

Midmonth BookNotes

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New Year, New Reads

Bailey, Martine. [*A Taste for Nightshade*](#) (St Martins \$27.99)

At first, Grace Moore is thrilled when Michael Croxton asks her to marry him. But after Michael whisks her away to his family's isolated, run-down family estate in Lancashire, Grace soon discovers her new husband loves her more for her money than for herself. A lonely Grace turns to their new cook, Peg Blissett, for company without once realizing that "Peg" isn't the woman she purports to be, but is instead a thief, who has her own score to settle with Grace's husband. As with her first novel *An Appetite for Violets*, the real recipes from the early nineteenth century that open each chapter in Bailey's latest novel gives the story a nice touch of period flavor, but it is the author's flair for creating realistically flawed characters that will really hook you into the story. This is impeccably crafted historical fiction with a strong thread of suspense and a nice dash of gothic atmosphere.

Brackston, P J. [*The Case of the Fickle Mermaid*](#) (Norton \$25.95)

In the third of Brackston's "A Brother Grimm" mysteries, private investigator Gretel (yes, that Gretel) is hired by the captain of ship Arabella to investigate the mysterious disappearance of two of his crew members. The rest of the crew is convinced the men were lured to their deaths by a mermaid, and the captain wants Gretel to nip that theory in the bud fast. After accepting the job Gretel envisions two weeks of fine dining and sophisticated company while she enjoys a free cruise around the Friesian islands, but the

reality of her new sleuthing assignment isn't exactly quite what Gretel pictured. Brackston's fairy tale inspired mysteries are just plain fun. The author has a wickedly sly sense of humor as well as a deft touch with characterization, and the end result is another genre-blended detective story that is perfect for fans of Jasper Fforde's "Nursery Crime" series or Maia Chance's new "Fairy Tale Fatal" historical mystery series.

Cabot, Meg. [*Remembrance*](#) (Harper \$15.99)

You can take the boy out of the darkness. But you can't take the darkness out of the boy. All Susannah Simon wants is to make a good impression at her first job since graduating from college. But when she is hired as a guidance counselor at her alma mater, she stumbles across a decades-old murder, and soon ancient history isn't the only thing coming back to haunt Susannah. The first six in Cabot's "Mediator" series were published as YA titles, but with *Remembrance* (the 7th featuring ghost whisperer Suze Simon), the series moves into women's fiction as ghost whisperer Suze preps for her first adult job and her upcoming marriage all while trying to deal with another NCDP (noncompliant dead person). Cabot will be making a rare Arizona appearance for the launch of her latest book and will be at the Scottsdale Civic Center Library on Tuesday February 9th at 7 PM. *Remembrance* can be ordered in advance of the event or copies will also be available for sale that evening. The book signing following will be by ticket only, and you get your signing ticket by purchasing a copy of Meg's new book from the Poisoned Pen. If you

have never heard Meg speak, you are in for a treat since she is absolutely as funny in person as she is on the written page.

Caldwell, Laura. [Dog Park Signed](#) (Harlequin \$7.99)

When her beloved dog Baxter rescues a child and the video footage goes viral, stylist and dogwear designer Jessica Champlin is thrust into the spotlight where everyone is watching, including the press, the new guy she is seeing and her ex-husband.

Cattrell, Baile. [Daisies for Innocence](#) (Berkley \$7.99)

After divorcing her cheating husband, Elliana "Ellie" Allbright fashions new life for herself in the small California town of Poppyville as the owner of Scents and Nonsense, a custom-made perfume shop. But when her part-time assistant Josie announces that she is now dating Ellie's ex, Ellie smells trouble. Then when Josie winds up dead in the Enchanted Garden behind her store, Ellie must sniff through a myriad of clues to find the killer. I found this to be a completely charming start to a new series. The information about aromatherapy and floral botany was fascinating. If you enjoy the herbal stuff in Susan Wittig Albert's "China Bayles" books, you may want to give this a try. Cattrell is also the author of the "Magical Bakery" series.

