

# Midmonth BookNotes

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Contact:

email: [sales@poisonedpen.com](mailto:sales@poisonedpen.com)

phone: (888) 560-9919

(480) 947-2974

<https://poisonedpen.com>

4014 N Goldwater Blvd. #101

Scottsdale, AZ 85251



## The Literary Fireworks Continue!

*Alam, Rumaan. [Rich and Pretty](#)*  
(Harper \$25.99)

Ever since they met in the sixth grade, “rich” Sarah and “pretty” Lauren were as inseparable as two peas in a pod. The two friends shared everything in their lives, but now they seem to be drifting apart. Socialite Sarah is party of the “ladies who lunch” crowd, and most of her time is taken up with planning her upcoming wedding to her doctor fiancé. Lauren is still happily single and she spends all her time slowly climbing the career ladder at the publishing house in NYC, where she works as an editor. When Sarah asks Lauren to be her maid of honor will the two rekindle their old friendship or will it just prove they now have nothing in common?

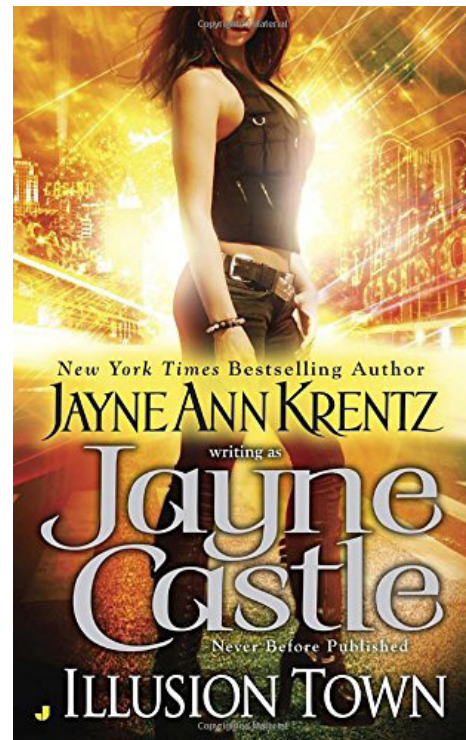
*Balogh, Mary. [Unforgiven](#)* (\$15)

Miss Moira Hayes knows she should stay away from Kenneth Woodfall since he is responsible (albeit indirectly) for her brother’s death. But somehow Moira finds herself softening towards Kenneth’s attempts to win her heart.

*Cannon, Joanna. [The Trouble with Goats and Sheep](#)* (Scribner \$26)

When Mrs. Margaret Creasy suddenly disappears, everyone in the neighborhood whispers that Walter Bishop -the man in #11 - is responsible. But ten-year-olds Grace and Tilly aren’t convinced, and inspired by the local vicar, who tells them that if their neighbors find God no one will be lost. The two girls decide to begin their own search believing that if they find Him, they will also find their missing neighbor. Set in England in 1976 during a horrible heat wave, this is

a thoughtful coming of age story wrapped up in a quirky mystery.



*Castle, Jayne. [Illusion Town](#)* (\$7.99)

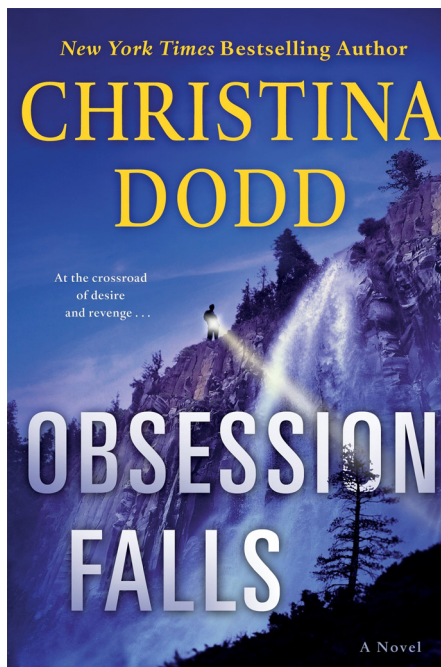
What happens in Illusion Town, stays in Illusion Town. At least this is what Hannah West hopes is true when she wakes up in the resort city and finds herself married to Elias Coppersmith. All Hannah can remember prior to waking up as Mrs. Coppersmith, is that she and Elias were out on a date the previous night. Something happened that must have forced them to get married but what could it have been? Is Hannah in any danger or is the real danger that she is starting to fall for her new “husband?” Castle (the pseudonym for *New York Times* best-selling Jayne Ann

Krentz) has a lot of fun putting her own clever spin on the “married in Vegas” trope in this fast-paced, futuristic romantic thriller.

*Devens, Toby. [Barefoot Beach](#)* (NAL \$15)  
For Nora Quinn Farrell, the beach in Nanticoke, Maryland, really is the center of her world. This is the place where she got married, decided to become a parent, and where she met her two closest friends: Margo and Em. Even though many years have passed since then, the three women still try to get together, but this year big changes loom on the horizon. Even as Nora delights in teaching at her dance studio, she is shaken by her son’s decision to seek out his sperm-donor dad. While Margo directs a musical at the Driftwood Playhouse, her marriage seems headed toward its final curtain. And Em, who relishes running her family’s café, struggles to handle her rebellious teen.

*Dimon, Helenkay. [Under the Wire Bad Boys Undercover](#)* (Harper \$7.99)

After his former fiancée, scientist Cara Layne, mysteriously disappears while working on a top-secret research project in the Ural Mountains, Alliance agent Reid Armstrong sets out to find her. Dimon’s “Bad Boys Undercover” series is chockablock full of sexy passion and nonstop action.



