

# Midmonth BookNotes

Volume 4 Issue 4 April, 2024

4014 N. Goldwater Blvd., Scottsdale, AZ 85251

(888) 560-9919 • (480) 947-2974

poisonedpen.com • sales@poisonedpen.com



## It's Blooming Books!

### Cozy Corner

Graves, Sarah. [Death By Chocolate Raspberry Scone](#) (Kensington \$27)

Summer guests are eager to sink their teeth into the tantalizing desserts Jacobia “Jake” Tiptree and Ellie White serve at their bake-shop in the island village of Eastport, Maine. But Jake and Ellie discover attracting the wrong kind of attention can be deadly when they begin searching for the remains of a skilled fisherman who vanished with a valuable gold doubloon inherited from his grandfather,

Meier, Leslie. [Patchwork Quilt Murder](#) (Kensington \$27)

When the director of the new community center and her young employee are found dismembered, part-time reporter Lucy Stone, trying to piece the clues together, discovers the truth rests somewhere between wild rumors, a trusted friend’s emotional new sewing project and the authenticity of a mysterious 300-year-old patchwork quilt.

Osler, Rob. [Cirque du Slay](#) (Crooked Lane \$29.99)

Junior High teacher and gay dating Blogger Hayden McCall and his best friend Hollister investigate after the star of an upcoming fundraiser is discovered dead in her hotel suite and their frenemy Sarah is charged with the crime.

Sampson, Freya. [Nosy Neighbors](#) (Penguin \$18)

When their apartments in Shelley House face demolition, sworn enemies 25-year-old Kat and 77-year-old Dorothy put their differences aside to save their historic building, but when one of its residents is murdered, the duo seek justice to restore peace in their community.

Shelton, Paige. [The Poison Pen](#) (Minotaur \$27) SIGNED

Arriving at Jolie’s estate in the village of Roslin to examine an antique sword, bookseller Delaney Nichols, when a dead body is discovered, digs into Jolie’s own fascinating history through a journal linked to King Edward VIII. However, when the journal goes missing, Delaney must read between the lines to solve

this case.

Tietjen, Katie. [Death in the Details](#) (Crooked Lane \$29.99)

Maple Bishop is a World War II widow creating and selling intricate dollhouses to avoid foreclosure on her Vermont home. However when her first customer turns up suspiciously dead, Maple must rely on help from a rookie police officer and her own skills at crafting miniatures to find the murderer. A debut based loosely on the story of forensic-science pioneer Frances Glessner.

### Cozy Adjacent

Burr, Samuel. [The Fellowship of the Puzzle-makers](#) (Knopf \$29)

Raised by a group of eccentric enigmatologists, 20-something Clayton Summer, when the esteemed crossword compiler and main maternal presence in his life passes away, bestowing her final puzzle on him, embarks on a quest to uncover the secrets surrounding his birth, which will change him, and the Fellowship of Puzzlemakers, forever. Full of word puzzles, this uplifting debut has already been optioned by Disney.

Gilmore, Lucy. [The Library of Borrowed Hearts](#) (Sourcebooks \$16.99)

Stumbling across a rare edition of a book from the 1960s with love notes scribbled in the margins, librarian Chloe Sampson is sent on a literary scavenger hunt that brings about unexpected friendship and the discovery that some love stories begin in the unlikeliest places. "This dual-timeline novel is a bookish love letter to anyone who has ever found solace between the pages of a book." (LJ)

Roberts, Sheila. [The Best Life Book Club](#) (MIRA \$18.99) SIGNED

Leaving Seattle and her cheating husband behind, single mother Karissa moves to Puget Sound where she meets her new neighbors, who are also dealing with their own crises, and together they start a book club as a distraction until it becomes a way to build a better life together. Anyone who has ever been part of a book club, will relate to the way Roberts' characters bond over books.

