

Midmonth BookNotes

Volume 7 Issue 7 July, 2024

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Cool Reading for HOT Times

Cozy Corner

Byron, Ellen. [A Very Woodsy Murder](#) (Kensington \$27)

Divorced sitcom writer Dee Stern escapes Hollywood to renovate a remote, ramshackle mountain motel with her first ex-husband, where she meets meddling park rangers, prowling bears, and the murder of a disrespectful guest that could sink her fledgling business before it even opens. First in a fun and funny new series.

Chien, Vivien. [Peking Duck and Cover](#) (Mino-taur \$9.99)

During Chinese New Year, the shop owners of Asia Village create a memorable holiday event to bring positivity and prosperity to the plaza, but when a member of the lion dance performance team is found dead, it's up to Lana Lee to solve this case that has rattled their close-knit community.

Duncan, Emmeline. [Chaos at the Lazy Bones Bookshop](#) (Kensington \$17.95)

Between managing Lazy Bones Books, working on her graphic novel-in-progress, and running the Spooky Season Literary Festival, Bailey Briggs hardly has a moment to enjoy Elyan Hollow's spot-on seasonal Halloween vibes. Not to mention, at every turn she seems to be tripping over the contentious crew of Gone Ghouls, a ghost-hunting reality TV show currently filming around town. Bailey tries to stay focused on the Lit Festival, which is supposed to kick off Elyan Hollow's annual Halloween Fair; instead, this year's festival begins with a murder. The first in a new Pacific Northwest-set mystery series inspired by the real "Halloweentown."

Greene, M.S. [There's No Murder Like Show Murder](#) (Crooked Lane \$31.99)

When the insufferable Broadway reject who stars in their production of Annie Get Your Gun is shot center stage, Tasha Weaver, the costume shop head at the Eastbrook Playhouse, must catch a killer to save the theater and keep her community safe before it's cur-

tains for them all. First in the new Backstage Mystery series.

Noonan, Roz. [Puzzle Me a Murder](#) (Kensington \$27)

When her close confidant Ruby is accused of murdering her cheating husband, 65-year-old librarian Alice Pepper, secretly searching for the truth to exonerate Ruby, uses her unassuming persona to fly under the radar to slim down a massive suspect list and restore peace to West Hazel.

Siegel, Katie. [Charlotte Illes Is Not a Teacher](#) (Kensington \$17.95)

Mention “returning to the scene of a crime,” and people don’t usually picture a middle school. But that’s where kid detective Lottie Illes enjoyed some of her greatest successes, solving mysteries and winning acclaim—before the world of adult responsibilities came crashing in. Now twentysomething Charlotte is back in the classroom, this time as a substitute teacher. However, a fellow teacher is hoping for Lottie’s help discovering the culprit behind anonymous threats being sent to her and her aunt, who’s running for reelection to the Board of Education. At first, Charlotte assumes the messages are a harmless prank. But maybe it’s a good thing she left a detective kit hidden in the band room storage closet all those years ago—just in case.

Historical Fiction, Mysteries, Romance and More

Blalock, Georgie. [The Windsor Conspiracy](#) (HarperCollins \$18.99)

Disowned by her family, and left a penniless widow after her husband’s death, American Amelia Montague becomes her cousin Wallis

Simpson’s private secretary in France. With no other prospects available, Amelia has no choice but to succeed, and under their Aunt Bessie’s direction, hopes to have a positive influence on Wallis and the Duke of Windsor. However, when the Germans invade France, and the Windsors leave Amelia to escape the Gestapo on her own, Amelia finds herself in position to work for the most unlikely of employers: MI5 and the FBI. Convinced to work undercover, Amelia joins the Windsors in Nassau and soon realizes that Wallis’s treachery extends far deeper than the US and British government even know.

Brazier, Eliza Jane. [It Had To Be You](#) (Penguin \$29)

Eva and Jonathan, two contract killers, each with a hit out on the other, must fight their growing attraction as they embark on a deadly high-stakes adventure across Western Europe, leaving behind a trail of bodies, where they discover they are also being hunted by someone who is determined to put an end to their romantic fling.