Cox, Susan. [The Man on the Washing Machine](#) (St Martins \$25.99)

Former party girl Theophania Bogart is hiding in San Francisco to escape a family scandal, but her carefully-constructed new life is threatened when she sees Tim Callahan fall from a window. The police don't believe his death was an accident, and they seem to think Theo had sufficient motive to wish him dead. And when Theo's friend and business partner is also murdered mere days later, the police start digging even deeper into the secrets Theo's been running from. Theo soon realizes the only way to prove her innocence will be to find the real killer herself. Barbara referenced this title in one of the earlier Book News, and let's just say it was really her literary cup of tea (to put it mildly). But I enjoyed this debut mystery, which won the Minotaur Books/Mystery Writers

of America First Crime Novel award. I liked the author's acerbic sense of humor and found it to be a fun (if light) read.

Donnelly, Jennifer. [These Shallow Graves](#) (Random \$19.99)

In 1890s New York, Jo Montfort dreams of one day becoming a famous journalist like Nellie Bly even though she knows it is more likely that she will be married off by her parents to a suitable young man and spend the rest of her days as a devoted wife and mother. However, when Jo's father is found dead apparently by his own hands, Jo decides to investigate. With some help from handsome reporter Eddie Gallagher, Jo looks into her father's mysterious death only to find some answers that will change her future – and her world – forever. Donnelly is the author of several historical novels (including one of my all-time favorites Tea Rose) and YA books (including Northern Lights, which was named one of the 100 best YA books of all time by Time magazine), and her latest book with its superb blend of history, mystery, and romance works equally well for both YA and adult readers. Think of Jo as a younger version of Tasha Alexander's heroine Lady Emily Hargreaves or if you enjoy Victoria Thompson's "Gaslight" series, you will also enjoy the wonderfully wrought setting of Donnelly's book.

Dunn, Suzannah. [Lady of Misrule](#) (Pegasus \$25.95)

At the time, Elizabeth Tilney thought keeping Lady Jane Grey company in the Tower of London would be a good idea. Even though the two sixteen-year-olds could not be more different in temperament or religious beliefs, Elizabeth reasons that once the new queen Elizabeth is crowned, Lady Jane will be set free. And to be perfectly honest having some time away from her own family is more than enough reason for Elizabeth to accept the commission. However, as the days stretch into weeks that turn into months of imprisonment, Elizabeth not only begins to reconsider the wisdom of her plan, she finds herself slowly being drawn into the fractious lives of Jane and her new husband Guildford Dudley, who is being held prisoner in a neighboring tower. The leisurely pacing of the plot, insular setting, and the occasional use of modern language

might put some readers off Dunn's latest historical novel, but if you enjoy Elizabethan-set historical novels like those by Hilary Mantel or want a different view of the Nine Days Queen this may be right up your alley.

Frampton, Megan. [One Eyed Dukes Are Wild](#) (Harper \$7.99)

The scandalously unmarried Lady Margaret Sawford is looking for adventure—and is always up for a challenge. Her curiosity is aroused by a dangerous-looking stranger with an eye patch, an ideal companion for the life she longs for, no matter what Society might say. So when the piratical gentleman turns out to be a duke—and just as boringly proper as any other nobleman—she can't help but incite him to walk on the wild side. Frampton is relatively new to the romance genre, but I love her sense of wit and how she cleverly turns the conventional good girl/bad boy romance trope on its head in this sexy love story.

Higgins, Kristan. [Anything for You](#) (Harlequin \$7.99)

Connor O'Rourke has been waiting ten years to propose to the love of his life: Jessica Dunn. But now the time to get married seems perfect since Connor's restaurant is thriving, and Jessica has landed her dream job at Blue Heron Vineyards. However, when Connor gets down on bended knee and proposes to Jessica, he stunned when she replies "thanks but no thanks." Jessica would rather continue on with things exactly the way they are. After all, if it isn't broke, why fix it? Okay then. If Jessica doesn't want to marry him, Connor will just find someone who does. Which is easier said than done since Jessica is the only woman Connor has ever loved. With her usual spot-on sense of humor, Higgins skillfully navigates the messy emotional minefields of modern day romances in her latest emotionally satisfying, sweetly, sexy, and completely swoon-worthy love story.

