

# Midmonth BookNotes

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4014 N. Goldwater Blvd., Scottsdale, AZ 85251

(888) 560-9919 • (480) 947-2974

poisonedpen.com • sales@poisonedpen.com



## Summertime and the Reading is Easy

**Awad, Mona.** [Bunny](#)  
(Penguin \$26)

Invited to join a popular clique at her university, Samantha Heather Mackey, a misfit artist with a dark imagination, is drawn into ritualistic activities that transform her perspectives on reality. This book's publisher has described the latest novel by the award-winning author of *13 Ways of Looking at a Fat Girl* as *The Vegetarian* meets *Heathers* (those readers more hip than I will know what that this means), but it is definitely a hot literary commodity having already been named a Best Book of Summer 2019 by *The Washington Post*, *Elle*, *NPR*, *Entertainment Weekly*, and *Bustle* just to name a few critical review sources.

**Bailey, Tessa.** [Fix Her Up](#)  
(Harper \$14.99).

When his best friend's sister, Georgie, Castle, proposes a wild scheme—that they pretend to date to shock her family and help him land a new job, major league baseball player Travis Ford agrees and soon finds himself wanting to make their fake relationship real. Readers who like their rom coms served up with plenty of richly detailed sex will definitely want to indulge in Bailey's latest of which *Kirkus* said "The sexual relationship between Travis and Georgie is sizzling,



but the emotional journey from fake relationship to true love is just as compelling. Don't let the cover fool you: This romance is as steamy as it self-empowering."

**Barnett, Karen.** [Ever Faithful](#)  
(Waterstone \$9.99).

Nate Webber becomes the foreman at the Civilian Conservation Corps camp in Yellowstone National Park, but he hides the fact that he cannot read, so Elsie Brookes tutors him at night leading to friendship and romance in the latest sweetly romantic historical novel by Barnett, who is evidently drawing upon her own work experiences as a ranger naturalist and outdoor educator at Northwest Trek Wildlife Park, Silver Falls State Park, and Mount Rainier National Park to give the book's setting and plot its vivid sense of authenticity.

**Barr, Lisa.** [The Unbreakables](#)  
(Harper \$16.99).

On her forty-second birthday, wealthy Chicago suburbanite Sophie Bloom discovers her husband Gabe is a serial cheater, so she flees to France to visit her daughter Ava, who is experience her own life crisis. Once Sophie arrives in Paris, it not only reawakens her neglected artistic ambitions, but provides her with the opportunity to reflect back on the choices she has made in life and love. Paris continues to be the literary hot spot for women's fiction as this evocative novel by Barr beautifully demonstrates.

**Chadwick, Elizabeth.** [Templar Silks](#)

(Sourcebooks \$16.99).

William Marshal, England's greatest knight, begins a pilgrimage to the Holy Land with his brother, Ancel — a perilous journey that will have lasting impact for the rest of his life. William and Ancel become embroiled in the deadly politics of Jerusalem as well as the devious scheming and lusts of the powerful men and women who rule the kingdom. Becoming entangled with the dangerous, mercurial Pascia de Riveri, concubine of the highest churchman in the land, William treads a path so dangerous that there seems no way back for him, or Ancel. Both will pay a terrible price, and their only chance to see home again will depend upon the Templars and two silk shrouds. Fans of detail-rich historical novels like those of Philippa Gregory and Ken Follett will want to add Chadwick's equally time transportive novel to their reading lists.

**Chen, Katherine.** [Mary B](#)

(\$17).

The middle child of five, Mary Bennet, who loses herself in the pleasures of reading and writing in nineteenth-century England, discovers that her fictional creations are no match for the real scandal, tragedy, and romance that come into her life. Named one of the best books of the year by *Real Simple* in 2018 when it came out in hardcover, this is a retelling of Jane Austen's classic *Pride and Prejudice* as seen from the viewpoint of Mrs. Bennet's third up until now taciturn daughter.



**Cohen, Tish.** [The Summer We Lost Her](#)

(Gallery \$16.99).

While preparing to sell a valuable family cabin on a lake in the Adirondacks, Matt and Elise Sorenson run into Matt's teenage crush. As Elise is trying to sort out how the reappearance of Matt's first love into his life will impact their marriage, their eight-year old daughter Gracie, who has cerebral palsy caused by Elise's fall from a horse while she was pregnant, disappears without a trace. Readers who treasure the nuanced characterization of Jodi Picoult's nov-

els (along with the angst-driven plots for which that author is known and loved) will want to give Cohen's equally mesmerizing and fraught tale of a family on the verge of emotional collapse equal consideration.

**Colgan, Jenny.** [The Bookshop on the Shore](#)

(Harper \$26.99).

Also in trade paperback" [The Bookshop on the Shore](#) (\$15.99).

