

Midmonth BookNotes

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October's Sweet Literary Treats



Aiken, Joan. [Smile of the Stranger](#) (Sourcebooks \$8.99); [Weeping Ash](#) (Sourcebooks \$8.99)

Over the course of her long literary career, Aiken wrote more than 100 books. Today she is best known and loved for her children's novels including the classic *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase*, which launched a series of popular and award-winning alternate history books set in nineteenth century England in which the Stuarts rather than the Hanovers reign. However, many people don't know that Aiken also wrote adult novels as well. Almost a quarter of her literary

output consists of books that combine to a lesser or greater deal mystery, suspense, romance and history with wildly entertaining results.

Sourcebooks has recently begun republishing some of Aiken's romance novels including *The Smile of the Stranger* and *The Weeping Ash*. *The Smile of the Stranger*, which is first in the Paget trilogy, opens with the heroine Juliana Paget being forced to pack her bags and leave Florence after she tells her scholar father about the strange lady with a crow-like voice she saw asking about them on the *Ponte Vecchio*. Traveling through revolutionary France, the Pagets escape across the English Channel in a balloon, but once Juliana arrives in England, she finds herself forced to rely on her own wits in order to survive the unscrupulous plotting of some of her estranged relatives. *The Smile of the Stranger* is a wonderful example of Aiken's flair for delivering to readers a novel jam-packed with madcap adventures brimming over with danger and intrigue, a marvelously quirky cast of characters, a generous dash of romance, and a substantial sprinkling of this author's distinctive sense of wit.

Next up is Aiken's *The Weeping Ash*. This time the story centers on Fanny Price, whose arranged marriage to controlling Thomas Paget is definitely less than a love match. However while the couple is living at the Hermitage (owned by Juliana Paget from *The Smile of a Stranger*) Fanny finds a new friend in the person of the estate's gardener Andrew Talgarth. A parallel plotline concerns Thomas's cousins Cal and Scylla dangerous journey from India back to England. *The*

Benjamin, Melanie. [The Swans of Fifth Avenue](#) (\$16)

Best-selling historical novelist Benjamin (*The Aviator's Wife*) bases her latest impeccably crafted book, which is now out in trade paperback, 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 women 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 gossipy 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.

Berry, Ellen. [The Bookshop on Rosemary Lane](#) (Harper \$14.99)

After her mother Kitty's death, Della Cartwright now finds she is proud owner of her mum's 1000 volume cookbook collection since neither of her siblings want anything to do with them. Opening up a specialty bookshop dedicated to cookery tomes in the family's old home of Rosemary Cottage seems like a splendid idea, if Della can just convince everyone else in her life to get on board with her plan! This is the first in a new series of books set in the cozy British village of Burley Bridge, and Berry adds a nice dollop of tart

humor to her writing that neatly balances out the sweetness of her story.

Cabot, Meg. [Boy is Back](#) (Harper \$15.99)

Ten years after he left Bloomville for the pro golf circuit, Reed Stewart returns home when his parents cause a scandal by trying to pay for a meal with a postage stamp. Half of Reed's relatives think his parents have finally gone senile while the other half - including Reed - think they are just a tad eccentric. Everyone agrees, however, that a change is in order for the elderly couple. Becky Flowers loves her life in Bloomville, which includes her business helping elderly clients move, and she hasn't given her no-good high school ex boyfriend Reed Stewart a second thought in years. However, when Becky bumps into Reed, she suddenly finds her whole world turned upside down because the boy is back in town, and he needs her help. Cabot launched her loosely connected Boy series back in 2002 with *The Boy Next Door* when Chick Lit was the hot trend in publishing. Cabot's fun and funny contemporary romance was especially notable for the author's use of emails, texts, and other forms of social media as part of the storyline. Two more titles followed, and now more than a decade later, the fourth installment is ready for readers to enjoy since sassy, sexy contemporary romance (a.k.a. Chick Lit) is once again the literary flavor of the month.

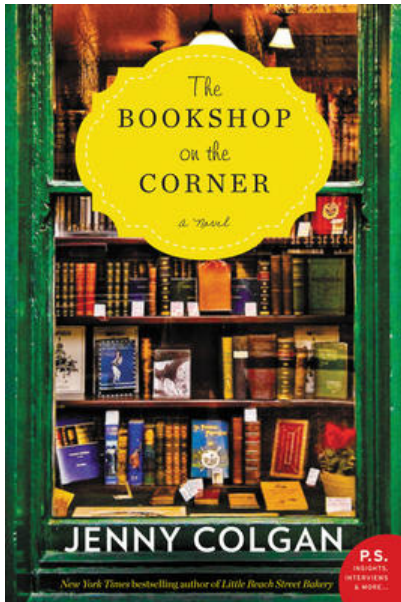
Carr, Robyn. [The Life She Wants](#) (Mira \$15.99)

After her husband is indicted for running a Ponzi scheme and then commits suicide, Emma Shay Compton returns to her California hometown to regroup. Once there, Emma unexpectedly bumps into her old estranged friend Riley Kerrigan, who betrayed Emma when the two were teenagers. Now the question of the day is can Emma forgive and forget what Riley did since she might be one of the few people in Emma's life, who doesn't think Emma benefited from her husband's financial thievery?

