

# Midmonth BookNotes

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## Summertime and the Reading is Easy!

### Cozy Corner

Cahoon, Lynn. [An Amateur Sleuth's Guide to Murder](#) (Kensington \$27) SIGNED

After her fiancé runs off with her bridesmaid, Meg Gates moves back home to Bainbridge, where she divides her time helping out in her mom's bookstore and doing part-time research for mystery writer LC Aster. Working with LC offers Meg the perfect opportunity to follow up on her dream of writing a manual on criminal investigation. However, when LC's agent is found dead shortly after he was fired, Meg puts her guide to the real-world test to help prove her boss is innocent. "Cahoon launches a promising new series with endearing characters and a charming locale." (*Kirkus*)

Claire, Ann. [A Cyclist's Guide to Villains & Vines](#) (Kensington \$27)

When American expat and bicycle tour company proprietress Sadie Greene guides a hard-to-impress group of sophisticated seniors on a stunning trip in northeastern France, she expects some twists, turns, and sudden stops

to sip the Riesling. What Sadie doesn't anticipate is a detour leading straight to murder.

Davis, Krista. [The Diva Poaches a Bad Egg](#) (Kensington \$27)

After accepting an invitation from designer Mitzi Lawson to visit the historic Inger House In Old Town Alexandria, domestic diva Sophie Winston discovers the body of the home's owner (and Mitzi's best friend and business partner) Denise Nofsinger.

Freeman, Dianne. [A Daughter's Guide to Mothers and Murder](#) (Kensington \$27)

SIGNED

Frances Hazelton, Countess of Harleigh, and her husband George are asked by their friend Alicia Stoke-Whitney to investigate Carlson Deaver, a wealthy American with a murdered wife who's courting Alicia's daughter. The stage icon Sarah Bernhardt receives a piece of jewelry belonging to Deaver's late wife, Frances and husband George now find themselves infiltrating elite Parisian society to track down the murderer.

Lumley, Sam. [How to Have a Killer Time in DC](#) (Kensington \$27) SIGNED

Lumley's debut stars Oliver Popp, a 24-year-old gay autistic travel writer for *Offbeat Traveler* magazine. Oliver's most comfortable with a schedule, but on his first feature assignment in Washington, DC, his well-ordered life is upended by adorable photographer Ricky Warner and then an unexpected death, which Oliver and Ricky team up to solve.

Perry, Carol J. [The Spirit Moves](#) (Kensington \$17.95)

Innkeeper Maureen Doherty is well aware that no one—when asked why they come to Florida—says, “For the ghosts.” But her historic Haven House Inn has spirits to spare, and just when she thinks she's met every ghost in town—a new one pops up to help solve a murder. Now Maureen is getting detecting assistance from the late Peter Paterson when the body of “how-to” book writer Terry Holiday is found by Aster Paterson in her flower garden.

Sutton, Paula. [The Potting Shed Murder](#) (Kensington \$28)

In the idyllic Norfolk village of Pudding Corner, Daphne Brewster, a newcomer and vintage shop owner, becomes entangled in a murder investigation after the local headmaster's death reveals secrets, scandals, and a killer threatening her close-knit community.

### Historical Fiction, Mysteries, Romances and More

Adler, Sarah. [Finders Keepers](#) (Penguin \$19)  
Freshly single and jobless, Nina Hunnicutt returns home only to reunite with childhood

crush Quentin Bell, who convinces her to resume their long-abandoned treasure hunt that could change their futures but forces them to confront their past in the process.

Arikawa, Hiro. [The Passengers on the Hankyu Line](#) (Penguin \$28)

Come along on a heartwarming, funny, and perfectly cozy voyage with the charming and relatable passengers—including one dashing dachshund—whose lives intersect and affect each other on one of Japan's most romantic railway lines.

Brady, Ali. [Battle of the Bookstores](#) (Penguin \$19)

Josie Klein and Ryan Lawson both manage different bookstores on the same street in Boston. Given that Josie's store focuses on serious literature and Ryan's store sells romance only, there has always been a kind of rivalry between them. However, Josie and Ryan are thrust into a real competition by the owner of both their stores, who has decided the street only needs one place to buy books. Now can the former business rivals become allies in an effort to save their bookstores?

