

# Midmonth BookNotes

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## L'Amour. Tourjours, L'Amour.

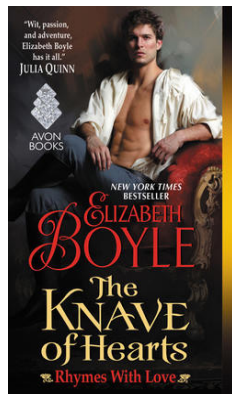
*Bowen, Kelly.* [Duke of My Heart](#) (Grand Central \$5.99)

When he finds a naked—and very much dead—earl tied to his missing sister's bed, Captain Maximus Harcourt turns to Miss Ivory Moore, who is known throughout London for smoothing over scandals, for help and is drawn to this fearless woman who takes charge of the situation—and his heart. Bowen is one of the new stars of historical romance.

*Boyle, Elizabeth.* [Knave of Hearts](#) (Harper \$7.99)

Miss Lavinia Tempest won't dance, so don't ask her.

Lavinia has come to London with one objective in mind: find a husband. In order to achieve her goal, Lavinia knows she mustn't give into temptation and dance, since every time in the past, when she has tripped the light fantastic in public, social disaster has followed in her wake. However, when Alister "Tuck" Rowland asks Lavinia for a waltz, she somehow finds herself unexpectedly accepting his offer. At first everything seems to be going splendidly as the two twirl around the dance floor in perfect synchronicity until someone calls Tuck's name, and he abandons her on the dance floor. Of course, all hell immediately breaks loose and Lavinia once again finds herself a social outcast. Now Tuck wants to make things up



to Lavinia by making her the toast of the ton, but can Lavinia really trust the knave? The Knave of Hearts is the latest in Boyle's nursery rhyme inspired series of Regency-set historical romances, and it is one of her best yet. If you enjoy Eloisa James' or Julia Quinn's books but haven't yet discovered Elizabeth Boyle's romances you are in for a treat.

*Dare, Tessa.* [Lord Dashwood Missed Out](#) (Harper \$3.99)

Miss Elinora Browning grew up yearning for the handsome, intelligent lord-next-door...but he left England without a word of farewell. One night, inspired by a bit too much sherry, Nora poured out her heartbreak on paper. Lord Dashwood Missed Out was a love letter to every young lady who'd been overlooked by gentlemen—and an instant bestseller. Now she's on her way to speak in Spindle Cove when snowy weather delays her coach. She's forced to wait out the storm with the worst possible companion: Lord Dashwood himself. And he finally seems to have noticed her. Dare's historical romances are always a lot of fun.

*Francesc, Miralles.* [Love in Lowercase](#) (Penguin \$16)

When Samuel de Juan, a lonely linguistics lecturer, wakes up on New Year's Day, he is convinced that the year ahead will bring nothing more than passive verbs and un-italicized moments—until an unexpected visitor slips into his Barcelona apartment and refuses to leave. The appearance

of Mishima, a stray, brindle-furred cat, leads Samuel from the comforts of his favorite books, foreign films, and classical music to places he's never been (next door) and to people he might never have met (his neighbor Titus, with whom he's never exchanged a word). Even better, Mishima leads him back to the mysterious Gabriela, whom he thought he'd lost long before. A best-seller in Spain, *Love in Lowercase* is an endearing, philosophical tale of love, friendship, and literature much in the style of Nina George's charming *The Little Paris Bookshop*.

*Gray, Shelley S. [A Son's Vow](#)* (Harper \$12.99)

Three months ago, everything changed for Darla Kurtz and her family. Darla's father was responsible for a terrible fire at Charm's lumber mill which killed five Amish men. And though he, too, lost his life, the town of Charm hasn't looked at her family the same since. Even Lukas Kinsinger—with whom Darla used to have a close friendship. Lukas Kinsinger wants to mourn the loss of his father, but he can hardly find the time to breathe. Suddenly the head of his father's lumber mill and responsible for taking care of his three siblings, he's feeling the pressure. He has also never felt more alone—especially with the new tension between he and Darla. But when he learns of her troubles at home, Lukas knows he can't simply stand by and watch. Someone has to help her before another tragedy occurs. This is the first book in Gray's new "Charmed Amish Life" series set in the village of Charm, Ohio, and it is a sweet romance that also gracefully explores the important role of forgiveness in one's life.

