

Midmonth BookNotes

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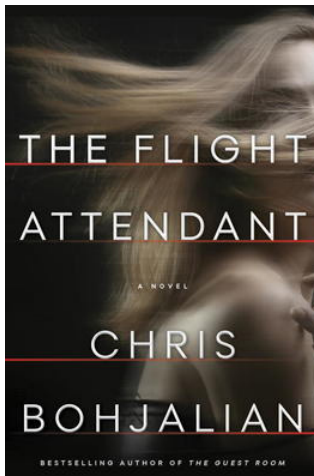
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It's Raining Books!

Bohjalian, Chris. [The Flight Attendant](#)

(Doubleday \$26.95)



Flight attendant Cassandra Bowden is no stranger to hungover mornings. So, when she awakes in a Dubai hotel room, she tries to piece the previous night back together, counting the minutes until she has to catch her crew shuttle to the airport. She quietly slides out of bed, careful not to aggravate her already pounding head, and looks at the man she spent the night with. She sees his dark hair. His utter stillness. And blood, a slick, still wet pool on the crisp white sheets. Afraid to call the police - she's a single woman alone in a hotel room far from home - Cassie begins to lie. She lies as she joins the other flight attendants and pilots in the van. She lies on the way to Paris as she works the first class cabin. She lies to the FBI agents in New York who meet her at the gate. Soon it's too late to come clean-or face the truth about what really happened back in Dubai. Could she have killed him? If not, who did? In

many ways, the latest literary suspense effort from Bohjalian is as much about a flawed heroine battling addiction as it is about finding out whether or not the person responsible for killing the heroine's "date" catches up with her.

Child, Laura. [Plum Tea Crazy](#) (Berkley \$26)

While viewing the harbor's Gaslights and Galileons Parade from the widow's walk of Timothy Neville's Charleston mansion, local banker Carson Lanier seemingly tumbles over a narrow railing, then plunges three stories to his death. But a tragic accident becomes something much more sinister when it's discovered that the victim was first shot with a bolt from a crossbow. At the request of the mansion owner, tea shop owner Theodosia Browning investigates the tragedy and is soon neck deep in suspects. An almost ex-wife, a coworker, a real estate partner--all had motives for killing the luckless banker, but one resorted to murder to settle accounts. The latest in the long-running Tea Shop mysteries, Plum Crazy is strong on Charleston atmosphere and brimming with plenty of tea tidbits, tempting recipes, and culinary lore even if the plot itself requires more than the usual generous suspension of disbelief.

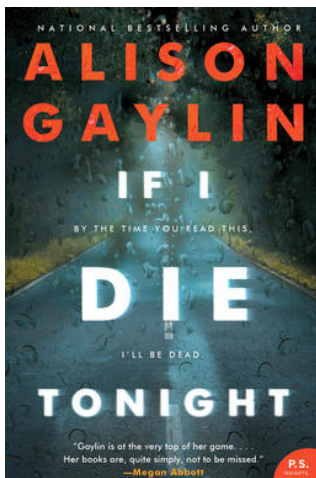
Davis, Krista. [Color Me Murder](#)

(Kensington \$12.95)

It sounds like the answer to her housing prayers. Color Me Read bookstore manager Florrie Fox is delighted when her boss - Professor John Maxwell - offers to let her live rent-free in the

beautiful carriage house behind his Georgetown mansion. There is just one catch: Professor Maxwell needs Florrie to move into the carriage house a.s.a.p. before his odious nephew Delbert tries to claim it for himself. After an initial acrimonious meeting with Delbert and his mother, Florrie thinks she may have seen the last of him, but then Florrie never expected she would stumble across Delbert's body at the bookstore a few days later nor that the police would cast Professor Maxwell in the role of their prime suspect. While the police might think they have their case all wrapped up, Florrie isn't quite so positive they have the right person, and since she is used to coloring outside the lines, Florrie decides she will just have to do some investigating herself. If you can ignore the gimmicky color-me-in jacket, this is actually quite an entertaining cozy mystery. The Georgetown setting is nicely sketched in, the cast of secondary characters adds some appealing humor to the story, cute pets play their parts to perfection, the murder itself is neatly plotted out, and there is the requisite soupcon of romance thrown into the mix for good measure.

