

Midmonth BookNotes

Volume 3 Issue 6 May BookNotes 2017

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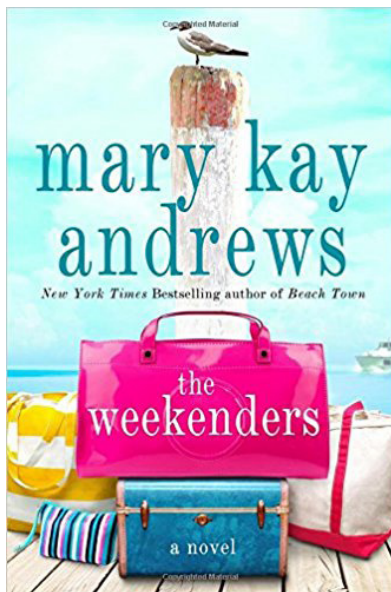
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Marvelous May



Andrews, Mary K. [Weekenders](#) (\$16.99)

While waiting for her husband to arrive on the ferry to Belle Isle one Friday afternoon, Riley Griggs is instead surprised when she is served with papers informing her that her island home is being foreclosed. To make matters worse, her husband is nowhere to be found. Riley turns to her island friends for help and support, but each of them has their own secrets and the clock is ticking as the mystery deepens. Now cocktail parties and crab boil aside, Riley must find a way to investigate the secrets of Belle Island and the husband she might not really know. More breezy beach reading from Andrews, who also wrote the award-winning Callahan Garrity mysteries as Kathy Hogan Trocheck.

Ashley, Jennifer. [Red Wolf](#) (Berkley \$7.99)

Fight club champion and red wolf shifter Dimitri is hoping for a more romantic relationship in the form

of a mate bond with his oldest friend leopard Shifter and a fellow tracker, Jaycee Bordeaux. But any future the couple might have together is threatened when the two are called to infiltrate a rogue group bent on enslaving Shifters. The latest sizzling sexy paranormal romance from Ashley, who also writes terrific historical mysteries as Ashley Gardner.



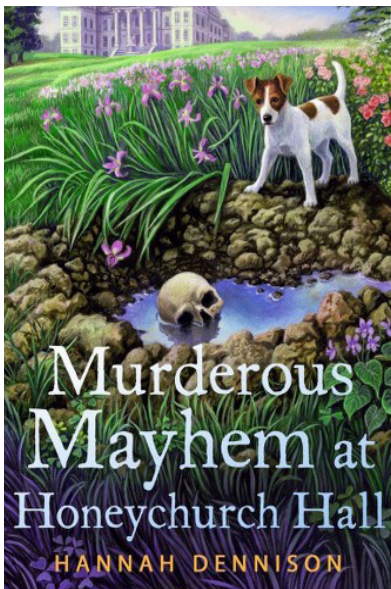
Boyle, Elizabeth. [Six Impossible Things Rhymes with Love](#) (Harper \$7.99)

Lord Rimswell is a man of honor and absolutes. If he says something is impossible, it is. Yet his life of right and wrong is turned upside down when he finds himself in a compromising situation with the most unyielding, yet maddeningly beautiful, woman in London. If only he had not given in to the irresistible temptation to kiss her. Now he must marry her. Miss Roselie Stratton *is* the very definition of impossible—headstrong, outspoken, and carrying a reticule of se-

crets that could ruin more than her reputation. Kissing Brody is hardly the most ruinous thing Roselie has ever done as a secret agent for the Home Office...nor will she let a marriage of convenience stop her from continuing her work. Little does Roselie realize that she has underestimated Brody's resolve to keep her safe—for he has hopelessly fallen in love with her and is determined to do the impossible by stealing her heart in return. Boyle is unrivaled when it comes to cooking up intrigue-spiced historical Regencies flavored with plenty of tart wit.

Brenner, Jamie. [Forever Summer](#) (LittleBrown \$26)

When a single careless mistake costs her the job she so carefully built, straitlaced Marin Bishop joins a stranger claiming to be her half-sister in Cape Cod, where she meets family members she never knew she had during a fateful summer of revelations and self-discovery. If you need a good New England beach read in lieu of Elin Hilderbrand, Brenner is your gal.