*Dodd, Christina. [Obsession Falls](#)* (\$8.99)  
Interior decorator Taylor Summers came to the

Sawtooth Mountains in Idaho, hoping that while she was sketching there, she would rediscover her long dormant artistic muse. Instead Taylor observes two men drive up in a car, get out, and proceed to drag a terrified boy out of the car’s trunk. The men then begin discussing the best way to murder the boy and get rid of the body without realizing Taylor listening in. Before the thugs can follow through on their threat, Taylor hatches a desperate plan that she hopes will save the boy. This is just the opening from Dodd’s latest thrill-a-minute novel that will definitely have you on the edge of your seats right up the book’s jaw-dropping conclusion. Dodd got her start writing some terrific romances, and now with last year’s *Virtue Falls* and *Obsession Falls*, Dodd is successfully venturing further and further into the suspense genre as she takes a walk on the dark side. With its gutsy heroine, unexpected plot twists, and sharp edge of humor, *Obsession Falls* is tailor-made for fans of Lisa Gardner’s *The Perfect Husband* or Iris Johansen’s *The Ugly Duckling*.

*Fertig, Judith. [Memory of Lemon](#)* (Penguin \$16)

First introduced to readers in *The Cake Therapist*, pastry chef Claire “Neely” Davis has a unique gift for being able to match the ingredients in her confections with the emotional needs of her clients. However, Neely’s latest job may tax even her special gifts since her new clients – a hard-to-please bride to be and her overbearing society mother – can’t agree on anything. Does Neely have a recipe that can fix this family problem?

*Giffin, Emily. [First Comes Love](#)* (Random \$28)

Sisters Josie and Meredith could not be more different. Up until now school teacher Josie has been quite happy with her free-spirited, single lifestyle. But now with her fortieth birthday rapidly approaching, Josie is seriously thinking about becoming a mother via the sperm donor route. Lawyer Meredith took a more traditional path to motherhood via marriage to her brother Daniel’s best friend Nolan. Now Meredith is second-guessing her choice in husbands as her seven year old marriage starts showing some serious cracks. Throw in the fifteenth anniversary of their brother Daniel’s untimely death and you have the



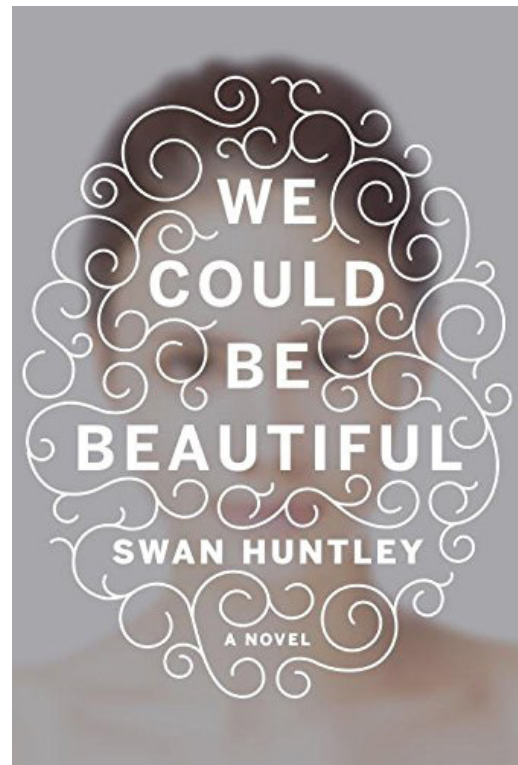
perfect emotional storm brewing for two sisters trying to find a safe harbor in life.

*Harbison, Beth. [One Less Problem Without You](#)* (St Martins \$26.99)

Two women deal with romantic problems in Harbison's latest cheeky yet contemplative novel. After earning her degree in business administration, Lissa Thomas discovers the only job available is one managing the M Street Apothecary, a "woo-woo" type shop selling candles, charms, and potions. However, when Lissa finds herself falling for a married man, she is willing to try anything – including a spell – to fall back out of love. Fledgling jewelry designer Diana Tiesman has had her own bad luck with men including her current paramour, who keeps letting her down. So when the opportunity comes up to make some jewelry under the table for M Street Apothecary, it seems like the perfect to get away from the man responsible for all her heartache and headaches.

*Harris, Shaun [The Hemingway Thief](#)* (Prometheus \$15.95)

Henry "Coop" Cooper is going to murder Toulouse Velours. This really shouldn't be a problem since Toulouse isn't actually a real person, but is rather the pen name under which Coop has written a string of best-selling Scottish vampire romance novels. However, Coop is sick of writing about vampires in love and is tired of having his literary masculinity constantly called into question. Coop's literary agent does convince him to at least think over his decision to kill off a lucrative brand, which is how Coop finds himself in a run-down hotel in Pendera, Mexico. When the hotel's owner Grady Doyle saves a young, drunk American from a couple of thugs trying to abduct him, Coop finds himself caught up in the action once the drunk – Ebbie Milch – reveals he is a thief, who has stolen the original draft manuscript of Hemingway's *A Moveable Feast*. While the language can occasionally be rough enough to blister the paint off the walls and there is more than a generous dash of graphic violence included in the plot, this was one of the funniest debut mysteries I have read in a long time. For fun pair this up with Lesley Blume's book on Hemingway (see Nonfiction titles below).



