

Midmonth BookNotes

Volume 5 Issue 2 February BookNotes 2018

Contact:

email: sales@poisonedpen.com

phone: (888) 560-9919

(480) 947-2974

<https://poisonedpen.com>

4014 N Goldwater Blvd. #101

Scottsdale, AZ 85251



I Heart Books

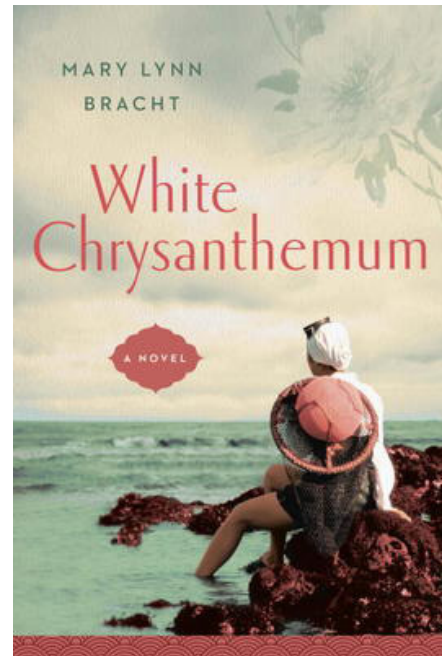
Beard, Janet. [The Atomic City Girls](#) (HarperCollins \$15.99)

When eighteen-year-old June Walker arrives in Oak Ridge, Tennessee in November of 1944, she is just one of more than a hundred other young girls, who have come to help the war effort by taking jobs operating machines and in the process, being told not to ask a lot of questions. While June may not know the ultimate purpose of what everyone is doing in Oak Ridge, her new boyfriend, young Jewish physicist Sam Canter, knows all too well what the U.S. government's end game is. By the time the U.S. bombs Hiroshima, June herself begins to understand the truth about exactly what kind of work she has been doing in the lab forcing her finally come to terms with her own ideals about the costs of war and the sacrifices being made in the name of patriotism.

Berenson, Alex. [The Deceivers](#) (G.P. Putnam \$28)

The phrase "ripped from the headlines" seems particularly apropos when it comes to the latest in Berenson's John Wells thrillers since it seems the Russians will not stop at anything when it comes to influencing American politics. Ex-CIA agent John Wells is tasked with the President of the United States with traveling to Bogota to try and track down the party (or parties) responsible for a terrorist attack at a sports stadium in Dallas. Add a right-wing Tennessee senator, who is hoping to take advantage of the country's mood against Muslim extremists to finesse his way into the White House, into the mix, and you have an adrenaline-fueled thriller that will keep readers both new and old of Berenson glued to their seats.

Bracht, Mary Lynn. [White Chrysanthemum](#) (Penguin 26)



Hana, a *haenyeo* or sea diver, promised her mother that she would always protect her younger sister Emi. So when Hana saw the Japanese soldier on the beach of Jeju island walking towards Emi, she did the only thing she could think of doing. Swimming back to shore, Hana distracted the soldier and allowed him to take her instead of her sister thus beginning her long and terrifying journey as a "comfort woman." Now, fifty years later, Emi is trying to find out anything she can about the girl she remembers from her childhood, whom she saw standing on the beach that day long ago. In 1910, Japan annexed Korea as part of a broader campaign to gain dominance over

East Asia, and within a year Koreans became second class citizens in their own country. During World War II, the Japanese began seizing Korean women - accounts of the total number of women range from 50,000 to more than 200,000 – and forcing them to become prostitutes, who serviced Japanese soldiers. It wasn't until 1991 when one of few remaining "comfort women" came forward to tell her story, that the rest of the world learned about what these brave women endured. Bracht's debut novel is both a heartbreaking and hopeful account of two sisters, whose lives were forever changed by World War II, but whose love for one another and resilience in the face of danger forged a bond between them that endured for decades afterwards. If you loved *The Nightingale* or *Lilac Girls*, you will find *White Chrysanthemum* to be equally enthralling.

