

Midmonth BookNotes

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Happy Booksgiving!

Ashley, Kristen. [Walk Through Fire](#) (Forever \$7.99)

It was love at first sight for Millie Cross and Logan "High" Judd. Their love for each other burned hotter than the sun until the day Millie walked away from High. Now twenty years later, Millie unexpectedly bumps into High, but will her one true love give her another chance or will it be High's turn to ride away into the sunset? Ashley continues her best-selling Chaos series (which focuses on a group of bad boy motorcycle bikers) with another emotionally intense contemporary romance that sizzles with red-hot sensuality. Ashley is one of the five romance authors, who will be appearing at the Poisoned Pen on Saturday November 28th at 2 PM to discuss the romance genre and their books.

Bradley, Anna. [Wicked Way to Win an Earl](#) (Berkley \$7.99)

As a favor to her younger sister, Della Somerset agrees to attend a house party being given by the Sutherland family even though the two families have been feuding ever since Della's mother jilted Alec Sutherland's father more than two decades earlier in order to marry another man. Alec is determined to even old scores by seducing Della, but the more time Alec spends in Della's company, the less certain he is of exactly who is seducing whom. It is always a delight to discover a new author, and Bradley's impeccably written debut is a terrific choice for any romance reader, who enjoys historical love stories that skew to the sexy side of the genre.

Flowers, Jean. [Death Takes Priority](#) (Berkley \$7.99)

Murder comes postage due in this engaging series debut by Flowers (pseudonym for Camille Minichino author of the Miniature Mysteries among others). After being dumped by her fiancé, Cassie Miller returns home to North Ashcot to take over as the town's new postmaster. Since it has been years since Cassie has been back home, she is desperately trying to reconnect with the town's residents, so Cassie is thrilled when handsome antiques shop owner Scott James asks her out for lunch. Cassie is less thrilled when the local police show up while she and Scott are eating in order to bring Scott in for questioning about the death of Cassie's old high school sweetheart. Can Cassie find the real killer and help stamp out crime in her little hometown? All postage puns aside, this is a well crafted mystery that will definitely appeal to fans of Katherine Hall Page's books or Rita Mae Brown's Sneaky Pie mysteries (because as we know from that series, working at the Post Office provides plenty of great opportunities for snooping).

Holmes, Juliann. [Just Killing Time](#) (Berkley \$7.99)

Ruth Clagan had always been close to her grandfather Thom especially since it was he who taught her everything she knows about repairing clocks. However, after her grandmother died, Grandpa Thom remarried and Ruth and her Grandpa drifted apart. When her grandfather is killed during a break in at his shop – the Cog & Sprocket – and Ruth inherits the shop, she moves back to Orchard determined to find her

grandfather's killer before the clock runs out. I loved the small town Berkshires setting of this impeccably written debut as well as the fascinating facts about horology the author works into the story.

Kincheloe, Jenn. [The Secret Life of Anna Blanc](#) (Seventh Street \$15.95)

This is another title Barbara referenced in the last *BookNews*. While I enjoy discovering a new author, I must admit I struggled with this debut. There were glimpses of promise in Anna - the spunky heroine of the story - and I appreciated the intriguing historical early 20th century Los Angeles setting. But I felt the tone of the book wandered all over the place from light to dark, and Anna went from entertaining to annoying and back again without much rhyme or reason. However, if you like historical mysteries, your reading mileage might vary.

Krentz, Jayne A. [Secret Sisters](#) (Berkley \$26.95)

Eighteen years ago, a man attacked Madeline Chase while she was living with her grandmother Edith at the Aurora Point Hotel. Fortunately, Madeline's best friend, Daphne Knight, saw what was happening and alerted Edith and the hotel's handyman, Tom Lomax, who then rescued Madeline and "took care" of the attacker. Now Madeline finds herself back at the Aurora Point Hotel after she receives a mysterious phone call from Tom, but before she can talk with him in person, he is murdered. It seems someone may be trying to uncover the secret Madeline thought she had buried in the past, and the only person Madeline can trust to help her is her new hotel security expert: Jack Rayner. No one does contemporary romantic suspense quite like Krentz, and her latest polished novel is a sophisticated fusion of edgy danger and sexy desire seasoned with just the right dash of tart humor.