Childs, Laura. [Crepe Factor](#) (Berkley \$26).

Someone has stuck a fork in online restaurant critic Martin Lash, and the man is definitely done. Actually, to be more precise, Lash is dead

as New Orleans scrapbook owner Carmela Bertrand and her best friend Ava discover when they stumble across Lash's body while browsing at the Winter Market. At first, Carmela has no intention of getting involved in Lash's death. However, when the police – in the person of Carmela's current boyfriend Detective Edgar Babcock – arrest Carmela's old boyfriend restaurateur Quigg Brevard, Carmela can't resist Quigg's plea to help find the real killer. The latest entry in Child's and Moran's "Scrapbooking Mystery" series serves up plenty of what readers love and expect including lots of mouthwatering descriptions of food (selected recipes included!), some tips on scrapbooking and crafting, a vividly detailed setting, plenty of quirky characters, and smidge of romance.



Colgan, Jenny. [The Bookshop on the Corner](#) (Harper \$14.99)

When her job as a librarian for the city of Birmingham is cut and her library begins jettisoning its collection of old books, Nina Redmond finds her life at a crossroads. At first, Nina tries to adapt to the changing tides sweeping the library world by searching for another job, but she quickly finds that "there seemed to be no place for librarians anymore. Information officers, yes. Play advisors and local government PRs and marketing consultants, but nothing that seemed to have anything to do with what she had done her entire life, the only job she wanted: finding the right book for the right person." An ad for an old van being sold in Scotland suddenly gives Nina an idea. What if she bought the van, outfit

ted it with all the books she had "rescued" from the library, and became a mobile bookseller? That is the premise of British author Colgan's latest sweetly charming novel that sends her heroine to a cozy little village in Scotland, where she discovers plenty of "adventure, magic, and a soul in a place that's beginning to feel like home." I absolutely adored this book not only for its delightful cast of characters and gentle storyline, but also for the way the author writes about the importance of books and reading in our lives. If you loved Nina George's *The Little Paris Bookshop* or if you just want a novel that will make you feel a bit better about the world, you really can't do better than *The Bookshop on the Corner*.

Dare, Tessa. [Do You Want to Start a Scandal?](#) (Harper \$7.99)

In order to avoid marrying arrogant aristocrat Piers Brandon, Charlotte Highwood must discover the identities of the two lovers involved in a scandalous tryst the night of the Parkhurst ball, and prove that she was not one of them. If you like your historical romances served up with plenty of laughs, Dare's fun and flirty Regency-set love stories are a definite must-read.

Dickinson, Robert. [The Tourist](#) (Orbit \$26).

In this debut thriller by British author Dickinson, after a near extinction event (NEE), people hundreds of years in the future have perfected the art of time travel. The preferred era for visitors is the early 21st century, where shopping malls apparently have become the tourist mecca that cathedrals and the pyramids once were for us. Spens is a guide at a time travel resort but unfortunately, on his latest trip to England, one of his clients either forgets or purposely doesn't rejoin the group on its way back to the future. When Spens gets back to the future, he discovers that according to the official records, the woman never disappeared. Could this "tourist" be someone trying to change the future? By the time I was three chapters into this book, I was frantically searching the cabin for the nearest door marked "exit." For me, thrillers are all about the pacing, and this book just dragged. However, in all fairness, *Kirkus* loved *The Tourist* ending its review with "The characters are well-drawn

and distinctive, Dickinson's literary prose glides through the plot with graceful assurance, and the whole immersive enterprise concludes on a satisfyingly poetic note. Echoes of Bradbury and Orwell, in the service of a crackerjack conspiracy plot; a seductively intriguing work of speculative fiction."



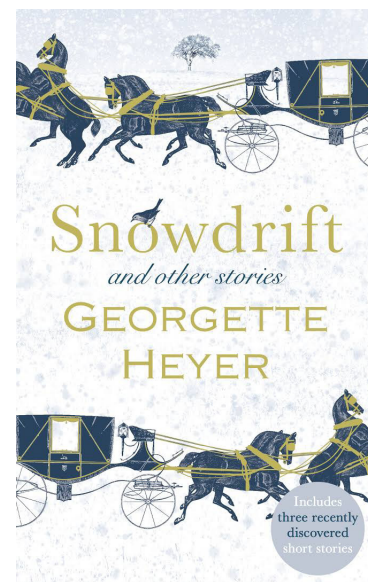
Gray, Juliana. [A Most Extraordinary Pursuit](#) (Berkley, \$15)