Dennison, Hannah. [Murderous Mayhem at Honeychurch Hall](#) (Minotaur \$25.99)

Not another body at Honeychurch Hall! That is the first thought that crosses Kat Stanford's mind when her mum Iris calls to tell her the news that her neighbor Eric Pugsley has discovered a body while digging a trench for a new sewer line. However, the good news is that it looks like this body has been around for a few centuries or more give or take, which means Kat will not have to rush to find a killer. However, in

the meantime, the only copy of *Ravished*, Iris's new manuscript, never arrives at her London publisher's office, and now Iris insists that Kat do some snooping around the tiny local village post office to see if she can find it. Now if only Kat could get some time to herself to get her new antiques business up and running! If you like British cozy mysteries served up with plenty of fun, frothy wit and endearingly quirky characters, Dennison's Honeychurch Hall series is just the ticket.

Eden, Cynthia. [After the Dark](#) (HQN \$7.99)

Former FBI agent Samantha Dark was one of the most respected profilers in the bureau, an expert on the twisted minds and dark hearts of the most depraved criminals. But when her own former lover turned out to be the serial killer she was hunting, Samantha's career was destroyed. Blamed for the FBI's failure on the complex case, Samantha fled Washington, DC, for the quiet anonymity of Alabama. Now an all-too-familiar killer is hunting once again. She can catch the sadistic assassin, but that means putting her trust in her former partner, Blake Gamble. Can't get enough dark, adrenaline-fueled romantic suspense by authors like Karen Rose, Lisa Jackson, or Lisa Gardner? Then you will definitely want to add Eden's new twisty tale to your summer reading list.

Flynn, Kathleen. [The Jane Austen Project](#) (Harper \$15.99)

Arriving in 1815 London, two time travelers from a technologically advanced future, a disaster-relief doctor and an actor-turned-scholar posing as wealthy West Indies planters, infiltrate Jane Austen's inner circle to recover a suspected unpublished novel, but when a special friendship forms between them all, they must make a tough choice. I adored this debut novel both because the author has a deep love of Austen and her work that shines through the story and because her inventive plot allows readers to vividly experience exactly what it would be like for someone today to try and adapt to life in 19th England. A definite must for Regency romance readers or fans of the inimitable Miss Austen.

Hart, Liliana. [Darkest Corner](#) (Pocket \$7.99)
Gravedigger Deacon Tucker, a former black ops agent who no one knows is alive, must save the world or die trying, and takes a job at a funeral home where he falls in love with mortician Tess Sherman who is the

only one who has the skills to stop a terror attack.



Herrick, Ellen. [The Forbidden Garden](#) (HarperCollins \$25.99)

At the nursery she runs with her sisters on the New England coast, Sorrel Sparrow has honed her rare gift for nurturing plants and flowers. Now that reputation, and a stroke of good timing, lands Sorrel an unexpected opportunity: reviving a long-dormant Shakespearean garden on an English country estate. Arriving at Kirkwood Hall, ancestral home of Sir Graham Kirkwood and his wife Stella, Sorrel is shocked by the desolate state of the walled garden. Generations have tried—and failed—to bring it back to glory. Sorrel senses heartbreak and betrayal here, perhaps even enchantment. Intrigued by the house’s history—especially the haunting tapestries that grace its walls—and increasingly drawn to Stella’s enigmatic brother, Sorrel sets to work. And though she knows her true home is across the sea with her sisters, instinct tells her that the English garden’s destiny is entwined with her own, if she can only unravel its secrets. This enchanting story about love, fate, families, and, of course, gardens is tailor made for fans of Sarah Addison Allen or anyone who loved Alice Hoffman’s *Practical Magic*. Herrick’s first novel, about another of the Sparrow sisters – Patience - was titled (very apropos) [The Sparrow Sisters](#).

