

Midmonth BookNotes

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Give Thanks for Great Books!

Cozy Corner

Bennett, S.J. [The Queen Who Came In From the Cold](#) (Crooked Lane \$29.99)

It is 1961, and the Queen is spending a night on board the royal train with her entourage and her sister, Princess Margaret. But before they reach their destination, an unreliable witness claims to have seen a brutal murder from one of the carriages. The Queen and her assistant private secretary, Joan McGraw, get to work on their second joint investigation. No one else saw the crime. If there *is* a victim, could he be the missing photographer friend of Margaret's new husband, Tony Armstrong Jones?

Connally, Celeste. [Revenge, Served Royal](#) (St. Martin's \$29)

Autumn is in the air as Lady Petra Forsyth and some of the most illustrious members of the ton descend upon Windsor Castle for a week of royal celebrations, with the highlight being Queen Charlotte's inaugural patisserie contest for the best bakers employed by England's

finest houses. Not only is Lady Petra's own cook one of the contestants, but Her Majesty has requested that Petra herself serve as one of the judges. Petra's happiness at tasting delicious cakes and biscuits only increases at finding her beloved Aunt Ophelia in attendance at Windsor, as well as Sir Rufus Pomeroy. As England's most famous former royal chef-turned-cookbook author, Sir Rufus is slated to present his best recipes to the Queen during the festivities, with Petra being granted an early viewing in the royal library. Yet upon arrival, Petra instead encounters a frantic housemaid pointing to a body of one of Her Majesty's guests-and to the valet still tugging at the silk ribbon used to strangle the victim. What's more, the valet turns out to be Oliver Beecham, the ne'er-do-well brother of Petra's own lady's maid, Annie. *Bridgerton* meets *The Great British Baking Show* meets *Murder She Wrote* in the latest in this fabulously fun historical mystery series by Connally.

Kelly, Vanessa. [Murder at Donwell Abbey](#) (Kensington \$27)

After Emma Knightley's father announces

that he and Miss Hetty Bates have decided to marry, Emma and her husband George host an extravagant betrothal ball for the couple at Donwell Abbey, the grand Knightley estate where Emma and George will soon permanently reside. Nearly every villager in Highbury revels in the dazzling affair--except Emma's hardworking lady's maid, Prudence Parr. To Emma's horror, Prudence is found dead, sprawled across the stones of the library terrace. The woman's tragic fall is quickly ruled a terrible accident and whispers circulate around personal troubles leading up to her untimely demise. But Emma's instincts tell her that something far more sinister is at play. Now, Highbury's matchmaker-turned-sleuth vows to outwit a cunning criminal before an innocent man loses his freedom.

Manansala, Mia P. [Death and Dinuguan](#) (Penguin \$19)

Things are looking up for the Brew-ha Cafe, and Lila Macapagal can't think of anything that could break the spell, especially with Valentine's Day coming up--she can't wait to celebrate with her boyfriend, Jae Park. Adding to the lovey-dovey atmosphere is Hana Lee, Shady Palms's newest resident. She's also Jae's beloved cousin and chocolatier at Choco Noir, the latest addition to the town's culinary offerings. Unfortunately, beneath the sweet surface of Shady Palms runs a bitter undercurrent, as a series of attacks against women-owned businesses in the area escalates from petty theft to assault and murder when Hana is found knocked unconscious inside Choco Noir, and the chocolate shop owner is put out of business--for good. With Hana left in a coma, a murderer hiding amongst them, and the safety of the women entrepreneurs of Shady Palms at risk, the Park brothers team up with the Brew-ha crew to put a stop to the villain before they strike again.

Holiday Titles

Blakely, Lauren. [My Favorite Holidate](#) (Atria \$19)

Much to Fable's surprise, her hot billionaire boss, Wilder Blaine, is more than willing to take on the challenge of playing her holiday boyfriend. The sexy single dad desperately needs a plus one for a Christmas Eve wedding, where he's the best man and Fable, who is the maid of honor, is determined to make her ex jealous. Their partnership includes participating in the annual week-long Christmas competition leading up to the snowy destination wedding. However, what starts as late nights crafting the best popcorn balls for the contest soon turns into a passionate night together, where the sparks between them are impossible to ignore. But when the holidays end, can their winter wonderland romance turn into something real back at the office?