Gaylin, Alison. [If I Die Tonight](#) (HarperCollins \$26.95)



All teenagers lie. That is what single mother Jackie Reed tells herself when her older son Wade seemingly goes from being a nice - albeit shy - kid to a surly, secretive teenager. However, when a fellow classmate of Wade's is struck down by a carjacked automobile and the Haven-kill police turn up to ask Jackie if she knows exactly where Wade was that night, Jackie begins to wonder exactly what kind of secrets Wade might be keeping. Shamus award-winning and

Edgar nominated Alison Gaylin deftly manipulates the multiple character points of view in her latest riveting novel of psychological suspense into a secrets-steeped plot that will have readers guessing just exactly what happened right up to the novel's stunning conclusion. Put these factors together with Gaylin's spot-on ability to dial into every parent's worst fear, and you have a book that perfect for both fans of Mary Higgins Clark style suspense as well as book clubs in search of their next great read.

Giordano, Mario. [Auntie Poldi and the Sicilian Lions](#) (HMH \$24)

Can't afford a trip to Sicily? This first novel by Giordano may be the next best thing. On her sixtieth birthday, Isolde Oberreiter (better known to her family and friends as Auntie Poldi) packed up her bags and left Germany to retire in Sicily. Once there, Poldi intended on finding a small place for herself by the sea and slowly drinking herself into an early grave. However, fate and Poldi's family had other plans in store for her. Soon Poldi finds herself immersed in the doings of her new hometown, and when her handsome young handyman suddenly disappears, Poldi decides if the local polizzi won't investigate, then she will. After all her grandfather was a famous - relatively - German police detective so Poldi surely has some kind of detective skills in her genetic makeup. Before she really knows what is happening, Poldi finds herself following one lead after another all the while engaging in a dance of slow seduction with the local police inspector assigned to the case. An appealing and refreshingly older sleuth, lots of local color, dash of bright humor, and a leisurely paced mystery add up to a winner in this fun English language debut for Giordano.

Goodman, Carol. [The Other Mother](#) (HarperCollins \$15.95)

Borrowing her friend Laurel Hobbes name and academic credentials, Daphne Marist packs up her meager belongings and her infant daughter Chloe, and heads for a job as working as an archivist for a once famous author Schuyler Bennett. Daphne is positive her husband, who has threatened to use Daphne's Post Partum

Mood Disorder to take Chloe away from her, will not be able to find her now. The stone mansion where Daphne now lives and works sits next door to an old mental asylum founded and run by Schuyler's father years ago. As Daphne begins digging through Schuyler's papers, she discovers a disturbing story about an old patient, who decades ago was convinced authorities at the mental asylum had stolen her child. Past and present begun blurring together leaving Daphne to wonder if she really has discovered something serious or if this is just another figment of her fevered imagination. Hammett Prize winning Goodman, whose novel *The Widow's House* is currently on the short list for the Edgar's this year, once again delivers another tangled tour de force of sophisticated suspense with *The Other Mother*. From the name Goodman chooses for her protagonist (Daphne Marist – hint hint think of another classic suspense writer who wrote about Manderley) to the creepy gothic setting of the book to the layers of deception skillfully woven into the plot, this is another Hitchcockian delight from a consistently entertaining author.

Gutcheon, Beth. [The Affliction](#)
(HarperCollins \$26.99)

Maggie Detweiler, retired head of a prestigious New York City private school, and her friend Hope Babbin, once again find themselves playing Jessica Fletcher when a talkative teacher at the Rye Manor School for Girls is murdered. Maggie had been part of an evaluative team scoping out the future prospects of the school when Florence Meagher, one of the teachers at the school who has made a habit of befriending the misfit students, first disappears then surfaces in the school's brand new pool. With suspects both among the faculty and students and within Florence's family, Maggie and Hope have their work cut out for themselves as they try to puzzle out who silenced the chatty teacher. If you miss those civilized old Kate Fansler mysteries by Amanda Cross, you will love the equally erudite puzzlers crafted by Gutcheon.

Hall, Parnell. [The Purloined Puzzle](#)
(Minotaur \$25.99)

Never a fan of teenagers at the best of times, crossword puzzle maven (or so she would have

the public believe) Cora Felton tries to palm obnoxious sixteen year old Peggy Dawson's request for help in solving a puzzle off on someone else. However, when it turns out the puzzle has been stolen; Cora is delighted to think she won't have to worry about trying to solve it (and potentially clueing in everyone in town that she is a fraud). The downside is that someone has left a blood-stained knife in place of the missing puzzle. Now instead of puzzling out the answers to a crossword, Cora must successfully put the clues of a murder investigation together in order to find the killer. As long as you don't let the occasionally acerbic Cora get under your skin, there is a marvelously breezy quality to Hall's writing the perfectly suits the latest entry in the author's long-running series.

