

Midmonth BookNotes

Volume 8 Issue 8 July 2025

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Escape Into a Cool Book!

Cozy Corner

Alexander, Ellie. [Laying Down the Latte](#) (St. Martins \$9.99)

A fortuitous invitation from one of her husband Carlos's former colleagues, Valentina, has baker Jules Capshaw and her crew venturing to the coffee capital of the world for a tasting tour and an immersive weekend at her family's organic coffee farm. Except Jules' tranquil weekend quickly turns into a nightmare when one of Valentina's employees is found dead in the pulping machine.

Andrews, Donna. [For Duck's Sake](#) (St. Martin's \$28)

When a skeleton is uncovered in her brother's yard, Meg Langslow helps investigate the decades-old mystery while preparing for Caerphilly's first Mutt March.

Bivald, Katarina. [Just Another Dead Author](#) (Sourcebooks \$17.99)

When mystery author Berit Gardner agrees to attend a writer's conference in the idyllic

French countryside, she dreams of basking in the sun and nurturing budding talent. But her vacation takes a dark turn when the keynote speaker—a notorious literary titan known for his biting critiques—drops dead at the end of her lecture.

Boulton, Ginger. [Sour Crime Donuts](#) (Kensington \$17.95)

With Emily Westhill's popular Deputy Donut Café rolling out seasonal summer treats, everyone in Fallingbrook, Wisconsin wants a taste. But when a limited batch box turns up near a dead body, Emily and her curious tabby are pitted against the worst kind of customer—a cold-blooded murderer!

Byran, Ellen. [Solid Gold Murder](#) (Kensington \$27)

After the discovery of gold turns her struggling motel into a viral tourist hotspot, ex-sitcom writer Dee Stern must navigate eccentric guests, tech millionaires, and a suspicious death in the mines to save her business and clear her name.

Duncan, Emmeline. [Mayhem at a Halloween Wedding](#) (Kensington \$17.95)

As a bridesmaid to her college friend Raven, Bailey Brigg is overwhelmed helping with wedding preparations while also planning for the annual Halloween holiday festival that scares up business for her bookstore. Trying to ease stress between her fellow bridesmaids and enjoy the spirit of the season, Bailey arranges the bachelorette party on the night of the Halloween parade. Everyone agrees to join in the festivities and dress up in costume. But running into several people dressed as the Grim Reaper turns out to be a bad omen; especially when one of the bridesmaids turns up dead.

Nichols, Jo. [The Marigold Cottages Murder Collective](#) (St. Martin's \$28)

When their beloved landlord Golda Bakofsky (Mrs. B to her tenants of The Marigold Cottages) confesses to murder in order to save a new tenant with a criminal past she believes is innocent of the crime, the other tenants including Sophie, Hamilton, Ocean, Lily-Ann; and Nicholas band together and form "The Marigold Cottages Murder Collective" to save their beloved landlady. "From its charmingly realized Santa Barbara setting to its eccentric, engaging cast of characters, everything about this whimsically wonderful mystery is done to perfection." (LJ)

Historical Fiction, Mysteries, Romance and More

Ackerman, Elliot. [Sheepdogs](#) (Knopf \$29)

After being cast aside by their respective countries, former CIA operative Skwerl and Afghan pilot Cheese join a covert network to repossess a jet in Africa, launching them into a

chaotic mission spanning Kampala, Marseille, Kyiv, and beyond, with unexpected allies and escalating personal entanglements. "International intrigue, classic heist tropes, and gonzo humor collide in this bruising page-turner from Ackerman." (PW)

Alexander, Poppy. [The Battle of the Bookshops](#) (HarperCollins \$18.99)

Capelthorne's Books may be a tad run-down these days, but to Jules Capelthorne, the wonky, dusty world of literary treasures is full of precious childhood memories. When her great-aunt Florence gets too frail to run it alone, Jules comes home to make the bookshop's hundredth birthday a celebration to remember only to discover the bookshop is close to bankruptcy. To make matters worse, the owner of the property is the insufferable Roman Montbeau, who intends on proving his point about Capelthorne's being a relic of the past by opening a new bookshop directly opposite—a shiny, plate-glass-windowed emporium of books. A delightfully charming, British-flavored take on *You've Got Mail*.

