

# Midmonth BookNotes

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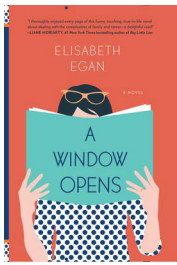
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## Outlandish October



*Egan, Elisabeth. [A Window Opens](#) (SimonSchuster \$26)*

Every once in a while a book comes along that is so good you just don't want it to end. *A Window Opens* by Elisabeth Egan is exactly that kind of novel. At the

beginning of *A Window Opens*, the book's protagonist Alice Pearse has the best of both worlds. Alice works part-time as a book review editor for a women's magazine in New York City. Three days a week, Alice gets to go into the city and interact with the world of books and publishing that she loves so much. The rest of Alice's week is dedicated to taking care of her three kids and her husband Nicholas. However, when Nicholas arrives home early one day and tells Alice he isn't going to make partner at the law firm where he works, Alice realizes her life is about to change dramatically. Nicholas wants to open his own practice, but it will take time to build up a client list so Alice is going to have to go back to work full-time. Fortunately, Alice lands a new dream job with a cutting edge new start-up company called Scroll. The idea behind the company is to "revolutionize" the bookstore experience by providing high tech reading lounges, where readers can download books and enjoy them in quiet and luxurious surroundings. As an added bonus coffee will be served and print copies of first edition books will be on display and available for purchase. For a serious reader it sounds like heaven, but even as Alice tries to juggle her new professional responsibilities as well as her long-standing family duties, she discovers her

new dream job gradually evolving into something more of a nightmare. As a book review editor at *Glamour* magazine, Egan knows a thing or two about what her protagonist is going through as she struggles to balance both work and family, and her debut novel is a thoughtful meditation on marriage and motherhood, family and friendship, love and loss. Egan also deftly explores the benefits and the costs social media has introduced into our lives as well as the important role reading, print books (or as one techie character in the novel calls them "carbon-based artifacts") and bookstores have in society. *A Window Opens* is women's fiction and storytelling of the highest caliber. You may need a few Kleenex by the end of the book, but I promise you it will be worth it.

*Ashley, Jennifer. [The Stolen Mackenzie Bride](#) (Berkley \$7.99)*

After spotting her at a ball, Highland warrior Malcolm Mackenzie falls head over heels for Mary Lennox, Now Malcolm will do anything to claim Mary as his own even though she is betrothed to an Englishman and her father is not only loyal to the King but hates all Scotsmen with a vengeance. The latest in Ashley's superbly written Mackenzie family series is actually a prequel of sorts since it takes place in 1745 Scotland just as fighting is breaking out between the rebelling Highland clans and the English, who rule over the country. RITA award-winning Ashley will be appearing at the Poisoned Pen along with several other romance writers on Saturday November 28<sup>th</sup> at 2 PM.

*Ayres, D D. [Primal Force](#)* (St Martins \$7.99)

Dog trainer Jori Garrison just wants to focus on her work with the Warriors Wolf Pack (a non-profit group which provides service animals to wounded veterans), but she finds her strictly business philosophy of life shaken up by the presence of Law Battise, a taciturn Military Police veteran, who is participating in the program as a way of dealing with PTSD. Ayres has done a tremendous amount of research into service dogs used by the military and other professions and it shows in the latest thrilling addition to her sexy, action-driven K-9 Rescue romance. Ayres is another author, who will be appearing at the romance event on Saturday November 28<sup>th</sup> at 2 PM.

*Dimon, Helenkay. [Facing Fire](#)* (Harper \$7.99)

Josiah King and the other members of the undercover black ops team known as the Alliance discover the rules of the game have changed when Josiah's uncle Thomas, the Earl of Stonechase, is blown apart in his home. The Alliance's most deadly adversary, international terrorist and full-time psychopath Benton, is now targeting the Alliance's family members and friends as a means of payback. The only lead Josiah has to the real identity of Benton is in the hands of private investigator Sutton Dahl, and Josiah is determined to get that intel from her one way or another. The latest installment in Dimon's Bad Boys Undercover is equal measures of nonstop action and sizzling hot sex.

