

Midmonth BookNotes

Volume 2 Issue 2 February 2026

4014 N. Goldwater Blvd., Scottsdale, AZ 85251

(888) 560-9919 • (480) 947-2974

poisonedpen.com • sales@poisonedpen.com



Fall in Love with a Good Book!

Cozy Corner

Beaton, M.C. [Death of a Groom](#) (Grand Central \$28)

It is February and the Scottish Highlands village of Lochdubh is dealing with heavy snow and freezing temperatures. Sergeant Hamish Macbeth can handle the weather, but with a surprise influx of high-society visitors for a Valentine's Day wedding at Tommel Castle Hotel, he has bigger problems. Shortly after the lavish wedding ceremony, a body is found in the hotel dining room.

Breedlove, Jennifer K. [Murder Will Out](#) (St. Martin's \$28) SIGNED

Little North Island, off the coast of Maine, is so beautiful it could be a postcard. Organist Willow Stone cherishes her memories of childhood summers spent on the island with her godmother Sue... even though her visits ended abruptly, and she hasn't seen or heard from her godmother in over fifteen years. Until a letter from Sue—and word of Sue's death—brings Willow back to the picturesque

island. The islanders rarely mention Sue without also bringing up Cameron House, and the controversy around Sue's unexpected inheritance of the sprawling mansion. When Willow overhears someone threatening the next heir to the property, she starts to question whether Sue's death was really an accident, and can't help but wonder whether someone on this sleepy island is willing to stop at nothing—even murder—to claim Cameron House for their own."Breedlove's marvelously entertaining debut deftly borrows elements from traditional mysteries and merges them with a ghostly, gothic vibe creating something delightfully different. . . Fans of Katherine Hall Page's superiorly crafted traditional mysteries, Nancy Atherton's delightful Aunt Dimity books, or Carolyn Hart's ghostly cozy Bailey Ruth Raeburn series will fall under the spell of Breedlove's equally enchanting novel." (*Library Journal*)

Ferguson, Melissa. [Without a Clue](#) (Thomas Nelson \$18.99)

Penelope Mae Dupont has one superpower: keeping her cool. Which is essential when

you're the personal assistant to renowned mystery author Hugh Griffin. But when Pip organizes a luxury book cruise featuring The Fabulous Seven--a glittering cast of seven bestselling authors known for both their brilliance and their drama--her trademark composure starts slipping. One boat. Seven egos. Hundreds of fans. What could possibly go wrong? Well . . . murder, for starters

George, Nicholas. [You've Lost that Livin Feelin](#) (Severn \$29.99)

Adam Parrall's wild days as a drummer in a rock band are far behind him. Now semi-retired and running a record store in the sleepy town of Cordoba on the mid-California coast, life is considerably calmer, with pleasant surprises such as winning a lifetime achievement award (which Adam learns, depressingly, is intended for deceased artists). There's plenty of life left in Adam yet, though sadly the same can't be said of Righteous Brother tribute artist Barry Haddon, whose dead body is discovered by Adam outside a nightclub. Suddenly Adam discovers an exciting new hobby—sleuthing!

Lane, Lyla. [The Best Little Motel in Texas](#) (HarperCollins \$17.99)

Cordelia West's great-aunt Penelope has passed away, naming Cordelia the sole heir to the Chickadee Motel. Cordelia has no memory of a great-aunt and no interest in hospitality, but the will stipulates that the motel can't be sold until its residents leave or pass away—so she reluctantly heads back down to Sarsaparilla Falls only to discover the Chickadee isn't a motel—it's a brothel, housing three women in their sixties known as the Chicks. For decades, Daisy, Arline, and Belinda Sue have entertained the men of Sarsaparilla Falls (with their wives' blessings)—including the upright Pastor Reed-Smythe, who thunders against the town's favorite sins when he's not indulging.

Cordelia doesn't want to be a hotel manager or a madam, but she can't just sell the only home the Chicks have known—especially not after the pastor is found poisoned in Daisy's bed.