*Huntley, Swan. [We Could Be Beautiful](#)* (Doubleday \$25.95)

All of her life, Catherine West has been surrounded by wealth and beauty, but all she feels inside is a gnawing emptiness. Then Catherine meets the man of her dreams – handsome, successful William Stockton – at a gallery opening, and Catherine believes he may be exactly what is missing from her life. But Catherine's mother, who is suffering from Alzheimer's, seems to have bad memories of William from when he was a boy. When Catherine decides to pursue a romantic relationship with William, will she be building a bright new future for herself or making the biggest mistake of her life? In her elegantly written debut, Huntley tries to merge the current fad for psychological fiction with old school romantic suspense.

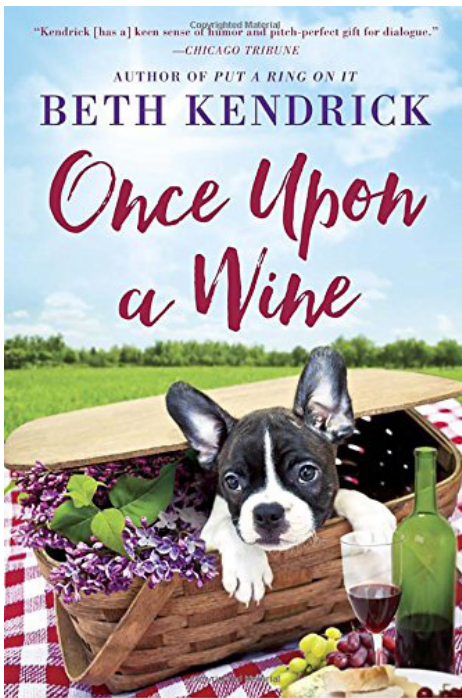
Jenkins, Beverly. [Stepping to a New Day](#) (Harper \$14.99)

After finally ending her relationship with a loser, Genevieve Gibbs is revealing in her newfound freedom when she meets T.C. Barbour, who has just landed a job driving a limo for the most powerful woman in the small Kansas town of Henry Adams. Readers in search of a sweet romance featuring an older heroine and heroine (which only goes to show that romance doesn't.

end at 40) will definitely want to pick up Jenkin's latest addition to her emotionally satisfying small town series.

*Jones, Darynda. [Curse of Tenth Grave](#) (St Martins \$26.99)*

Part-time PI and full-time grim reaper, Charley Davidson's latest supernatural assignment is to find a trap three gods and cast them back into the world from which they came. If that isn't bad enough, one of the gods has been sent to kill Charley's daughter, which means Charley must succeed in getting rid of them at all costs. There is just one problem: one of the gods happens to be the man Charley loves.



*Kendrick, Beth. [Once Upon a Wine](#) (NAL \$15)*

Who in the world would buy a winery in Delaware? Apparently Cammie Breyer's Aunt Ginger, is who. At least this is what Cammie discovers after she receives a panicked call from her cousin Kat in Black Dog Bay. It seems Ginger cashed out her retirement account in order to buy the vineyard, and now she needs help getting the business back on track. Since Cammie is the only one in the family with any real experience with wine (and that is really stretching things since Cammie's sole professional experiences with *vino* boils down to pushing the stuff to snooty customers in a trendy

L.A. restaurant), Ginger desperately wants her to come back home and help out with the new family business. Of course, who is one of the first people Cammie should meet after she sets foot back in Black Dog Bay but local strawberry farmer Ian McKinley, the man who broke her heart back when they were high school sweethearts. Writing with an addictively acerbic sense of wit, Kendrick delivers another winner with the latest installment in her sweet, sassy, and superbly entertaining Black Dog Bay series. P.S. the strawberry wine sounds totally yummy!

*Kotero, R. J. [Death on the Sapphire](#) (Crooked Lane \$14.99 )*

When Major Colcombe, a family friend and war veteran, dies under mysterious circumstances, Lady Frances Ffolkes discovers that he was working on a manuscript about South Africa's bloody Boer War, which reportedly revealed a scandalous mistake that cost many innocent lives. Now, it's up to Frances and her loyal lady's maid, June Mallow, to track down the missing manuscript and bring the killer to justice. This is the first in a new historical mystery series that will definitely resonate with fans of Victoria Thompson's Gaslight series.

*Kuhn, Sarah. [Heroine Complex](#) (DAW \$15)*

Evie Tanaka loves working as Aveda Jupiter's – San Francisco's #1 superhero and Evie's long-time friend – personal assistant since it allows her to do what she does best: blend into the background. But when Jupiter is unable to attend an important city event, Evie – with the help of a little magical spell – has to step in for the night as her boss. Everything is going perfectly until demons decide to make an appearance at the party and Evie unleashes her own secret superpower. Now will Evie finally step out of the shadows and become the superhero she was destined to be? If you look up the definition of snarky humor, there would probably be a picture of this book right next to it in the dictionary. This was a fun, wonderfully imaginative debut that anyone who enjoys fantasy fiction written with an off-beat sense of wit will enjoy.

*Lancaster, Jen.* [By the Numbers](#) (NAL \$27)

As an actuary, Penny Sinclair is very familiar with statistics. Since 60% of spouses cheat, Penny isn't surprised when her husband informs her about his little "affair," but Penny makes sure she gets everything in the divorce, including their beautiful Victorian house. Penny's plan is sell the home after her younger daughter has her hipster-fab wedding in the backyard, but then Penny's oldest daughter, her parents and her ex (really, does the man have no shame whatsoever?) suddenly turn up needing Penny's help. Lancaster has written both nonfiction – *I Regret Nothing* is the latest in her terrifically funny memoirs– as well as novels, both of which are richly imbued with a deliciously sly sense of humor.