Byron, Ellen. [Crescent City Christmas Chaos](#) (Severn House \$29.99) SIGNED

Ricki James-Diaz gets the best present ever when her parents arrive in New Orleans for the holidays. Not only is it a chance to catch up, it's also an opportunity to jog her mom Josepha's memory about Ricki's adoption. The details have always been shrouded in mystery. And Ricki understands why when she learns her mother was blackmailed for years, simply for not wanting to lose her precious daughter. But digging into the past soon lands the James-Diaz clan in water hotter than a big pot of gumbo! When the woman who extorted Ricki's mom is found dead at her home, Josepha becomes the primary suspect. Now Ricki has another murder to solve, and tracking down a killer in Crescent City is going to take a holiday miracle.

Borison, B.K. [Good Spirits](#) (HarperCollins \$18.99)

Ghost of Christmas Past Nolan Callahan intends to spend this holiday haunting like every other--get in, get out, return to his otherwise aimless existence as a ghost awaiting the afterlife. But when he's faced with Harriet York, the sweetest assignment he's ever had, he suddenly finds himself wishing for a future. Harriet York has no idea why she's being haunted. She's a good person--or, at least, she tries to be. A people pleaser to her core, she always does what's expected of her. But as she and Nolan begin to examine her past, they discover there are threads that bind them together--and realize there might be more to moving on than expected. With the deadline of Christmas Eve fast approaching, will they find the key to their futures in each other's pasts? *The Ghost and Mrs. Muir* meets *A Christmas Carol* in this charming holiday romance.

Colgan, Jenny. [The Secret Christmas Library](#) (HarperCollins \$18.99)

Mirren Sutherland stumbled into a career as an antiquarian book hunter after finding a priceless antique book in her great aunt's attic. Now, as Christmas approaches, she's been hired by Jamie McKinnon, the surprisingly young and handsome laird of a Highland clan whose ancestral holdings include a vast crumbling castle. Family lore suggests that the McKinnon family's collection includes a rare book so valuable that it could save the entire estate--if they only knew where it was. Jamie needs Mirren to help him track down this treasure, which he believes is hidden in his own home. But on the train to the Highlands, Mirren runs into rival book hunter Theo Palliser, and instantly knows that it's not a chance meeting. She's all too familiar with Theo's good looks and smooth talk, and his uncanny

ability to appear whenever there's a treasure that needs locating.

McKay, Julia. [Christmas at the Ranch](#) (Penguin \$19)

With the holidays around the corner and her father recently imprisoned for financial fraud, disgraced journalist Emory Oakes doesn't know where to turn. She's only certain of one thing--she needs to get away. Fate takes the wheel, leaving her stranded in snowy Evergreen, the picturesque town where she spent her happiest Christmas as a teen--and chronicled every moment in her journal as she fell in love with handsome local, Tate Wilder, at his family's idyllic horse ranch--until it all went wrong. Emory isn't ready to face Tate, but kismet and Christmas magic have other ideas.

Meltzer, Jean. [The Eight Heartbreaks of Hanukkah](#) (MIRA \$18.99)

Evelyn Schwartz has the perfect Hanukkah planned: eight jam-packed days producing the live-action televised musical of *A Christmas Carol*. Who needs family when you've got long hours, impossible deadlines, and your dream job? That is, until an accident on set lands her in the medical bay with one of her chronic migraines, and she's shocked to find her ex-husband, David Adler, filling in for the usual studio doctor. It's been two years since David walked away from Evelyn and their life in Manhattan, and his ex-wife is still the same workaholic who puts her career before everything else--especially her health. But when Evelyn begins hallucinating 'ghosts' tied to her past heartbreaks, and every single one leads to David, he finds himself spending much more time with her than he anticipated.

Palmer, Iva-Marie. [Christmas People](#) (St. Martin's \$18)

Jill Jacobs hasn't been a Christmas person ever since her hometown love broke her heart on

Christmas Day three years ago. After that, Jill moved to L.A. to pursue her dream of becoming a screenwriter. She hasn't been home in years to avoid her ex, but this winter she finds herself back in drab, suburban Illinois for the holidays. After one very hazy night, Jill wakes up to a hometown that's filled with jolly neighbors, covered in pristine white snow, and seasoned with the smell of peppermint. She realizes that this is more than just a bad hang-over... she's stuck in a Heartfelt movie. One set in her town, starring real people from her life, including her family, her high school crush (uber perfect, owns a bakery, and definitely a Christmas Person), and of course, her ex -handsome as ever and now exclusively clad in plaid flannel. The only way out of this bizarro world is to complete the plot of the movie, including a holiday bake off and a cookie-sweet love story. YA author Palmer makes her adult romance debut with a wonderfully witty story that manages to both gleefully skewer the whole world of Hallmark holiday movies while at the same time embracing them with love.