Mathews, Lisa Q. [Buried in Shamrocks](#) (Crooked Lane \$29.99)

Kate Buckley returns to her Irish-themed hometown of Shamrock, Massachusetts for the summer, but when her ex Ian, who is back from Ireland to perform with his band at the annual Great Shamrock Fair, becomes the prime suspect in his fiancée Fallon's murder, Kate must clear his name for the sake of their daughters.

McKinlay, Jenn. [Booking for Trouble](#) (Berkley \$30) SIGNED

Just off the shores of the coastal Connecticut town of Briar Creek are two small islands, which library director Lindsey Norris visits with her new book-boat, inspired by the book-mobiles she's seen traveling across the country. Nothing, not even the infamous feud between the families who own the Split Islands, can stop Lindsey from getting books into the hands of readers. But when Lindsey and her boat captain husband, Mike Sullivan, discover a body on the rocky outcropping of one of the islands, Lindsey's new library venture quickly becomes a murder investigation.

Meier, Leslie, Lee Hollis, and Peggy Ehrhart. [Easter Egg Murder](#) (Kensington \$27)

Light pink, robin's egg blue, daffodil yellow, mint green—Easter eggs hiding sweet treats come in every pastel color. But in a few small towns this year, cracking them could be more fatal than fun as readers discover in three cozy novellas—“Easter Egg Murder” by Leslie Meier, “Death by Another Easter Egg” by Lee Hollis, and “An Eggy Way to Die” by Peggy Ehrhart.

Sanders, Angela M. [A Whiff of Murder](#) (Kensington \$27)

Some people read auras—a light or color that surrounds others, revealing their character or emotions. Lise Bloom reads ribbons—of fragrance, that is. Whether she's around old friends or new, fragrance often unfurls from them—an ability called "clairalience." Hoping to gain insight into her gift, Lise works at the Lucky Lotus, a New Age shop. Unfortunately, the oils the owner, Dyann, concocts, nauseate Lise and impede her sense of scent. Persuaded to quit by her caring, colorful crew of housemates, Lise emails Dyann a resignation letter. But when she goes to the store the next morning, she detects a fetid odor she doesn't recognize—and discovers a spilled bottle of Mayan ceremonial liqueur . . . beside Dyann's dead body.

Historical Fiction, Mysteries, Romance and More

Abe, Shana. [A Crown of Stars](#) (Kensington \$18.95)

A sumptuously vivid and poignant tale drawn from the true story of extraordinary young actress Rita Jolivet, who rose to fame on the stages of London only to become a star in America, where silent films are becoming the hot, new thing in entertainment. However, when the threat of war sends Rita back home to her family in England, she makes the fateful decision to book passage on the *Lusitania*.

Adams, Taylor. [Her Last Breath](#) (HarperCollins \$30) SIGNED

From the critically acclaimed author of *No Exit* and *The Last Word* comes a story of two

friends who embark on an ill-fated caving expedition—and the dark truth of what happens deep underground.

Akers, W.M. [To Kill a Cook](#) (Berkley \$30)

It's 1972, and Bernice Black is Manhattan's busiest restaurant critic, juggling her fiance and his two young sons with demands of fine dining. When she stops by the famed restaurant of her favorite chef and mentor, Laurent Tirel, early one morning, Bernice stumbles across a horrific scene in the kitchen: Laurent's severed head, perfectly preserved in a flawless mold of jellied aspic. Her meeting with the cops assigned to the case proves only one thing—they know nothing about food or the seedy underworld that Bernice has made her home. With layoffs looming, Bernice makes the gamble of her career—she promises her editor she can catch Laurent's killer before the week is out.

Blake, Ashley Herring. [Get Over It, April Evans](#) (Berkley \$19)

April Evans' life is in shambles. She's had to close her tattoo shop in Clover Lake and she's subletting her house to cover her mortgage. And her love life? Nonexistent ever since Elena, her ex-fiancée, left her for a younger woman three years ago. When she is asked to teach a summer art class at the town's new resort called Cloverwild, April jumps at the opportunity, especially since the job comes with boarding. She's sure that this is the silver lining she needs . . . until she meets her cabin-mate: Daphne Love, the woman who stole her ex-fiancée. And what is even worse, it's clear Daphne has no idea who April is.

