

# Midmonth BookNotes

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## A Cornucopia of Good Reading

### Cozy Corner

Abbott, Cordy. [Dead Men Don't Decorate](#) (Crooked Lane \$28.99)

As Camille Benson, the mother of the newly elected mayor of Marthasville, Virginia, prepares to take over a local antiques business, the discovery of the previous owner's body in the antiques shop leads Camille to investigate the possible connection between this murder and a previously unreported theft of rare books.

Claire, Ann. [Dead and Gondola](#) (Bantam \$17)

Returning to her Colorado hometown to run her family's historic bookshop with her sister, Ellie Christie discovers a dead man on the ski gondola and immediately suspects a mysterious stranger who left behind a first edition Agatha Christie novel. Here is what *Publishers Weekly* had to say about this entertaining start to a new series. "A fair-play plot, vivid characters, fascinating facts about Dame Agatha, and an intelligent and appealing protagonist make this a winner. Cozy fans will chomp at the bit for more" (*PW*)

Elliott, Lauren. [Steeped in Secrets](#) (Kensington \$26)

Flat broke and divorced, intuitive gemologist Shay Myers has changed since leaving her artsy hometown of coastal Bray Harbor sixteen years ago. But when she moves back under strange circumstances to open

a New Age tea and crystals shop, her old instincts may be the only key to spilling the tea on a deadly mystery.

Krotow, Geri. [A Santa Stabbing](#) (Tule \$17.99)

Retired Navy pilot Angel Warren knew opening Shop 'Round the World – a shop stocked with gifts from around the world – would be a challenge. Especially since Christmas – the target date of the shop's grand opening – is just around the corner. But it turns out Angel has a bigger challenge than getting her contractor to finish the shop's shelves and find time to price her inventory, when the town's cut-throat real estate agent is found dead in Angel's shop with one of Angel's specialty Santa figurines as the murder weapon.

Levine, Laura. [Death by Smoothie](#) (Kensington \$26)

It's the funny side of homicide in acclaimed TV comedy writer and novelist Laura Levine's newest mystery featuring Jaine Austen and her snarky cat, Prozac, as a murder from the past comes back to haunt the Hollywood writer-for-hire when Jaine is hired to clean-up the script for a new theatrical production of the short-lived television sitcom *I Married a Zombie* only to find murder is on the theatrical bill as well. "Jaine's wry sense of humor enlivens the action, while the reports from her retired parents in Florida are often hilarious. Fans of girl-on-the-go cozies will have fun." (*PW*) While I had no idea there was such a thing as girl-on-the-go cozies, I echo *PW*'s take on Levine's deliciously dry sense of humor.

St. James, Dorothy. [A Book Club to Die For](#) (Berkley \$27)

Invited to speak at an exclusive club, assistant librarian Trudell Becket and her friend Flossie discover the club's president dead in her kitchen before the meeting and therefore, of course, must investigate, in the third novel of the series following *Perfect Bind*.

## Historical Fiction, Mysteries, Romance and More

Adams, Lyssa Kay. [A Very Merry Bromance](#) (Berkley \$17)

With the help of his Bromance Book Club, country singer Colton Wheeler considers representing his ex-girlfriend's family's whiskey brand, despite how horribly she crushed his heart. "The romance-loving men that give the series its name are a reliable joy, and fans will be especially pleased by all the cameos from past heroes. The result is cute, funny, and heart-felt." (*PW*)

Alexander, Claire. [Meredith, Alone](#) (Grand Central \$28)

Not leaving her house in 1,214 days, Meredith Maggs is kept company by visits from her best friend, her online support group, and her treacherous memories of a traumatizing past, but when the world comes knocking at her door, she must find the courage to answer. Alexander's remarkable debut is racking up rave reviews including one from *Publisher's Weekly* that called it "a quiet slice-of-life story with heart to spare," and the usually cranky *Kirkus*, which concluded their review by saying it is "an optimistic, feel-good novel that might just soothe some post-Covid angst."