Hilton, Kate. [The Hole in the Middle](#) (Penguin \$15)

In a single day, Sophie Whelan can host a vegan-friendly and lactose-free dinner for ten, thwart a PTA president intent on forcing her to

volunteer, and outwit her hostile 'assistant' in order to get her work done on time. However, with her fortieth birthday looming, and her carefully coordinated existence beginning to come apart at the seams, Sophie begins feeling like she needs more from her life—and especially from her husband, Jesse. The last thing Sophie needs is a new complication in her life. But when an opportunity from her past suddenly reappears, Sophie is forced to confront the choices she's made and decide if her chaotic life is really a dream come true—or the biggest mistake she's ever made... Hilton's debut women's fiction novel is very much in the literary vein of Allison Pearson's *I Don't Know How She Does It*, and it is humorous and heart-felt look at how overwhelmed modern woman can feel at times as they try to juggle all the different priorities in their lives.

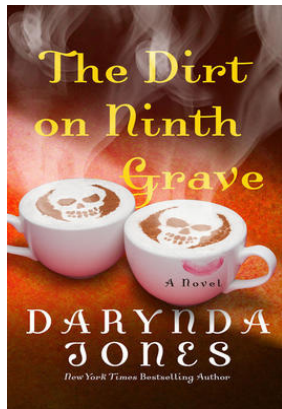
James, Eloisa. [My American Duchess](#) (Harper \$7.99)

American heiress Merry Pelford has a reputation (no, not that kind of reputation). Merry has already jilted two fiancés, and word is getting around that Merry is nothing if not fickle in her affections. Merry is currently engaged to the perfectly charming Lord Cedric Allardyce, and she is determined that this time, she is going to see things through to for better or for worse even if it kills her. However, when Merry meets a tall, dark, and handsome stranger at a ball one evening, she finds herself weakening. What Merry doesn't know yet is that the man who piques her romantic interest is none other than the Duke of Trent, Cedric's twin brother! James' elegantly written yet completely fun historical romances are always a treat.

Jensen, Jane. [Kingdom Come: An Elizabeth Harris Mystery](#) (Berkley \$15)

After her husband is murdered, Detective Elizabeth Harris turns in her NYPD badge and moves back home, hoping that a quiet life in remote Pennsylvania Dutch country will help her overcome the dark memories of her ten years in New York. But when a beautiful, scantily clad "English" girl is found dead in the barn of a prominent Amish family, Elizabeth knows that she's uncovered an evil that could shake the community to its core. *Kingdom Come* is the first

in a new procedural series from SF writer Jensen. Don't let the bucolic setting of the book fool you, however. The author isn't afraid to employ a generous measure of realistic grit as she explores the fascinating world of the Amish as well as a dark secret that haunts the community.



Jones, Darynda. [The Dirt on Ninth Grave](#)

(St. Martin's \$26.99)

Currently living in New York City as Jane Doe, Charley Davidson has no memory of her past as the Grim Reaper. So, of course when Charley begins seeing dead people, it kinda freaks her out just a little bit. What is

even more frightening is the man who walks into the diner where she works one day and informs Charley that he has been sent by the darkest force in the universe to kill her. Fortunately for Charley, the diner's hot-as-sin fry cook is more than willing to protect her... The latest in Jones' award-winning Charley Davidson series is an addictive combination of sexy romance, danger-infused fantasy, and just the right dash of smart-alecky humor. Signed copies while they last.

Krentz, Jayne A. [Trust No One](#) (\$7.99)

It's no coincidence when Grace Elland finds a vodka bottle next to the lifeless body of her boss, motivational speaker Sprague Witherspoon. The bottle is a terrifying and deliberate reminder of the horrors of her past. Grace retreats to her hometown to regroup and tries to put everything she's learned about positive thinking into practice a process that is seriously challenged on the world's worst blind date. Awkward doesn't begin to describe her evening with venture-capitalist Julius Arkwright. She has nothing in common with a man who lives to make money, but the intense former Marine does have some skills that Grace can use and he's the perfect man to help her when it becomes clear she is being stalked.

Lane, Kelly. [One Foot in the Grove](#) (Berkley \$7.99)

After leaving a man at the altar for the second time in her life, Eva Knox decides to head home to her

family's plantation to regroup and soak in some Southern charm. But hiding from her woes is a slipperier proposition than Eva imagined. For one thing, most people in town still haven't forgiven her for leaving local boy Buck Tanner at the altar and high-tailing it up north eighteen years ago. For another, a death on her family's farm soon makes her the lead suspect in a murder case—and the sheriff investigating is none other than Eva's old flame Buck. If you like your cozy mysteries brimming with quirky characters, some yummy Southern recipes, and a dollop of romance, you will gobble up this delightful debut.