Brenner, Jamie. [A Novel Summer](#) (Park Row \$18.99)

Returning home to Provincetown after her best-selling novel exposes local secrets, Shelby Archer finds old friends, who feel betrayal by what they read in Shelby’s book, giving her the cold shoulder. But Shelby gradually rediscovers her passion for writing and a new community of friends while spending the summer managing a friend’s bookstore.

Bryce, Denny S. [The Trial of Mrs. Rhineland](#) (Kensington \$17.95)

Inspired by a real-life scandal that was shocking even for the tumultuous Roaring Twenties, this captivating novel tells the story of a pio-

neering Black journalist, a secret interracial marriage among the New York elite, and the sensational divorce case that ignited an explosive battle over race and class—and brought together three very different women fighting for justice, legitimacy, and the futures they risked everything to shape.

Colgan, Jenny. [Close Knit](#) (HarperCollins \$18.99)

Yearning for adventure beyond her close-knit Scottish island, Gertie nurses a broken heart until a surprise job opportunity ignites her dreams of travel and self-discovery, in the latest novel by the British Queen of the cozy, comfort reads.

Cobb, May. [The Hollywood Assistant](#) (Penguin \$29) SIGNED

A personal assistant to famous Hollywood couple, Marisol and Nate Sterling, Cassidy Foster, when Nate takes a personal interest in her, soon discovers why she was really hired: to be the perfect suspect when one of them is found dead.

Dillsworth, Lianne. [House of Shades](#) (HarperCollins \$30)

In 1833 London, doctress Hester Reeves leaves her husband and son behind in Kings Cross to accept a life-changing commission to cure the ailing owner of a large estate in Fitzrovia, where she uncovers long-hidden and life-changing secrets. A fascinating Victorian-set gothic novel.

Dixon, Ruby. [Bound to the Shadow Prince](#) (Wattpad \$18.99)

In order to protect her kingdom from the wrath of a vengeful goddess, Princess Candra must remain locked inside a tower for seven years. And shut inside the tower with her? A Fellian, the enemy of her people, a fearsome warrior race complete with wings and claws

and fangs. Nemeth is terrifying, cruel, and disturbingly magnetic. Candra should kill him for his supplies, but she's desperate for his company...and his touch.

Dunlay, Emily. [Teddy](#) (HarperCollins \$30)

In 1969 Rome, Teddy Huntley Carlyle, eager for a fresh start with her new husband, a diplomat assigned to the American embassy, is determined to be conservative, proper, polite and good until she finds herself in the middle of a mess that even her powerful connections and impeccable manners can't contain *Lessons in Chemistry* meets *Mad Men* in this wildly entertaining debut novel, set in glamorous Rome in the late 1960s,

Finz, Stacy. [Nothing Less Than Magic](#) (Kensington \$17.95)

After her husband Austin leaves her, Chelsea, a celebrity marriage counselor, seeks refuge at her beloved small-town lake cabin where she meets handyman Knox Hart. However, when she learns the truth about this idyllic hamlet, Austin swoops in to mend her broken heart, forcing her to make an impossible choice.

Gamez, Gabriella. [The Next Best Fling](#) (Forever \$17.99)

When the two people they're in love with get engaged to each other, librarian Marcela Ortiz and ex-NFL player Theo Young have a no-strings attached rebound relationship, which results in complicated feelings, messy familiar dynamics and uncovered secrets.

Goodman, Carol. [Return to Wyldcliffe Heights](#) (HarperCollins \$18.99)

While transcribing the sequel to Veronica St. Clair's 1993 hit phenomenon, *The Secret of Wyldcliffe Heights*, Agnes discovers the true - and terrifying - events that inspired the original novel and must now set free the stories of all the women traumatized and vic-

timized by Wyldcliffe Heights, a former psychiatric hospital for “wayward women.” *Jane Eyre* meets *The Thirteenth Tale* in this new modern gothic mystery from two-time Mary Higgins Clark Award–winner

Greenwood, Kirsty. [The Love of My Afterlife](#) (Penguin \$19)

If she wasn't dead already, Delphie would be dying of embarrassment. Not only did she just die by choking on a microwaveable burger, but now she's standing in her 'shine like a star' nightie in front of the hottest man she's ever seen. And he's *smiling* at her. As they start to chat, everything else becomes background noise. That is until someone comes running out of a door, yelling something about a huge mistake, and sends the dreamy stranger back down to earth. And here Delphie was thinking her luck might be different in the afterlife. When Delphie is offered a deal in which she can return to earth and reconnect with the mysterious man, she jumps at the opportunity to find her possible soulmate and a fresh start. But in a city of millions, Delphie is going to have to listen to her heart, learn to ask for help, and perhaps even see the magic in the life she's leaving behind.