*Hearth, Amy Hil. [Miss Dreamsville and the Lost Heiress of Collier County](#)* (Atria \$15)

Eudora "Dora" Welty Witherspoon has spent the last year in Jackson, Mississippi trying to find out more about her own family when she receives a telegram summoning her back to Collier County, Florida. Once Dora arrives home she discovers her ex-husband Darryl Norwood is planning on tearing up a large chunk of land near the river and Everglades in order to put in a modern housing development. With the help and support of the rest of the members of the Collier County Women's Literary Society, Dora sets out to stop Darryl. Hearth is also the author of *Miss Dreamsville* and the Collier County Women's Literary

Society, which introduces readers to the endearingly quirky residents of Collier County. If you enjoy Fannie Flagg's novels or Ann B. Ross's "Miss Julia" books, Hearth will be right up your literary alley.

*Holleman, Emily. [Cleopatra's Shadows](#)* (Little Brown \$27)

Historians have long been fascinated by Cleopatra, but the famous Egyptian ruler actually had two sisters, who take center stage in Holleman's intriguing historical novel. Arsineo, the younger sister, finds herself caught up in dangerous court intrigues when her oldest sister Berenice "the Shining One," seizes power in a coup that sends their father and his favorite daughter Cleopatra running to Rome for military backup. As Berenice attempts to consolidate her hold on the throne, Arsineo struggles to maintain her place in her sister's new court even as everyone in Egypt waits with baited breath to see if the old King and Cleopatra will return. Holleman's impeccably researched novel not only gives readers a vivid glimpse of life in Hellenistic Egypt but also a look at two compelling heroines whose lives deserve to be more than just a footnote in history. Anyone who enjoys well-crafted historical fiction set in ancient times (or anyone who has loved Steven Saylor's or Lindsey Davis's equally compelling historical mysteries) will not want to miss this brilliant debut, the first in a series featuring Arsineo.

*Johnson, Alissa. [Talent for Trickery](#)* (Sourcebooks \$7.99)

Ever since her father William, who was one of London's most successful thieves and con men, died, Lottie Walker had reinvented herself as the very respectable Charlotte Bales. Now eight years after her father's death, Owen Renderwell, a Scotland Yard detective who once worked with William, suddenly turns up demanding that she help him go through her father's coded journals in the hopes that it might help him crack a current murder case. Lottie knows that by spending time with Owen, she is putting her family's hard-won respectability at risk, but what Lottie didn't expect is that she would be putting her own heart at risk as well.

*Kappes, Tonya. [Ghostly Murder](#)* (Harper \$7.99)

In the fourth quirkily humorous installment of Kappes' "Ghostly Southern" series, funeral home owner Emma Lee Raines once again finds herself investigating a cold-case crime when the ghost of the town's wealthiest resident, Mamie Sue Preston, appears and insists she was murdered.

*Kendrick, Beth. [Put a Ring on It](#)* (NAL \$15)

Insurance actuary Brighton Smith has her future carefully planned out, and that future included marching down the aisle with her fiancé Colin. However, when Colin calls her and tells her that he has just met his soul mate and they are going to get married, something inside the usually cool, calm, and collected Brighton just snaps. While taking a vacation in Black Dog Bay, Brighton bumps into the town's designated rebound guy Jake Sorenson, and fueled by one too many glasses of champagne, Brighton informs Jake she wants to do something with him that he hasn't done with any other woman: get married. One quick plane trip to Las Vegas and Brighton returns to Black Dog Bay the next day as Mrs. Jake Sorenson. Kendrick continues her charming series set in Black Dog Bay, Delaware (the best place in America to recover from a breakup!) with another wickedly funny and wonderfully sweet romance that is just an absolute delight to read. Beth will also be appearing at the Poisoned Pen on Saturday November 28<sup>th</sup> at 2 PM as part of the romance author program.

*Kleypas, Lisa. [Cold-Hearted Rake](#)* (Avon, \$7.99)

After unexpectedly inheriting the title of Earl of Trenear and a ramshackle estate, London rake Devon Ravenel plans on washing his hands of both responsibilities until he meets Kathleen, the lovely widow of the late Earl. After a segue into contemporary and paranormal romances, Kleypas returns to historical romance with a Victorian-set novel that delivers all of the rich characterization and lush sensuality for which Kleypas is known and loved.