Lee, Janice Y K. [The Expatriates](#) (Viking \$27)

Lee is the author of the best-selling *The Piano Teacher*, which sold more than 400,000 copies. Now she explores the lives of three different women living in the expat community in Hong Kong. Mercy, a Korean-American and recent graduate of Columbia is struggling with a horrible incident in her past. Wealthy housewife Hilary is desperate to get pregnant in the hopes it will save her marriage. And Margaret is trying to redefine her life outside simply being someone's wife and mother. This is superior, character-driven literary fiction for those who can't get enough Oprah Book Club picks.

March, Lucy. [For Love Or Magic](#) (St Martin's \$7.99)

After her cheating husband dies, leaving her with his girlfriend's bullmastiff, a mountain of debt and a small house in Nodaway Falls, Elliot Parker starts a new life in this not-so typical town that forces her to confront the magic within her and around her. If you enjoy paranormal romances written with a light touch and seasoned with a nice dash of tart wit, you will definitely want to give March's books a try.

Robson, Jennifer. [Moonlight Over Paris](#) (\$15.99)

It's the spring of 1924, and Lady Helena Montagu-Douglas-Parr has just arrived in France. On the mend after a near-fatal illness, she is ready to embrace the restless, heady allure of the City of Lights. Her parents have given her one year to

live with her eccentric aunt in Paris and Helena means to make the most of her time. She's quickly drawn into the world of the Lost Generation and its circle of American expatriates, and with their encouragement, she finds the courage to pursue her dream of becoming an artist. One of those expats is Sam Howard, a journalist working for the Chicago Tribune. Irascible, plain-spoken, and scarred by his experiences during the war, Sam is simply the most fascinating man she has ever met. He's also entirely unsuitable. If you enjoy your historical fiction served up with a dollop of romance like Deanna Raybourn's *City of Jasmine* or Lauren Willig's *The Other Daughter*, Robson's books are an absolute treasure.

Solomons, Natasha. [The Song of Hartgrove Hall](#) (Penguin \$16)

When the men of the Fox-Talbot family return from World War II, Hartgrove Hall is in near ruins. The three brothers are determined to save their beloved home, and eighteen-year-old Harry hopes to save its spirit by collecting the long-forgotten songs of their land. But the arrival of Jack's beautiful fiancé, wartime singer Edie Rose, tangles the threads of brotherly love when Harry falls for her. Five decades later Harry forms a bond with his impetuous four-year-old grandson and embarks on a journey back from grief after losing his wife, Edie. Interweaving past and present, here is a moving novel about a man deeply connected through music to the woman he adores. If you are fascinated by the upstairs/downstairs world of *Downton Abbey*, you will definitely want to add Solomons' books to your reading list.

Starck, Lindsay. [Noah's Wife](#) (Putnam \$27)

The rain just won't stop! The heroine in Starck's novel moves to an isolated coastal town with her husband Noah, who is to be the new minister for the town's church. Despite the warnings of the town's weatherman to get out while they still can, a few residents stubbornly remain. When the town's zoo floods, these residents, along with Noah, who is undergoing his own crisis of faith, and his wife, come together to save the animals and find them new homes. Starck has a flair for characterization and the idea of updating this Biblical tale is intriguing even if the plot for me

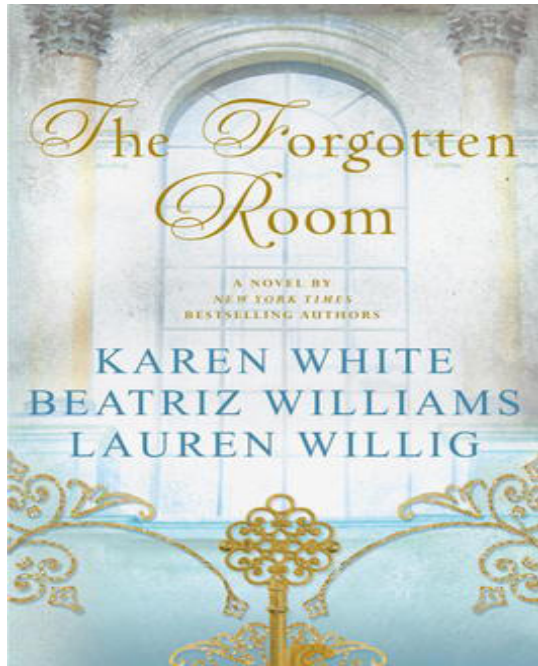
moved at a leisurely (some might say snail's) pace.

