

# Midmonth BookNotes

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## Give Thanks for Great Books!

### Cozy Corner

Burns, V.M. [Murder on Tour](#) (Kensington \$16.95)

Michigan bookshop owner Samantha Washington's tour for the launch of her new mystery novel is a whirlwind success... until life – or rather murder – begins to imitate fiction on the last stop at Michigan's most prestigious literary festival!

Connally, Celeste. [Act Like a Lady, Think Like a Lord](#) (Minotaur \$27)

Lady Petra Forsyth, daughter of the Earl of Holbrook, has made a shocking proclamation. After losing her beloved fiancé in an accident three years earlier, she announces in front of London's loosest lips that she will never marry. A woman of independent means—and rather independent ways—Petra sees no reason to cede her wealth and freedom to any man now that the love of her life is gone. Instead, she plans to continue enjoying the best of society without any expectations. But when ballroom gossip suggests that a longtime friend has

died of a fit due to her “melancholia” while in the care of a questionable physician, Petra vows to use her status to dig deeper. “A delightful period adventure with pitch-perfect banter.” (Kirkus)

Coyle, Cleo. [Bulletproof Barista](#) (Berkley \$28) When the film crew's for *Only Murders in Gotham*, the smash-hit streaming program, location shoot at Village Blend delivers an *actual shooting*, shop manager and master coffee roaster Clare Cosi finds herself at the scene of a *true crime* in this show stopping entry in the beloved Coffeehouse Mysteries.

“Scads of red herrings, peeks behind the show-biz curtain, and bountiful appended recipes will leave fans smiling contentedly.” (Kirkus)

### Historical Fiction, Mysteries, Romance and More

Awad, Amal. [Courting Samira](#) (HarperVia \$18.99)

Set in Sydney, Australia, *Courting Samira* is a charming, big-hearted rom-com about twenty-seven-year-old Palestinian woman Samira Abdel-Aziz, who after enduring her fair share of potential arranged matches, finds herself in an unexpected love triangle—a sparkling ode to meddling best friends, traditional courtship, *The Princess Bride*, and, of course, the possibility of love.

Cantor, Jillian. [The Fiction Writer](#) (Park Row \$17.99 Signed)

Battling writer's block, once-rising literary star Olivia Fitzgerald is offered a high-paying ghostwriting opportunity by a reclusive mega-billionaire and twice named *People's Sexiest Man Alive* Henry "Ash" Asherwood, who wants her help in writing a book that reveals a shocking secret about his grandmother and Daphne du Maurier. Cantor, who knows a thing or two about revisiting literary classics as evidenced by her previous novel *Beautiful Little Fools*, which looked at F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, cleverly echoes the irresistible blend of suspense and romance found in du Maurier's *Rebecca* as well as putting her own spin on several of the key characters in that book and sifts in some fascinating historical tidbits about du Maurier as well. This is literary catnip for gothic fans!

Clayborn, Kate. [Beginner's Luck](#) (Kensington \$16.95)

A quiet scientist with a steady job at a university, Kit Averin, falls in love with a corporate recruiter who wants her for his company's engineering division as well as permanently in his life.

Cooper, Tea. [The Butterfly Collector](#) (Harper Muse \$18.99)

In 1922, when would-be journalist Verity Binks receives a spectacular butterfly costume along with an invitation to the Sydney Artists Mas-

querade Ball the same day she loses her job, she is drawn into a mystery 50 years in the making—one she's determined to solve."Cooper melds fictional lives, scientific history, and social issues into a compassionate story. This will please fans of historicals with smart women protagonists." (PW)

Cousens, Sophie. [The Good Part](#) (Putnam \$18) When she makes a wish to skip to the good part of her life, 26-year-old Lucy Young wakes up to a handsome husband, a high-powered job and two perfect children. But as Lucy embraces the new relationships and the perks of maturity, she must ask herself some difficult questions like by skipping ahead to the best part of her life has she also missed out on some important parts of her past?

