

Midmonth BookNotes

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Escape into a Cool Book

Cozy Corner

Andrews, Donna. [Terns of Endearment](#)
(St Martins 26.99).

When her family's cruise vacation to Bermuda is interrupted by a ship breakdown and reports of a passenger's suspicious leap overboard, artisan blacksmith, loving wife, dedicated mother, and par-time amateur sleuth Meg Langslow and her extended family race to uncover the truth before the necessary repairs are complete and the prime suspects return to shore. *PW* effectively captured the appeal of the latest from Andrews, the 25th sterling installment in her award-winning series, by saying "smoothly combines a clever plot with distinctive and endearing characters. Cozy fans will wish this long-running series never ends."

Cleverly, Barbara. [Invitation to Die](#)
(Soho \$26.95)

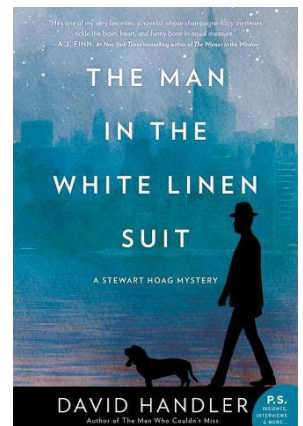
In Cambridge during the early summer of 1924, Detective Inspector John Redfyre investigates the murder of a former soldier, one of several cases linked to a secretive dining club at St. Bede's College. Cleverly follows up last year's *Fall of Angels*, which introduced readers to Detective Inspector John Redfyre, with another evocative mystery set in Cambridge in the 1920s. While the plot is a bit of a muddle, Cleverly does excel at capturing the literary flavor and feel of that corner of England. Those who favor character and setting (or who miss the erudite mysteries of Dorothy L. Sayers) may want to check out this series.

Conroy, Vivian. [Last Pen Standing](#)
(Sourcebooks \$7.99)

As the new co-owner of Tundish Montana's stationery shop WANTED, Delta Douglas knows how to organize a killer crafting event. Creativity and cardstock are all she needs to move one step closer to her ultimate dream: developing her own line of crafting products. But on the night of the workshop, at the swanky hotel venue, glitter isn't the only thing found sprawled on the floor. A hotel guest is discovered dead in the bar, and amid the confusion, Delta's best friend is suspected of the crime. Conroy launches her new Stationary Shop Mystery series with a cunning crafty cozy that should please fans of Laura Childs.

Handler, David. [The Man in the White Linen Suit](#)
(HarperCollins \$15.99)

Washed-up celebrity ghostwriter Stewart "Hoagy" Hoag has finally rediscovered his voice and is making progress on what he hopes will be his long-awaited second novel when his ex-wife, celebrity actress Merilee Nash, who is sifting through film offers—and also her fickle feelings for Hoagy—offers her home for Hoagy's use while she's shooting on location. However, any hopes Hoagy might have that this offer from Merilee represents a chance to get back together is put to the side when Hoagy



agrees to help infamous editor Sylvia James try and track down Tommy O'Brien, who worked as a literary assistant to Sylvia's father Addison James and has disappeared with Addison's latest manuscript.

Lotempio, T.C. [The Time for Murder is Meow](#)

Crishell "Shell" McMillan sees the cancellation of her TV series as a blessing in disguise. The former actress can now take over her late aunt's pet shop, the Purr N' Bark, and do something she loves. While getting the shop ready for re-opening, Shell is asked to loan her aunt's Cary Grant posters to the local museum for an exhibit. She finds the prospect exciting—until a museum board member, who had a long-standing feud with Shell's aunt, votes against it. When she discovers the board member dead in the museum, Shell becomes suspect number one. Can she, her Siamese cat Kahlua, and her new sidekick—her aunt's Persian Purrrday—find the real culprit, or will her latest career go up in kitty litter? Miss the old "Cat Who" series by Lillian Jackson Braun? Then you need to add this feline-loving cozy series debut to your must-read list.