Brohm, Hannah. [Love and Other Brain Experiments](#) (Atria \$19)

An academic-rivals-to-lovers rom-com set at a New York conference about two neurosci-

entists – Dr. Frances Silberstein and Dr. Lewis North -who are forced to pretend they’re dating, leading to unexpected chemistry and a heartfelt journey of self-discovery.

Chance, Megan. [The Vermilion Sea](#) (Amazon \$16.99)

World War I may be over, but brilliant scientist Billie McKennan continues the fight to be taken seriously. When a deliberate omission wins her a marine biologist position aboard an expedition funded by a wealthy eccentric, she quickly discovers she’s not the only one keeping secrets. The opulent *Eurybia* sets sail for the Gulf of California with a handful of well-to-do passengers and talented scientists on board. To Billie’s surprise, her ex-husband is among them. The true mission of the voyage comes into question, however, when a mysterious specimen is captured. And then science unexpectedly gives way to wild rumors and superstition. Soon, a sinister force takes hold of the vessel—and everyone on it. Billie must reconcile her beliefs with the reality of what she encounters in the vermillion sea. But how much is she willing to sacrifice in order to survive?

Chang, Janie. [The Fourth Princess](#) (Harper-Collins \$19.99)

Two young women living in a crumbling, once-grand Shanghai mansion face danger as secrets of their pasts come to light, even as the mansion’s own secret threatens the present in this haunting gothic historical set in 1911 China.

Compton, Johnny. [Dead First](#) (Berkley \$30)

From the Bram Stoker award-nominated author of *The Spite House* comes a bone-chilling new novel about private investigator Shyla Sinclair, who is hired by mysterious billionaire Saxton Braith to discover why he can’t die.

Coventry, Tobi. [He’s the Devil](#) (Abrams \$28) Simon has always been a good guy, a charmer. He’s consistently employee of the month at his bougie restaurant job, neurotically tidy, and generally tries to do right by everyone. And his dark parts? He keeps those well-hidden. But when his best and only friend Josh moves out of their shared apartment, Simon’s world starts to fall apart when his new roommate Massimo moves in. Because Massimo has brought something—or someone—with him. It turns out, Massimo might just be the roommate from hell.

Craig, Fergus. [I’m Not the Only Murderer in My Retirement Home](#) (Berkley \$30)

Carol is delighted to be leaving her tiny prison cell behind to take her place in a luxury retirement home. She’s hoping her past as a serial killer won’t come to light so she can make a few friends and find some murder-free hobbies. But it’s not long before a fellow resident—who happens to be a former police commissioner—drops dead, and Carol’s true identity is leaked—making catching up over daily activities of bingo and baking rather awkward. Just her luck, Carol soon realizes that the victim wasn’t the only former law enforcement officer at Sheldon Oaks—it’s filled to the brim with former cops, barristers, and government representatives, her newfound friends included. And everyone thinks Carol’s guilt is a no-brainer, but she is ready to prove them dead wrong... without killing anyone, for once.

Cullen, Lynn. [When We Were Brilliant](#) (Penguin \$30)

They were an unlikely pair — a blond bombshell and a photographer determined to be taken seriously — but Marilyn Monroe and Eve Arnold would make a deal that would change their lives in this dazzling new novel from the national bestselling author of *Mrs.*

Poe and *The Woman with the Cure*.

Curtis, Debra. [Laws of Love and Logic](#) (Random \$30)

A woman finds herself torn between her first love and her devoted husband in this extraordinary debut novel that asks the question: *Can one heart hold two great loves?*

Dubb, Sarah T. [Honey Bee Mine](#) (Gallery \$19)

Like the bees she keeps, Penny Becker lives by a golden rule: never stop working. That mantra kept Becker Farms running when her grandfather, dad, *and* ex all left for greener pastures. But after taking out a loan for an expansion plan that crashed and burned, Penny has to find a way to pay or risk losing it all, and she's betting everything on the Sullivan's Glen Honey Festival. Reformed bad boy turned restaurateur Zander Bouras left Sullivan's Glen in a blaze of glory and vowed to never return. But when his ex-wife wants to go back for the summer, Zander grudgingly follows. His first day in town brings Zander face to face with Penny, the girl whose perfect life mocked him from next door. It's just his luck that his son loves her *and* her bees, and before he knows it he's been volunteered to help plan a honey festival with the sexy, stubborn beekeeper whose braid he just wants to tug. As they learn to work together, Zander faces his demons and learns to see Sullivan's Glen in a new light as Penny realizes that accepting help isn't so bad—especially from the right person.

