

Midmonth BookNotes

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A Bounty of Books!

Cozy Corner

Andrew, Lucy. [A Very Vexing Murder](#) (Harper-Collins \$21.50)

No longer Emma's naïve companion, Harriet Smith is now tasked with breaking off Frank Churchill's engagement and uncovering his aunt's would-be murderer. While Harriet has doubts that the deadly threats are little more than society scandal, the shrewd Mrs. Churchill suspects Frank's unsuitable fiancée, Jane Fairfax, is out to kill her. What begins as a routine investigation among Highbury's elite quickly spirals into a web of deception, dangerous secrets, and a game of survival. Andrew debuts with a winsome mystery that re-imagines the timid Harriet Smith from Jane Austen's *Emma* as a skilled con artist now turned amateur sleuth.

Cannon, Jess. [A Zoom with a View](#) (Penguin \$29)

Leo can't believe she's back in Blue Oak. Her small, quirky Texas hometown feels suffocating after trying to make it big as an English

professor in New York—especially due to her strained relationship with her overly hair-sprayed mother, Karina. But with Leo's career in academia in shambles, at least she's able to work as a photographer for her godmother's real estate business. And her best friend, Emily, is around to help her navigate through the mess—and maybe force her to reconnect with her old high school boyfriend, Mack. But while at work, Leo makes an unexpected discovery at one of her godmother's properties: the dead body of rival real estate agent and social media influencer Chaz.

Gerber, Daryl Wood. [Murder in a Lavender Daze](#) (Kensington \$17.95)

With its soothing décor and tempting treatments, customers are flocking to Aroma Wellness for more than just facials and massages. Lately, Emma Brennan has been booking private events, from spa parties to bridal showers and birthdays. Next on her calendar is something really unique: A "Happily Divorced" party. After eight years of marriage, Addison Lacey is divorcing her husband, whom she claims convinced her he was Mr. Nice Guy

when he was really Mr. Controlling Guy. To kick off her journey toward becoming a better version of herself, Addison wants to celebrate, bigtime. Her wealthy mother, Gianna, a former model turned difficult diva, is footing the bill. . . . But when Emma goes to Gianna's home to pick up the final payment, she and Addison find her dead in her bed amid the aroma of lavender, with an herbal-infused pillow from the party nearby.

Haines, Carolyn. [Ode to the Bones](#) (St. Martin's \$28)

When private investigator Sarah Booth Delaney returns to her Mississippi Delta roots, she's confronted by a ghostly vision of a woman in white on the Tallahatchie Bridge, who disappears before Sarah Booth can investigate further. Then the local bank president hires her to find a missing farmer, Danny Anderson, and Sarah Booth is forced to shift her focus back to the land of the—hopefully—still living. With the help of her resident ghost-turned-spiritual-guide, Jitty, and her own unrelenting instincts, Sarah Booth must unravel the mystery of Danny's disappearance, confront a town full of half-truths, and decipher the cryptic clues left behind. But someone is watching Sarah Booth's every move, and if she isn't careful, she may be the next body swept away by the Tallahatchie's current.

Hollis, Lee. [The Chowder House Murder](#) (Kensington \$27)

The first in a brand new, multi-generational cozy mystery series introduces three generations of strong, no-nonsense women who head the Holbrook family seafood dynasty in Downeast Maine...and a murder the Holbrook matriarch and her granddaughter must solve, even as it entangles them in a web of small-town secrets, and a Hatfields and McCoys-level

chowder rivalry.

Jalaluddin, Uzma. [Moonlight Murder](#) (Harper-Collins \$18.99)

When Kausar Khan moved back to Toronto to be closer to her family, she didn't expect to have another murder investigation on her hands so soon—or really *ever*. But when a young man named Qasim is found dead in their Golden Crescent neighborhood, and when she learns he was close to her granddaughter, Maleeha, what's a grandmother to do but try and solve the case?