### Historical Fiction, Mysteries, Romance and More

Acton, Helly. [Begin Again](#) (HarperCollins \$30) Despite living firmly in her comfort zone, Frankie McKenzie feels unsettled. She can't help feeling something's missing. Is it a home to call her own? Travel? A more rewarding job? A relationship? Before she can work it out, she dies in a freak kebab-related accident after what she sees as yet another dud of a first date. But life isn't over for Frankie. Instead, she is miraculously offered a second chance: Frankie can revisit key moments from her past to see if different choices will lead her to the fulfilling life she's always dreamt of.

Adler, Sarah. [Happy Medium](#) (Penguin \$18) Gretchen Acorn, a fake spirit medium, is hired to cleanse a skeptical goat farmer's property where she is shocked to find herself face-to-face with a very real ghost who wants to help the landowners avoid a long-standing curse.

Anderson, Rebecca. [The Orchids of Ashthorne Hall](#) (Shadow Mountain \$16.99)

On the Cornwall coast in 1887, botanist Hyacinth Bells arrives at Ashthorne Hall to study the estate's one-of-a-kind orchid collection

where she's swept away by Lucas Harding, the manor's caretaker, and as romance blossoms between them, strange things start happening, and she must uncover the truth he's keeping secret.

Cambron, Kristy. [The British Booksellers](#) (Thomas Nelson \$17.99)

Rival booksellers Amos and Charlotte, as Coventry is devastated by Luftwaffe's local blitz, must put aside their differences and fight together to help Coventry survive, in this exploration of the unbreakable bonds that unite us through love, loss and the enduring solace that can be found between the pages of a book.

Campisi, Megan. [The Widow Spy](#) (Atria \$27.99)

In 1861, Kate Warner—the country's first detective, a Pinkerton agent and a union spy—to possibly end the Civil War, must win the trust of her captive, Confederate spy and socialite Rose Greenhow, and, with time running out, worries she'll fail the most important assignment of her career.

Charles, Janet Skeslien. [Miss Morgan's Book Brigade](#) (Atria \$29.99)

1918: As the Great War rages, Jessie Carson takes a leave of absence from the New York Public Library to work for the American Committee for Devastated France. Founded by millionaire Anne Morgan, this group of international women help rebuild destroyed French communities just miles from the front. Upon arrival, Jessie strives to establish something that the French have never seen—children's libraries. She turns ambulances into bookmobiles and trains the first French female librarians. Then she disappears. 1987: When NYPL librarian and aspiring writer Wendy Peterson stumbles across a passing reference to Jessie Carson in the archives, she becomes con-

sumed with learning her fate. In her obsessive research, she discovers that she and the elusive librarian have more in common than their work at New York's famed library, but she has no idea their paths will converge in surprising ways across time.

Cleeton, Chanel. [The House on Biscayne Bay](#) (Penguin \$18)

After the tragic death of her parents, Carmen Acosta arrives at Maribrisa, the grand home of her estranged older sister and her husband on Biscayne Bay, and soon discovers beneath its glittering façade lies a treacherous legacy. Now Carmen must unravel Maribrisa's secrets to stop history from repeating itself.

Delacour, Faye. [The Lady He Lost](#) (Sourcebooks \$16.99)

When Lieutenant Eli Williams reappears after being lost at sea for two years, Miss Jane Bishop, as he tries to make amends for a past mistake, must decide if she can let go of the past to build a future with him or risk losing him for good.

Easton, Etta. [The Kiss Countdown](#) (Penguin \$18)

When an infuriating encounter leads to fake relationship, struggling risk-averse event planner Amerie Price poses as astronaut Vincent Rogers' girlfriend for the three months leading up to his mission. But Amerie doesn't plan on Vincent's strong romantic gravitational pull and must decide if she'll settle for the safe life—or shoot for the stars.

Eddings, Mazey. [Late Bloomer](#) (St. Martin's \$18)

After winning the lottery, Opal Devlin buys a failing flower farm in North Carolina to start her painting business, but when Pepper Smith claims she's the rightful owner of the farm and refuses to move out, they strike up a cohabi-

tation agreement that, despite their constant bickering, turns into something more.