Long, Julie Ann. [The Legend of Lyon Redmond](#) (Avon \$7.99)

Once upon a time, Olivia Eversea and Lyon Redmond fell hopelessly in love. Because of a long-standing feud between their families, however, Olivia turned Lyon down when he suggested that they elope. Now five years later just as Olivia is mere weeks away from marrying the perfectly

pleasant Lord John Landsdowne, who should suddenly turn back up in her life but Lyon: the one man Olivia never forgot. This is the latest swoonworthy addition to Long's Pennyroyal Green series, but the great thing about these books is that each title can be read in and of itself. However, Long's romances are just like potato chips. Once you have read one, you won't be able to stop.

Morton, Kate. [The Lake House](#) (Atria \$28)

Sixteen-year-old Alice Edevane loves to write mysteries but she is about to become part of a real-life thriller for which she won't be able to write the ending. Late one midsummer evening after a party hosted by Alice Edevane's parents at the family's estate in Cornwall is winding down, the Edevanes discover their youngest child Theo is missing. The case is never solved but seventy years later London Police detective Sadie Sparrow, currently on suspension from her job, is visiting her grandfather's home in Cornwall when she stumbles across the Edevane estate. Sadie contacts Alice, now a famous mystery writer living in London, who gives Sadie the keys to the abandoned estate and her permission to begin investigating what really happened that night. Morton's latest elegantly written novel is a luscious, old-fashioned suspense novel that delivers plenty of intriguing family secrets and a wonderfully retro gothic sense of atmosphere for which Daphne Du Maurier would kill to have written.

Nix, Garth. [Newts Emerald](#) (Harper \$18.99)

After Lady Truthful's magical Newington Emerald is stolen from her she devises a simple plan: go to London to recover the missing jewel. She quickly learns, however, that a woman cannot wander the city streets alone without damaging her reputation, and she disguises herself as a mustache-wearing man. During Truthful's dangerous journey she discovers a crook, an unsuspecting ally, and an evil sorceress—but will she find her Emerald? You might not be familiar with Nix, an award-winning author of YA fantasy novels, but if you enjoy fun, genre-blended stories (in this case an engaging mash-up of historical fiction, fantasy, and a pinch of romance) don't miss this entrancing novel that reads like a clever collaboration between Susanna Clark (author of *Jonathan Strange and Mr. Norrell*) and a witty

Regency romance by Georgette Heyer or one of Mary Robinette Kowal's "Glamourist" books.

Reay, Katherine. [Bronte Plot](#) (Harper Collins \$15.99)

After her unorthodox methods of "adding value" to rare books causes some issues especially with her client and boyfriend James, Lucy Alling decides a career change is in order so she accepts the job of travel consultant and companion for James' wealthy grandmother Helen. As the two travel across England visiting various literary landmarks – including the home of the Brontes – both Lucy and Helen find themselves dealing with ghosts from their pasts. Reay has specialized in writing sweet contemporary romances/women's fiction with a literary leitmotif. I loved Reay's [Lizzy and Jane](#) (a modern take on Austen) as well as her first book [Dear Mr. Knightly](#).

Roberts, Nora. [Stars of Fortune](#) (Berkley \$17)

Once upon a time, the moon goddesses created three new stars fashioned out of fire, water, and ice as gifts for their new queen. But Narezza, the Mother of Darkness, desired the stars for herself. To keep the stars out of Narezza's hands, the moon goddesses hid them in three different locations. Hundreds of years later, artist Sasha Riggs is plagued by dreams of a sun drenched Mediterranean island and a mystery man, who has the power to control lightning. Arriving in Corfu, Sasha not only finds magician Bran Killian, but four other people – Riley Gwin, Sawyer King, Annika Waters, and Doyle McCleary – whose fate and future is tied up in a dangerous quest for the fire star. This is start to Roberts' new "The Guardians" trilogy so expect it to end on a cliffhanger.

Trent, Christine. [Death at the Abbey](#) (Kensington \$15)

While on a much-needed respite with her husband Sam in Nottinghamshire, undertaker Violet Harper is summoned to Welbeck Abbey by the Fifth Duke of Portland to prepare a body. His Grace is known as the "mad duke," and Violet has more than an inkling of why when she arrives at the grand estate and discovers that the corpse in question is that of the duke's favorite raven, Aristotle. This is the fifth in Trent's in-

triguing series featuring a female undertaker in Victorian England, and all of these meticulously crafted books are good bets for fans of Deanna Raybourn's Lady Julia Grey mysteries or the Lady Emily Ashton series by Tasha Alexander.