Blake, Olivia. [Alone with You in the Ether](#) (Tor \$26.99)

A doctoral student with destructive thoughts managed by time travel calculations and a bipolar counterfeiter artist undergoing court-ordered psychotherapy meet at the Art Institute in a new novel from the best-selling author of *The Atlas Six*. Sounds a bit too *Matrix-y* for me, but other readers may be intrigued.

Boyd, S.E. [The Lemon](#) (Viking \$27)

When the universally adored host of a culinary travel show is found dead in a Belfast hotel room in an apparent suicide, a group of friends, fixers, hustlers and opportunists vie to seize control of the narrative, in

this darkly hilarious and ultimately devastating interrogation of the underside of success and fame.

Brown, Tracy. [Hold You Down](#) (St. Martin's \$16.99)  
Mercy and Lenox Howard have always only had each other. Growing up on the mean streets of Harlem with an absentee mother meant that they had to have each other's backs. Now young, smart mothers they are determined to survive in New York City while raising their two sons, who have bright futures ahead of them.

Burdick, Serena. [The Stolen Book of Evelyn Aubrey](#) (Park Row \$17.99)

When she discovers that her great-great-grandmother was the author Evelyn Aubrey, whose shocking disappearance in 1898 led London society to believe she was murdered, Abigail journeys to England in search of answers, suspecting Evelyn may have written a new chapter of her life in order to take charge of her future.

Cochrun, Alison. [Kiss Her Once for Me](#) (Atria \$17.99)

Faking an engagement to suit both their needs, Andrew and Ellie are just trying to get through the holidays together until Ellie discovers that Andrew's sister is the mysterious woman she fell for last Christmas. Now Ellie must choose between the safety of a fake relationship with Andrew and the risk of something real with Jack. "Ellie and Jack's love story is gentle, and readers will appreciate every grand gesture, whether it takes place on a snowy bridge, a ski lift, or even in a dingy dive-bar bathroom. A heartwarming queer romance reminiscent of Wham!'s "Last Christmas." (*Kirkus*)

Fredericks, Mariah. [The Lindbergh Nanny](#) (Minotaur \$27.99)

In 1932 New Jersey, Lindbergh nanny Betty Gow, after toddler Charles Lindbergh Jr. is kidnapped, becomes a suspect in the eyes of both the media and public. Now Betty must find the truth about the kidnapping in order to clear her name and find justice for the child she loves. "Historical mystery fans and true crime aficionados will be well pleased." (*PW*)

Hays, Kate. [The Cloisters](#) (Atria \$28)

When Ann Stilwell arrives in New York City, she expects to spend her summer working as a curatorial associate at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Instead, she finds herself assigned to The Cloisters, a

gothic museum and garden renowned for its medieval art collection and its group of enigmatic researchers studying the history of divination. Desperate to escape her painful past, Ann is happy to indulge the researchers' more outlandish theories about the history of fortune telling. But what begins as academic curiosity quickly turns into obsession when Ann discovers a hidden 15th-century deck of tarot cards that might hold the key to predicting the future. I have no idea about whether tarot cards can really foretell the future, but I have no problem predicting Hays has a bright future ahead as a novelist. This stunning debut captivated me from the beginning with its beautifully realized museum setting, fascinating historical tidbits about the origins of tarot cards, and subtle hints of supernatural based suspense. *The Cloisters* is one of the best, most mesmerizing books I have read this year.

Kelk, Lindsey. [The Christmas Wish](#) (HarperCollins \$15.99)

When someone in her family makes a Christmas wish, Gwen has to relive the day over and over again until she grants the wish, realizing even the people closest to her have secrets of their own, and a little Christmas magic can fix a broken heart. Think *Bridget Jones' Diary* meets *Groundhog Day* meets *Love, Actually* in this fun and funny, British flavored holiday rom-com.

