

# Midmonth BookNotes

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## *Fall in Love with a Great Book*

### Cozy Corner

Beaton, M. C. with R.W. Green. [Death of a Spy](#) (Grand Central \$28)

While introducing his new assistant officer James Bland, an American secretly investigating a Russian spy ring, Sergeant Hamish Macbeth faces a string of mysterious robberies that are only the beginning of an international threat to his sleepy Scottish village of Lochudch

Chow, Jennifer J. [Ill-Fated Fortune](#) (Minotaur \$8.99)

In her family's magical bakery, Felicity Jin crafts handmade fortune cookies, making her own personalized predictions, but when one customer's ill-fated fortune results in murder, she must find a way to turn her luck around and clear her name. The first in the heart-warming and deliciously mysterious Magical Fortune Cookie series .

Dennison, Hannah. [Dagger of Death at Honeychurch Hall](#) (Little Brown \$17.99)

When the dishy – and single – new vicar of St. Mary's church spearheads a campaign

to restore a derelict chapel - rumored to be haunted by a German Luftwaffe pilot- in a far-flung corner of the Honeychurch estate, the Dowager Countess puts her foot down. But nobody quite understands why. Meanwhile, a fierce bidding war at an auction of military memorabilia ends in Kat Stanford's female adversary being murdered and Kat being held as the prime suspect. And then it turns out that several of the auctioned items are connected to Operation Tiger, a doomed rehearsal for the D-Day landings that took place in nearby Slapton Sands all those years ago. And Kat begins to realize that the vicar, the Luftwaffe ghost and all the World War II weaponry may all somehow be related.

George, Emily. [A High Tide Murder](#) (Kensington \$17.95)

While flying high on the success of her cannabis café, Chloe Barnes once again finds herself on the trail of a low-down murderer when a top contender at a local surf competition seemingly takes his own life.

Lewis, Gerri. [The Last Word](#) (Crooked Lane \$29.99)

When the very much alive Leocadia Arlington requests her own obituary by the end of the week, and then turns up dead, obituary writer Winter Snow falls under suspicion and, with the help of friends and family, must uncover the killer before the next obituary written is her own. First in the Deadly Deadlines series.

McKinlay, Jenn. [Fatal First Edition](#) (Berkley \$28 SIGNED)

While attending a conference in Chicago, library directory Lindsey Norris discovers under her chair a rare, first edition copy of *Strangers on a Train* by Patricia Highsmith and inscribed to Alfred Hitchcock. So, given Lindsey's propensity for attracting murderers, is it any surprise on the train ride back home to Connecticut, Lindsey stumbles across the dead body of the conference director? The latest in McKinlay's fabulously fun Library Lovers' series features an entertaining cameo from some characters in Kate Carlisle's Bibliophile series.

Miller, C.L. [The Antique Hunter's Guide to Murder](#) (Atria \$27.99)

When Arthur Crockleford, antiques dealer and her estranged mentor, dies under mysterious circumstances, Freya Lockwood returns to her quaint English hometown to find the truth and, following the clues to an old man or hosting an antiques enthusiast's weekend, she finds herself drawn back into the dangerous world of tracking stolen artifacts. Given her past career working as an assistant to her mom Judith Miller, the author of the indispensable *The Miller's Antique Price Guide*, is it really surprising C.L. would choose to set her terrific debut cozy in the cut-throat world of antiques?

Rue, Gretchen. [A Pie to Die For](#) (Crooked Lane \$29.99)

Este March, owner of the Lucky Pie Diner in Northern Michigan, where certain customers are granted their greatest wishes upon eating her family's magical pies, investigates after an unpopular new produce vendor is found murdered on his boat. First in the Lucky Pie series.

### **Historical Fiction, Mysteries, Romance and More**

Ackerman, Sara. [The Uncharted Flight of Olivia West](#) (MIRA \$18.99)

Wren Summers is down to her last dime when she learns she has inherited a remote piece of land on the Big Island with nothing on it but a dilapidated barn and an overgrown mac nut grove. She plans on selling it and using the money to live on, but she is drawn in by the mysterious objects kept in the barn by her late great-uncle—clues to a tragic piece of aviation history lost to time. Determined to find out what really happened all those years ago, Wren enlists the help of residents at a nearby retirement home to uncover the story of pilot Olivia "Livy" West.. What she discovers is more earth-shattering, and closer to home, than she could have ever imagined.