Cleeton, Chanel. [Next Year in Havana](#) (Berkley \$15)

Inspired by the stories she heard while growing up about her grandparents, who buried their most treasured family heirlooms in their backyard before fleeing Cuba for America in 1967, Cleeton offers readers the fascinating story of Marisol Ferrera, who returns to her grandmother's homeland to fulfill her last wish to have her ashes scattered in Havana and discovers her family history amidst Cuba's tropical beauty and dangerous political environment of the 1950s. Cleeton immerses readers in the culture and customs of Cuba while honoring her own family's heritage and its past in this mesmerizing novel that deftly explores the topics of family, love, and patriotism.

Graves, Sarah. [Death by Chocolate Cherry Cheesecake](#) (Kensington \$25)

"So far, I had a dead guy in a chocolate pot, a shop shuttered by homicide cops, a close friend under as-yet-unspoken suspicion of murder, and a grown son stuck in Boston by sudden – and I very much feared they were mythological – weather delays, plus unbaked cheesecakes." Graves successfully reboots her Maine-set "Home Repair is Homicide" mysteries featuring Jacobia "Jake" Tiptree with this new culinary flavored launch that has Jake and her

best friend Ellie as owners of The Chocolate Moose, a charming bakery in the fishing village of Eastport. Fans of Joanne Fluke's books or Katherine Hall Page's splendid Faith Fairchild books or anyone who misses the marvelous old cooking mysteries of Virginia Rich will gobble this tasty literary treat down.

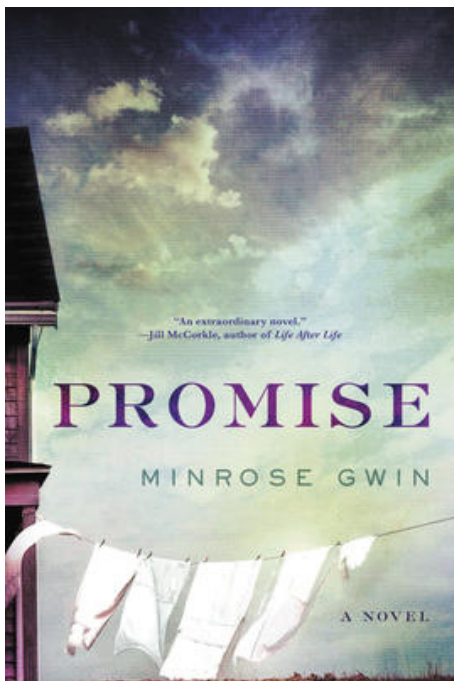
Green, Cass. [In a Cottage In a Wood](#) (HarperCollins \$12.99)

After attending a less-than-stellar office dinner party and then engaging in a disappointing (in every sense of the word) hookup with a stranger, Neve Carey finds herself walking home to her sister's flat. While crossing Waterloo Bridge, a more-than-slightly hung over Neve spies a young woman poised to throw herself over the edge of the bridge into the Thames. Neve's attempts to convince the woman that life is worth living come to naught but not before the woman asks Neve her name. After the police investigation into the suicide, Neve believes she has heard the last about the matter until she receives a letter from a law firm representing Miss Isabelle Shawcross (the deceased woman). It turns out Ms. Shawcross has made a deathbed gift of her home – Petty Whin Cottage – to Neve. The bequest could not have come at a better time for a very broke and soon-to-be-out-of-work Neve, who decides to head to Cornwall to investigate her legacy. But when Neve finally arrives at Petty Whin Cottage, it is not the charming seaside abode she imagined. Instead Neve is now the proud owner of a sinister looking, isolated bungalow with bars across all its windows and a dark history that could very well be the death of its new owner. If you can get pas the whiney, self-indulgent heroine (who seems to be the literary twin of the protagonist in *The Girl on the Train*), this novel by Green, a pseudonym for British YA novelist Caroline Green, is actually a nerve-jangling, creepy-to-the-max tale.