*Leigh, Eva. [Forever Your Earl](#)* (Harper \$7.99)

As the editor for London's most popular scandal

sheet, Eleanor Hawke has gotten a lot of mileage out of the exploits of Daniel Balfour, the rakish Earl of Ashford. So when Daniel suddenly appears in Eva's offices one day offering her what would seem to be the deal of a lifetime – Daniel will allow Eleanor to accompany him on all of his nightly adventures as long as he has final approval of her copy – Eleanor knows she would be a fool to refuse. What Eleanor doesn't know is that Daniel has his own reasons for keeping Eleanor close. With this book, Leigh launches a witty and sexy new historical series featuring a group of female writers known as the Wicked Quills of London that is perfect for fans of Eloisa James.

*MacNeal, Susan. [Mrs Roosevelt's Confidante](#)* (Bantam \$15)

Maggie Hope hasn't been back to America since the war started, but now Maggie has the opportunity to return home when her boss Winston Churchill asks Maggie to accompany him as his typist when he visits Washington D.C. to meet with President Roosevelt. When the First Lady's secretary goes missing, Maggie accompanies Eleanor to the woman's apartment, where they find the woman with her wrists slit. Maggie is positive the secretary was murdered and someone is trying to implicate Eleanor in her death, so she sets out to find the real culprit. This is the fifth in MacNeal's series featuring the plucky Maggie, and due to the major changes in Maggie's life over the books, you probably will want to read them in order. I love the way the author brings World War II to life and in some ways they serve as a distaff compliment to James R. Benn's "Billy Boyle" mysteries.

*Mayle, Peter. [The Diamond Caper](#)* (Knopf \$24.95)

It's all champagne wishes and caviar dreams in Mayle's latest luxe novel featuring Sam Levitt and Elena Morales. The LA based insurance company for which Elena works is taking a hit with a big claim from a French couple in Nice, whose diamonds have been stolen so Elena's boss asks her to go to Nice and check the claim out. Elena is of course more than happy to do so since it will give her the chance to spend some quality time with her boyfriend Sam. It is Sam, however, who believes there is a link between



this diamond robbery and several other jewelry heists in the region, and he convinces Elena to work with him. The investigation into the jewel thefts takes second place to the lovingly described meals and vivid descriptions of the French countryside as well as the home renovation drama taking place as Sam and Elena take ownership of their dream house in France.

*McBride, Susan. [Say Yes to the Death](#)* (Harper \$7.99)

The last time Andrea Kendricks saw Olivia La Belle was when the two were in prep school and Olivia was the original “mean girl.” Now more than a decade later, it seems Olivia hasn’t changed a bit when Andrea bumps into her at a wedding for one of her mother’s friends and Olivia, who is now Dallas’s premier wedding planner, is giving Millicent Draper, the baker who prepared the cake for the event, hell. So of course when Olivia is found with murdered the next day and Millie is found standing over her body, the police assume Millie is the killer. Andrea, of course, knows better and she sets out to find the real murderer. It has been awhile since the last Andrea Kendricks mystery but if you enjoy contemporary sleuths with a generous dollop of sharp humor and a dash of romance, McBride may be your new go-to sleuth.

*Moyes, Jojo. [After You](#)* (Viking \$26.95)

Moyes’ *Before You*, in which the author introduced readers to Louisa Clark, was a million copy best-seller. (The movie will appear next June with Emilia Clark and Sam Claflin). It is now eighteen months after the events of that book (about which I won’t say much so as to not spoil some major plot points), and Lou must take stock of her life after a drunken tumble off the roof of her apartment forces her to return home to the small village of Stortfold to convalesce with her family. In an interview with Bookpage, Moyes said she is a believer in the power of fiction to change hearts and minds. “Everything I’ve learned, I’ve learned from fiction. One of the greatest things you can learn from fiction is empathy. If you can’t empathize with someone else’s position, it makes a rigid adult.” Readers will empathize with the characters in Moyes’ latest emotional roller coaster of a novel. One caveat, *After You* is definitely tied to *Before You*, so if you haven’t read that book yet, do so

before starting Moyes latest moving tale.