As the personal secretary to the eighth Duke of Olympia, Emmeline Rose Truelove never failed to successfully complete any job she was given. However, when the newly widowed Duchess of Olympia asks Emmeline to undertake a little task for her, Emmeline starts to think there might be a first time for everything. Arthur Maximilian Haywood, the new heir to the ducal title, has gone missing. Max, a long-time scholar and enthusiastic amateur archaeologist was last seen in Crete digging at Knossos. The Duchess wants Emmeline to travel to Crete, find Max, and bring him back home to England. Of course, the Duchess wouldn't think of sending Emmeline on a mission like this all by herself, and she has selected the perfect traveling companion for her: John Worthington, the Marquess of Silverton. Gray, the pseudonym for historical novelist Beatriz Williams, borrows Emmeline, who played a wonderful secondary role in some of Gray's earlier historical romances, and uses her to launch this splendidly amusing, wonderfully witty new historical mystery series that artfully blends adventure, history, myth, romance, and a dash of the paranormal into one captivating tale. If you thought Bogart and Bacall had some serious romantic sparks in *The African Queen*, wait until you see what develops between Emmeline and John!

Gray, Shelley S.

[An Amish Family Christmas](#) (Harper \$12.99); *[A Sister's Wish](#)* (Harper \$12.99)

Readers who enjoy Amish romances (or, as they are sometimes called "buggy and bonnet" love stories) and who have yet to discover Gray's novels are definitely in for a treat. In *An Amish Family Christmas*, Julia Brubacher arrives in the small Ohio town of Charm with her young daughter Penny hoping for a new start in life as the recently widowed "Julia Kemp." To avoid any questions about her past, Julia plans on keeping to herself, but when she locks herself and Penny out of their home one cold December night; Julia is forced to accept some help from her equally reclusive neighbor Levi Kinsinger. In *A Sister's Wish*, Amelia Kinsinger has been in love with bad boy Simon Hochstetler for as long as she can remember. Now that Simon is back in Charm, Amelia is determined to make him finally notice her, but Simon is equally convinced that because of his past, he will never be good enough for Amelia. If you think Amish novels are only about perfect people living perfectly simple lives, Gray's books will surprise you (in a good way) since she creates characters with realistic flaws, who struggle with the kind of obstacles we all face in life.



Heyer, Georgette. [Snowdrift and Other Stories](#)

(Heinemann \$21)

Georgette Heyer is considered to be the Queen of Regency romances since she pretty much made

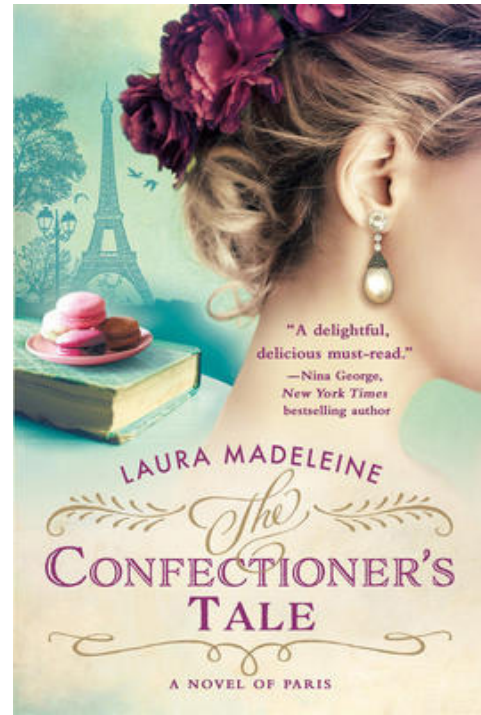
this period of history her own beginning with her first novel, *The Black Moth*, which was published in 1921. Heyer would go on to write more than fifty more novels; the majority of them Regency romances, but she also wrote several historical novels and eleven contemporary detective stories (which, if you love Golden Age mysteries and haven't yet read, I envy you). Previously entitled *Pistols for Two, Snowdrift and Other Stories* includes three recently discovered short stories by Heyer, making this the perfect gift (birthday, holiday, St. Swithin's Day, you name it) for any romance reader.

Hilderbrand, Elin. [Winter Storms](#) (Little-Brown \$26)

In this conclusion to the Hilderbrand's Winter Street trilogy, its holiday season in Nantucket and the Quinn family is hoping this year's celebration will be one of their best. But even as the family is gathering together, a powerful blizzard is heading their way. *Winter Storms* deftly mingles love and tears into a heartwarming holiday tale that works best for those readers, who have been following the Quinn family saga from the beginning.

Hughes, Anita. [Christmas in Paris](#) (\$15.99)

When her fiancé Neil decides trade in big city life in order to take over his grandparent's farm, Isabel Lawson calls off their nuptials since she isn't ready to give up her job as a financial analyst for a new career as farmer's wife. Rather than have their honeymoon tickets to Paris go to waste, however, Isabel decides to go by herself. Once she arrives in the City of Light, Isabel meets sexy French illustrator Alec, who has been jilted by his bride. The two have a ball exploring Paris, but then a chance encounter with a fortune teller and a close call with a taxi, has Isabel questioning everything she thought was important in life. Can't afford to spend the holidays in Paris, Hughes' latest fairy-tale romance is an easy way to enjoy all the fabulous foods and celebrated *haute couture* goods this magical city has to offer without having to worry about a bill from the credit card company arriving in the mail.