Danan, Rosie. [Do Your Worst](#) (Berkley \$17) Hired to break a curse on an infamous Scottish castle, Riley Rhodes meets a disgraced archaeologist, Clark Edgeware, who tries to get her fired for being in the way, sparking more than anger between them. "This lightly paranormal contemporary love story is filled with delicious tropes, spicy chemistry, and truly humorous situations. Over-the-top in all the right ways, it will most appeal to readers who like their romances a little ridiculous and a whole lot of fun. (Kirkus)

Freethy, Sarah. [The Porcelain Maker](#) (St. Martin's \$29)

Embarking on a journey to discover the identity of her father, Clara, piecing together the past, discovers a love story dimmed by the rising threat of Nazism, revealing how her father, a Jewish architect, used his talent at making exquisite porcelain figures to stay alive.

Garner, Alan. [Treachle Walker](#) (Scribner \$22) An introspective young boy, Joseph Coppock is trying to make sense of the world. Living alone

in an old house, he spends his time reading comic books, collecting birds' eggs, and playing with marbles. When one day a rag-and-bone man called Treacle Walker appears on a horse and cart, offering a cure-all medicine, a mysterious friendship develops and the young boy is introduced to a world beyond his wildest imagination. Garner's latest is shortlisted for the 2022 Booker Prize.

Graham, Lily. [The Last Restaurant in Paris](#) (Grand Central \$13.99)

In enemy-occupied Paris, as the locals go to bed starving and defeated by the war, music and laughter spill through the door of a little restaurant crowded with German soldiers. The owner Marianne moves on weary feet between its packed tables, carrying plates of food for the enemy officers. Her smile is bright and sparkling, her welcome cordial. Nobody would guess the hatred she hides in her heart. One night the restaurant closes its doors for the final time. In the morning, the windows are scratched with the words *traitor* and *murderer*. And Marianne has disappeared without a trace... Years later, Marianne's granddaughter Sabine stands under the faded green awning of the restaurant left to her by the grandmother she never met. She knows she isn't welcome. Marianne was hated by the locals, and when Sabine discovers they blamed her for the terrible tragedy that haunts the restaurant, she is ready to abandon her dark legacy. Then she finds a hidden passport with a picture of a woman who looks like her grandmother but has a different name, and she knows there must be more to Marianne's story.

Greenberg, Alison Rose. [Maybe Once, Maybe Twice](#) (St. Martins \$18)

In this novel of second chances and finding your own way, 35-year-old aspiring singer Maggie Vine, when her first boyfriend from

summer camp turned heartthrob actor offers her a career-changing opportunity, it feels like everything is falling into place, but her past won't let her move on without a fight.

Greer, Helena. [For Never & Always](#) (Forever \$16.99)

Hannah Rosenstein *should* be happy: after a lonely childhood of traipsing all over the world, she finally has a home as the co-owner of destination inn Carrigan's All Year. But her thoughts keep coming back to Levi "Blue" Matthews: her first love, worst heartbreak, and now, thanks to her great-aunt's meddling will, absentee business partner. When Levi left Carrigan's, he had good intentions. As the queer son of the inn's cook and groundskeeper, he never quite fit in their small town and desperately wanted to prove himself. Now that he's a celebrity chef, he's ready to come home and make amends. Only his return goes nothing like he planned: his family's angry with him, his best friend is dating his nemesis, and Hannah just wants him to leave. *Again*. Levi sees his chance when a VIP bride agrees to book Carrigan's—if *he's* the chef. He'll happily cook for the wedding, and in exchange, Hannah will give him five dates to win her back. Only Hannah doesn't trust this new Levi, and Levi's coming to realize Hannah's grown too. But if they find the courage to learn from the past . . . they just might discover the love of your life is worth waiting for.

Hanks, Diane. [The Woman with a Purple Heart](#) (Sourcebooks \$16.99)

In 1941, Army nurse Annie Fox, transferred to Hickam Field in Honolulu, finds her love for her country put to the test during the bombing of Pearl Harbor when, amidst the death and destruction, her friend and fellow nurse, who is Japanese American, is arrested under suspicion of being subversive. Based on the

real life of Lieutenant Annie Fox, Chief Nurse of Hickam Hospital.