*Williams, Beatriz. [Along the Infinite Sea](#)* (Putnam \$26.95) Event

When readers last met Pepper Schuyler in the pages of *Tiny Little Thing*, the youngest of the Schuyler daughters was struggling with how to deal with the soon-to-be-noticeable effects of a romantic fling with a married politician while she worked at restoring a 1936 Mercedes-Benz Special Roadster, which she found abandoned in a shed. Now Pepper figures that the money she earns from auctioning the car will solve all her problems. However, it turns out the anonymous buyer of the car, Annabelle Dommerich, actually has a past connection with the roadster that stretches back to World War II and is tied to a love so strong it has withstood the decades. Two women with past secrets find an unexpected friendship with each other as well as the strength to face their futures in the latest spell-binding novel from New York Times bestseller Williams, who is unrivaled when it comes to deftly weaving together two different storylines into one completely mesmerizing tale. Readers who relish impeccably crafted historical novels sweetened with a generous splash of danger and romance will not want to miss this captivating book. Williams will be visiting the Poisoned Pen on Saturday November 7<sup>th</sup> at 2 PM so mark your calendars now!

## *Curl Up with a Good Cozy*

*Buckley, Julia. [The Big Chili](#)* (Berkley \$7.99)

Lilah Drake has built up quite a successful little side business in Pine Haven, IL, supplying residents who either don’t have the time or the necessary culinary skills with covered-dish meals that they can then claim they whipped up in their own kitchens. However, when the President of St. Bart’s Altar and Rosary Guild drops dead after taking a bit of the chili Lilah prepared for one of her “clients,” Lilah finds her business may be going down the drain. This debut mystery, which reminds me a bit of Katherine Hall Page’s delightful cozies, is as warm and comforting as one of the covered dishes Lilah prepares with the added bonuses of a nicely done small town setting and a cast of engaging characters.

*Martin, Nancy. [Miss Ruffles Inherits Everything Signed](#)* (St Martins \$25.99) event  
After her job at the university is cut, Sunny McKillip lands a new position working for Honeybelle Hensley, the richest woman in Mule Stop, Texas. Sunny started out as Honeybelle's personal secretary but now she really is more of personal assistant to Miss Ruffles, the Texas Cattle Cur whom Honeybelle loves more than anything. So it really isn't much of a surprise to Sunny when Honeybelle unexpectedly passes away and leaves her home and most of her money (with a few strings attached) to Miss Ruffles. What is unexpected to Sunny is the lengths people in Mule Stop will go to get their hands on Honeybelle's money, which means Miss Ruffles might need someone to watch her back. Martin is the award-winning author of the popular "Black-bird Sisters" mysteries and she will be here at the Poisoned Pen on Wednesday November 4<sup>th</sup> at 2 PM for tea and a talk to launch her latest marvelously amusing book.

*Myers, Ann. [Bread of the Dead](#)* (William Morrow \$7.99)  
Everyone at the Tres Amigas Café, where Rita Lafitte works as a cook, is looking forward to Santa Fe's upcoming Day of the Dead baking contest, but Rita finds herself distracted from the upcoming event when her friend and landlord Victor is found dead. The police, including Rita's annoying ex-husband Manny, believe Victor committed suicide but Rita and her boss Flori think otherwise which leaves them with no other choice but to take a break from cooking and start snooping if they want to find the murderer. This terrific debut is right on the money with vivid descriptions of Santa Fe and its colorful culture, memorable characters, and a hint of romance.

*Staub, Wendy Corsi. [Nine Lives](#)* (Crooked Lane Books \$24.95)  
Staub, who is known for her darker suspense and romantic suspense novels, takes a stab at the cozier side of mystery with this series debut. Recently widowed Isabella "Bella" Jordan is in the process of moving with her young son Max from New York to Chicago to live with her intimidating mother-in-law when car trouble leaves them stranded in the small town of Lily Dale.