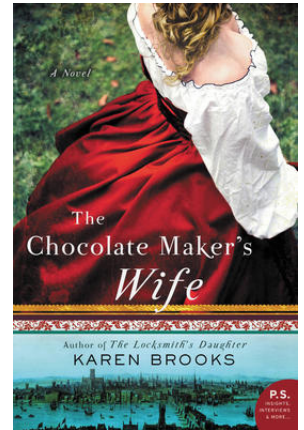
More Fiction, Mysteries, Romance, and More

Benedict, Marie. [The Only Woman in the Room](#) (\$16.99).

Hedy Kiesler's beauty almost certainly saved her from the racial wrath of the rising Nazi party even if it did lead to an early marriage with an Austrian arms dealer. While at her husband's side, Hedy, dismissed by German officials as just a pretty face, actually understood more about what was being plotted than anyone would guess. Hedy devised a plan to flee in disguise from their castle, and the whirlwind escape landed her in Hollywood, where she would go on to become movie goddess Hedy Lemarr. But even as Hedy was filming one movie after another, she had a secret more shocking than her heritage or her marriage: she was a scientist. And she knew a few secrets about the enemy. She had an idea that might help the country fight the Nazis...if anyone would listen to her. While cinematic icon Hedy Lemarr was known for her exotic beauty and mysterious allure, she and composer George Antheil were also responsible for developing a type of communications technology that not only helped the Allies win the war but one that would become the blueprint for today's Wi-Fi.

Brooks, Karen. [The Chocolate Maker's Wife](#) (Harper \$16.99).

Rosamund Tomkins, the illegitimate daughter of a nobleman, spends most of her young life in drudgery at a country inn. To her, the Restoration under Charles II, is but a distant threat as she works under the watchful eye of her brutal, abusive stepfather . . . until the day she is nearly run over by the coach of Sir Everard Blithman. Sir Everard, a canny merchant, offers Rosamund an "opportunity like no other," allowing her to escape into a very different life, becoming the linchpin that will drive the success of his fledgling business: a luxurious London chocolate house where wealthy and well-connected men come to see and be seen, to gossip and plot, while indulging in the sweet and heady drink. Rosamund's rise to the top of the London society hits an unexpected snag when she meets a man who threatens to destroy everything she loves and damn her to a dire fate. Think *Forever Amber* but with lots more chocolate.



Christopher, Andie J. [Not the Girl You Marry](#) (Penguin \$16)

If you loved the rom-com *How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days*, this is the romance for you! Christopher flips the script of that classic movie by switching up the roles of the hero and heroine. In the case of the book, it is hero Jack Novlan, who because of his own darned internet celebrity, is doomed to churn out fluffy articles and click-bait pieces on the app-based dating scene instead of the serious and thoughtful articles on politics he desperately wants to write. In a deal with his boss that he hopes will finally set him free, Jack agrees to write a piece on "How to Lose a Girl." The only problem is that the girl Jack now has to romantically catch and release is celebrity event planner Hannah Mayfield. Jack thought it would be easy to love and leave Hannah, but the more time he spends with her, the less likely Jack is that he wants Hannah to dump him!

Colgan, Jenny. [The Loveliest Chocolate Shop in Paris](#) (Sourcebooks \$15.99).

Anna Trent may be a supervisor in a chocolate factory ... but that doesn't necessarily mean she knows how to make chocolate. So, when a fateful accident gives her the opportunity to work at Paris's elite chocolatier Le Chapeau Chocolat, Anna expects to be outed as a fraud. After all, there is a world of difference between chalky, mass-produced English chocolate and the gourmet confections Anna's new boss creates. But with a bit of luck and a lot of patience, Anna might learn that the sweetest things in life are always worth working for. *PW* gave this a rave saying "Parallel love stories play out in Paris a generation apart in this funny, lyrical story from U.K.-based chick-lit writer Colgan (Meet Me at the Cupcake Cafe), about striving for perfection—and forgiveness."

Dare, Tessa. [The Wallflower Wager](#) (Harper \$7.99).

Lady Penelope Campion never met a lost or wounded creature she wouldn't take into her home and her heart. So, when her cranky—and attractive—new neighbor Gabriel Duke demands she clear out the rescued animals, Penny sets him a challenge. She will part with her precious charges, if he can find them loving homes. Done, Gabriel says. How hard can it be to find homes for a few kittens? And a two-legged dog. And a foul-mouthed parrot. And a goat, an otter, a hedgehog...Easier said than done, for a cold-blooded bastard who wouldn't know a loving home from a workhouse. Soon he's covered in cat hair, knee-deep in adorable, and bewitched by a shyly pretty spinster who defies his every attempt to seduce her because she's set her mind and heart on saving him. The latest witty and sexy addition in RITA award-winning Dare's "A Girl Meets Duke" series swept the professional review circuit winning starred reviews from *Booklist*, *Kirkus*, *LJ*, and *PW*.

