

Midmonth BookNotes

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Cool Reading for HOT Times!

Cozy Corner

Bryant, Elise. [The Game Is Afoot](#) (Penguin \$19)
When Coach Cole, the director of the kids' soccer program, drops dead on a sunny Saturday morning, no one suspects foul play. However, the police soon discover something suspicious left on the field, making it clear that someone had it in for the coach. But who? Sure, parents got mad when he made their precious star athletes sit on the bench, but not *that* mad. Mavis Miller is determined to find out, even if it takes her into the dark, dangerous underbelly of gentle parents and MLM girlbosses.

Crawford, Isis. [A Catered Bake-Off](#) (Kensington \$27)

Sisters Bernie and Libby Simmons's baking competition sours with suspicious ingredients, malfunctioning appliances, a goat invasion, and ominous notes delivered to the cast and crew—and when a judge meets a grisly end, the sleuthing siblings race to catch a mixed-up killer.

Delany, Vicki. [Tea with Jam & Dread](#) (Kensington \$27)

When Cape Cod tearoom owner Lily Roberts travels with her mother to a Yorkshire castle for a centenarian aristocrat's birthday, a missing heirloom sapphire and a deadly allergic reaction pull her into a tangled mystery amid high-society tensions and suspicious guests.

Dennison, Hannah. [A Fatal Feast at Honeychurch Hall](#) (Little Brown \$17.99)

When Eric Pugsley brings home his Turkish fiancée, everyone is delighted - even if the marriage does seem to include her outrageously feisty mother. A Safari Supper at the Hall is held in their honor, but trouble begins when, somewhere between the first course and dessert, one of the villagers goes missing and is later found drowned in the estate's ornamental lake. But things take an even more sinister turn when Eric asks Kat Stanford, to value the bride-to-be's 19th century Etruscan engagement ring, only to be told that historically it was used to carry poison - hardly an appropriate choice for love, but Eric is adamant it's what his fiancée wants. And then a

second body is found.

Erickson, Alex. [A Purrfect Date](#) (Kensington \$18.95)

When A Purrfect Pose yoga studio owner Ashley Branson's disastrous blind date winds up dead that same night, she is thrust into a murder investigation. Now Ashley wonders if she might be the suspect . . . or the next victim.

Jackson-Opoku, Sandra. [Savvy Summers and the Sweet Potato Crimes](#) (St. Martin's \$28)

When Grandy Jaspers, the 75-year-old neighborhood womanizer, drops dead at table two of Savvy Summers's soul food café Essie's, she finds herself and her café swamped by bad press, so Savvy and her snooping assistant manager, Penny Lopés, take it upon themselves to find who really killed Grandy.

Historical Fiction, Mysteries, Romance and More

Blackwell, Juliet. [Asylum Hotel](#) (Penguin \$19)

While photographing the now abandoned but soon to be renovated The Hotel Seabrink Aubrey Spencer bumps into a man named Dimitri Petroff, a minor online celebrity who shares her fascination with old buildings, the Hotel Seabrink in particular. When he is found dead the next day at the base of a cliff, the police are quick to close the investigation. But Aubrey feels unsettled by locals who claim Dimitri was murdered and that it's not the first time someone interested in the hotel was killed. Readers who remember and miss those wonderfully spooky old books by Barbara Michaels or those who have discovered and devoured newer writers like Riley Sager will love this supernatural tinged suspense novel.

Blakely, Sally. [Friends to Lovers](#) (Harlequin \$18.99)

Best friends Joni and Ren have been inseparable since childhood. So when Joni moves across the country for her job, the two devise a creative way to stay in touch: they'll be each other's plus-ones every year for wedding season, no matter what else is happening in their lives. It's a tradition that works, until a line is crossed and the friendship they once thought was forever is ruined. Now Joni is back at their families' shared summer home for her sister's wedding, and she's determined to make the week perfect, even if it means faking a friendship with Ren—and avoiding the truth of why they have to fake it in the first place. How hard can it be to pretend to be friends with the person who once knew you best?