Gunasekera, Yosha. [The Midnight Taxi](#) (Penguin \$19)

Siriwathi Perera never expected to be a taxicab driver in New York City, struggling to make ends meet and still living with her parents at twenty-eight. The true-crime podcasts that keep Siri company as she drives don't do much to make up for the legal ca-

reer she imagined for herself, or the brother she's grieving. When public defender Amaya Fernando gets into her cab, they make a quick connection through their shared Sri Lankan roots. But Siri's suddenly dropped into her own true crime when she discovers her next passenger murdered in the back-seat, and she has to call Amaya sooner than she'd expected.

Harris, Terah Shelton. [Where the Wildflowers Grow](#) (Sourcebooks \$18.99)

Grief never truly fades and even as the tragedy haunts her, Leigh Wilde carries on, because survival is in her blood. So, when the transport bus taking her to prison careens off the road, killing everyone onboard except her, she does what's in her nature. She survives. While searching for a place to hide, Leigh stumbles upon an unexpected sanctuary: a flower farm in rural Alabama tucked away from the world. But Leigh's past isn't so easily buried. No matter how far she runs, the truth of who she is and the ghosts of the Wildes follow. And when those secrets catch up to her, threatening everything she now loves, Leigh will have to truly face what she can survive.

Ihli, Noelle W. [Run on Red](#) (Kensington \$18.95)

By the time Laura and Olivia notice the headlights tailing them through the hills, it's too late. What seems, at first, like a case of road rage quickly unfolds into a heart-pounding chase—and a battle for survival. Who are the men in the truck? What do they want? And can Laura and Olivia outrun—and outsmart—them long enough to call for help, even if it means taking their chances in the hills on foot?

Jewell, Isla. [Books & Bewitchment](#) (Random \$19)

When Rhea Wolfe's estranged grandmother dies, leaving her everything—including a magical heritage Rhea never knew she carried—she finds herself in Arcadia Falls, the quaint mountain town her mother made her swear to avoid at all costs. While the defunct video store she's also inherited needs a serious upgrade, Rhea's lucky that resident handyman Hunter Blakely is more than happy to help—and more than easy on the eyes. If only he wasn't the grandson of her grandmother's sworn enemy in witchcraft. Yet as Rhea makes plans for the bookstore of her dreams, she learns that her grandmother made a terrible choice, one that could ruin her own chance at happiness. As she gets ever closer to solving the mystery of what exactly is happening, each clue points to Arcadia Falls's magic hanging in the balance. To keep her new home safe, Rhea must step into her enchanted birthright and harness her newfound powers . . . before it's too late.

Johnson, Milly. [The Queen of Wishful Thinking](#) (Harper Muse \$18.99)

When Lewis Harley has a health scare in his early forties, he takes it as a wake-up call. So he and his wife Charlotte leave behind life in the fast lane and Lewis opens the antique shop he has dreamed of. Bonnie Brookland was brought up in the antiques trade and now works for the man who bought out her father's business, but she isn't happy there. So when she walks into Lew's shop, she knows this is the place for her. As Bonnie and Lew start to work together, they soon realize that there is more to their relationship than either thought. But Bonnie is trapped in an unhappy marriage, and Lew and Charlotte have more problems than they care to admit. Each has secrets in their past which are about to be uncovered. Can they

find the happiness they both deserve?

Johnson, Sadeqa. [Keeper of Lost Children](#) (Simon and Schuster \$30)

After discovering a local orphanage filled with the abandoned mixed-race children of German women and Black American GI's in Occupied Germany in the 1950s, Ethel Gathers feels compelled to help find these children homes. Ethel's mission of mercy in post WW II Germany will ultimately change the course of countless lives over the succeeding decades, including those of Ozzie Phillips and Sophia Clark, and demonstrate that love in its myriad of forms—familial, parental, and forbidden, even love of self—can be transcendent.