Madeleine, Laur. [The Confectioner's Tale](#) (St Martins \$25.99)

At the famous Patisserie Clermont, a chance encounter with the owner's daughter has given one young man a glimpse into a life he never knew existed: of sweet cream and melted chocolate, golden caramel and powdered sugar, of pastry light as air. But it is not just the art of confectionery that holds him captive, and soon a forbidden love affair begins. Almost eighty years later, Petra Stevenson discovers a hidden photograph of her grandfather as a young man with two people she has never seen before. Scrawled on the back of the picture are the words "Forgive me." Unable to resist the mystery behind it, Petra begins to unravel the story of two star-crossed lovers and one irrevocable betrayal. Sweet French pastries and an intriguing historic mystery add up to one delectable debut novel.

Malpas, Jodi Ellen. [The Protector](#) (Grand Central \$15.99)

It started out as just another job for ex-military sniper Jake Sharp. Protect rich socialite Camille Logan, whose father's ruthless business dealings have put her life in jeopardy. However, when Jake finds himself falling for Camille, it makes guarding her almost impossible. Once before, Jake had become distracted from duty, and the consequences still haunt him. Now Jake faces the

most difficult choice he has ever had to make between finishing the job he swore he would complete or compromise the mission for the woman he loves. Imagine the movie *The Bodyguard* but with more sex (way, way more sex). British author Malpas definitely knows how to ratchet up the sexual chemistry between her protagonists to full boil, and the result is an intensely sensual love story.

Montefiore, Santa. [The Girl in the Castle](#) (Signed) (\$14.99)

Built on the stunning green hills of West Cork, Ireland, Castle Deverill is Kitty's beloved home, where many generations of Deverills have also resided. Although she's Anglo-Irish, Kitty's heart completely belongs to the wild countryside of the Emerald Isle, and her devotion to her Irish-Catholic friends Bridie Doyle, the daughter of the castle's cook, and Jack O'Leary, the vet's son, is unmatched—even if Jack is always reminding her that she isn't fully Irish. Still, Jack and Kitty can't help falling in love although they both know their union faces the greatest obstacles since they are from different worlds. The first in a trilogy set against Ireland's fight to gain its independence from Great Britain in the early 20th century that should appeal to fans of Kate Morton.

Patchett, Ann. [Commonwealth Signed](#) (Harper \$27.99)

Patchett, who has not only published six novels and three works of nonfiction but is also the co-owner of an independent bookstore in Nashville, recently shared in an interview with *BookPage* magazine that for her, "nothing was more terrifying than writing a novel that had to do with her family." With *Commonwealth*, Patchett faces her literary fears by not only incorporating her own experiences as part of a blended family but by drawing inspiration from some of her own memories of moving from California to the South as well. The novel begins one Sunday afternoon in Southern California when Bert Cousins turns up at Franny Keating's christening party uninvited only to end up kissing Franny's mother Beverly. That kiss ends up becoming the catalyst that leads to the dissolution of both their marriages and the formation of a new family

composed of Bert, Franny, and their children. While spending summers together in Virginia, the Keating and Cousins children forge a close bond that is tested when a fatal accident splits the group apart. Years later, when Franny becomes romantically involved with author Leo Posen, she shares her childhood memories with Leo, who uses it as the basis for his latest best-selling novel thus forcing Franny and the others to finally deal with their shared past.

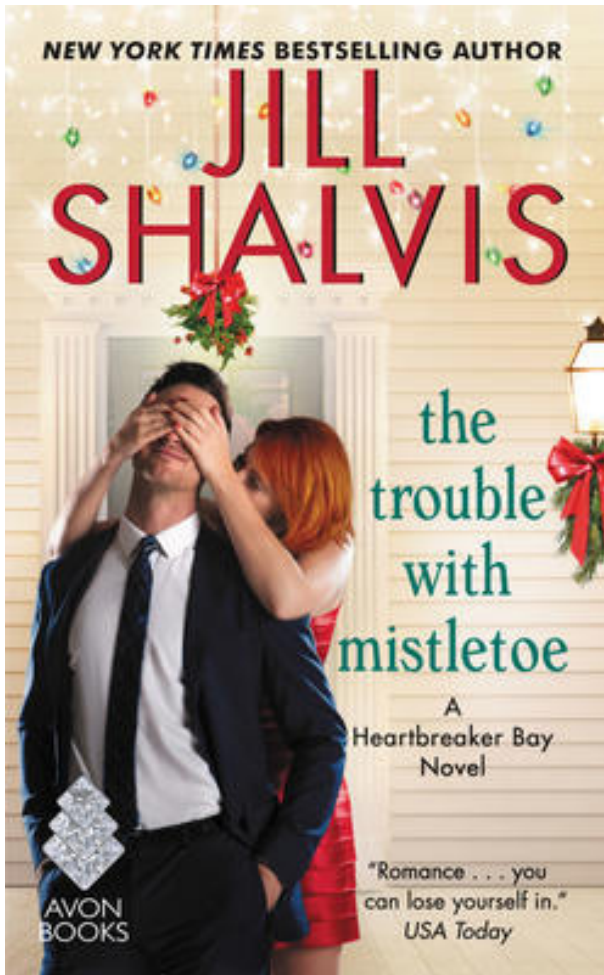
Picoult, Jodi. [Small Great Things](#) (Random \$28.99)