Schaler, Karen. [A Ruff Royal Christmas](#) (Hawktale \$29.99)

Princess Ava's perfectly planned Christmas Eve charity gala erupts into chaos when she loses Stormy, the Queen's mischievous new border collie. With Christmas fast approaching, Ava must team up with Justin, a laid-back American dog trainer who's used to wrangling strays, not royal runaway. Sparks fly as Justin's rule-breaking free spirit clashes with Ava's determination to follow royal protocol. But when their search for Stormy takes them through glittering Christmas markets, festive holiday activities, and snowy winter wonderlands, an undeniable chemistry builds between them. The more time they spend together, the harder it is to fight their growing attraction. When duty and desire collide, Ava faces a choice

that could change everything. "A festive story that would feel right at home among Netflix or Hallmark's holiday offerings, and the addition of a chaotic canine enhances the fun." *PW*

Snowe, Jaqueline. [Date Night in December](#) (Grand Central \$17.99) SIGNED

With Christmas rapidly approaching, Laney Reynolds heads for Cherrywood Creek, the small town where she grew up, to heal her broken heart. It feels good to leave the bustling city, where her husband Connor is too busy climbing the corporate ladder to notice the growing distance between them. But Laney's got his attention now . . . Connor received his wake-up call loud and clear when Laney left, and there's no way he's giving up on his marriage. If that means dropping everything and trading high-rises for gingerbread houses to sweep his wife off her feet in her hometown, then so be it. This time, he's listening; but it'll take more than hot chocolate dates and even hotter nights to win Laney back. Can he prove that being a CEO is nowhere near as important as being her husband?

Stone, Emily. [Yours for the Season](#) (Random \$19)

Melanie hasn't had a good year. Her work life isn't what she dreamed it would be, her best friend has moved to the other side of the world, and Finn, the man she was sure was the love of her life, dumped her. In front of everyone. At his sister's engagement party. So when Finn shows up at Mel's doorstep two weeks before Christmas, asking if she'll help him, her first instinct is to slam the door in his face--or punch him. But he has a proposal for her: Spend the week of Christmas with him and his family in a vacation cottage in the Scottish Highlands. His mother is obsessed with the idea of a perfect Christmas--and to make this dream come true Finn told his

mother that he and Mel are dating again. All Mel has to do is come with him and pretend they're back together. Mel may hate Finn, but she loves his mom. So she agrees--on one condition. At the end of the week, Finn will allow Mel to publicly dump him so that she can get her dignity back and he can experience the same humiliation she felt.

Sullivan, Sophie. [You Make It Feel Like Christmas](#) (St. Martin's \$19)

Maisie Smart doesn't look back. Not on the choice she made to be a photographer, and not on the one-night stand she had six months ago. But sleeping with a professional hockey player who bolted the morning after is a whole new level of embarrassing. Now she's about to spend the week at Tickle Tree Farms with her family this Christmas--and then the universe throws a Grinch in her festive plans. Nick King, her one-night stand, is there for the holidays because his family owns Tickle Tree Farms.

Upton, Nicola. [The Christmas Clue](#) (Faber \$24)
Christmas Eve, 1943. Anthony and Elva Pratt arrive in a snowy English village to run a murder mystery game - and instead discover a real murder.

The Pratts had planned for festive cheer, despite the wartime shortages: with Elva's map of the hotel and Anthony's prop weapons to use as clues, the guests in their parlour game would move through the rooms to figure out whodunnit. But when Anthony discovers the cook's sister Miss Silver beaten to death, they instead find themselves investigating a shockingly real crime. Upton based her holiday mystery on the real-life British couple who invented Cluedo (or, as we know the game in America: Clue).

Historical Fiction, Mysteries, Romance and More

Armstrong, Jess. [The Devil in Oxford](#) (St. Martin's \$28) SIGNED

If someone were to ask American heiress Ruby Vaughn how exactly the occult came to play such a large role in her life, she would immediately point to her octogenarian housemate and employer, Mr. Owen. Together, the pair run a rare book shop in Exeter. Mr. Owen's penchant for arcane, unusual--and occasionally illegal--books has been known to get Ruby into her fair share of trouble. And after the last year, she is looking forward to spending a quiet holiday in picturesque Oxford while Mr. Owen attends the annual meeting of his antiquarian society. Secretly, Ruby is also looking for a holiday from her confounding feelings for Ruan Kivell, the intriguing folk healer Pellar that she met in Cornwall. When Mr. Owen secures two tickets to an upcoming exhibition of artifacts amassed by disgraced scholar Julius Harker, Ruby reluctantly agrees to attend. The evening turns out to be more eventful than either of them bargained when a dead body is discovered among the collection of artifacts.