Fox, Hester. [The Book of Thorns](#) (Graydon \$18.99)

When Cornelia joins Napoleon's army as a traveling naturalist with the power to heal, she meets the sister she never knew existed on the opposite side of the battlefield and together, they must use the magic of flowers to solve the mystery of their mother's death, while fighting for their survival.

Gable, Michelle. [The Beautiful People](#) (Graydon \$17.99)

In 1961, Margo Hightower, becoming the assistant to a society photographer, is thrown headfirst into the glamorous Jet Set world she so covets where she becomes friends with heiress and rising fashion designer Lilly Pulitzer, but when the lines between work and play blur, the golden life she desires slips from her grasp.

Garvin, Eileen. [Crow Talk](#) (Penguin \$28)

Frankie O'Neill and Anne Ryan would seem to have nothing in common. Frankie is a lonely ornithologist struggling to salvage her dissertation on the spotted owl following a rift with her advisor. Anne is an Irish musician far from home and family, raising her five-year-old son, Aiden, who refuses to speak. When Frankie finds an injured baby crow in the forest, little does she realize that the charming bird will bring all three lost souls—Frankie, Anne, and Aiden—together on a journey toward hope, healing, and rediscovering joy.

Grunwald, Lisa. [The Evolution of Annabel Craig](#) (Random \$30)

When John T. Scopes is arrested for teaching Charles Darwin's theory of evolution at the local high school in 1925, Annabel Hayes, with her marriage already strained, questions

both her beliefs and her vows to her attorney husband when he joins the team defending Scopes.

Henry, Emily. [Funny Story](#) (Penguin \$29)

Daphne always loved the way her fiancé Peter told their story. How they met (on a blustery day), fell in love (over an errant hat), and moved back to his lakeside hometown to begin their life together. He really was good at telling it...right up until the moment he realized he was actually in love with his childhood best friend Petra. Which is how Daphne begins her new story: Stranded in beautiful Waning Bay, Michigan, without friends or family but with a dream job as a children's librarian (that barely pays the bills), and proposing to be roommates with the only person who could possibly understand her predicament: Petra's ex, Miles Nowak.

Hoffman, K.T. [The Prospects](#) (Random \$18)

The first openly trans player in professional baseball, Gene, when his current rival, Luis, comes back to the team, finds the tension between them turning into the visceral, terrifying desire he's never allowed himself and must reconcile the minor-league-sized life he once found fulfilling with the major-league dreams Luis makes feel possible.

Holtz, Melissa. [An Enchanting Case of Spirits](#) (Penguin \$18)

After a girl's night out with drinks and tarot readings, newly widowed single mother Alyssa Mann begins seeing ghosts, one of whom reveals unwelcome and unexpected facts about her late husband's death.

Jimenez, Abby. [Just for the Summer](#) (Grand Central \$17.99)

With every person they date finding their soul mate the second they break up, Justin and Emma decide to date each other and then

break up to cancel each other's curse out, but their quick fling turns into something more when their families get involved and they catch real feelings for each other.

Lattimore, Ashton. [All We Were Promised](#) (Random \$30)

Charlotte, a former enslaved housekeeper, escapes to 1837 Philadelphia where she plays servant to her white-passing father and befriends a young abolitionist and risks everything to help another former slave, brought to the city by her plantation mistress.

Miranda, Megan. [Daughter of Mine](#) (Simon & Schuster \$28.99)

When Hazel Sharp, daughter of Mirror Lake's longtime local detective, unexpectedly inherits her childhood home, she's warily drawn back to the town—and people—she left behind almost a decade earlier. But Hazel's not the only relic of the past to return: a drought has descended on the region, and as the water level in the lake drops, long-hidden secrets begin to emerge...including evidence that may help finally explain the mystery of her mother's disappearance. Miranda is a master at slowly ratcheting up the suspense.

Myah, Ariel. [When I Think of You](#) (Penguin \$18)

When her college boyfriend, now a hot shot director, offers her a job on his next production, Kaliya finally gets her chance break into the movie-making business, and as a true connection forms between them, Hollywood politics and scandal threaten everything, forcing her to make an impossible choice.