Lumley, Sam. [Coastal Views to Die For](#) (Kensington \$27)

Though sparks flew between travel writer Oliver Popp and extroverted photographer Ricky Warner on their last assignment together, when they're teamed up again for a road trip, they agree to keep things low-key. But that's a little at odds with Oliver's new assignment: finding romance on the Oregon coast. The destination is a picturesque inn overlooking the Pacific, where innkeeper Mary Alice's large extended family, headed by a fabulously wealthy aunt, are all vying to stay in Mary Alice's aunt's good graces...and her will. Then on the first night, settling into their room, Oliver and Ricky make an unsettling discovery: a dead man in their hot tub—one of Mary Alice's tragically unlucky relatives who, from the looks of it, dropped in from the balcony above. The sheriff concludes it was an accident. Considering the circumstances of this odd family reunion, Oliver and Ricky have their doubts.

Moone, Lacey. [Voted Most Likely to Murder](#) (Crooked Lane \$29.99)

Belinda Bishop's journalism career is currently on hold, and let's not even speak about her love life, which isn't helping her look forward to her upcoming high school reunion. Stuck

working at her parents' seaside cottage and RV park in Nova Scotia for the time being, she needs time to regroup and come up with a killer story to get her career and her life back on track. Then Belinda literally stumbles across the dead body of the philandering class jock at the reunion. At first, it seems like the perfect opportunity for Belinda to channel her inner Christianne Amanpour, until her childhood-best-friend-turned-nemesis, Jolene Dexter, is declared the prime suspect. Despite their falling out, Belinda is convinced the former pageant queen is innocent. A cozy debut.

Polito, Frank Anthony. [Dragged to Death](#) (Woodward Avenue Books \$17.95)

Invited to participate in a charity drag extravaganza, Peter "PJ" Penwell and his real-life Domestic Partner in Crime, JP Broadway, expect good cheer, friendly competition, and plenty of sequins. Instead, the celebration comes to a screeching halt after one of the show's brightest stars, Melody Mansion, is found dead in her dressing room—smothered by her own wig. Suspicion quickly falls on the victim's drag mother, Harmony House, a beloved local legend whose larger-than-life presence has earned her both devoted fans and bitter enemies in the Detroit suburb of Pleasant Woods. Certain their good friend and neighbor is innocent, PJ and JP once again trade power tools for detective work as they dig into a tight-knit drag community where rivalries run deep, secrets are well-hidden, and everybody has something to lose.

Postel-Vinay, Danielle. [Murder Most Delicious](#) (HarperCollins \$30)

Once a rising star in the wine world, Olivia Beech was one of a handful of women in the world to hold the distinction of being a Master Sommelier before COVID stole her sense of taste—and her career. Adrift and depressed, she gets a second chance when beloved ce-

lebrity chef Jacques de Bizet invites her to Paris for a job interview. But as the interview begins, he collapses, poisoned, making Olivia the prime suspect. Olivia is in trouble, but she has an advantage: her extraordinary nose is still sharp enough to detect the subtlest of scents, including the poison that killed Jacques. Olivia knows she's innocent, but how can she prove it? Postel-Vinay is the French literary alter ego of *NYT* best-selling author Danielle Trussoni who makes her cozy mystery debut with a *tres charmant* story that delivers everything a cozy mystery could crave all while celebrating the French way of life (something she also wrote about in *Home Sweet Maison*).

Sutton, Paula. [The Body in the Kitchen Garden](#) (Kensington \$28)

Pudding Corner is abuzz: the enigmatic Lord Hugh Darlington has returned to his crumbling ancestral home after years away. With his fiancée, he plans to revive the grand Darlington Hall—and who better to help than antique-hunting Daphne Brewster? Daphne is enchanted by the estate's stained-glass windows, regal turrets, and sprawling kitchen garden. But amidst the overgrown greenery, she stumbles upon something far less picturesque: a body. A body that no one can identify.

