

Midmonth BookNotes

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Happy Holidays! Happy Reading!

Cozy Corner

Benjamin, Kallie E. [Sniffing Out Murder](#) (Penguin \$17)

When the newly elected school board trustee—and former high school mean girl—cuts funding to her beloved pet-assisted reading program and then winds up dead, children’s book author Pris Cummings and her trusty bloodhound, Bailey, must prove the authorities are barking up the wrong tree. The debut of the new Bailey the Bloodhound series.

Carpenter, Callie. [Death by Demo](#) (Crooked Lane \$29.99)

After discovering her husband having an affair, Jaime Moore` receives only a single thing in the ensuing divorce, a run-down historical house where she discovers a dead body in the wall once starting her renovations. First in the new Home Renovation series.

Johns, Patricia. [Murder of an Amish Bridegroom](#) (Crooked Lane \$29.99)

To keep her best friend, Eden Beiler, who is accused of murder, out of prison, Petunia Yoder teams up with homicide detective Asher Nate

and together they follow a trail of damning clues to find the truth before they’re next on the killer’s list. Kirkus had this to say about the first in the new Amish Seamstress series: “Plenty of suspects and a burgeoning relationship between the English detective and the Amish heroine make for a fun read.”

Matthews, Olivia. [Coconut Drop Dead](#) (Mino-taur \$9.99)

Brooklyn’s annual Caribbean American Heritage Festival is finally here, and Spice Isle Bakery is thrilled to be one of the event’s food vendors. Co-owner Lyndsay Murray hopes their West Indian pastries and finger foods draw people back to the bakery in Little Caribbean. She’s looking forward to having fun, connecting with customers, and celebrating with her family. The day’s festivities are cut short when Camille, lead singer of an up-and-coming reggae band, dies. The police think it may be a tragic accident. But Lyndsay’s cousin Manny was close to Camille, and he believes someone cut her life short. Now Manny needs Lyndsay’s help to make sure a killer faces the music.

Oliver, Katie. [Cyanide and Sensibility](#) (Penguin \$9.99)

When one of her sister Hannah's famous dark chocolate cupcakes poisons a local celebrity's assistant, Phaedra Brighton, to save Hannah's reputation and business, sets out to serve justice to a culprit willing to take their target off the menu—permanently. Jane Austen meets Agatha Christie in this fun new contemporary cozy series.

Quigley, Mindy. [Public Anchovy #1](#) (St. Martin's \$8.99)

Pizza chef Delilah's O'Leary's hopes of perfecting a new "free-from" pizza recipe for a charity bash are dashed when a dead body crashes the party. Soon, Police detective Calvin Capone, Delilah, and her entire staff are trapped in an isolated mansion and embroiled in a dangerous game of cat and mouse. Now to catch an increasingly-desperate killer, Delilah will have to top all of her previous crime-solving accomplishments, and a few pizzas, too. "Shades of Agatha Christie in a modern whodunit whose prime suspects keep getting killed off." (*Kirkus*)

Historical Fiction, Mysteries, Romance, and More

Armstrong, Jess. [The Curse of Penryth Hall](#) (Minotaur \$28)

After the Great War, American heiress Ruby Vaughn, delivering a box of books to Penryth Hall, the home to her once dearest friend, Tamsyn, is drawn into a mystery when Tamsyn's husband is murdered and the crime is blamed on a curse—one that could claim Tamsyn's life as well. "Readers who like their historical mysteries embellished with plenty of gothic ambience and enhanced with an abundance of dry wit will adore this splendid debut." (*LJ*)

Burton, Jessie. [Medusa](#) (Bloomsbury \$17.99)
With little company other than the snakes that adorn her head instead of hair, Medusa, haunted by memories of a life before everything was stolen from her, finds her lonely existence blown open when Perseus arrives on the island, unleashing desire, love and betrayal.

Dunmore, Evie. [The Gentleman's Gambit](#) (Penguin \$17)

Living for her work at Oxford and her fight for women's suffrage, deeply introverted Catriona Campbell finds herself distracted by her father's handsome young colleague, who, unbeknownst to her, is on a mission to take Oxford's ancient artifacts back to his homeland in the Middle East.