*Lee, Linda Francis.* [Glass Kitchen](#) (St Martins \$7.99)

After they inherit a ramshackle brownstone, Portia Cuthcart moves to New York City with her two sisters for a fresh start in life. However, after she bumps into some of her neighbors – widower Gabriel Kane and his two daughters – Portia finds herself employing her oddly clairvoyant culinary instincts (a gift she thought she was long done with) to help them. Lee writes with exceptional grace about heartbreak and hope and the importance of family and love in anyone's life.

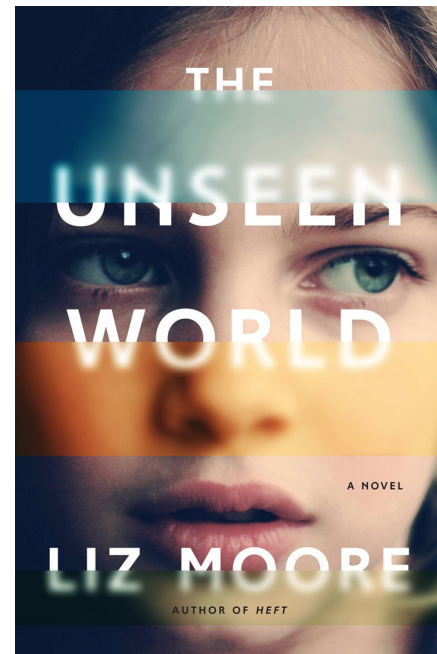
*Mallery, Susan.* [Daughters of the Bride](#) (Houghton \$26.99)

After being widowed for almost 24 years, Maggie Watson is getting married again. Nothing will please Maggie more than having her three daughters – Courtney, Sienna, and Rachel – involved in the wedding planning especially since Maggie hopes that in process, her lovely daughters might be inspired to finally take note of the absence of true love in their own lives and begin searching for their own happily ever after endings.

*McLaren, Leah.* [Better Man](#) (Grand Central \$14.99)

Nick Wakefield wants out of his marriage to Maya. The problem is that since Maya left her

high-powered job as an attorney to stay home and raise their kids, Nick is the sole breadwinner in the family. So if Nick decides to go ahead with a divorce, Maya will be able to take him to the proverbial cleaners. Based on some advice from a lawyer friend, Nick decides to become a "better" husband so that when he finally gets Maya to agree a divorce, he will make out better financially. The only problem is that Nick soon discovers that all the time he spends pretending to be better is actually starting to really make him enjoy being a husband and father once again.



*Moore, Liz.* [Unseen World](#) (Norton \$26.95)  
Ada Sibelius thought she knew everything there was to know about her father David until he began forgetting things. Until that point in her life, David – an intellectual genius but someone singularly lacking in most social skills - had single handily raised Ada. David had taken care of Ada's education by homeschooling her and then later taking her to work with him to the computer science lab where he worked in Boston. However, when David begins exhibiting signs of Alzheimer's, the few people close to him at work begin to question his ability to take care of Ada. When Diana Liston, David's professional colleague and his neighbor – agrees to take the necessary steps to become Ada's guardian, Ada discovers everything her father told her about his past may simply have been a story he made up. Moore has written a poignant, deeply mov



ing coming of age story that also explores what it exactly means to be “family.” Fascinating details about the early work on artificial intelligence are neatly woven into the plot helping to provide a satisfactory resolution to the mystery of David Sibelius’s life. If Oprah read more mysteries, this is the kind of book she would love.

*Morton, Kate. The Lake House (\$17)*

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.

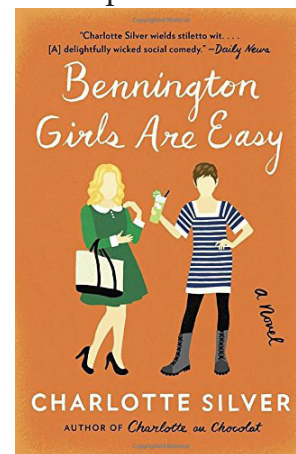
*Rowley, Steven. Lily and the Octopus Signed (Simon and Schuster, \$25.99)*

Stock up on Kleenex because you are going to need them as you read this terrific debut! It was love at first sight when writer Ted Flask first met Lily, an adorable dachshund he adopted twelve years ago. Since that day, the two have been BFFs sharing their thoughts about everything under the sun and playing board games every Thursday night. Life is wonderful until the day the octopus showed up on Lily’s head. The octopus is the name Ted gives to the cranial tumor that threatens Lily’s life. As with Lily, Ted can communicate with the Octopus, but nothing he says can convince the Octopus to leave. However, Lily is Ted’s best friend and if the Octopus thinks he is just going to give up without a fight, that evil sea creature doesn’t know what kind of

battle he is in for. Yes, the premise of the book is a bit fantastical, but Rowley poignantly captures the strong bond that exists between a pet and their human. The author doesn’t downplay the difficult decision any pet owner must face in the end, but the book also beautifully celebrates the significant contributions animals make to our lives. You will cry, but it is worth every tear.