Liese, Chloe. [Two Wrongs Make a Right](#) (Berkley \$17) Becoming allies to get back at their matchmaking friends, Jamie Westenberg and Bea Wilmot must convince the meddlers they are madly in love, and then break up spectacularly, thus dashing any hope the two might have a romantic future together. But the more time Jamie and Bea spend together, the more these two polar opposites begin to wonder if Cupid's arrow wasn't so off the mark in this "lighthearted rom-com riff on Shakespeare's *Much Ado about Nothing*." (PW)

Martin, Alexa. [Better Than Fiction](#) (Berkley \$17) Drew Young completely gets the irony of her life. She is a bookstore owner who hates to read. However, owning a bookstore was never Drew's life plan. Drew wanted to use her talents as a photographer to share the world with others, but when her beloved grandmother passed away and left her bookstore to Drew, does Drew really have any other choice but to put her dreams aside and focus all her energy on keeping the bookstore open? While attending a book signing at the store, best-selling romance novelist Jasper Wil-

liams offers Drew a solution to one of her problems. If Drew will show Jasper around Colorado – the setting for Jasper's next book – he will compile a list of books guaranteed to make Drew a book lover. The question for Drew is whether Jasper's offer is just what she needs to make the bookstore a success or is she about to make a deal she will later regret?

Payne, Nikki. [Pride and Protest](#) (Berkley \$17)

Determined to take her neighborhood back from a soulless property developer, DJ Liza B. goes head-to-head with CEO Dorsey Fitzgerald and finds her life turned upside down when her protest results in a viral meme that changes everything, including her feelings for Dorsey. *Pride and Prejudice* meets *Black-ish* in this exciting new rom-com by debut author Nikki Payne.

Prusa, Carolyn. [None of This Would Have Happened If Prince Were Alive](#) (Atria \$27)

Struggling to evacuate Savannah as a Category Four hurricane bears down, Ramona, along with her entourage, navigates police check points, bathroom emergencies, demands from her boss, torrential downpours and calls from her cheating ex, while wishing for the days when her life was like a Prince song.

Rickloff, Alix. [The Girls in Navy Blue](#) (William Morrow \$17.99)

In 1968, when young divorcee Peggy Whitby inherits her great-aunt Blanche's beach cottage, she begins receiving cryptic postcards addressed to Blanche, a former yeomanette, all dated from 1918, that now draw Peggy into a mystery that could reveal a truth she may not be prepared to handle.

Robins, Eden. [When Franny Stands Up](#) (Sourcebooks Landmark \$16.99)

In post-WWII Chicago, aspiring Jewish comedienne Franny Steinberg discovers that her comedy heals men's pain and must now summon the courage to find humor in her darkest trauma to break boundaries, discover her voice and bring her family back together through the power of laughter. Perfect for fans of *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*.

Robinson, Shauna. [The Banned Bookshop of Maggie Banks](#) (Sourcebooks Landmark \$16.99)

Banned from selling anything written this century, bookstore manager Maggie Banks, to keep the business afloat, starts an underground book club that unexpectedly unearths a town secret that could

upend everything, forcing Maggie to choose between the books that formed a small town's history or the stories poised to change it all.

Ryan, Kennedy. [Before I Let Go](#) (Forever \$15.99)  
After a devastating tragedy, married couple, Yasmen and Josiah Wade, discover that love isn't enough to save their marriage, but it eventually might be enough to bring them back together for a second time around. Looking for something new to read after binging on Colleen Hoover's backlist? Ryan's stunning contemporary novel may be just the ticket. Here is what *Kirkus* had to say "The struggles here are real and wrenching, and Ryan's talent is such that, by the end, the characters feel like old, dear friends. This tender contemporary is a knockout."

Shane, Lizzie. [Pride & Puppies](#) (Forever \$15.99)  
Dr. Charlotte Rodriguez has a history of dating jerks for which she blames Jane Austen. Austen made the brooding Darcy types sound so appealing on the page, but in real life when Charlotte is dumped by the latest in a long line of not Darcy-caliber boyfriends she decides to swear off men and convinces her best friends to join her in a Puppy Pact, lavishing all their affection on sweet little puppies who actually deserve it instead of the man-children who most definitely do not. But can the town's new physical therapist George Leneghan, who never brooded a day in his life, convince Charlotte to give romance one more chance?