Howe, Jenny L. [On the Plus Side](#) (St. Martin's \$18)

When she is secretly nominated for the next season of *On the Plus Side*, introvert Everly Winters, overwhelmed by how much time she'll have to spend on screen, finds an ally in cameraman Logan until their growing connection is caught on camera."Timely, humorous, and heartfelt, this exceptional tale of self-acceptance deserves a place on every romance lover's shelf." (*PW*)

Kantra, Virginia. [The Fairytale Life of Dorothy Gale](#) (Penguin \$17)

After heartbreak and humiliation, Dorothy "Dee" Gale applies to the writing program at Trinity College Dublin where, during a year of opportunities and changes, love and loss, finds the confidence to confront her biggest fears and see herself and her work with new eyes. Kantra's ingeniously inventive, modern re-imagining of *The Wizard of Oz* will resonate with anyone who is trying to find their way home, as well as any reader who might ask themselves "What would the original Dorothy

Gale do?" when facing a public setback.

Kane, Darby. [The Engagement Party](#) (Harper-Collins \$18.99)

Engaged to Murray Sedgemont after a whirlwind romance, Kass Baptiste, unexpectedly entering the world of the rich and powerful, starts receiving anonymous threatening social media messages during their engagement party that result in murder—one she's accused of committing.

Klassen, Julie. [A Winter by the Sea](#) (Baker \$18.99)

When the Duke and Duchess of Kent and their daughter--the future Queen Victoria--rent neighboring Woolbrook Cottage for the winter, the Summers sisters are called upon to host three of the royal family's male staff in their seaside house. But they soon realize they've invited secrets and intrigue into their home. Meanwhile, Emily Summers longs to become an author. A local publisher offers to consider her novel if she will first write a Sidmouth guidebook for him. Emily agrees and begins researching the area with help from the Duke of Kent's handsome private secretary. But a surprise visitor from her past shows up at Sea View, leaving Emily torn between the desires she's long held dear and her budding dreams for the future.

Krentz, Jayne Ann. [Night Island](#) (Penguin \$29 SIGNED)

Seven months ago, Talia March, Pallas Llewellyn, and Amelia Rivers were all victims in an experiment designed to "enhance" their psychic abilities. Now a mysterious informant named Phoebe Hatch contacts Talia hinting to her that a list of similar victims exists. But before Talia can get her hands on said list, Phoebe vanishes, forcing Talia to team up with Luke Rand, a hunted and haunted man chasing after the same information, when the two of

them become the targets of a determined killer. Krentz's latest ingeniously inventive paranormal-tinged suspense novel is an addictively readable combination of killer vegetation, killer vegetarian cooking, and a killer sense of wit making this a real treat for fans new and old of the consistently entertaining Krentz.

Lemmie, Asha. [The Wildest Sun](#) (Penguin \$27) Forced from her home in postwar Paris, aspiring young writer Delphine Auber embarks on a journey to New York's Harlem, and then to Havana and Key West, in search of her father, whom she believes is famed luminary Ernest Hemingway. From the author of the *New York Times* best-selling debut *Fifty Words for Rain*.

Rich, Roberta. [The Jazz Club Spy](#) (Gallery \$17.99)

In 1939 NYC, Giddy Brodsky, a cigarette girl at a Manhattan jazz club, recognizes one of the Cossacks who burned down her family's home in Russia and enlists the help of the Chief Commissioner of Immigration at Ellis Island to bring him to justice.

Ryan, Renee. [The Paris Housekeeper](#) (Harlequin \$18.99)

In 1940, as German tanks rumble through the streets of Paris, Camille Lacroix, a chambermaid at the world-famous Hotel Ritz, finds her courage and strength tested when she turns to a wealthy American widow for helping getting her friend out of the city.

Segura, Jo. [Raiders of the Lost Heart](#) (Penguin \$17)

It's been archaeologist Dr. Socorro "Corrie" Mejia's life goal to lead an expedition deep into the Mexican jungle in search of the long-lost remains of her ancestor, Chimalli, an ancient warrior of the Aztec empire. But when she is invited to join an all-expens-

es-paid dig to do just that, Corrie is sure it's too good to be true...and she's right. As the world-renowned expert on Chimalli, by rights Corrie should be leading the expedition, not sharing the glory with her disgustingly handsome nemesis. But Dr. Ford Matthews has been finding new ways to best her since they were in grad school. But as the dig begins, it becomes clear they'll need to work together when they realize a thief is lurking around their campsite, forcing the pair to keep their discoveries—and lingering attraction—under wraps. “Drawing unapologetically on *Indiana Jones* and *Tomb Raider* for inspiration, Segura's rip-roaring debut is sure to put her on the map.” (PW)

Shelton, Paige. [Lost Hours](#) (Minotaur \$28 SIGNED)

When their Alaskan tourist ship rescues a woman claiming to have been kidnapped, Beth Rivers befriends the woman, who reveals she's been in Juneau under witness protection, and teams up with police chief Gril who believes this complicated case is connected to another kidnapping. “A mystery, a thriller, and an all-around great vehicle for an intrepid heroine who never gives up” is how *Kirkus* summed up Shelton's latest entry in her “Alaska Wilds” series.