Guhrke, Laura Lee. [The Trouble with True Love](#) (Avon \$7.99)

With almost all of her family either conveniently unavailable or out of the country, Clara Deverill is left in charge of the *Weekly Gazette*, her family's newspaper. While Clara can handle almost

every aspect of the business, the one thing that does have her quaking in her boots is the thought of having to fill for advice columnist Lady Truelove. Given her own track record – or lack thereof – in the romance department, Clara just doesn't feel qualified dispensing advice to the lovelorn. Fortunately for Clara while she just happens to be in a tea room waiting for inspiration to strike, she overhears perennial rake Rex Galbraith prosing on about the art of "honorable" jilting. Before she knows it, Clara has everything she needs for Lady Truelove's next column. When Rex realizes Clara has been using him as fodder for her columns, he immediately sets off for the newspaper's offices to set her straight only to be presented by Clara with an offer he simply can't refuse.



Gwin, Minrose. [Promise](#) (HarperCollins \$25.99)
SIGNED

A few minutes after 9 p.m. on Palm Sunday, April 5, 1936, a massive funnel cloud flashing a giant fireball and roaring like a runaway train careened into the thriving cotton-mill town of Tupelo, Mississippi, killing more than 200 people, not counting an unknown number of African-American citizens, one-third of Tupelo's population, who were not included in the official casualty figures. Gwin, who grew up in Tupelo and remembers hearing stories about the tornado, uses this historical event as the backdrop for her eloquent and moving story

about two characters linked by a past tragedy – African-American laundress Dovey and white teenager Jo- both of whom now find themselves struggling in the aftermath of the disaster to find the ones they love the most.

Hunt, Margot. [Best Friends Forever](#) (MIRA \$26.99)

Kat Grant and Alice Campbell have a friendship forged in shared confidences and long lunches lubricated by expensive wine. Though they're very different women – the artsy socialite and the struggling suburbanite – they're each other's rocks. But even rocks crumble under pressure. Like when Kat's financier husband, Howard, plunges to his death from the second-floor balcony of their South Florida mansion. Howard was a jerk, a drunk, a bully and, police say, a murder victim. The questions begin piling up. Like why Kat has suddenly gone dark: no calls, no texts and no chance her wealthy family will let Alice see her. Why investigators are looking so hard in Alice's direction. Who stands to get hurt next. And who is the cool liar – the masterful manipulator behind it all. Another in the long-running line of psychological suspense novels hoping to cash in on the *Gone Girl* phenomena.

Jenkins, Beverly. [Tempest](#) (Avon \$7.99)

When Regan Carmichael, his mail-order bride, arrives, widower Dr. Colton Lee, who is in need of someone to care for his daughter, gets more than he expected in this independent beauty who makes him believe in second chances. When it came time to create her hero Dr. Colton Lee, award-winning Beverly Jenkins was inspired by the real-life person of Dr. Alexander T. Augusta, who was born free in Norfolk, VA in 1825. Augusta received his formal medical training from the University of Toronto, and he was one of the first eight African-American officers commissioned in the U.S. Army during the Civil War. After the war, Augusta would go on to lead Lincoln Hospital in Savannah until he moved to Washington D.C. where he taught at Howard medical school. Jenkin's brilliantly written historical romances offer readers a fascinating look at just how diverse the old west truly was and just how many significant contributions African Americans made when it came to taming the frontier.

Miller, Tom. [The Philosopher's Flight](#)

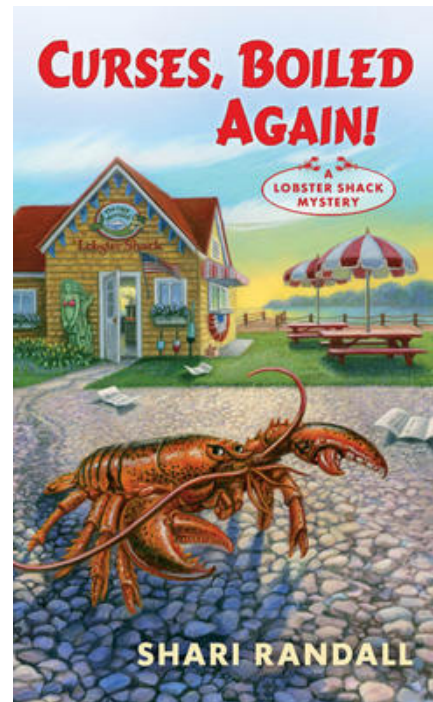
(Simon & Schuster \$26)