Someone's In the Kitchen

Andrew, Sally. [Recipes for Love and Murder](#) (Ecco \$26.99)

When her recipe column for the local paper is switched out for a self-help column, middle-aged widow Tannie Maria isn't sure if she will be any good at helping others. However, when Tannie Marie decides to include some recipes along with her "advice," she discovers she has a hidden gift for helping others. One of the first letters Tannie Marie receives is from an abused woman, who is worried that her husband may kill her. When the woman is later found dead supposedly by committing suicide, Tannie Marie (who has had her own experiences with an abusive spouse), realizes she must do something. With the help of her co-workers at the Klein Karoo and a handsome police officer, Tannie Maria decides to investigate. I love books that take me to another corner of the world, and Andrew's marvelous debut is exactly that kind of mystery. The author beautifully captures the spare beauty of the South African landscape as well as the country's exotic flora and fauna. Food, of course given the heroine's job, plays an important role in the plot as well, and you can almost taste the dishes Tannie Maria cooks and shares with her friends. (As an added bonus, a small selection of recipes is included. The chocolate buttermilk cake looks yummy!) Other critics have compared this to Alexander McCall Smith's Mma Ramotswe series, and if you enjoy those books you will probably also fall for this debut. But I also see a bit of Miss Marple in Tannie Maria, and in its own unique way her corner of South Africa has echoes the small village atmosphere of St. Mary Mead. Don't miss this one!

Baker, David. [Vintage](#) (Touchstone \$25)
Food journalist and wine connoisseur Bruno Tannebaum has just lost his job as columnist for the Chicago Sun-Times and his wife has kicked him out for cheating when he stumbles across something that could restore his writing career

and bank account. While working a temporary job cataloging a wine locker, Bruno comes across the cork from a legendary bottle of wine made in France in 1943, which is thought to have been lost during the Nazi occupation. Baker's cleverly de-but is filled with mouth-watering descriptions of meals eaten and wines drunk as well as a thoughtful meditation on the role of food and wine in one's life. If you like Peter Mayle's similarly flavored European caper novels, this may be for you.

Bate, Dana. [Too Many Cooks](#) (Kensington \$15)

Accepting a job abroad after reading advice from her late mother about taking risks, cookbook ghostwriter Kelly becomes the assistant to a glamorous but self-centered movie star and has unexpected adventures marked by her attraction to her employer's neglected husband. Bates' third foodie women's fiction title comes with a smattering of recipes for readers, who want to taste test the dishes the protagonist prepares.

Hendricks, Judi. [Baker's Blues](#) (University of Chicago Press \$14.95)

An early morning phone call is never good news for bakery owner Wyn Morrison. In this case, Wyn learns that Mac, her ex-husband is dead, and now as his executor Wyn must not deal with his will but also help his daughter Skye deal with her loss. Once again, Wyn's bakery comes to her emotional rescue as she sifts through her memories of Mac while relearning the life lessons that come from baking bread. This is the third in a series by Hendricks, who also wrote *Bread Alone* and *The Baker's Apprentice* among other culinary flavored novels.

Jones, Belinda. [The Traveling Tea Shop](#) (Berkley \$15)

Travel planner Laurie Davis is thrilled when her culinary idol, British "Cake Queen" Pamela Lambert-Leigh, offers her the job of coordinating Pamela's trip around New England (in a double-decker bus no less!) while she researches American desserts for her next cookbook. However, the trip isn't quite the piece of cake Laurie imagined it would be once she discovers that not only is Pamela's bratty teenage daughter along for the ride but also that secrets among the family could very well have Laurie threatening to

turn the bus back around and go home. This is a charming, feel-good novel of family, friendship, second chances, and of course cake.

Reichert, Amy E. [The Coincidence of Coconut Cake](#) (Gallery \$16)

Chef Lou Johnson wanted to surprise her fiancé Devlin with a homemade coconut cake. However, it was Lou who got the real surprise when she walked into Devlin's apartment and found him "taking a meeting" with his pretty new intern. Despite the best efforts of her staff that night, Lou insisted on cooking at her restaurant Louella's, but every dish she touched was a disaster. Unfortunately for Lou, that night just happened to be the one night Milwaukee's caustic new restaurant reviewer A.W. Wodyski (the journalistic pseudonym for ex-pat British writer Al Waters) decides to visit. Reichert has a real flair for writing about food in such a vivid way that you can almost taste the dishes she is describing, and the lovingly detailed Milwaukee setting is the icing on the cake of this sweetly satisfying love story.