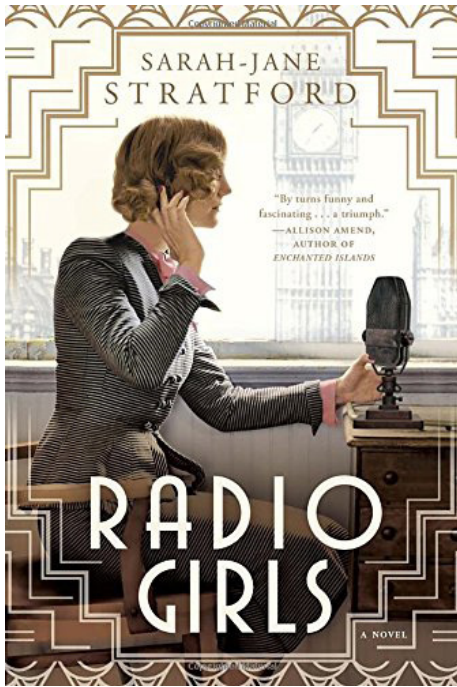
*Shalvis, Jill. Sweet Little Lies (Harper \$7.99)*

Legend has it that the historic fountain in the apartment building where San Francisco Bay tour boat operator Pru Harris lives can help find a person’s true love. But when Pru throws a coin in the fountain, she isn’t wishing for herself but for sexy local pub owner Finn O’Riley. Finn spends all his time taking care of everyone else, Pru figures it is about time someone took care of him, but what if the fountain decides Pru is Finn’s soul mate? This is the first in a fun and flirty new series from Shalvis, who seemingly has a never-ending supply of ideas for contemporary love stories up her sleeve.



*Silver, Charlotte. Bennington Girls Are Easy (Anchor \$16)*

Cassandra Puffin and Sylvia Furst become BFFs while attending Bennington College. After graduating, Sylvia moves to New York City where Cassandra soon joins her and the two eventually become roommates. Initially, everything is all bright lights in the big city until the friends discover they have very different opinions on a lot of important things, and their friendship – a bond which they thought would last a lifetime – starts fraying around its edges. A sharply written – if occasionally caustic- look at the important role friendship plays in women’s lives.



*Stratford, Sara.-Jane. [Radio Girls](#) (NAL \$16)*

Times are tough in London in 1926, so a currently out-of-work, American-raised Maisie Mugrave is thrilled when she lands a job working as a secretary at the fledgling British Broadcast Corporation. Maisie soon finds herself taken under the wing of one of her bosses – Hilda Matheson- and it isn't long before she finds herself promoted into a position, where she helps find speakers and plan programs for the company. However, when Maisie stumbles across a shocking conspiracy, she is faced with making a difficult choice that could have some very dangerous consequences. Stratford's impeccably written and researched historical novel with its captivating cast of characters truly captures the flavor of what it must have been like working at the upstart BBC in the 1920s and 1930s. Long-time fans of another Maisie (Dobbs, that is) as well as readers who follow Susan Elia MacNeal's plucky Maggie Hope will definitely want to check out this terrific novel.

*Tanabe, Karin. [The Gilded Years](#) (Mulholland \$16)*

Anita Hemmings has finally achieved her life's dream when she is accepted into Vassar. However, Anita has been hiding something that could get her expelled from the university if anyone ever finds out. Anita is actually "passing" for

white. Now a senior in the class of 1897, Anita's new roommate is Louise "Lottie" Taylor, the daughter of one of New York's wealthiest society families. However, as the two young women become close friends, Anita begins to worry that her secret will get out. Tanabe based her latest historical novel on the real-life personage of Anita Hemmings, who became the first African-American to attend Vassar.

*Thayne, Raeanne. [Riverbend Road](#) (Houghton \$7.99)*

Police officer Wyn Bailey, who is secretly in love with her boss, police chief Cade Emmett, is overjoyed when she discovers that he loves her too, but his complicated past still stands in the way of any long-term relationship between the two of them. If you enjoy sweet romances like the kind Debbie Macomber writes or you like small town love stories similar to those crafted by Robyn Carr and you haven't yet discovered Thayne, you are in for a treat.

*Trigiani, Adriana. [All the Stars in the Heavens](#) (\$15.99)*

Now in paperback, this is Trigiana's fictionalized version of the life of actress Loretta Young as seen through the viewpoint of Young's personal secretary and friend Alda Ducci, who not only helps Loretta navigate the treacherous waters of studio system in place at that time, but is there for her when Young falls fast and hard for Clark Gable and their affair results in the birth of a daughter, whose presence could destroy Young's career forever. If you loved Kate Alcott's exemplary *A Touch of Stardust* (the story of the romance between Carole Lombard and Clark Gable – that man certainly did get around- as told by her assistant) you may also want to pick up this paean to the Golden Age of Hollywood.

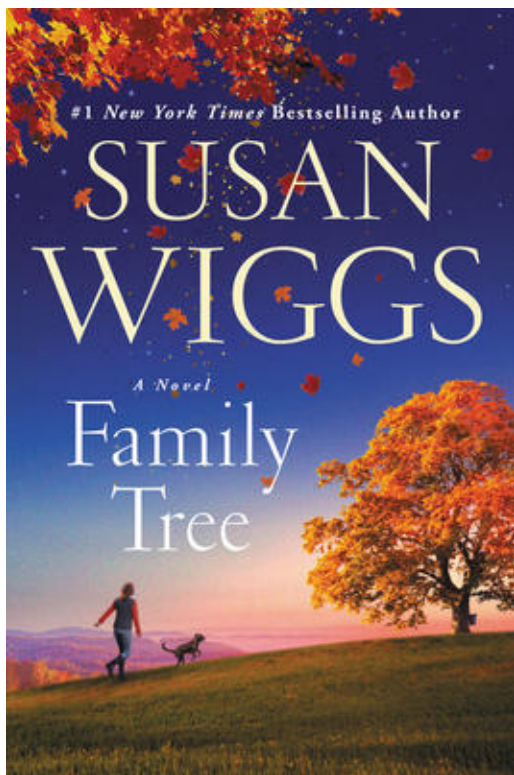
*Wax, Wendy. [Sunshine Beach](#) (Berkley \$16)*

After losing their life savings in a Ponzi-type investment scheme, three women – Maddie, Avery, and Nikki - come together to bring a historic old seaside hotel, once owned by a former Vaudeville star, back to life. In between sorting out their own personal dramas, the ladies' renovation of the hotel uncovers a decades-old unsolved murder.