Historical Fiction, Mysteries, Romance and More

Adler, Dahlia. [Soon by You](#) (St. Martin's \$19)

Arielle Becker is one hora away from a meltdown. After one too many bridesmaid gigs—complete with Spanx, heels, and hideous dresses—she's officially over love and its overpriced trappings. Especially when they keep coming with the same smug, judgmental

wedding singer. Judah Klein is New York's go-to Modern Orthodox wedding singer and most eligible bachelor. Years of failed setups have left him jaded, until repeated clashes with a fiery bridesmaid wake him right up. But when snarks turn to sparks, and fights turn to feelings, things get complicated. Arielle is not a girl who settles down. And Judah is not a guy who hooks up. So why does walking away feel impossible?

Berman, Mary. [Until Death](#) (Little, Brown \$19.99)

If Ophelia Cohen learned one thing from her parents, it's that getting married is a bad idea. But if she's learning anything from her widowed mother's dementia, it's that dying alone is worse. So when she meets Luke—the man of her mother's dreams—marriage suddenly doesn't seem so crazy. But none of Ophelia's obsessive scrolling on wedding forums can prepare her for the nightmare of planning her own. Why is her mother-in-law going crazy over every detail? Why is Luke's family so eager to host the wedding in their vineyard's ancient chapel? And what exactly will Ophelia have to sacrifice if she and her mother both hope to survive her special day?

Bickers, Tessa. [The Night Bus](#) (MIRA \$30)

As an entertainment journalist, Daisy Douglas can spot the start of a story a mile away. So when her routine 4 a.m. bus ride to the newsroom takes a surprising turn, she notices. For months, the same man has boarded at the same stop, reading the same tattered copy of Virginia Woolf's *Orlando* over and over as if his life depends on it. When a broken-down bus and a shared walk through the quiet early-morning London streets finally throws them together, Tom reveals the heartbreaking truth to why he can't be without his novel. Determined to help him find the answer to the riddle hidden in its pages, Daisy joins Tom

on his strange literary quest—one that leads them to places neither of them ever expected. But as their friendship deepens, she starts to wonder if what they're both looking for might not be in the book after all.

Cantor, Jillian. [The May House](#) (Atria \$29)

No matter what's going on in the May sisters' lives, the one thing they can rely upon is seeing each other for one week in May at their grandmother's beachside home in gorgeous Coronado. As adults, Julia, Emily, and Nora aren't particularly close, their homes spread out across the country and the sisters busy with careers, relationships, and the minutia of life, but their promise to return each year keeps them anchored together. Until one May when Julia, the oldest and most dependable sister, doesn't show. Suddenly Nora and Emily start to question how much they truly know about their sister's life. Told in alternating points of view, spanning from their time together with Grandma Vera as kids into their adult lives, *The May House* explores how a decades-long family secret has unknowingly shaped each sister and, ultimately, how it brings them closer together.

Chalfin, Ben. [Marooned](#) (Rising Action \$17.99)

Ryan Levine is a contestant on the newest season of *Marooned*, the hit reality show where eighteen people are stranded on a desert island, competing in challenges and voting each other out until one is left to claim the million-dollar prize. All he cares about is bringing home the money, and he's determined to not let anything stand in his way. That all changes when he meets Cole Walker, his handsome tribemate with a ready smile and a quick laugh--and, of course, a perfect body. In other words, Cole is a distraction, and that's the one thing Ryan can't afford, not when the slightest mistake could get him voted out. Will he be

able to navigate the twists and turns of the game and win the million? Or will he go home with nothing but empty pockets and a broken heart?