Stratton, Richard. [Defending Alice](#) (HarperVia \$28.99)  
Set in 1920s New York, this addictively readable, thoroughly entertaining historical novel involving sex and secrets, race and redemption, and power and privilege is based on a sensational real-life case that made international headlines. A case in which the marriage between a working-class black woman and the scion of one of America's most powerful white families ends in a scandalous annulment lawsuit.

Williams, Preslaysa. [A Sweet Lowcountry Proposal](#) (Avon \$16.99)  
It was supposed to be the happiest day of Jaslene Simmons' life, the day she'd say "I do" to Marcus Clark. But when her sister dies in a tragic accident everything changes—including her once rosy future with Marcus. Jaslene now pours all of her energy into caring for her now-motherless niece and running the wedding planning company she and her sister had built. Jaslene never thought her path would cross that

of Marcus' again until Jaslene's best friend Sasha not only insists on having Jaslene plan her wedding, but that the venue must be Charleston's Black history museum, of which Marcus just happens to be Head Archivist. Williams not only beautifully captures the charm and history of Charleston in her latest heart-warming contemporary romance, she also offers readers a thoughtful exploration of the role the past can play in our present day lives.

## Children's Fiction

Bunce, Elizabeth C. [In Myrtle Peril](#) (Algonquin \$17.99)  
Amateur Detective Myrtle Hardcastle must solve the mystery of a long-lost heiress and track down a possible murderer lurking in the halls of the Royal Swinburne Hospital before her father, a patient there, becomes the killer's next victim in the latest fun addition to the Edgar Award-winning mystery series.

Dashka, Slater. [Love, Escargot](#) (Farrar Straus and Giroux \$18.99)  
When he arrives at a Snailentine's Day party, hoping to meet another snail with similar interests, he discovers it is actually a Valentine's Day party and wants to hide in his shell until he makes a surprising new friend. I have no idea why the publisher decided to bring this out in November (I am guessing supply chain issues), but you can get a jump start on next year's Valentine's Day reading with this completely charming picture book of which *Kirkus* concluded "Though love and snails rarely go together, it's easy to be won over by this mighty mollusk."

De Seve, Randall. [This Book Is Not About a Kitten](#) (Random House \$18.99)  
A heartwarming picture book about a neighborhood coming together to help a kitten find a home, from a *New York Times* bestselling author and a Caldecott Honor-winning illustrator.

Flores, Feather. [The Twelve Cats of Christmas](#) (Chronicle \$15.99)  
Celebrate the holidays with twelve adorable cats—and one kitten—with this festive feline take on the classic carol The Twelve Days of Christmas.

Molk, Laurel. [Knitting for Dogs](#) (Random \$18.99)  
Izzy, who can build anything, expects to be an ace at knitting, but as her attempts to make a sweater pile

up, it takes her dog Max and a trip to the dog park to show her that maybe these aren't mistakes after all.

## Teen Fiction

Fuston, Margie. [Cruel Illusions](#) (Margaret K McElderry \$21.99)

Eighteen-year-old Ava Perry leaves the safety of her foster care home and joins a troupe of vampire-hunting magicians, believing that she finally has her chance to discover the truth behind her mother's death. *Caraval* meets *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* in this deliciously dark young adult fantasy.

Arlow, Jake Maia. [How to Excavate a Heart](#) (Harper Teen \$18.99)

Fresh off a breakup, college freshman Shani is distracted from her month long paleoichthyology internship when she gets involved with May, but when their relationship takes a serious turn, Shani's heartache over her ex-girlfriend's rejection comes rushing back.

Peppins, Brianna. [Briarcliff Prep](#) (Disney-Hyperion \$17.99)

Attending Briarcliff Prep, a Historically Black Boarding School, with her popular sister Belle, 14-year-old Avi LeBeau finds their sisterhood threatened when she discovers the truth about Belle's boyfriend, the pride and joy of Briarcliff's sibling school.

Scott, Marina. [The Hunger Between Us](#) (Farrar Straus and Giroux \$18.99)

For fans of Elizabeth Wein and Ruta Sepetys, an absorbing, fast-paced YA debut novel from Marina Scott about a girl's determination to survive during the Nazi siege of Leningrad—and to save her best friend from a horrible fate.