Holton, India. [The Ornithologist's Field Guide to Love](#) (Penguin \$19)

When a competition to become Birder of the Year by capturing an endangered caladrius bird is announced, rival ornithologists Beth Pickering and Devon Lockley are forced to team up to have any chance of winning, in this race that results in “fowl play,” ruffled feathers and love.

Johns, Sarah C. [The Siren's of Soleil City](#) (Random \$18)

In 1999, 58-year-old Cherie, while her pregnant daughter Laura coaches a senior synchronized swim team, tries to help her two

mothers, the one who left her and the one who raised her, in an apartment complex filled with feisty, funny, strong-willed women, who teach them valuable lessons about family and motherhood.

Kate, Lauren. [What's In a Kiss](#) (Penguin \$19) Since a prom night kiss that never was, Liv's life has not gone according to plan, until, during her best friend Masha's wedding, the universe gives her the magical chance to live a version of her life where prom night was the beginning of everything. “With a touch of humor and plenty of swoony moments, Kate nimbly explores how small choices can alter the trajectory of a life. Readers will be hooked.” (PW)

Lee, Jayci. [That Prince Is Mine](#) (St. Martin's \$18)

Marriage-averse Korean royal court cuisine instructor Emma Yoon, when her Korean godmother's fellow matchmakers decide to meddle in Emma's love life in a bid to sabotage her godmother, must find herself the perfect-on-paper husband to save both her godmother's reputation and her dreams, even if she's not ready for love.

Lee, Miye. [The Dallergut Dream Department Store](#) (Hanover Square \$21.99)

Working at Dallergut, a department store that sells dreams, Penny uncovers the workings of this whimsical world and bonds with a colorful cast of characters, including the flamboyant and wise owner, a famous dream designer, a nightmare producer and the many customers who dream to heal, grow and flourish.

Lindo-Rice, Michelle. [The Bookshop Sisterhood](#) (MIRA \$18.99)

While working toward the grand opening of their Black-owned bookstore, four best friends are each told four little words that upend their

lives, forcing them to lean on each other - and the books they love - to navigate the changes or risk losing the business and their friendships.

Mazarura, Rufaro Faith. [Let the Games Begin](#) (Flatiron \$19.99)

Interning at the 2024 Summer Games in Athens, Olivia, when she meets Zeke, the heart-throb runner of Team Great Britain, finds things heating up as they become close, but when the competition gets fierce, she must decide if their relationship is strong enough to cross the finish line.

McMyne, Mary. [A Rose by Any Other Name](#) (Orbit \$19.99)

Rose Rushe's passion for life runs deep—she loves mead and music, meddles with astrology, and laughs at her mother's warnings to guard her reputation. When Rose's father dies and a noble accuses her and her dear friend Cecely of witchcraft, they flee to the household of respected alchemists in London. But as their bond deepens, their sanctuary begins to feel more like a cage. To escape, they turn to the occult, secretly casting charms and selling astrological advice in the hopes of building a life together. This thriving underground business leads Rose to fair young noble Henry and playwright Will Shakespeare, and so begins a brief, tempestuous, and powerful romance—one filled with secret longings and deep betrayals. A historical novel that offers an interesting theory as to the origins of Shakespeare's "Dark Lady."

Moran, Michelle. [Maria](#) (Random \$19)

In the 1950s, when Oscar Hammerstein is asked to write a musical based on Maria von Trapp, he reinvents her life for the stage, but when Maria sees the script, she sets off to confront Hammerstein, which leads to an unlikely friendship with his secretary, to whom

she tells her real story. The perfect choice for anyone whose favorite things include *The Sound of Music*.