Honeyman, Gail. [Eleanor Oliphant Is Completely Fine](#) (Penguin \$26)

Meet Eleanor Oliphant: She struggles with appropriate social skills and tends to say exactly what

she’s thinking. Nothing is missing in her carefully timetabled life of avoiding social interactions, where weekends are punctuated by frozen pizza, vodka, and phone chats with Mummy. But everything changes when Eleanor meets Raymond, the bumbling and deeply unhygienic IT guy from her office. When she and Raymond together save Sammy, an elderly gentleman who has fallen on the sidewalk, the three become the kinds of friends who rescue one another from the lives of isolation they have each been living. And it is Raymond’s big heart that will ultimately help Eleanor find the way to repair her own profoundly damaged one. Comparisons to Graeme Simsion’s *The Rosie Effect* certainly seem appropriate here.

Kilpack, Josi S. [The Vicar’s Daughter](#) (Shadow Mountain \$15.99)

Family tradition dictates that only one Wilton daughter at a time can make their debut in society. So far, the four oldest Wilton daughters have successfully made matches, but for the last three years painfully shy Lenora has failed to make a connection with even one eligible suitor. So, Cassie, the youngest Wilton daughter, decides to give Lenora a little helpful push by writing some letters to Evan Glenside, the leading matrimonial prospect in Legrave, under the guise of her sister. Upon receiving Evan’s thoughtful and considerate replies to her letters, Cassie is even more certain that he is the perfect match for Lenora until Cassie begins wondering what it might be like to be married to Evan herself. Jane Austen meets Cyrno de Bergerac in this charming, sweetly satisfying romance.

Kwan, Kevin. [Rich People Problems](#) (Knopf \$26.95)

When Nicholas Young hears that his grandmother, Su Yi, is on her deathbed, he rushes to be by her bedside—but he’s not alone. The entire Shang-Young clan has convened from all corners of the globe to stake claim on their matriarch’s massive fortune. With each family member vying to inherit Tyersall Park—a trophy estate on 64 prime acres in the heart of Singapore—Nicholas’s childhood home turns into a hotbed of speculation and sabotage. As her relatives fight over heirlooms, Astrid Leong is at the center of her own storm, desperately in love with her old sweetheart Charlie Wu, but tormented by her ex-husband—a man hell bent on destroying Astrid’s reputation and relationship. Meanwhile Kitty Pong, married

to China's second richest man, billionaire Jack Bing, still feels second best next to her new step-daughter, famous fashionista Colette Bing. Kwan delivers another fun beach read by channeling his inner Judith Krentz.

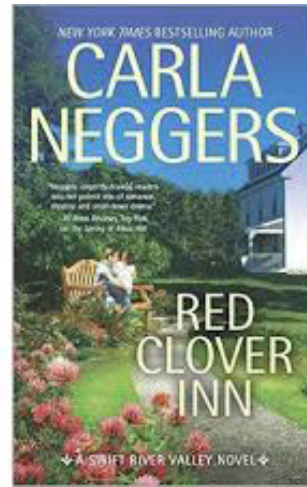
Laditan, Bunmi. [Confessions of a Domestic Failure](#) (Mira \$15.99)

There are good moms and bad moms and then there are hot-mess moms. Introducing Ashley Keller, career girl turned stay-at-home mom who's trying to navigate the world of Pinterest-perfect, Facebook-fantastic and Instagram-impressive mommies but failing miserably.

When Ashley gets the opportunity to participate in the Motherhood Better boot camp run by the mommy-blog-empire maven she idolizes, she jumps at the chance to become the perfect mom she's always wanted to be. But will she fly high or flop?