Anderson, Rebecca. [Whispers of Shadowbrook House](#) (Shadow Mountain \$17.99)

In the crumbling Shadowbrook House, governess Pearl Ellicott and heir Oliver Waverly unravel a haunting mystery while confronting their growing forbidden love in this Victorian-set gothic romance.

Ashley, Jennifer. [A Silence in Belgrave Square](#) (Berkley \$19)

Full-time cook and part-time amateur sleuth, Kat Holloway knows that her beau and confidante Daniel McAdam has a talent for dangerous work as a Scotland Yard agent. However, before he is finally free of his government work, Daniel must risk his life one last time, masquerading as a secretary to an elderly viscount who could be the mastermind behind

the recent plots against the Queen and her government. At the same time, Kat discovers several of her friends and colleagues have been victims of vicious blackmail. They'll do anything to protect their scandalous secrets, even conform to the blackmailer's political agenda. Now if Kat and Daniel wish to have any kind of a future together not to mention save the Crown, they must prove the blackmailer's identity and evade those who will stop at nothing to eliminate them.

Blumberg, Chandra. [Love Is an Open Book](#) (Harlequin \$18.99)

Mia Brady never imagined her romance novels would become bestsellers, much less inspire a hit TV show. However, after signing a deal to write the final book of the series, she's struck by a serious case of writer's block. As Mia's ride-or-die BFF, Gavin Lane been by her side through it all and convinced himself his crush on her is a thing of the past. He's not about to let his feelings ruin their friendship, and never will. But things get complicated when Mia pitches a bold idea to help save her career: testing out tried-and-true love story tropes...together. From workplace romance to fish-out-of-water, Mia and Gavin embark on a series of experiments to spark a little creativity—but they are not prepared for the flame that ignites between them. Does their friendship even stand a chance when pure fantasy suddenly becomes a little too real?

Brynolf, Becky C. [I Found a Body](#) (Crooked Lane \$19.99)

Detective Sergeant Mona Hendricks has a lot on her plate: she's getting divorced, her teen daughter is punishing her for it, and she's shooting for a life-changing promotion. When her daughter's favorite influencer, Kylie May, finds a dead body and livestreams it to the world, Mona is thrown into a very public murder investigation. Nine years later, Mona

has hit rock bottom, and the case remains unsolved. When Kylie, now a sleek TV contrarian, approaches Mona with a high-paying offer to reopen the cold case, Mona has no choice but to accept and hope things will be different this time around.

Byrne, Paula. [Six Weeks by the Sea](#) (Pegasus \$28.95)

While her family's new lodgings are being prepared in Bath, Jane Austen relishes the bracing air and beautiful surroundings of their temporary home by the sea and shares laughter with her sister Cassandra and best friend Martha Lloyd. To her joy, Jane's brother Frank arrives, fresh from naval exploits in the war against Napoleon. His friend Captain Parker seems to be making a play for Jane's affections, but her sharp emotional intelligence tells her that something is not quite right. At the same time, another visitor to the seaside resort of Sidmouth, the lawyer Samuel Rose, is really getting on Jane's nerves, but as she gets to know him, a wholly different feeling begins to emerge. *Kirkus* calls this "The Jane Austen beach book fans have been waiting for."