Brenner, Jamie. [The Weekend Crashers](#) (Park Row \$18.99)

Maggie Hodges and her daughter Piper are looking forward to a restful knitting retreat in the picturesque village of New Hope, Pennsylvania. But instead, they are surprised to find themselves sharing their charming riverside inn with a rowdy bushcraft bachelor party. Undaunted by the clash of interests and personalities, Maggie suggests a lighthearted competition--a battle of crafts--that sparks a rivalry between the two groups, and perhaps

something more. But as the weekend unfolds, old mistakes and buried resentments begin to surface, threatening to destroy Maggie and Piper's cherished connection. In knitting, one can easily fix mistakes by picking apart each stitch and starting anew. But life's tangles aren't so easily mended. With tensions rising and the retreat coming to a close, Maggie must act quickly before she loses everything she holds dear.

Butler, Lyn Liao. [The Deadly Book Club](#) (Crooked Lane \$19.99)

Five of the most prominent book influencers in the US make up an exclusive virtual book club that's the envy of the online book world. Once a month, they get on a video call to sip cocktails, chat about social media campaigns and book events, and discuss their monthly book club pick. Until one meeting, when all of their screens freeze, and they listen to gut wrenching screams as one of them is brutally attacked. It feels like an eternity before the video call drops--and thus begins the frantic texts and phone calls as they try to figure out who was murdered and why.

Carleton, Brisa. [Last Call at the Savoy](#) (Grand Central \$29)

When her sister Rosie is put on bedrest, Cinnamon Scott flies to her sister's side, where she's temporarily living at The Savoy. Immediately swept away by the beauty and history of the legendary hotel and its famed American Bar, Cinnamon finds ample opportunity to distract herself. When the late shift bartender tells her the story of Ada Coleman, the woman who crafted the cocktail recipes The Savoy popularized in its famous handbook a century ago, Cinnamon is inspired by the bartender's vivid stories of Ada's fearlessness and can't understand why Ada's name is nowhere to be found. After meeting a handsome historian researching the hotel and realizing that Ada is

likely to be once again overlooked, Cinnamon must decide if she can overcome her demons and stand up for Ada's story. And, along the way, she might just save her own story too

Dade, Olivia. [Second Chance Romance](#) (HarperCollins \$18.99)

There was a time, right after high school, where it seemed like Karl and Molly might finally cross the line from friends to lovers... but instead, a foolish misunderstanding meant they never spoke again. Molly went to LA and got married. Karl stayed in Harlot's Bay and bought a bakery. The only connection the pair has shared over the years is painfully one-sided: Now divorced, Molly narrates monster romance audiobooks, and Karl is an ever-diligent listener, clinging to his only piece of the one that got away. Still, Molly hasn't totally left Harlot's Bay behind. When she hears that Karl's obituary has run in the local paper, unexpected grief prompts her to hop on the next flight to Maryland, where she finds Karl very much alive, the victim of nothing but an accidental obituary. As the pair reunite, they finally hash out their missed connection. True, Molly isn't quite ready to trust again, but Karl is determined to prove himself worthy of her faith and devotion.

Grant, Tanya. [Made You Look](#) (Penguin \$19)

Sydney Kent is the ultimate It Girl. You want her effortless style, her charisma, her hair. You want to be her; you want to be with her. But the trouble with a star is that everyone else looks dull in comparison. Despite Caitlyn's social media cunning, it's impossible for her to step out from Sydney's shadow. Even Lucy, Sydney's best friend since before her fame, can't escape her role as full-time photographer to the influencer. When the women are invited to post content for a secluded new retreat in the Catskills, alongside Sydney's boyfriend Jeff, stylist Nash, and manager Brent,

the weekend feels like it will be a fresh start. But an unexpected snowstorm traps the group together with no cell service, no Wi-Fi, and no way out. Then a killer strikes, and the dream trip becomes a nightmare.