*Hepworth, Sally. [Things We Keep](#)* (St Martins \$25.99)

Anna Forster is only thirty-eight yet she is suffering from the early stages of Alzheimer's disease. All of the other residents at Rosalind House are at least twice her age except Luke. As the two get to know each other better, friendship blossoms into love, but almost everyone at Rosalind House except the facility's new cook/housecleaner Eve Bennett doesn't think it is good for Anna and Luke to be together. Now the question becomes how far will Eve go and how much will she risk

to help Anna and Luke? "Falling in love requires memory, communication, reason, decision making. It's very unlikely that people with dementia have these capabilities." This is a quote from one of the characters in Hepworth's remarkable new novel about the residents of Rosalind House, and it becomes the underlying theme that the author expertly weaves throughout this emotionally wrenching novel as she explores whether this really is true or not. I wasn't a big fan of Hepworth's debut novel *The Secrets of Midwives* (too much midwifery details for me), but I was totally sucked into this poignant and powerful book. Is *The Things We Keep* a tear-jerker? You betcha! But in the best possible way as this remarkable story makes you really think about the power of love as well as the importance of human connections in our lives.

*Jenkins, Beverly. [Forbidden](#)* (Harper \$7.99)

Rhine Fontaine is building the successful life he's always dreamed of—one that depends upon him passing for White. But for the first time in years, he wishes he could step out from behind the façade. The reason: Eddy Carmichael, the young woman he rescued in the desert. Outspoken, defiant, and beautiful, Eddy tempts Rhine in ways that could cost him everything, and the price seems worth paying. Eddy owes her life to Rhine, but she won't risk her heart for him. As soon as she's saved enough money from her cooking, she'll leave this Nevada town and move to California. No matter how handsome he is, no matter how fiery the heat between them, Rhine will never be hers. Giving in for just one night might quench this longing. Or it might ignite an affair as reckless and irresistible as it is forbidden . . . This is the first in a new, impeccably researched trilogy from Jenkins, and it offers a fascinating look at the role African-Americans played in the history of the West.

*Lowell, Elizabeth. [Perfect Touch](#)* (Harper \$7.99)

When Jay Vermillion hires art dealer Sara Medina to look at his late father's paintings, a mutually inconvenient attraction is complicated by a double murder and Sara being targeted by the killer. Lowell lives in the West herself so it isn't

surprising that she can write so convincingly about the spare beauty of the landscape and the rugged way of life.

*Macalister, Kat. [The Importance of Being Alice](#)* (NAL \$7.99)

After her fiancé Patrick calls off their wedding only days before their nonrefundable honeymoon, Alice Wood decides to take the luxurious European river cruise by herself until a strange mix-up puts her in a cabin with an uptight British aristocrat who is none too happy about the arrangement. MacAlister is known for her distinctive (some might say zany) sense of humor, so if you like your love stories liberally laced with laughs, she is just the ticket.

*Macomber, Debbie. [Girl's Guide to Moving On](#)* (Ballantine \$26)

A former mother-in-law and her daughter-in-law become unlikely new friends when both of them must deal with cheating husbands in Macomber's latest sweet romance. When Nichole discovers that her husband, Jake, has been unfaithful, the illusion of her perfect life is indelibly shattered. While juggling her young son, a new job, and volunteer work, Nichole meets Rocco, who is the opposite of Jake in nearly every way. Though blunt-spoken and rough around the edges, Rocco proves to be a dedicated father and thoughtful friend. But just as their relationship begins to blossom, Jake wagers everything on winning Nichole back--including their son Owen's happiness. Leanne has quietly ignored her husband's cheating for decades, but is jolted into action by the echo of Nichole's all-too-familiar crisis. While volunteering as a teacher of English as a second language, Leanne meets Nikolai, a charming, talented baker from Ukraine. Resolved to avoid the heartache and complications of romantic entanglements, Leanne nonetheless finds it difficult to resist Nikolai's effusive overtures--until an unexpected tragedy tests the very fabric of her commitments.