Chapman, Amanda. [Mrs. Christie at the Mystery Guild Library](#) (Penguin \$29)

Tory Van Dyne, a book conservator at Manhattan's Mystery Guild Library, discovers a woman in the Christie Room who says she's Agatha Christie, there to solve a future murder—so when Tory's cousin Nic gets her involved in Nic's talent agent's suspicious death, she turns to Mrs. Christie for help. "Chapman has a blast with her contemporary New York setting, resettling British mystery tropes among Manhattan's rare books community, theatrical circles, and eccentric Upper East Siders. Uncovering a killer, it turns out, can be just as fun in the Big Apple as it is in St. Mary Mead. Fans of classic detective fiction are in for a treat." (*PW*)

Dade, Olivia. [Zomcomrom](#) (Penguin \$19)

When Edie Brandstrup attempts to save her sweet, seemingly harmless human neighbor from the first major zombie breach in two decades, she's stunned to be saved by him—and his ridiculously large sword—instead. As it turns out, he's actually a super-old, super-surly vampire. But for all her neighbor's newly revealed cynicism and lethality, Gaston "Max" Boucher (yes, *Gaston*) is unexpectedly protective. He wants her to stay in his safety bunker until the breach is resolved. Edie can't risk more innocent people getting killed, though—and Max won't let her save them alone.

Dumas-Heidt, Alie. [The Myth Maker](#) (Crooked Lane \$19.99)

Cassidy Cantwell has devoted her life to becoming a detective, never forgetting the cold case that has influenced her entire career: the unsolved murder of her best friend. Cassidy tries to balance her demanding job with her suffocatingly close-knit family and her increasingly clingy boyfriend, but when a strange new murder case comes across her desk—someone is killing women and staging their bodies in strange, evocative scenes inspired by Greek mythology—she's determined to solve it, especially when it turns out the victim was the wife of her college ex-boyfriend.

Eddings, Mazey. [Well, Actually](#) (St. Martin's \$19)

When Eva Kitt publicly calls out her college ex Rylie Cooper for ghosting her on an episode of her show Sausage Talk, her video goes viral. Now Eva is forced to confront Rylie on a live episode, where Rylie makes her a deal: allow him to take her on a series of dates to make up for his toxic behavior, then debrief them all on his own social media channel. Initially, Eva refuses to play nice, but agrees to the deal to further her own career and continue defaming Rylie's good name. But when these

manufactured dates start to feel real, Eva has to wonder if the boy that broke her heart has become the man that might heal it.

Estes, Christina. [The Story That Wouldn't Die](#) (St. Martin's \$28) SIGNED

Phoenix, Arizona TV reporter Jolene Garcia is fresh off winning her first Emmy and committed to covering stories that matter to her community. But Jolene's managers want stories that grab immediate attention and generate clicks, not ones that take time to develop. When a beloved small business owner dies in a car crash, Jolene isn't convinced it was an accident. He'd been raising questions about who keeps getting lucrative deals at city hall—questions that powerful people don't want answered. The deeper Jolene digs, the more suspicious things she uncovers.

Fama, Daphne. [House of Monstrous Women](#) (Penguin \$29)

In 1986 Philippines, Josephine accepts an invitation to a childhood friend's eerie, labyrinthine house to play a game that promises her heart's desire, only to find herself trapped in a deadly contest where winning may cost her blood.

"In lush prose, Fama paints Ranoco House as labyrinthine and sinister and masterfully incorporates the backdrop of political upheaval and brewing revolution in Manila to add to the tension. The result is a wonderfully fresh take on gothic horror that should win the author a legion of fans." (PW)

Herron, Rachael. [The Seven Miracles of Beatrice Holland](#) (Grand Central \$19.99)

Beatrice Barnard definitely doesn't believe the predictions of the celebrity psychic who claims that she will experience seven miracles and that she will die. However, after discovering her husband is cheating on her. Bea, now

in desperate need of solitude, flees to Skerry Island, off the Pacific Northwest coast. Immediately upon arrival, she finds her life on the line as a rogue woodchopper blade almost kills her. Her survival is almost like a miracle. One miracle down, six left!

Kurtzman, Sharon. [The Lost Baker of Vienna](#) (Penguin \$30)

Zoe Rosenzweig investigates her family's Holocaust history, uncovering the story of her ancestor Chana Rosenzweig, who endured the horrors of war to find herself, her mother, and her younger brother finally free in Vienna. But freedom doesn't look like they'd imagined it would, as they struggle to make a living and stay safe. Despite the danger, Chana sneaks out most nights to return to the hotel kitchen where she works as a dishwasher, using the quiet nighttime hours to bake her late father's recipes. Soon, Chana finds herself caught in a dangerous love triangle, torn between the black-market dealer who has offered marriage and protection, and the apprentice baker who shares her passions. How will Chana balance her love of baking against her family's need for security?

