

London Book Fair 2023: Commercial & Genre Fiction

Cherie Dimaline | VenCo [CookeMcDermid] (Women's Fiction/Speculative)

- **Optioned for television by AMC, Alexis Henderson's *The Year of the Witching* meets *American Horror Story: Coven* in *VenCo*, a wickedly subversive, deliciously imaginative, and deeply feminist novel of contemporary witches on the rise, from **Cherie Dimaline**, a bestselling, internationally published author and screenwriter (most recently part of the writers' room for HBO Max's *Welcome to Derry*, the prequel to Stephen King's *IT*)**
- Lucky St. James is barely making ends meet when one night, while doing laundry in her building's dank basement, she finds a tarnished silver spoon depicting a story-book hag over letters that spell out S-A-L-E-M. In doing so, she unknowingly alerts a hidden network of witches (masquerading under the guise of international headhunting firm VenCo) to her existence. Devoted to placing exceptional women in roles where they can influence business, politics, and the arts, VenCo's leader Meena has spent years searching out witches hiding in plain sight
- With Lucky discovered and just one witch left to find, Meena sends Lucky on a dangerous road trip through the United States to search her out. The trail leads her to the darkly magical city of New Orleans, where a final showdown with the deadly witch hunter Jay Christos will determine whether the coven will be completed, ushering in a new beginning, or whether witches will be forced to remain forever underground
- **"Crackling with magic, mystery, adventure, and intrigue, *VenCo* is a captivating tribute to the bonds of families we are born into and the ones that we create, and a delightful testament to the power of all womankind." —Nikki Erlick, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Measure***
- ***VenCo* is a compulsively readable fantasia of adventure, history, feminism, and magic – it is a novel only the supremely gifted Cherie Dimaline could write**
- **Rights Sold: Canada English (Random House Canada), US English (William Morrow), NA French (Boreal); Pub date: Feb 2023; Page extent: 400 (hc)**

Rebecca Hirsch Garcia | The Girl Who Cried Diamonds and Other Stories [CookeMcDermid] (Speculative/Short Stories)

- The boundaries between realist and fabulist, literary and speculative are shattered in this remarkable debut collection for readers of **Carmen Maria Machado** and **Nana Kwame Adjei-Brenyah's *Friday Black***
- A girl born in a small, unnamed pueblo is blessed —or cursed— with the ability to produce valuable gems from her bodily fluids; a tired wife and mother escapes the confines of her oppressive life and body by shapeshifting into a cloud; a girl reckons with the death of her father and changing familial dynamics while slowly, mysteriously losing her physical senses – these are some of the stories in this dark, magnetic collection by newcomer **Rebecca Hirsch Garcia**, infused with keen insight and presented in startling prose that invites the reader into an uncanny world out of step with reality while exploring the personal and interpersonal in a way that is distinctly human.
- **Rebecca Hirsch Garcia** is an **O. Henry Prize**–winning author whose work has been published in *Threepenny Review*, *PRISM international*, *The Dark*, and elsewhere – *The Girl Who Cried Diamonds* is her debut collection, and part of a two-book deal (her first novel is scheduled for publication in 2024)
- **Rights Sold: World English (ECW Press); Pub date: Oct 2023; Page extent: 256 (pb)**

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Karen Lord | *The Blue, Beautiful World* [CookeMcDermid] (Science Fiction)

- **Sold to Del Rey (North America) and Gollancz (UK Comm.)**, award-winning author **Dr. Karen Lord's** latest, *The Blue Beautiful World*, is a brilliant near-future sci-fi first contact novel in which a team of gifted visionaries race to create a new future and transform Earth
- The world is changing and humanity must change with it: rising seas and soaring temperatures have radically transformed the face of Earth; all the while, other civilizations have been observing our world . . . and are now ready to make contact. Striving to prepare humanity for what's ahead are a group of dreamers and changemakers, including Peter Hendrix, a genius inventor behind the most advanced VR tech; Charyssa, a beloved celebrity icon with a passion for humanitarian work; Kanoa, a member of a global council of young people drafted to reimagine the relationship between humankind and alien societies; and unexpected secret weapon, Owen, a pop megastar whose ability to connect with his adoring fans is more than charisma. His hidden talent could be the key to uniting Earth as it looks toward the stars
- **"Karen Lord weaves a complex story of first contact from a unique perspective that is warm, engaging, and wildly original. I thoroughly enjoyed this book!"—Martha Wells, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Murderbot Diaries***
- *The Blue Beautiful World* is Karen Lord at her best and a return to her "rewarding, touching and often funny exploration of the forms and functions of human culture" (SFX) from *The Best of All Possible Worlds* and *The Galaxy Games* – both slated for reissue, with brand new cover treatments, from Del Rey (June 2023) and Gollancz (TBC, 2024)
- **Rights Sold: NA English (Del Rey/PRH), UK Comm. (Gollancz/Hachette); Pub date: Aug 2023; Page extent: 256 (hc)**