*Rodale, Maya. [Lady Bridget's Diary](#)* (Harper \$7.99)

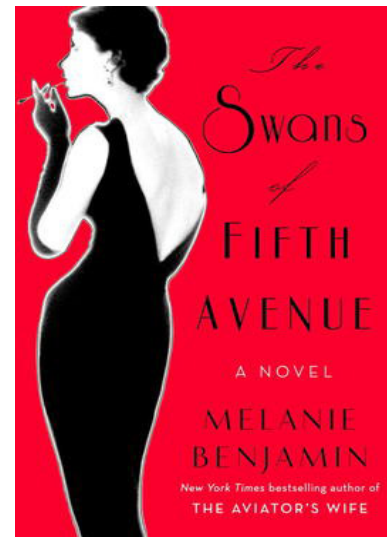
When American James Cavendish discovers he

is now the Duke of Durham, he and his three sisters – Amelia, Bridget, and Claire – pack their trunks and head for England. Bridget plans on taking the haute ton by storm, and she faithfully records every one of her attempts to assimilate into London society in her diary. But when her diary disappears, Bridget fears that all of the scandalous secrets - including her disdain for the Dreadful Lord Darcy - she confided in its pages might now be available for public consumption. Rodale puts her own unique twist on the classic novel Bridget Jones's Diary by transplanting the action back to Regency England in this laughter-laced romance.

## *Novels and Mysteries*

*Alcott, Kate. [Touch of Stardust](#)* (Anchor \$15)

Taking a job at the studio where David O. Selznick is filming "Gone with the Wind," Julie Crawford becomes an assistant to Carole Lombard, a rising actress from Julie's hometown who embarks on a scandalous affair with Clark Gable.



*Benjamin, Melanie. [The Swans of Fifth Avenue](#)* (Bantam \$28)

Best-selling historical novelist Benjamin (The Aviator's Wife) bases her latest impeccably crafted book on the real-life spellbinding story of author Truman Capote and his friendship with Babe Paley and four other "Swans" of New York City. In the 1950s, rising literary star Capote forges friendships with wealthy socialites Babe Paley, Slim Keith, C.Z. Guest, Pamela Churchill,

and Gloria Guinness. Over three martini lunches at Le Cirque, swanky soirees in the Hamptons, and holidays in the Caribbean, the group bond over shared gossip and secrets as the woman bask in the growing literary limelight cast by Capote, who in turn, revels in the access to wealth and power his new friendships give him. But after the publication of *In Cold Blood*, Truman struggles with his writing while at the same time scrambling to maintain his place in society. When Capote's novella *La Cote Basque* 1965 is published in 1975 in *Esquire* magazine, it tears apart Capote and his "swans" since the author used the deepest, darkest secrets the women confided in him as the basis for the story. *The Swans of Fifth Avenue* is just plain fun. The story is filled with an abundance of gossip details about Capote and his work as well as the extravagant lifestyles of the Swans. Real historical figures like CBS President William S. Paley, Frank Sinatra, and Katherine Graham have wonderful cameo roles while events like Capote's infamous Black and White masquerade ball provide the glittering backdrop for an addictively readable novel that dishes the dirt with a deft touch.

*Binchy, Maeve. [Few of the Girls: Stories](#)* (Knopf \$26.95)

Fans of the late, great Irish writer will want to give this collection of 36 stories previously unpublished in the United States a look. The pieces range from fully polished short stories to others that are more in the sketched in stage, but all of them are imbued with Binchy's distinctive warm wit.