Ballard, Falon. [Right on Cue](#) (Putnam \$18)  
Former actress-turned-screenwriter Emmy Harper, after a series of unexpected events, is stuck with the blockbuster action hero responsible for her disastrous first movie and early end to her acting career, but to save her film and her career, she must get her act together both on and off camera.

Bastone, Cara. [Ready or Not](#) (Dial \$18)  
When an uncharacteristic one-night stand leads to an unplanned pregnancy, Eve Hatch, over the course of nine months, struggles to

adjust to her expanding reality and comes to realize that family and love, in all forms, can sneak up on you when you least expect it.

Bell, Angela. [A Lady's Guide to Marvels and Misadventure](#) (Bethany House \$17.99)

Victorian socialite Clara Stanton strives to protect her eccentric family's reputation, but that proves to be difficult when her grandfather takes off on a flight of fancy. Thrown together with vagabond tinker Theodore Kingsley, Clara sets off to follow her grandfather's whimsical adventure and finds love along the way.

Bond, Gwenda. [The Frame-Up](#) (Del Rey \$18)

A magically gifted art forger, Dani Poissant, the daughter and former accomplice of the world's most famous art thief whom she betrayed, must assemble her estranged mother's old crew to pull off an once-in-a-lifetime heist and then discovers there's far more at stake in this job than she ever realized.

Camden, Elizabeth. [While the City Sleeps](#) (Bethany House \$17.99)

Katherine Schneider's life as a dentist in 1913 New York is upended when a patient reveals details of a deadly plot while under the influence of laughing gas. As she is plunged into danger, Katherine seeks help from the dashing Lieutenant Jonathan Birch, a police officer she has long admired from afar.

Cisneros, Sandra. [The House On Mango Street](#) (Knopf \$26)

*The House on Mango Street* is one of the most cherished novels of the last fifty years. Readers from all walks of life have fallen for the voice of Esperanza Cordero, growing up in Chicago and inventing for herself who and what she will become. "In English my name means hope," she says. "In Spanish it means too many letters. It means sadness, it means waiting.» Told in a series of vignettes—some-

times heartbreaking, sometimes joyous—Cisneros's masterpiece is a classic story of childhood and self-discovery and one of the greatest neighborhood novels of all time. This 40th anniversary hardcover edition of Cisneros's beloved coming-of-age novel includes a new introduction by John Phillip Santos.

Dade, Olivia. [At First Spite](#) (Avon \$18.99)

After her fiancé Johnny Vine's brother Matthew convinces Johnny to break up with her before the wedding, Athena Greydon moves into a ten-foot-wide Spite House between the two and engages in some well-deserved payback. Dade's latest is richly imbued with her deliciously snarky sense of wit, but it also takes a thoughtful look at dealing with mental health issues and anxiety.

Deibel, Jennifer. [The Irish Matchmaker](#) (revel \$16.99)

Catriona Daly is no stranger to the business of love—even though personally she has yet to find it. Eager for a match of her own and a fresh start away from her sleepy village, she makes grand plans for the annual Lisdoonvarna Matchmaking Festival. The one thing Catriona never expects is for shy, widowed sheep farmer Donal Bunratty to distract her from her goal of securing a successful match of her own.

Dodd, Christina. [Every Single Secret](#) (Canary Street \$29 SIGNED)

In an isolated lighthouse on the California coast, Rowan Winterbourne lives a solitary life with only her secrets for company. For she has a mission that drives her—to avenge herself against Gregory Torval, the powerful drug and arms dealer who murdered her mother and vowed to eliminate everyone in her family. Then Joe Grantham arrives at her door and, for the first time, Rowan lets her guard down—a dangerous mistake when he black-

mails her to go with him to Torval's private island. The plan is for Rowan to distract Torval during the birthday celebration being thrown for him while Joe steals a valuable address book. What could possibly go wrong? Dodd delivers another nerve-jangling, twist-rich suspense novel guaranteed to keep you up way past your regularly scheduled bedtime.