Jones, Tayari. [Kin](#) (Knopf \$30) SIGNED

A magnificent new book from the bestselling, award-winning author of *An American Marriage* — Tayari Jones has written an unforgettable novel that sparkles with wit and intelligence and deep feeling about two lifelong friends whose worlds converge after many years apart in the face of a devastating tragedy.

LaMothe, Allison. [Dirty Metal](#) (Flatiron \$29.99)

New York City, 1992—Meet Parker Snow, the most tenacious reporter for a tabloid paper that thrives on juicy gossip over hard-hitting news, the *New York Street*. She also has a big black mark on her record from her last street crime story—and a habit of taking a few too many pills to erase the memory. Since the fall of the USSR, a new crop of Russian criminals have been arriving in Brighton Beach, Brooklyn. It's now Parker's job to cover them. But her old beat keeps calling to her, especially when she learns of a murdered woman whose case the cops want to ignore. Trying to run down two stories at once—a

simmering mafia turf war, and a homicide that leads to two more with no clear link between them—Parker must also fight the pull of her pills and the arrogant men who get in her way at every turn. Despite it all, she's determined to find truth and redemption for herself, the victims, and a city in chaos—if her demons don't get to her first

Lowkis, Carmella. [A Slow and Secret Poison](#) (Atria \$28)

1922, Wiltshire: When Vee Morgan accepts the job of gardener at a crumbling stately home in southwest England, she's hoping it's a fresh start. But Harfold Manor is shadowed by its own grief and the memories of long-faded glory, its rooms haunted by the only surviving member of the family, Lady Arabella Lascy. Vee is fascinated by her enigmatic new employer, a woman obsessed with the curse she believes has killed her family one by one and is coming for her next. Her only hope for escape is a local folktale: the elusive dancing hare that gave her ancestor its blessing and the house its name. "An enticing Sapphic love story that takes place on a supposedly cursed English manor...Lowkis effortlessly toggles between past and present, and the novel swerves artfully from gothic tropes to knotty and surprising psychological suspense. There's much to admire in this twisty tale." (*Publishers Weekly*)

Malicka, Philippa. [In Her Defense](#) (Scribner \$29)

The whole country has been riveted by the trial: beloved TV star and national treasure Anna Finbow, standing in court, accusing her daughter's therapist Jean Guest of brainwashing her daughter Mary for her own financial gain. Jean insists Mary's traumatic memories arise from her upbringing and her time studying at a prestigious art school in Rome; wounds only Jean's therapy can heal.

But as the trial unfolds, it's Augusta "Gus" Bird, Anna's former employee—a seemingly insignificant bystander, a nobody—who holds the key to unraveling the tangled web of lies and deceit.

Mazarura, Rufaro Faith. [Skate It Till You Make It](#) (Flatiron \$19.99)

When Ari Shumba and Drew Dlamini meet at a New Year's Eve party in London, neither of them is looking for love. However, when they unexpectedly cross paths in the snowy Swiss Alps two months later, where Ari is captaining Great Britain's women's ice hockey team, their feelings for each other rise to the surface. As the competition heats up, the combination of complicated exes, over-involved families, and stress-inducing teammates convinces them that the perfect solution to their problems is to fake-date their way through the Games. After all, there's no risk of falling in love if it is doomed from the start . . . right?

Morillo, Maria J. [The Ex-perimento](#) (Penguin \$19)

Maria "Marianto" Camacho is a planner. At twenty-seven, she has her life perfectly mapped out. Her long-term boyfriend, Alejandro, is perfect on paper, and she's expecting a proposal any day now. She has a stable job as a lifestyle columnist at *Ellas*, one of Latin America's biggest digital magazines. Her future is set; she's sure of it. Until everything falls apart overnight: Marianto loses her boyfriend and her job. But she's determined to get them both back with an idea that is either delusional or ingenious—a juicy new article for *Ellas* that documents a series of romantic experiments to get her ex back enlisting the help of Simón Arreaza, the lead singer of her favorite indie band.