*Chance, Maia. [Beauty, Beast, and Belladonna](#)* (Berkley \$7.99)

Variety hall actress Ophelia Flax is beginning to think she made a mistake in accepting the Comte de Griffé's proposal of marriage. With his boorish table manners, his wild mane of hair, and his habit of prowling along the corridors of his chateau at night, the Comte can seem more beast than man at times. Just as Ophelia is poised to break up with the Comte, Ophelia's old investigative/romantic sparring partner Professor Gabriel Penrose, along with a stagecoach full of stranded travelers, turns up at the chateau. When the bloody, clawed body of one of the guests is found in the orangerie, Ophelia begins to wonder if her fiancé really is a beast.

The third in Chance's "Fairy Tale Fatal" series is written with a light touch and lots of acerbic wit.

*Chase, Eve. [Black Rabbit Hall](#)* (Putnam \$27)

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 superbly written book.

*Chee, Alexander. [Queen of the Night](#)* (Houghton \$28)

Lilliet Berne is a sensation of the Paris Opera, a legendary soprano with every accolade except an original role, every singer's chance at immortality. When one is finally offered to her, she realizes with alarm that the libretto is based on a hidden piece of her past. Only four could have betrayed her: one is dead, one loves her, one wants to own her. And one, she hopes, never thinks of her at all. As she mines her memories for clues, she

recalls her life as an orphan who left the American frontier for Europe and was swept up into the glitzy, gritty world of Second Empire Paris. In order to survive, she transformed herself from hippodrome rider to courtesan, from empress's maid to debut singer, all the while weaving a complicated web of romance, obligation, and political intrigue. Chee based his heroine on the opera singer Jenny Lind known as the "Swedish Nightingale," and the plot of *Queen of the Night* is packed with enough bold drama and dreamy passion to fill the libretto of at least two operas if not more.

*Cudmore, Libby. [The Big Rewind](#)* (Harper \$14.99)

A mail mix-up with a mix tape leads to murder in this acerbically comic debut. When Jett Bennett finds a mix tape meant for her neighbor KitKat in her mailbox, she decides to deliver the package to KitKat herself. However, when Jett arrives at KitKat's apartment, she finds the door open and KitKat on the floor of the kitchen with her skull bashed in. The local police are quick to pin the crime on KitKat's MIA boyfriend Bronco, but Jett isn't convinced he did it. Since she is temping for a NYC PI firm, Jett decides to see if she can't get her boss to give her a few tips about cracking a case so that she can find the real killer herself. Cudmore definitely has the New York hipster vibe down pat in her debut mystery, which also has all the edgy, raucous humor of an episode of *2 Broke Girls*. Great fun as long as you can get past the swearing!

*Girard, Anne. [Platinum Doll](#)* (Mira \$14.95)

Harlean Carpenter McGrew couldn't be happier. She and her brand-new husband Chuck have just arrived in Beverly Hills, where Chuck has purchased a charming new home for them to start their married life. However, there is only so many lunches with her girlfriends, shopping trips to Bullocks, and lively, liquor-laced parties with the neighbors a girl can take before ennui sets in. So when a friend dares Harlean to take up a casting director's offer to meet, Harlean figures what can she lose? Before Harlean knows it, she had landed a number of small roles as "Jean Harlow," and then she gets her big break when

Howard Hughes casts her as the lead in *Hell's Angels*. But all of these new career opportunities come at a cost: Chuck doesn't like sharing his wife with the public and his jealousy and drinking binges are tearing their marriage apart. Caught between her husband and her passion to perform, Harlean quickly learns that fame comes at a price. But is she willing to pay it? Known as the "Platinum Blonde" and the "Blonde Bombshell" for the distinctive color of her hair, Jean Harlow was one of Hollywood's brightest stars in the 1930s. She had a remarkable flair for comedy, and her co-stars included Clark Gable, William Powell, Spencer Tracy, and Laurel and Hardy. Girard, whose previous book *Madame Picasso* chronicled that Spanish artist's relationship with his first great love, charts Jean's early years working in pictures as well as the complicated relationship she had with her mother. If you loved Adriana Trigiani's *All the Stars in Heaven* or you just enjoy reading about the Golden Age of Hollywood, this is your book.