Howard, Linda. [The Woman Left Behind](#)
(HarperCollins \$26.99)

Jina Modell works in Communications for a paramilitary organization, and she really likes it. She likes the money, she likes the coolness factor—and it was very cool, even for Washington, DC. But when Jina displays a really high aptitude for spatial awareness and action, she's reassigned to work as an on-site drone operator in the field with one of the GO-teams, an elite paramilitary unit. The only problem is Jina isn't particularly athletic, to put it mildly, and in order to be fit for the field, she has to learn how to run and swim for miles, jump out of a plane, shoot a gun...or else be out of a job. Team leader Levi, call sign Ace, doesn't have much confidence in Jina--who he dubbed Babe as soon as he heard her raspy, sexy voice--making it through the rigors of training. The last thing he needs is some tech geek holding them back from completing a dangerous, covert operation. In the following months, however, no one is more surprised than he when Babe, who hates to sweat, begins to thrive in her new environment, displaying a grit and courage that wins her the admiration of her hardened, battle-worn teammates. What's even more surprising is that the usually very disciplined GO-team leader can't stop thinking about kissing her smart, stubborn mouth...or the building chemistry and tension between them. Howard's latest high adrenaline thriller – think G.I. Jane but with more kissing -

is a compelling mix of danger and desire.

Lawhon, Ariel. [I Was Anastasia](#) (Doubleday \$216.95)

On July 17, 1918 under direct orders from Lenin, Bolshevik secret police execute Anastasia Romanov, along with the rest of the Russian imperial family, in a damp basement in Siberia. None of the royal family is believed to have survived, or at least that is what their murderers claim. On February 17, 1920, a young woman bearing an uncanny resemblance to Anastasia Romanov is pulled out of a canal in Berlin. The woman refuses to explain how she ended up in the canal, but when she is later taken to the hospital for examination, staff find her body is riddled with countless scars. When the woman finally does speak she claims to be the Russian Grand Duchess Anastasia. Is the woman the real deal or is she just an imposter named Anna Anderson, who is hoping to cash in on the Romanov fortune? Even though DNA testing has proven once and for all whether Anastasia survived, Lawhon through her rich incorporation of historical details and emotionally powerful plotting still manages to make you believe Anna could really be who she says she is.

Nay, Roz. [Our Little Secret](#) (St. Martin's \$25.99)



Angela Petitjean sits in a cold, dull room. The police have been interrogating her for hours, asking about Saskia Parker. She's the wife of Angela's high school sweetheart, HP, and the mother of his child. She has vanished. Homicide Detective J. Novak believes Angela knows what happened to Saskia. He wants the truth, and he wants it now. But Angela has a different story to tell. It

began more than a decade ago when she and HP met in high school in Cove, Vermont. She was an awkward, shy teenager. He was a popular athlete. They became friends, fell in love, and dated senior year. Everything changed when Angela went to college. When time and distance separated them. When Saskia entered the picture. Fans of psychological suspense will not want to miss Nay's stunning debut. With hints of Patricia Highsmith and echoes of Alfred Hitchcock, Nay's deceptively simple story will hook readers early on and keep them enthralled right up to the book's twisty conclusion.

Quindlen, Anna. [Alternate Side](#) (Random House \$27.99)

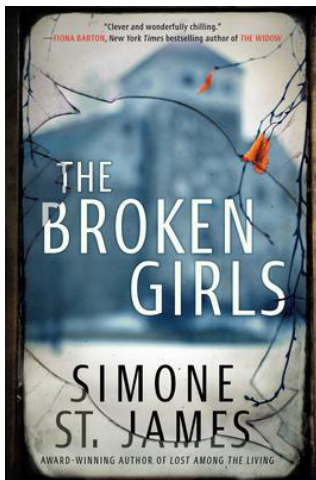
New York City was once Nora Nolan's dream destination, and her clannish dead-end block has now become a safe harbor, a tranquil village amid the urban craziness. The owners watch one another's children grow up. They use the same handyman. They trade gossip and gripes, and they maneuver for the ultimate status symbol: a spot in the block's small parking lot. Then one morning, Nora returns from her run to discover that a terrible incident has shaken the neighborhood, and the enviable dead-end block turns into a potent symbol of a divided city. The fault lines begin to open: on the block, at Nora's job, especially in her marriage. Quindlen's latest meditation on Manhattan and the lifestyles of those able to live there is another successful mix of complex characters and quiet insight into modern life and marriage.