*Weisberger, Lauren. Singles Game* (Simon-Schuster \$26)

After a devastating injury and loss at Wimbledon, rising tennis star Charlotte “Charlie” Silver cuts her old coach Marcy loose and hires legendary men’s tennis coach Todd Feltner, who not only retools her training regime but also sets out to change Charlie’s “good girl” image as well. Rebranded the “Warrior Princess,” Charlie not only starts racking up wins on the court but also finds herself splashed across the gossip rags as her steamy affair with sexy Spanish tennis player Marco Vallejo heats up. But is this really the life Charlie wanted? Weisberger landed on the best-seller lists with her first novel *The Devil Wears Prada* (a thinly disguised *roman à clef* of the author’s tenure at *Vogue* magazine) and now she takes on the glitzy world of professional tennis with equal glee.



*Wiggs, Susan. Family Tree Signed* (Harper \$25.99 August 12)

Annie Rush knows she has a great life. Her cable cooking show, *The Key Ingredient*, is a big ratings hit. Viewers not only love the show’s sexy celebrity chef host (Annie’s husband Martin Harlow) but also his perky co-host Melissa Barrett. Then one day Annie receives some unexpected personal news that she knows will change her and Martin’s future for the better. Annie rushes to the

set of the show to share everything with Martin and finds her husband taking a private “meeting” with Melissa in his trailer. Hurt and betrayed by what she discovers, Annie rushes off the set only to suffer a tragic accident that puts her in a coma. One year later, Annie wakes up in her old hometown of Switchback, Vermont. Now with some help from an old cookbook written by her beloved Nona, Annie must not only figure out a way to put her life back together again, but also decide if she wants to take a second chance at love with her old high school sweetheart Fletcher Wyndham. Wiggs is one of the brightest stars in the romance and women’s fiction firmament, and her newest novel beautifully showcases her flair for crafting richly nuanced characters as well as coming up with emotionally engaging storylines. Wiggs will be making her first appearance in AZ for the book at the Scottsdale Civic Center Library on Sunday August 14<sup>th</sup> at 2PM in a program co-hosted by the Poisoned Pen and the Scottsdale Public Library System. Mark your calendars now for what is certain to be a delightfully entertaining program!

*Wilson, Anne A. Clear to Lift* (Signed) (Tor \$25.99)

Being assigned to the Naval Air Station at Fallon, Nevada was not part of helicopter pilot Lt. Alison Malone’s long-term career plan. However, Alison’s commander assures her it is just temporary, and that he is doing everything he can to get her assigned to a more suitable base. Until then, Alison knows she will just have to make the best of it and learn to work with her mission commander “Boomer” Marks. Boomer is a great guy, but his casual approach to rules and regulations flies directly in the face of Alison’s own “by-the-book” approach to things. However, working as part of the local Search and Rescue team does have its share of benefits, Alison discovers when she meets mountaineering expert Will Cavanaugh during a particularly tricky rescue mission. However, the more time Alison spends in Fallon and the more time she spends with Will, the less sure she is that her carefully planned career path and her neatly planned romantic future with her fiancé back in San Diego is really what she wants. Wilson brings a



wealth of real-life flying experience to the plot of her second thrilling novel, and it shows in the carefully choreographed, white-knuckle rescue scenes in the book that will have a reader literary holding their own breath. Pair this up with a gorgeously rendered Sierra Nevada setting and a cast of richly nuanced characters and you have the perfect summertime read.

## Cozy Corner

**Booth, Claire.** [\*The Branson Beauty\*](#)

(Minotaur, \$25.99)

Newly appointed Sheriff Hank Worth thought getting more than one hundred passengers off *The Branson Beauty*, an old showboat that had become stranded in the icy waters of one of the Ozark's prettier lakes, and safely to shore was going to be a nightmare until he found the dead body in the Captain's private dining room. The victim turns out to be former high school track star Mandy Bryson, but no one can figure out why she was on the boat for the luncheon party since she had broken up with the guest of honor's grandson several weeks before. As Hank sifts through assorted alibis and motives, he runs into some resistance from some very powerful people in the county, who would like him to simply make the case go quietly away. Of course, this just makes Hank even more determined to bring the killer to justice. Booth's smartly written debut book is a crackerjack traditional mystery with a wonderfully realized Missouri setting, a terrific cast of characters, and just the right dash of dry wit making this a new series that will definitely appeal to readers who loved Aaron Elkin's Gideon Oliver books or who are fans of Bill Crider's mysteries featuring Dan Rhodes.

**Buckley, Julia.** [\*A Dark and Stormy Murder\*](#) (Berkley \$7.99)

Camilla Graham is the reason why Lena London decided to become a writer. So having the chance to be Camilla's new assistant is a dream come true for Lena. Not only will Lena get to live in Camilla's lovely home in Blue Lake, Indiana, she will be helping her literary idol write her next

thrilling novel. However, when Lena discovers a dead body on the grounds of her boss's lake-front estate, she finds she must put into practice all the things she learned from the mysteries she has read about solving murders. This is the start in a new series by Buckley (who also writes the Covered Dish mysteries), and I loved the nod the author gives in her story to those classic gothic/romantic suspense novels of the 1960s and 1970s.