*Gortner, CW. [The Vatican Princess](#)* (Ballantine \$28)

Told in the notorious Italian villainess' (or victim depending on your viewpoint) own voice, this fictionalized account of Lucrezia Borgia's life covers everything from her privileged and pampered childhood in Roman palaces to her arranged marriages, and complicated relationship with her brothers. This entertaining novel is tailor-made for fans of the popular cable television show or anyone who enjoys soap opera style historical fiction served up with plenty of sex and scandal.

*James, Delia. [Familiar Tail](#)* (NAL \$7.99)

Artist Annabelle Britton, who is unlucky in love, arrives in the quaint seaside town of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, where she finds herself unexpectedly saddled with a witch's wand, a furry familiar and a coven of witches who gather together to keep the town safe from evil. If you like Juliet Blackwell's "Witchcraft" books, you will gobble up this equally enchanting debut.

*Johnson, Julia. [Be Frank with Me](#)* (Harper \$25.99)

Reclusive literary legend M. M. “Mimi” Banning has been holed up in her Bel Air mansion for years. But after falling prey to a Bernie Mad-off-style ponzi scheme, she’s flat broke. Now Mimi must write a new book for the first time in decades, and to ensure the timely delivery of her manuscript, her New York publisher sends an assistant to monitor her progress. The prickly Mimi reluctantly complies—with a few stipulations: No Ivy-Leaguers or English majors. Must drive, cook, tidy. Computer whiz. Good with kids. Quiet, discreet, sane. When Alice Whitley arrives at the Banning mansion, she’s put to work right away—as a full-time companion to Frank, the writer’s eccentric nine-year-old, a boy with the wit of Noel Coward, the wardrobe of a 1930s movie star, and very little in common with his fellow fourth-graders. As she slowly gets to know Frank, Alice becomes consumed with finding out who Frank’s father is, how his gorgeous “piano teacher and itinerant male role model” Xander fits into the Banning family equation—and whether Mimi will ever finish that book. I loved this wonderfully endearing debut novel. The author writes with a great sense of wit and quirky charm about the importance of family, friendship, and love in one’s life.

*Joinson, Suzann. [Photographer’s Wife](#)* (Berkley \$26)

Jerusalem is a surprisingly peaceful place in the 1920s even though the population consists of British colonials, exiled Armenians, and Greek, Arab, and Jewish residents. 11 year-old Prue Ashton’s father Charles has big plans for the city starting by tearing down some of Ottoman minarets and putting in traditional English parks. In the process, Charles hires British pilot William Harrington to assist Eleanora Rasul (the photographer’s wife of the book’s title.) Things get really complicated when Eleanora falls for William, but there is a big hitch: Eleanora’s husband is working for the underground nationalist group trying to kick the British out of Palestine. More than a decade later, Prue, who is now an artist living in Sussex by the Sea, is surprised when Harrington pays her a visit. What Harrington

tells Prue will force her to reexamine the events that took place in Jerusalem as long-buried secrets come back into the light. Johnson’s first book was the quirky and charming *A Lady Cyclists Guide to Kashgar*, and this is another gorgeously written historical novel with a strong sense of place and time.