Buchanan, Emily. [Send Flowers](#) (Park Row \$28.99)

Fiona, better known as eco-influencer @FoliageFifi, hasn't left her apartment since her boyfriend, Ed, died. It's easy to self-isolate when your heart's shattered and the planet you've spent your whole life trying to save is dying right outside your window. But when a houseplant randomly appears on her doorstep with an anonymous note, Fiona feels a flicker of hope—it's not just any plant; it's Ed's favorite. Thinking it's a sign, Fiona pours Ed's ashes into the soil, only to wake up to find the plant has vibrantly flowered. And can...*talk*? There's only one logical explanation: Ed is back. This time as a houseplant.

Cambron, Kirsty. [The French Kitchen](#) (Thomas Nelson \$17.99)

As Paris rebuilds in the aftermath of World War II, Kat Fontaine never expected the skills she learned in a French château kitchen to be the key that unlocks the secrets swirling

in her new post-war life."Cambron paints a textured portrait of wartime France, balancing action-packed scenes with entertaining appearances from Julia Child and mouthwatering descriptions of French cuisine." (PW)

Cleeton, Chanel. [The Lost Story of Eva Fuentes](#) (Penguin \$19)

A mysterious book with a legacy spanning from the beginning of the twentieth century to the present day unites three women—American expat Margo Reynolds, librarian Pila Castillo, and Cuban schoolteacher and aspiring author Eva Fuentes - and their secrets in this unforgettable novel from *New York Times* bestselling author Chanel Cleeton.

Collins, Anna E. [Finding Mr. July](#) (Grand Central \$17.99)

Intern Holly King knows there are pros and cons to everything, including competing in her nonprofit's big fundraising competition. But winning means a full-time job at the new office in Scotland. The con is working with office grump Jonathan Summers.

Cox, Kelsey. [Party of Liars](#) (St. Martin's \$28)
SIGNED

Today is Sophie Matthews's sixteenth birthday party, an exclusive black-tie bash in the heart of the Texas Hill Country, where secrets are as deep-rooted as the sprawling live oaks. Sophie's dad has spared no expense, and his renovated cliffside mansion—once thought haunted and shuttered for years from outsiders—is now hosting the event of the season. Then, just before the candles on the three-tiered red velvet cake are blown out, a body falls from the balcony onto the starlit dance floor below. A fun debut that gives updates the classic gothic to modern-day Texas.

Gardiner, Kelly & Kumar Sharmini. [Miss Caroline Bingley, Private Investigator](#) (HarperCol-

lins \$17.99)

Two years after her brother Charles Bingley weds Miss Jane Bennett, Miss Caroline Bingley is visiting her brother's country estate near Pemberley, the home of their best friends, Mr. and Mrs. Darcy. Restless and out of sorts, Caroline wonders if there's more to life than playing cribbage and paying calls on country neighbors. So, when Georgiana Darcy's maid, Jayani disappears and Georgiana sets off to find her, Caroline races to find them in London, where she stumbles on a shocking, cold-blooded murder.

Gonzalez, Nicky. [Mayra](#) (Random \$28)

It's been years since Ingrid has heard from her childhood best friend, Mayra, a fearless rebel who fled their hometown of Hialeah, a Cuban neighborhood just west of Miami, for college in the Northeast. But when Mayra calls out of the blue to invite Ingrid to a weekend getaway at a house in the Everglades, she impulsively accepts. A ghost from her past brings a woman to a peculiar, isolated Everglades mansion—and to the brink of delirium—in this ominous and compulsively readable gothic debut.

Guhrke, Laura Lee. [Bad Luck Bride](#) (Grand Central \$17.99)

Third time's a charm? For Lady Kay Matheson, it had better be. Her first engagement was a failed elopement; the second ruined by gossip about the first. Resigned to be a disgraced spinster, no one is more surprised than Kay when an American millionaire offers for her hand. Just when she's convinced she will finally make it down the aisle, the scoundrel who broke her heart arrives with his own fiancée. Devlin Sharpe has finally become a success. He has wealth, connections, and a lovely bride-to-be—and he won't let an old flame derail all his hard work. But it turns out time has not dampened his grudge toward Kay—or

the desire sparking between them. And one searing kiss threatens to ruin their wedding plans and their futures, and make Kay the bad-luck bride all over again.