Hawley, Sarah. [A Demon's Guide to Wooing a Witch](#) (Berkley \$17)

Calladia Cunnington, member of Glimmer Falls' founding witch families, saves someone from a demon attack and realizes the perpetrator is the legendary soul bargainer Asteroth, who is suffering from amnesia after being banished to the mortal plane.

Howe, Katherine. [A True Account](#) (Henry Holt \$28.99)

In Boston, as the Golden Age of Piracy comes to a bloody close, Hannah Masury – bound out to service at a waterfront inn since childhood – is ready to take her life into her own hands. When a man is hanged for piracy in the town square and whispers of a treasure in the Caribbean spread, Hannah is forced to flee for her life, disguising herself as a cabin boy in the pitiless crew of the notorious pirate Edward “Ned” Low. To earn the freedom to choose a path for herself, Hannah must hunt down the treasure and change the tides. Meanwhile, professor Marian Beresford pieces Hannah's story together in 1930, seeing her own lack of freedom reflected back at her as she watches Hannah's transformation. At the center of Hannah Masury's account, however, lies a centuries-old mystery that Marian is determined to solve, just as Hannah may have been determined to take it to her grave.

James, Sarah. [Last Night at the Hollywood Canteen](#) (Sourcebooks \$16.99)

In 1943 Hollywood, aspiring murder mystery screenwriter Annie Laurence, to get a foot in the door, volunteers at the Hollywood Canteen, a club run exclusively by industry members, and gets an opportunity to prove her worth by solving a real-life murder case, chronicling her investigation in an anonymous

magazine column.

Johansen, Erika. [The Kingdom of Sweets](#) (Dutton \$28)

Cursed to live in her sister Clara's shadow, Natasha gets her chance at revenge when an enchanted Nutcracker offers entry into a deceptively beautiful world where she uncovers her dark destiny and, reckoning with forces both earthly and magical, must decide to which world she truly belongs.” It would be a simple thing to take the outlines of *The Nutcracker* ballet and make it grim, but Johansen is doing a lot of delicate character work here, primarily around envy, social limitations on women's choices, and accountability. The world beyond the candy fantasy is satisfyingly creepy but also an effective landscape for exploring what happens when you ignore the rotten core of your deepest desires. An eerie and sophisticated dark fantasy.” (*Kirkus*)

La Rosa, Erin. [Plot Twist](#) (Canary Street \$18.99)

To overcome her writer's block, romance author Sophie Lyon, who's never been in love, reunites with her exes to learn why. Sophie gets some social media assistance from her reclusive landlord, a former teen heartthrob, and as they grow closer, she suggests a friends-with-benefits arrangement—what could possibly go wrong?

Murphy, Emily Bain. [Enchanted Hill](#) (Union Square \$18.99)

The year is 1930 and Cora McCavanagh is posing as a maid at Hollywood magnate Truman Byrd's legendary estate. She's closing in on the damning evidence she needs for a high-profile client. An aspiring PI, Cora was trained by her father, a former prison guard at the notorious Pelican Island, where Cora grew up surrounded by hardened criminals. This is why she recognizes Jack Yates as soon as he walks through the door. The last time she saw him was on an

ill-fated night that changed the course of her life and still haunts her more than a decade later. Cora never expected to see Jack again—and now a single misstep could cause both their secret identities to come crashing down.

Robert, Katee. [Hunt on Dark Waters](#) (Berkley \$18)

After stealing from her vampire ex and falling through a portal to another realm, witch Evelyn is rescued by telekinetic sailors in the first novel of Robert's "Crimson Sails" series.

Scott, Caroline. [Good Taste](#) (William Morrow \$19.99)

England in 1932 is in the grip of the Great Depression. Stella Douglas, author of a much-loved but not very successful biography, is a bit depressed herself. When she's summoned to see her editor in London, she expects her writing career is over before it's even started. But much to her surprise, Stella is being commissioned to write a history of English food. It's to be quintessentially English and intended to lift the spirits of the nation. There's just one problem: a lot of English food is actually quite terrible (and anything good is usually imported from elsewhere). So Stella travels across England in hopes of discovering a hidden culinary gem. What she discovers is oatcakes and gravy and lots and lots of potatoes. But when her car breaks down midjourney and the dashing and charismatic antiques dealer Freddie springs to her rescue, she is led in a very different direction.