Ladelle, Ebony. [You've Got a Place Here Too](#) (Random \$29)

Set across the campuses of Historically Black Colleges and Universities, this heartwarming and unforgettable collection of love stories follows students and alumni navigating identity, legacy, and unexpected romance—from forbidden crushes and musical ambitions to activist causes and aviation dreams, capturing the transformative power of Black love and community.

London, Julia. [Everything Is Probably Fine](#) (Harper Muse \$18.99)

After making a major mistake at work, Lorna Lott has been mandated to attend a thirty-day

wellness program, and everything is on the line. If she can't get her low-key rage thing under control and figure out how to be more likeable, she won't get a promotion or raise. Cooperating with the program means coming to terms with her past, including how she handled her older sister's substance abuse. Now, with the help of her oddly endearing eight-year-old neighbor and his equally charming father, Lorna throws herself into the process of making amends. But as she begins to accept that there is nothing she could have done to change the course of her sister's life, Lorna faces her most challenging task yet: changing the course of her own.

Lord, Emma. [For the Record](#) (St. Martin's \$18)

Once the most notorious rivals in the music scene, pop princess Mackenzie Waters and punk rockstar Sam Blaze electrified audiences as their bands clashed on stage. But behind the scenes, their simmering tension grew into something more — until suddenly both bands fell apart, and the idea of Mackenzie and Sam did, too. Two years later, Sam has traded the rockstar lifestyle for a quiet life raising the son he didn't know about. Meanwhile, Mackenzie is dealing with a postoperative change in her voice by only singing under a pseudonym. The only way to revive their public careers? A joint comeback album.

Marr, Melissa. [Toni and Addie Go Viral](#) (TOR \$19.99) SIGNED

On a whim—and hoping to pay off the hundreds of thousands of dollars in debt her grifter father left behind—Victorian history professor Toni Darbyshire sells her lesbian detective novel in a massive deal. Suddenly thrust into the overwhelming new world of publishing, plus a television adaptation, Toni's life gets even more complicated when her one-night stand turned pen pal Addie Stewart (and the

namesake for her main character) shows up in person for casting of the show.

Martin, Madeline. [The Secret Book Society](#) (Hanover \$18.99)

London, 1885: Trapped by oppressive marriages and societal expectations, three women – Eleanor Clarke, a devoted mother suffocating under the tyranny of her husband; Rose Wharton, a transplanted American dollar princess struggling to fit the mold of an aristocratic wife; and Lavinia Cavendish, an artistic young woman haunted by a dangerous family secret - receive a mysterious invitation to an afternoon tea at the home of the reclusive Lady Duxbury. Beneath the genteel facade of the gathering lies a secret book club—a sanctuary where they can discover freedom, sisterhood and the courage to rewrite their stories.

Morrey, Beth. [Isabella's Not Dead](#) (Penguin \$29)

Fifty-three, jobless, and with grown children, Gwen travels across England and Europe to discover why friend Isabella disappeared fifteen years ago, which tests her marriage and puts her on a collision course with reluctant acquaintances, an eccentric mother-in-law, and a rabbit hole full of clues.

Natera, Cleyvis. [The Grand Paloma Resort](#) (Random \$30)

As ambitious resort manager Laura nears a career-defining promotion, her troubled sister Elena becomes entangled in a harrowing scandal involving missing children, forcing both women to confront the brutal realities of privilege, exploitation, and sacrifice within a luxury Dominican resort. The book equivalent of *White Lotus*.