Rorick, Kate. [The Baby Plan](#) (HarperCollins \$15.99)

Three L.A. women tackle the challenges and rewards of pregnancy in this marvelously funny women's fiction novel from Rorick (who also writes historical romance as Kate Noble). Nathalie Kneller and her husband have very carefully planned everything around Nathalie's pregnancy, but just as they are set to announce the news to their family, Nathalie's sister Lyndi steals the spotlight by barfing all over the Thanksgiving centerpiece (and thus revealing she too is pregnant). While her sister meticulously worked out every detail of her pregnancy, Lyndi didn't expect to suddenly discover she is going to be a mom; especially since she is just starting to

get her own life in order. After finally getting her daughter Maisey off to college, Hollywood makeup artist Sophia Nunez is ready to enjoy her life (and her new rock musician boyfriend) when she discovers she is about to become a mommy all over again. From baby gender reveal parties to crowd-sourced baby names, Rorick skillfully skewers all of the over-the-top elements that go into planning for a new baby in today's society while at the same time writing with insight and compassion about the emotional roller coaster women go through as they become new mothers.

St. James, Simone. [The Broken Girls](#) (Berkley \$26)



It has been twenty years since her older sister Deb's body was discovered in a field outside Idlewood Hall, but journalist Fiona Sheridan can't stop thinking about it. Even though the police arrested Deb's boyfriend at the time for the crime, Fiona can help but think they got the wrong person. When Fiona discovers someone has bought Idlewood Hall with the intention of restoring it and turning it back into a boarding school, she decides writing a story about the renovation will provide her with the perfect opportunity to do some digging into her sister's murder. But the more investigating Fiona does, the more questions she has not only about Deb's death but also about the rumors that Idlewood Hall is haunted. St. James deftly switches back and forth between the present day and Fiona's investigation into her sister's death, and the 1950s when four boarding school students at Idlewood Hall have their own encounter with Mary Hand, a woman who supposedly haunts the grounds of the school. With plenty of gothic

atmosphere and a deliciously creepy ghost, this spellbinding story is tailor-made for readers who miss Barbara Michaels marvelously spooky novels like *Ammie Come Home* and *Someone in the House*.

van Alkemade, Kim. [Bachelor Girl](#) (Touchstone \$28)

When the owner of the New York Yankees baseball team, Colonel Jacob Ruppert, takes Helen Winthrop, a young actress, under his wing, she thinks it's because of his guilt over her father's accidental death—and so does Albert Kramer, Ruppert's handsome personal secretary. Helen and Albert develop a deepening bond the closer they become to Ruppert, an eccentric millionaire who demands their loyalty in return for his lavish generosity. Van Alkemade, the New York Times bestselling author of *Orphan #8*, was inspired by the true story of Jacob Ruppert, the millionaire owner of the New York Yankees, and his mysterious bequest in 1939 to an unknown actress, Helen Winthrop Weyant.

Calling Agatha Christie

Thompson, Laura. [Agatha Christie](#) (Pegasus \$35)

Arguably the greatest crime writer in the world, Christie's books still sell over four million copies each year—more than thirty years after her death—and it shows no signs of slowing. But who was the woman behind these mystifying, yet eternally pleasing, puzzlers? Thompson, award winning author of *The Six*, reveals the Edwardian world in which Christie grew up, explores her relationships, including those with her two husbands and daughter, and investigates the many mysteries still surrounding Christie's life, most notably, her eleven-day disappearance in 1926. Thompson maintains a nice balance between exploring Christie's life and looking critically at her oeuvre and Christie's place in the crime fiction canon.

Wilson, Andrew. [A Different Kind of Evil](#) (Atria \$26)

It has been two months since Agatha Christie "disappeared." The author hoped to have put that incident behind her, but now she finds herself traveling to the Canary Islands at the

request of British Special Agent John Davison in order to investigate the strange murder of Douglas Greene, whose partially mummified corpse drained of blood was found on a cave on one of the islands. However, while en route on the SS Gelria, Agatha becomes involved in another death when she witnesses a woman flinging herself over the side of the ship and into the ocean. When Agatha does finally arrive at the Canaries, she discovers both crimes may be mysteriously connected. It isn't easy taking a real-life figure and making them a character in your books, but Wilson does a credible job at capturing the essence of Agatha Christie. However, those who have not yet read the first in the series, *A Talent for Murder*, will want to start with that book since the author reveals quite a bit of the plot of that book while giving Agatha a new case to.

