsbury lodgings on a night of sleet and howling wind, and the hours that follow fill with strange sounds. Algernon Blackwood first published this ghost story in December 1908. It shows how much dread a single ordinary object can hold.

Read “The Kit-Bag” at Wikisource

Thank you for spending part of your day among the letters with us.

Many of today’s stories turn on what people hide in plain sight. A bride carries the women who made her, a host stages her guests’ secrets, and a teller remembers a face the robber forgot. Others turn hospitality into danger, from a tallow supper to a Halloween game. Mystery and horror often ask us to look twice at ordinary rooms. We hope a few of these shadows keep you company this week.

I hope one of today’s pieces gives you somewhere worth staying for a while.

Take care!