Desperate to escape from London, single mother Zoe wants to build a new life for herself and her four-year-old son Hari. Hari's dad, Jaz, a charismatic but perpetually broke DJ, is no help at all. But his sister Surinder comes to Zoe's aid, hooking her up with a job as far away from the urban crush as possible: a bookshop on the banks of Loch Ness. And there's a second job to cover housing: Zoe will be an au pair for three children at a genuine castle in the Scottish Highlands. Perennially popular Colgan, author of *The Little Beach Street Bakery* series among others, once again comes up literary trumps with a sweetly nourishing and warm-hearted tale of love and family set amidst the gorgeous scenic backdrop of Scotland.

**Cullen, Helen.** [The Lost Letters of William Woolf](#)

(Graydon \$26.99).

Working to identify the intended recipients of undelivered mail at the Dead Letters Depot in London, William Woolf, a mail detective working there, tackles the greatest mystery of his career when he discovers letters addressed simply to "My Great Love." The letters are written by a woman to her soulmate, whom she has yet to meet, and the missives strike a chord with William, who soon finds himself on a life-changing journey to unravel the mystery of the lost letters. Irish author Helen Cullen's poignant and perceptive tale is a lovely paean to the lost art of letter writing.

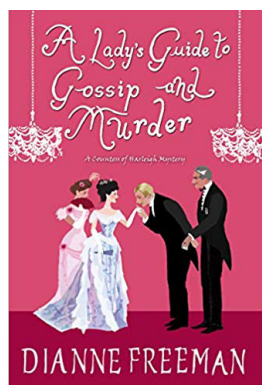
**Freeman, Dianne.** [A Lady's Guide to Gossip and Murder](#) (Kensington \$26)

Frances Wynn, the dowager Countess of Harleigh, is just settling into her new life sans husband and is hoping to spend a few quiet months in London with her soon-to-be-married sister Lily, her Aunt Hetty, her daughter Rose, and their friend Lottie, when Fran-

ces finds herself once again entangled in a murder investigation. Frances had been playing matchmaker between her cousin-by-marriage Charles Evingdon and her friend Mary Archer with the expectation that the couple would soon be walking down the aisle. So, of course, Frances is more than a bit shocked when Charles announces he and Mary have called it off. Any hopes Frances might have of bringing the couple back together are immediately dashed when Mary's dead body turns up and Charles is accused of murder. Freeman won historical mystery readers over with her delightfully charming first Frances Wynn book *A Lady's Guide to Etiquette and Murder* (which went on to win both an Agatha award and a Left Coast Crime "Lefty" award for best debut mystery), and the second in the series is every bit as much fun, making it required reading for readers who like their historical mysteries served up with a generous dash of wit.

**Gilbert, Elizabeth.** [City of Girls](#) (Penguin \$26)

Eighty-nine-year-old Vivian Morris recounts her life after being kicked out of Vassar College in 1940 (Vivian was ranked 361 in a class of 362 causing her father to remark "Dear God, what was the other girl doing?"). Upon arriving in Manhattan to live with her Aunt Peg, the owner of the Lily Playhouse, Vivian forges a new life for herself making costumes for her Aunt's low-budget productions and making friends with a bevy of exuberant showgirls, who teach Vivian some things she never would have learned at Vassar. Gilbert, author of the best-selling *Eat, Pray, Love* makes up for her last novel *The Signature of All Things*, which featured a chaste by fate but not by choice 19<sup>th</sup> century botanist as its heroine, with this wonderful historical about women embracing life (and passion) in all its forms. Major critical buzz for this book (and for good reasons). The Poisoned Pen still has a few signed copies in stock while they last.



**Green, Jane.** [Friends We Keep](#) (Berkley \$26).

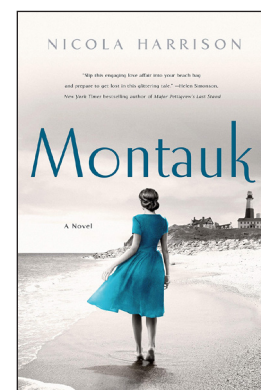
Reconciling thirty years after college, three friends – Evvie, Maggie, and Topher - reunite at their college reunion and have a second chance at happiness, until a dark secret changes everything. Best-selling British author Green has built her own franchise specializing in beachy summer books with a nod towards the book discussion crowd.

**Grunwald, Lisa.** [Time After Time](#) (Random \$27).

On a clear December morning in 1937, at the famous gold clock in Grand Central Terminal, Joe Reynolds, a hardworking railroad man from Queens, meets a vibrant young woman who seems mysteriously out of place. Nora Lansing is a Manhattan socialite whose flapper clothing, pearl earrings, and talk of the Roaring Twenties don't seem to match the bleak mood of Depression-era New York. Captivated by Nora from her first electric touch, Joe despairs when he tries to walk her home and she disappears. Finding her again—and again—will become the focus of his love and his life. Delving into Grand Central Terminal's rich past, Lisa Grunwald crafts a masterful historical novel about a love affair that defies age, class, place, and even time.