Sofia Samatar | *The Practice, the Horizon, and the Chain* [CookeMcDermid] (Science Fiction)

- **The first novel in over a decade** from the author of *A Stranger in Olondria* (winner of the **2014 William L. Crawford Fantasy Award, the British Fantasy Award, and the World Fantasy Award**) and *The White Mosque* (finalist for the **2023 PEN/Jean Stein Award**), *The Practice, the Horizon, and the Chain* is the story of carceral and academic institutionalized power set on a generation starship with a centuries-old caste system, written in the vein of **Rivers Solomon** and **Ursula K. Le Guin**
- The boy was raised among the Chained, shackled to an ever-rotating stream of work gangs, and condemned to toil in the Hold of a ship out amongst the stars for eternity. His whole world changes—literally—when he is brought upstairs to one of the ship's professors, who says the boy has been granted a scholarship and is no longer one of the Chained. The woman—herself one generation removed from those imprisoned in the Hold—is dedicated to ensuring he succeeds, all while fighting for her own advancement. But as the boy and the woman grow closer and learn the physical and mental reality the other inhabits, they embark on a journey to grasp the shape of the many chains that are both the tools of subjugation and the key to breaking free
- **"The Practice, the Horizon, and the Chain does what only Samatar can do: cut to the bone, but with a loving hand. It's a hopeful, humane, and bruisingly perceptive fable about the chains we build, and what it takes to break them."** —Alix E. Harrow, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Ten Thousand Doors of January* and *A Spindle Splintered*
- A mystical space adventure for the exhausted dreamer, loosely inspired by *Star Wars*, told with **Sofia Samatar's** characteristic lyrical, poetic, and incisive prose, *The Practice, the Horizon, and the Chain* is an examination of power—who has it, wields it, for what ends, how it's reinforced—and how it connects us all
- **Rights Sold: World English (Tordotcom); Pub date: Mar 2024; Page extent: 96 (ms)**

Esther Verhoef | *The Night Shift* [Uitgeverij Prometheus] (Thriller/Crime)

- For fans of **Nicci French** and **M.T. Edvardsson's *A Nearly Normal Family*** – this is psychological suspense at its best, from Dutch mega-bestselling author **Esther Verhoef, whose works have sold nearly 3 million copies**
- When veterinarian and single mom Emma van Eerd gets a job at a remote veterinarian clinic with a house attached to the clinic, it's an opportunity to start fresh (though her 14-year-old daughter Vegas is horrified by the move, which takes her away from her friends and school). Shortly after accepting the position, during a night shift, two masked men force Emma to perform a life-saving operation on their badly injured friend. Emma tries to do the impossible to save the man's life, but little does she know, this is only the beginning of a harrowing series of events that will put her, her daughter, and so many others in mortal danger
- **"[Verhoef] lives up to her long-standing reputation as 'queen of the Dutch thriller.' *The Night Shift* is an exciting novel with surprising plot twists and a lovely touch of romance, which you just want to read in one go."** —*Telegraaf*
- With compelling and believable depictions of flawed characters and sensitive, intelligent social observations, *The Night Shift* is a fresh and propulsive domestic thriller, which has already **sold over 120,000 copies in the Netherlands!**
- **Rights Sold: Dutch (Prometheus), Czech (Alpress); Pub date: Jul 2021; Page extent: 65 (translated sample), 385 (Dutch pb)**