Inbetween befriending an expecting momma cat and trying to sort out her travel plans, Bella agrees to temporarily take over running Leona Gatta's guesthouse. While staying in Leona's home, Bella finds herself dreaming that Leona's death may not have been the accident everyone thinks it was. Staub makes good use of the psychic tone of the town (Lily Dale is actually a real place that has a long history of spiritualism stretching back into the 19<sup>th</sup> century) while crafting a sweet story that will appeal to readers, who like their mysteries on the gentle side with a bit of woo woo factor thrown in for good measure.

## *Hurray for Hollywood*



*Brunkhorst, Ale. [The Gilded Life of Matilda Duplaine](#)* (Mira \$26.99)  
Struggling L.A. Times reporter Thomas Cleary just needs a good quote to finish up his obituary on legendary movie mogul Joel Goldman from the producer's daughter Lily. Instead, Lily hands Thomas the key that will change his future forever when she invites him to an informal dinner party with some of Tinsel Town's most powerful and influential players. Before he can say "cut and print," Thomas is on a first name basis with some of the industry's titans including David Duplaine, a media mogul and former protégé of Joel Goldman. When Thomas mistakenly shows up at David's Bel Aire mansion for a political fundraiser that is actually being held in Malibu, he stumbles across a beautiful young woman named Matilda playing tennis on court hidden away in the estate. By the time the night is over, Thomas will not only have fallen in love with the bewitchingly different Matilda, he will find himself entangled in a decades-old mystery that could either make or break his journalistic career. Some reviews have compared Brunkhorst's debut novel to *The Great Gatsby* since its protagonist becomes swept up in the world of the wealthy and powerful, but I think the book is more *Sunset Boulevard* (although with a happier ending) with its references to classic Hollywood

and a past mystery as well as a generous dash of Dominic Dunne, whose novels about the rich and powerful were a staple on the best-seller lists a few decades ago. If you like glitz, glamour, suspense, and romance, this makes perfect escapist reading.

*Brady, John. [Frank & Ava: In Love and War](#) (SimonSchuster \$26.99)*

It started out as an extra-marital affair between legendary crooner Frank Sinatra and smoldering silver screen goddess Ava Gardner. She had just gotten out of two disastrous marriages (one to movie star Mickey Rooney and the other to band leader Artie Shaw) while he was married with kids. But Sinatra was completely smitten and pursued Gardner relentlessly. The next four decades saw enough make-ups and break-ups (and even one shoot-up involving a Cadillac, a bottle of booze, and a pair of Smith and Wesson .38s) between Gardner and Sinatra to fill an issue of People Magazine, but emotional connection between the two remained strong long after their tumultuous divorce. Brady, who once worked at Reprise Records where he first met Sinatra, explores the complicated (to put it mildly) relationship between Gardner and Sinatra from both of their perspectives giving readers a nuanced and thoroughly researched look into the troubled romantic lives of two of the brightest stars in the Hollywood firmament.

*Marcott, Lindsa. [The Producer's Daughter](#) (Crooked Lane \$24.99)*

Marcott, who wrote the "Lucy Freers" mysteries as Lindsay Marcotta, delves into the tawdrier side of Hollywood as Hannah Doran, daughter of movie producer Warren Doran, is released from prison for grand theft (a crime for which Hannah claims she is innocent) just as her father is poised re-launch his most lucrative film franchise in this new novel, which delivers plenty of glitz along with some intriguing suspense.

*McGilligan, Pat. [Young Orson: The Years of Luck and Genius on the Path to Citizen Kane](#) (HarperCollins \$40)*

Since 2015 is the century of Welles birth, it isn't surprising publishers are rolling out titles on this legendary actor/director. McGilligan, who has

also done biographies on Hitchcock and Lang, distinguishes himself from the other Welles books by focusing exclusively on Welles early years including Welles' work with Mercury Theater and his War of the Worlds radio broadcast that convinced many in the U.S. that we were under attack from aliens from outer space. Amazingly enough, Citizen Kane which was made when Welles was just 25!