Sellet, Amanda. [Belittled Women](#) (Clarian \$18.99)

When a famed photojournalist shows up to document her family's "Little Women Live!" attraction, Jo, who is rebelling against living in the shadow of her literary namesake, discovers that real life is much more complicated and messier than fiction. "The characters' snappy repartee is both biting and affectionate, and the premise's cheeky inventiveness—a remix within a remix that both enacts and interrogates the source material—buoys this playful jaunt. (*PW*)

## Food

America's Test Kitchen. [The Complete Modern Pantry](#) (America's Test Kitchen \$34.99)

This unique guide helps you get the most out of your own pantry by showing how ingredients add crunch, acid, umami, or spice to a dish. Whether making Gochujang-Tahini Noodles, a top-it-your-way Savory Dutch Baby, or Chana Masala, Pantry Improv tips offer hundreds of ways to adapt meals based on what's on hand, while helping you to round out your pantry with high-flavor seasonings to turn the simplest meal into something fantastic.

Blumenthal, Heston. [Is This a Cookbook?](#) (Bloomsbury \$35)

Each of the 70 simple, straightforward recipes is accompanied by Heston's stories, insights, and hacks, turning each cooking session into a journey—and revealing a whole world of culinary possibilities and fresh perspectives. Brought to life by the incredible illustrations by Dave McKean, Heston's long-term collaborator and one of the greatest illustrators at work today, *Is This A Cookbook?* is the next best thing to having Heston as your sous-chef. A *BON APPETIT* BEST COOKBOOK OF THE YEAR

Leith, Prue. [Bliss on Toast](#) (Bloomsbury \$26)

Prue Leith toasts sourdoughs, focaccias, baguettes, flatbreads and more, then pairs them with everything from seasonal vegetables to meat and fish. The collection spans healthy, hearty, salty, and sometimes sweet. Ideal for a busy home cook who loves a full and balanced plate, the recipes are incredibly versatile and perfect for any time of the day: tomatoes, shallots, and oregano on black olive toast; grilled chicken tikka with yogurt on naan; smoked salmon, wasabi, and avocado on multigrain bread; and bananas and ice cream with brandy syrup on panettone.

Perelman, Deb. [Smitten Kitchen Keepers](#) (Knopf \$35)

The long-awaited new book from the best-selling and beloved author of *The Smitten Kitchen Cookbook* and *Smitten Kitchen Every Day*—a collection of essential recipes for meals you'll want to prepare again and again, from Cozy Chicken and Dumplings to Fettuccine with White Ragù, and from Chocolate Peanut Butter Cup Cookies to Strawberry Summer Stack Cake.

Saffitz, Claire. [What's for Dessert](#) (Clarkson Potter \$37.50)

Claire Saffitz returns with 100 recipes for all dessert people—whether you're into impressive-yet-easy molten lava cakes, comforting rice pudding, or decadent chestnut brownies. To keep the recipes straightforward and simple, Claire makes sure each recipe is extra efficient, whether you're making a Whipped Tres Leches Cake with Hazelnuts or Caramel Peanut Popcorn Bars. ONE OF THE BEST COOKBOOKS OF THE YEAR: *Bon Appétit*

Tosi, Christina. [All about Cookies](#) (Clarkson Potter \$35) The James Beard Award-winning chef, owner of Milk Bar and host of Bake Squad presents a collection of 100 new cookie recipes including sandies, sammies, chewies, bars and no-bakes including Golden Oaties, Pie Bars and Jelly Donut Sandwich cookies.

## Nonfiction

Baldwin, Neil. [Martha Graham](#) (Knopf \$40) A major biography—the first in three decades—of one of the most important artistic forces of the twentieth century, the legendary American dancer and choreographer who upended dance, propelling the art form into the modern age, and whose profound and pioneering influence is still being felt today.

Brands, H.W. [The Last Campaign](#) (Doubleday \$32.50) A best-selling historian and Pulitzer Prize finalist follows the lives of two war chiefs—General William Tecumseh Sherman and Geronimo—over the course of the 1870s and 1880s during which they confronted each other in the final battle for the American West would be.