McKinlay, Jenn. [About a Dog](#) (Berkley \$7.99)

As far as Mackenzie "Mac" Harris is concerned, Thomas Wolfe was wrong. You can go back home again, you just shouldn't. It has been seven years since Mackenzie "Mac" Harris fled her hometown of Bluff Point, Maine, after being left at the altar, but now she is back because her best friend Emma Tolliver is about to get married. All Mac has to do is survive two weeks in Bluff Point more or less and then she can get the heck out of town and back to her new life in Chicago. Everything seems to be going according to plan until Mac unexpectedly bumps into Gavin Tolliver, Emma's younger brother and the man with whom Mac spent one unforgettable night right after her wedding imploded. Mac would like nothing better than to let sleeping dogs lie, but Gavin, with some help from a rescued stray puppy named Tulip, is prepared to show Mac what they shared is more than just "puppy love." After conquering the cozy mystery world, Jenn McKinlay now sets her literary sights on contemporary romance and comes up aces with a sweetly sexy, wonderfully witty love story. Jenn will be at the Poisoned Pen on Saturday June 3rd at 2 PM to launch her new romance trilogy with *About a Dog* along with Kate Carlisle, who will be here talking about *Once Upon a Spine*, the latest in her Brooklyn Wainwright series.



Neggers, Carla. [Red Clover Inn](#) (MIRA \$7.99)

Marine archaeologist Charlotte Bennett is no stranger to risk, but her dives into sunken wreckage are always meticulously planned. However, being the maid of honor in her cousin Samantha's English wedding gives her a new perspective on her life as a nomad who's given up on romance altogether. Though an encounter with roguish wedding guest Greg Rawlings leaves her unsettled, the other people she meets make a trip to the tranquil town of Knights Bridge, Massachusetts, enticing. Acting on impulse, Charlotte offers to house-sit at Red Clover Inn while Sam and Justin Sloan are away on their honeymoon. The quaint inn isn't open to the public yet, and Charlotte will have quiet time to plan her next project. It might also give her a chance to see how her cousin found love and a sense of family. But the peace is immediately disrupted when Greg shows up with reservations at the inn.

Palmer, Liza. [The F Word](#) (Flatiron \$15.99)

Olivia Morten is perfect. Maybe she's constantly hungry, but her body is to die for. Maybe her high-flying publicist job has taken over her life, but her clients are L.A.'s hottest celebrities. Maybe her husband is never around, but he is a drop-dead-gorgeous doctor. And maybe her past harbors an incredibly embarrassing secret, but no one remembers high school...right? When Ben Dunn, Olivia's high school arch nemesis and onetime crush, suddenly resurfaces, all of her hard-won perfection begins to unravel. As she finds herself dredging up long-suppressed memories, she is forced to confront the most painful truth of all: sometimes who we become isn't who we really are. What I especially love about Palmer's thoughtful women's

fiction novels is the way in which she tackles some tough subjects like body image but with a deft, sensitive touch and a generous helping of smart humor.

Palombo, Alyssa. [The Most Beautiful Woman in Florence](#) (St Martins \$15.99)

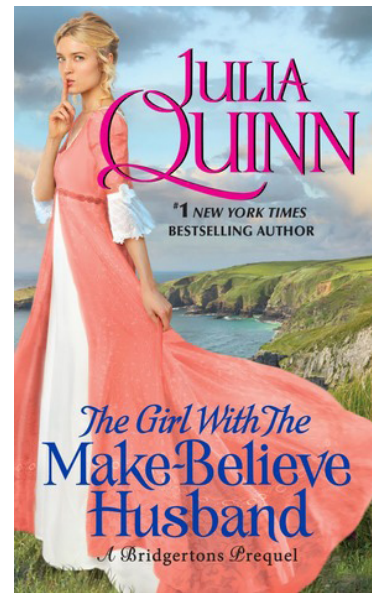
A girl as beautiful as Simonetta Cattaneo never wants for marriage proposals in 15th Century Italy, but she jumps at the chance to marry Marco Vespucci. Marco is young, handsome and well-educated. Not to mention he is one of the powerful Medici family's favored circle.

Even before her marriage with Marco is set, Simonetta is swept up into Lorenzo and Giuliano de' Medici's glittering circle of politicians, poets, artists, and philosophers. The men of Florence—most notably the rakish Giuliano de' Medici—become enthralled with her beauty. That she is educated and an ardent reader of poetry makes her more desirable and fashionable still. But it is her acquaintance with a young painter, Sandro Botticelli, which strikes her heart most. Botticelli immediately invites Simonetta, newly proclaimed the most beautiful woman in Florence, to pose for him. As Simonetta learns to navigate her marriage, her place in Florentine society, and the politics of beauty and desire, she and Botticelli develop a passionate intimacy, one that leads to her immortalization in his masterpiece, *The Birth of Venus*.