Brennan, Allison. [Beach Reads and Deadly Deeds](#) (MIRA \$30) SIGNED

When responsible-to-a-fault Mia Crawford is forced into taking a long-overdue vacation, she finds herself on a luxurious private island where she just might have a chance to reinvent herself. She can explore the island. Flirt shamelessly with a cute bartender. Have a vacation fling. Live like a heroine in one of her favorite novels. Or she can curl up with a good book on the beach. Turns out reinventing yourself is easier planned than done. But when gossip notes written in the margins of an old book turn out to be clues to the disappearance of another guest, Mia finds herself diving headfirst into a dangerous adventure

Daley-Ward, Yrsa. [The Catch](#) (Liveright \$28.99)

Long estranged after being adopted into different families, twin sisters Clara and Dempsey encounter a woman identical to their vanished mother who seems to have lived a childless life, and their opposing views on her true identity push them toward a confrontation.

Dodd, Christina. [Thus with a Kiss I Die](#) (Kensington \$28) SIGNED

Rosie Montague, a 20-year-old free spirit in Verona, finds her life upended when she's tasked by the ghost of Prince Escalus the Elder to solve his murder, all while navigating a love triangle, a possible revolution, and a looming threat that may turn her into a tragic heroine." After introducing Rosie in *A Daughter of Fair Verona*, Dodd continues in fine fettle with the second superbly entertaining addition to her "Daughter of Montague" series. Writing with a modern, sassy sense of wit, Dodd neatly folds the book's fascinating Italian Renaissance setting and compelling cast of characters into a smartly executed plot that offers up a clever nod to *Hamlet*." (LJ)

Escobar, Marie. [A Bookseller in Madrid](#) (Harper \$18.99)

For as long as she can remember, Barbara Spiel has always found solace in books. Born in Germany and having come of age in a tumultuous era, she flees her home country as the Nazis rise to power in the early 1930s. Her destination? Madrid. There she's determined to realize her long-held dream of opening a bookshop and creating a safe haven for young idealists and independent thinkers to come together to transform the world. But with war brewing both inside Spain and outside its borders throughout the entirety of Europe--and beyond--Barbara must fight to keep her bookstore the safe haven she has always imagined

it to be.

Firestone, Jo. [Murder on Sex Island](#) (Random \$18)

Posing as the glamorous Luella van Horn, disgraced detective Marie Jones goes undercover on her favorite trashy reality show to solve a contestant's murder, whose killer lurks among the shady producers and ruthless contestants surrounding her. "Firestone scores major points with her outrageous premise, laugh-out-loud one-liners, and fast-paced plot. It's a tropical blast of sun, sex, and sleuthing." (PW)

Gaynor, Hazel. [Before Dorothy](#) (Penguin \$19) Chicago, 1924: Emily Gale and new husband, Henry, leave Chicago for the Kansas prairie, though she hates leaving behind sister Annie. Then eight years later when tragedy strikes, their orphaned niece Dorothy lands on their doorstep. The wide-eyed child isn't the only thing to disrupt Emily's world. Drought and devastating dust storms threaten to destroy everything, and her much-loved home becomes a place of uncertainty and danger. When the past catches up with the present and old secrets are exposed, Emily fears she will lose her most cherished thing of all: Dorothy.

Gunn, Adrienne. [Fan Favorite](#) (Grand Central \$18.99)

Thirty-five year old Edie Pepper, a rosé loving, reality TV obsessed copywriter from Chicago, dreams of plucking her soulmate from the depths of Hinge (or Tinder or Bumble). Following yet another dumpster fire of a date, Edie is consoling herself with boxed wine and *E! News* when Ryan Seacrest drops a bomb: Edie's high school sweetheart Charlie Bennett has been cast as the lead in America's most beloved reality dating show, *The Key*, and wow, does he look different. Desperate to reclaim her One True Love, Edie DMs the

show's conniving producers, who are more than happy to shove Edie headfirst into the competition. But Charlie isn't quite who she remembers, and he's as desperate to hide his past as Edie is to reveal it. Further complicating matters is Peter Kennedy, *The Key's* cranky showrunner, who, despite his best efforts, finds himself drawn to Edie's everywoman charm.