Hayward, Stella. [The Good Boy](#) (HarperCollins \$18.99)

On the eve of Genie's thirtieth birthday, her grandmother gives her an unexpected gift: a wish at midnight. Genie, forever the family skeptic, laughs it off and, returns home to her empty house and her golden retriever, Rory. Who needs a boyfriend when she has a loyal friend like Rory? As she hugs him and gets ready for bed, she wishes to herself that he were human. She really should've listened to her grandmother. To her surprise, Rory is now a human with big Golden Retriever Energy—like a goofy, adoring Hemsworth. But he doesn't like being a human. He doesn't like wearing clothes or human manners, and he most definitely can't manage a human job. Genie needs to turn him back before it's too late and enlists her oldest friend and boy next door, Miles, to help. Their quest brings them closer than they've ever been—and maybe, just maybe, her messed up wish is the key to granting her heart's desire after all.

Hubscher, Libby. [Heart Marks the Spot](#) (Penguin \$19)

Treasure hunter Stella Moore dreams of having it all—wealth, love, and a flourishing career—but knows she'll never be that lucky. Every summer she and her childhood friends travel to search for hidden treasure, but she can barely manage her bills, let alone a relationship. Then, a chance encounter with alluring novelist Huck Sullivan during an expedition in Iceland has Stella thinking maybe her fortune has changed.

Jackson, Holly. [Not Quite Dead Yet](#) (Random

\$28)

Thirty-six hours after being attacked, Margaret "Jet" Mason wakes in the hospital to grim news that a bone fragment is putting pressure on her brain's arterial wall and will cause a fatal hemorrhage. However, instead of choosing surgery with a slim chance of survival, Jet uses her last week to find her murderer. Bestselling YA author Jackson ("A Good Girl's Guide to Murder" series, adapted by Netflix) makes her adult debut.

James, Sarah. [Last Stop Union Station](#) (Sourcebooks \$17.99)

Hollywood, 1942. Jacqueline Love's acting career is flailing. Suddenly on the wrong side of 40, parts are drying up, directors are calling her "difficult," and Humphrey Bogart has definitely stopped taking her calls. Desperate to cling to stardom, Jackie takes the only gig that will have her: the Hollywood Victory Caravan, a train full of movie stars crossing the country to fundraise for the war effort. Jackie wouldn't call herself patriotic, but with her life's work on the line, she'll do anything. When a fellow star dies on board, everyone assumes the death was a tragic accident—but Jackie isn't so sure. Stuck in Chicago's Union Station, Jackie enlists the help of Grace, one of the few women in the police force, to investigate. But "difficult" outside of a movie set is dangerous, and when the pair fall into a homegrown Nazi scheme, Jackie must ask herself what's more important: her career, or her country?

Lauren, Kate. [The Spirit of Love](#) (Penguin \$19)

Fenny's got that boss glow. Not only did she just have the best sex of her life, but she's finally about to direct the TV show she's been a screenwriter on for ten years. Only one thing could floor her—finding out she's been replaced by a hotshot director named Jude. Wait, no. Two things. Jude looks *exactly* like Sam the guy who just turned her bones to

jelly. Same dimples, same eyes, but he looks older and has a sadness Fenny wants to fix. Last weekend, Fenny met Sam when he movie-style rescued her from a storm on Catalina Island. Here he is again, just ... different. Can Sam and Jude be the same man? And if they are, will Fenny's love be enough to put him back together?

Lindo-Rice, Michelle. [A Summer for the Books](#) (MIRA \$18.99)

Jewel Stone has it all—the perfect marriage, a bestselling author career, her dream home—or so she likes everyone to believe. But between her writer's block and her husband losing his job, her picture-perfect life is in shambles. And inspiration just isn't hitting... until she receives a call she never expected: her former best friend needs her help. When Shelby Andrews wakes up in the hospital after a biking accident, she can't remember the last twelve years. She knows she owns a bookstore on the beach, but she has no memory of Lacey, her nineteen-year-old adopted daughter who's away for the summer. There's only one person who can help Shelby through this—her bestie, Jewel. With so many secrets and heartbreaks between them, Jewel and Shelby haven't spoken in years. Yet Jewel can't turn away from the friend who doesn't remember their fallout. Besides, the best writing she's ever done was with Shelby...