*Morgan, Michelle. [The Ice Cream Blonde](#) (University of Chicago \$26.95)*

Thelma Todd was one of the rare exceptions in 1920s Hollywood: she was an actress, who successfully made the transition from silent films to the "talkies." A gifted comedienne, Todd shared screen time with Laurel and Hardy as well as the Marx Brothers, but she eventually became weary with the movie business and opened her own restaurant – Todd's Sidewalk Café – in 1934. When she was only 29, Todd was found dead in her garage near the café. An inquest ruled the death accidental, but there have always been rumors in Hollywood about "Hot Toddy's" mysterious demise. Using previously unavailable investigative material, Morgan comes to the conclusion that Todd was murdered, and she offers her own list of possible suspects in this gossip-rich book that will definitely draw in any reader, who enjoys tales about Hollywood in the 1920s and 1930s.

*Trigiani, Adriana. [All the Stars in the Heavens Signed](#) (Harper \$26.99)*

Barbara has already referenced this in the October Book News, but I include it here again since it has such a strong cinematic connection. The book is a fictionalized version of the life of actress Loretta Young as seen through the viewpoint of Young's personal secretary and friend Alda Ducci, who helps Loretta navigate the treacherous waters of studio system in place at that time when Young falls fast and hard for Clark Gable and their affair results in the birth of a daughter, whose presence could destroy Young's career forever. If you loved Kate Alcott's exemplary A Touch of Stardust (the story of the romance between Carole Lombard and Clark Gable – that man certainly did get around-as told by her assistant) you may also want



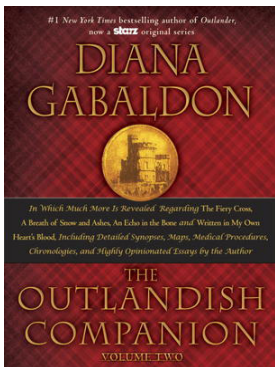
to pick up Trigiani's latest, of which we have signed copies (tip-ins) while they last. P.S. Trigiani's debut novel *Big Stone Gap* will soon be on its way to a theater near you.

*Wieland, Karin and Shelley Frisch. [Dietrich & Riefenstahl: Hollywood, Berlin, and a Century in Two Lives](#)* (Liveright \$35)

Growing up in Berlin, Marlene Dietrich and Leni Riefenstahl both dreamed of careers in the movie business, and ultimately they both did achieve that goal for better or for worse. Dietrich began in music as a violinist while Riefenstahl tried to make it as a dancer before the two found their way into the German movie business. Dietrich eventually moved onto to Hollywood, where she not only produced a string of popular films but also spent considerable time touring for the USO and selling war bonds for America while Riefenstahl worked her insider connections to Hitler and his circle to secure her place as one of Nazi Germany's premier directors. Wieland's dual biography of these two fascinating women focuses both on their professional and personal lives, but unlike some other biographies of Riefenstahl, Wieland doesn't gloss over what she did for the Nazis in order to secure her own career.

## *Waiting for Jamie and Claire*

Legions of fans have been eagerly awaiting the publication of [The Outlandish Companion Volume 2](#) this month (signed copies while they last). But after devouring this information-rich



tome and then re-reading every other book in the series, what can a reader do until Diana Gabaldon's next imaginative adventure appears in print? The books below may help tide you over until you can once again return to Scotland with Claire, Jamie, and the rest of their clan.

*Ashley, Jennifer. [The Stolen Mackenzie Bride](#)* (Berkley \$7.99)

Local author Ashley's latest impeccably written historical is mentioned above in the Book Notes,

but I include it here because it is such a terrific mix of historical storytelling and passion-rich romance. In this book, Mal Mackenzie falls fast and hard for Mary Lennox, but there are obstacles to overcome before they can be together including Mary's father, who hates Scotsmen on principle, Mary's English fiancé, and political trouble brewing between the Scots and the English.

*Callihan, Kristen. [Evernight](#)* (Grand Central \$6)

In 1881 London, Miranda Ellis, who has been gifted since birth with a rare talent, is forced to marry Lord Benjamin Archer. The first in the author's Darkest London series, *Firelight* is a compelling mix of Beauty and the Beast and Phantom of the Opera with plenty of sizzling sensuality and a generous dollop of the paranormal thrown into the mix.