Davis, Fiona. [Chelsea Girls](#) (Dutton \$27).

Playwright Hazel Ripley's friendship with actress Maxine Mead began twenty years ago when they were both performers in the USO. It continued when

the two met again in New York City, and discovered they were both living at the Chelsea Hotel. However, now their friendship is about to be severely tested by the impact of McCarthy-era witch hunts convenient political targets among the creative residents of New York City's Chelsea Hotel. Davis traditionally picks one iconic NYC landmark upon which to anchor each of her mesmerizing historical novels, and in the case of her latest it is the Chelsea Hotel.

De La Rose, Lia. [To Love a Scandalous Duke](#) (Creative Arts \$14.99).

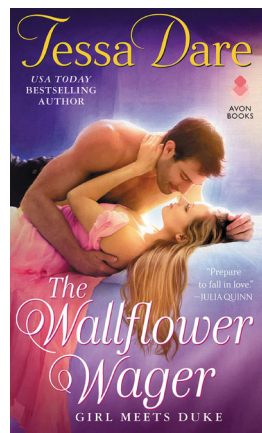
Returning home after a scandal drove him into exile years ago, Declan Sinclair finds he is once again the topic of gossip ever since his brother's murder has now made Declan the new Duke of Darington. Declan is certain the man responsible for his brother's death is the same man he blames for his own exile, but finding out the truth about the murder will require Declan to work closely with the surprisingly distracting Lady Alethea Swinton.

Emmett, Eliza. [Love Made to Measure](#) (\$12.99).

Cora Larsen is perfectly happy with her comfortable home and her thriving business as one of London's most sought-after seamstresses. Then Lord Grant Galavyn walks into her shop to pick up a dress ordered by his mother, and suddenly Cora's world is turned upside down. Despite their shared love of literature, Grant cannot convince Cora to overlook the differences in their societal status. Cora's and Grant's friendship takes an even rockier turn when Cora loses the lease on her shop, and unbeknownst to her, Grant's mother is the one pulling strings to keep them apart. Now, can Grant figure out a way to bridge the gap society has put between them and convince Cora he loves her?

Fehst, Zach. [American Magic](#) (Atria \$27)

When an enigmatic message uploaded to the dark web turns out to contain an ancient secret giving regular people the power to do impossible things, like levitate cars or make themselves invisible, American government officials panic. They know the demo videos on YouTube and instructions for incantations could turn from fantastical amusement to dangerous weapon at the drop of the hat, and they



scramble to keep the information out of the wrong hands. They tap Ben Zolstra, an ex-CIA field operative whose history with the Agency is conflicted at best, to lead the team that's racing to contain the dangerous knowledge—and track down the mysterious figure behind the leak who threatens that even more dangerous spells will be released one by one until the world as we know it no longer exists. This debut has been called Jack Reacher and Jack Ryan meets Harry Potter (*LJ*) so that gives you some idea of the book's literary flavor.

Gregory, Philippa. [Tidelands](#) (Atria \$28)

In a tale set during England's mid-17th-century civil war, Alinor, an herbalist seeking to escape an abusive relationship, is targeted by witchcraft mania in her tidelands community. In a note to readers, Gregory said "A few years ago I realized that though I still loved my fictionalized biographies of well and less-known women, I wanted to write a different sort of historical fiction: actually, a series of books, tracing the rise of a family from obscurity to prosperity. The main character, Alinor, is entirely fictional but representative of the working women of her time: excluded from power, from wealth and education, but nonetheless making lives for themselves as best they can." When you think about it, Gregory is in some ways the next gen version of that quintessential historical novelist of the 20th century, Jean Plaidy, who not only wrote about famous queens and power-brokers, but who also as Philippa Carr, wrote a multi-volume series of novels about an English family that traced their descendants from Tudor times to the 19th century.