Nonfiction

Chernila, Alana. [*Eating From the Ground Up*](#) (Potter \$27)

Thinking of incorporating more vegetables into your diet? This collection of 100 recipes teaches home cooks how to prepare dishes with vegetables in ways that help showcase the unique flavor and texture properties of each. The vegetables covered include familiar standbys like radishes and asparagus to more exotic vegetables such as celeriac and kohlrabi. From soups to dips, there is bound to be something here that every cook will want to add to their repertoire.

Freidman, Andrew. [*Chefs, Drugs, and Rock & Roll*](#) (HarperCollins \$27.99)

Taking a rare, coast-to-coast perspective, Andrew Friedman goes inside Chez Panisse and other Bay Area restaurants to show how the politically charged backdrop of Berkeley helped draw new talent to the profession; into the historically underrated community of Los Angeles chefs, including a young Wolfgang Puck and future stars such as Susan Feniger, Mary Sue Milliken, and Nancy Silverton; and into the clash of cultures between established French chefs in New York City and the American game changers behind The Quilted Giraffe, The River Cafe, and other East Coast establishments. We also meet young cooks of the time such as Tom Colicchio

and Emeril Lagasse who went on to become household names in their own right. Along the way, the chefs, their struggles, their cliques, and, of course, their restaurants are brought to life in vivid detail. As the '80's unspool, we see the profession evolve as American masters like Thomas Keller rise, and watch the genesis of a "chef nation" as these culinary pioneers crisscross the country to open restaurants and collaborate on special events, and legendary hangouts like Blue Ribbon become social focal points, all as the industry-altering Food Network shimmers on the horizon.

Goldstone, Nancy. [*Daughters of the Winter Queen*](#) (Little Brown \$30)

Young Elizabeth Stuart was thrust into a life of wealth and splendor when her godmother, Queen Elizabeth I, died and her father, James I, ascended to the illustrious throne of England. At sixteen she was married to a dashing German count far below her rank, with the understanding that James would help her husband achieve the crown of Bohemia. Her father's terrible betrayal of this promise would ruin "the Winter Queen," as Elizabeth would forever be known, imperil the lives of those she loved, and launch a war that would last for thirty years. Forced into exile, the Winter Queen and her growing family found refuge in Holland, where the glorious art and culture of the Dutch Golden Age formed the backdrop to her daughters' education. The eldest, Princess Elizabeth, was renowned as a scholar when women were all but excluded from serious study and counted the preeminent philosopher René Descartes among her closest friends. Louise Hollandine, whose lively manner and appealing looks would provoke heartache and scandal, was a gifted painter. Shy, gentle Henrietta Maria, the beauty of the family, would achieve the dynastic ambition of marrying into royalty, although at great cost. But it would be the youngest, Sophia, a heroine in the tradition of Jane Austen, whose ready wit and good-natured common sense masked immense strength of character, who would fulfill the promise of her great-grandmother, a legacy that endures to this day.

Larson, Edward J. [To the Edges of the Earth](#)

(HarperCollins \$29.99)

As 1909 dawned, the greatest jewels of exploration—set at the world’s frozen extremes—lay unclaimed: the North and South Poles and the so-called “Third Pole,” the pole of altitude, located in unexplored heights of the Himalaya. Before the calendar turned, three expeditions had faced death, mutiny, and the harshest conditions on the planet to plant flags at the furthest edges of the Earth. In the course of one extraordinary year, Americans Robert Peary and Matthew Henson were hailed worldwide at the discovers of the North Pole; Britain’s Ernest Shackleton had set a new geographic “Furthest South” record, while his expedition mate, Australian Douglas Mawson, had reached the Magnetic South Pole; and at the roof of the world, Italy’s Duke of the Abruzzi had attained an altitude record that would stand for a generation, the result of the first major mountaineering expedition to the Himalaya’s eastern Karakoram, where the daring aristocrat attempted K2 and established the standard route up the most notorious mountain on the planet. Based on extensive archival and on-the-ground research, Edward J. Larson, author of *Empire of Ice*, weaves these narratives into one thrilling adventure story.