Edwards, Melodie. [Once Persuaded, Twice Shy](#) (Berkley \$18)

When a joint project between her theater company and the local winery forces her to work with Ben Wentworth, an old flame who hasn't forgiven her for breaking his heart, Anne Elliott wonders if she made a mistake all those years ago. Edwards perfectly captures the beautifully autumnal romantic tone of Austen's *Persuasion* in her modern re-imagining that is full of all the witty banter, romantic angst, and compelling characters that made Austen's book a classic.

Evans, Malayna. [Neferura](#) (Sourcebooks \$16.99)

Dreaming of forbidden romance and freedom, Neferura, princess and high priestess of Egypt, to escape her vile half-brother, forms an unlikely alliance with a mysterious tattooed wise woman who offers her a way out, forcing her to decide where her loyalties lie and how much she's willing to sacrifice. In her adult fiction debut, Evans, author of middle-grade series "The Egyptified Joneses," uses her Egyptology background to tell the almost-unknown fictionalized story of Hatshepsut's daughter at the height of ancient Egyptian civilization.

Feldman, Ellen. [The Trouble with You](#) (St. Martin's \$19)

In NYC in the aftermath of World War II, Fanny Fabricant takes a job as a secretary to the "queen" of radio serials and stumbles on the blacklist that is destroying careers and wreck-

ing lives, forcing her to decide between playing it safe as she's always done or doing what she knows is right.

Forest, Kristina. [The Partner Plot](#) (Berkley \$18)  
When successful celebrity stylist Violet Greene and her high school boyfriend Xavier Wright wake up married after hooking up in Vegas, they decide both their careers could benefit from the marriage, but instead get an unexpected second shot at happily ever after.

Hameroff, Lindsay. [Till There Was You](#) (St. Martin's \$18)

After having an affair with Jake Taylor, a dive bar musician who becomes an overnight sensation due to her famous blueberry pancake recipe, chef Lexi Berman, when Jake unexpectedly returns, must decide if a relationship with him is worth risking her career—and her heart.

Handler, David. [The Woman Who Lowered the Boom](#) (WW Norton \$26.95)

This new installment of the Edgar award-winning Stewart Hoag mystery series finds the beloved ghostwriter-sleuth finally on the precipice of reclaiming his previous literary fame when threats against his editor appear to put both his career and her life in jeopardy.

Hartong, Mary Liza. [Love and Hot Chicken](#) (William Morrow \$30)

Returning home to Pennywhistle, Tennessee, for her beloved daddy's funeral, PJ Spoon abandons her PhD program at Vanderbilt and impulsively takes a job as a fry cook at the Chickie Shak, where she meets and falls for Boof, a talented singer-songwriter searching for her birth mother."By turns hilarious, sad, and introspective, this cross between *Steel Magnolias* and *Gilmore Girls* will appeal to anyone who has searched for answers about life and how to live it in a plate of fried chick-



en.” (*Kirkus*)

Himes, Chester. [The Essential Harlem Detectives](#) (Knopf \$35)

Here in one volume is an exceptional selection from Chester Himes’s acclaimed Harlem Detectives series. Winner of France’s prestigious Grand Prix de Littérature Policière and lauded by Jean Cocteau as a “prodigious masterpiece,” *A Rage in Harlem* introduces detectives Grave Digger Jones and Coffin Ed Johnson in a searing escapade. In *The Real Cool Killers*, the duo investigates a shooting and discovers an unsettling personal connection. In *The Crazy Kill*, a man is found in a breadbasket, stabbed to death, leaving Himes’s detectives to find out who among the many suspects did it. And in *Cotton Comes to Harlem*, the brazen robbery of a notorious con man running a back-to-Africa scam sets off a hunt for a bale of Southern cotton.

Huber, Anna Lee. [Sisters of Fortune](#) (Kensington \$17.95)

Based on the true story of the Fortune sisters, three young women each at a crossroads when they boarded the *RMS Titanic* in the spring of 1912 – and how that maiden voyage would transform their lives in profound and unexpected ways.

Jayatissa, Amanda. [Island Witch](#) (Berkley \$28)

Amara, the daughter of a 19th century Sri Lankan village’s demon-priest is accused of witchcraft and must clear her and her father’s names after someone or something begins mysteriously attacking men in the jungle.