Obuobi, Shirlene. [Between Friends & Lovers](#) (HarperCollins \$18.99)

To thousands of Instagram followers Josephine Boateng is the dazzling Dr. Jojo, and her opinions on health and self-love matter. Her message: be smart, be significant, and do not put up with foolish men. Off-camera, Jo's story is more complicated. She's grappling with depression and the pressures of her career, and her love life is nonexistent thanks to a longtime unrequited crush on her best friend, romcom heartthrob Ezra Adelman. But when Ezra shows up to his thirtieth birthday party with her childhood bully on his arm, Jo realizes enough is enough. It's time to take her own advice and prioritize herself.

Palmer, Ellie. [Four Weekends and a Funeral](#) (Penguin \$19)

When thirty-year-old post-double-mastectomy BRCA 1 carrier and reluctant thrill-seeker Alison Mullally arrives at her ex-boyfriend Sam's funeral to find that no one knows he dumped her, she agrees to play the grieving girlfriend for the sake of the family and to help pack up Sam's apartment with his prickly best friend, Adam Berg. After all, it'll only take four weekends.

Pitts, Delia. [Trouble in Queenstown](#) (Minotaur \$28)

Back in Queenstown, New Jersey, PI Vandy Myrick is hired to tail the wife of the mayor's nephew, Leo Hannah, for a divorce suit, but when her routine surveillance leads to a racially charged murder with connections to the Hannah family, Vandy refuses to back off until she finds the truth.

Robinson, Shauna. [The Townsend Family Recipe for Disaster](#) (Sourcebooks \$16.99)

Mae Townsend grew up picturing relatives who looked like her, crowded dinner tables, bustling kitchens. And, of course, the Townsend family barbecue, the tradition that kept her late father flying to North Carolina year after year, despite the mysterious rift that always required her to stay behind. But as Mae's wedding draws closer, promising a future of always standing out among her white in-laws, suddenly not knowing the Townsends hits her like a blow. So when news arrives that her paternal grandmother has passed, she decides it's time to head South.

What she finds is a family in turmoil, a long-standing grudge intact, a lost mac & cheese recipe causing grief, and a family barbecue on the brink of disaster. Not willing to let her dreams of family slip away, Mae steps up to throw a barbecue everyone will remember.

Rowell, Rainbow. [Slow Dance](#) (HarperCollins \$28)

Fourteen years after they went their separate ways, 33-year-old Shiloh, a divorced, single mom living back in the same house she grew up in, attends a high school friend's wedding in hopes of seeing Cary, the boy she never realized she loved until he was lost.

Saint, Jennifer. [Hera](#) (Flatiron \$28.99)

Betrayed by Zeus's ruthlessness after overthrowing her father, Hera questions her place as his wife and as a mother and seeks a path beyond endless violence in a retelling of the classic Greek myth. "The gods of Olympus deliver Real Housewives-level drama in this juicy interpretation of Greek myth from bestseller Saint (*Ariadne*)." (PW)

Sangoyomi, O.O. [Masquerade](#) (Tor \$27.99)
Chosen to be the wife of a great warrior king, Òdòdó', a young Yorùbá woman, after a lifetime of subjugation, soars to the very heights of society where power and political savvy is too enticing to resist, but as tensions grow and betrayal runs rampant, she must defy her cruel husband even though she risks losing everything, including her life.

Shaffer, Meg. [The Lost Story](#) (Random \$29)
Forced to return to the enchanted world they called home fifteen years ago to confront their shared past, reclusive artist Rafe and famed missing persons' investigator Jeremy search for their friend Emilie's sister - and for everything they've lost. "Like all the best fairy tales: nostalgic with an undercurrent of darkness." (Kirkus)

Vasti, Alexandra. [Ne'er Duke Well](#) (St. Martin's \$18)

The newly inherited Duke of Stanhope must become respectable to gain custody of his half siblings and turns to Lady Selina Ravenscroft, society's most proper debutante for help in finding a suitable wife, but things don't go as planned when the chemistry between them proves impossible to resist.

Webber, Heather. [A Certain Kind of Starlight](#) (Tor \$28.99)

Two estranged sisters, Addie, burdened by a long-held secret, and Tessa, facing heartbreak and family pressure, return to their hometown of Starlight, Alabama, to help their ailing aunt run the family bakery and confront their pasts.