Peden, Peggy O'Neal. [Your Killin' Heart](#) (Minotaur \$25.99)

Contrary to popular belief, not everyone in Nashville is an aspiring country music star. Campbell Hall, for one, just wants to get her travel agency off the ground and move on from a break-up. But when she gets the opportunity to visit the mansion of mysterious country icon Jake Miller with her boyfriend attorney Doug Elliott, she jumps at the chance. But as Campbell pokes around, she discovers more than just a few sequined suits and priceless memorabilia. She finds Hazel Miller, Jake's widow, quietly resting in a bedroom on the main floor. But Hazel might just be dead quiet. And Campbell might just be the last person to have seen her alive. This debut by Peden won the Malice Domestic Best First Traditional Mystery Novel competition and deservedly so. The author writes with an easy charm and she subtly seasons her story with a sharp sense of humor. Put this together with a strong-

ly realized Nashville setting and a cast of appealing characters, and you have a terrific start to a new series that should delight anyone who loved Anne George's Southern Sisters mysteries or Charlaine Harris's Aurora Teagarden books.



Quinn, Julia. [The Girl with the Make-Believe Husband](#) (Avon \$7.99)

It just one little lie. At least, this is what orphaned Englishwoman Cecilia Harcourt tells herself when she arrives in New York City searching for her brother Thomas, a British soldier, who has been injured in battle. However, when Cecilia can't immediately find Thomas she discovers the British government is prepared to send her back home since she has no reason for remaining in the city. So Cecilia invents a reason in the person of her brother's best friend officer Edward Rokesby. By claiming to be Edward's new "wife," Cecilia now has a valid reason for staying in New York, and since Edward is recuperating from amnesia, it isn't as if he is going to care. Everything is going as well as can be expected until Edward suddenly wakes up.

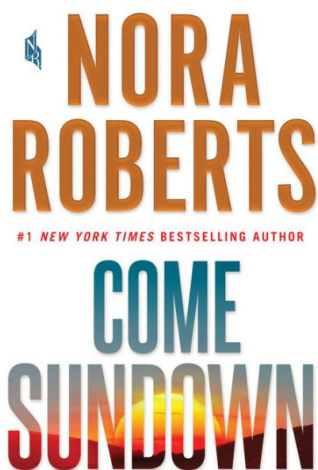
Reichert, Amy E. [The Simplicity of Cider](#) (Gallery \$16)

Focused and unassuming fifth generation cider-maker Sanna Lund has one desire: to live a simple, quiet life on her family's apple orchard in Door County, Wisconsin. Although her business is struggling, Sanna remains fiercely devoted to the orchard, despite her brother's attempts to convince their aging father to sell the land. Single dad Isaac Banks has spent years

trying to shield his son Sebastian from his troubled mother. Fleeing heartbreak at home, Isaac packed up their lives and the two headed out on an adventure, driving across the country. Chance—or fate—led them straight to Sanna’s orchard. Isaac’s helping hands are much appreciated at the apple farm, even more when Sanna’s father is injured in an accident. As Sanna’s formerly simple life becomes increasingly complicated, she finds solace in unexpected places—friendship with young Sebastian and something more deliciously complex with Isaac—until an outside threat infiltrates the farm.

Riggs, Cynthia. [Trumpet of Death](#)
(Minotaur \$25.99)

When 92-year-old poet/sleuth Victoria Trumbull takes her city-bred tenant Zack Zeller on a nature walk on one of Martha’s Vineyard’s conservation areas and shows him a mushroom she calls black trumpet of death, he’s sure he’s found the way to rid himself of his troublesome girlfriend, Samantha. But the mushrooms he’s given Samantha end up on her daddy’s dinner table, and Zack, one of the invited guests, is sure he’s doomed the diners to an untimely death. Meanwhile, dead bodies are cropping up on the Island, which leaves Victoria with only one option but to step in and find the killer. Rigg’s books are rich in a dry sense of humor and shot-through with a wonderful New England type of sensibility making them a great choice for fans of Katherine Hall Page’s books or anyone who misses Virginia Rich’s classic series featuring Eugenia Potter.