Green, Amy K. [Haven't Killed in Years](#) (Penguin \$30)

Marin Haggerty, the daughter of a notorious serial killer, was only a child when they arrested her father. Ripped from her home and given a new identity, Marin disappeared. Twenty years later, Gwen Tanner keeps everyone at a distance, preferring to satirize the world around her than participate in it. It's for her safety--and theirs. But when someone starts sending body parts to her front door, the message is clear: I Know Who You Are. To preserve her secrets, Gwen must hunt down the killer, a journey which immerses her in the twisted world of true crime fandom and makes her confront her past once and for all.

Griffin, Laura. [Innocence Road](#) (Penguin \$30)
Leanne Everhart knows women have something to fear in her artsy hometown, especially so if they're not rich, white locals. Returning to town after her father's death, she sees the ugliest sides of an area that draws people for its severe, untamed natural landscape. While her department faces mounting backlash over a recent wrongful conviction in the long-ago murder case of a popular local teenager--which is now unsolved--Leanne is called to a fresh crime scene at the edge of the desert. A nameless woman was found murdered, with no clues as to her identity. As Leanne digs into the crime scene evidence, she grows convinced this latest murder case is linked with the local teenager's murder.

Laing, Olivia. [The Silver Book](#) (Farrar, Straus and Giroux \$27)

It is September 1974. Two men meet in Ven-

ice. One is Nicholas, a young English artist, in panicked flight from London. The other is Danilo Donati, the magician of Italian cinema, the designer responsible for realizing the spectacular visions of Fellini and Pasolini. Donati is in Venice to produce sketches for Fellini's *Casanova*. A young apprentice is just what he needs. He sweeps Nicholas to Rome and introduces him to the looking-glass world of Cinecittà, the studio where *Casanova's* Venice will be ingeniously assembled. In the spring, the lovers move together to the set of *Saláo*, Pasolini's horrifying fable of fascism. But Nicholas has a secret, and in this world of constant illusion, his real nature passes unseen. Amid the rising tensions of Italy's Years of Lead, he acts as an accelerant, setting in motion a tragedy he doesn't intend.

Lee, Alissa. [With Friends Like These](#) (Atria \$27)
Though they started out as roommates at Harvard, Sara, Bee, Dina, Allie, Wesley, and Claudine soon became family. They had their whole bright lives ahead of them--until their senior year, when a shocking tragedy changed everything. Twenty years later, five of the roommates still indulge in a secret tradition they've kept alive since their campus days: the Circus, a harmless elimination-style 'killing' game played across the private rooms and hidden alleys of New York City. The game is a nod to their younger selves and a tribute to the sixth roommate they lost too young. But this year, Sara wants out of the game--until she discovers there is a small fortune awaiting the winner of this final round. As the Circus unfolds, Sara begins to suspect that the others aren't playing by the rules, and as the danger turns real and the old friends start pointing fingers, she discovers that even those closest to her harbor secrets of their own...secrets that could kill.

Mallory, Susan. [Otherwise Engaged](#) (MIRA \$30)

When Shannon gets engaged, her beloved mom, Cindy, is the first person she wants to tell—and the last. Cindy's engaged, too, and has already hinted at a double wedding. The image of a synchronized bouquet toss with her mom fills Shannon with horror. She'll keep her engagement a secret until Cindy's I-dos are done. Victoria has never been proper enough for her mother, Ava, so she stopped trying. She lives on her own terms and amuses herself by pushing Ava's buttons. Ava loves but doesn't understand her stuntwoman daughter. When a movie-set mishap brings Victoria home, Ava longs to finally connect. Chance brings the four women together at a wedding venue, where a shocking secret comes tumbling out. Twenty-four years ago, desperate teenager Cindy chose wealthy Ava to adopt her baby—then changed her mind at the very last second. The loss rocked Ava's world, leaving her unable to open her heart to the daughter she did adopt, Victoria. As Shannon and Victoria deal with the fallout from the decisions their mothers made, they wrestle with whether who they are is different than who they might have become.