Breihan, Tom. [The Number Ones](#) (Hachette \$29) Featuring the greatest pop artists of all times, this fascinating narrative of the history of popular music told through the lens of the Billboard Hot 100, which began in 1958, reveals a remarkably fluid and connected story of music that is as entertaining as it is enlightening.

Copeland, Misty. [The Wind at My Back](#) (Grand Central \$29) From celebrated ballerina and *New York Times* bestselling author Misty Copeland, a heartfelt memoir about her friendship with trailblazer

Raven Wilkinson which captures the importance of mentorship, shared history, and honoring the past to ensure a stronger future.

Darnell, John and Colleen Darnell. [Egypt's Golden Couple](#) (St. Martin's \$29.99)

Combining fascinating scholarship, detective suspense, and adventurous thrills, *Egypt's Golden Couple* is a journey through excavations, museums, hieroglyphic texts, and stunning artifacts. From clue to clue, renowned Egyptologists John and Colleen Darnell reconstruct an otherwise untold story of the magnificent reign of Akhenaten and Nefertiti. P.S. check out the author photo on this book. Truly one of the cleverest I've ever seen!

Davis, Kenneth C. [Great Short Books](#) (Scribner \$28) From hard-boiled fiction to magical realism, the 18th century to the present day, *Great Short Books* spans genres, cultures, countries, and time to present an enchanting and diverse selection of acclaimed and canonical novels. From works in translation like Yu Miri's *Tokyo Ueno Station* and Marguerite Duras's *The Lover* to popular, acclaimed authors like F. Scott Fitzgerald and Stephen King, this compilation is a celebration of classics from the historic to contemporary—plus a few bestsellers. Each entry includes the novel's opening lines, a spoiler-free plot summary, a “why you should read it” section, and suggestions for what to read next.

De Bellaigue, Christopher. [The Lion House](#) (Farrar Straus & Giroux \$28)

Told through the eyes of the intimates of Suleyman the Magnificent, the 16th-century sultan of the Ottoman Empire, this story of rival superpowers in an existential duel and one of the most consequential lives in human history reveals a time when a few mean decided the fate of the world.

Everitt, Anthony and Roddy Ashworth. [Nero](#) (Random \$30)

An acclaimed biographer and historian, in this nuanced biography of the cruel, vain and incompetent ruler, reveals the contradictions inherent in the reign of Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus and offers a reappraisal of his life, bringing ancient Rome to life—a city rife with political intrigues that could turn deadly in an instant.

Fisher, Paul. [The Grand Affair](#) (Farrar Straus & Giroux \$40)

A bold new biography of legendary painter John Singer Sargent, stressing the unruly emotions and furtive desires that drove his innovative work and defined the transatlantic, fin de siècle culture he inhabited.

Gage, Beverly. [G-Man](#) (Viking \$45)

This major new biography of the man who served for almost 50 years as FBI director looks at the full sweep of his life and career and how he planted the seeds for the today's conservative political landscape. Selected by *Publishers Weekly* as one of their "Top Ten Books of 2022."

Geanacopoulos, Daphne Palmer. [The Pirate's Wife](#) (Hanover Square \$27.99)

The dramatic and deliciously swashbuckling story of Sarah Kidd, the wife of the famous pirate Captain Kidd, charting her transformation from New York socialite to international outlaw during the Golden Age of Piracy. The author had me at "deliciously swashbuckling."

Griswold, Mac. [I'll Build a Stairway to Paradise](#) (Farrar Straus & Giroux \$40)

Bunny Mellon, whose life was marked by astonishing good fortune as well as tragedy and scandal, remains a singular figure in the annals of American design. She had her finger on the pulse of American culture and possessed a rare, once-in-a-generation sense of style and grace. Her most celebrated work—the White House Rose Garden, designed during the presidency of John F. Kennedy—demonstrated how formal restraint and the sparing use of color could be deployed to maximal effect. Later, her understated landscape design for the Kennedy gravesite at Arlington National Cemetery changed the face of American public memorials. In *I'll Build a Stairway to Paradise*, Mac Griswold—who knew Mellon personally—delves into her subject's closely-guarded personal archives to construct an unrivaled portrait of a woman as complex and multifaceted as the gardens and homes on which she left her mark.