Shane, Lizzie. [Four Weddings and a Puppy](#) (Forever \$16.99)

Kendall Walsh has exactly one second to save a fancy, five-tiered wedding cake and any possibility of being a wedding planner—not to mention her family's struggling ski resort. All because of one very cute, very furry, golden menace of a retriever who has a serious

thing for butter chiffon icing. This is exactly when Olympic skier Brody James shows up and saves the day . . . and the cake. Brody makes Kendall feel about a million indecipherable things. He's her brother's bestie. Her first crush. And a ridiculously popular Olympic hero, which only reminds her of her own failed Olympic dreams. What Brody isn't telling her is that he's walked away from it all. Now he and Kendall are both lost somewhere between their past and a future they can't yet see. But four weddings, one mischievous puppy, and a few steamy kisses later, these two might just realize that they are both exactly where they need to be...with each other.

Simpson, Alice Sherman. [The Winthrop Agreement](#) (Harper \$18.99)

A captivating historical novel set in Gilded Age New York City about an immigrant daughter's ascent from a miserable tenement to the heights of haute couture, driven by an insatiable hunger for a place in society and secrets she must not betray. Fans of HBO's *The Gilded Age* will want to try this that is described as part history, part romance, with a twist of gothic.

Taylor, Clementine. [Something about Her](#) (Putnam \$28)

When they meet at the Poetry Society, Aisling and Maya, two very different young women, find an unexpected connection with each other as they embark on a surprising journey of self-discovery and modern love.

Tieu, Julie. [Fancy Meeting You Here](#) (Avon \$18.99)

With all of her closest girlfriends getting married within the same few months. Elise Ngo agrees to be a bridesmaid and florist for each of them. But at her latest wedding, Elise begins a complicated relationship with a prickly and aloof caterer Ben Yu, who just happens

to be the elusive younger brother of Elise's friend Rebecca.

Upton, Nicola. [Shot with Crimson](#) (Crooked Lane \$31.99)

In 1939 Hollywood, Josephine Tey, when a shocking act of violence on the set of Hitchcock's *Rebecca* reawakens the shadows of the past, teams up with DCI Archie Penrose and together, they follow a trail of clues that echoes Rebecca's timeless themes of obsession, jealousy and murder. *PW* gave this a starred review saying "Upton excels at misdirection, masterfully juggling subplots until they all click into place, and she imbues the novel's violence with an uncommon depth of feeling. Golden age mystery fans will be in heaven."

## Teen

Chen, Jennifer. [Artifacts of an Ex](#) (Wednesday \$20)

After creating an art exhibit inspired by heartbreak, eighteen-year-old Chloe meets Daniel, but Chloe's unresolved feelings and Daniel's fear of being a rebound hinder their romantic prospects and leads Chloe on a journey to rediscover love and prove to Daniel she is ready for a genuine connection.

Croucher, Lex. [Gwen & Art Are Not In Love](#) (Wednesday \$20)

Forced to spend the summer together at Camelot in the run up to their nuptials, Arthur and Gwendoline, betrothed since birth, discover they make better allies than enemies as they cover for each other so they can pursue their real romantic interests.

Dennard, Susan. [The Hunting Moon](#) (Tor \$19.99)

As a new nightmare called the Whisperer

kills hunters each night, leaving bodies and secrets in its wake, Winnie Wednesday finds herself questioning what it means to be a true Wednesday and a true Luminary – and where her fierce-hearted loyalties lie.

DeWitt, Amanda. [Wren Martin Ruins It All](#) (Peachtree \$18.99)

Wren Martin, the asexual student council president, plans to eliminate the school's annual Valentine's Day Dance, until his rival Leo sabotages Wren's plan by securing a sponsorship from a dating app, which leads to unexpected feelings and realizations about Leo's seemingly perfect life.

Hazelwood, Ali. [Check & Mate](#) (Putnam \$14)

When eighteen-year-old Mallory begrudgingly agrees to return to chess in one last charity tournament, her surprise upset against Nolan Sawyer, the reigning world champ and bad boy of the chess world, sets her on a whirlwind adventure as she rediscovers her passion for the game.