Tremel, Joyce. [To Brew Or Not to Brew](#) (Berkley \$7.99)

The Allegheny Brew House is a dream come true for Maxine "Max" O'Hara, who went all the way to Germany for her brew master certification, and is now preparing to open her own craft brew pub in a newly revitalized section of Pittsburgh. However, before her new business is even open to the public, there's trouble brewing. Suspicious acts of sabotage culminate in Max finding her assistant brew master and chef Kurt Schmidt strangled in one of the vats. I loved the Pittsburgh setting for this new series start, the characters were engaging, and the details about craft beer brewing were nicely worked into the story.

Weiner, Jennifer. [Best Friends Forever](#) (\$7.99)

Addie Downs and Valerie Adler will be best friends forever. That's what Addie believes after Valerie moves across the street when they're both nine years old. But in the wake of betrayal during their teenage years, Val is swept into the popular crowd, while mousy, sullen Addie becomes her school's scapegoat. Flash-forward fifteen years. Valerie Adler has found a measure of fame and fortune working as the weathergirl at the local TV station. Addie Downs lives alone in her parents' house in their small hometown of Pleasant Ridge, Illinois, caring for a troubled brother and trying to meet Prince Charming on the Internet. She's just returned from *Bad Date #6* when she opens her door to find her long-gone best friend standing there, a terrified look on her face and blood on the sleeve of her coat. "Something horrible has happened," Val tells Addie, "and you're the only one who can help." Weiner has a remarkable flair for exploring the complicated love/hate relationships women can have with one another.



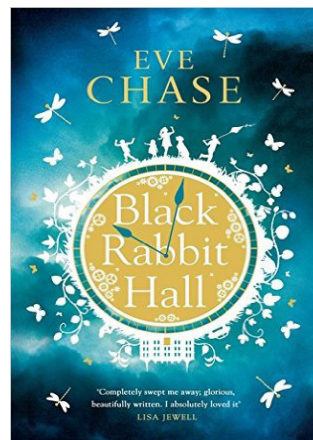
White, Karen. [The Forgotten Room](#) (Putnam \$25.95)

In 1892, Olive Van Alan arrives at the Pratt mansion on East Sixty-Ninth Street in New York City, as the household's newest maid, but Olive really has another much more personal reason for working for the Pratt family. In 1920, Lucy Young is thrilled when she is not only able to land a job working for the law offices of Cromwell, Polk, and Moore, but when she is also able to rent a room at Stornaway House, the women's boardinghouse now located in the old Pratt mansion. In 1944, Dr. Kate Schuyler will do anything she can to help critically wounded Captain Ravenel Cooper keep his leg when the American soldier is brought to Stornaway Hospital: the latest incarnation of the old Pratt mansion. But why does Ravenel have a small painting tucked in his bag of a woman, who looks exactly like Kate and who is wearing a ruby necklace like the one Kate's mother gave to her? With an impeccably evoked sense of history, a generous soupcon of mesmerizing mystery, and just the right dash of soul-satisfying romance, a talented trio of New York Times best-selling authors team up to create a spellbinding tale about three different women and one unforgettable mansion that is guaranteed to not only please the readers of each individual author but will also create a whole new audience for these superbly gifted writers.

Yarbro, Chelsea Quinn. [Haunting Investigation Signed](#) (Smoke & Shadow \$19.99) Spring 1924. The world has clawed its way back from the ravages of WWI and the Spanish Flu pandemic. The 20's are beginning to roar. Poppy Thornton lives with her Aunt Jo and her excitable cat Maestro in upper-crust Philadelphia. Poppy is determined to make a name for herself as a serious crime reporter, but is stuck reporting on garden parties and ladies' fashion. Then one day her editor assigns her to collect background information on the suicide of a prominent businessman. She soon discovers it was actually a murder... but her surprising source for this information is the ghost of a man killed alongside her father during the Great War. Signed copies while they last!