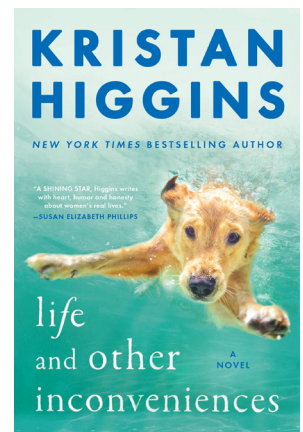
Harmel, Kristin. [The Winemaker's Wife](#) (Gallery \$26).

Inès has just married Michel, the owner of storied champagne house Maison Chauveau, when the Germans invade their corner of France in 1940. As the danger mounts, Michel turns his back on his marriage to begin hiding munitions for the *Résistance*. Inès fears they'll be exposed, but for Céline, half-Jewish wife of Chauveau's *chef de cave*, the risk is even greater—rumors abound of Jews being shipped east to an unspeakable fate. When Céline recklessly follows her heart in one desperate bid for happiness, and Inès makes a dangerous mistake with a Nazi collaborator, they risk the lives of those they love—

and the champagne house that ties them together. Almost eighty years later, Liv Kent has just lost everything when her eccentric French grandmother shows up unannounced, insisting on a trip to France. But the older woman has an ulterior motive—and a tragic, decades-old story to share. When past and present finally collide, Liv finds herself on a road to salvation that leads right to the caves of the Maison Chauveau. *LJ* gave Harmel's latest engaging historical a starred review ending with "Unfolding in multiple viewpoints, the writing is atmospheric and rich, showcasing heavily researched topics of wine making and French Resistance efforts. Harmel's touching story of love and loss in World War II France will appeal to fans of Pam Jenoff and Kate Quinn."

Higgins, Kristan. [Life and Other Inconveniences](#) (Berkley \$16).

As far as Emma London is concerned, it isn't that she can't go home again; it is just that she doesn't want to. However, eighteen years after her grandmother kicked her out for getting pregnant her senior year in high school, Emma, along with her own daughter Riley, is returning home to Connecticut to help the last woman on earth she ever thought would need it: her grandmother. No one writes with such clarity and compassion about the bonds of love and friendship that connect generations of women as Kristan Higgins, and her latest superbly insightful novel will have readers both laughing and crying with delight.



Imrie, Celia. [A Nice Cup of Tea](#) (Berkley \$18).

The beautiful town of Bellevue-sur-Mer, tucked between glitzy Monte Carlo and the plush red carpets of Cannes, is home to Theresa, Carol, William, Benjamin, and Sally: five retired London expats who have pooled their resources to set up La Mosaïque, a divine little restaurant. But there is trouble in paradise: the friends are desperately struggling to make ends meet. It will take every bit of their talent and gumption to save La Mosaïque. With fussy customers, obnoxious cruise parties, and a failing delivery van, it's

certainly not going to be easy. Fans of Peter Mayle's French-set novels will want to check out what *Kirkus* has called "A caper-filled romp in the Riviera sure to delight expats and mystery lovers alike."

Jefferies, Dina. [The Sapphire Widow](#) (Crown \$16).

Enjoying her life in 1935 Ceylon in spite of heart-breaking miscarriages, Louisa Reeve, the daughter of a successful British gem trader is forced by her husband's sudden death to unravel a mystery involving local cinnamon plantation and an outdoorsman Leo's checkered past. This gem will be The Pen's September History Paperback Book of the Month.

Jio, Sarah. [All the Flowers in Paris](#) (Ballantine \$27).

When Caroline wakes up in a Paris hospital with no memory of her past, she's confused to learn that for years she's lived a sad, reclusive life in a sprawling apartment on the rue Cler. Slowly regaining vague memories of a man and a young child, she vows to piece her life back together—though she can't help but feel she may be in danger. A budding friendship with the chef of a charming nearby restaurant takes her mind off her foggy past, as does a startling mystery from decades prior. In Nazi-occupied Paris, a young widow named Céline is trying to build a new life for her daughter while working in her father's flower shop and hoping to find love again. Then a ruthless German officer discovers her Jewish ancestry and Céline is forced to play a dangerous game to secure the safety of her loved ones. When her worst fears come true, she must fight back in order to save the person she loves most: her daughter. When Caroline discovers Céline's letters tucked away in a closet, she realizes that her apartment harbors dark secrets—and that she may have more in common with Céline than she could have ever imagined. Jio utilizes the now popular dual timeline plot and World War II setting for her latest compelling, quietly poignant novel.