A woman and her husband admitted to a hospital to have a baby requests that their nurse be reassigned - they are white supremacists and don't want Ruth, who is African-American, to touch their baby. The hospital complies with the couple's demand, but the baby later goes into cardiac distress when Ruth is the only nurse available. Ruth spends just a few seconds hesitating before rushing in to perform CPR. When her indecision ends in tragedy, Ruth finds herself on trial, represented by a white public defender who warns against bringing race into a courtroom. Picoult tells her latest novel through the viewpoints of three characters: Ruth, the baby's father Turk, and Kennedy, the attorney who defends Ruth. Along with her usual *au courant* storyline, Picoult's invests all of her characters with layers of nuance, which gives *Small Great Things* a remarkable sense of richness and depth. Filled with both heartbreak and hope, *Small Great Things*, whose title is taken from a speech given by Martin Luther King, is an unflinching look at race and racism in America. While Picoult might tie up the ending a bit too neatly for every reader's tastes, it in no way diminishes the power of this book, and the light it shines on how we treat one another.

Sands, Lynsay. [Immortal Nights](#) (\$7.99)

Abigail Forsythe's life hasn't been easy lately. Still, if there's one thing guaranteed to take her mind off an empty bank account and abandoned dreams, it's a naked man locked in a plane's cargo hold. When Abigail gives into her instincts to free Tomasso Notte, she suddenly finds herself forced to rely on him when the couple wind

up miles from civilization and on the run from Tomasso's kidnappers.



Shalvis, Jill. [Trouble with Mistletoe](#)
(Harper \$7.99)

It has been more than a decade since Willa Davis last saw Keane Winters, but he still has the power to annoy her to no end. If ruining high school for Willa wasn't bad enough, now Keane can't even be bothered to recognize Willa when he walks into her pet shop with a pink, bedazzled cat carrier in his hand. Keane can't figure out why the owner of South Bark Mutt Shop seems to be so mad at him since as far as he knows they have never met. But it doesn't matter because Keane needs a cat sitter a.s.a.p. for Petunia, the cranky-as-all-get-out Siamese cat his great aunt has left in his care. Willa reluctantly agrees to take care of Petunia, but that is where she is going to draw the line. Even if Keane seems to be a completely different person, there is no way in heck she is going to let him back into her life. At least that is what Willa thinks... The latest in Shalvis's fun and sexy Heartbreaker Bay series is another addictive blend of love and laughter.

Thayne, Raeanne. [Snowfall on Haven Point](#)

(Harlequin \$7.99)

As a favor for her best friend Wynona, widow and single mother Andrea Montgomery agrees to keep an eye on her Wynona's brother Sheriff Marshall Bailey, who is recovering from a hit and run, and just might be the grumpiest patient in the history. However, when a blizzard forces them to spend even more together during the holidays, Marshall finds himself falling for the relationship-shy Andrea despite his best efforts to remain a Christmas Grinch.

Thomas, Sherry. [A Study in Scarlet Women](#)

(Berkley, \$15)

When her father fails to honor his promise to provide the funds needed for her education, Charlotte Holmes is forced to take drastic measures. Charlotte devises a plan in which she is caught in a compromising position with a married man in order to thwart her parents' plans to marry her off to a suitable man. Now to avoid being exiled to her family's country estate, Charlotte runs off and settles into life in London as an independent woman, where she finds a new benefactress and a way to support herself by using her talent for "discernment" to open a private consultation business as "Sherlock Holmes." However, when her beloved sister Livia is suspected of being involved in a scandalous murder, Charlotte must employ all of her powers of observation in order to find the real killer. As an award-winning historical romance author, Thomas has always taken creative risks with her stories. Now as Thomas launches a superbly entertaining new historical mystery series, she does the same thing, and the end result is an absolutely brilliant take on the classic Sherlock Holmes we all know and love. I absolutely adored the clever spin Thomas put on some of the iconic secondary characters from the canon as well as the skillful way in which the author mingled history and mystery with just the right dash of dry wit and smidgeon of romance into her cleverly constructed plot. If you love Laurie King's Mary Russell books or Deanna Raybourn's new Veronica Speedwell historical series, don't miss this smashing book!

Walker, Margaret. [Jubilee](#)

(Houghton \$12.95)

One of America's most popular and respected African-American writers, Walker first gained national attention with her 1942 poetry collection *For My People*, which won the Yale Younger Poets Award. She was awarded the Houghton Mifflin Literary Fellowship for *Jubilee*, which went on to become a bestseller. *Jubilee* tells the story of Vyry, the child of a white plantation owner and his black mistress, and the novel is a vivid account of both the opulence and brutality of antebellum South as well as a riveting account of the South's wartime ruin and its efforts to rebuild itself during the Reconstruction. The author based her heroine on the life of her own grandmother, Margaret Duggans Ware Brown, and this Fiftieth anniversary edition of Walker's novel offers an interesting contrast that other classic Civil War novel: *Gone with the Wind*.