**Harrison, Nicola.** [Montauk](#) (St Martins \$27.99).

For three months during the summer, the little fishing village of Montauk, Long Island serves as the vacation home for New York City's wealthy elites. Now newly married Beatrice Bordeaux is about to experience this lifestyle when her husband Harry informs her, they will be spending the summer there. Well, to be honest, Bea will be spending the summer at the exclusive 200 hundred room seaside Montauk Resort while Harry shuttles back and forth between the city – where he does something in finance during the week – and the quiet village for weekends with his new wife. Bea had hoped spending more time with Harry might help them conceive the



child they both wanted, but instead she finds her days trying to fit in with the snobby, upper-crust wives, who have also been abandoned during the week by their career-driven spouses. As she drifts further from the society women and their preoccupations and closer toward Montauk's natural beauty and community spirit, Bea finds herself drawn to a man nothing like her husband -stoic, plain spoken and enigmatic. Inspiring a strength and courage she had almost forgotten, his presence forces her to face a haunting tragedy of her past and question her future. Fans of Beatriz Williams lush and luscious historical novels will happily devour this remarkable debut.

**Hilderbrand, Elin.** [The Summer of 69](#) (LittleBrown \$28).

Every year the four Levin children have looked forward to spending the summer at their grandmother's historic home in downtown Nantucket. But like so much else in America, nothing is the same: Blair, the oldest sister, is marooned in Boston, pregnant with twins and unable to travel. Middle sister Kirby, caught up in the thrilling vortex of civil rights protests and determined to be independent, takes a summer job on Martha's Vineyard. Only-son Tiger is an infantry soldier, recently deployed to Vietnam. Thirteen-year-old Jessie suddenly feels like an only child, marooned in the house with her out-of-touch grandmother and her worried mother, each of them hiding a troubling secret. As the summer heats up, Ted Kennedy sinks a car in Chappaquiddick, man flies to the moon, and Jessie and her family experience their own dramatic upheavals along with the rest of the country. Okay, once I got over the shock of discovering that a book set in the 1960s is now considered historical fiction, I really enjoyed Hilderbrand's (known on the NYT best-seller list as the Queen of Beach Reads) first historical, novel.

**Hogan, Ruth.** [The Wisdom of Sally Red Shoes](#) (Crooked Lane \$26.99).

Once a spirited, independent woman with a rebellious streak, Masha's life was forever changed by a tragic event twelve years ago. Unable to let go of her grief, she finds comfort in her faithful canine companion Haizum, and peace in the quiet lanes of her town's swimming pool. Almost without her realizing

it, her life has shuddered to a halt. It's only when Masha begins an unlikely friendship with the mysterious Sally Red Shoes, a bag lady with a prodigious voice and a penchant for saying just what she means, that a new world of possibilities opens up: new friendships, new opportunities, and even a chance for new love. For the first time in years, Masha has the chance to start living again. British author Hogan made a name for herself with discerning readers with her first novel *The Keeper of Lost Things* (a favorite here at the Poisoned Pen), and her latest is perfectly poised to become another popular pick for book discussion groups and fans of comfort reads.

**Holmes, Linda.** [Evvie Drake Starts Over](#) (Ballantine \$26).

Young widow Evvie Drake and major league pitcher Dean Tenney, who has lost his game and needs a chance to reset his life, form an unlikely relationship when Dean moves into an apartment at the back of Evvie's house. The host of NPR's *Pop Culture Happy Hour* podcast makes her literary debut with a stellar novel that adeptly navigates the lines between humor and heartfelt emotion.

**James, Eloisa.** [Say No to the Duke](#) (Harper \$7.99).

Before Lady Betsy Wilde settles down and marries a perfectly respectable (and perfectly boring) duke, she does have one thing to cross off her single's bucket list: Betsy wants to experience a day in London as a man. Of course, no gentleman would ever agree to Betsy's scandalous plan, but Lord Jeremy Roden is no gentleman. Jeremy offers up a wager of his own to Betsy: if she can win a billiards game with him, he will provide her with the breeches she needs. If Jeremy wins the game, Betsy is his for one night no breeches necessary.

**Jimenez, Abby.** [The Friend Zone](#) (Grand Central \$14.99)

Kristen Peterson doesn't do drama, will fight to the death for her friends, and has no room in her life for guys who just don't get her. She's also keeping a big secret: facing a medically necessary procedure that will make it impossible for her to have children. Planning her best friend's wedding is bittersweet for



Kristen -- especially when she meets the best man, Josh Copeland. He's funny, sexy, never offended by her mile-wide streak of sarcasm, and always one chicken enchilada ahead of her hangry. Even her dog, Stuntman Mike, adores him. The only catch: Josh wants a big family someday. Kristen knows he'd be better off with someone else, but as their attraction grows, it's harder and harder to keep him at arm's length. This sensational debut by Minnesota baking sensation Jimenez offers rom-com fans the perfectly calibrated mix of laugh-out-loud humor and poignant emotional depths.