Nordqvist, Sabina. [It's All in Your Head](#)

(Grand Central \$18.99)

A “poignant and swoony” romance about a woman with a rare neurological condition who agrees to fake-date the hot guy in her chronic pain support group—only to discover he’s an Olympic snowboarder whose career-ending injury is as infamous as his dating history.

O’Riley, Jeneane. [A Secret in the Garden](#)

(Sourcebooks \$19.99)

Perched on a windswept cliff, Blackwood Manor looms like a dark monument to a mysterious family. Behind its grand iron gates, one part of the estate has been left to rot since the tragic death of Hester Blackwood: the once-glorious conservatory, now choked by vines and shattered glass. The rest of the family is gone—only her brooding son, Jasper, remains, the heir to a weapons empire. Desperate to save her job and out of options, botanist Eliza Arnold makes a bold gamble—drive to the manor and beg the elusive millionaire for a donation. Jasper agrees...on one chilling condition: restore the conservatory. Alone. No help. No leaving. But the manor is not empty. As Eliza battles thorns and secrets, a magnetic tension builds between her and Jasper. The deeper Eliza digs, the more she uncovers a garden of grief, longing...and desire. Because in Blackwood Manor, even buried things can bloom again.

Page, Libby. [This Book Made Me Think of You](#)

(Penguin \$30)

When Tilly Nightingale receives a call telling her there’s a birthday gift from her husband waiting for her at her local bookshop, it couldn’t come as more of a shock. Partly because she can’t remember the last time she read a book for pleasure. But mainly because Joe died five months ago. When

she goes to pick up the present, Alfie, the bookshop owner with kind eyes, explains the gift—twelve carefully chosen books with handwritten letters from Joe, one for each month, to help her turn the page on her first year without him. At first Tilly can’t imagine sinking into a fictional world, but Joe’s tender words convince her to try, and something remarkable happens—Tilly becomes immersed in the pages, and a new chapter begins to unfold in her own life.” Page creates a cozy world that shimmers with whimsy even as she delicately explores grief... The novel serves as a reminder that books have the power to shape lives... The perfect cozy read for book lovers, sure to break and heal hearts.” (*Kirkus*)

Quindlen, Anna. [More than Enough](#) (Random \$29)

A woman confronts the surprising results of an ancestry test and begins to question the meaning of family and friendship in this wise, tender novel teeming with life — from the beloved #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of *After Annie*. Written with Anna Quindlen’s trademark warmth, humor, and insight into the power of love and hope, *More Than Enough* explores how we find ourselves again and again through the relationships that define us.

Siegel, Katie. [Out of the Loop](#) (Crooked Lane \$19.99)

For the past two years, Amie Teller has been stuck in a time loop. Each day, she wakes up, and it’s September 17. Same day, same weather, same people, same conversations. Until one day, it’s September 18, and Amie is free. Before she can celebrate, Amie learns her neighbor was murdered the day before—the day Amie has lived hundreds of times. Amie knows she has to help; nobody knows yesterday like she does. But

acclimating to her new non-repeating life proves to be more difficult than expected. How does one resume their life after a time loop, anyway? Assisted by an ex-girlfriend who wants to make their friendship work and a grumpy neighbor who spends his days building Rube Goldberg machines, Amie sets out to track down who killed (and killed and killed and killed) Savannah Harlow.

Slator, Annabelle. [Risky Business](#) (HarperCollins \$18.99)

Struggling to gain funding for her company, Jess Cole begins to wonder if it's because she's a woman in the male-dominated tech industry. In an act of financial desperation, she applies to a competition for start-ups using her twin brother Spencer's name. To her surprise, it works! Spencer is invited into the exclusive world of Tech Rumble, an annual innovation competition hosted by tech darling Dominic Orsino. Spencer, an out-of-work actor, must now pretend to be the CEO, and Jess must become his loyal "assistant," Violet. At the event, "Violet" is introduced to the handsome Oliver, a fellow assistant who shows her how to let her hair down and enjoy life outside the pressures of her job. But Jess soon discovers falling for Oliver is riskier than any mistake Spencer may be making pretending to be the head of her company.