Tom, Jessica. [Food Whore](#) (William Morrow \$14.99)

It is the opportunity of a lifetime but Tia Monroe can't tell a soul. Michael Saltz, the restaurant critic for the New York Times, has recently lost his sense of taste. Michael convinces Tia to act as his palate and ghostwrite his reviews in exchange for four-star dinners, an unlimited wardrobe account at Bergdorf Goodman, and most importantly a chance to work with legendary food writer and cookbook author Helen name. It starts out as great fun and the experience of a lifetime, but when the bill arrives at the end of each meal, Tia begins to wonder if all the lies and deceptions are really worth it. Other critics have compared this debut novel to *The Devil Wears Prada*, and there definitely is a bit of that novel's sharp sense of wit and dark humor to Tom's delectably clever novel as well plenty of juicy insider information on the business of restaurants and the reviewing of them.

America's Test Kitchen. [100 Recipes: The Absolute Best Way to Make the True Essentials](#) (Americas Test Kitchen \$40)

For more than two decades, the cooks at Amer-

ica's Test Kitchen have been tirelessly searching for the perfect recipe for every dish under the sun, which they then showcase in their magazines, cookbooks, and on their PBS shows. Now the editors have collected their top one hundred recipes to share with newbie cooks. Each recipe is preceded by an informative essay explaining the steps needed to master the dish as well as the rationale for using specific ingredients and cooking techniques. The selection of recipes includes everything from a "killer" tomato sauce and the perfect scrambled eggs to a tasty Peruvian roast chicken (something Barbara may have sampled on her trip last August). With gorgeous photographs and some fun sidebars, this makes an excellent gift for anyone just starting out in the kitchen or even experienced cooks, who want to brush up on their culinary basics.

Anthony, Michael. [V is for Vegetables](#)
(Little Brown \$40)

Vegetables get their moment in the spotlight in James Beard award-winner Anthony's latest yummy cookbook. Strictly speaking, this is not a pure vegetarian cookbook since some of the dishes do include meat or fish (sorry Ariel), but when the author does include these ingredients they are cast more in a supporting role to the real star of the dish: the vegetables. The cookbook is arranged in an easy-to-use alphabetic format, and more than 60 different vegetables are included with instructions on prepping them for dishes as well as various cooking techniques such as roasting, braising, grilling, and pickling that are guaranteed to bring out the best flavors in each vegetable. Written for the home cook with great photos of each vegetable, this cookbook will definitely encourage you to rethink the role those good (and good-for-you) vegetables play in your diet.

Axworthy, Nicol. [DIY Vegan: More Than 100 Easy](#) (SimonSchuster \$25.99)

Frustrated by the difficulty in determining whether store bought products were truly vegan, Axworthy and Pittman, editors for VegNews magazine, set out to create their own home-made vegan staples with which to stock their pantries. The book includes more than 100 recipes for healthy, plant-based staples such as vegan milks and butters made from a variety of nuts and

seeds as well as vegan riffs on popular treats like Pop Tarts and a vegan cheese sauce for good, old mac and cheese.

Battista, Maggi. [Food Gift Love: More Than 100](#) (Houghton \$25)

The founder of the Eat Boutique offers an exciting, inspiring and full-color food-gift guide for crafty cooks and food-DIY fans—including such gifts as Citrus Sugar, Grenadine, Chocolate-Dipped Everything and many more—in a book that has gift-wrap ideas, a pantry list and a list of sources. Battista's book is the cookbook that keeps on giving since not only will you find some tasty treats for your own consumption as well as a selection of good culinary gifts for you to give to friends and family.

Bittman, Mark. [Mark Bittman's Kitchen Matrix](#) (Pam Kraus Books \$35)

If you wanted to compare cooking to music, Bittman's latest meticulously written cookbook proves he is a fan of jazz. Bittman built his culinary career around the idea of simplifying complex recipes for the home cook, and he has always embraced the power of improvisation. In Kitchen Matrix, Bittman delivers a collection of 400 customized recipes that cooks can then riff off of to create new dishes simply by slightly changing a few things like an ingredient or two or by changing the method of preparation such as vegetable soup prepared twelve different ways.