**Johnson, Melonie.** [Once Upon a Bad Boy](#)  
(St, Martin's Press \$7.99)

Sadie Gold is ready to take her career to the next level with the role of a lifetime. Finally, she can shake her reputation as a pretty face with more wealth and connections than talent. But Sadie is not prepared for the wild turn her own life is about to take. The man in charge of training Sadie for her most demanding role yet is none other than her first real boyfriend Bo Ibarra—the one who took her heart and ran away.

**Jones, Sandie.** [First Mistake](#)  
(St Martins \$27.99)

It has taken Alice quite a while to get over the loss of her first husband, but now she is happily building a new life – and a thriving business – with her second husband Nathan. However, when Nathan begins acting a bit oddly, Alice turns to her best friend Beth for advice and support. Unfortunately, this may have been Alice's first mistake. Jones, whose first domestic suspense novel *The Other Woman* was a Reese Witherspoon Hello Sunshine Book Club Pick as well as *New York Times* best-seller returns with another compelling tale of domestic drama and sly suspense of which *PW* says "The twisty plot builds to a shocking conclusion. This puzzler reinforces Jones's status as a rising suspense star."

**Kamali, Marjan.** [The Stationery Shop](#)  
(Gallery \$27).

A young couple – Roya Kayhani and Bahman Aslan – meet and fall in love at a neighborhood stationery shop owned by Mr. Fakhri. However, a coup by forces supporting the Shah in 1953 forces the couple apart on the eve of their marriage. Sixty years later Roya, who has since married Walter Archer, and Bahman, who is now living in a nursing home, are reunited in Boston reunite by chance after more than half a century. This novel is a huge first printing (100,000 copies) and tons of rave reviews from a wide range of critical sources including LJ which concluded with "The unfurling stories in Kamali's sophomore novel (after *Together Tea* will stun readers as the aromas of Persian cooking wafting throughout convince us that love can last a lifetime. For those who enjoy getting caught up in a romance while discovering unfamiliar history of another country."

**Kate, Lauren.** [The Orphan's Song](#)  
(g.P. Putnam's Sons \$26)

When fate brings Violetta and Mino together on the roof of the Hospital of the Incurables in Venice in 1736, they form a connection that will change their lives forever. Both are orphans at the Incurables, dreaming of escape. But when the resident Maestro notices Violetta's voice, she is selected for the Incurables' world famous *coro*, and must sign an oath never to sing beyond its church doors. After a declaration of love ends in heartbreak, Mino flees the Incurables in search of his family. Known as the "city of masks," Venice is full of secrets, and Mino is certain one will lead to his long-lost mother. Without him, the walls close in on Violetta and she begins a dangerous and forbidden nightlife, hoping her voice can secure her freedom. But neither finds what they are looking for, until a haunting memory Violetta has suppressed since childhood leads them to a shocking confrontation. Kate, who built a career writing wildly popular YA novels, was inspired to write *The Orphan's Song* while she was on a book tour in Venice and stumbled across the *Ospedale degli Incurabili* late one cold winter night while returning back to her hotel room from an event at a bookstore. From that moment on, Kate fell in love with the idea of a story set there.

**Kinsella, Sophie.** [I Owe You One](#) (\$17).

Struggling to hold her late father's business together in spite of her less-motivated siblings, Fixie Farr cashes in an IOU from a handsome stranger to find employment for her childhood crush.

**Koslow, Sally.** [Another Side of Paradise](#) (Harper \$16.99).

Set in 1937 Hollywood, this historical novel by Koslow reimagines the affair between F. Scott Fitzgerald and his longtime lover, gossip columnist Sheilah Graham, detailing how she helped revitalize Fitzgerald's career in the years before his tragic death.

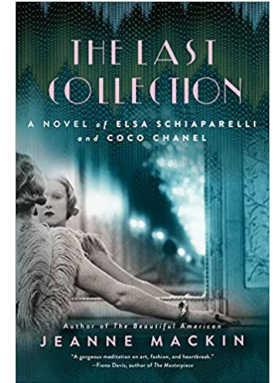
**Lombardo, Claire.** [The Most Fun We Ever Had](#) (Doubleday \$28.95).

When Marilyn Connolly and David Sorenson fall in love in the 1970s, they are blithely ignorant of all that's to come. By 2016, their four radically different daughters are each in a state of unrest: Wendy, widowed young, soothes herself with booze and younger men; Violet, a litigator-turned-stay-at-home-mom, battles anxiety and self-doubt when the darkest part of her past resurfaces; Liza, a neurotic and newly tenured professor, finds herself pregnant with a baby she's not sure she wants by a man she's not sure she loves; and Grace, the dawdling youngest daughter, begins living a lie that no one in her family even suspects. Above it all, the daughters share the lingering fear that they will never find a love quite like their parents'. This doorstep of a debut novel was named one of the most anticipated books of the summer by *O Magazine*, *NY Post*, and *LitHub* among others, and those seeking "richly rewarding family sagas" will find it delivers enough plotlines to keep a reader busy right up until September.