Wood, Katherine. [Ladykiller](#) (Random \$29)
When her childhood friend, an heiress, mysteriously vanishes, Abby arrives in Greece where the sole clue to her whereabouts is a manuscript she was working on. The manuscript

reveals the dark truth of her friend's marriage and the dirty secrets of her high-profile guests, and now Abby must separate fact from fiction if she wants to find her. Guilty pleasure beach reading of the highest order!

Teen and Children's Fiction

Barnes, Jennifer Lynn. [The Grandest Game](#) (Little Brown \$19.99)

Seven players in the Grandest Game, an annual competition run by a billionaire to give anyone a shot at fame and fortune, are pushed to their limits - physically, mentally and emotionally - and it soon becomes clear that not everyone is playing by the rules.

Dean, Becky. [Hearts Overboard](#) (Random \$12.99)

After her ex publicly declares she's boring, Savannah, to prove she's fun, joins her mom on an Alaskan cruise where she, with the help of her longtime nemesis, tries everything, from zip-lining and dog sledding to taking a polar plunge, finding unexpected love in the great outdoors in the process.

Dean, Benjamin. [How To Die Famous](#) (Little Brown \$18.99)

Landing a role in one of the hottest reboots, Sunset High, rising star Abel Miller, who is secretly investigating his brother's death on the show, discovers a darkness beneath the shimmer of fame when one of his co-stars is willing to kill to keep their secrets hidden.

Emmel, Katrina. [Near Misses and Cowboy Kisses](#) (Random \$12.99)

While on a weeklong Oregon Trail bonding excursion, California girl Riley Thomas meets her match in tough Nebraskan cowboy Colton Walker and soon finds their battle of wills taking a romantic turn under a wide prairie sky of puffy clouds and bright stars.

Goldsmith, Amy. [Our Wicked Histories](#) (Random \$19.99)

After a disastrous accident at her school's Midsummer Ball leads to Meg's suspension, she agrees to attend a Halloween party at her old friends' ancestral home in Ireland in order to make amends, only to discover that the estate has a sordid past of its own. Goldsmith "deftly blends classic gothic style with a contemporary sensibility." (*Kirkus*)

Hicks, Deron R. [The Dark Skies Mystery](#) (HarperCollins \$19.99)

During WWII, while chasing down leads to report on the city's air raid program, aspiring journalist Henry Hamilton discovers a story far more dangerous: one that forces him to navigate enemy spies and saboteurs to expose the shocking truth

McLachlan, Jenny. [Dead Good Detectives](#) (HarperCollins \$19.99)

Sid Jones and her best friend, Zen, unexpectedly discover the ghostly games they like to play in their local graveyard suddenly turning real when Sid accidentally frees the spirit of Ezekiel "Bones" Kittow, a pirate who died nearly three hundred years prior, and he asks her to help him find his long-lost treasure so his soul can finally be at rest. The only problem? He can't remember where, or even what, the treasure is!

Sass, Adam. [Cursed Boys and Broken Hearts](#) (Penguin \$19.99)

Grant Rossi, an eighteen-year-old with a poor dating record due to a wish gone wrong, returns to his family's vineyard and B&B to help save it from disrepair, only to find himself working alongside his former friend and first love, Ben McKittrick.

Urban, Diana. [Under the Surface](#) (Penguin \$19.99)

On her senior French trip, seventeen-year-old Ruby follows her classmates into the Paris catacombs to attend an exclusive party, but they quickly become entangled in a sinister pursuit underground and uncover dark secrets about the catacombs and each other.

Wellington, Joelle. [The Blonde Dies First](#) (Simon & Schuster \$19.99)

Seventeen-year-old Devon, her twin sister, and her friends face a demonic force who seemingly follows horror movie tropes, propelling the group to flip the script and use their horror movie knowledge in order to survive.

Nonfiction

Bergstein, Rachelle. [The Genius of Judy](#) (Atria \$28.99)

Everyone knows Judy Blume. Her books have garnered her fans of all ages for decades and sold tens of millions of copies. But why were people so drawn to them? And why are we still talking about them now in the 21st century? In *The Genius of Judy*, her remarkable story is revealed as never before, beginning with her as a mother of two searching for purpose outside of her home in 1960s suburban New Jersey.