Littlefield, Sophie. [That's What Frenemies Are For](#) (Ballantine \$27)

Manhattan socialite Julia Summers transforms her spin instructor Tatum into a fitness superstar to reclaim her own fading influence over her privileged friends only to find herself overwhelmed by her husband's arrest, her friends' disloyalty and her protégé's over-the-top

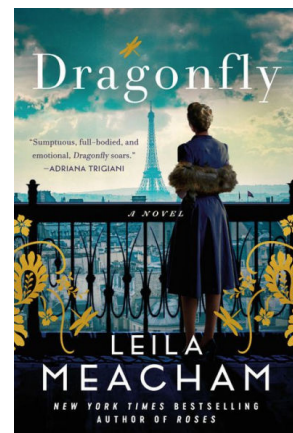
ego. Littlefield teamed up with debut novelist Gershell in what reads like a 21st century Upper East Side spin (pun intended) on *All About Eve*. If you enjoy the kind of gossipy, status-obsessed novels that Jackie Collins and Judith Krantz used to turn out, you may enjoy this literary collaboration of which *PW* said this "entertaining page-turner is delicious, biting fun." My take, however, is that if you are easily annoyed by the antics of people with more money than common sense, think about skipping this one.

McKenna, Lindsay. [Wind River Protector](#) (Kensington \$7.99).

While working for Dev Mitchell, a fellow veteran with whom she was once involved, ex-Air Force pilot Andy Whitcomb tries to keep things professional until an encounter with drug traffickers forces them into survival mode.

Meacham, Leila. [Dragonfly](#) (Grand Central \$28).

At the height of World War II, a handful of idealistic young Americans receive a mysterious letter from the government, asking them if they are willing to fight for their country. The men and women from very different backgrounds—a Texan athlete with German roots, an upper-crust son of a French mother and a wealthy businessman, a dirt-poor Midwestern fly fisherman, an orphaned fashion designer, and a ravishingly beautiful female fencer—all answer the call of duty, but each for a secret reason of her or his own. They bond immediately, in a group code-named Dragonfly. Thus begins a dramatic cat-and-mouse game, as the group seeks to stay under the radar until a fatal misstep leads to the capture and the firing-squad execution of one of their team. But...is everything as it seems, or is this one more elaborate act of spycraft?



Orenstein, Hannah. [Love at First Like](#) (Atria \$16.99).

Eliza Roth and her sister Sophie co-own a jewelry shop in Brooklyn. One night, after learning of an ex's engagement, Eliza accidentally posts a photo of

herself wearing a diamond ring on *that* finger to her Instagram account beloved by 100,000 followers. Sales skyrocket, press rolls in, and Eliza learns that her personal life is good for business. So, she has a choice: continue the ruse or clear up the misunderstanding. With mounting financial pressure, Eliza sets off to find a fake fiancé. Orenstein has some fun taking a few jabs about how social media – especially Instagram – can take over a person’s life.

Paul, Gill. [The Lost Daughter](#)
(Harper \$16.99).

With the Bolsheviks now in power in Russia, pretty, vivacious Grand Duchess Maria Romanov, the nineteen-year-old daughter of the fallen Tsar Nicholas II, lives with her family in suffocating isolation, a far cry from their once-glittering royal household. Her days are a combination of endless boredom and paralyzing fear; her only respite are clandestine flirtations with a few of the guards imprisoning the family—never realizing her innocent actions could mean the difference between life and death. Fifty-five years later in 1973, when Val Doyle hears her father’s end-of-life confession, “I didn’t want to kill her,” she’s stunned. So, she begins a search for the truth—about his words and her past. The clues she discovers are baffling—a jewel-encrusted box that won’t open and a camera with its film intact. What she finds out pulls Val into one of the world’s greatest mysteries—what truly happened to the Grand Duchess Maria?

Prior, Hazel. [Ellie and the Harpmaker](#)
(Penguin \$26).