**Mackin, Jeanne.** [The Last Collection](#) (Berkley \$26).

When Lily Sutter, a recently widowed young American teacher, visits her brother, Charlie, in Paris in 1938, he insists on buying her a couture dress—a Chanel. Lily, however, prefers a Schiaparelli. Charlie's beautiful and socially prominent girlfriend soon begins wearing Schiaparelli's designs as well, and much

of Paris follows in her footsteps. Schiaparelli offers budding artist Lily a job at her store, and Lily finds herself increasingly involved with Schiaparelli and Chanel's personal war. Their fierce competition reaches new and dangerous heights as the Nazis and the looming threat of World War II bear down on Paris. Long before the term "frenemies" entered into popular culture, there was the personal and professional rivalry between Coco Chanel and Elsa Schiaparelli. Mackin perfectly captures just how alike – and how different – Chanel and Schiaparelli were. Both designers were perfectionists when it came to delivering couture gowns, no detail was too small to escape their attention. Both designers understood just how important it was to cultivate the right clientele, who would get their gowns seen and talked about. However, while Chanel embraced a minimalist, elegant, and classic approach to her work; Schiaparelli went the opposite direction turning out gowns that were outrageous, surrealistic, and controversial. Chanel was the ultimate capitalist, while Schiaparelli embraced the ideas behind communism. The two could seemingly be at times the best of friends and then suddenly the worst of enemies. Yet both survived World War II Paris in their own ways. There have been a ton of novels set during World War II over the last few years (in part due to the success of *The Nightingale*), but Mackin's fascinating, compelling take on these two designers is one of the best. Fans of Melanie Benjamin and Fiona Davis's historical novels (or anyone caught up in the repeat showing of *The Collection* on PBS) will not want to miss this.



**Macomber, Debbie.** [A Cottage by the Sea](#) (\$7.99).

Returning to the Pacific Northwest after a tragedy, Annie Marlow begins to heal, with help from Keaton, a local painter who offers comfort and reprieve from her grief. This standalone novel by Macomber, is an excellent introduction to her heartwarming brand of women's fiction and romance.

**Mallery, Susan.** [The Summer of Sunshine and Margot](#) (Harlequin \$26.99).

When etiquette coach Margo Baxter works with an aging movie star, she falls for her client's son, while her twin sister Sunshine tries to resist falling for the single dad who happens to be her boss. Margo and Sunshine are descended from a long line of Baxter women with disastrous luck in love. Will they be ones to finally break the family's bad luck love cycle?

**Mansell, Jill.** [Maybe This Time](#) (Sourcebooks \$15.99).

When Mimi Huish first visits her dad's new home in the Cotswolds, she falls in love with Goosebrook and the people who live there. There's Paddy, with his electric-blue eyes and seductive charm. Friendly and funny Lois makes Mimi laugh. And seriously gorgeous Cal Mathieson is welcoming and charismatic. Though Mimi loves her city life and her career, she'd be very happy to return to Goosebrook if it means seeing more of him. Life is about to take some unexpected and shocking twists and turns. And Mimi's path and Cal's are set to cross again and again—but will it ever be the right time for both of them?

**Mason Doan, Amy.** [Summer Hours](#) (Graydon \$16.99).

What happens when you suddenly realize that you are not the person, you'd always promised yourself you would become? That is the intriguing premise behind this nuanced novel. Becc was the good girl. A dedicated student. Aspiring reporter. Always where she was supposed to be. Until a secret affair with the charming Cal one summer in college cost her everything she held dear: her journalism dreams; her relationship with her best friend, Eric; and her carefully imagined future. Now, Becc's past is back front and center as she travels up the scenic California coast to a wedding—with a man she hasn't seen in a decade. The publisher is billing this as a combination of *Comencement* meets a distaff version of *The Graduate*.

**McQuiston, Case.** [Red, White & Royal Blue](#) (St Martins \$16.99).

After an international incident affects U.S. and British relations, the president's son Alex Claremont-Diaz and Great Britain's Prince Henry must pretend to be

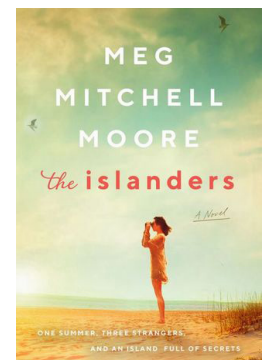
best friends, but as they spend time together, the two begin a secret romance that could derail a presidential campaign.

**Mechling, Lauren.** [How Could She?](#) (Viking \$26).

Following her best friends Sunny MacLeod and Rachel Ziff to New York City in the aftermath of a devastating broken engagement, Geraldine Despont struggles to find her footing among the West Village's influencers and media darlings before discovering the realities of her friends' successes. Think of this as a 21st century literary take on the classic film *The Women*.

