

Midmonth BookNotes

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Spring Into Reading!

Cozy Corner

Childs, Laura. [High Tea and Misdemeanors](#) (Penguin \$30)

While catering an elegant wedding, tea shop owner Theodosia Browning investigates a murder after a suspicious greenhouse collapse turns deadly during the celebration.

Gerber, Daryl Wood. [Essence of Foul Play](#) (Kensington \$17.95)

While preparing for her grand opening, spa owner Emma is accused of murdering a rival store owner with a goodwill gift and must investigate the crime herself, facing small-town gossip, skeptical police and quirky suspects to clear her name. Gerber spins off a charming new series from her popular Fairy Garden Mysteries.

Golden, S.K. [The Socialite's Guide to Sleuthing and Secrets](#) (Crooked Lane \$29.99)

Hotel heiress Evelyn Murphy investigates the mysterious death of a costume jewelry saleswoman at a luxury luncheon in 1958 New

York, uncovering ties to a Gentleman Thief who leaves behind red pocket squares as his calling card.

Pandian, Gigi. [The Library Game](#) (Minotaur \$28) SIGNED

Tempest Raj, part of a family business crafting secret passages, investigates a baffling murder during a mystery dinner at a literary-themed library, unraveling a deadly game where classic detective stories seem to come horrifyingly alive." Tempest remains an immensely likable heroine, and Pandian's shrewd puzzle plot arrives at a satisfying and surprising conclusion. This will enchant fans of Golden Age mysteries." (PW)

Pleiter, Allie. [One Sharp Stitch](#) (Kensington \$27)

When Shelby Phillips reluctantly takes over her mother's Nimble Needle needlepoint shop outside of Asheville, North Carolina, and scissor entrepreneur Kat Katsaros is found dead, Shelby is aided by a new friend, a crush, her sister and the Nimble Needle stitchers to find the crafty culprit. The start of a new series.

Historical Fiction, Mysteries, Romance and More

Aster, Alex. [Summer in the City](#) (HarperCollins \$28)

When 27-year-old screenwriter Elle returns to New York City to complete her long-overdue new novel and runs into her polar opposite Parker Warren, a hookup from two years ago, she realizes he's her twisted muse. So, when Parker needs someone to pretend to be his girlfriend during his company's acquisition and merger with another business, Elle agrees to fake date him in order to finish her book. A fun and flirty adult romance debut from a best-selling YA author.

Cervantes, J. C. [The Anatomy of Magic](#) (Park Row \$18.99)

Lilian Estrada seemingly has it all: an ob-gyn star on the rise, a master at balancing work with whirlwind romances and part of a family of fiercely loyal and exceptional women, all bound together by an extraordinary secret. The Estrada women each possess a unique power, and Lily shines with the rare gift to manipulate memories. Yet not even her mystical abilities can shield her from a harrowing event at the hospital, one that sends her powers—and her confidence—spiraling out of control. Seeking solace, Lily retreats to her family's ancestral home in Mexico, only to find herself face-to-face with a ghost from her past—Sam, the first love she never forgot.

Critchley, Emily. [The Undoing of Violet Claybourne](#) (Sourcebooks \$17.99)

When Gillian Larking is asked to tell the truth about the enigmatic Claybourne sisters and a fateful Boxing Day hunt in 1939, she must confront long-buried secrets of privilege, loyalty, and tragedy that shaped her life and shattered

theirs.

Critchley “maintains an intoxicating air of melancholy and foreboding throughout, and brings the mystery to a satisfying—if not entirely surprising—resolution. It's an immersive, chilling treat for suspense fans.” (*PW*)

Dodd, Christina. [Girl Anonymous](#) (Harlequin \$30) SIGNED

Haunted by her mother's role in a deadly feud years ago, Maarja Dare is drawn back into the dangerous world of the Bouchard crime family forcing her and Dante Bouchard to confront their pasts and a relentless shared enemy. Dodd's latest addictively readable suspense novel is absolutely bonkers, but Dodd makes the whole thing work throwing a Mafia family-like feud, a relic with otherworldly powers, and a cast of eccentrically entertaining characters into an adrenaline-fueled plot that will have readers up long past their regular bed-times.