Ibanex, Isabel. [What the River Knows](#) (Wednesday \$20)

Set in 1884, nineteen-year-old Inez travels to Egypt after the sudden death of her parents to uncover the truth about their deaths, and as she attempts to unravel the mysteries her parents sought, she becomes a pawn in a larger game that threatens to kill her.

Rosen, L.C. [Emmett](#) (Little Brown \$18.99)

Playing matchmaker for his friends at Highbury Academy, handsome, clever and rich Emmett tries to find his occasional friend-with-benefits the perfect match, but instead learns that gifted as he may be, he has no idea what he's doing when it comes to love. Emmett, who also writes adult historical mysteries as L.C. Rosen, offers his teen literary take on Jane Austen's *Emma*.

Valdes, David. [Finding My Elf](#) (HarperTeen \$19.99)

Escaping to NYU for college didn't turn out the way Cameron planned—he's flunking his theater classes, about to lose his scholarship, and he still hasn't found anyone he can call his "people." When he gets home for winter break, he's so desperate to avoid a conversation with his dad that he takes the first acting job he can get—as a mall elf. Despite how Scroogey he feels, the plus side is that there's a cash prize for the most festive of Santa's helpers. But the competition is fierce—especially from fellow elf Marco. Christmas spirit oozes out of his veins. At first Cam is determined to see him as nothing but a rival, but as they spend more time together, Cam starts to second-guess himself. What if he's finally found his people here—in the fakest consumerist nightmare place on Earth, where he least expected it?

## Nonfiction

Agrawal, Roma. [Nuts and Bolts](#) (WW Norton \$29.99)

Tracing the evolution from Egyptian nails to modern skyscrapers, and Neanderthal string to musical instruments, Agrawal shows us how even our most sophisticated items are built on the foundations of these ancient and fundamental breakthroughs.

Atakay, Bulent. [Beyond Genius](#) (Pegasus \$35) Exploring genius in the arts and sciences through the life and works of five seminal intellectual and cultural figures—da Vinci, Shakespeare, Newton, Beethoven and Einstein—this engrossing and enlightening work gives us a stunning new lens through which to view humanity's most prolific thinkers and creators.

Brands, H.W. [Founding Partisans](#) (Doubleday \$32.50)

To the framers of the Constitution, political parties were a fatal threat to republican virtues. They had suffered the consequences of partisan politics in Britain before the American Revolution, and they wanted nothing similar for America. Yet parties emerged even before the Constitution was ratified, and they took firmer root in the following decade. In *Founding Partisans*, master historian H. W. Brands has crafted a fresh and lively narrative of the early years of the republic as the Founding Fathers fought one another with competing visions of what our nation would be.

Clavin, Tom. [The Last Outlaws](#) (St. Martin's \$30)

Taking us back to the Wild West on October 5, 1892, this gripping true account of the Dalton Gang—four brothers and their rotating cast of accomplices—follows their attempt to rob two banks in broad daylight in Coffeyville, Kansas, simultaneously, which led to an epic gun battle that left eight men dead.

Copeland, Rob. [The Fund](#) (St. Martin's \$32) Drawing on hundreds of interviews with those inside and around Bridgewater Associates, this unauthorized biography of its billionaire founder, Ray Dalio, exposes a rarified world of wealth and power, offering unique insight into the past, present and future of the world's largest hedge fund.

Conway, Ed. [Material World](#) (Knopf \$35) Sand, salt, iron, copper, oil, and lithium. These fundamental materials have created empires, razed civilizations, and fed our ingenuity and greed for thousands of years. Without them, our modern world would not exist, and the battle to control them will now determine our future. Embarking on an epic journey across continents, cultures and time to reveal the

underpinnings of modern life on Earth, the author celebrates the humans and human networks, the miraculous processes and the little-known companies that combine to turn raw materials into things of wonder.

Du Sautoy, Marcus. [Around the World in Eighty Games](#) (Basic \$30)

Marcus du Sautoy is Simonyi Professor for the Public Understanding of Science and professor of mathematics at the University of Oxford, who in his latest entertaining and informative book explores the deep connections between math and the games we love, such as Monopoly and Connect 4, and explains how playing such games are an essential part of human psychology and culture.