**Moore, Meg Mitchell.** [The Islanders](#) (Harper \$26.99).

Anthony Puckett was once a rising literary star, but something went very wrong with his second work. Now Anthony's borrowing an old college's friend's crumbling beach house on Block Island in the hopes that solitude will help him get back to the person he used to be. Joy Sousa owns and runs Block Island's beloved whoopie pie café. She came to this quiet space eleven years ago, newly divorced and with a young daughter, and built a life for them here. But this summer she's thrown off balance. A food truck from a famous New York City brand is roving around the island, selling goodies—and threatening her business. Lu Trusdale is spending the summer on her in-laws' dime, living on Block Island with her two young sons while her surgeon husband commutes to the mainland hospital. When Lu's second son was born, she and her husband made a deal: he'd work and she'd quit her corporate law job to stay home with the boys. But a few years ago, Lu quietly began working on a private project that has becoming increasingly demanding on her time. Torn between her work and home, she's beginning to question that deal she made. Looking for a big, fat, juicy beach book with which to while away those hot summer days? Moore's deliciously fun novel delivers on all counts.





**O’Leary, Beth.** [Flatshare](#)  
(Flatiron \$26.99).

Tiffany and Leon share an apartment. Tiffany and Leon have never met. After a bad breakup, Tiffany Moore needs a place to live. Fast. And cheap. But the apartments in her budget have her wondering if astonishingly colored mold on the walls counts as art. Desperation makes her open minded, so she answers an ad for a flatshare. Leon, a night shift worker, will take the apartment during the day, and Tiffany can have it nights and weekends. He’ll only ever be there when she’s at the office. In fact, they’ll never even have to meet. Tiffany and Leon start writing each other notes – first about what day is garbage day, and politely establishing what leftovers are up for grabs, and the evergreen question of whether the toilet seat should stay up or down. Even though they are opposites, they soon become friends. And then maybe more. But falling in love with your roommate is probably a terrible idea... especially if you’ve never met.

**Reay, Katherine.** [The Printed Letter Bookshop](#)  
(Thomson Nelson \$16.99)

One of Madeline Cullen’s happiest childhood memories is of working with her Aunt Maddie in the quaint and cozy Printed Letter Bookshop. But by the time Madeline inherits the shop nearly twenty years later, family troubles and her own bitter losses have hardened Madeline’s heart toward her once-treasured aunt—and the now struggling bookshop left in her care.

While Madeline intends to sell the shop as quickly as possible, the Printed Letter’s two employees – Janet and Claire - have other ideas. Soon a combination of professional and personal experiences prompt Madeline to question if she has been too quick to dismiss her aunt’s beloved shop? And even if she has, can the women’s best combined efforts be enough to save it?

**Ricciardi, David.** [Rogue Strike](#)  
(Penguin \$27)

Ricciardi wowed readers last year with *Warning Light* (one of the best debut spy novels I have ever read). Now he is back with another ripped-from-the-headlines espionage thriller about a potential nuclear conflict involving the US and the Middle East. CIA agent Jake Keller (who used to be Zac Miller) and his

partner, Curt Roach, are in Yemen on an important mission. They’ve been tipped off to a secret meeting of top al Qaeda leaders. The plan is to interrupt the meeting with a few unexpected visitors—a pair of Hellfire missiles from an orbiting drone. But the drone stops responding to their signals and soon disappears over the horizon. When next seen, the drone is attacking innocent pilgrims in Mecca. Now guess who everyone wants to pin the blame on for this international incident? With a body count to rival that of the *Die Hard* film franchise and enough testosterone and adrenaline to fuel a dozen James Bond books, Ricciardi keeps the pages turning in this twisty and politically twisted thriller.

**Ryan, Jennifer.** [The Spies of Shilling Lane](#)  
(Crown \$27)

Dethroned as the self-appointed queen of her village’s chapter of the Women’s Voluntary Service when her husband divorces her, Mrs. Braithwaite travels to London at the height of the blitz in order to spend some time with her daughter Betty and at the same time inform Betty about a scandalous family secret before her village nemesis, the power-mad Mrs. Metcalf does. However, when Mrs. Braithwaite arrives at her daughter’s boarding house, she discovers Betty is missing. Now with some assistance from Betty’s landlord, Mrs. Norris, Mrs. Braithwaite sets about plotting a plan to find her daughter only to now find herself mixed up in a treacherous plot that goes all the way to the highest levels of the British government. Ryan has a real knack for evoking the spirit of World War II Britain as evidenced by her previous novel *The Chilbury Ladies’ Choir*, and now she does it again with a sterling story that *LJ* called “a mixture of cozy village mystery and World War II thriller.” Tailor-made for fans of last years *Dear Mrs. Bird*.



**Shalvis, Jill.** [The Lemon Sisters](#)  
(Harper \$15.99).

Brooke Lemon has always led the life she wanted, wild adventures—and mistakes—including, something her perfect sister, Mindy, never understood. So,



when Mindy shows up on Brooke's doorstep in the throes of a break-down with her three little kids in tow, Brooke's shocked.

Wanting to make amends, Brooke agrees to trade places, taking the kids back to Wildstone for a few days so Mindy can pick up the pieces and put herself back together. What Brooke doesn't admit is she's just as broken . . . Also how does one go home after seven years away? It doesn't take long for Brooke to come face-to-face with her past, in the form of one tall, dark, sexy mistake.