O'Leary, Joan. [A Killer Wedding](#) (HarperCollins \$30)

The Riptons are American royalty—wealthy, powerful, and bound by secrets. When they gather at a grand Irish castle for the society wedding of the year, as the ceremony unfolds something far more sinister lurks beneath the glamour. From the ambitious heirs and spurned lovers to the enigmatic staff and mysterious uninvited guest, everyone harbors secrets—and some are deadly.

Former Tonight Show producer O'Leary's debut "reads like the wedding-cruise version of *Death on the Nile*. Not to be missed, even if you hate weddings and wedding mysteries." (*Kirkus*)

Orner, Peter. [The Gossip Columnist's Daughter](#) (Little Brown \$29)

Jed Rosenthal hasn't published a book in fourteen years, the mother of his child left him in a "trial separation" that has stretched on indefinitely, and he struggles to navigate the daily sorrows of their co-parenting arrangement. But the implosion of Jed's family is simply a footnote in the larger history of the Rosenthal family's decline. Just days after the JFK assassination, Karyn "Cookie" Kupcinet was found dead in her Hollywood apartment. The press reported that the 22-year-old was strangled, yet unanswered questions linger to this day. Cookie's parents—Chicago royalty, Irv and Essee Kupcinet—had been close friends with Jed's grandparents, but in the aftermath of her death, their friendship abruptly and inexplicably ended. Decades later, Jed pores over family stories, newspaper archives, old photos, and crime scene notes, believing that if he can divine the truth of Cookie's death—whether it was suicide, murder, or part of a larger conspiracy—it might shed light on a mystery closer to home.

Palmer, Ellie. [Anywhere with You](#) (Penguin \$19)

Charley Beekman is thriving . . . if you overlook that she's financially strapped, stuck in a dull legal career, and the youngest divorcee at the Ruth's Chris Steak House. After being left by a man she was sure was too boring to ever leave her, she's figured out that the key to true happiness is protecting yourself from surprises. So when her free-spirited sister announces she's eloping with an on-again, off-again childhood sweetheart, Charley knows she has to stop the wedding before her sister makes the biggest mistake of her life. Conveniently, Charley's best friend, Ethan, who's as gorgeous as he is chronically unreliable, has an extra seat in his camper van that he is willing to let Charley fill.

Pearce, A.J. [Dear Miss Lake](#) (Scribner \$27.99)
London, July 1944. After nearly five years of war, the readers of *Woman's Friend* magazine are relying on the support of Emmy Lake and her team more than ever. With the city under attack, the magazine staff decamps to the countryside for the summer. Determined to help the women of Britain carry on, Emmy and friends are hard at work finding new ways to inspire resilience. With her army officer husband Charles posted close to home, and best friend Bunty by her side, Emmy happily throws herself into rural life, juggling children, magazine assignments, and plans for a very important wedding. And then a call comes that means she may finally fulfill her long-held dream of becoming a war correspondent. Filled with courage and compassion, a lovable cast of characters, and winning wartime details, *Dear Miss Lake* is an enormously uplifting testament to the power of friendship and hope.

Quinn, Kate. [A Song of War](#) (HarperCollins \$19.99)

Troy: city of gold, gatekeeper of the East, haven of the god-born and the lucky, a city destined to last a thousand years. But the Fates have other plans—the Fates, and a woman named Helen. In the shadow of Troy's gates, all must be reborn in the greatest war of the ancient world: slaves and queens, heroes and cowards, seers and kings . . . and these are their stories. From seven masters of historical fiction—including *New York Times* bestseller Kate Quinn—comes a richly imagined anthology of stories which bring the epic tale of the Trojan War to life.

Richter, Morgan. [The Understudy](#) (Knopf \$28)
After years of rigorous instruction and ensemble work, Kit finally gets her big break when she's hired to play the lead role in a new opera based on the 1960s cult classic film *Barbarella*. Entrusted with playing the beautiful and seductive titular role, Kit is on her way to the top of the highly competitive world of New York City opera. But then she walks into rehearsal and meets her understudy. Stunning, suggestive, and bursting with the unbridled confidence of a novice, Yolanda is physically everything *Barbarella* is meant to be. At first, Kit isn't threatened by the neophyte, until Yolanda reveals that she wants the role—and will do anything to get it. *All About Eve* takes a dangerous turn in this soapy suspense novel set amidst the fascinating opera world.