Kapelke-Dale, Rachel. [The Fortune-Seller](#) (St. Martin’s \$29)

Starting a job at a Manhattan hedge fund after graduation, Rosie uncovers the true identity the mysterious Annelise, a girl who infiltrated her elite Yale set with devastating

consequences and wonders if it’s too late for her to put right what went wrong. The publisher is billing this as *Yellowjackets* meets *The Cloisters* while *Kirkus* says it is “an intoxicating mystery that defies easy categorization,” and that “readers will be tempted to devour it in a single sitting.”

Kashiwai, Hisashi. *The Kamogawa Food Detectives*

Down a quiet Kyoto backstreet, “food detectives” Koishi Kamogawa and her father Nagare, the proprietors of the Kamogawa Diner, through ingenious investigations, recreate dishes from a person’s treasured memories, which hold the keys to their forgotten past and future happiness. “Readers won’t find dead bodies or scandalous affairs here, but they will eagerly devour each morsel of this miso soup for the soul, complete with a purring cat called Drowsy for good measure. A nourishing collection of bite-sized stories with a hearty dash of savory flavor.” (*Kirkus*)

Kelly, Anita. [You Get the Girl](#) (Forever \$16.99)

High school basketball coach Julie Parker invites a team member’s foster parent, a super-hot ex-WNBA star, to be her assistant coach and the pair begin to blur the lines between working together and dating.

Lennon, J. Robert. [Hard Girls](#) (Mulholland \$29)

Jane Pool likes her safe, suburban existence just fine. She has a house, a family, (an infuriating mother-in-law,) and a quiet-if-unfulfilling administrative job at the local college. Everything is wonderfully, numbingly normal. Yet Jane remains haunted by her past: her mercurial, absent mother, her parents’ secrets, and the act of violence that transformed her life. When her estranged twin, Lila, makes contact, claiming to know where their mother is and why she left all those years ago, Jane agrees to join her, desperate for answers and the

chance to reconnect with the only person who really knew her true self.

McLaughlin, M.A. [The Lost Dresses of Italy](#) (Alcove \$29.99)

Verona, 1947. Textile historian Marianne Baxter comes to post-war Italy with one thing on her mind: three pristine Victorian dresses, once owned by the famous poet Christina Rossetti. Hidden away in a trunk for nearly a century, they were recently discovered at the Fondazione Museo Menigatti and Marianne's expertise is needed before they go on exhibit. But when she arrives, Marianne discovers an unsupportive but handsome museum owner, a superstitious local community, and a mysterious letter with a scribbled warning hidden among the dresses.

Verona, 1864. Christina Rossetti returns to her family's homeland in hopes of leaving her unfulfilled personal life and poetry career in England and beginning a new chapter. After a chance encounter with an old family friend, she finds a gift her father once gave her: a small ornate box with the three Muses carved into the lid. When she stumbles across a secret compartment, Christina finds a letter from her father with an urgent and personal request.

Meyerson, Amy. [The Love Scribe](#) (Park Row \$18.99)

While trying to harness her extraordinary gift—the ability to make others fall in love - Alice is summoned to the estate of the reclusive Madeline Alger and her mysterious library where she is faced with her most challenging assignment yet—one that forces her to confront her own guarded heart.

Mullen, Thomas. [The Rumor Game](#) (Minotaur \$29)

When a reporter Anne Lemire's story about Nazi propaganda intersects with Special Agent

Devon Mulvey's investigation into the death of a factory worker, they are led down a dangerous trail of espionage, organized crime and domestic fascism, which threatens to engulf the city in violence.

Payne, Nikki. [Sex, Lies, and Sensibility](#) (Berkley \$18)

Left with nothing but a rustic inn in the middle of nowhere—and each other—after the death of their father, Nora and her free-spirited sister must revamp the inn before Labor Day or lose it all, which pits them against an eco-tour guide who is determined to see them fail. Payne's latest deliciously spicy novel is a clever reimagining of Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*.