Stone, Daniel. [The Food Explorer](#) (Dutton \$28)

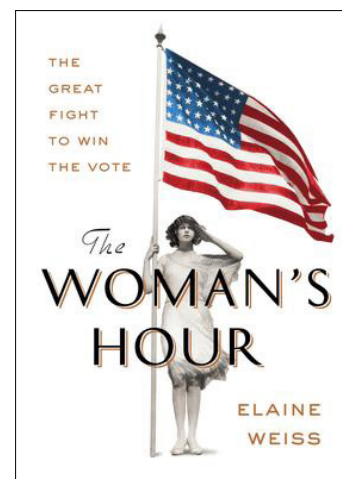
In the nineteenth century, American meals were about subsistence, not enjoyment. But as a new century approached, appetites broadened, and David Fairchild, a young botanist with an insatiable lust to explore and experience the world, set out in search of foods that would enrich the American farmer and enchant the American eater. Kale from Croatia, mangoes from India, and hops from Bavaria. Peaches from China, avocados from Chile, and pomegranates from Malta. Fairchild’s finds weren’t just limited to food: From Egypt he sent back a variety of cotton that revolutionized an industry, and via Japan he introduced the cherry blossom tree, forever brightening America’s capital. Along the way, he was arrested, caught diseases, and bargained with island tribes. But his culinary ambition

came during a formative era, and through him, America transformed into the most diverse food system ever created.

Tallis, Nicola. [Elizabeth’s Rival](#) (Pegasus \$27.95)

A kinswoman to Elizabeth I, Lettice Knollys had begun the Queen’s glittering reign basking in favor and success. It was an honor that she would enjoy for two decades. However, on the morning of September 21st, 1578, Lettice made a fateful decision. When the Queen learned of it, the consequences were swift. Lettice had dared to marry without the Queen’s consent. But worse, her new husband was Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, the Queen’s favorite and one-time suitor. Though she would not marry him herself, Elizabeth was fiercely jealous of any woman who showed an interest in Leicester. Knowing that she would likely earn the Queen’s enmity, Lettice married Leicester in secret, leading to her permanent banishment from court. Elizabeth never forgave the new Countess for what she perceived to be a devastating betrayal, and Lettice permanently forfeited her favor. She had become not just Queen Elizabeth’s adversary. She was her rival. But the Countess’ story does not end there. Surviving the death of two husbands and navigating the courts of three very different monarchs: Henry VIII, Elizabeth I, and Charles I, Lettice’s story offers an extraordinary and intimate perspective on the world she lived in.

Weiss, Elaine. [The Woman’s Hour](#) (Viking \$28)



After more than seven decades spent fighting for the right of women in the United States of America to vote, in the end, it all came down to

one state: Tennessee. By August 1920. Thirty-five states have ratified the Nineteenth Amendment, twelve have rejected or refused to vote, and one last state is needed. Those leading the charge for women's suffrage include Carrie Catt, president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association and Sue White of the rival Alice Paul's Women's Party. Working together – if not always in tandem – these two groups do whatever they feel necessary to get Tennessee legislators to sign onto their cause. Those opposed to seeing women granted the vote include politicians with careers at stake, liquor companies, railroad magnates, and a lot of racists who don't want black women voting. And then there are the "Antis" -- women who oppose their own enfranchisement, fearing suffrage will bring about the moral collapse of the nation. They all converge in a boiling hot summer for a vicious face-off replete with dirty tricks, betrayals and bribes, bigotry, Jack Daniel's, and the Bible. Weiss's compelling book manages to be both scholarly and entertaining, and it is a proud testament to the long hours and hard work so many people put into seeing women in this country gain the right to vote.

Zeitz, Joshua. [Building the Great Society](#)
(Viking \$30)

Given the dysfunctional state of our current executive branch, it is refreshing to read about a different time when a White House actually accomplished something. Zeitz, author of the New York Times bestselling *Lincoln's Boys*, now tackles legendary president LBJ and the talented group of advisors – including Sargent Shriver, Walter Jenkins, and Clark Clifford - he assembled on his staff, who together helped push the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, Medicare, Medicaid, Head Start, and environmental reform through Congress. *Building the Great Society* is the story of how one of the most competent White House staffs in American history - serving one of the most complicated presidents ever to occupy the Oval Office - fundamentally changed everyday life for millions of citizens and forged a legacy of compassionate and interventionist government.