Robuck, Erika. [The Last Assignment](#) (Sourcebooks \$17.99)

Since her arrest for disobeying orders and going ashore at Iwo Jima almost a decade earlier, combat correspondent Georgette "Dickey" Chapelle has been unmoored. Her military accreditation revoked, her marriage failing, and her savings dwindling, Dickey jumps at the next opportunity: to be the world's witness

to war from the front lines. Never content to report on battles unless her own boots are on the ground, Dickey and her camera journey with American and international soldiers from frozen wastelands to raging seas to lush jungles, revealing one woman's extraordinary courage and tenacity in the face of discrimination and danger. And it's along the way, in Dickey's desire to save the world, she realizes she might also be saving herself.

Rose, Karen. [Knife in the Back](#) (Penguin \$30)
After being framed for stealing cocaine from evidence and serving five years in prison, Officer Naomi Cranston is threatened again by the crooks who framed her; former cop Burke Broussard reluctantly agrees to protect her and her son and prove her innocence.

Schaumburg, Amie. [Murder by the Book](#) (MIRA \$30)
Near a small college campus, a student is found strangled in an abandoned barn on the outskirts of town. She's been posed to look like a painting of Ophelia from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, the scene taunting the police with a message they don't understand. Finding the girl's body leaves Detective Ian Carter shaken and uncertain of where to turn—until a chance meeting with a charmingly awkward literature professor Emma Reilly ends with her accidentally solving a clue left by the killer. When a second murder is discovered, with the victim posed as the Lady of Shalott this time, Emma believes her knowledge of literature can identify the killer. However, when the murderer strikes too close to home and kills a third student, one from Emma's classes, she realizes that the safety of her insular life might be nothing more than an illusion. She must find the strength to confront a killer who is turning the stories she loves into lurid scenes of death.

Shupe, Joanna. [The Gilded Heiress](#) (HarperCollins \$18.99)

After being raised in a children's asylum, Josie Smith ends up on the streets and quickly learns how to take care of herself. Her singing voice draws crowds on every corner, and she'll stop at nothing to become famous and travel the world, loved and adored by all. Maybe then she won't think about the family who gave her away as an infant. Leo Hardy isn't afraid to use his charm and wits to make a fast buck, especially with a mother and five siblings to support. When he stumbles upon Josie singing on the street, Leo notices her striking resemblance to the infamous missing baby's mother, Mrs. Thomas Pendelton. The Hardys lost everything thanks to the Pendeltons, and once Leo sees Josie, he seizes the opportunity to settle the score. All he needs to do is pull off the biggest swindle of his career. A sexy historical romance in which HBO's *The Gilded Age* meets *Anastasia*.

Wilde, Darcie. [The Heir](#) (Kensington \$27)
Arriving as a baby at Kensington Palace, young Victoria has been raised with an incredibly strict regimen to follow, watched at all times by her mother, the controlling, German-born Victoire, and Victoire's prized advisor, the power-hungry Sir John Conroy. Bright 15-year-old Victoria is allowed no freedom at any time—except that which she steals or wheedles for, always in the company of Conroy's resentful daughter, Jane. But one fateful afternoon, Victoria slips away from her mother to ride out on her beloved gelding, Prince, with a reluctant Jane in tow. But what would normally be an uneventful trot around very familiar terrain presents the mutinous princess with a most bewildering sight—a dead man, and on the grounds of the palace, no less. Determined to get to the bottom of the inscrutable puzzle, Victoria joins forces

with Jane Conroy and Victoria's first "case" is underway.

Willingham, Stacy. [Forget Me Not](#) (St. Martin's \$29) SIGNED

Returning to coastal South Carolina for the summer, journalist Claire Campbell takes a job at a vineyard near where her sister vanished decades earlier—and when she uncovers a disturbing old diary, she begins to suspect the past holds deadly secrets.