*Lawhon, Ariel. [Flight of Dreams](#)* (Doubleday \$25.95)

Struggling to maintain her professionalism and hide her own agenda on board the Hindenburg, where everyone seems to be keeping secrets, Emilie Imhoff, a sole female crewmember, interacts with passengers and fellow workers throughout the doomed airship’s three-day flight. All of the witnesses involved in the Hindenburg tragedy used the same word: uneventful. But Lawhon, author of *The Wife*, *the Maid*, and *the Mistress*, didn’t believe this, and *Flight of Dreams* is her attempt to sort out what really happened on that fatal flight when the airship took off from Frankfurt, Germany on May 3, 1937 and then landed in disaster three days later in Lakehurst, New Jersey. The story is told from the viewpoints of a number of passengers and crew including “the Stewardess,” “the Navigator,” “the Journalist,” and “the American.” While Lawhon does offer her own interpretation of events and she does invent some background stories for several of the passengers, she doesn’t change any of the major facts about the tragedy including the 35 who died and the 62 who survived the journey. In addition, there is a wealth of wonderful details about traveling in the luxury airship as well as an intriguing thread of suspense neatly woven into the thrilling storyline.

*Rose, Karen. [Alone in the Dark](#)* (NAL \$7.99)

Homicide Detective Scarlett Bishop has seen enough bad guys slip through the cracks and innocent victims go unavenged to know that good doesn’t always prevail. So far she’s been able to lock away her rage and her vigilante fantasies. That lock is about to break. Former Army Ranger Marcus O’Bannion is a fierce champion of victims’ rights. His secret past gives him good reason. He believes he’s seen the depths of human depravity, but then his investigation into the

murder of a young girl who once asked for his help lures him and Scarlett down a dark, dark road—and straight into the crosshairs of a dangerous, powerful underground ring that deals in human trafficking. To stop them, Scarlett and Marcus have to be just as cunning and just as ruthless. But first they have to make it out alive. If you like your suspense on the dark side and served up with a generous dash of romance, Rose is definitely your kind of author.

*Vallere, Diane. [A Disguise to Die For](#) (Berkley \$7.99)*

Former magician's assistant Margo Tamblyn, who has come back home to Proper City, Nevada to run Disguise DeLimit, her family's costume shop, is thrilled when she gets her first big order from Blitz Manners, who needs forty costumes for his big detective-themed birthday bash. Margo is less thrilled when Blitz winds up dead at the party and her best friend Ebony Welles is accused of murdering him. Vallere is the author of several other charming mystery series including the "Material Witness" books, and *A Disguise to Die For*, the first in her "Costume Shop" mysteries is tailor-made for anyone, who likes their cozies served up with plenty of fun fashion facts.

*Van Praag, Menna. [Witches of Cambridge](#) (Ballantine \$16)*

Each member of the Cambridge University Society of Literature and Witchcraft has his or her own unique gift. But the group's newest member Noa, considers her talent for being able to see anyone's deepest secret more of a curse than a blessing. So when she meets artist Santiago, who offers to "cure" Noa of her gift, she is thrilled. But how will Noa's reckless attempt to become normal again, affect the rest of the group? Van Praag is known for her quirky, charming novels like *The Dress Shop of Dreams*, and her latest is another treat for readers who love Sarah Addison Allen's equally magical novels.

*Warlick, Ashley. [The Arrangement](#) (Mulholland \$25.95)*

This re-imagination of the life of legendary food writer M.F.K. Fisher – known to those close to her as Mary Frances – begins in Los Angeles in 1933 when the aspiring writer begins an affair

with her friend Tim Parrish. Unlike her husband Al, Tim believes in Mary's literary talents and that one of the things that makes him so seductive to Mary Frances. However, it isn't long before their affair has repercussions. Tim's wife – an aspiring actress named Gigi – leaves him for another man, and a heartbroken Tim packs his bags and heads back east. When Tim and Mary Frances reconnect and pick up their affair a few years later, Mary Frances does so with the understanding that she won't leave Al, who is suffering through the darkest point in his life. There is a languid, almost sensual quality to Warlick's writing, and her latest novel is an interesting exploration of a complicated love triangle as well as a fascinating look at MFK's development as a writer.