The Suspense is Killing Me

Ever since Gillian Flynn's novel *Gone Girl* hit the best-seller lists (and then appeared in a movie theater near you) and Paula Hawke's *Girl on a Train* (fueled by unprecedented word-of-mouth recommendations) turned into another surprise hit, the suspense genre has been the literary flavor du jour with readers, who are now desperate to find their next adrenaline fix. Who knows, perhaps one of the titles listed below might just become your next can't-put-it-down, stay-up-all-night read?



Chase, Eve. [Black Rabbit Hall](#) (Putnam \$27.95)

Amber Alton knows that the hours pass differently at Black Rabbit Hall, her London family's country estate, where no two clocks read the same. Summers there are perfect, timeless. Not much ever happens. Until, of course, it does. More than

three decades later, Lorna Dun and her fiancé Jon are searching for a place to hold their upcoming wedding. Once Lorna sees the ramshackle yet still grand, ivy-covered walls of Pencraw Hall (known to the locals as Black Rabbit Hall), she knows she has found the perfect spot. When the

owner of Pencraw Hall, Caroline Alton, invites Lorna to stay with her before the wedding in order to seal the deal, Lorna can't resist. But as Lorna explores the nooks and crannies of Black Rabbit Hall, half-buried memories of her mother begin to surface and Lorna soon finds herself ensnared within the manor's labyrinthine history, overcome with an insatiable need for answers about her own past and that of the once-happy family whose memory still haunts the estate. This debut by British journalist Chase is an absolute knockout. Chase's elegantly subtle writing style has echoes of Daphne Du Maurier, and readers will definitely see a resemblance between Black Rabbit Hall and Manderley. This is a spellbinding novel in the best sense brimming over with secrets, suspense, and suspicious characters. If you miss those wonderful old gothic novels that Susan Howatch, Dorothy Eden, and Mary Stewart used to write or if Kate Morton is one of your new must-read authors, don't miss this splendidly written book.

Dean, Averil. [Undoing](#) (Mira \$15.99)
Dean's second twisted novel opens with former Olympic downhill skier Julian Moss reading a note that says "I know what you did." Minutes later, Julian throws himself off the top of a mountain in Jawbone Ridge, Colorado. The novel then proceeds in reverse chronological order (a la the movie Memento) to tell story of Julian, his former lover Kate Vaughn, and their friends Celia Dark, her step-brother Rory McFarland, and Eric Dillon, whose lives fatally implode one day at the old Blackbird Hotel in Jawbone Ridge. Five years earlier, Celia, Rory, and Eric decided to live Celia's childhood dream by restoring the Blackbird Hotel together. Then one day Julian returns to the Blackbird Hotel to find all three of his friends shot to death. But who killed whom? And why did Kate convince her father to buy the hotel for her now so that she can run it? Love, friendship, jealousy, obsession, and sex (described quite graphically) all play important roles in the plot of this dark, intense suspense novel that does have a rather nifty final plot twist even if some readers might feel the need for a Silkwood scrub down afterwards.

Goodman, Carol. [River Road](#) (Touchstone \$25)

Late one snowy night, creative writing professor Nan Lewis leaves a Christmas party after imbibing in a few drinks. On the way home, she hits a deer. The next day Nan learns that her favorite student Leia Dawson was killed in the same spot in a hit-and-run accident. (Where coincidentally Nan's young daughter was also killed). The police target Nan as their initial suspect, but Nan knows she is innocent. As Nan tries to find the real killer, she learns everyone around her is keeping a secret or two. Hammett award-winning Goodman is the author of some terrific suspense novels (my own favorite of hers is *The Drowning Tree*), and her latest is a refined thriller with a marvelously realized academic setting and a plot packed with unexpected twists and turns.