El-Mohtar, Amal. [The River Has Roots](#) (TOR \$24.99)

In Thistleford, two sisters, heirs to a mystical stewardship, are torn apart when one falls in love with a denizen of the land of Faerie, leading to an enchanting story of separation, loss, and an enduring love that transcends death. “El-Mohtar's ethereal prose paints a clear picture of the unbreakable bond between her worthy heroines. Readers will be captivated.” (*PW*)

Everett, Elizabeth. [The Lady Sparks a Flame](#) (Penguin \$19)

Returning to England to settle her late father's debts, Lady Phoebe Hunt clashes with ambitious investor Samuel Fenley, whose offer to buy her estate hides deeper intentions, as shared danger and unexpected attraction force them to confront their guarded hearts.

A beautifully written and superbly executed Victorian-set historical that in the words of a *Kirkus* review “uses love to illuminate the darkest places.”

Fay, Kim. [Kate & Frida](#) (Penguin \$28)

In 1991 in Paris, twenty-something Frida Rodriguez begins a long-distance friendship with Seattle bookseller Kate Fair, and through the tumultuous years of their lives, they sustain and nourish each other, learning how to embrace joy even in their darkest hours. Fay brilliantly brings back the epistolary novel, whose most beloved example could very well be Helen Hanff's *84 Charing Cross Road*, with grace and charm. An excellent example of “feel good fiction” of which readers could definitely use more of in these turbulent and troubling times.

Gilchrist, January. [My Sister's Shadow](#) (Crooked Lane \$29.99)

In England 1904, reserved Adelaide and adventurous Victoria are mirror twins with intertwined lives, and Victoria is furious when Lord Stanley bewitches her yet marries Adelaide instead. When the newly married couple move to New York for a new life and Adelaide's star rises as part of Mrs. Astor's 400, Victoria's rage threatens everything.

Gortner, C.W. [The Saint Laurent Muse](#) (Harper-Collins \$18.99)

In 1970s Paris, aristocrat-turned-muse Loulou de la Falaise becomes entwined in the glamorous yet ruthless fashion world, navigating her complex friendship with Yves Saint Laurent, rivalries with Karl Lagerfeld, and the intoxicating excesses of a scene where desire and betrayal collide.

Griffiths, Rachel. [The Trouble with Anna](#) (Gallery \$19.99)

Anna didn't *intend* to ride in a high-stakes

horse race or start up a betting ring. She certainly didn't mean to find herself in so many darkened corners with Lord Julian Ramsay, quarreling and kissing. But when her grandfather's strange will stipulates that Anna must marry or she'll be left broke, there's nothing she won't do to win her fight for independence. Even go head-to-head with Lord Ramsay, with her heart as the prize. A charming debut that is certain to delight Regency romance fans.

Hart, Emilia. [The Sirens](#) (St. Martins \$29)

Lucy searches for her missing sister Jess in a modern-day coastal Australian town shrouded in eerie legends only to discover connections to Jess's adolescent past and twin sisters from 1800 whose haunting ties to the sea ripple across generations

Hays, Katy. [Saltwater](#) (Random \$30) SIGNED

Thirty years after Sarah Lingate's mysterious death on Capri, her daughter Helen returns with the family for their annual retreat, only to uncover a buried necklace, renewed suspicions, and dangerous secrets, as betrayal and paranoia threaten to rupture the family and claim more lives.

Hunter, Georgia. [One Good Thing](#) (Penguin \$30)

In occupied Italy, Jewish best friends Lili and Esti hide war orphans in a convent where they forge false papers for the Underground, and when Esti is critically injured, she asks Lili to go on the run with her son Theo through Nazi-occupied villages toward Allied territory.

James, Holly. [The Big Fix](#) (Kensington \$28)

After a murder at an estate sale entangles bookish professor Penny Collins with Anthony, a fixer on the run, the unlikely pair must outwit criminals and the FBI, relying on Penny's smarts and Anthony's skills to survive a sum-

mer of chaos.

Labuskes, Brianna. [The Boxcar Librarian](#) (HarperCollins \$19.99)

During the Great Depression, WPA editor Millie Lang is sent to Montana to investigate sabotage at her project and uncovers a mystery surrounding Alice Monroe, her Boxcar Library, and the disappearance of librarian Colette Durand years earlier. Inspired by true events.