Harkup, Kathryn. [Superspy Science](#) (Bloomsbury \$28)

A scientific look at the world's favorite secret agent, James Bond, shows how the weapons, technologies, and tactics that have thrilled and delighted audiences would work in the real world.

Homans, Jennifer. [Mr. B.](#) (Random \$40)

Based on more than 100 interviews and research in archives across Russia, Europe and the Americas, this first major biography of the greatest choreographer who ever lived takes us through his tumultuous and dramatic life during the 20th century, showing us how he became a legend who reinvented the art of ballet.

Hope, Bradley. [The Rebel and the Kingdom](#) (Crown \$29)

This remarkable story of idealism and insanity, hubris and heroism, follows Yale undergraduate Adrian Hong, who in the early 2000s, found purpose helping asylum-seeking North Korean escapee to safety and trying to subvert the North Korean regime, causing him to become one of the world's most unlikely fugitives

Keay, John. [Himalaya](#) (Bloomsbury \$30)

Himalaya has drawn an illustrious succession of admirers, from explorers, surveyors, and sportsmen, to botanists and zoologists, ethnologists and geologists, missionaries and mountaineers. It now sits seismically unstable, as tectonic plates continue to shift and the region remains gridlocked in a global debate surrounding climate change. *Himalaya* is historian John Keay's striking case for this spectacular but endangered corner of the planet as one of its most essential wonders.

Lancaster, John. [The Great Air Race](#) (WW Norton \$28.95)

Reclaiming one of the most important moments in American aviation history, this incredible, untold story recounts the transcontinental air race of October 1919, which riveted a nation as the aviators pioneered the first coast-to-coast air route, despite much drama and tragedy.

Montillo, Roseanne. [Deliberate Cruelty](#) (Atria \$28.99)

When Ann Woodward shot her husband, banking heir Billy Woodward, in the middle of the night in 1955, her life changed forever. Though she claimed she thought he was a prowler, few believed the woman who had risen from charismatic showgirl to popular socialite. Everyone had something to say about the scorching scandal afflicting one of the most rich and famous families of New York City, but no one was more obsessed with the tale than Truman Capote. Acclaimed for his bestselling nonfiction book *In Cold Blood*, Capote was looking for new material and fol-

lowed the scandal from beginning to end. He decided the story of Ann's turbulent marriage would be the basis of his masterpiece—a novel about the dysfunction and sordid secrets revealed to him by his high society “swans”—never thinking that it would eventually lead to Ann's suicide and his own scandalous downfall.

Osgood, Josiah. [Uncommon Wrath](#) (Basic \$32)

In this meticulously researched and compellingly told dual biography of Julius Caesar and Cato the Younger, a noted historian chronicles how these two men destroyed the world they loved, pushing the Roman Republic into civil war as a result of their hatred for each other.

Smith, Emma. [Portable Magic](#) (Knopf \$28)

Most of what we say about books is really about the words inside them: the rosy nostalgic glow for childhood reading, the lifetime companionship of a much-loved novel. But books are things as well as words, objects in our lives as well as worlds in our heads. And just as we crack their spines, loosen their leaves and write in their margins, so they disrupt and disorder us in turn. All books are, as Stephen King put it, ‘a uniquely portable magic’. Here, Emma Smith shows us why.

Tetro, Tony and Giampiero Ambrosi. [Con/Artist](#) (Hachette \$29)

The world's most renowned art forger reveals the secrets behind his decades of painting like the masters—exposing an art world that is far more corrupt than we ever knew while providing an art history lesson wrapped in sex, drugs, and Caravaggio.

Truby, John. [The Anatomy of Genres](#) (Picador \$20)

A legendary writing teacher provides a step-by-step guide to understanding and using the basic building blocks of the story world, detailing the three ironclad rules of successful genre writing and analyzing more than a dozen major genres and the essential plot events that define each of them.