Maclean, Sarah. [These Summer Storms](#) (Random \$30)

Banished from her powerful family for years, Alice Storm returns to their Rhode Island estate for her father's funeral, only to face a high-stakes inheritance game that forces her into tense confrontations with relatives and an enigmatic family advisor. "MacLean's first foray into contemporary family drama has notes of *Succession* along with the steamy

romance she's known for in her historical novels. The Storm family is full of complicated, flawed characters, and sticking them together on an island for a week leads to lots of delightfully dramatic fights, secrets, and reveals. A compelling story about grief, sex, and money, but also the power of family and forgiveness." (Kirkus)

Miranda, Megan. [You Belong Here](#) (Simon & Schuster \$28.99) SIGNED

When her daughter Delilah enrolls at the college Beckett Bowery fled after a deadly scandal two decades earlier, Beckett is forced to return to Wyatt Valley, where buried truths and old suspicions threaten to resurface against the backdrop of the picturesque Virginia town.

Mullet, Melinda. [A Ghostwriter's Guide to Murder](#) (Crooked Lane \$19.99)

As a ghostwriter for the long-running Simon Hills mysteries, Maeve Gardner has planned the perfect murder time and again, and she enjoys it. She dreams of writing something under her own name someday rather than babysitting her adopted character Simon, but at least she's writing. And as one of the burnt-out souls who've run away from dry land to live on London's waterways, she has the joy of working from the home she loves: a colorful houseboat. Life on the canals is grand, but when her cheating ex-boyfriend turns up floating facedown in the water outside her boat, murdered, and the police arrest her, the plot takes a wayward turn. Suddenly, Maeve is thrust into one of her own crime dramas, complete with missing money, violent thugs, extortion, and conspiracy. Only this time, there is no real-life Simon Hill to come to her aid. Instead, with the help of friends from the river—India, owner of a popular floating bookshop; Paul, the exceedingly attractive landlord of the local pub; and Ash, Maeve's

quiet, nerdy neighbor who is keeping some secrets of his own—Maeve may have a shot at saving herself.

O'Connor, Melissa. [The One and Only Vivian Stone](#) (Gallery \$18.99)

The Seven Husbands of Evelyn

Hugo meets *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel* in this enchanting novel about estranged lovers reconnecting over mysterious tapes found in an attic and the old Hollywood secret hidden within them.

Piazza, Jo. [Everyone Is Lying to You](#) (Penguin \$19)

Lizzie and Bex were best friends in college. After graduation, Bex vanished, leaving Lizzie confused and devastated. Fifteen years later, Bex is now Rebecca Sommers, a “traditional” Instagram influencer with millions of followers who salivate over her perfect life on her ranch with her five children and handsome husband, Gray. Lizzie is a struggling magazine writer, watching reels while her young children demand her attention. One night out of the blue, Bex calls Lizzie with a career-making proposition—an exclusive interview with her about her multimillion-dollar business venture and an invitation to MomBomb, the high-profile influencing conference. At the conference, Bex goes missing and Gray is found brutally murdered on their ranch. Lizzie finds herself plunged into the dark side of the cutthroat world of social media that includes jealousy, sordid affairs, swingers, and backstabbing. She must learn who her old friend has become and who she has double-crossed to try to find her, clear her name, and maybe even save her life.

Pote, Ryan. [Blood and Treasure](#) (Penguin \$30)
The International Space Station suddenly loses contact with Earth. When a NASA tech devises a way to restore the feed, the images

that come through are unfathomable: a scene of terrible violence, the crew unresponsive, droplets of blood hovering in zero gravity. But which of the astronauts on board would have done such a thing? And why? Off the coast of Mozambique, former special ops pilot and current treasure hunter Ethan Cain sees something he can't believe: an object shot out of the heavens plunging deep into the Indian Ocean. When he goes to investigate, it becomes even less intelligible. A space capsule has crashed into the sea, and inside is a woman—alone, unconscious, and injured. Ethan knows he must save her. What he doesn't know is who she is, how she got there . . . or why she's the only survivor of a killing spree conducted 254 miles up in the sky. “With his adrenaline-fueled debut, former naval helicopter pilot Pote effectively and efficiently delivers all the classic components adventurous thriller fans crave, including a propulsively paced plot full of details about high-tech and military gadgets, a Timex watch hero who takes a licking and keeps on ticking, and an ancient relic straight out of *Raiders of the Lost Ark*.”