Harmel, Kristin. [The Stolen Life of Colette Marceau](#) (Gallery \$28.99)

Colette Marceau has been stealing jewels for nearly as long as she can remember, following the centuries-old code of honor instilled in her by her mother, Annabel: take only from the cruel and unkind, and give to those in need. But one night in 1942, it all went wrong. Annabel was arrested by the Germans, and Colette's four-year-old sister, Liliane, disappeared in the chaos of the raid, along with an exquisite diamond bracelet sewn into the hem of her nightgown for safekeeping. Soon after, Annabel was executed, and Liliane's body was found floating in the Seine—but the bracelet was nowhere to be found. Seventy years later, Colette—who has “redistributed” \$30 million in jewels over the decades to fund many worthy organizations—has done her best to put her tragic past behind her, but her life begins to unravel when the long-missing bracelet suddenly turns up in a museum exhibit in Boston.

Huber, Anna Lee. [A Tarnished Canvas](#) (Penguin \$19)

Wintering in 1833 Edinburgh with their daughter, Kiera and Sebastian Gage attend the auction of Lord Eldin's art collection, where a fellow bidder is killed by a collapsing floor. Given their talent for sleuthing, it only makes sense that Kiera and Sebastian would assist Sergeant Maclean in his investigation. Howev-

er, almost immediately after the couple begin looking for clues, they discover that Kiera was the intended target.

Kelley, Pamela. [The Nantucket Restaurant](#) (Sourcebooks \$27.99)

When their grandmother's will unexpectedly gifts a Nantucket restaurant to Mandy, Jill, and Emma—provided they each work there for a year—the sisters must navigate unresolved past hurts, personal ambitions, not to mention Emma's complicated history with the chef.

Kellogg, Camille. [The Next Chapter](#) (Random \$18)

Actress and influencer Katrina Kelly, with a stalled career and evolving sexuality, seizes reinvention when she meets bookstore employee Jude Thacker, whose life at a queer bookstore is upended by media scrutiny and an encounter that forces them both out of their comfort zones.

Knight, Eliza. [Confessions of a Grammar Queen](#) (Sourcebooks \$17.99)

In 1960s New York, Lenox & Park Publishing copyeditor Bernadette Swift is determined, despite her sexist boss and jealous coworker, and with the support of dog Frank, her book club buddies, and a charismatic Lenox & Park editor, to become the first female CEO in the publishing industry.

Lowell, Joanna. [A Rare Find](#) (Penguin \$19)

Elfreda Marsden discovers a Viking amulet on her family's estate but loses it after colliding (literally) with childhood nemesis Georgie Redmayne. However, despite the enmity that exists between their families, Elfreda and Georgie join forces to find a hidden Viking treasure only to discover in the process, sparks of attraction rather than hatred are being struck between them.

Lurie, Kyra Davis. [The Great Mann](#) (Crown \$28)

In 1945 Los Angeles, Charlie Trammell is drawn into the glamour of Sugar Hill, where Black success clashes with white privilege, but as he grows close to the enigmatic Reaper Mann, he uncovers hidden tensions, personal betrayals and a court battle that threatens the community's future. A debut inspired by F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*.

Mare, Annie. [Cosmic Love at the Multiverse Hair Salon](#) (Penguin \$19)

In-demand hairstylist and social media star Tressa Fay Robeson can admit that spending her days at her hair salon and her nights with her tight-knit group of friends (and one grumpy cat) is not the kind of exciting life she'd hoped for. So, when a misdirected text from a stranger leads to a flirty exchange, she surprises herself by suggesting an impulsive meetup. But the woman, Meryl, never shows. Tressa Fay brushes it off—until Meryl's sister and friend show up at the salon demanding to know what's going on. Because, you see, there's no way Meryl could have texted her. Meryl has been missing for a month. "A heart-warming multiverse tale of fated love, family and memory." (PW)

Michelle, Holly. [Last Night Was Fun](#) (HarperCollins \$18.99)

*You've Got Mail* meets *The Hating Game*! Vying for a promotion against a bitter rival, Emmy Jameson, the only female data analyst for a professional baseball team, finds a bit of welcome distraction in the text-flirting relationship that started out as a wrong number exchange. What Emmy doesn't know is that the man with whom she is texting is Gabe Olson, the same one she is fighting against for the promotion.

Myers, Kate. [Salty](#) (HarperCollins \$28)

In a tropical paradise with a hurricane on the way, Denise and Helen - two estranged sisters - uncover their rich employers' shady real estate development and wonder if these yacht owners have something to do with the dead body found in the marina.