**Simsion, Graeme.** [The Rosie Result](#)  
(Text \$26.99).

Don Tillman and Rosie Jarman are about to face their most important challenge. Their eleven-year-old son, Hudson, is struggling at school: he's socially awkward and not fitting in. Don's spent a lifetime trying to fit in—so who better to teach Hudson the skills he needs? The Hudson Project will require the help of friends old and new, force Don and Rosie to decide how much to guide Hudson, and raise some significant questions about Don's own identity. Hilarious and thought-provoking, with a brilliant cast of characters, *The Rosie Result* is the triumphant final installment of the internationally bestselling Don Tillman trilogy.

**Williams, Beatriz.** [Summer Wives](#)  
(\$16.99).

When celebrated movie star Miranda Thomas arrives back on Winthrop Island eighteen years after she left, nothing is the same. Greyfriars, her stepfather's once elegant estate, is now being run by Miranda's mother as an "artists' colony" in order to make ends meet. Miranda's once vivacious stepsister Isobel Fisher is now a somber shadow of her former self, and Miranda is about to meet her teenage half-brother Hugh for the first time. If this isn't enough to take in, Joseph Vargas, the son of a local lobsterman and the first boy to ever break Miranda's heart, has escaped from prison, where he has spent the last eighteen years serving time for murder. Everything and everyone seems to have changed including Miranda herself. The real question, however, is will Miranda's return to Winthrop Island stir up new interest in events that almost everyone else would prefer remain

quietly buried in the past? In the latest binge-worthy addition to her loosely connected Schuyler family novels, Williams deftly fashions an unforgettable, almost operatic story brimming with enough secrets, scandals, and seduction to give Peyton Place a good run for its money. At the same time Williams' luscious, evocative prose style would make Daphne Du Maurier green with envy. Put both these elements together with a splendidly nuanced cast of characters and a cleverly conceived and brilliantly executed plot that neatly shifts between three different historical time periods (each one rendered perfectly down to the last detail), and you have all the necessary ingredients for this year's most sought after as well as superbly satisfying summer read.

**Winfrey, Kerry.** [Waiting for Tom Hanks](#)  
(Berkley \$15).

Romantic-comedy-obsessed Annie Cassidy dreams of being the next Nora Ephron. She spends her days writing Internet content, rewatching *Sleepless in Seattle*, and waiting for her movie-perfect meet cute. If she could just find her own Tom Hanks--a man who's sweet, sensitive, and possibly owns a houseboat--her problems would disappear and her life would be perfect. But Tom Hanks is nowhere in sight. When a movie starts filming in her neighborhood and Annie gets a job on set, it seems like a sign. Then Annie meets the lead actor, Drew Danforth, a cocky prankster who couldn't be less like Tom Hanks if he tried. Their meet-cute is more of a meet annoying, but soon Annie finds herself sharing some classic rom-com moments with a man who just might turn out to be her own leading man.

## Cookbooks

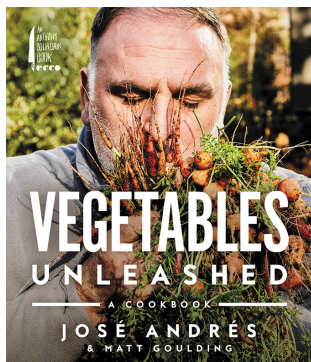
[Spiced](#) (America's Test Kitchen \$29.99)

Spices: You probably have a cabinet full of them, but do you know how to make the most of them? *Spiced* opens up the world of possibility hidden in your own pantry, with six chapters, each of which shares a way to use spices to ramp up the flavor of your cooking, along with 139 foolproof recipes that put these simple techniques to work. Sprinkle a finishing salt you make from sea salt and herbs on seared white fish fillets to make them special. Make

a different roast chicken every week by applying a different rub. Learn the best spices to use in curries--and when to add them for fragrant (not dusty) results. Add flavor--and texture--with homemade blends (you'll eat your spinach when it's topped with pistachio dukkah). With this cookbook in hand, you will never have another dull dinner again.

**Andreas, Jose.** [Vegetables Unleashed](#)  
(HarperCollins \$39.99)

Spanish-American chef Jose Andrés is famous for his unstoppable energy—and for his belief that vegetables are far sexier than meat can ever be. Showing us how to creatively transpose the flavors of a global pantry onto the produce aisle, *Vegetables Unleashed* showcases Andrés's wide-ranging vision and borderless cooking style. With recipes highlighting everything from the simple wonders of a humble lentil stew to the endless variations on the classic Spanish gazpacho to the curious genius of potatoes baked in fresh compost, *Vegetables Unleashed* gives us the recipes, tricks, and tips behind the dishes that have made Andrés one of America's most important chefs and that promise to completely change our relationship with the diverse citizens of the vegetable kingdom.