MacMillan, Gill. [What She Knew](#) (Harper \$15.99)

Who can you really trust? That is the question that haunts Rachel Jenner after tragedy strikes and her young son Ben goes missing. Rachel blames herself for letting Ben run ahead of her on the way to the playground, but she never imagined that he could simply vanish. Detective Inspector Jim Clemo and his team begin searching immediately, but they can't seem to find any clues as to how Ben disappeared even though they interview everyone involved. While Rachel gradually begins to wonder if someone close to her might be keeping a secret that could help her find her son, she finds herself cast in the role of villain as some members of the public take to different social media platforms to air their own "theories" about the case. MacMillan's debut (reminiscent in some ways of Mary Higgins Clark's edgy, early suspense novels) is a real nail-biter of a book, and the author is especially skilled at illustrating how social media today can be used for both good and bad.

Marinovich, Matt. [The Winter Girl](#) (Doubleday \$24.95)

Newly married Brooklynites Scott and Elise have come to the Hamptons to be near her father, who is slowly dying. While Elise is at the hospital, a bored out of his mind Scott remains at home

pretending to work. One day Scott notices that every night precisely at eleven, the lights in their neighbor's bedroom turn off. Of course, the simple explanation is that the lights are on a timer since the owners are away, but Scott becomes obsessed. It isn't long before Scott decides to break into the house, and the jolt of adrenaline he experiences becomes addictive. Scott soon convinces Elise to join him in attempt to reignite the passion in their trouble marriage. But when the two discover some unexplained bloodstains in the bedroom, the couple's little "adventure" takes a scary turn. We are in Gillian Flynn territory here with this dark psychological suspense novel that is rife with troubling family secrets.

Montes, Raphael. [Perfect Days](#) (Penguin \$25)

Medical student Teo Avelar knows that he and art history student and aspiring screen writer Clarice are fated to be together. Clarice just needs a bit of convincing, which is why Teo decides to "kidnap" Clarice and take her away with him just until she realizes Teo is the only man for her. Critically acclaimed Brazilian crime writer Montes makes his American debut with *Perfect Days*; an elegantly written suspense novel that is equal parts Patricia Highsmith and Stephen King but is definitely is not for the faint of heart. The plot of *Perfect Days* is full of dark twists, and its protagonist would certainly make a good BFF for either Dexter or Hannibal Lecter (though exactly how long their friendship might last is another matter entirely).

Tucker, KA. [He Will Be My Ruin](#) (Atria \$25)

The police are wrong. There is no way Maggie Sparkes will ever believe that her childhood best friend Celine Gonzalez committed suicide. Then while packing up Celine's belongings from her Lower East Side apartment, Maggie finds proof that she is right. Hidden away in secret compartment of a box, Maggie finds almost 10,000.00 in cash and an extremely revealing photograph of a sexy man. Written on the back of the photo in Celine's handwriting are the words "this man was once my salvation. Now he will be my ruin." When Maggie accidentally bumps into the same man – investment manager Jace Everett - in the

photograph at the building where Celine used to work, she knows he is somehow connected to her friend's death, and she vows to get closer to Jace in order to find out what he knows no matter what the cost may be to her. Tucker, author of the best-selling "Burying Water" series, makes her hardcover debut with this thrilling, sexy romantic suspense novel that will definitely appeal to fans of Sandra Brown, Kate White, and Nora Roberts. I found it to be a wonderfully entertaining escapist read.

World War II Novels and Nonfiction

Chamberlain, Mary. [The Dressmakers' War](#) (Random \$27)

Ada Vaughn had always dreamed of one day opening her own couture house. So when Austrian Count Stanislaus von Lieben sweet talks her into accompanying him to Paris, Ada thinks she is about to get her big chance. However, once the war in Europe breaks out, Stanislaus abandons a now pregnant Ada in Belgium leaving her to fend for herself. At first Ada disguises herself as a nun, but when she is taken prisoner by the Nazis, Ada survives by sewing dresses for the officers' wives at Dachau. As evidenced by the popularity of Anthony Doerr's *All the Light We Cannot See* and Kristin Hannah's *The Nightingale*, World War II is once again in vogue for historical novels, and Chamberlain's book is getting a lot of critical buzz. But be forewarned, this historical novel is even darker and grimmer than those titles.