Oliver, Amber. [When the Music Hits](#) (Random \$30)

Billie Grand, a Bronx native who found salvation in music, lands a dream job at a top record label, but as she navigates grueling demands and industry corruption, she must decide whether chasing success is worth compromising her values and identity.

Pons, Chip. [Winging It With You](#) (Penguin \$19)

Dumped by his fiancé before the start of a globe-trotting reality competition in which they both are participating, Asher Bennett convinces airline pilot Theo Fernandez to fake a relationship with him for the cameras and be his new competition partner. But will their growing attraction for each other help them compete or just make things more challenging? Think *The Amazing Race* but with much more kissing.

Poston, Ashley. [Sounds Like Love](#) (Penguin \$19)

Haunted by emptiness despite her status as a coveted songwriter, Joni Lark returns to her North Carolina hometown where her family's closing music venue sparks a mysterious telepathic connection with a guarded musician determined to complete a haunting melody.

Reay, Katherine. [The English Masterpiece](#) (Harper \$18.99)

As the recently promoted assistant to the Tate's Modern Collections keeper Diana Gilden, Lily helps plan a world-class Picasso exhibit to honor the passing of the great artist. The

opening is beyond anyone's expectations until Lily does the unthinkable. She stops in front of a masterpiece and hears her own voice say, "*It's a forgery.*" The gallery falls silent. The Tate's Picasso Commemorative is supposed to be her boss Diana's crowning achievement, featuring not only the artist's most iconic and intimate works, but a newly discovered painting—one she advised an investor to purchase. But when Lily makes her outrageous declaration, suspicion and scandal threaten everything Diana has achieved. All Lily has ever wanted is to follow in Diana's footsteps and take the art world by storm in her own right. Yet one comment puts not only her career at risk but also her mentor's. Unless . . . Was she right?

Robotham, M. J. [Mrs. Spy](#) (Bloomsbury \$28.99)

Maggie Flynn isn't your typical 1960s mum. She's a spy, an unsuspecting operative for MI5, stalking London's streets in myriad disguises. But Maggie's world spins out of control when a chance encounter with a mysterious Russian agent triggers a chilling revelation: he knew her husband. And what's worse, the agent suspects someone on home soil betrayed him. As Maggie searches for answers, she'll question everyone – and everything – she thought she could trust. In the murky and perilous world of espionage, can she outsmart those determined to keep her silenced?

Schellman, Katharine. [Last Dance Before Dawn](#) (St. Martins \$28)

When a stranger from Chicago appears at speakeasy The Nightingale to settle old scores, Vivian Kelly and owner Honor Huxley send him packing; but slowly they realize someone's hunting them and won't stop until the old mystery of a missing girl and a truck full of cash has been unraveled.

Shapiro, B.A. [The Lost Masterpiece](#) (Little Brown \$29)

When Tamara Rubin, the great-great-great-great granddaughter of Impressionist artist Berthe Morisot, inherits Edouard Manet's *Party on the Seine*, she discovers a long-hidden family history replete with unanswered questions: How had it been stolen by the Nazis? How had the painting managed to survive three disasters that destroyed every other artwork around it? And most of all, why had she never known about her ancestor, Berthe Morisot? As the painting begins to metamorphose into darker and more terrifying versions of itself, Tamara's ordinary life is thrown into turmoil. What wounds and resentments plagued Morisot, and to what lengths will her spirit go for revenge?

Sosa, Mia. [When Javi Dumped Mari](#) (Penguin \$19)

On the eve of their college graduation, best friends Javier Báez and Marisol Campos swore never to date someone the other doesn't approve of. Now, almost a decade later, Javi has a problem. Mari, the woman he's secretly pined for since sophomore year, is engaged—and Javi didn't even get the chance to vet the Pedro Pascal knockoff she plans to marry. With his life and career finally on track, Javi's ready to confess his feelings. Except Mari's changed the script and moved on without him. Javi has just six weeks to convince Mari this marriage is a flop. If that means he needs to ruffle some feathers to help her avert disaster, well, he's up for the challenge. After all, isn't that what best friends are for? "Sosa creates dramatic and romantic tension by toggling between her protagonists' perspectives and skillfully deploys flashbacks to the pair's early friendship and the moment it all went wrong, teasing out their juicy backstories. There are plenty of laugh-out-loud

moments along the way, especially in the zingy banter between Javi and Mari. It's a pitch-perfect romantic comedy." (*PW*)