Dodd, Christina. [Teach the Torches to Burn](#) (Kensington \$28) SIGNED

Daughter of Romeo and Juliet (yes, that Romeo and Juliet), Rosie Montague, blushing bride, noted cynic and sleuth, believed the moment her upcoming wedding to Escalus, prince of Verona, went spiraling out of control was when elderly Princess Ursula announced that she would hold a public séance to determine the future of the marriage. With the aid of Yorick's skull and her own considerable dramatic nature, Princess Ursula prophesied three things: the marriage would be joyous and fertile (the guests yawn,) a long-lost treasure would be found . . . and foul and most unnatural murder would disrupt the fragile peace of Verona. Before the day was done, two prophesies had been fulfilled. Hint: not the fun fertility one. As one death follows another and it's clear a murderer lurks among Rosie's wedding guests leaving her no option but to use her clever wit and sleuthing skills to uncover the killer's identity. Dodd's cleverly crafted and perfectly conceived new historical mystery series is the literary equivalent of catnip for readers who don't take their Shakespeare (or themselves) too seriously.

Dray, Stephanie & Laura Kamoie. [A Founding Mother](#) (HarperCollins \$19.99)

In time for the 250th Anniversary of the birth of the United States comes a sweeping, intimate portrayal of Abigail Adams—wife of one president and mother to another—whose wit, willpower, and wisdom helped shape the fledgling republic. Taking readers from revolutionary Boston to the court of Great Britain and finally the White House, Dray and Kamoie craft an engaging novel steeped in history

and featuring a remarkably resilient woman, whose ahead of her time thinking and political savvy helped shape the America we live in today.

Eng, Heather. [Double Happiness](#) (Penguin \$22)

When Mei Li runs into Alexandre Brodeur at a family function, there's no denying their chemistry. It turns out Alexandre, whose brother is married to Mei's younger sister, is back in New York rebuilding his life after two decades toiling away in academic research. Somehow, Alexandre's different from the young scientist Mei met years ago. His intelligent eyes and quiet air of mystery have a magnetic effect, drawing her in like never before. But Mei's carefully constructed life has no room for Alexandre. She's engaged to Joey, a fellow Queens native who keeps her grounded as she pulls eighty-hour weeks at Livin, the tech world's hottest startup. In Mei's brief moments away from her crushing workload, Alexandre is an uncomfortably enticing presence. It doesn't take long for their thoughtful conversations and his electric gaze to get under her skin, leaving Mei to wonder what she really wants in work, life, and love.

Everett, Jessica. [Last Summer at Maine Chance](#) (Sourcebooks \$17.99)

Economics undergrad Cynthia Proctor knows everything about statistical impossibilities. In 1954, women like her from middle-class families do not earn degrees from prestigious New England colleges. When Cynthia receives notice that her scholarship will now be given to a male student, she knows her chances of graduating are slim. But an invitation to spend the summer lakeside in Maine turns into a job at Elizabeth Arden's Maine Chance spa, where Cynthia will learn that the best investment of all is herself.

Fortune, Carley. [Our Perfect Storm](#) (Penguin \$30)

Frankie and George have been best friends since they were eight years old. Both passionate, impulsive, and headstrong—they've always clashed . . . and come back together. Until now. It's the eve of Frankie's wedding weekend, and she doesn't know where they stand or even if George will show up as her best man. Then, at the start of the festivities, in walks George. But it all comes crashing down around Frankie when her fiancé dumps her the next morning, leaving only a note as an explanation. Crushed and confused, Frankie returns to her family's home to wallow. But George has a different idea and a plan for healing Frankie's broken heart. He wants her to go on her honeymoon. With him.

Harper, Molly. [A Cute Little Murder](#) (Penguin \$19)

As teens, Harlow Drake and Lainey Piper built an online fandom solving small-town crimes. Harlow was the star, Lainey the behind-the-scenes genius (and often, Harlow's scapegoat). Years later, Harlow's hosting a hit true crime tv show. Lainey? She's working in forensics. Well, forensic accounting . . . from home. In pajamas. With her cat. But when Harlow faces significant backlash over fumbling a case, she needs a quick win—like a special investigation into the decades-old disappearance of a starlet from a once-glamorous, now decrepit island hotel. The catch? It's bankrolled by Deke and Bryce of DBag Games, who are looking to shed their "frat bro" reputations. As long-time fans, they have one requirement for their funding: Lainey has to play the sidekick again.