Roberts, Nora. [Come Sundown](#)
(St. Martin’s \$27.99)

Nearly two decades after she ran away from home,

Alice Bodine turns up back at the family ranch. However, the Alice that now shows up at the Bodine ranch and resort in western Montana is not the same teenage girl, who ran off to become a star in Hollywood. This Alice is an emotionally and physically bruised and battered woman, who has only just managed to escape from the twisted individual, who has held her captive in his basement. At the same time that Alice suddenly returns back home, the bodies of two women who work at the dude ranch have turned up. While police suspect Callen Skinner, a new hire at the ranch, of killing the women, Alice’s niece Bodine Longbow, who now runs the family dude ranch, begins to wonder if the recent murders of two of the ranch’s employees might be connected to the same person who held her aunt captive. Now working together with Cal, Bodine is determined to find this person and see to it that they pay for their crimes. Award-winning Roberts packs her latest nail-biting romantic suspense novel with plenty of details about running a dude ranch as well lots of well-developed family connections.

Sardar, Gian. [You Were Here](#) (Penguin \$27)
Fourteen years after she left home in Minnesota, Abby Walters began having the dream again. The nightmare was always involved a table set for two, a chandelier, and Abby being buried alive with the taste of dirt in her mouth. However, this time the dream is different in one way: Abby also hears the name Claire Ballantine. After learning that her grandmother was once best friends with Claire, Abby returns home to Makade hoping to find some answers to her nightmares. After an unexpected reunion with her old high school crush Aiden MacKenzie, now a detective with the Makade Police Department, Abby finds herself digging into the past when a love triangle involving a married couple and a young woman ends tragically for all concerned. There is a mesmerizing almost dreamy quality to Sardar’s writing, which perfectly suits her debut novel. Put this together with a twisted plot rich in old secrets, modern day crimes, hidden passions, and chilling suspense – all of which are expertly employed by Sardar as literary building blocks – and you have the kind of novel Hitchcock would give his eyeteeth to film.

Simsion, Graeme. [Best of Adam Sharp](#)
(St Martins \$26.99)

On the cusp of turning fifty, Adam Sharp likes his life.

He's happy with his partner Claire, he excels in music trivia at quiz night at the local pub, he looks after his mother, and he does the occasional consulting job in IT. But he can never quite shake off his nostalgia for what might have been: his blazing affair more than twenty years ago with an intelligent and strong-willed actress named Angelina Brown who taught him for the first time what it means to find—and then lose—love. How different might his life have been if he hadn't let her walk away?

And then, out of nowhere, from the other side of the world, Angelina gets in touch. What does she want? Does Adam dare to live dangerously? The author of the international best-seller *The Rose Project* returns with a bittersweet tale about the one who got away.

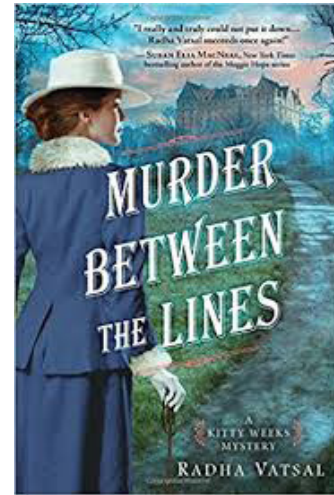
Simpson, Rosemary. [What the Dead Leave Behind](#) (Kensington \$25)

They called the snowstorm that struck New York City in the spring of 1888 The Great Blizzard and The Storm of the Century. More than 200 people died including Prudence MacKenzie's fiancé Charles Linwood. Like so many of the blizzard victims, Charles' death was ruled an accident, but Prudence finds the timing of Charles's death to be just a little bit too convenient for her stepmother Victoria, who now gains control of the fortune Prudence's father left her. Now with the help of Geoffrey Hunter, an old school friend of Charles', Prudence hopes she can find the proof she needs before it is too late and someone gets away with murder. Simpson's splendid debut is the perfect blend of history and mystery with a sleuthing couple, who could easily pass as a younger version of Charlotte and Thomas Pitt. Combine this with a vividly evoked Gilded Age setting, and you truly have the start of very special new series for historical mystery lovers and historical fiction fans alike.