Pride, Christine. [All the Men I've Loved Again](#) (Atria \$28.99)

In 1999, shy college freshman Cora Belle is swept into a whirlwind of first love, heartbreak, and self-discovery between two unforgettable men and, twenty years later, must face her unresolved choices when a surprise reunion brings them all back together.

Resau, Laura. [The Alchemy of Flowers](#) (Harper Muse \$18.99)

A broken woman. A mysterious job ad. A chance to heal in French castle gardens—but strange things are growing behind the ancient stone walls. This debut adult novel is an enchanting, modern-day take on *The Secret Garden*, sprinkled with magic.

Stetz-Waters, Karelia. [Taste of Love](#) (Grand Central \$17.99)

Six years ago, eco-chef Alice Sullivan and her culinary-school rival *almost* gave into the burning tension between them. But those kisses? Just the heat of competition boiling over. Sullivan never expected to see Kia after graduation . . . until Kia crashes back into her life with a plan to buy Sullivan's beloved Portland greenspace. A delicious, heart-warming romantic comedy about big dreams, life-changing friendships, and the people who bring out your best.

Sweeney, Melanie. [Where You're Planted](#) (Penguin \$19)

Single mom Tansy Perkins only has room in her life for her daughter and her library. And maybe the next book to add to her collection. But after a catastrophic hurricane severely damages her library, she's forced to temporarily move her branch library into the adjacent county botanic gardens, where Jack Reid—the world's grouchiest gardener who rescued her and her daughter from the flood—happens to be the assistant director.

Tully, Liza. [The World's Greatest Detective and Her Just Okay Assistant](#) (Penguin \$30)

Eager to prove herself, assistant detective Olivia Blunt pushes her reluctant mentor famous investigator Aubrey Merritt to investigate a wealthy matriarch's suspicious death on Lake Champlain, only to find herself entangled in the secrets and shifting loyalties of the powerful Summersworth family. "A solidly entertaining read, especially for lovers of traditional mysteries." (*Kirkus*)

Wallbrook. Zoe B. [History Lessons](#) (Soho \$25.95)

As a newly minted junior professor, Daphne

Ouverture spends her days giving lectures on French colonialism, working on her next academic book, and going on atrocious dates. Her small world suits her just fine. Until Sam Taylor dies. The rising star of Harrison University's anthropology department was never one of Daphne's favorites, despite his popularity. But that doesn't prevent Sam's killer from believing Daphne has something that belonged to Sam—something the killer will stop at nothing to get. Between grading papers and navigating her disastrous love life, Daphne embarks on her own investigation to find out what connects her to Sam's murder. With the help of an alluring former-detective-turned-bookseller, she unravels a deadly cover-up on campus.

Ware, Ruth. [The Woman in Suite 11](#) (Gallery \$29.99)

A decade after that terrible business on a Norwegian cruise (*The Woman in Cabin 10*), Ware brings journalist Laura "Lo" Blacklock back for another rollercoaster ride of suspense. A now happily married Lo has spent the last decade raising her family, but she really would like to get back to work. A surprise invitation to the opening of billionaire Marcus Liedmann's luxury hotel in Geneva provides the perfect opportunity for Lo to jumpstart her writing career. Especially, if Lo can secure an interview with the notoriously reclusive Marcus. Ware once again proves her flair for punchy pacing and perceptive plotting as she slowly entangles her protagonist in another web of secrets, lies, and murder that sends her zigzagging her way across Europe. Fans' of Ware will also appreciate the author's deliciously desiccated sense of humor that provides a welcome counterbalance to nerve-jangling situations in which her protagonist finds herself enmeshed.