Laskey, Celia. [Cover Story](#) (Grand Central \$18.99)

In 2005, closeted publicist Ali is assigned to manage rising gay star Cara Bisset, but as their bond deepens during a global tour, both must decide if love is worth defying Hollywood's strict closet culture.

Li, Christina. [The Manor of Dreams](#) (Avid Reader \$28.99)

Vivian Yin is dead. The first Chinese actress to win an Oscar, the trailblazing ingénue rose to fame in the eighties, only to disappear from the spotlight at the height of her career to live out the rest of her life as a recluse. Now her remaining family members are gathered for the reading of her will, and her daughters expect to inherit their childhood home: Vivian's grand, sprawling, Southern California garden estate. But due to a last-minute change to the will, the house is passed on to another family instead—one that has suddenly returned after decades of estrangement. In hopes of staking their claim, both families move into the mansion. As Vivian's daughters race to piece together what happened in the last weeks of their mother's life, disturbing visions and bizarre behaviors start to take hold of everyone in the house, forcing them to realize they are being haunted by something far more sinister and vengeful than their regrets.

Lyuzna, Olesya. [Glitter in the Dark](#) (Penzler

\$17.95)

The search for a kidnapped singer in Prohibition-era New York leads Ginny Dugan, an aspiring investigative reporter who currently writes an advice column about fashion for *Photoplay* magazine, from Harlem speakeasies to the dazzling theater world of the Great White Way.

Mallery, Susan. [Beach Vibes](#) (Harlequin \$18.99)

Beth's idyllic life running her Malibu beach shop Surf Sandwiches unravels when she discovers her brother Rick is cheating on her new best friend Jana. Now Beth must make a decision between keeping Rick's secret or losing out on her own newfound happiness with Jana's handsome brother. Start your summer beach reading early with Mallory's latest.

Marsh, Violet. [Our Dear Miss H. Is On the Case](#) (Grand Central \$17.99)

When Georgina Harrington's feckless cousin Percy goes missing, his infuriating but incredibly handsome best friend Alexander offers help. While Alexander finds himself falling for Georgina's charms, when their investigation in the missing Percy turns into a threat to the monarchy, whatever spark of attraction blooming between the two could be snuffed out before it can ignite.

Meissner, Susan. [A Map to Paradise](#) (Penguin \$29)

Blacklisted actress Melanie Cole and her maid, Eva, form an unlikely alliance to uncover the mystery surrounding their agoraphobic neighbor's disappearance, leading them to a surprising discovery about themselves and their shared past. Meissner returns with another intriguing, impeccably sourced historical novel set in 1950s California against the backdrop of the Red Scare.

Noblin, Annie England. [Spring Fling](#) (Harper-Collins \$18.99)

Spring is in the air and Mylie has everything she could ever want: her tackle shop is thriving and employs a third of Clay Creek, Arkansas, and she lives with her beloved Granny and little sister Cassie, who both keep her on her toes. As tourists pour into town for the annual fishing tournament, Mylie is in her element and ready to bring her all-women team to victory. At least that is the plan until Mylie's old childhood friend Ben turns back up in Clay Creek.

Owens, Elle. [Tell Me You Trust Me](#) (Amazon \$16.99) SIGNED

When her husband goes missing, Marissa Creighton fears the worst. *Tell me you trust me* was the last thing Ethan said to her, and she'd shrugged it off. Now she can't get those words out of her head. Owens, pseudonym for romance writer Jaqueline Snowe, makes her suspense debut with a stunning storyline with some jaw-dropping twists that cleverly makes use of technology in the form of Spotify as a means of communicating while also exploring the issue of who among the people around us can we really trust.

Riley, Alexandra. [Scot and Bothered](#) (Harlequin \$18.99)

A second chance romance is rekindled on the breathtaking Isle of Skye as former college sweethearts, ghostwriter Brooke and nature photographer Jack, work together to help their ailing mentor Mhairi complete her memoir. Can't make it to Scotland this year? Riley's vividly evoked settings in this fun contemporary romance are the next best thing.

Rose, Bellamy. [Pomona Afton Can So Solve a Murder](#) (Atria \$27.99)

Upper East Side heiress Pomona Afton's paranoid grandmother is murdered and her will

mandates freezing her assets, so Pomona and Gabe, son of Pomona's former nanny, must solve the murder so his mom gets her retirement money and Pomona can return to luxury.

