

BOOKS

Best Beach Reads

Get lost in these suspenseful new releases by Southern authors. Just add sunscreen!

BY AUGUSTA SCATTERGOOD

Seaside, Florida, sunset!



JAY ADKINS

August's picks

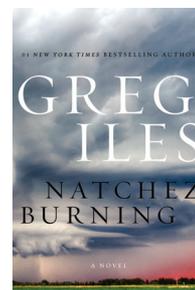
- 1 Booty Bones**
By Carolyn Haines
Minotaur Books

Just in time for warmer weather, the books of summer are here. And for fans of the ever-engaging series of mysteries to be solved by Sarah Booth and her cohort Tinkie, a new book is an occasion for rejoicing. With a potentially worrisome lover's triangle threading through the story, at least a couple of dead bodies, a treasure hunt, not to mention a hurricane baring down, *Booty Bones* doesn't disappoint. As always, the elusive haint Jitty—part drill sergeant, part guardian angel—puts in an appearance to add a touch of the supernatural. My only complaint? How long do we have to wait to see what happens next.



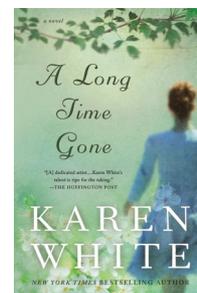
- 2 Natchez Burning**
By Greg Iles
William Morrow

It's been a long wait for fans of Greg Iles' thrillers, and with 800 pages of heft and the rumor of a trilogy, *Natchez Burning* is possibly his best yet. Southern lawyer Penn Cage, a vastly complicated and conflicted character, returns in this novel, trying to make sense of the stories that have long haunted his physician father, a pillar of the community. Crimes reaching back into the '60s—greed, murder, unspeakable violence from a splinter group of the KKK—have compelled a local reporter to dig very deep. This epic story is electrifying from beginning to end, un-put-downable, a gripping read.



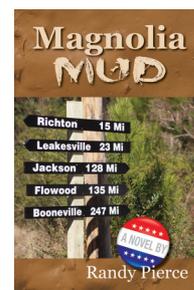
- 3 A Long Time Gone**
By Karen White
New American Library

Sunburn alert! This multi-generational family saga is a book you could get lost in, so read with care in the bright sunshine. Set in the Mississippi Delta and spanning almost 100 years of three strong women's lives, *A Long Time Gone* is part mystery, part women's fiction, and a riveting story. Vivien Walker, whose troubled family has farmed the same acres for generations, is the predominant narrator. Though she can't seem to completely sever her deep roots, her struggle to return home is complicated by a step-daughter, a parent with dementia, and a vow she'd never come back. Inspired in part by the author's summers spent with her Delta grandparents, the novel has a deep sense of place that feels very authentic.



- 4 Magnolia Mud**
By Randy Pierce
Dogwood Press

If anyone should be able to write political intrigue like an insider, it's Randy Pierce, former Mississippi legislator, now a sitting justice on the state's Supreme Court. His second novel features a mud-slinging gubernatorial election between Lee Jones, a popular Republican governor of Mississippi, and his challenger, Lieutenant Governor Anna Scott. Advised by hot-shot outside consultants and despite the budding friendship between their two young daughters, the candidates complicate the election process by launching personal attacks against each other and their families. In this new novel, Pierce seamlessly weaves together the politics as well as the people—those directly involved in getting their candidates elected and those whose lives are irrevocably changed.



- 5 Save the Date**
By Mary Kay Andrews
St. Martin's Press

Every summer needs a big wedding book, right? This popular author's newest novel is storytelling at its best. Although Savannah florist Cara Kryzik is clinging to her flower shop by her fingernails, one big wedding could keep her afloat, a party of the year to get Cara's business back on track. But of course, nothing about any large event is simple, as wedding planners and their brides know all too well. A dognapper, a competitive florist, and a potential love interest make this a beach book to tickle even the most cynical of summer readers.