Teen

Andrews, Claire. [A Beautiful and Terrible Murder](#) (Little Brown \$19.99)

Perfect for fans of *Stalking Jack the Ripper*, this historical murder mystery follows the cunning Irene Adler as she teams up with the mysterious Sherlock Holmes to discover who is murdering Oxford's elite students in the All Souls class.

D'amato, Jamie. [The Good Vampire's Guide to Blood & Boyfriends](#) (St. Martin's \$21)

Nineteen-year-old Brennan, a college freshman who becomes a vampire after a suicide attempt, navigates his new life in an underground vampire society, keeps his secret from Cole, the cute campus librarian, and deals with rising dangers while balancing his humanity and growing feelings for Cole.

Lesperance, Nicole. [A Spell to Wake the Dead](#) (Penguin \$19.99)

Two teen girls must uncover the dark, occult secrets lurking in their Cape Cod town to solve a series of murders—and save themselves from the same fate—in this twisty, witchy thriller.

Logan, Karlie. [Dream by the Shadows](#) (Little Brown \$22.99)

Beauty and the Beast meets *Labyrinth* in this YA romantic fantasy about a deadly dream world and the shadow-cursed girl who must dare its depths to save her family, all while she falls in love with a dark prince.

Woods, E.V. [Girls of Dark Divine](#) (Random \$19.99)

Phantom of the Opera meets *Black Swan* in this breathtakingly gorgeous gothic fantasy about love and control that will never let you go. A group of hauntingly beautiful girls have been bound together by a cruel curse—and one of them will go to any lengths to save them from their violent dance.

Nonfiction

Al-rashid, Moudhy. [Between Two Rivers](#) (WW Norton \$29.99)

Thousands of years ago, in a part of the world we now call ancient Mesopotamia, people began writing things down for the very first time. What they left behind, in a vast region between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, preserves leaps in human ingenuity, like the earliest depiction of a wheel and the first approximation of pi. But they also capture breathtakingly intimate, raw, and relatable moments, like a dog's paw prints as it accidentally stepped into fresh clay, or the imprint of a child's teeth. With breathtaking intimacy and grace, Al-Rashid brings their lives—with all their anxieties, aspirations, and intimacies—vividly close to our own

Boin, Douglas. [Clodia of Rome](#) (WW Norton \$29.99)

One of Rome's most powerful women, Clo-

dia has been maligned over two thousand years as a promiscuous, husband-murdering harlot—thanks to her starring role in one of Cicero’s most famous speeches in the Forum. But Cicero was lying, in defense of his own property and interests. Like so many women libeled or erased from history, Clodia had a life that was much more interesting, complex, and nuanced than the corrupted version passed down through generations. Drawing on neglected sources and deep, empathetic study of Roman lives, classicist Douglas Boin reconstructs Clodia’s eventful passage through her politically divided and tumultuous times.

Dasal, Jennifer. [The Club](#) (Bloomsbury \$29.99) In *Belle Époque* Paris, the Eiffel Tower was newly built, France was experiencing remarkable political stability, and American women were painting the town and gathering at a female-only Residence known as The American Girls’ Club in Paris. Opened in 1893, The Club was the center of expatriate living and of dedication to a calling in the fine arts, and singularly harbored a generation of independent, talented, and driven American women. Now in *The Club*, curator, art historian, and podcast host Jennifer Dasal presents the never-before-told story of the Club, the philanthropists who created it, and the artists it housed.

Giesecke, Annette. [Classical Mythology of the Constellations](#) (Workman \$30)

As long as humans have lived on Earth, they have gazed up at the starry sky with fascination and longing. For the ancient Greeks and Romans, the Sun, Moon, and Earth were gods. The stars beyond our Solar System, however, represented heroes, animals, and monsters that the gods placed in the sky after their death. These include the great hunter Orion and the scorpion who killed him with its sting, the beautiful maiden Callisto who was turned into a bear (Ursa Major) by the goddess Hera,

Perseus, the slayer of Medusa, and many more. In this beautifully designed work, stunningly illustrated by Jim Tierney, Giesecke tells the origin stories of the 48 constellations.