*White, Karen. [The Forgotten Room](#) (NAL \$26)*

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 – Karen White, Lauren Willig, and Beatriz Williams – 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.

*Williams, Beatrice. Tiny Little Thing*

(\$16)

In the summer of 1966, Christina “Tiny” Hardcastle stands on the brink of a breathtaking future. Unlike her spirited sisters, Tiny was the consummate well-behaved debutant, poised and picture-perfect, raised to serve as a consort to a great man. Now, as her handsome husband, Frank, runs for a Massachusetts seat in the U.S. House of Representatives, that long-sought destiny lies nearly within reach., But behind her glamorous facade, Tiny’s flawless life is cracking. She and Frank both have secrets in their pasts that could shatter their political ambitions and the intricate truce of their marriage. So when two unwelcome visitors arrive at the Hardcastle family’s Cape Cod estate—Frank’s cousin Caspian, a Vietnam war hero who knows a thing or two about Tiny’s hidden past, and an envelope containing incriminating photographs—Tiny is forced into a reckless gamble against a house that always, always wins...

*Cass, Kiera. Siren* (Harper \$18.99)

Years ago, Kahlen was rescued from drowning by the Ocean. To repay her debt, she has served as a Siren ever since, using her voice to lure countless strangers to their deaths. Though a single word from Kahlen can kill, she can’t resist spending her days on land, watching ordinary people and longing for the day when she will be able to speak and laugh and live freely among them again. Kahlen is resigned to finishing her sentence in solitude . . . until she meets Akinli. Handsome, caring, and kind, Akinli is everything Kahlen ever dreamed of. And though she can’t talk to him, they soon forge a connection neither of them can deny. Falling in love with a human breaks all the Ocean’s rules, and if the Ocean discovers Kahlen’s feelings, she’ll be forced to leave Akinli for good. But for the first time in a lifetime of following the rules, Kahlen is determined to follow her heart.

*Mattick, Lindsay. Finding Winnie* (Little-Brown \$18)

This charming children’s book was actually published last fall. However, it just received the American Library Association’s Caldecott award (given out annually for the best illustrated

children’s book) in January, and I have to say I completely agree with the committee in choosing the book’s illustrator Sophie Blackall for the honor. The book is inspired by the real-life story of the author’s great-grandfather, Henry Colebourn, a veterinarian on his way to tend horses in World War I, who followed his heart by rescuing a baby bear, which he named Winnie (after his hometown of Winnipeg). Henry took Winnie with him to an English Army base, but when Henry receives his orders to report to France, he finds a new home for Winnie at the London Zoo. It is there that the second chapter in Winnie’s life begins when she is befriended by a young boy named Christopher Robin, who in turn names his stuffed teddy bear after Winnie thus inspiring his father (author A.A. Milne) to write the now classic children’s books about a certain bear and his friends. Blackall’s wonderful watercolor illustrations perfectly complement this sweet story that is perfect for both young and young-at-heart readers.

*Moldavsky, Goldy. Kill the Boy Band* (Scholastic \$17.99)

Four American female members of the “Strepurs” would do anything to get a chance to meet the Ruperts, a British boy band composed of four singers all named Rupert, who first found fame on the television reality television show “So You Think The British Don’t have Talent?” So when the Strepurs discover the Ruperts will be in NYC on tour, they book a room in the same hotel in which the band is staying. A chance meeting with Rupert P. (the least talented of the lot) leads to kidnapping when the girls bring Rupert P. back to their hotel room. It is shortly thereafter with a tied-up Rupert P. being held hostage in their room, that the unnamed narrator of this darkly comic story discovers her three fellow Strepurs might be more than a bit psychotic when it comes to their obsession with the Ruperts. The currently popular “unreliable narrator” is given the YA fiction treatment in this humorously twisted debut that also serves up some sharp insights about the corrosive power of social media.