Shemilt, Jane. [The Vacation House](#) (HarperCollins \$18.99)

Ten years after one terrible night in Paxos, Greece, Julie, the classic “yummy mummy” of high society, is a stifled woman trapped in a gilded cage, stricken with anxiety and perfectionism until she meets a therapist who gives her hope for a different future. The Edgar-nominated, #1 internationally bestselling author of *The Daughter* and *The Playground* weaves a breathtaking tale of betrayal, family, and secrets from the past in this crackling novel of psychological suspense.

Wilkes, Ally. [Where the Dead Wait](#) (Atria \$28.99)

Victorian explorer William Day, 13 years after a failed expedition resulted in abandonment, betrayal and cannibalism, embarks on an uncanny journey into his past to find his missing second-in-command during which he must face up to the things he's done as the restless dead follow closely behind. The publisher is billing this as “Arctic Gothic.”

Nonfiction

Freeman, Charles. [The Children of Athena](#) (Pegasus \$32)

In 146 BC, Greece yielded to the military might of the Roman Republic; sixty years later, when Athens and other Greek city-states rebelled against Rome, the Roman general Lucius Cornelius Sulla destroyed the city of Socrates and Plato, laying waste to the famous Academy where Aristotle had studied. However, the traditions of Greek cultural life continued to flourish during the centuries of Roman rule that followed—in the lives and work of a distinguished array of philosophers, doctors, scientists, geographers, and theologians. Charles Freeman's accounts of such luminaries as the physician Galen, the geographer Ptolemy, and the philosopher Plotinus are interwoven with contextual “interludes” that showcase a sequence of unjustly neglected and richly influential lives. A cultural history on an epic scale, *The Children of Athena* presents the story of a rich and vibrant tradition of Greek intellectual inquiry across a period of more than five hundred years, from the second century BC to the start of the fifth century AD.

Keahey, John. [Following Caesar](#) (St. Martin's \$30)

A veteran newspaper journalist examines three ancient roads: the Via Appia, Via Egnatia

and Via Traiana, short sections of which are still preserved as archeological wonders today and discusses their historical significance over two thousand years.

Murphy, Paul Thomas. [Falling Rocket](#) (Pegasus \$32)

In November 1878, America's greatest painter sued England's greatest critic for a bad review. The painter won—but ruined himself in the process. The painter: James Abbot MacNeill Whistler, whose combination of incredible talent, unflagging energy, and relentless self-promotion had by that time brought him to the very edge of artistic preeminence. The critic: John Ruskin, Slade Professor of Art at Oxford University, whose four-decades' worth of prolific and highly respected literary output on aesthetics had made him England's unchallenged and seemingly unchallengeable arbiter of art. The internationally-reported, widely discussed, and hugely-entertaining trial that followed was a titanic battle between the opposing ideas and ideals of two larger-than-life personalities. For these two protagonists, Whistler v Ruskin was the battle of a lifetime—or more accurately, a battle of their two lifetimes.

Pettegree, Andrew. [The Book at War](#) (Basic \$35)

We tend not to talk about books and war in the same breath—one ranks among humanity's greatest inventions, the other among its most terrible. But as esteemed literary historian Andrew Pettegree demonstrates, the two are deeply intertwined. *The Book at War* explores the various roles that books have played in conflicts throughout the globe. Winston Churchill used a travel guide to plan the invasion of Norway, lonely families turned to libraries while their loved ones were fighting in the trenches, and during the Cold War both sides used books to spread their visions

of how the world should be run. As solace or instruction manual, as critique or propaganda, books have shaped modern military history—for both good and ill.

Raines, Howell. [Silent Cavalry](#) (Crown \$36)
Part American history, part family saga, part scholarly detective story, a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist brings to life the little-known story of the First Alabama Cavalry—renegade Southerners who played a decisive role in the Civil War but who were scrubbed from the history books.

Richardson, Patric. [House Love](#) (HarperCollins \$27.99)

Patric Richardson is known as “The Laundry Evangelist,” but his genuine love for household chores extends far beyond the laundry room. His philosophy is simple: tidying up is a privilege and a task you do for those you love (including yourself), and there are a million ways to infuse joy into the everyday tasks behind maintaining a home. *House Love* is his sunny guide to freshening up every inch of the house—from the entryway to the attic, the backyard to the bedroom. Patric shares his best design inspiration, DIY projects, and, of course, cleaning tips, so you can fall in love with your home all over again—or for the very first time!