Rose, Karen. [Dead Man's List](#) (Penguin \$30)
On a long-anticipated second date with police psychologist Dr. Sam Reeves, Homicide Detective Kit McKittrick stumbles across the mutilated body of a local San Diego politician. The man was loved by many of his constituents but is hated and reviled by many more. That the suspect list is long surprises no one, but exactly who ends up on it stuns Kit and her team. As the SDPD reveal the victim's sinister dealings, Kit and Sam are forced to navigate the closely guarded world of the city's richest and most powerful citizens to find answers.

Runyan, Aimie K. [The Wandering Season](#) (Harper Muse \$18.99)

After discovering she's adopted, Veronica Stratton embarks on a European journey to trace her ancestry, navigating family mysteries, unexpected visions of her ancestors, and a budding romance with Irish castle keeper Niall Callahan, all while balancing her rapidly growing business.

Silvey, Catriona. [Love and Other Paradoxes](#) (HarperCollins \$18.99)

Cambridge University, 2005: Student Joe Greene scribbles verses in the margins of his notebook, dreaming of a future where his words will echo through the ages, all while doubting it could ever happen. Then, the future quite literally finds him—in the form of Esi. She's part of a time-traveling tour, a trip for people in the future to witness history's greatest moments firsthand. The star of this tour? Joe Greene. In Esi's era, Joe is as renowned as Shakespeare. And he's about to meet Diana, a fellow student and aspiring

actress, who will become his muse and the subject of his famous love poems. A sweetly romantic, interesting take on time travel with a beautifully evoked Cambridge setting.

Williams, Denise. [Just Our Luck](#) (Penguin \$19) Sybil Sweet spends the night with Kieran Anderson and runs out in the morning, leaving her winning lottery ticket behind. When news of the returned ticket boosts sales in Kieran's struggling donut shop, the two agree to pretend to be a couple both to help out Kieran's business and to convince Sybil's family of her good romantic choices.

Willig, Lauren. [The Girl from Greenwich Street](#) (HarperCollins \$29.99) SIGNED Bitter rivals Hamilton and Burr unite to defend a carpenter accused of murdering Elma Sands, a mysterious young woman found in a well, intertwining a high-profile trial with their own political ambitions and personal enmity. Part murder mystery, part thriller, part true crime, *The Girl From Greenwich Street* revisits a dark corner of history—with a surprising twist ending that reveals the true story of the Manhattan Well Murder trial of 1800.

Winstead, Ashley. [This Book Will Bury Me](#) (Sourcebooks \$27.99) A once-celebrated amateur detective turned public pariah, Jane Sharp recounts her group's descent into the dark and deadly Delphine Massacres case, where fame, fractured evidence, and their own missteps blurred the line between solving crimes and becoming part of the tragedy.

Wurth, Erika T. [The Haunting of Room 904](#) (Flatiron \$28.99) Paranormal investigator Olivia Becente, struggling with her sister's death and her sudden gift to commune with spirits, investigates mysterious deaths at a Denver hotel, uncov-

ering ties to a cult and dark secrets about her sister's hidden life.

Nonfiction

Hammer, Joshua. [The Mesopotamian Riddle](#) (Simon and Schuster \$29.99) Around 3,400 BCE—as humans were gathering in complex urban settlements—a scribe in the mud-walled city-state of Uruk picked up a reed stylus to press tiny symbols into clay. For three millennia, wedge shape cuneiform script would record the military conquests, scientific discoveries, and epic literature of the great Mesopotamian kingdoms of Sumer, Assyria, and Babylon and of Persia's mighty Achaemenid Empire, along with precious minutiae about everyday life in the cradle of civilization. And then...the meaning of the characters was lost. London 1857. Enter a swashbuckling archaeologist, a suave British military officer turned diplomat, and a cloistered Irish rector, all vying for glory in a race to decipher this script that would enable them to peek farther back into human history than ever before.

Hoffman, Claire. [Sister, Sinner](#) (Farrar, Straus & Giroux \$32) Having disappeared in 1926 before reappearing with a kidnapping story, America's most famous evangelist used spectacle, storytelling, and the newest technology - including her own radio station - to bring God's message to the masses, but was she everybody's saintly sister or a con-artist sinner?