Harvey, Kristy Woodson. [Summer State of Mind](#) (Gallery \$29)

After the worst day in her professional life,

burnt-out NICU nurse Daisy Stevens runs to Cape Carolina, North Carolina, looking for a new life—and possibly new romance. On her first day at her "simpler" job, high school baseball coach Mason Thaysden discovers an abandoned baby, sending ripples through the entire tight-knit town of Cape Carolina. Mason is still struggling to reconcile the scars of the injury that kept him out of the big leagues, stuck in his hometown, and searching for a way out. This newcomer and the child they've saved together might be just the motivation he needs to stay put. But as Daisy becomes increasingly attached to this abandoned child, and begins facing her own demons in the process, a startling discovery is made that threatens to rip the entire town of Cape Carolina apart, placing Daisy, Mason, and Tilley in the center of the storm.

James. Eloisa. [The Last Lady B](#) (Gallery \$19)

In the depths of winter, Lady Genevieve Hughes, her pet piglet, and her septuagenarian husband travel to a haunted abbey in the Scottish Highlands. Evie is excited to meet a ghost (perhaps one of her husband's three previous wives), but didn't expect the funny, quirky guests to become the friends she's never had. And she certainly didn't imagine meeting Sir Godric Everly, a sardonic, witty solicitor who loathes her husband. Yet as secrets and lies turn Evie's world upside down, Sir Godric becomes the one person whom she can trust. James delivers another marvelously entertaining historical romance that inventively spoofs the gothic novels of Jane Austen's era.

James, Holly. [The Alias Agenda](#) (Kensington \$18.95)

In this action-packed thrill-ride of suspense, humor, and heartfelt romance, undercover informant Erin Daniels and out-of-practice field agent Cal Bray delve deep into an investigation and become entangled with a most un-

likely band of criminals (a group of suburban mommy smugglers and a ruthless killer.

Krentz, Jayne. [Enter the Nightmare](#) (Penguin \$30) SIGNED

For the second time in her life, Alice Radstone finds herself at the infamous Hotel of Dreams stuck in a room with a dead body. The first time occurred during Alice's honeymoon when she was accused (falsely) of using her paranormal powers to murder her husband. Now, Alice is back at the Hotel of Dreams in another room with a different dead body and two masked men intent on making her the next body to be discovered. So, when Owen March turns up at the hotel claiming he is here to rescue her, does Alice really have any choice but to go along with him? Using her Castle pseudonym, Krentz returns with another smartly plotted, acerbically witty futuristic suspense novel guaranteed to keep readers thrilled from beginning to end.

Lawson, Liz. [It Happened One Murder](#) (Sourcebooks \$17.99) SIGNED

After getting fired from her dream magazine job, Harriet Baker finds herself stuck back in the sleepy New Jersey beach town she once called home living with her eccentric mother and desperate to escape. When Harriet's extravagant birthday party ends with a dead body, all fingers point to Sara Allbright, the troublesome sister of none other than Nic Allbright, Harriet's short-lived fling from years ago that she's been eager to forget. But murder makes for a good story, and when Harriet is told that she can get her old job back if she writes an article uncovering what really happened the night of her party, she readily agrees. To write her piece, Harriet will need Nic's full cooperation, and if Nic wants to clear his sister's name, he'll need Harriet's investigative skills. But working together? That's less than ideal. YA author Lawson makes her adult

fiction debut with a deft literary mash-up of mystery and romance.