*Chisholm, P.F. [A Famine of Horses](#)* (Poisoned Pen Press \$14.95)

Struggling to keep the peace in 1592 Carlisle, Sir Robert Carey, the newly appointed Deputy Warden of the West March under Queen Elizabeth, finds himself having to avert civil war as the laws of the Scots clash with the laws of the English. If you love the history in the Outlander series, you won't want to miss Chisholm's books, which are set on the Scottish border during the tumultuous Elizabeth era.

*Deveraux, Jude. [A Knight in Shining Armor](#)* (Gallery Books \$16)

After Dougless Montgomery's fiancé and his bratty daughter abandon her in an English church, Dougless begins crying over the sixteenth century tomb of Nicholas Stafford wishing she had her own knight in shining armor. Her tears summon Nicholas from 1564, and the knight now has a chance not only to help Dougless but to rewrite his own life's history as well.

*Donati, Sara. [Into the Wilderness](#)* (Random House \$17)

23 year old spinster Elizabeth Middleton leaves England with her brother to live with their father in America, where Elizabeth plans on opening a school. But Elizabeth's plans take an unexpected turn when she falls in love with Nathaniel Bonner, a Scotsman raised by the Mowhawks. This is the book which launched Donati's series

about the Middleton and Bonner families, which extended to six volumes. If you love the epic sweep, complex characters, and rich historical backdrop of the *Outlander* series, give this one a try.

*Harkness, Deborah. A Discovery of Witches* (Penguin \$17)

Diana Bishop, a young scholar and a descendant of witches, discovers a long-lost and enchanted alchemical manuscript, Ashmole 782, deep in Oxford's Bodleian Library. Its reappearance summons a fantastical underworld, which she navigates with her leading man, vampire geneticist Matthew Clairmont. This is the first in the author's "All Souls" trilogy, which delivers plenty of passionate romance, fascinating historical details, and a generous dollop of magic.

*Kearsley, Susanna. A Desperate Fortune* (Sourcebooks \$16.99)

Hired by a once-famous historian to crack codes in a 300-year-old journal that belonged to a Jacobite exile, Sara Thomas encounters complications in the form of the journal's reclusive owner, a charming Parisian neighbor and the journal's own writer. Kearsley has a real flair for weaving together two different storylines set in two historical periods, and she has a large backlist of titles that you may also want to check out.

*Mosse, Kate. Labyrinth* (Penguin \$17)

In 1209, Alaiss is entrusted by her father with a book that is part of a sacred trilogy connected to the Holy Grail. In 2005, Alice Tanner discovers two skeletons, a labyrinth pattern engraved on a wall, and a ring hidden in a cave while on an archaeological dig in southwest France. These items trigger visions of the past and propel Alice into a dangerous race against those who want the book for themselves. This is the first book in a trilogy by the author that swept the British best-seller lists when it first came out.

*Ridgeway, Bee. River of No Return* (Plume \$16)

Waking up in a modern day London hospital 200 years after dying on a battlefield in France, Nick Falcott is indoctrinated into a time-traveling society who returns him to the side of the woman he loved to reclaim a talisman. Epic romance, time travel, and secret historical conspiracies, this

wonderful book has it all.

*Neville, Katherine. The Eight* (Ballantine \$16)

Computer expert Catherine Velis becomes caught up in the search for the mystical Montglane Service, a chess set once owned by Charlemagne, which holds the key to great power. This debut, with two terrific heroines, nonstop suspense and adventure, and a plot that borrows more than a bit from the game of chess, was an absolute knockout when it first came out in print in 1988.

*Williams, Beatriz. Overseas* (Berkley \$16)

A cynical Wall Street analyst falls in love with a billionaire with a mysterious past that shares a connection with a World War I British officer and an American woman who holds vital information about a fateful reconnaissance mission. With *Overseas*, Williams delivers a captivating time slip storyline and all the romance and danger you could desire.

*Willis, Connie. Domsday Book* (Random House \$7.99)

It's the middle of the twenty-first century, and some graduate students at Oxford are able to time-travel to whatever period in history they're studying. Kivrin Engels, a student specializing in the Medieval period, plans to travel back to 1320 for a couple of weeks, but her troubles begin when a new, virulent form of the flu sweeps across England afflicting the technician in charge of time-travel and leaving Kivrin stranded in the past.