Lawson, Nigella. [Simply Nigella Feel Good Food](#) (Flatiron Books \$35)

The "It" girl of British cooking serves up 150 recipes from breakfast dishes to decadent desserts that are designed to make your time in the kitchen less stressful. The uncomplicated yet always satisfying selection of choices includes one-bowl treats suitable for a cozy night on the sofa in front of the telly as well as great dishes to serve a crowd. I especially love Lawson's wry, dry sense of British humor that infuses her writing with its distinctive flavor.

Nunn, Emily. [Comfort Food Diaries](#) (Atria \$27)

One life-changing night, still reeling from her beloved brother's sudden death a few weeks ear-

lier, former New Yorker editor Emily Nunn was dumped by her handsome architect fiancé and evicted from the apartment they shared, losing in the same moment all sense of family, home, and financial security. After a few glasses of wine, heartbroken and lost, Emily—an avid cook and professional food writer—poured her heart out on Facebook. The next morning she woke up with a terrible hangover and a feeling she'd made a terrible mistake—only to discover she had more friends than she knew, many of whom invited her to come visit and cook with them while she put her life back together. Thus began the Comfort Food Tour. Think of this as the foodies' version of Eat, Pray, Love (or Eat, Eat, Eat in this case).

Pepin, Jacques. [Jacques Pepin: Heart and Soul in the Kitchen](#) (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt \$35)

Pepin has starred in 13 cooking shows and authored more than 25 cookbooks. In this companion book to his new PBS series, the culinary legend offers up 200 low-fuss recipes (organized by course) that he most frequently prepares for friends and family in his own home kitchen as well as some amusing stories from his long career as a chef and essays on topics such as eggs, gardening, and wine.

Reichl, Ruth. [My Kitchen Year](#) (Random \$35)

The announcement in the fall of 2009 that Conde Nast was shutting down the venerable *Gourmet* magazine, which had been published for more than seventy years, came as a total shock to everyone in the food world but most of all to the magazine's editor-in-chief Ruth Reichl. The former restaurant critic and food writer spent the next year struggling to come to terms with the loss of her culinary raison d'être for the last decade so it wasn't surprising that Reichl turned to the one place that always offered her comfort and solace: the kitchen. *My Kitchen Year* includes 136 recipes arranged by season for such tempting treats as roasted tomato soup, grilled cheese sandwiches with leeks, and a simple rhubarb cake. Part cookbook, part culinary memoir, this is an essential purchase for anyone who is a fan of Reichl, whose previous books include *Tender at the Bone*, *Garlic* and *Sapphire* culinary

memoir of the year with recipes roasted tomato soup, grilled cheese sandwiches with leeks, and rhubarb cake. Author of other great literary treats including *Tender at the Bone* as well as the yummy novel *Delicious!*

Seneviratne, Samantha. [The New Sugar and Spice](#) (Subterranean \$27.5)

Bakers who want to spice up their dishes will definitely want to invest in Seneviratne's cookbook. A food editor and stylist at *Fine Cooking*, the author's goal is to convince western cooks to not only up the amount of spices they use in their baking but to also consider some less conventional (but no less tasty) pairings of spices. The cookbook is divided into seven major spice categories such as nutmeg and cinnamon and the author also includes helpful details on buying and storing spices.

Holiday Reading

Barron, Stephanie. [Jane and the Twelve Days of Christmas](#) (Soho \$16.95)

Its Christmas Eve 1814 and Jane Austen and her family have been invited to spend the holidays at the Vyne, the gorgeous ancestral home of the wealthy Chute family. However, when someone dies in a tragic accident, suspicion falls upon everyone staying at the estate and it is up to Jane, with a little assistance from her new friend name, to find the killer. Barron is a master at channeling the literary voice of Jane Austen, and her latest is another impeccably researched and meticulously crafted historical mystery that will appeal not only to historical mystery readers but also to romance readers, who enjoy Regency-set novels. Signed copies while they last.

Bowen, Rhys. [Away in a Manger](#) (St Martins \$24.99)

Barbara included Bowen's historical mystery in the last *BookNews*, but I am mentioning it here again because it really is a marvelous treat for fans both old and new of the Molly Murphy Sullivan books. It's the holiday season in New York City, and Molly is preparing to celebrate Christmas with her family and friends. While out shopping with her young son and Bridie (the young girl Molly and her husband have taken into their home and hearts), the group encounters an an-

gelic young girl singing Christmas carols. When Bridie attempts to help the young girl and her older brother, both some of the many children left to beg on the streets of the city, Molly finds herself drawn into a new case as she attempts to discover what really happened to the children's mother. Signed copies while they last.