Van Der Kleut, Jennifer. [The Better Mother](#) (Crooked Lane \$29.99)

Still recovering from a devastating breakup, 34-year-old Savannah Mitchell has finally managed to put her life back together when she gets the shock of her life—after a brief fling with a man named Max, she is pregnant. When she gets in touch to tell him, he reveals that he's just gotten back together with his ex, Madison, and he will need time

to break it to her. Surprisingly, Madison isn't upset—in fact, she's excited, and wants to help. Max insists Madison has the best of intentions, but Savannah finds her efforts anything but helpful. When Savannah finally stands up for herself, Madison's treatment of her goes from casually cruel to downright dangerous. *Fatal Attraction* meets *The Hand that Rocks the Cradle* in this twisty novel of suspense.

Yardley, Ellen. [Eleanor and the South Beach Murders](#) (Kensington \$27)

For fans of Colleen Cambridge, Jacqueline Winspear, and Ashley Weaver, a brilliant 1950s Cold War historical mystery featuring the former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt's indispensable assistant Kay Thompson as an equally resourceful sleuth. In their latest adventure in detection, the duo become entangled in a deadly international mystery connected to famous performer Josephine Baker, when a dead body turns up in the performer's dressing room at the Copa City Club in Miami.

Nonfiction

Bennett, Joshua. [The People Can Fly](#) (Little Brown \$30)

In *The People Can Fly*, Dr. Joshua Bennett explores the complex position of black prodigies in a society that has, all too often, defined blackness as absence, as lack of intellect or inner life. Through this hybrid work of memoir and cultural history, Dr. Bennett shares how his own academic journey reflected the ebb and flow of being seen as both promising and *as a problem*. He turns to the childhood archives of Malcolm X, Ste-

vie Wonder, Gwendolyn Brooks, James Baldwin, Nikki Giovanni, and others to further explore this theme: highlighting the role of cultural institutions, and loving communities, in shaping the lives of leading lights within African American culture.

Foster, Ann. [Rebel of the Regency](#) (Hanover Square \$32.99)

The dramatic, absolutely outrageous story of Caroline of Brunswick, a beloved icon of the Regency era, who uplifted the voice of the public and unabashedly defied society's expectations, yet was shockingly robbed of her crown, from the host of the *Vulgar History* podcast

Kaplan, Matt. [I Told You So](#) (St. Martin's \$30)

For two decades, Matt Kaplan has covered science for the *Economist*. He's seen breakthroughs often occur in spite of, rather than because of, the behavior of the research community, and how support can be withheld for those who don't conform or have the right connections. In entertaining prose, Kaplan reveals scientific cases past and present to make his case. Some are familiar, like Galileo being threatened with torture and Nobel laureate Katalin Karikó being fired when on the brink of discovering how to wield mRNA—a finding that proved pivotal for the creation of the Covid-19 vaccine. Others less so, like researchers silenced for raising safety concerns about new drugs, and biologists ridiculed for revealing major flaws in the way rodent research is conducted. Kaplan shows how the scientific community can work faster and better by making reasonably small changes to the forces that shape it.

Kelly, Jack. [Tom Paine's War](#) (St. Martin's \$31)

Two hundred and fifty years ago, the Declaration of Independence marked the birth of the United States. But two essays of that era appealed even more directly to Americans' feelings. In January 1776, Thomas Paine—a recent immigrant to America — published *Common Sense*. His straightforward argument upended the fraud of monarchy and dismantled the idea of aristocratic privilege that had dominated the world for centuries. Having inspired patriots to declare their independence, Paine enlisted as a militia private. He saw Washington's army suffer grievous defeats. He slogged through the mud with retreating troops to Pennsylvania. There, he wrote *The American Crisis*, the most stirring rallying cry in our history. It began: "These are the times that try men's souls . . ." With Paine's words ringing in their ears, Washington and his men crossed the Delaware River and defeated the enemy at Trenton. The battle reversed the fortunes of the campaign and of the Revolution itself. A tribute to the Revolution's 250th anniversary, *Tom Paine's War* is a riveting exploration of our nation's birth. This is a story of the power of words—and the power of belief—and how both speak as well to America's current crisis.