Eighteen-year-old Robert Weekes is a practitioner of empirical philosophy—an arcane, female-dominated branch of science used to summon the wind, shape clouds of smoke, heal the injured, and even fly. Though he dreams of fighting in the Great War as the first male in the elite US Sigilry Corps Rescue and Evacuation Service—a team of flying medics—Robert is resigned to mixing batches of philosophical chemicals and keeping the books for the family business in rural Montana, where his mother, a former soldier and vigilante, aids the locals. When a deadly accident puts his philosophical abilities to the test, Robert rises to the occasion and wins a scholarship to study at Radcliffe College, an all-women's school. At Radcliffe, Robert hones his skills and strives to win the respect of his classmates, a host of formidable, unruly women. Robert falls hard for Danielle Hardin, a disillusioned young war hero turned political radical. However, Danielle's activism and Robert's recklessness attract the attention of the same fanatical anti-philosophical group that Robert's mother fought years before. With their lives in mounting danger, Robert and Danielle band together with a team of unlikely heroes to fight for Robert's place among the next generation of empirical philosophers—and for philosophy's very survival against the men who would destroy it. Billed by the publisher as part thriller, part historical novel, part fantasy, and part romance (that's a lot of moving parts!), this debut should appeal to fans of Lev Grossman's *The Magicians* series or Deborah Harkness's equally quirk novels.

Randell, Shari. [Curses, Boiled Again](#)

(St. Martin's \$7.99)

After a bad fall benches her dreams of a permanent career in ballet, Allie Larkin heads back home to Mystic Bay to help her Aunt Gully realize her own dreams of running a successful seafood restaurant. Of course, winning the local food festival's "Best Lobster Roll in New England" contest would certainly help put Aunt Gully's Lazy Mermaid Lobster Shack on the culinary map, but the competition has only just begun when one of the judges ends belly up after



ingesting a poison-laced lobster roll. Now with her beloved aunt about to become the police's number one suspect, Allie has no choice but to dig deep and find the real murderer before Aunt Gully winds up in hot water with the police and her restaurant goes under. The clever title of this terrific debut effectively hints at the marvelous sense of humor with which Randall liberally seasons her writing. Put this together with a quirky yet totally charming cast of secondary characters, a well realized small town setting, and a neatly conceived and brilliantly executed plot, and you have what is bound to be one of the best cozy mysteries of the year.

Swanson, Cynthia. [The Glass Forest](#)

(Touchstone \$25.99)

In the autumn of 1960, Angie Glass is living an idyllic life in her Wisconsin hometown. At twenty-one, she's married to charming, handsome Paul, and has just given birth to a baby boy. But one phone call changes her life forever. When Paul's niece, Ruby, reports that her father, Henry, has committed suicide, and that her mother, Silja, is missing, Angie and Paul drop everything and fly to the small upstate town of Stonekill, New York to be by Ruby's side. Angie thinks they're coming to the rescue of Paul's grief-stricken young niece, but Ruby is a composed and enigmatic seventeen-year-old who resists Angie's attempts to nurture her. As Angie learns more about the complicated

Glass family, staying in Henry and Silja's eerie and ultra-modern house on the edge of the woods, she begins to question the very fabric of her own marriage. The charms of this novel somehow escaped me, but Swanson racked up plenty of raves from review sources for her latest psychological suspense novel including one from *Library Journal* that likened her to such literary luminaries as Laura Lippman and Gillian Flynn,