Stone, Georgia. [The Friendship Fling](#) (Harper-Collins \$17.99)

No one would ever call Ava Monroe a people person, which isn't ideal for a barista in a busy London coffee shop. She's sarcastic, blunt, and cynical, and her relationships are strictly no strings attached. Then insufferably cheerful, country-hopping, undeniably gorgeous Finn O'Callaghan rolls into her coffee shop with a proposal—a strictly friends-only summer fling. Finn needs a local to help him complete his London bucket list. To Ava's surprise, their mismatched friendship of convenience becomes oddly tolerable, and as they work their way through Finn's list and around the sun-drenched city, from rooftops and floating bars to nights at the museum, their adventures—and Finn's company—start to feel . . . nice.

Sutanto, Jessie Q. [Worth Fighting For](#) (Disney \$15.99)

Pretending to be her ailing father, Fa Mulan steps in for a critical whiskey company acquisition, but while navigating masculine traditions and wrangling cattle, she must also resist her growing attraction to Shang, the skeptical heir, all while proving she belongs in the business world.

Thompson, Alicia. [Never Been Shipped](#) (Penguin \$19)

A decade after their band's messy breakup, Micah and John reunite for a one-time performance on a cruise, forcing them to face old feelings, past mistakes and the chance that their love might deserve a second chance.

Wax, Wendy. [Just Beachy](#) (Penguin \$19)

After losing her longtime TV role, Sydney Ryan retreats to Florida where she uncovers a mys-

tery at her grandmother's new home. Determined to ferret out the truth and protect her grandmother, Sydney enlists the help of the Ten Beach Road ladies and Luke, a local police officer who was once her high school crush. While Sydney puts her television crime-solving skills to the test, she decides to act on the sizzling chemistry between herself and Luke. And as Sydney spends more sunsets toasting to true friends and new romance, she begins to wonder if the sun is setting on her time in Hollywood and if this town could be the dawn of a new chapter.

West, Kathleen. [Making Friends Can Be Murder](#) (Penguin \$19)

It feels like kismet when Sarah Jones, newly relocated to Minneapolis after abruptly calling off her engagement, gets invited to join a group of women who share her same (very common) name. For years Sarah has received all types of correspondence intended for different Sarah Joneses, but now it seems that this mistake has given her the opportunity for an instant community. What starts as a low-stakes meet-up called "The Sarah Jones Project" soon turns sinister when another local Sarah Jones is found dead, under suspicious circumstances, at the base of the downtown Minneapolis bridge. After fielding numerous calls from concerned loved ones ruling out *their* Sarah as the victim, the surviving Sarahs decide to take matters into their own hands and solve the murder.

Wilde, Eleanor. [June in the Garden](#) (Crown \$28)

After her mother's unexpected death, June must vacate her home. But when the social worker urges her to move into a flat with no garden—clearly, that won't work. With no other options, she embarks on her first solo trip in search of a father she's only seen in a single old photograph. When June unexpect-

edly shows up at her father's door, he panics and turns her away, unwilling to jeopardize his idyllic life and new family. On her way out, June spies an unruly backyard and with nowhere else to go, quietly moves into her father's yellow garden shed. Once again, she can spend her days surrounded by her beloved flowers. But when her father's 12-year-old son—her half-brother—discovers June, she must choose between being seen for the first time or running away yet again.

## Teen

Barrow, Rebecca. [The Tournament](#) (Margaret K. McElderry \$21.99)

This year's Tournament, a series of grueling physical challenges, is more cutthroat than ever with seniors Max, the ruthless scholarship student, Nora, Max's ex-best friend who may be ready for center stage, and Teddy, the transfer student on her last chance, all battling to be the winner. However, in order to win, they can't let anything - or anybody - get in their way.

Ernshaw, Shea. [The Beautiful Maddening](#) (Simon & Schuster \$19.99)

Seventeen-year-old Lark lives in a decaying family home where white petals cause the locals to fall in love with anyone who bears the Goode last name. But when she meets a boy who seems unaffected by the family curse, she finds herself falling into a feeling she has spent her life trying to avoid.

Lee, C. B. [Coffeeshop in an Alternate Universe](#) (Feiwel & Friends \$19.99)

Brenda, a geeky overachiever determined to save the world through science, meets Kat, a troublemaking chosen one lashing out against

her destiny, in a magical coffeeshop and the two fall in love as their different universes begin to collide.