Dunn, Daisy. [The Missing Thread](#) (Penguin \$35)

In this monumental work, Dunn re-conceives our understanding of the ancient world by emphasizing women's roles within it. *The Missing Thread* never relegates women to the sidelines and is populated with well-known names such as Cleopatra and Agrippina, as well as the likes of Achaemenid consort Atossa and Olympias, a force in Macedon.

Spanning three thousand years, the story moves from Minoan Crete to Mycenaean Greece, from Lesbos to Asia Minor, from the Persian Empire to the royal court of Macedonia, and concludes with Rome and its growing empire.

Gibson, Susannah. [The Bluestockings](#) (WW Norton \$29.99)

In England in the 1700s, a woman who was an intellectual, spoke out, or wrote professionally was considered unnatural. After all, as the wisdom of the era dictated, a clever woman—if there were such a thing—would never make a good wife. But a circle of women called the Bluestockings did something extraordinary: coming together in glittering salons to discuss and debate as intellectual equals with men, they fought for women to be educated and to have a public role in society.

Kitagawa, Kate. [The Secret Lives of Numbers](#) (HarperCollins \$32.99)

Our story takes us from Hypatia, the first great female mathematician, whose ideas revolutionized geometry and who was killed for them—to Karen Uhlenbeck, the first woman to win the Abel Prize, “math’s Nobel.” Along the way we travel the globe to meet the brilliant Arabic scholars of the “House of Wisdom,” a math temple whose destruction in the Siege of Baghdad in the thirteenth century was a loss arguably on par with that of the Library of Alexandria; Madhava of Sangamagrama, the fourteenth-century Indian genius who uncovered the central tenets of calculus 300 years before Isaac Newton was born; and the Black mathematicians of the Civil Rights era, who played a significant role in dismantling early data-based methods of racial discrimination. Covering thousands of years, six continents, and just about every mathematical discipline, *The Secret Lives of Numbers* is an immensely compelling narrative history.

Kousser, Rachel. [Alexander at the End of the World](#) (HarperCollins \$35)

In *Alexander at the End of the World*, renowned classicist and art history professor Rachel Kousser vividly brings to life Alexander's labyrinthine, treacherous final years, weaving together a brilliant series of epic battles, stunning landscapes, and nearly insurmountable obstacles. Meticulously researched and grippingly written, Kousser's narrative is an unforgettable tale of daring and adventure, an inspiring portrait of grit and ambition, and a powerful meditation on the ability to learn from failure.

Parker, Matt. [Love Triangle](#) (Penguin \$30)

In *Love Triangle*, Matt Parker argues we should all show a lot more love for triangles, along with all the useful trigonometry and geometry they enable. To prove his point, he uses triangles to create his own digital avatar, survive a harrowing motorcycle ride, cut a sandwich, fall in love, measure tall buildings in a few awkward bounds, and make some unusual art. Along the way, he tells extraordinary and entertaining stories of the mathematicians, engineers, and philosophers—starting with Pythagoras—who dared to take triangles seriously. This is the guide you should have had in high school—a lively and definitive answer to “Why do I need to learn about trigonometry?”

Rooks, Noliwe. [A Passionate Mind in Relentless Pursuit](#) (Penguin \$28)

When Mary McLeod Bethune died, tributes in newspapers around the country said the same thing: she should be on the Mount Rushmore of Black American achievement. Indeed, Bethune is the only Black American whose statue stands in Statuary Hall in the US Capitol, and yet for most, she remains a marble figure from the dim past. Now, seventy years later, Noliwe Rooks turns Bethune from stone

to flesh, showing her to have been a visionary leader with lessons to still teach us as we continue on our journey toward a freer and more just nation.

Slater, Dan. [The Incorruptibles](#) (Little Brown \$32.50)

Drawn from never-before-seen sources and peopled with unforgettable characters, this epic and often brutal saga of crime and redemption, set in the early 1900s when a strictly off-the-books vice squad called the Incorruptibles waged war on the sin they saw as threatening the future of their New York City community.