Park, Suzanne. [One Last Word](#) (HarperCollins \$18.99)

The founder of the One Last Word app, which allows you to send messages to whomever you want after you pass, Sara Chae acciden-

tally sends her final words to the important people in her life, including her former crush, with whom she now works, and now finds her life turned upside down.

Politano, Joanna Davidson. [The Elusive Truth of Lily Temple](#) (Baker \$18.99)

Lively and charming silent movie actress Lily Temple is everything private investigator Peter Driscoll is not. It makes sense, then, that combining forces would mean more cases solved and secrets revealed. Except for Lily's own-- why a legendary missing sapphire is within her possession and on her person at all times.

Rains, Annie. [The Finders Keepers Library](#) (Grand Central \$16.99)

For a gardener blessed with a green thumb, Savannah Collins's life sure seems like it's all thorns, zero roses. She has no job, no relationship, and no place to live. With nothing but a car full of plants and her new rescue kitten, Savannah heads to Bloom, North Carolina, to spend the summer with her beloved Aunt Eleanor, a retired librarian. Her aunt shares her love of literature with the Finders Keepers Library, located in her beautiful garden, where anyone can stop by to pick a book or leave a book. When a sudden summer storm destroys the library and many of the roses, it will take a village to get everything ready for the garden wedding that is planned there in just three weeks.

Reich, Christopher. [Matterhorn](#) (Amazon \$16.99)

Robbie Steinhardt lives a peaceful life. A fixture of his small alpine village, he tends cattle, minds his own business, and doesn't dwell on his former life and the family and lover he left behind—back when he was Mac Dekker, CIA. But when he learns his son Will died following in his footsteps, he needs answers. What mission took Will up into the alpine heights, and

why is Ilya Ivashka on the same trail? Ilya—his close friend, his rival in love. Ilya, who framed Mac for treason and sent him into hiding. This is Reich's first standalone in nine years.

Reichl, Ruth. [The Paris Novel](#) (Random \$29)  
SIGNED

Resigning herself to honor her mother's last wishes, Stella St. Vincent travels to Paris where she meets an octogenarian art collector who introduces her to the who's who of the 1980's Paris literary, art and culinary worlds, helping her understand what it might mean to live a larger life. Food critic, former editor at Gourmet, and novelist Reichl serves up a delectable story of an introverted copy editor's life-changing visit to Paris.

Robinson, Ishi. [Sweetness in the Skin](#) (HarperCollins \$30)

To free herself from her dysfunctional family in Kingston, Jamaica, and join her beloved aunt in Paris, 13-year-old Pumpkin Patterson turns her passion for baking into a way to raise money for her French exam, but when word gets out, she stands to lose everything for which she's worked so hard.

Robotham, M.J. [The Scandalous Life of Ruby Devereaux](#) (Bloomsbury \$28.99)

From a teenager in wartime England to a veteran of modern-day London – via 1950's New York, the Swinging Sixties, Cold War Berlin, Venice and Vietnam – Ruby Devereaux has lived one hell of a life: parties, scandals and conflict zones, meeting men and adventure along the way. In a writing career spanning seven decades and more than twenty books, she's distilled everything into her work. Or has she? Now beyond her 90th year, Ruby's energy is ebbing and her beloved typewriter put away. Until a call from her publisher presents Ruby with an ultimatum, and the impetus to embark on one last book – “warts and all”, as

she says. Even in her dotage, Ruby M. Devereux has the power to surprise, because whatever this author does, she does on her own terms.

Steinberg, Shaina. [Under the Paper Moon](#) (Kensington \$27)

Five years after working for the Office of Strategic Services with Nick, whom she gets close to until the World War II's end brings with it an act of deep betrayal, former spy Evelyn, now working as a PI, finds herself back in Nick's orbit when her latest case brings the war to her doorstep.

Thomas, Sarah Loudin. [These Tangled Threads](#)

When a betrayal tears apart three young friends living in the shadow of Biltmore Estate, their friendship may be fractured forever. Years later, one of them risks exposure as a fraud unless she can mend the relationships and solicit help to create an original woven design for Cornelia Vanderbilt's 1924 wedding.