Dan Hollis lives a happy, solitary life carving exquisite Celtic harps in his barn in the countryside of the English moors. On the anniversary of her beloved father’s death, Ellie Jacobs takes a walk in the woods and comes across Dan’s barn. She is enchanted by his collection. Dan gives her a harp made of cherrywood to match her cherry socks. He stores it for her, ready for whenever she’d like to take lessons. Ellie begins visiting Dan almost daily and quickly learns that he isn’t like other people. He makes her sandwiches precisely cut into triangles and repeatedly counts the (seventeen) steps of the wooden staircase to the upstairs practice room. Ellie soon realizes Dan isn’t just different; in many ways, his world is better, and he gives her a fresh perspective on her own life. Another marvelous example of the trend in popularity for

feel-good fiction, this debut “resonates with a clear voice, depicting love evolving from a friendship based upon genuine acts of kindness.” (PW)

Rao, Mahesh. [Polite Society](#)
(Penguin \$26).

In a modern retelling of Jane Austen’s *Emma* set in Delhi, Ania Khurana, the only daughter of a wealthy Indian family aspires to matchmake for her friends and family, only to find herself caught up in an unforeseen scandal—and an unexpected match of her own. This American debut for Rao will certainly draw interest from fans of Kevin Kwan’s *Crazy Rich Asians*, but it is also “a great choice for Austenites, fans of classic retellings, and general fiction.” (LJ)

Ramzipoor, E. R. [The Ventriloquists](#)
(Park Row \$27.99)

In this thrill debut based on real historical events, twelve-year-old street orphan Helene survives Brussels under the German occupation by living as a boy and selling copies of the country’s most popular newspaper, *Le Soir*, now turned into Nazi propaganda. Helene’s world changes when she befriends a rogue journalist, Marc Aubrion, who draws her into a secret network that publishes dissident underground newspapers. The Nazis track down Aubrion’s team and give them an impossible choice: turn the resistance newspapers into a Nazi propaganda bomb that will sway public opinion against the Allies, or be killed. Faced with no decision at all, Aubrion has a brilliant idea. While pretending to do the Nazis’ bidding, they will instead publish a fake edition of *Le Soir* that pokes fun at Hitler and Stalin—daring to laugh in the face of their oppressors.

Stuart, A. M. [Singapore Sapphire](#)
(Berkley \$16)

Desperate for a fresh start, Harriet Gordon finds herself living with her brother, a reverend and headmaster of a school for boys, in Singapore at the height of colonial rule. Hoping to gain some financial independence, she advertises her services as a personal secretary. It is unfortunate that she should discover her first client, Sir Oswald Newbold—explorer, mine magnate and president of the exclusive Explorers and Geographers Club—dead with a knife in his throat. When Inspector Robert Curran is put on the case, he realizes that he has an unusual witness in Harri-

et. Harriet's keen eye for detail and strong sense of duty interests him, as does her distrust of the police and her traumatic past, which she is at pains to keep secret from the gossips of Singapore society. When another body is dragged from the canal, Harriet feels compelled to help with the case. She and Curran are soon drawn into a murderous web of treachery and deceit and find themselves face-to-face with a ruthless cabal that has no qualms about killing again to protect its secrets. If you love historical mysteries with intriguing female sleuths much in the manner of those crafted by Jennifer Ashley, Sherry Thomas, and Susan Elia MacNeal, you will definitely want to add this series debut to your buy list.

Trigiani, Adria. [Tony's Wife](#)
(\$16.99).

Falling in love during a pre-World War II Jersey Shore summer, two aspiring singers – Chi Donatelli and Saverio Armandonada - find their marriage tested when they must decide which of them will pursue career opportunities while the other stays at home to raise a family. The latest from the author of *The Big Stone Gap* is one of Susan Wiggs (see below) top picks for summer reading.

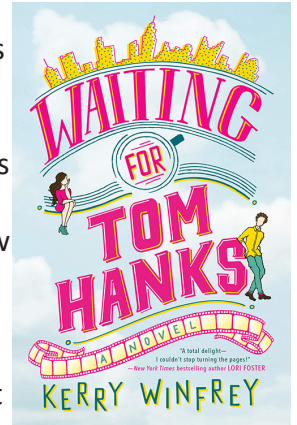
Wiggs, Susan. [The Oysterville Sewing Circle](#)
(Harper \$26.99).