[Great Bookish Quotes](#) (ALA \$16.99)

A stunning collection of more than 200 quotations that capture the wit, wisdom, and inspiration of writers, readers, and librarians – the perfect gift for your favorite bibliophile. Published by the American Library Association, every purchase of this charming little book helps support that organization and their efforts to promote books, reading, and libraries in America.

Martelle, Scott. [1932](#) (Citadel \$28)

An enthralling slice of history with contemporary resonance, this unique account examines the most transformative year in American history -- when a battered nation would emerge from the Great Depression and reinvent itself under the skilled leadership of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

McAfee, Andrew. [The Geek Way](#) (Little Brown \$30)

What is “being geeky?” It’s being a perennially curious person, one who’s not afraid to tackle hard problems and embrace unconventional solutions. McAfee shows how the geeks have

created a new culture based around four norms: science, ownership, speed, and openness. The geek way seems odd at first. It’s not deferential to experts, fond of planning and process, afraid of mistakes, or obsessed with “winning.” But it explains everything from why Montessori babies turn out to be creative tinkerers to how newcomers are disrupting industry after industry (and still just getting started). When all four norms are in place, a culture emerges that is freewheeling, fast-moving, egalitarian, evidence-driven, argumentative, and autonomous. Why does the geek way work so much better? McAfee provides an original answer: because it taps into humanity’s superpower, which is our ability to cooperate intensely and learn rapidly.

Renkle, Margaret. [The Comfort of Crows](#) (Spiegel & Grau \$32)

The beloved *New York Times* opinion writer and best-selling author presents this stunning literary devotional that follows the creatures and plants in her backyard over the course of the year, tracing the passing of the seasons, personal and natural. PW concluded their starred review with “This gorgeous reflection on humanity’s symbiotic relationship with the outdoors will transform the way readers interact with their own backyards.”

Shigeoka, Scott. [Seek](#) (Balance \$30)

Blending cutting edge research with wisdom from years of grassroots community work, an internationally recognized curiosity expert and speaker takes us on a journey to understand the power of deep curiosity, which is the most potent tool we have to bridge our differences and heal relationships.

Snow, Richard. [Sailing the Graveyard Sea](#) (Scribner \$29)



Part murder mystery, part courtroom drama, this gripping true account of the only mutiny in U.S. Navy history follows Commander Alexander Slidell Mackenzie who, while leading a training cruise, ended the lives of three innocent young men and was put on trial for his own life.

Southon, Emma. [A Rome of One's Own](#) (Abrams \$27)

Told with humor and verve as well as a deep scholarly background, an acclaimed author retells the history of Rome through the lives of 21 extraordinary women, overlooked and misunderstood, who caused outrage, led armies in rebellion, and wrote poetry, who lived independently or under the thumb of emperors.

Stutz, Phil. [Lessons for Living](#) (Random \$27)

In this profound collection of short essays he's been writing since the late 1990s, the famed therapist and subject of the Netflix documentary Stutz addresses real-world circumstances and offers a new way to think about life itself in a culture that denies the nature of reality.

Tick, Judith. [Becoming Ella Fitzgerald](#) (WW Norton \$40)

Ella Fitzgerald (1917–1996) possessed one of the twentieth century's most astonishing voices. In this first major biography since Fitzgerald's death, historian Judith Tick offers a sublime portrait of this ambitious risk-taker whose exceptional musical spontaneity made her a transformational artist.

Trotta, Roberto. [Starborn](#) (Basic \$30)

In *Starborn*, cosmologist Roberto Trotta reveals how stargazing has shaped the course of human civilization. The stars have served as our timekeepers, our navigators, our muses—they were once even our gods. How radically

different would we be, Trotta also asks, if our ancestors had looked up to the night sky and seen... nothing? He pairs the history of our star struck species with a dramatic alternate version, a world without stars where our understanding of science, art, and ourselves would have been radically altered. Revealing the hidden connections between astronomy and civilization, *Starborn* summons us to the marvelous sight that awaits us on a dark, clear night—to lose ourselves in the immeasurable vastness above.