Matthews, Mimi. [The Marriage Method](#) (Penguin \$19)

Well removed from London's more curious eyes, the Benevolent Academy for the Betterment of Young Ladies strives toward one clandestine goal: to distract, disrupt, and discredit men in power who would seek to harm the advancement of women-by appropriate means, of course. When intrepid newspaper editor Miles Quincy starts to question the school's intentions, the Academy appoints Penelope "Nell" Trewlove, one of their brightest graduates, to put this nuisance to rest. An easy enough mission, she supposes. Or it

would be, if Miles wasn't so fascinating-too fascinating to resist-and if Nell's visit to London didn't perfectly coincide with the murder of one of Miles's reporters. When the inexorable claws of fate trap Nell and Miles in a compromising situation, they agree to an arrangement that will save their reputations while enabling them to investigate the story that led to a man's death, as well as the surprising chemistry between them

McAlister, Jodi. [An Academic Affair](#) (Atria \$19)
Sadie Shaw and Jonah Fisher have been academic rivals since they first crossed paths as undergraduates in the literature department thirteen years ago. Now that a highly coveted teaching opportunity has come up, their rivalry hits epic proportions. Jonah needs the job to move closer to his recently divorced sister and her children, while Sadie needs the financial security and freedom of a full-time teaching position. When Sadie notices that the job offers partner hire, however, she hatches a plot to get them both the job. All they must do is get legally married. It's a simple win-win solution but when sparks begin to fly, it becomes clear that despite their education, these two may not have thought this whole thing through.

Murphy, Emily Bain. [The Ivory City](#) (Union Square \$18.99)

Cousins Grace and Lillie have been best friends since birth, despite Grace's vastly inferior social status ever since her mother married for love instead of wealth. When Lillie invites Grace to the biggest event of the century--the legendary World's Fair, also known as "The Ivory City"--Grace hopes her fortunes might be about to change. But when a member of their party is brutally killed at the fair, and suspicion falls on Lillie's brother Oliver, Grace must prove Oliver's innocence before her beloved cousins' family is ruined forever.

Along the way, she'll discover that the city's wealthy elite—including Oliver's handsome but irritable friend Theodore--aren't quite who they appear to be. And amidst the glitz, glamor, and magic of the Ivory City lurks a danger that just may claim her life.

Oliver, Megan. [Secret Nights and Nortern Lights](#) (Penguin \$19)

Mona Miller lives her life by platitudes: she's just fine, thanks; all good; not a problem! Everything is right as rain-even if it's all a lie. But, after being passed over for a promotion at the travel magazine she works for, Mona jumps at an international assignment to Iceland, even though she's woefully unprepared. She's determined to prove her worth, though, and her can-do attitude will scale any glacier. But the freelance photographer paired with her is none other than Benjamin Carter. Ben, her childhood best friend who understood her even when her family didn't. Ben, her first love-first everything. And Ben, the boy who ghosted her fourteen years ago and left her brokenhearted.

Riley, Lia. [The E.M.M.A. Effect](#) (HarperCollins \$18.99)

Harriet Smythe's AI was supposed to create sports legends--not encourage her crush on her best friend's totally off-limits, hot younger brother. But when funding runs dry, she has no choice but to enlist Gale Knight as her test subject. The same Gale she's been secretly crushing on for years. The player who follows her every instruction with a knowing smirk that threatens to short-circuit her carefully maintained system. Everything changes when The E.M.M.A. determines that finding Gale's perfect match is essential to his peak performance. Even worse? According to its data, that match is Harriet. A fun and flirty take on Jane Austen's *Emma*.

Roux. Madeleine. [These Violet Delights](#) (Random \$18)

Violet Arden is a burgeoning painter who insists on a life of passion, but scandal is heaped on humiliation at her artistic debut in London. Violet flees the London limelight to her cousin Emilia Graddock's country estate, where she plans to leave all thoughts of love in the past where it belongs. . . until she comes face-to-face with the man who scorned her paintings in front of her friends and family: Alasdair Kerr.

Sutanto, Jesse Q. [Next Time Will Be Our Turn](#) (Penguin \$19)

Izzy Chen is dreading her family's annual Chinese New Year celebration, where they all come together at a Michelin-starred restaurant to flaunt their status and successes in hopes to one up each other. So when her seventy-three-year-old glamorous and formidable grandmother walks in with a stunning woman on her arm and kisses her in front of everyone, it shakes Izzy to her core. She'd always considered herself the black sheep of the family for harboring similar feelings to the ones her Nainai just displayed. Seeing herself in her teenage granddaughter's struggles with identity and acceptance, Magnolia Chen tells Izzy her own story, of how as a teen she was sent by her Indo-Chinese parents from Jakarta to Los Angeles for her education and fell in love with someone completely forbidden to her by both culture and gender norms.