Thompson, Kate. [The Wartime Book Club](#) (Grand Central \$18.99)

Ordered by the Nazis to destroy books that threaten the new regime, Grace, the Isle of Jersey's only librarian instead forms the Wartime Book Club, offering fearful islanders the joy and escapism of reading, but when tensions turn to violence, she is forced to face the true, terrible cost of resistance. Inspired by true events, *The Wartime Book Club* is an unforgettable story of everyday bravery and resistance, full of romance, drama, and camaraderie and a tribute to the joy of reading and the power of books in our darkest hour.

Waxman, Abbi. [Christa Comes Out of Her Shell](#) (Penguin \$18)

After a tumultuous childhood, Christa Liddle

has hidden away, both figuratively and literally. Happily studying sea snails in the middle of the Indian Ocean, Christa finds her tranquil existence thrown into chaos when her once-famous father—long thought dead after a plane crash—turns out to be alive, well, and ready to make amends. The world goes wild, fascinated by this real-life saga, pinning Christa and her family under the spotlight. As if that weren't enough, her reunion with an old childhood friend reveals an intense physical attraction neither was expecting and both want to act on . . . if they can just keep a lid on it.

Wood, Monica. [How to Read a Book](#) (HarperCollins \$28)

Violet Powell, a twenty-two-year-old from rural Abbott Falls, Maine, is being released from prison after serving twenty-two months for a drunk-driving crash that killed a local kindergarten teacher. Harriet Larson, a retired English teacher who runs the prison book club, is facing the unsettling prospect of an empty nest.

Frank Daigle, a retired machinist, hasn't yet come to grips with the complications of his marriage to the woman Violet killed. When the three encounter each other one morning in a bookstore in Portland—Violet to buy the novel she was reading in the prison book club before her release, Harriet to choose the next title for the women who remain, and Frank to dispatch his duties as the store handyman—their lives begin to intersect in transformative ways.

## Teen

Diacon-furtado, Quinn. [The Lilies](#) (HarperCollins \$19.99)

Trapped in a mysterious time loop on the day

after a member of the Lilies Society disappears, four Archwell Academy students discover they each hold a clue that will unlock the truth about the Lilies, but they're each harboring a secret they would do anything to hide.

Eagar, Lindsay. [Made Glorious](#) (Candlewick \$19.99)

This diabolical and devilishly clever twist on Shakespeare's *Richard III* follows Rory, a scholarship kid teased for her weight, as she tells us exactly the lengths she'll go to secure the leading role in Bosworth Academy's senior musical.

Gracia, Anna. [The Misdirection of Fault Lines](#) (Holiday House \$18.99)

During one week at the elite Bastille Invitational tennis tournament, three teen girls — Alice, on her own for the first time; Violetta, a social media influencer and coach's pet; and Leylah, ready for a life of professional tennis — compete for a shot at their dreams. The publisher is marketing this as *Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants* goes to the French Open.

Villa, Jonny Garza. [Canto Contigo](#) (St. Martin's \$20)

When a Mariachi star transfers schools, he expects to be handed his new group's lead vocalist spot, but what he gets instead is a tenacious current lead with a very familiar, very kissable face.

Zhao, Ann. [Dear Wendy](#) (Feiwel & Friends \$19.99)

Aromantic and asexual students Sophie and Jo, engaged in an online feud as the creators of popular relationship advice accounts "Dear Wendy" and "Sincerely Wanda," unwittingly become real-life friends and navigate their shared identities as they face the challenges

of college life.

## Nonfiction

Bell, Jason. [Cracking the Nazi Code](#) (Pegasus \$29.95)

The story of how Harvard philosophy professor Dr. Winthrop Bell became an agent in the British spy organization M16, broke open the emerging Nazi conspiracy and cracked the code for Hitler's deadliest secret—the Holocaust.