Phillips, Susan Elizabeth. [Simply the Best](#) (Avon \$29)

Sports agent Brett Rivers has never been involved in a negotiation that he hasn't won. That is until he crosses paths with aspiring artisanal chocolatier Rory Garrett. In order to prove her half-brother Chicago Stars quarterback Clint Garrett did not murder his ex-girlfriend Ashley, Rory needs some help from Brett. While Brett may think he can keep Rory from getting involved in a police investigation, it turns out he is defenseless when it comes to saying no to her. Phillips scores another touchdown with her latest, a winning combination of madcap mystery and delicious romance expertly infused with an abundance of wicked wit and some mouthwatering descriptions of chocolates.

Quin, Elish. [Medea](#) (Atria \$27)

Hearing the reviled sorceress Medea's side of the story through a feminist lens, this beautifully written novel follows Medea as she travels the treacherous seas with her husband, the hero Jason, and the Argonauts, battles inconceivable demons and falls in love with

the man who may ultimately be her downfall.

Schillace, Brandy. [The Framed Women of Ardmore House](#) (Hanover Square \$30)

A neurodivergent, hyperlexic book editor, Jo Jones, taking possession of a possibly haunted family estate in North Yorkshire, finds herself at the center of a murder investigation when the groundskeeper is found dead and a family portrait goes missing, and to clear her name, she must unearth the town's secrets—and her own.

Scott, Kylie. [The Last Days of Lilah Goodluck](#) (Graydon House \$18.99)

Saving the life of Good Witch Willow, Lilah Goodluck receives five unwanted predictions as a reward, and when the first three predictions come true, she is sent into a panic since, according to the fifth prediction, she only has a week to live unless she can stop the fourth one from happening.

Smith, Tiana. [The Spy and I](#) (Berkley \$18)

When she's mistaken for her super-spy sister, cyber security analyst Dove Barkley is drawn into a dangerous government mission with her sister's sexy partner, who has information that can help prevent a national tragedy and is running out of time to save her sister.

Spalding, Amy. [At Her Service](#) (Kensington \$17.95)

An assistant to a Hollywood talent agent, Max Van Doren, lets her roommate sponsor her for a new self-actualization app that brings her dreams close to coming true.

St. James, Simone. [Murder Road](#) (Berkley \$29)

No kind deed goes unpunished. At least that is what newlyweds Eddie and April Carter discover when they stop to help an injured young woman only to become the Coldlake Falls Police Department's number one suspects when the woman dies at the hospital there.

While Atticus Line, the road the Carters somehow found themselves lost on, has a history of murders, April and Eddie know they can't really tell the police everything that happened because it is just too weird. This leaves the couple no other option but to solve the murder themselves. St. James once again fashions another of her addictively readable mixes of spooky, supernatural tinged suspense and spine-tingling chills.

St. John, Yarah. [Frenemy Fix-Up](#) (Afterglow \$12.99)

When a health scare pushes corporate workaholic Colin to make a few life changes, he knows where to turn. If he's going to get right with his career and his love life, he'll need the right woman—and to get the right woman, he has to prioritize his health. Who better than Shay to help whip his butt into shape so he can win back his high school girlfriend? The catch is, she only has ninety days to do it. And they both really, *really* get on each other's nerves.

Stein, Charlotte. [When Grumpy Met Sunshine](#) (St. Martin's \$18)

Working with curvy, cheery, cute ghostwriter Mabel Willicker on his memoir, grumpy ex-footballer Alfie Harding, when their business arrangement is mistaken for a budding romance, convinces her to be in a fake relationship for the public, but their undeniable chemistry between them leads to something real.

Waters, Martha. [To Woo and To Wed](#) (Atria \$17.99)

When her widowed sister, Alexandra, won't move forward with an engagement until she, too, settles down again, young widow Sophie asks the Marquess of Weston to fake their own engagement and then break things off once Alexandra is happily married—a simple

plan with complicated results.

Webb, Heather. [The Queens of London](#) (Sourcebooks \$16.99)

In 1925 London, brilliant criminal mastermind Alice Diamond, the queen of an all-girl gang with plans on building a dynasty the likes of which no one has ever seen, must outwit and outsmart Britain's first female policewoman who is determined to prove herself by putting Alice out of business—permanently.

Williams, Sheila. [No Better Time](#) (HarperCollins \$30)

In early 1945, Dorothy and 800 African American WACs arrive at their post in England where they are tasked with processing mail sent to GIs from their loved ones back home, an estimated 17 million pieces, and then with their outlooks changed forever, the women return to the U.S. as the catalysts for change in America.