Ridley, Erica. [The Protege](#) (Random \$19.99)  
Eighteen-year-old Ang  lique, a talented young seamstress from a working-class background, seeks vengeance on the factory owner who destroyed her family, all while navigating a cutthroat competition for a coveted position in Paris's fashion world.

## Nonfiction

Dickinson, Elizabeth Evitts. [Claire McCardell](#) (Simon & Schuster \$29.99)

After World War II, McCardell fought the severe, hyper-feminized silhouette championed by male designers, like Christian Dior. Dior claimed that he wanted to "save women from nature." McCardell, by contrast, wanted to set women free. Claire McCardell became, as the young journalist Betty Friedan called her in 1955, "The Gal Who Defied Dior." Filled with personal drama and industry secrets, this story reveals how Claire McCardell built an empire at a time when women rarely made the upper echelons of business.

Gradvall, Jan. [The Story of ABBA](#) (St. Martin's \$30)

More than half a century after their songs were recorded, ABBA still make people the world over dance and sing their hearts out. In 2013, when the band had not been interviewed for over thirty years, Jan Gradvall was granted unique access to them for the next decade and the result is *The Story of ABBA: Melancholy Undercover*. Agnetha F  ltskog, Bj  rn Ulvaeus, Benny Andersson, and An-

ni-Frid Lyngstad all share their personal stories, their thoughts and their opinions about ABBA's music more openly than ever before. Weaving in and out of their story, well-known international music critic Jan Gradvall reveals the context in which their unique sound developed and shows how the story of ABBA is also the story of Sweden and the globalization of pop culture.

Olson, Lynne. [The Sisterhood of Ravensbruck](#) (Random \$35)

Drawing on the experiences of a group of French Resistance women imprisoned in a Nazi concentration camp, this account details their acts of defiance, survival strategies, and postwar efforts to seek justice and ensure their experiences were not forgotten.

Purdum, Todd S. [Desi Arnaz](#) (Simon & Schuster \$29.99)

Desi Arnaz is a name that resonates with fans of classic television, but few understand the depth of his contributions to the entertainment industry. In *Desi Arnaz*, Todd S. Purdum offers a captivating biography that dives into the groundbreaking Latino artist and businessman known to millions as Ricky Ricardo from *I Love Lucy*. Beyond his iconic role, Arnaz was a pioneering entrepreneur who fundamentally transformed the television landscape.

Princiotti, Nora. [Hit Girls](#) (Random \$29)

Exploring the early 2000s pop explosion, this deep dive examines how female artists reshaped music, celebrity culture and industry standards, driving a new era of pop stardom that continues to influence today's biggest stars and redefine the genre's cultural impact.

Randall, Willard Sterne. [John Hancock](#) (Penguin \$35)

A revealing portrait of the Revolutionary leader, exploring his rise from modest begin-

nings to wealthy merchant, his pivotal yet overlooked role in the American Revolution, his political rivalries and his influence on key events that shaped the United States.

Scheele, Judith. [Shifting Sands](#) (Basic \$32.50)

The Sahara stretches across 3.2 million square miles, hosting several million inhabitants and a corresponding variety of languages, cultures, and livelihoods. But beyond ready-made images of exoticism and squalor, we know surprisingly little about its history and the people who call it home. *Shifting Sands* is about that other Sahara, not the empty wasteland of the romantic imagination but the vast and highly differentiated space in which Saharan peoples and, increasingly, new arrivals from other parts of Africa live, work, and move. It takes us from the ancient Roman Empire through the bloody colonial era to the geopolitics of the present, questioning easy clichés and exposing fascinating truths along the way

Shaw, Garry J. [Cryptic](#) (Yale University \$40.50)

Books can change the world. They can influence, entertain, transport, and enlighten. But across the centuries, authors have disguised their work with codes and ciphers, secret scripts and magical signs. What made these authors decide to keep their writings secret? What were they trying to hide? Garry J. Shaw tells the stories of nine puzzling European texts. Shaw explores the unknown alphabet of the nun Hildegard of Bingen; the enciphered manuscripts of the prank-loving physician Giovanni Fontana; and the angel communications of the polymath John Dee. Along the way, we discover how the pioneers of science and medicine concealed their work, encounter demon magic and secret societies, and delve into the intricate symbolism of alchemists searching for the Philosopher's Stone.