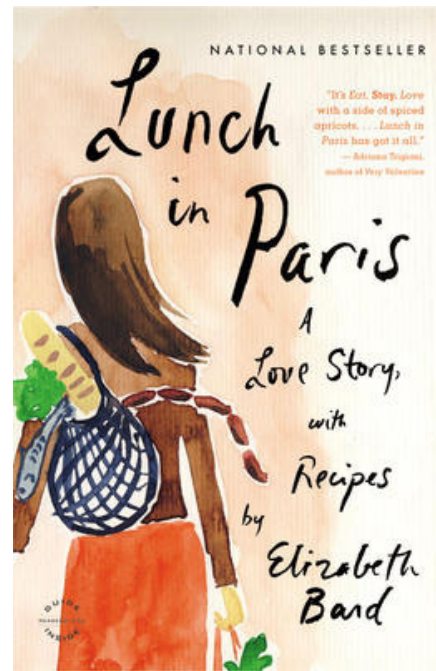
Simpson, Rosemary. [Lies that Comfort and Betray](#) (Kensington \$26)

Fans of Ann Perry's impeccably crafted Victorian mysteries cannot afford to miss Rosemary Simpson's equally compelling new series (which began with *What the Dead Leave Behind*) featuring Prudence MacKenzie and Geoffrey Hunter. In *Lies that Comfort and Betray*, the duo, who are in the process of forming their own professional business partnership, once again find themselves entangled in a murder case when the parents of Nora Kenny, a young Irish maid, who has worked on an off for Prudence's family and is friends with Prudence, is found brutally murdered. When the eviscerated body of a second maid turns up soon afterwards, suddenly everyone in New York City begins to wonder if the person responsible for the Jack the Ripper murders in London might have booked passage to America. Simpson does a stellar job incorporating a wealth of fascinating historical details into her books making them a real treat for anyone who enjoys mysteries with a strong sense of place and time.

Warner, Helen. [The Story of Our Lives](#) (Graydon House \$15.99)

Sophie, Emily, Amy and Melissa have been best friends since they were girls. They have seen each other through everything—from Sophie's private fear that she doesn't actually want to be a mother despite having two kids, to Amy's perfect-on-the-outside marriage that starts to reveal troubling warning signs, to Melissa's spiraling alcoholism, to questions that are suddenly bubbling up around the paternity of Emily's son. But could a lie that spans just as long as their friendship be the thing that tears them apart?

Romantic Nonfiction



Bard, Elizabeth. [Lunch in Paris](#) (Little Brown \$16)

Lunch in Paris is a memoir about a young American woman caught up in two passionate love affairs—one with her new beau, Gwendal, the other with French cuisine. Packing her bags for a new life in the world's most romantic city, Elizabeth is plunged into a world of bustling open-air markets, hipster bistros, and size 2 *femmes' fatales*. She learns to gut her first fish (with a little help from Jane Austen), soothe pangs of homesickness (with the rise of a chocolate soufflé) and develops a crush on her local butcher (who bears a striking resemblance to Matt Dillon). Elizabeth finds that the deeper she immerses herself in the world of French cuisine, the more Paris itself begins to translate. French culture, she discovers, is not unlike a well-ripened cheese—there may be a crusty exterior, until you cut through to the melting, piquant heart.

Callan, Jamie Cat. [Parisian Charm School](#) (Tarcherperigree \$19)

"We all know that French women don't get fat. But their famous *je ne sais quoi* comes from more than just body type—something anyone can master: the old-fashioned art cultivating our inner beauty, confidence, and unique personal style, at any age. From savoring the everyday beauty around you to engaging in captivating

conversations, playing dress-up, hosting impromptu dinner parties under the stars, and of course mastering the art of French flirting, the lively and inspiring lessons in this “syllabus” will help you rediscover your beautiful, fierce, romantic, engaging best self--to attract the best of everything into your life”

Carlson, Erin. [I'll Have What She's Having](#) (Hachette \$27)

In *I'll Have What She's Having* entertainment journalist Erin Carlson tells the story of the real Nora Ephron and how she reinvented the romcom through her trio of instant classics. With a cast of famous faces including Rob Reiner, Tom Hanks, Meg Ryan, and Billy Crystal, Carlson takes readers on a rollicking, revelatory trip to Ephron's New York City, where reality took a backseat to romance and Ephron--who always knew what she wanted and how she wanted it--ruled the set with an attention to detail that made her actors feel safe but sometimes exasperated crew members.