Linden, Rachel. [A Sprinkle of Sweet Serendipity](#) (Penguin \$19)

Paris trained chocolatier and single mother Emmie Wynne gave up her own dreams six years ago when she returned to her Pacific Northwest coastal tourist town to run her family's struggling candy store. Now on her thirty-fourth birthday, Emmie has only one wish, to be granted the vision that every Wynne woman is given once in her lifetime—a shimmering glimpse of her true destiny. This year, when she blows out her candles, it finally comes true. Her vision is more delectable than she could've imagined—her very own artisanal chocolate shop and her celebrity crush, Henry Summers, down on one knee. And when Henry suddenly arrives in town for the summer, offering Emmie the opportunity of a lifetime, the future in her vision suddenly seems possible. But a rekindled connection with Jakob, her former high school best friend turned hunky, brooding tattooed baker, forces Emmie to grapple with the bittersweet realization that her destiny may not be what her heart truly longs for.

Manning, Sarra. [The Last Days of Summer](#) (HarperCollins \$18.99)

After a disastrous first meeting, Cassie and Marc are instant arch nemeses. Despite Marc's frustratingly sharp cheekbones and sexy French accent—and the fact that Cassie's best friends Lucy and Russell think he's wonderful—Cassie is convinced that Marc's a terrible person who did a terrible thing, full stop. But, years later, when their friends are hit with bad news, Cassie and Marc decide to put aside their differences and give Lucy and Russell the best weekend ever. While they can't change the past, they can help their friends make new memories with all of their favorite

people. Which means convincing everyone that Cassie and Marc are head over heels in love, since their best friends have always thought they would be perfect together.

McKinlay, Jenn. [The Summer Share](#) (Penguin \$19) SIGNED

Free-spirited travel influencer Hannah Spencer has spent five years touring the country in her vintage van, alone save for her hulking Great Dane, Dude. Until an unexpected inheritance from her pops has Hannah thinking about putting down roots in Cape Split, North Carolina, where she's the new owner of a worse-for-wear seaside beach house. Or, rather, fifty percent of one. Turns out Simon O'Malley inherited the other half from his gramps. As Simon and Hannah spend the summer tag-teaming repairs on the crumbling cottage, they discover it was once home to a timeless love story. As their own relationship shifts from enemies to friends to lovers, they begin to wonder if the house's romantic past might be a good omen for their future together. But there's one problem—Simon is set on selling the property at the end of the summer. "McKinlay's (*Witches of Dubious Origin*, 2025) gift for crafting sneaky sweet yet seriously sexy rom-coms continues on in fine fashion with this sharply humorous and superbly satisfying love story that not only underscores the immeasurable value of love and laughter in life, but also the importance of investing ourselves in the community around us." (*Booklist*)

McLeod, Lindz. [The Miseducation of Caroline Bingley](#) (Carina Press \$18.99)

Pride, prejudice, and...lessons in love? Jane Austen meets *My Fair Lady* in this joyful, clever opposites-attract Sapphic romance featuring Caroline Bingley and Darcy's younger sister, Georgiana.

Moore, Rachel. [Safari Murder Party](#) (Penguin \$30)

After three years working seventy-hour weeks as assistant to the most terrifying CEO in the magazine world, Fletcher Spence finally snagged a spot on Cartwright Media's annual corporate retreat—a famously luxurious week on the Cartwrights' private island, where promotions are handed out like party favors. And her plan to snag her dream job as a travel magazine photographer was going great...until her boss's dramatic death reveals his last will and testament: Whoever survives the week will inherit the company. So now she's stuck on her billionaire boss's safari park island, surrounded by wild animals and on the run from coworkers who've swapped coffee cups for machetes and briefcases for hunting rifles. To Fletcher's dismay, her only ally might be her boss's insufferably gorgeous son, Waylon Cartwright. Despite their hostile history, Fletcher is at least 80 percent sure he won't try to kill her this week. Plus, his experience on the island might come in handy while they fend off lions and tigers and...marketing executives? Oh my.