Nonfiction

Amore, Anthony M. [The Rembrandt Heist](#) (Pegasus \$29.95)

On April 14, 1975, Myles Connor, already a known art thief, entered the Boston Museum of Fine Arts in disguise along with a cohort. The pair went directly to the Dutch Gallery and proceeded to remove *Portrait of Elsbeth van*

Rijn from its place on the wall. After a brief scuffle with the guards--with Myles deterring his partner from shooting a bystander--the pair was gone, leaving behind no traceable evidence amidst the mayhem. Filled with unforgettable personalities and non-stop action and intrigue, *The Rembrandt Heist* will lay out the anatomy of this notorious art theft while describing not just the criminal genius that is Myles Connor, but also the complexity of personal relationships between lifelong friends. All along, the reader will learn about a breathtaking painting by the world's most famous artist and the incredible true story about how *Portrait of Elsbeth van Rijn* ended up on the wall at the MFA in the first place.

Bardi, Jason Socrates. [The Great Math War](#) (Basic \$32)

As the nineteenth century ended, mathematicians were celebrating a century of triumphs that--surprisingly--made clear how little they knew: What is the nature of infinity? Is math free from self-contradiction? And what does math have to do with reality? This was the Foundational Crisis in mathematics. In *The Great Math War*, Jason Socrates Bardi tells the story of three competing efforts by mathematicians to resolve it--and the firefight that ensued.

Coplan, Robert. [The Joy of Solitude](#) (Simon and Schuster \$27)

Solitude is part of the human experience. But just like other relationships, your relationship with solitude can be satisfying, intimate, and enhance your well-being, or it can leave you wanting, stuck in a cycle of sadness, anxiety, or anger. Regardless of whether you're starved for "me time" or struggling with loneliness, most of us have never thought carefully about how to get the most out of the time we spend by ourselves. As a result, we're missing out on what could be a deeply enriching aspect of

our lives. But how can we unlock the positive power of solitude? In *The Joy of Solitude*, Robert Coplan draws from diverse fields including psychology, neuroscience, literature, and sociology to guide readers through solitude's many dimensions and its profound effects on mental health and well-being.

Davis, Matthew. [A Biography of a Mountain](#) (St. Martin's \$30)

A comprehensive narrative history of Mt. Rushmore, written for the monument's 100th anniversary in 2025. *A Biography of A Mountain* combines history with reportage, bringing the complicated and nuanced story of Mt. Rushmore to life, from the land's origins as sacred tribal ground; to the expansion of the American West; to the larger-than-life personality of Gutzon Borglum, the artist who carved the presidential faces into the mountain; and up to the politicized present-day conflict over the site and its future.

Eyman, Scott. [Joan Crawford](#) (Simon and Schuster \$31)

Joan Crawford burst out of her poverty-stricken youth to become a bright young movie star in the 1920's, drawing the admiration of F. Scott Fitzgerald and the attention of audiences worldwide. She flourished for decades, working for multiple studios in every genre from romance to westerns (*Mildred Pierce*, *Johnny Guitar*), musicals to noir (*Torch Song*, *A Woman's Face*), and being directed by a young Steven Spielberg in one of her last appearances. Along the way she accumulated four husbands, an Academy Award for Best Actress, and the undeniable status of a legend. *Joan Crawford: A Woman's Face* looks at the reality of this remarkable woman through the prism of groundbreaking primary research, and interviews with friends and relatives.

Hitt, Tarpley. [Barbieland](#) (Atria \$30)

In June of 1952, German publishing tycoon Axel Springer was sending a new paper to print: a four-page broadsheet that almost ready, save for a narrow blank on the second page. With minutes to spare, Springer commissioned a one-block cartoon of a petite blonde with a predilection for rich men. That blonde was named "Lilli." But in a span of seven short years, she would be reborn in plastic, across an ocean, and under a different name: Barbara Millicent Roberts. If Barbie began as a blank space, the world has spent seven decades filling it in. No doll has elicited more adoration from fans, more hatred from detractors, and more eyerolls from the indifferent. To boosters, she is the ultimate symbol of unabashed girlhood, an 11.5-inch figurine who shot to the moon before American women could get credit cards, an evolving illustration that, per one tagline, "we girls can do anything." To critics, she represents an inane vision of femininity that was going out of style just years after she was "born"--an homage to impossible body proportions, an emblem of Eurocentric beauty standards, a bimbo built on an empire of polyethylene. For everyone else, Barbie is to dolls what Xerox is to copy machines, or Kleenex is to tissues. She is, for better or for worse, an American icon.