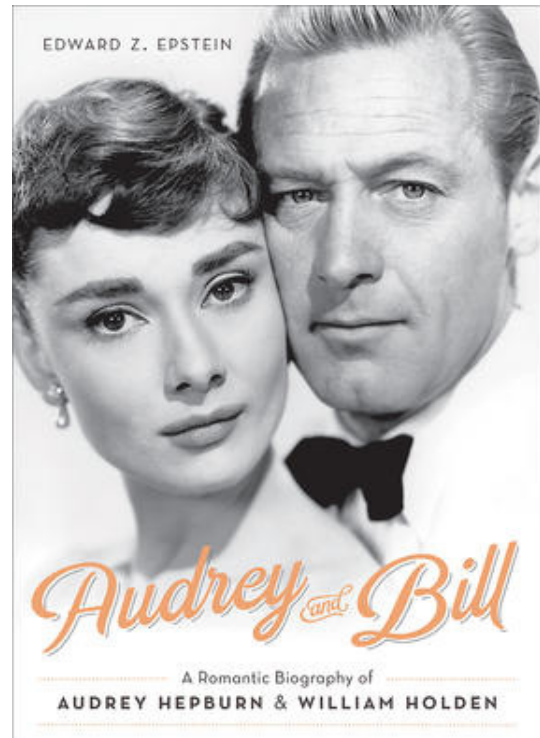
De La Hoz, Cindy. [Bogie & Bacall](#) (Running Press \$15)

Ever since nineteen-year-old Lauren Bacall seductively taught Humphrey Bogart how to whistle in the most famous scene from 1941's *To Have and Have Not*, fans have been fascinated by the palpable heat between these two movie legends. Their onscreen passion blossomed into a full-blown off-screen love affair, and culminated in a blissful marriage that lasted twelve years, until Bogart's untimely death in 1957. *Bogie & Bacall* celebrates their love, with rare photos of the couple, along with tips and anecdotes that will inspire you to ignite your own legendary romance.

Douglas, Kirk. [Kirk and Anne](#) (Running Press \$25)

Compiled from Anne's private archive of letters and photographs, this is an intimate glimpse into the Douglas's' courtship and marriage set against the backdrop of Kirk's screen triumphs, including *The Vikings*, *Lust For Life*, *Paths of Glory*, and *Spartacus*. The letters themselves, as well as Kirk and Anne's vivid descriptions of their experiences, reveal remarkable insight and anecdotes about the legendary figures they knew so well, including Lauren Bacall, Frank

Sinatra, Burt Lancaster, Elizabeth Taylor, John Wayne, the Kennedys, and the Reagans. Filled with photos from film sets, private moments, and public events, *Kirk and Anne* details the adventurous, oftentimes comic, and poignant reality behind the glamour of a Hollywood life-as only a couple of sixty-two years (and counting) could tell it.



Epstein, Edward Z. [Audrey and Bill](#) (Running Press \$25)

In 1954, Hepburn and Holden were America's sweethearts. Both won Oscars that year and together they filmed *Sabrina*, a now-iconic film that continues to inspire the worlds of film and fashion. *Audrey & Bill* tells the stories of both stars, from before they met to their electrifying first encounter when they began making *Sabrina*. The love affair that sparked on-set was relatively short-lived, but was a turning point in the lives of both stars. *Audrey & Bill* follows both Hepburn and Holden as their lives crisscrossed through to the end, providing an inside look at the Hollywood of the 1950s, '60s, and beyond. Through in-depth research and interviews with former friends, co-stars, and studio workers, *Audrey & Bill* author Edward Z. Epstein sheds new light on the stars and the fascinating times in which they lived.