□

Woods, Sherryl. [Mending Fences](#)

(Mira \$15.99)

For ten years Emily Dobbs and Marcie Carter have been the closest of friends. They've raised their kids together, shared joy and heartache, exchanged neighborhood gossip over tea. But when Marcie's son, now a college freshman sports star, is arrested for date rape, the bond between the families could be shattered forever. Wood's latest women's fiction novel not only explores how a crisis can test the different members of a family, it is a thoughtful look at how the bonds of friendship can help support women in their time of greatest need.

Zanetti, Rebecca. [Deadly Silence](#)

(Grand Central \$14.99)

Paralegal Zara Remington knows she is taking a risk by indulging in an affair with sexy P.I. Ryker Jones, one of the owners of The Lost Bastards Investigative Agency. Zara knows Ryker isn't being completely upfront with her about his life, and the more she learns, the less Zara wants to know. But when all hell breaks loose, Ryker may be the only one, who can keep Zara safe; unless, of course, his past catches up with them first.

Food and Drink

America's Test Kitchens. [What Good Cooks Know](#) (America's Test Kitchens, \$29.95)

Those dedicated (some might say consumed) staff at America's Test Kitchens have now taken 20 years spent researching and testing assorted recipes and boiled it all down into an essential guide for home cooks. Not only do the contributors deliver the details on the best ways to shop, prepare, and cook an assortment of foods, they also offer a range of extensively tested and proven culinary tips, tricks, and techniques that will help save you time and money in the kitchen. Recommendations for choosing the best culinary equipment as well as 50 essential recipes round out this terrific resource.

Bittman, Mark. [How to Bake Everything](#) (Houghton, \$35)

Bittman, author of the best-seller *How to Cook Everything*, now turns his culinary attention to the sweeter side of the kitchen with this exhaustive baking guide that includes more than 2,000 recipes for a wide variety of sweet treats. Bittman likes to provide lots of what he calls foundation recipes, for which he then offers several easy twists. Useful instructions for adapting some of the recipes for vegan and other dietary needs are also included as well as a sampling of "savory" baking treats.

Bourdain, Anthony. [Appetites](#) (Harper, \$37.50)

In his first cookbook in ten years, Bourdain, the legendary bad boy of the kitchen and author of *Kitchen Confidential* (the classic tell-all book about working in a professional kitchen), boils down more than forty years spent cooking into a collection of his favorite recipes suitable for any home cook. Dishes range from simple scrambled eggs and tuna salad to lasagna Bolognese. Bourdain even throws in a separate chapter dedicated to hosting the perfect Thanksgiving dinner!

Brown, Alton. [Everday Cook](#) (Random, \$35)

Known for his Peabody Award-winning show deliciously acidic sense of wit. *Good Eats*, as well

as his snarky – yet informative - commentary on the Food Network’s *Iron Chef America*, Brown has also written seven cookbooks, several of which not only landed on the NYT Best-seller list, but also garnered him a couple of James Beard award nominations (think the Edgars but for food writing). With *Everyday Cook*, Brown has chosen to give his fans his most personal collection of recipes – arranged by time of day-to date since everything included in the book is a dish that he prepares for himself, family, and friends at home. Included among the collection are recipes for Always Perfect Oatmeal, Butter-scotch Puddin’, and Salisbury Steak all served up a heaping helping of Brown’s.

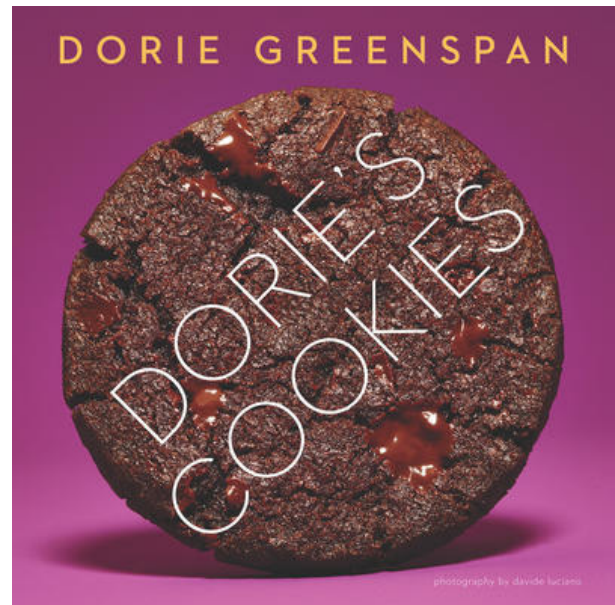
Freedman, Paul. [Ten Restaurants that Changed America](#) (WW Norton, \$35)