White, Karen. [That Last Carolina Summer](#) (Park Row \$30)

Years after fleeing to the West Coast, Phoebe

Manigault returns to the South Carolina Low-country to help her sister care for their mother, confronting childhood tensions, unsettling visions, and a deepening bond with a grieving family nearby.

Wood, Laura. [Let's Make a Scene](#) (Atria \$19)
When Cynthia Taylor gets her first real acting job, starring in a small British movie, she is over the moon. There is only one problem... Cynthia's arrogant and annoyingly handsome costar Jack hates her, and the feeling is definitely mutual. While they may be at war behind the scenes, their on-screen chemistry is palpable, and the studio sees an opportunity—have the two young stars fake a romance that will charm fans and draw crowds. Thirteen years later, Cynthia and Jack have successfully kept their promise to stay far away from one another, until a surprising offer comes to make a sequel to the cult classic that launched their careers. But there's a catch: they must also rekindle their pretend relationship...and this time there's a documentary crew following their every move.

Younger, Pamela Samuels. [Sounds Like Trouble](#) (Atria \$18)

Jackson Jones and Mackenzie "Mac" Cunningham can't agree on anything. After coming close to death on their last case, the two have decided to team up but they can't even decide on how to furnish their new office. Jackson wants to make a big splash. Mackenzie just wants a desk and some filing cabinets to clean up the mess. Before they can reach a truce on the decor, the two PIs get an offer they have no choice but to accept: infamous gangster Big Ced and two of his mafia dons want them to track down a package. Or else.

Nonfiction

Brady, Tim. [A Light in the Northern Sea](#) (Kens-

ington \$29)

The true story of how Danish citizens united to secretly ferry nearly all of Denmark's Jews to safety in Sweden during World War II, overcoming Gestapo patrols, political hurdles and incredible danger to orchestrate one of history's greatest humanitarian rescues.

Elmhirst, Sophie. [A Marriage at Sea](#) (Penguin \$28)

Two 1960s-era British dreamers sell everything to sail the world to New Zealand, but after a whale sinks their boat, they endure months adrift in a raft, battling starvation, inner demons and the ultimate test of their relationship in this true-life survival struggle. This is a tale of an adventure gone definitively wrong. A maritime bookend of sorts to Jon Krakauer's *Into the Wild*.

English, Charlie. [The CIA Book Club](#) (Random \$35)

For nearly five decades after the Second World War, the Iron Curtain divided Europe, forming the longest and most heavily guarded border on earth. No physical combat would take place along this frontier: the risk of nuclear annihilation was too high for that. Instead, the war was fought psychologically. It was a battle for hearts, minds, and intellects. Few understood this more clearly than George Minden, head of a covert intelligence operation known as the "CIA book program," which aimed to undermine Soviet censorship and inspire revolt by offering different visions of thought and culture. From its Manhattan headquarters, Minden's "book club" secretly sent ten million banned titles into the East. Volumes were smuggled aboard trucks and yachts, dropped from balloons, hidden aboard trains, and stowed in travelers' luggage. Nowhere were the books welcomed more warmly than in Poland, where they would circulate covertly among circles of like-minded readers,

quietly making the case against Soviet communism. Such was the demand for Minden's texts that dissidents began to reproduce them in the underground. By the late 1980s, illicit literature was so pervasive in Poland that censorship broke down: the Iron Curtain soon followed.

Grant, Stephen Starring. [Mailman](#) (Simon & Schuster \$29.99)

Steve Grant was laid off in March of 2020. He was fifty and had cancer, so he needed health insurance, fast. Which is how he found himself a rural letter carrier in Appalachia, back in his old hometown. An exuberant, hilarious, and profound memoir by a mailman in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia, who found that working for the post office saved his life, taught him who he was, gave him purpose, and educated him deeply about a country he loves but had lost touch with. "A charming book that's guaranteed to make you think differently about the USPS." (*Kirkus*)

Holt, Nathalia. [The Beast in the Clouds](#) (Atria \$29.99)

During the 1920s, dozens of expeditions scoured the Chinese and Tibetan wilderness in search of the panda bear, a beast that many believed did not exist. When the two eldest sons of President Theodore Roosevelt sought the bear in 1928, they had little hope of success. Together with a team of scientists and naturalists, they accomplished what a decade of explorers could not, ultimately introducing the panda to the West. In the process, they documented a vanishing world and set off a new era of conservation biology.