Aspiring NYC fashion designer Caroline Shelby finds herself dealing with professional scandal when her designs are stolen by her boss and then personal tragedy when she must take guardianship of the two young children of her best friend Angelique, who has died of a drug overdose. Moving back home Oysterville seems like the best option for Caroline and her two new charges. Once Caroline and her new family has settled in, she starts her own sewing business, which helps her reconnect with old friends as well as open the door to a new project that will honor the memory of her friend Angelique. Wiggs deftly and compassionately explores the toll domestic violence can take on a family and a community in her latest emotionally compelling novel.

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

Almost all of her life, aspiring screenwriter (and current internet content creator) Annie Cassidy has been obsessed with the romantic comedies of Nora

Ephron. Unfortunately, Annie has yet to meet her own “Tom Hanks.” So, when Annie gets the chance to work on a movie being filmed in her hometown, she figures the universe is telling her that the man of her dreams is just about to enter stage right. Unfortunately, the only man Annie keeps crossing paths with is the sexy – yet oh-so-annoying – star of the movie Drew Danforth. A total prankster, Drew could not be more unlike Tom Hanks. Or is it simply that Annie hasn't taken the time yet to dig deeper beneath Drew's superficial Hollywood hunk surface to find the nice guy within? If you like your rom-coms served up with plenty of zingy wit and endearingly quirky characters, this is little gem is definitely for you!



Nonfiction

Abbott, Karen. [The Ghosts of Eden Park](#)
(Crown \$28)

In the early days of Prohibition, long before Al Capone became a household name, a German immigrant named George Remus quits practicing law and starts trafficking whiskey. Within two years he's a multi-millionaire. The press calls him “King of the Bootleggers,” writing breathless stories about the Gatsby-esque events he and his glamorous second wife, Imogene, host at their Cincinnati mansion, with party favors ranging from diamond jewelry for the men to brand-new cars for the women. By the summer of 1921, Remus owns 35 percent of all the liquor in the United States. Pioneering prosecutor Mabel Walker Willebrandt is determined to bring him down. Willebrandt's bosses at the Justice Department hired her right out of law school, assuming she'd pose no real threat to the cozy relationship they maintain with Remus. Eager to prove them wrong, she dispatches her best investigator, Franklin Dodge, to look into his empire. It's a decision with deadly consequences. With the fledgling FBI on the case, Remus is quickly imprisoned for violating the Volstead Act. Her husband behind bars, Imogene begins an affair with Dodge. Together, they plot to ruin Remus, sparking a bitter feud that soon reaches the highest levels of government--and that can only end in murder.

Alexander, Kevin. [Burn the Ice](#)
(Penguin \$27.99)

Over the past decade, Kevin Alexander saw American dining turned on its head. Starting in 2006, the food world underwent a transformation as the established gatekeepers of American culinary creativity in New York City and the Bay Area were forced to contend with Portland, Oregon. Its new, no-holds-barred, casual fine-dining style became a template for other cities, and a culinary revolution swept across America. Traditional ramen shops opened in Oklahoma City. Craft cocktail speakeasies appeared in Boise. Poke bowls sprung up in Omaha. Entire neighborhoods, like Williamsburg in Brooklyn, and cities like Austin, were suddenly unrecognizable to long-term residents, their names becoming shorthand for the so-called hipster movement. At the same time, new media companies such as Eater and Serious Eats launched to chronicle and cater to this developing scene, transforming nascent star chefs into proper celebrities. Emerging culinary television hosts like Anthony Bourdain inspired a generation to use food as the lens for different cultures. It seemed, for a moment, like a glorious belle époque of eating and drinking in America. And then it was over. To tell this story, Alexander journeys through the travails and triumphs of a number of key chefs, bartenders, and activists, as well as restaurants and neighborhoods whose fortunes were made during this veritable gold rush—including Gabriel Rucker, an originator of the 2006 Portland restaurant scene; Tom Colicchio of Gramercy Tavern and *Top Chef* fame; as well as hugely influential figures, such as André Prince Jeffries of Prince's Hot Chicken Shack in Nashville; and Carolina barbecue pit master Rodney Scott.