"Painting the evangelist as part grifter, part troubled soul, Hoffman illuminatingly pinpoints how McPherson "prefigures" today's influencer-dominated world, where "pop culture language" can blend with "ideas about the divine" to manufacture new truths. It's a

revelatory study of how power, religion, and fame intersect.” (*PW*)

Kennedy, Kostya. [The Ride](#) (St. Martins \$29)
In *The Ride*, Kostya Kennedy presents a dramatic new narrative of the events of Paul Revere’s famous ride of April 18 and 19, 1775, informed by fresh primary and secondary source research into archives, family letters and diaries, contemporary accounts, and more. Kennedy reveals Revere’s ride to be more complex than it is usually portrayed—a loosely coordinated series of rides by numerous men, near-disaster, capture by British forces, and finally success. While Revere was central to the ride and its plotting, Kennedy reveals the other men (and, perhaps, a woman with information about the movement of British forces) who helped to set in motion the events that would lead to America’s independence.

Kopley, Richard. [Edgar Allan Poe](#) (University of Virginia Press \$49.95)
Edgar Allan Poe: A Life is the most comprehensive critical biography of Poe yet produced, exploring his fascinating life, his extraordinary work, and the vital relationship between the two. Best known for his tales of mystery and the macabre found in such works as “The Raven,” “Annabel Lee,” and “The Tell-Tale Heart,” this legendary American author continues to intrigue and enthrall his devoted readers. Written by one of the world’s leading Poe experts, this biography is a rich and rewarding study for the general reader as well as for the seasoned scholar.

Krefft, Vanda. [Expect Great Things!](#) (Little Brown \$29)
Katharine Gibbs was one her own success stories. She started her school when, as a 46-year-old widow, she was left near-broke with two young sons. The school taught typing

and stenography but Gibbs also hired accomplished professors from elite colleges to teach academic subjects—it was a well-rounded education that produced early feminists ready to tackle the sexism of their era. “Expect great things!” was her motto and her philosophy. Within a decade she’d opened schools in three elegant locations. With nostalgic period photographs throughout, *Expect Great Things!* takes us back to Katie Gibbs’s life and tells the stories of the women she influenced.

Lowe, Keith. [Naples 1944](#) (St. Martins \$35)
The award-winning author of *Savage Continent* and *The Fear and the Freedom* brings readers another masterful chronicle of the terrible and often unexpected consequences of war, in a page-turning book about a city on the brink of chaos in the dark heart of post-war Italy.

Maier, Thomas. [The Invisible Spy](#) (Hanover Square \$32.99)
The untold WWII story of a former NFL player Ernest Cuneo turned White House insider who worked with Churchill’s undercover agents in New York City to conduct the biggest foreign spy operation ever within the US, and inspired Ian Fleming’s James Bond.

Randall, Cassidy. [Thirty Below](#)
Grace Hoeman dreamed of standing on top of Denali. The tallest peak in North America, the fierce polar mountain loomed large in many climbers’ imaginations, and Grace, a doctor in Alaska, had come close to the top, only to be turned back by altitude sickness and a storm that took the lives of seven fellow climbers in one remorseless blow. Other expeditions denied her a place because of her gender, and when a letter arrived from a climber in California named Arlene Blum, who’d also been barred from expeditions—unless she stayed in base camp and cooked for the men, Grace got

a defiant idea: she would organize and lead the first-ever all-female ascent of the frozen Alaskan peak. Cassidy Randall draws on extensive archival research and original interviews to tell an engrossing, edge-of-the-seat adventure story about a forgotten group of climbers who had the audacity to believe that women could walk alone in extraordinary and treacherous heights.

Rogak, Lisa. [Propaganda Girls](#) (St. Martins \$29) Working in the European theater, China and Washington, D.C., Betty MacDonald, Zuzka Lauwers, Jane Smith-Hutton and Marlene Dietrich, each fascinating in her own right, together contributed to one of the most covert and successful military campaigns in World War II.

Sen, Mayukh. [Love, Queenie](#) (WW Norton 29.99) the first biography of Oberon (1911–1979) in more than forty years, Mayukh Sen draws on family interviews and heretofore untapped archival material to capture the exceptional life of an oft-forgotten talent. Tracing Oberon's story from her Indian roots to her final days surrounded by wealth and glamour, Sen questions the demands placed on stars in life and death. His compassionate, compelling chronicle illuminates troubling truths on race, gender, and power that still resonate today.