This fascinating book explores how the opening of different restaurants in America reflected the current culinary trends going on in the country beginning with Delmonico’s, which opened its doors in New York City in 1827. Whether charting the rise of our love affair with Chinese food through San Francisco’s fabled The Mandarin, evoking the richness of Italian food through Mamma Leone’s, or chronicling the rise and fall of French haute cuisine through Henri Soulé’s Le Pavillon, food historian Paul Freedman uses each restaurant to tell a wider story of race and class, immigration and assimilation. Freedman also treats us to a scintillating history of the then-revolutionary Schrafft’s, a chain of convivial lunch spots that catered to women, and that bygone favorite, Howard Johnson’s, which pioneered midcentury, on-the-road dining, only to be swept aside by McDonald’s. Lavishly designed with more than 100 photographs and images, including original menus.

Garten, Ina. [Cooking for Jeffrey](#) (Clarkson Potter, \$35)

Ina Garten has been married to her husband Jeffrey for 46 years. Now in her latest cookbook, the Barefoot Contessa shares her recipes that Jeffrey has loved the most as well as gifting readers with the charming story of their courtship as well as some tales about their many years together. From simple dinners like skillet roasted lemon chicken to entertaining ideas and recipes like

herbed goat cheese, camembert, and prosciutto tartines for serving a crowd, Ina has it all, and she delivers it in her typical engaging, down-to-earth manner. There is even a separate chapter dedicated to bread and cheese, with recipes and tips for creating the perfect cheese course.



Greenspan, Dorie. [Dorie's Cookies](#) (Houghton, \$35)

Greenspan has collaborated with Julia Child and Pierre Herme on cookbooks as well as more recently opening her own popup cookie retail outlets in New York City. But even though she has created more than 300 cookie recipes over her career, this is her first cookbook specifically dedicated to cookies. The end result is well worth the wait for bakers. Every cookie recipe Greenspan includes in her new cookbook had to earn her “three purple stars of approval,” i.e. every cookie had to be so special that it begged to be made again and again. Cookies for every taste and occasion are here. There are company treats like Portofignos, with chocolate dough and port-soaked figs, and lunch-box Blueberry Buttermilk Pie Bars. They Might Be Breakfast Cookies are packed with goodies—raisins, dried apples, dried cranberries, and oats— while Almond Crackle Cookies have just three ingredients. There are dozens of choices for the Christmas cookie swaps, including Little Rascals (German jam sandwich cookies with walnuts), Italian Sausissons (chocolate log cookies studded with dried fruit), and Snowy-Topped Brownie Drops. And who but America’s favorite baker could

devise a cookie as intriguing as Pink-Peppercorn Thumbprints or as popular as the World Peace Cookie, with its 59 million Internet fans?

Hall, Craig and Kathryn. [A Perfect Score](#) (Center Street, \$26)

Twenty years ago, Kathryn and Craig Hall purchased a century-old winery in the Napa Valley. *A Perfect Score* is the story of how this couple built their business from a fledgling effort into one of the most respected wineries in California with their celebrated HALL Wines and WALT Wines. Readers who love a good glass of wine will find much to savor in the Halls' engaging tale about the art, soul, and business of a modern winery.

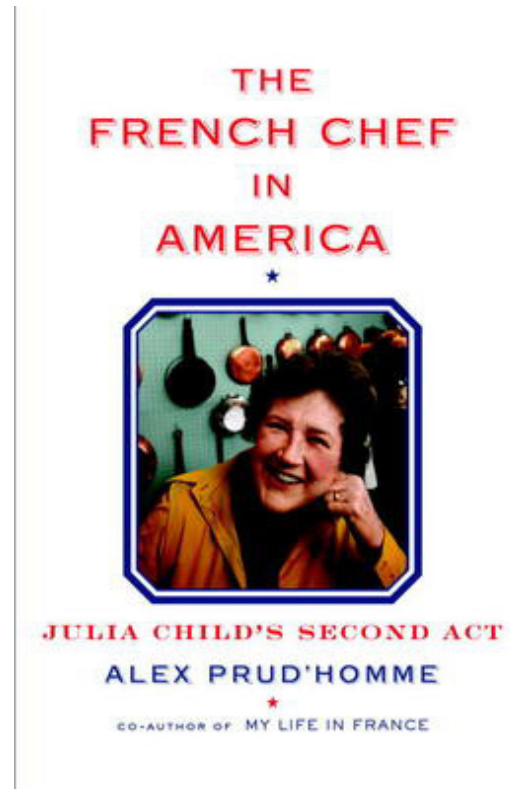
Khosrova, Elaine. [Butter](#) (Algonquin, \$25.95)

Butter is such a staple in most of our kitchens, that we frequently take it for granted. Now award-winning culinary writer Khosrova shares the fascinating story of this very special ingredient. Covering the history of butter from Stone Age times to the present day, the author gives readers an entertaining look at how butter has shaped society and cooking as well as the methods by which varied types of milk (cow's, goats, yaks, etc.) can be used to produce butter. From high tech production methods used by Land of Lakes and other commercial enterprises to the hand-crafted techniques boutique butter makers now employ, by the end of this marvelous book, readers will know everything they need to know about how butter ends up in their refrigerator at home. A nice selection of butter-rich recipes rounds out the last half of the book (the coffee cake recipe looks particularly yummy). If you loved Mark Kurlansky's books *Cod* and *Salt*, this just may be an equally tasty literary treat.