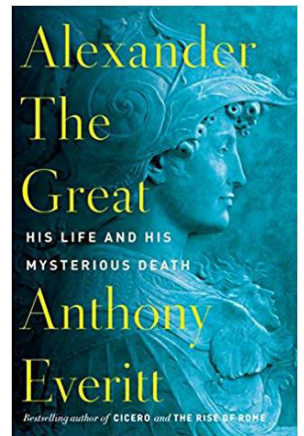
Bolick, Kate. [March Sisters: On Life, Death, and Little Women](#) (Library of America \$21.95)

For the 150th anniversary of the publication of Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*, Kate Bolick, Jenny Zhang, Carmen Maria Machado, and Jane Smiley explore their strong lifelong personal engagement with Alcott's novel—what it has meant to them and why it still matters. Each takes as her subject one of the four March sisters, reflecting on their stories and what they have to teach us about life. Kate Bolick finds parallels in oldest sister Meg's brush with glamour at the Moffats' ball and her own complicated relationship with clothes. Jenny Zhang confesses to liking Jo least

among the sisters when she first read the novel as a girl, uncomfortable in finding so much of herself in a character she feared was too unfeminine. Carmen Maria Machado writes about the real-life tragedy of Lizzie Alcott, the inspiration for third sister Beth, and the horror story that can result from not being the author of your own life's narrative. And Jane Smiley rehabilitates the reputation of youngest sister Amy, whom she sees as a modern feminist role model for those of us who are, well, not like the fiery Jo. These four voices come together to form a deep, funny, far-ranging meditation on the power of great literature to shape our lives.

Everitt, Anthony. [Alexander the Great](#)
(Random \$30)

More than two millennia have passed since Alexander the Great built an empire that stretched to every corner of the ancient world, from the backwater kingdom of Macedonia to the Hellenic world, Persia, and ultimately to India—all before his untimely death at age thirty-three. Alexander believed that his empire would stop only when he reached the Pacific Ocean. But stories of both real and legendary events from his life have kept him evergreen in our imaginations with a legacy that has meant something different to every era: in the Middle Ages he became an exemplar of knightly chivalry, he was a star of Renaissance paintings, and by the early twentieth century he'd even come to resemble an English gentleman. But who was he in his own time? As debate continues about the meaning of his life, Alexander's death remains a mystery. Did he die of natural causes—felled by a fever—or did his marshals, angered by his tyrannical behavior, kill him? An explanation of his death can lie only in what we know of his life, and Everitt ventures to solve that puzzle, offering an ending to Alexander's story that has eluded so many for so long.



Lanier, Jaron. [Ten Arguments for Deleting Your Social Media Accounts Right Now](#) (Picador \$13)

You might have trouble imagining life without your social media accounts, but virtual reality pioneer Ja-

ron Lanier insists that we're better off without them. In *Ten Arguments for Deleting Your Social Media Accounts Right Now*, Lanier, who participates in no social media, offers powerful and personal reasons for all of us to leave these dangerous online platforms.

Waller, Douglas. [Lincoln's Spies](#)
(Simon and Schuster \$35)

Waller, who previously explored the world of espionage through his book about Wild Bill Donovan (head of the World War II OSS) not tackles spying during the American Civil War in this exhaustive account of the lives and professional careers of four people – Allan Pinkerton, George Sharpe, Lafayette C. Baker, and Elizabeth Van Lew – who spied for the Union.

Wilson, Robert. [Barnum](#)
(Simon and Schuster \$27.99)

He was the wealthiest showman of his era. A man rumored to have coined the phrase "there's a sucker

born every minute." (He never did really say that). A man who loved to drink but also espoused the cause of temperance. Someone who owned slaves yet was a proponent of the abolitionist movement. Someone who could be both a penny-pinching businessman and a generous donor. Wilson's nuanced new biography of P.T. Barnum effectively captures the dual and fascinating natures of a man, who was so much more than the singing and dancing figure played by Hugh Jackman in *The Greatest Showman*. A review in the *Wall Street Journal* captured the caliber of this exemplary biography saying "Overall, Mr. Wilson's book shows how one complicated, contradictory, morally ambiguous man struggled to improve himself while being single-mindedly determined to give delight to millions. It is a life for our times, and the biography Barnum deserves."