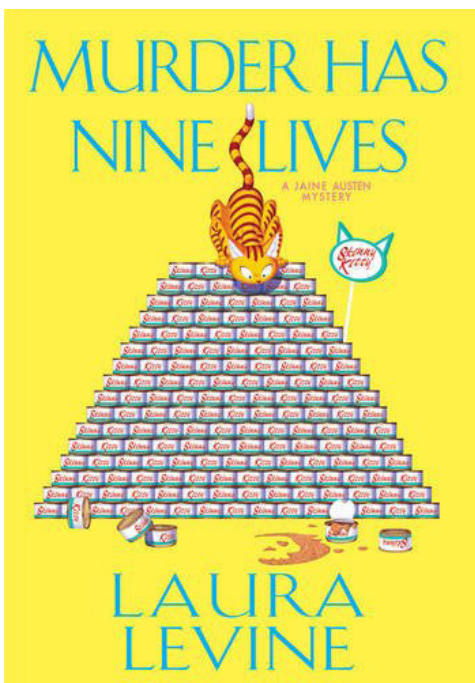
**Eckel, Wendy Sand.** [\*Death at the Day Lily Cafe\*](#) (Minotaur, \$25.99)

The day baker Rosalie Hart has been dreaming of is finally here: the grand opening of her Day Lily Café! Pretty as a picture and stuffed full of tasty organic treats, Rosalie is certain her new business will be a success. However before Rosalie has even settled into her role as business owner, her dear friend Doris Bird cashes in a personal favor. Doris wants Rosalie to help clear her little sister Lori of a murder charge. With the help of her friend and employee Glenn, Rosalie begins digging into the murder victim's past and discovers any number of the residents might have wanted him dead. Eckel introduced Rosalie in *Murder at Barclay Meadow*, and her latest has the same literary flavor profile as Diane Mott Davidson's books or Katherine Hall Page's culinary mysteries making it a tasty treat for readers of those series.

**Holt, Hazel.** [\*Mrs Malory and Death Is a Word\*](#) (NAL \$7.99)

Sheila Malory is thrilled when her old friend Eva Jackson moves back to Taviscombe. Since Eva is still recovering from the unexpected death of her husband Alan, a globetrotting foreign correspondent, Sheila believes being around old friends and family will be good for Eva. However, when Eva suddenly takes ill and dies shortly after beginning working on compiling a collection of her late husband's unpublished works, Sheila begins to think there may be more to her death than everyone in Taviscombe first imagined. There is something so wonderfully civilized about the Mrs. Malory mysteries with their quintessential British village setting and the lovingly etched characters who live there. Holt writes with a marvelously dry sense of wit that perfectly suits the storyline. The death of Holt last year means

this will, regrettably, be the last in the series, but the book serves as an excellent literary tribute to this author and is mandatory reading for anyone who loved Christie's Miss Marple books.



*Levine, Laura. [Murder Has Nine Lives](#)* (Kensington \$25)

Everything is coming up roses for free-lance writer Jaine Austen. Jaine (her mother loved literature but was a terrible speller) has a new job and a trip to Hawaii in her future (it's with her parents but still a trip to Hawaii is nothing to sneeze at). And the icing on the cake is the Skinny Kitty commercial Jaine's cat Prozac has just landed. However, when Skinny Kitty's inventor drops dead on the set, the claws come out from the rest of those involved in the production, and Jaine suddenly finds herself once again playing amateur sleuth in order to avoid a murder rap. This is the 14<sup>th</sup> installment in Levine's laugh-out-loud series featuring Jaine and everything fans love about the series is deftly integrated right into the madcap plot. If you like your cozy mysteries served up with plenty of chuckles and sweet charm, Levine – who once wrote scripts for such classic television shows as *The Bob Newhart Show* and *Laverne and Shirley* – is your gal.

*Maxwell, Edith. [Murder Most Fowl](#)* (Kensington \$25)

Who would want to kill Cam Flaherty's kind-hearted neighbor poultry farmer Wayne

Laitinen? When Cam and her boyfriend Massachusetts State Police Officer Pete Pappas do some digging, they discover several people may have wanted to cook Wayne's goose including a snooty neighbor who was pressuring Wayne to sell her some of his land as well as a local animal rights activist group, who had targeted Wayne's farm. The fourth in Maxwell's "Local Foods" series is another cleverly plotted traditional mystery that should appeal to fans of Sheila Connolly's Orchard series or Paige Shelton's Farmer's Market mysteries.

*McConnon, Maggie. [Wedding Bel Blues](#)* (St Martins \$7.99)

There is nothing like a dead body to put a damper on a party. At least this is what Belfast "Bel" McGrath discovers when a man plunges to his death from the second floor of Shamrock Manor, the location of Bel's cousin Caleigh's wedding reception. When Bel discovers that her old high school boyfriend Kevin Hanson is the police detective in charge of the investigation, she knows she is going to have to do something. After all, Kevin wasn't exactly the sharpest knife in the drawer back in the day and it doesn't look like he has gotten any smarter since then. All Bel has to do is figure out who among her family and friends would want to kill the stranger before Kevin discovers Caleigh just happened to have a one-night stand with the man right before the wedding! If you like your amateur sleuth mysteries served up with plenty of tart wit and a generous dollop of romance, this debut by McConnon will be right up your reading alley.

*Murphy, Haughton. [Murder.com](#)* (Mysterious Press, \$14.99)

When Reuben Frost's old friend Luis Bautista from the NYPD hints that he would welcome Reuben's help with a new case he just opened – a young woman who lived in an apartment building near where Reuben and his wife Cynthia reside is found dead – Reuben politely turns him down since the septuagenarian attorney firmly believes he is retired from amateur detective work. However when the murder victim turns out to be related to an important client at the firm where Reuben used to work, he – as well as his charming wife Cynthia – once again



find themselves searching for clues in order to catch a clever killer. There has been a long hiatus between the last Reuben Frost book and this new installment in the series, but long-time fans of this oh-so-civilized amateur sleuth will be glad he is back. In many ways, Frost's erudite approach to solving murders reminds me of the John Putnam Thatcher mysteries written by Emma Lathen.