Meacham, Jon. [American Struggle](#) (Random \$38)

This rich and diverse collection covers a wide spectrum of history, from 1619 to the twenty-first century, with primary-source documents that take us back to critical moments in which Americans fought over the meaning and the direction of the national experiment. From the founders to Lincoln to Obama, from Andrew Jackson to Theodore Roosevelt to Ronald Reagan, from Seneca Falls

to the March on Washington, this chorus—sometimes discordant and always fascinating—tells the story of the country and of its people. As clashes over liberty and slavery, inclusion and exclusion, play out, these voices, brilliantly framed by Meacham's singular commentary, remind us that contentious citizenship and fair-minded observations are essential to bringing about the more perfect union envisioned in the Preamble to the Constitution, which Frederick Douglass called a “glorious liberty document.”

Newens, Chris. [Moveable Feasts](#) (Pegasus \$29.95)

Paris has a justifiable claim to be the center of European gastronomy—but beyond its trademark *terrasses* and zinc-topped tables, what can its cuisine tell us about the city? Chris Newens, an award-winning food writer and long-time resident of the historic slaughterhouse quartier Villette, takes us on a delightful gastronomic journey around Paris' twenty *arrondissements*, seeking out, sampling, and attempting to recreate a dish that represents each as it is today. From Congolese cat fish in the 18th to Middle Eastern falafels in the 4th, to the charcuterie served at the libertine nightclubs of Pigalle in the 9th, Newens lifts the lid on the city's ever-changing, defining, and irresistible food culture.

O'donnell, Norah. [We the Women](#) (Random \$35)

Over a decades-long, distinguished career, award-winning journalist Norah O'Donnell has made it her mission to shed light on untold women's stories. Now, in honor of America's 250th birthday, O'Donnell focuses that passion on the American heroines who helped change the course of history. Through extensive research and interviews, as well as historical documents and old pho-

tos, O'Donnell curates a compelling portrait of these fierce fighters for freedom. From Mary Katherine Goddard, who printed the first signed Declaration of Independence, to the Forten family women, who were active in the abolition and suffrage movements and were considered the “Black Founders” of Philadelphia, to the first women who served in the armed forces even before they had the right to vote, O'Donnell brings these extraordinary women together for the first time, and in doing so writes the American story anew.

Picardie, Justine. [Fashioning the Crown](#) (Pegasus \$35)

Fashioning the Crown tells the story of a tumultuous half-century of British history through the lens of royal fashion and image-making. Informed by Justine Picardie's entirely original research in the Royal Archives, as well her own interactions with Elizabeth II and her family, it will reveal how, from the outbreak of the First World War to 1960, the soft power of clothing played a crucial role in helping the Royal Family, and the nation, to navigate seismic changes and challenges. Justine will take us behind the mystique of the Crown, introducing us afresh to three generations of royals, including the glamorous Queen Mary; the Chanel-wearing young flapper who would become the Queen Mother; and the little Princess Lil-livet, already setting fashion trends at the age of three. Justine will reveal the crucial importance of image-making in an era of abdications and assassinations, and amidst the rise of revolutions and fascism. She will also uncover the fascinating, little-known lives of the couturiers behind the clothes.

Sewell. Dennis. [Cromwell's Spy](#) (Pegasus \$32) Judged by contemporaries to be a “perfidious rogue,” Sir George Downing rose to

prominence during the English Civil War as Oliver Cromwell's chief of military intelligence. In the Interregnum he proved himself a double-dealer who bribed and blackmailed his way to diplomatic success across Europe (pioneering the practice of judicial kidnapping and starting two major wars in the process), before spectacularly betraying his friends to horrifically violent deaths by defecting to Charles II's court. Always at the centre of events, Downing engaged with the most illustrious men and women of his times: Samuel Pepys was his clerk; John Milton prepared his letters and dispatches; William of Orange was godfather to his son; his next-door neighbour was Queen Elizabeth of Bohemia; and when Downing finally built his street, his surveyor was Sir Christopher Wren. *Cromwell's Spy* tells George Downing's story for the very first time, following him from the asceticism of Puritan New England, across English battlefields, through courts, chancelleries and parliaments, to the heart of wealth and power in Restoration London.