## Nonfiction

**Burt, Stephanie.** [Don't Read Poetry](#)  
(Basic Books \$30)

If one of your New Year's resolutions was to read more poetry (mine is to eat more chocolate), than this is the book for you! In *Don't Read Poetry*, award-winning poet and literary critic Stephanie Burt offers an accessible introduction to the seemingly daunting task of reading, understanding, and appreciating poetry. Burt dispels preconceptions about poetry and explains how poems speak to one another--and how they can speak to our lives. She shows readers how to find more poems once they have some poems they like, and how to connect the poetry of the past to the poetry of the present.

Burt moves seamlessly from Shakespeare and other classics to the contemporary poetry circulated on Tumblr and Twitter. She challenges the assumptions that many of us make about "poetry," whether we think we like it or think we don't, in order to help us cherish--and distinguish among--individual poems.

**Jacobs, Ryan.** [The Truffle Underground](#)  
(Potter \$16)

Who knew what is essentially a cousin to the lowly mushroom would prove to be so valuable? This fascinating book takes readers into the secret world of truffles, where beneath the gloss of star chefs and crystal-laden tables, the truffle supply chain is touched by theft, secrecy, sabotage, and fraud. Farmers patrol their fields with rifles and fear losing trade secrets to spies. Hunters plant poisoned meatballs to eliminate rival truffle-hunting dogs. Naive buyers and even knowledgeable experts are duped by liars and counterfeits. Through it all, a question lingers: What, other than money, draws people to these dirt-covered jewels?

**Jones, Brian Jay.** [Becoming Dr. Seuss](#)  
(Penguin \$32)

From his early childhood to his years working in the advertising biz to his eventual success as the one of the most popular writers of children's books (among his works are *The Cat in the Hat* and *The Grinch Who Stole Christmas*), Jones' (who has penned bios on other cultural powerhouses such as Jim Henson and George Lucas) detailed biography traces the life, career, and creative evolution of Theodor Seuss Geisel, who credits film director Frank Capra, who recruited Geisel for work producing orientation and morale building films for the American troops during World War II, with teaching him the value of "conciseness."

**Lacey, James.** [The Washington War](#)  
(Bantam Dell \$35)

One review called this intriguing book "military history without soldiers or sailors" since the book focuses on the group of men -- including Harry Hopkins, Cordell Jull, and Henry Stimson -- who were part of the team of advisors, cabinet members, and politicians FDR assembled to help him and the country win World War II. Comparisons will be made (and not

unfairly) to Doris Kearns Goodwin's *Team of Rivals*, but Lacey's book stands on its own merits making it literary catnip for fans of the era.

**McCullough, David.** [The Pioneers](#)  
(Simon & Schuster \$30)

Pulitzer Prize-winning historian McCullough uses a wealth of diaries and letters from key figures of the 19th century to tell the fascinating story of how the Northwest Territory was settled by dauntless pioneers, who overcame incredible hardships while building communities based on ideals that would later come to define our country.

**Satow, Jill.** [The Plaza](#)  
(Grand Central \$29)

From the moment in 1907 when New York millionaire Alfred Gwynne Vanderbilt strode through the Plaza Hotel's revolving doors to become its first guest, to the afternoon in 2007 when a mysterious Russian oligarch paid a record price for the hotel's largest penthouse, the eighteen-story white marble edifice at the corner of Fifth Avenue and 59th Street has radiated wealth and luxury. For some, the hotel evokes images of F. Scott Fitzgerald frolicking in the Pulitzer Fountain, or Eloise, the impish young guest who pours water down the mail chute, or Truman Capote's infamous Black and White Ball. But the true stories captured in *The Plaza* also include dark, hidden secrets: the cold-blooded murder perpetrated by the construction workers in charge of building the hotel, how Donald J. Trump came to be the only owner to ever bankrupt the Plaza, and the tale of the disgraced Indian tycoon who ran the hotel from a maximum-security prison cell, 7,000 miles away in Delhi. Satow, a real-estate journalist and contributor to the *New York Times*, dishes the dirt on this New York City landmark with a great sense of fun and panache.

**Tarrant, Graham.** [For the Love of Books](#)  
(Skyhorse \$19.99)

Do you know which famous author died of caffeine poisoning? Who was the first British author to win the Nobel Prize in Literature? What superstitions Truman Capote kept whenever he wrote? Well, if you purchase a copy of this delightful literary compendium, you soon will if you didn't before. For the love of

books is a book about books, and the inside stories about the people who write them. From banned books to feuding authors, from literary felons to rejected masterpieces to stand-out lists of what to read next, this is the perfect gift for any reader.

**von Sothen, John.** [Monsieur Mediocre](#)  
(Viking \$25)

John von Sothen fell in love with Paris through the stories his mother told of her year spent in the City of Light as a student. Years later, von Sothen fell for and then married a French waitress working in New York City. The couple soon moved to France, but now after living there for fifteen years, von Sothen is pretty sure the stories his mother told him were all fairy tales. Now in a collection of *tres amusant* essays, von Sothen pens his own love letter to the country that exasperates and delights him in equal measures, but which he now calls home. Think of this as the American, big city version of *A Year in Provence*.