## Nonfiction Titles

**Blume, Lesley.** [Everybody Behaves Badly](#) (Houghton, \$27)

Blume takes a look at the story behind Hemingway's first novel *The Sun Also Rises* by chronicling the author's exploits in France and Paris in the 1920s as he was just getting his start as a writer. Inspired by an excursion to Pamplona to see the running of the bulls, Hemingway used the trip (as well as his friendships with a number of real life ex-patriate personalities) as templates for the characters in book. But writing the novel was just the first step in Hemingway's long-term goal of becoming a published author. Now he had to figure out a way to bring the book to the attention of someone in the rarified world of book publishing. Blume did a ton of original research for *Everybody Behaves Badly* by going through correspondence and memoirs by other members of the Lost Generation as well as interviewing some of their descendants. The end result is a fascinating look at the origin of Hemingway as an author as well as the manner in which his publisher marketed his first novel (and in the process created one of the first "literary brands").

**Dunn, Daisy.** [Catullus' Bedspread](#) (HarperCollins \$25.99) Dunn explores the life and times of Roman poet Gaius Valerius Catullus in this lively account of the classical writer, who could be thought of as the *Fifty Shades of Grey* literary sensation of his era. Catullus' tumultuous romantic relationship with his married lover Clodia, provided the spark for many of his sexy poems, and Dunn not only looks at Catullus' literary oeuvre but also the *tempora* and *mores* in which Catullus created his work.

**Fenster, Julie M.** [Jefferson's America](#) (Crown \$30)

Jefferson knew that purchasing the Louisiana Territory in 1803 from Napoleon in 1803 was risky, but it was a gamble he was willing to take. Buying the land not only geographically doubled the size of the nation, it effectively blocked the British and the Spanish from any plans they may have had about seizing the commercially important Mississippi River and its port of New Orleans. In order to cement the U.S.'s claim to the unexplored territory within this sizeable tract of land, the President put together an "army" of explorers and scientists, whose task was to mark the borders of the new U.S. acquisition and record what they discovered in the process. In this lively account, Fenster looks at men like Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, Dr. George Hunter, and Zebulon Pike, who braved the wilds of the Louisiana Territory in order that the borders of our nation could grow.

**Henderson, Jennifer Morag.** [Josephine Tey: A Life](#) (Dufour \$38)

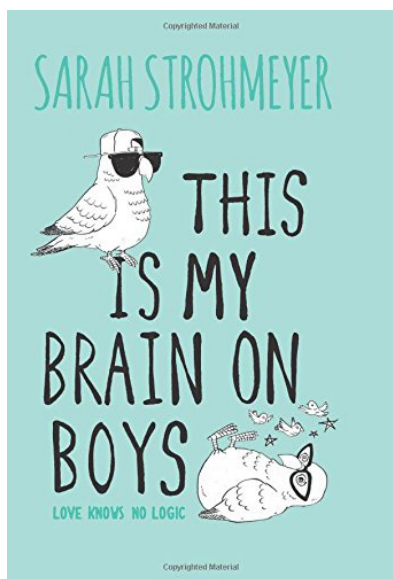
One of the pen names of Elizabeth MacKintosh, Tey was one of the Golden Age's "Queens of Crime." Her book *The Daughter of Time* routinely shows up on the number one slot of many lists compiled of the best mysteries of the century. MacKintosh also wrote a number of commercially successful and critically acclaimed plays under the name Gordon Daviot, and her play *Richard of Bordeaux* helped turn actor John Gielgud into a star. Yet very little is known about MacKintosh herself since she closely guarded every detail about her personal life. Now with a skill for detective work that rivals that of any Golden Age sleuth, Henderson gathers the assorted parts and pieces of MacKintosh's life and by skillfully putting them together finally gives readers a true picture of this remarkable writer.

## Children's Lit and YA Fic

*Hand, Cynthia.* [My Lady Jane](#) (Harper \$17.99)

In this fantasy take on history, King Edward IV and Lady Jane Grey (the Nine Days Queen) wind up with happier endings than in real life. In the book, rather than being divided by religion (Protestant vs. Catholic), people in England fall into two camps: Edians and Verities. Edians can shape-shift while Verities not only can't change their shapes, they believe magic is evil and will do anything to stamp out the Edians in their midst. In the book, Lady Jane Grey is about to be married off to Gifford Dudley (a nobleman, who spends his days as a horse and his nights as a man) by her cousin King Edward IV in order to secure the throne since someone keeps trying to poison him. But all this is this merely a framework for a clever, funny, and completely off-the-wall take on Tudor history.

kiss. Some readers may remember Strohmeier's fabulously funny "Bubbles Yablonsky" mysteries from a decade ago, and the author brings that same delicious sense of wit to her new YA novels.



*Strohmeier, Sarah.* [This is My Brain on Boys](#) (Harper \$17.99)

With one year left in high school, all of Addie Emerson's attention is focused on securing a full scholarship to Harvard. To win the Athenian Award that gives out this scholarship, Addie has been working on a scientific formula that will cause two people to fall in love by placing them in a traumatic situation. Among Addie's latest test subjects are Lauren and Kris. Addie plans on making Lauren fall for Kris, but Kris has a few ideas of his own about who he wants to