Kean, Sam. [Dinner with King Tut](#) (Little Brown \$32.50)

Whether it's the mighty pyramids of Egypt or the majestic temples of Mexico, we have a good idea of what the past *looked* like. But

what about our other senses: The tang of Roman fish sauce and the springy crust of Egyptian sourdough? The boom of medieval cannons and the clash of Viking swords? The frenzied plays of an Aztec ballgame...and the chilling reality that the losers might also lose their lives? History often neglects the tastes, textures, sounds, and smells that were an intimate part of our ancestors' lives, but a new generation of researchers is resurrecting those hidden details, pioneering an exciting new discipline called experimental archaeology. These are scientists gone rogue: They make human mummies. They investigate the unsolved murders of ancient bog bodies. They carve primitive spears and go hunting, then knap their own obsidian blades to skin the game. They build perilous boats and plunge out onto the open sea—all in the name of experiencing history as it was, with all its dangers, disappointments, and unexpected delights.

Kladstrup, Petie & Evelyne. [The Last Empress of France](#) (Hanover Square \$32.99)

Although a nineteenth-century woman, her almost twenty-first century outlook was key to the creation of modern France. Viewed frequently as a mere "ornament of the throne" of her husband, Emperor Napoléon III, this Spanish-born aristocrat proved to be almost as fiery as her red hair, fighting against institutional limitations, establishing innovations in childcare and women's health, scientific research and education, battling anti-Semitism and "sex prejudice," all the while displaying a political acumen so sharp that her husband gave her sole control of the government during his absences and consulted her daily when he was home. But the triumphs and glamour of her life were coupled with heartbreak and tragedy. This first definitive American biography of Eugénie restores her far-reaching legacy to history.

Orbanes, Philip E. [Monopoly X](#) (HarperCollins \$32)

Monopoly X is the fascinating true story of what is arguably the most unusual and best-kept secret operation of World War II. The masterminds at England's top-secret MI-9, and later America's MIS-X, created a special version of the popular game, hiding tools, maps, and money within game boards—delivered by fictitious charities—to captured Allied servicemen held at gunpoint behind barbed wire in German prison camps. This ingenious and complex plot, dubbed “Monopoly X,” was never discovered by the Nazis and led to many successful Allied breakouts. The creation and consequences of Monopoly X remained a deep secret through the war and for decades after, until now. For the first time, Phillip E. Orbanes tells the full story of the people behind this clandestine program—how it was devised, implemented, and used to great success.

Shapiro, Laurie Gwen. [The Aviator and the Showman](#) (Penguin \$35)

In 1928, a young social worker and hobby pilot named Amelia Earhart arrived in the office of George Putnam, heir to the Putnam & Sons throne and hitmaker, on the hunt for the right woman for a secret flying mission across the Atlantic. A partnership—professional and soon otherwise—was born. *The Aviator and the Showman* unveils the untold story of Amelia's decade-long marriage to George Putnam, offering an intimate exploration of their relationship and the pivotal role it played in her enduring legacy.

Wiencek, Henry. [Stan and Gus](#) (Farrar Straus and Giroux \$30)

Stanford White was a louche man-about-town and a canny cultural entrepreneur—the

creator of landmark buildings that elevated American architecture to new heights. Augustus Saint-Gaudens was the son of an immigrant shoemaker, a moody introvert, and a committed procrastinator whose painstaking work brought emotional depth to American sculpture. They met when Stan was walking down the street and heard Gus whistling Mozart in his studio. They pursued their own careers in Italy and France, then came together again in New York, where they maintained an intimate friendship and partnership that defined the art of the Gilded Age. In *Stan and Gus*, the acclaimed historian Henry Wiencek sets the two men's relationship within the larger story of the American Renaissance, where millionaires' commissions and delusions of grandeur collided with secret upper-class clubs, new aesthetic ideas, and two ambitious young men to yield work of lasting beauty.