Parsons, Brad. [Amaro](#) (Ten Speed, \$26)

While Europeans have enjoyed bittersweet liquors for decades, Americans have only recently discovered the joys of this class of liqueurs. Collectively known as amari in Italian, there is actually a broad range of flavors available to drinkers. Parson delves into the rich history of amaro as well as looking at a selection of bartenders and bars that showcase this type of

liquor. Recipes for classic drinks such as boulevardier as well as newer cocktails like cynara that use amaro are included as well as directions for DIY amaro for those who want to brew up a batch at home.



Prud'homme, Alex. [The French Chef in America](#) (Knopf, \$27.95)

Prud'homme, the great-nephew of Child, collaborated with America's best-known home chef on her memoir *My Life in France*, which detailed Julia Child's first trip to France and the story behind how she came to write *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*. Now Prud'homme looks at Child's "second act" in her life as her first cookbook is published and she becomes a star on public television with *The French Chef*. The book provides plenty of details about the latter part of Child's life and her relationships with her husband Paul (the love of her life), her editor Judith Jones, as well as other culinary luminaries such as James Beard and Jacques Pepin. Fascinating behind-the-scenes information about how Child wrote her following cookbooks is included as well as stories about the creation of the many different cooking shows with which Child was involved. If you love Julia Child (and really, who among us doesn't?), you will not want to miss this charming, entertaining biography.

Simonson, Robert. [A Proper Drink](#) (Ten Speed, \$27)

Simonson begins his “spirited” (sorry, I couldn’t resist) account in 1987 when mixologist Dale DeGroff used a copy of the classic 1862 guide “How to Mix Drinks” to recreate some of the great drinks of the past for the Rainbow Room at Rockefeller Center. DeGroff went on to become the first “startender” (star bartender) in America. For his detailed look at the craft cocktail renaissance, Simonson interviewed more than 200 different bar owners, bartenders, and patrons, who have in the last 25 years changed the way we drink our liquor. The book also features a curated list of approximately 40 cocktails – 25 modern classics, plus an addition 15 or so rediscovered classics and modern contenders to emerge in bars around the world.

Stewart, Martha. [Martha Stewart’s Vegetables](#) (Potter, \$29.50)

This go-to culinary guide for home cooks by the doyenne of all things culinary and her many minions provides information on selecting, storing, preparing, and cooking a wide range of vegetables. Includes 150 recipes including such tasty (and good for you) dishes as Swiss chard lasagna, asparagus and watercress pizza and carrot fries.

Happy Anniversary Curious George



Drummond, Allan. [The Journey that Saved Curious George](#) (Houghton, \$17.99)

As the Nazi Army marched into Paris in June 1940, H.A. Rey and his wife Margret fled the city on bicycles they had assembled from various parts. Packed among the water and supplies in the suitcases strapped to the bikes, were the couple’s manuscripts, including what would eventually become the story of a certain curious monkey named George. Drummond’s book about the literary couple, who created the world’s most famous primate – aside, that is, from King Kong – was originally published in 2005, but it has been updated and released in a new edition as part of this year’s celebration of the 75th anniversary of the publication of the first Curious George book. It is a fascinating tale about the couple, who married in Brazil in 1935 and then sailed to Europe in 1936 for a late honeymoon. The two began collaborating on children’s books while in Paris, and their first book *Raffy and the 9 Monkeys* was published in 1939. The advance the couple received from a French publisher in 1940 allowed them to escape France one step ahead of the Germans. The Reys finally relocated in New York City, where they were reunited with their British editor, who now worked for Houghton Mifflin Co. After giving one of the manuscripts they had brought with them a few minor tweaks including changing the name of the lead character from Fifi to George, the book was published. The Curious George series now has 133 titles by Rey and other authors with more than 75 million copies having been sold around the globe. Illustrated with photographs, sketches, and extracts from Rey’s diary as well as letters to and from their editors, Borden’s book is a fascinating look at the evolution of this children’s literary classic and the couple who created it.

Rey, H.A. and Margeret Rey. [The Complete Adventures of Curious George](#) (Houghton, \$34.99)

For seventy-five years, Curious George has delighted millions of young readers with his humorous antics. Now fans have the opportunity to have all seven of the original titles in the series available to them in one complete volume. Stories included in this collector’s edition are *Curious George*, *Curious George Takes a Job*, *Curious*

George Rides a Bike, Curious George Gets a Medal, Curious George Flies a Kite, Curious George Learns the Alphabet, and Curious George Goes to the Hospital. This edition also includes an original illustrated map of Curious George's world, as well as a new scrapbook biography of H. A. and Margret Rey's creative journey written by the historian Louise Borden.