Mazzeo, Tilar J. [The Sea Captain's Wife](#) (St. Martin's \$30)

Nineteen-year-old Mary Ann Patten and her husband, Joshua, were young and ambitious. Both from New England seafaring families, they had already completed their first clipper-ship voyage around the world with Joshua as captain. If they could win the race to San Francisco the summer of 1856, their dream of building a farm and a family might be within reach. It would mean freedom. And the price of that freedom was one last dangerous tran-

sit--into the most treacherous waters in the world

.McGrath, Tim. [Three Roads to Gettysburg](#) (Penguin \$39)

By mid-1863, the Civil War, with Northern victories in the West and Southern triumphs in the East, seemed unwinnable for Abraham Lincoln. Robert E. Lee's bold thrust into Pennsylvania, if successful, could mean Southern independence. In a desperate countermove, Lincoln ordered George Gordon Meade--a man hardly known and hardly known in his own army--to take command of the Army of the Potomac and defeat Lee's seemingly invincible Army of Northern Virginia. Just three days later, the two great armies collided at a small town called Gettysburg. The epic three-day battle that followed proved to be the turning point in the war, and provided Lincoln the perfect opportunity to give the defining speech of the war--and a challenge to each generation of Americans to live by.

Parton, Dolly. [Star of the Show](#) (Clarkson Potter \$55)

In *Star of the Show*, the culminating book in Dolly Parton's photographic trilogy--following *Songteller* (lyrics) and *Behind the Seams* (fashion)--the global superstar finally shares a definitive look at her career as one of the world's most dazzling and beloved performers. Featuring engaging stories and memories from Parton's dynamic life behind the microphone, this book spotlights her signature performances and star-making moments, from singing in front of her family to premiering on the Grand Ole Opry stage and beyond.

Smith, Sam and Phil Jackson. [Masters of the Game](#) (Penguin \$32)

Sam Smith and Phil Jackson grew to know and respect each other in the late 1980s, when

Smith was a *Chicago Tribune* sportswriter and Jackson was an assistant coach for the Chicago Bulls. Forty years later, the two remain close friends. In 2021, Smith helped the NBA arrive at a list of the seventy-five greatest players of all time in celebration of its seventy-fifth anniversary. Phil Jackson was asked to participate too, but he's not a big fan of ranking greatness. They've been enjoying the argument ever since. In *Masters of the Game*, Smith and Jackson chop it up about the basketball life, the sport, and the genius and the shadow side of the all-time greats: Jordan, Kobe, Shaq, Magic, Bill Russell, Wilt, Jerry West, Bird, LeBron, KD, Steph Curry, Bill Walton, and more. In a conversation full of high-grade analysis and high-grade gossip, we meet the stars of long-ago eras of basketball and see the mark race left on players and the business of the game--and we get a master class on character and the alchemy of a good team.

Ward, Geoffrey C. & Ken Burns. [The American Revolution](#) (Knopf \$80)

The American Revolution was at once a war for independence, a civil war, and a world war, fought by neighbors on American farms and between global powers an ocean or more away. In this sumptuous volume, which ties in to the new PBS series by Ken Burns, historian Geoffrey C. Ward ably steers us through the international forces at play, telling the story not from the top down but from the bottom up--and through the eyes of not only our "Founding Fathers" but also those of ordinary soldiers, as well as underrepresented populations such as women, African Americans, Native Americans, and American Loyalists, asking who exactly was entitled to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Weir, Alison. [Queens at War](#) (Random \$34)
In *Queens at War*, Alison Weir chronicles the five queens who got caught up in wars that changed the courses of their lives: the Hundred Years' War between England and France, and the Wars of the Roses between the royal Houses of Lancaster and York. Against this tempestuous backdrop, Weir describes the lives of five Plantagenet queens, who occupied the consort's throne from 1403 to 1485. **Joan of Navarre** was happily married to King Henry IV but was accused of witchcraft by Henry's heir and imprisoned. Paris-born **Katherine of Valois's** political marriage to Henry V was meant to bring peace between England and France. It didn't, and Henry died during the Hundred Years' War without ever seeing his newborn heir, Henry VI, who was wed to another French princess, **Margaret of Anjou**, in 1445. In the Wars of the Roses, Margaret staunchly supported her husband and son. Henry's successor, Edward IV, became embroiled in scandal after he fell in love with and married **Elizabeth Widville**, mother of the tragic Princes in the Tower. The notorious Richard III usurped Edward's throne and married **Anne Neville**, who died after losing her only child, forsaken by her husband.