Lubin, David M. [Ready for My Close-up](#) (Grand Central \$30)

Great films are born of great collaborations, and *Sunset Boulevard* represents one of the most extraordinary confluences of cinematic talent in film history—but its production was surprisingly fraught, filled with unexpected twists. Why was William Holden, who had never caught fire as a leading man, hired to play Joe Gillis after the fastest-rising star in the business dropped out at the last minute? After Mae West and Mary Pickford turned down the now iconic role of Norma Desmond, how did Billy Wilder convince Gloria Swanson, who had long been absent from Hollywood at this point, to leave her low-paying job as a TV talk show host to join the cast? From the writers’ room during Billy Wilder and Charles Brackett’s final collaboration to the moment when the film won three Academy Awards, scholar and former Rolling Stone staffer David M. Lubin takes readers on a fascinating journey through film history that proves, once and for all, why *Sunset Boulevard* is one of the most iconic films in cinematic history.

O’callaghan, Jennifer. [Rear Window](#) (Kensington \$29)

a offered voyeuristic glimpses into the lives of others, the acclaimed Master of Suspense, Alfred Hitchcock, exposed the dangers and delights of looking—and knowing—too much in his 1954 masterpiece *Rear Window*. This eye-opening book goes straight to the source of *Rear Window*’s genius by mining the original papers of Hitchcock, Jimmy Stewart, and Thelma Ritter, revealing little-known facts behind the scenes: Why taking the role of Lisa Fremont was one of the toughest decisions

Grace Kelly ever made; How Hitchcock intertwined suspense and romance with inspiration from Ingrid Bergman; and how Hitchcock crafted the film's unforgettable villain, Lars Thorwald, by modeling him on a producer he loathed—the infamous David O. Selznick.

Rebello, Stephen. [Criss-Cross](#) (Running Press \$29)

Coming off a 5-year-string of flops, Alfred Hitchcock gambled big on adapting Patricia Highsmith's debut novel, which critics called "preposterous" and "unconvincing," in addition to "unsavory," and "sick" (1950s code words for "gay" and "perverted"). Each step of the production was fraught with battles, but Hitchcock masterfully stayed two steps ahead of his opponents as he fought to bring his vision to life. *Strangers on a Train* became not only a creative high-water mark and box-office smash for Hitchcock, but also kicked off his unmatched decade of classics including *Dial M for Murder*, *Rear Window*, *Vertigo*, *North by Northwest*, and *Psycho*. Richly documented, meticulously researched, and stylishly written, *Criss-Cross* is more than an authoritative film book. It is a portrait of an especially politically paranoid, misogynistic, and homophobic era in America, a time of dramatic transition in the entertainment industry, and a day of reckoning for Alfred Hitchcock and a few other talents with whom he made a dark, resonant, and prescient work of art.

Wright, Jennifer. [Glitz, Glam, and a Damn Good Time](#) (Grand Central \$30)

Marion Graves Anthon Fish, known by the nicknames "Mamie" and "The Fun-Maker," threw the most epic parties in American history. This Gilded Age icon brought it all: lavish decor; A-list invitees; booze; pranks; and large animal guest stars. If you were a member of New York high society in the Peak Age of

Innocence Era, you simply had to be on Mamie Fish's guest list. Mamie Fish understood that people didn't just need the formality of prior generations — they needed wit and whimsy. Make no mistake, however: Mamie Fish's story is about so much more than partying. In *Glitz, Glam, and a Damn Good Time*, readers will learn all about how Fish and her friends shaped the line of history, exerting their influence on business, politics, family relationships, and social change through elaborate social gatherings. In a time when women couldn't even own property, let alone run for office, if women wanted any of the things men got outside the home—glory, money, attention, social networking, leadership roles—they had to do it by throwing a decadent soiree or chairing a cotillion.