Sykes, Plum. [Party Girls Die in Pearls](#) (HarperCollins \$26.99)

Ursula Flowerbutton arrives at Oxford University only to discover it isn't all Pimm's cups, punting, and picnics when she stumbles across the body of one of her classmates, Lady India Brattenbury – on their tutor's sofa. Desperate to land a spot on the school's paper, Ursula, with some help from her new best friend American exchange student Nancy Feingold (whose sole purpose in being at Oxford seems to be to try and "catch" a duke or at least an earl), agrees to

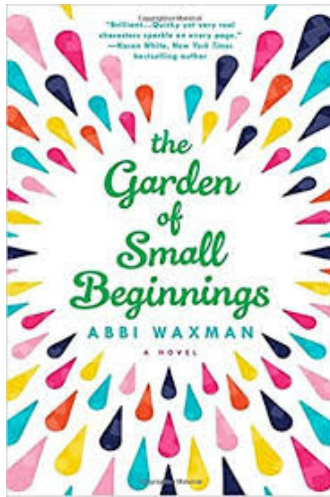
investigate the murder which turns out to be a good thing since the university is desperately trying to pass the whole thing off as an "accident." Sykes already took great glee in skewering America's version of high society in *The Debutante Divorcees*, and now she turns her gimlet eye on the British upper-crust and society a la 1980s in what proves to be a frothy, fun, mix of Agatha Christie, *Clueless*, and *Brideshead Revisited*. Marvelous fun for any reader who doesn't take themselves or their mysteries too seriously.



Vatsal, Radha. [Murder Between the Lines](#) (Sourcebooks \$15.99)

Kitty Weeks, Ladies Page Reporter for the *New York Sentinel*, wasn't sure there was any interesting stories at Westfield Hall until she meets Elspeth Bright. Unlike the rest of the students at the prestigious girls' boarding school, Elspeth wasn't content to study the standard fare of domestic arts and drawing room French. Instead Elspeth, the daughter of a noted scientist, impressed Kitty with her passion for science and her confidence that she was in the midst of achieving a great scientific breakthrough. However, Kitty is shocked to read in the newspapers a few days later that Elspeth has been found dead in Central Park after sleepwalking there one night and freezing to death. Under the guise of helping Elspeth's mother achieve some closure, Kitty agrees to talk to some of the girl's friends at Westfield only to find her own list of questions about Elspeth's death keeps getting longer. Vatsal deftly incorporates a wide range of fascinating historical subjects including electric batteries, submarines, Edison, and Women's Suffrage into the second sterling installment of her Kitty Weeks series, but she does so with an admirably light touch. If you love Rhys Bowen's Molly Murphy mysteries or Carola

Dunn's Daisy Dalrymple books, you can't afford to miss either of Vatsal's equally entertaining historical mysteries.



Waxman, Abbi. [The Garden of Small Beginnings](#) (Berkley \$16)

Rendered a single mom after her husband's fatal car accident, textbook illustrator Lillian recruits her young daughters and supportive sister to help her do research for a boutique vegetable guide at the Los Angeles Botanical Garden, where a patient instructor and quirky gardeners help her grieve and find healing. Readers of this engaging, earthy women's fiction novel will not only enjoy Waxman's deft hand at growing endearing characters, they will also learn something about gardening since each chapter opens with some practical instructions like "preparing your garden or planting tomatoes."

Wiggs, Susan. [Family Tree](#) (Harper \$7.99)

Waking up from a coma after a shattering accident, Manhattan television producer Annie Harlow retreats to her childhood home on a Vermont maple farm, where she reconnects with loved ones while cooking her grandmother's recipes and uncovering a family mystery.