Brown, Alexandra. [The Great Christmas Knit-Off](#) (William Morrow \$14.99)

"Keep calm and carry yarn." This has been Sybil's personal mantra ever since her fiancé jilted her at the altar in order to run off with Sybil's twin sister Sasha. The following months turned into a blur of both personal and professional crises as Sybil tried to cope. Now emotionally worn-out and exhausted from a lack of sleep, Sybil decides to take a few days off to visit her friend Cher, who owns a pub in Tindledale. Arriving one snowy night in Tindledale, Sybil finds the place to be the quintessential British village right down to its charming collection of shops, which includes Hettie's House of Haberdashery. It is only after Sybil meets the octogenarian owner of the shop, that she begins to wonder if she might not only be able to help Hettie with her problems but at the same time knit a new future for herself in Tindledale. A former columnist for the London Paper, Brown launches a new cozy contemporary romantic series that is guaranteed to warm the heart of even the most die-hard scrooge as well as please readers, who loved the cheeky charm of Bridget Jones' Diary.

Dallas, Sandra. [A Quilt for Christmas](#) (St. Martin's \$12.99)

Christmas provides the opening and closing frame for this quietly moving historical novel as Eliza Spooner works on a quilt to send to her husband Will, who as the book opens has joined the Union Army. While praying and waiting for the day her husband will return home, Eliza must run their farm herself as well as take care of their two young children. With the help and support of the women who live on the neighboring farms as well as that of a recent war widow and her young child whom she takes into her home, Eliza struggles to survive the challenges presented by living in such turbulent times. If you missed this when it came out last year in hardcover, now is your chance to snap up a copy

in trade paperback. Dallas writes with a simple sense of grace and strength about the importance of friendship in women's lives as well as the tremendous sacrifices made by those women, who were left behind to keep things running smoothly at home while their men were away at war. Dallas has written some amazing historical women's fiction books, including one of my favorite's The Persian Pickle Club, which is set in the same part of Kansas during the Great Depression (as an added literary bonus some of the characters in A Quilt for Christmas are the grandmothers of the heroines in The Persian Pickle Club). This remarkable book that will be the December choice for the bookstore's new Hearts and Flowers Book Discussion Group (which meets on the second Saturday of the month at 12 PM).

Macomber, Debbie. [Dashing Through the Snow](#) (Ballantine \$18)

Trying to get home to see her mother for the holidays, graduate student Ashley Davison discovers her only option for getting to Seattle is to share the last available rental car with Dashiell Sutherland, who is going there for a job interview. Readers in the mood for a lightly humorous contemporary romance will find Macomber's latest sweet contemporary to be a wonderful choice for a little quiet reading during the holiday season.

Neggers, Carla. [A Knights Bridge Christmas](#) (Mira \$17.99)

In the latest installment in the author's popular Swift Valley series, a widowed Clare Morgan moves to the town of Knights Bridge with her young son Owen in the hopes that a new job and a new home will give them the fresh start in life they need. Boston E.R. doctor Logan Farrell only intends on staying in Knights Bridge long enough to help his grandmother settle into an assisted living home. But Logan's grandmother has a few plans of her own and one of them includes playing matchmaker between Clare and Logan. The book's wonderfully rendered New England setting adds to the charm of the heartwarming story.

Putney, Mary Jo. [Last Chance Christmas Ball](#) (Kensington \$15)

Holbourne Hall is a whirlwind of activity as

everyone both upstairs and downstairs at the estate prepares to celebrate the estate's traditional holiday ball, which has been held every Christmas for the last 50 years. Of course the ball's hostess, the matchmaking dowager Countess of Holbourne, has included some very special invitees on her guest list with every intention of seeing more than a few of these couples announce their betrothal before the New Year is rung in. Eight of the best Regency historical authors writing today including Putney, Mary Jo Beverley, Joanna Bourne, Nicola Cornick, Cara Elliott, Ann Gracie, Susan King, and Patricia Rice have each contributed her own novella to this collection, which is cleverly linked to the central plot point of a Christmas ball. This splendidly satisfying anthology is the perfect gift for any romance reader on your holiday gift list.