Bertch, Jane. [The French Ingredient](#) (Random \$30)

When Jane Bertch was seventeen, her mother took her on a graduation trip to Paris. Thrilled to use her high school French, Jane found her halting attempts greeted with withering condescension by every waiter and shopkeeper she encountered. At the end of the trip, she vowed she would never return. Yet a decade later she found herself back in Paris, transferred there by the American bank she worked for. She became fluent in the language and excelled in her new position. But she had a different dream: to start a cooking school for foreigners like her, who wanted to take a few classes in French cuisine in a friendly setting, then bring their new skills to their kitchens back home.

Carr, Caleb. [My Beloved Monster](#) (Little Brown \$30)

Caleb Carr has had special relationships with cats since he was a young boy in a turbulent household, famously peopled by the founding members of the Beat Generation, where his steadiest companions were the adopted cats that lived with him both in the city and the country. As an adult, he has had many close feline companions, with relationships that have outlasted most of his human ones.

But only after building a three-story home in rural, upstate New York did he enter into the most extraordinary of all of his cat pairings: Masha, a Siberian Forest cat who had been abandoned as a kitten, and was languishing in a shelter when Caleb met her. She had hissed and fought off all previous carers and potential adopters, but somehow, she chose Caleb as her savior. For the seventeen years that followed, Caleb and Masha were inseparable. Masha ruled the house and the extensive, dangerous surrounding fields and forests. When she was hurt, only Caleb could help her. When he suffered long-standing physical ailments, Masha knew what to do. Caleb's life-long study of the literature of cat behavior, and his years of experience with previous cats, helped him decode much of Masha's inner life. But their bond went far beyond academic studies and experience. The story of Caleb and Masha is an inspiring and life-affirming relationship for readers of all backgrounds and interests—a love story like no other.

DuVal, Kathleen. [Native Nations](#) (Random \$38)

An award-winning historian tells the story of the Native nations, from the rise of ancient cities to the present, reframing North American history with Indigenous power and sovereignty at its center and showing how the influence of Native peoples remained a constant and will continue far into the future.

Gibbins, David. [A History of the World in Twelve Shipwrecks](#) (St. Martin's \$32)

A renowned underwater archaeologist presents a narrative of human history through the discoveries of twelve shipwrecks across time such as The Viking warship of King Cnut the Great, Henry VIII's Mary Rose and the doomed HMS Terror.



Kaskowitz, Sheryl. [A Chance to Harmonize](#) (Pegasus \$29.95)

The remarkable story of a hidden New Deal program that tried to change America and end the Great Depression using folk music, laying the groundwork for the folk revival and having a lasting impact on American culture.

Kincaid, Jamaica Ed. [My Favorite Plant](#) (Picador \$19)

The passion for gardening and the passion for words come together in this inspired anthology, a collection of essays and poems on topics as diverse as beans and roses, by writers who garden and gardeners who write.

Lance, Rachel. [Chamber Divers](#) (Penguin \$32)

This story of the men and women who provided invaluable submarine and underwater breathing reconnaissance that led to the Allies' dramatic and history-making success during D-Day is based on top secret documents only recently declassified.

Norton, Michael. [The Ritual Effect](#) (Scribner \$28)

Drawing on a decade of original research, a renowned social psychologist shows how we can shift from a "habitual" mindset to a "ritual" mindset, reminding us of the intention-filled acts that drive human behavior and create surprising satisfaction and enjoyment.

Roll, David L. [Ascent to Power](#) (Penguin \$33)

The story of how Harry Truman overcame the shadow of Franklin Roosevelt to lead America through the tumultuous post-war period of 1944-1948, which saw the revival of Western Europe, the reform of Japan and the birth of Israel.

Sides, Hampton. [The Wide Wide Sea](#) (Knopf \$35)

Part high-seas adventure, part examination of the Age of Exploration, this account of Cap-

tain James Cook's last voyage in 1776 charts how his overt and covert missions came to a head on the island of Hawaii and left behind a complex and controversial legacy still debated to this day.

Tomlinson, Tommy. [Dogland](#) (Avid Reader \$28.99)

From Pulitzer Prize finalist and author of *The Elephant in the Room* comes the first inside account of the Westminster Dog Show-America's oldest and most beloved dog show-following one dog on his quest to become a champion