Grant, Michael. [Front Lines](#) (Katherine Tegen \$18.99)

In this alternate historical novel, a lawsuit in 1940 leads the courts to declare that women can join the Armed Forces in the United States and fight in combat. The book features three different protagonists: California farmer's daughter Rio Richlin, African-American Frankie Marr, and Jewish Rainy Schulterman, each of whom enlists for her own reason. Grant doesn't stint on the grit and gumption each of the teenagers will need to get through basic training as well as the

sexism they must face (and in the case of Frankie and Rainey also the racism and anti-Semitism, which extends to the offensive – though historically accurate – slurs they must endure). A gritty, intriguing, and slightly different alternate take on World War II.

Taylor, Frederick. [Coventry: November 14, 1940](#) (Bloomsbury \$30)

November 14, 2015 marked the 75th anniversary of the German Luftwaffe bombing of the British city of Coventry, in which more than 500 Nazi planes used high-explosive bombs and incendiary devices to destroy the provincial city including its famous cathedral. Taylor explains exactly how the Germans were able to do this by using a radio beam code named Knickerbein, which allowed the German pilots to hit their targets within one hundred feet even at night. While larger cities were destroyed during the war and more lives were lost in other raids, the sheer level of destruction is what made Coventry an important symbol for both the English and the Germans. Taylor, who has also written about the destruction of Dresden by the Allied forces, sorts out the myths about the bombing (the British government sacrificed the city to keep the Germans from learning they had cracked their code) from the facts (a shortage of money meant the city was less prepared for an aerial attack than it should have been) in a thrilling book that will draw both armchair World War II history enthusiasts and scholars of the war alike.

More New Nonfiction

Corton, Christine L. [London Fog: The Biography](#) (Belknap \$35)

Whistler and Monet painted them. Margery Allingham and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle employed them as atmospheric settings in their plots. London's famous fogs – or "pea-soupers" as they became known – have been a source of inspiration for artists, writers, and film-makers ever since the nineteenth century. Corton's beautifully illustrated book delves into the history of this meteorological phenomenon that really originated much earlier than the Victorian era. In 1817, one of the fogs blanketed the city lasting from December 22 until January 2nd of the next year,

forcing residents to have to light candles and oil lamps all day long just to see indoors. Government legislation in the 1960s finally attempted to deal with the toxic effects of the fogs, but their place in London's history was firmly entrenched as Corton demonstrates in this fascinating look at a weather effect that defined a city.

Diamond, Becky. [The Thousand Dollar Dinner](#) (WestXXX \$26)

In 1851, fifteen wealthy New Yorkers took a group of Philadelphia friends to Delmonico's in order to show them what "fine dining" really meant. Money was no object, and the New Yorkers told the owner of Delmonico's to "astonish" their Quaker friends. The lavish banquet was enjoyed by all, but the Philadelphia men were not about to be outdone. They, in turn, invited the New Yorkers to come to their city, where chef James W. Parkinson, would prepare a feast that would put dinner at Delmonico's to shame. That meal became known as "The Thousand Dollar Dinner." Diamond, a journalist and historian, dissects the dinner course by course providing not only a history of that amazing event but also a lively look at the class mores, cultural habits, and food preferences of Gilded Age Americans.

Graham, Ian. [Scarlet Women](#) (St Martins \$26.99)

Courtesans were an elite group of talented, professional mistresses. The most successful became wealthy and famous in their own right. While they led charmed lives, they occupied a curious position: they enjoyed freedom and political power unknown to most women, but they were ostracized by polite society. Graham's book explores the colorful fates and remarkable fortunes of these fascinating women from the hetairai of ancient Greece to the cortigiani onesti of 16th century Venice, the oiran of Edo-period Japan to the demimondaines of 19th century France. Included among the women profiled are Marie Duplessis (the original La Dame aux Camellias), Madame de Pompadour, and Cixi (the dowager Empress of China).

Hayes, Paddy. [Queen of Spies: Daphne Park](#) (Overlook \$29.95)

Hayes relates the story of the British Secret

Service (SIS) from World War II to the Cold War through the biography of Daphne Park, Baroness Park of Monmouth (1921-2010), one of England's greatest spies. Raised in Africa by British parents, Park was sent to be schooled in England and eventually went to Oxford. In 1943, Park left Oxford to join the Special Operations Executive. After the war, she eventually landed a spot in the SIS, and served around the globe in different spots including Russia, Africa, and Vietnam. Park was a fascinating woman, who helped crack the old-boy school of spying that was the norm before World War II, and her own life story reads like a first-class espionage thriller.