Williams, Tia. [A Love Song for Ricki Wilde](#) (Grand Central \$29)

Leaving behind her socialite family in Atlanta, Ricki Wilde moves to New York to open a flower shop as the Harlem Renaissance swirls around her, in the new novel from the author of *Seven Days in June*.

### Teen

Bright, Anna. [The Hedgewitch of Foxhall](#) (HarperTeen \$19.99)

In need of power beyond her wildest dreams to get back what she's lost, hedgewitch Ffion agrees to help Prince Taliesin while secretly striking a bargain with his brother Dafydd, and soon the fate of Wales depends on their quest — and so might the fate of her heart.

Cicarelli, Kristen. [Heartless Hunter](#) (St. Martin's \$20)

In a world where witches face persecution,

Rune leads a double life, masquerading as a socialite during the day and transforming into the vigilante known as the Crimson Moth by night, and forms a complicated alliance with the witch hunter Gideon Sharpe, blurring the lines between love and danger.

Think a YA version of *The Scarlett Pimpernel* but with more magic

Hahn, Erin. [Even If It Breaks Your Heart](#) (St. Martin's \$21)

Determined to follow the list his late best friend left behind of things he wants him to accomplish, 19-year-old bullrider Case Michaels is led to 18-year-old Winnie Sutton, whom he ropes into competing on the rodeo circuit and becoming his friend.

Wasley, Robin. [Dead Things Are Closer Than They Appear](#) (Simon and Schuster \$19.99)

During a magical apocalypse, which has unleashed monsters and murderers, ordinary teen Sid Spencer teams up with a ragtag crew of would-be heroes to save the world as she knows it.

### Nonfiction

Bailey, Maddie. [The Hidden Histories of Flowers](#) (Hardie Grant \$20.99)

From the symbolism and meaning behind flowers and how these have evolved over time, to how humans interact with flowers based on cultural and geographical differences, to how flowers have been coveted for their medicinal aspects as well as for their visual merits, *The Hidden Histories of Flowers* showcases fascinating details of flowers and our relationship with them.

Boyle, Rebecca. [Our Moon](#) (Random \$28.99)

Many of us know that the Moon pulls on our oceans, driving the tides, but did you know that it smells like gunpowder? Or that it was essential to the development of science and



religion? Acclaimed journalist Rebecca Boyle takes readers on a dazzling tour to reveal the intimate role that our 4.51-billion-year-old companion has played in our biological and cultural evolution.

Crosley, Sloane. [Grief Is for People](#) (Farrar Straus and Giroux \$27)

How do we live without the ones we love? *Grief Is for People* is a deeply moving and suspenseful portrait of friendship, and a book about loss that is profuse with life. Sloane Crosley is one of our most renowned observers of contemporary behavior, and now the pathos that has been ever present in her trademark wit is on full display. After the pain and confusion of losing her closest friend to suicide, Crosley looks for answers in philosophy and art, hoping for a framework more useful than the unavoidable stages of grief.

Dykstra, Natalie. [Chasing Beauty](#) (HarperCollins \$37.50)

The vivid and masterful story of Isabella Stewart Gardner—creator of one of America’s most stunning museums—an American original whose own life was remade by art. Written by the author of *Clover Adams*, Dykstra’s latest fascinating biography includes archival photos of Isabella’s world, museum, and the art she collected.

Gregory, Philippa. [Normal Women](#) (HarperOne \$32.99)

Drawing on an enormous archive of primary and secondary sources to rewrite history, focusing on the agency, persistence and effectiveness of everyday women throughout periods of social and cultural transition, the #1 *New York Times* best-selling historical novelist redefines “normal” female behavior to include heroism, rebellion, crime, treason, money-making and sainthood.

Sherman, Casey. [A Murder in Hollywood](#) (Sourcebooks \$27.99)

*New York Times* bestselling author Casey Sherman pulls back Tinseltown’s velvet curtain to reveal the dark underbelly of celebrity, rife with toxic masculinity and casual violence against women, and tells the story of Lana Turner and her daughter, who finally stood up to the abuse that plagued their family for years. *A Murder in Hollywood* transports us back to the golden age of film and illuminates one of the 20th century’s most notorious true crime tales.