Patrick, June. [The Valencia Expat Club](#) (Atria \$18)

Dahlia Delaney's marriage just imploded, her friend group picked a side (not hers), and her fancy San Francisco life now fits into a single suitcase. Armed with a broken heart, a freelance marketing gig, and one blurry childhood memory of her abuela's garden, she impulsively hops on a flight to Valencia, Spain, to reconnect with distant family—and maybe herself. But Valencia isn't just sunny plazas and sangria. There's her chaotic new job at a quirky expat bar, a family she barely knows but who embrace her like she's always belonged, and a brooding American bar owner who's frustratingly attractive and entirely too familiar. As Dahlia stumbles through language

mishaps, clashing cultures, and late-night paella with new friends, she begins to realize that the fresh start she came for might turn into something even better—if she can let go of the life she planned and embrace the one unfolding around her.

Pliego, Ande. [The Library after Dark](#) (Random \$30)

Aria Stokes is finally feeling settled—she lives in a tiny New York apartment, works as a bookseller at a local shop, and has even taken a leap of faith in love by indulging her attraction to bookstore regular Jasper. And he seems to already know her so well. As a Valentine’s Day surprise, Jasper gets the two of them tickets to an exclusive, after-dark tour of the Daedalus Library—the grandiose establishment famed for its immersive genre-based reading rooms and, more notoriously, its rumored hauntings. While Aria normally loves all things ghastly, this place holds more dark secrets than she’d prefer Jasper to know. Like that the last time she was here, she left a body behind. But when the automatic-door entry malfunctions and Aria, Jasper, and the five other people in their tour group become trapped in the library, they are forced to venture through the storied rooms and hidden passageways of the Daedalus in search of escape . . . and Aria quite literally has nowhere to hide from the shadows of her past.

Rani, Ava. [Out of Her League](#) (HarperCollins \$18.99)

Dr. Isabelle Mercado is this close to having it all. Top of her class at the country’s most competitive orthopedic surgery residency, a dream career within reach, and a golden ticket to the wedding of the year in Paris. There’s just one problem: her ex—the one who got away—is going to be there... with his perfect new fiancée. Desperate to save face (and maybe spark a little jealousy), Isa enlists

soccer legend and global heartthrob Austin Cade to be her fake date. It’s the perfect match: after an injury and some unfortunate encounters with the press, he needs good PR and the kind of elite connections this wedding will attract. But between champagne toasts, macaron baking classes, and stolen glances under the Parisian stars, pretending starts to feel a lot like the real thing.

Roberts, Nora. [The Final Target](#) (St. Martin’s \$30)

He showed up at Arden Bowie’s debut author appearance with a copy of her novel and an eager smile. He showered her with compliments and got her autograph. Then he came to her next event. And the one after that. Dustin was just an aspiring writer who wanted advice, Arden reassured herself. But after giving in to one of his incessant invitations and chatting with him over coffee, she discovered that ignoring her inner alarm bell had been a terrible mistake. After being assaulted by Dustin, Arden’s relief at his imprisonment is tempered by anxiety when Dustin’s wealthy mother helps to get him a paltry five-year sentence at a psychiatric facility. Arden decides to write a new story for herself, moving to a tiny Oregon town and befriending Gideon, an ex-LAPD detective. But while she learns to thrive, Dustin remains his delusional, twisted self, as fixated as ever and now seething with anger. He still believes Arden’s purpose on earth is to serve and please him. And his job is to protect her. But who will protect her from him?

Runyan, Aimie K. [Missed Connections](#) (Harper Muse \$18.99) SIGNED IN JULY

After losing her job at a posh restaurant, Sabrina Sorensen heads home to California for her younger sister’s engagement party, where mother and siblings chide Sabrina for her inability to commit to any of her previous jobs and relationships. What they don’t know

is that for fifteen long years, Sabrina has been building her résumé in hopes of becoming an inspector for the famed MICHELIN guides—a path that has required keeping her ambitions hidden, even from her family. After her mother's final clumsy attempt to fix her up with the charming “boy next door,” Sabrina leaves the party and retreats to the Burbank Airport. The problem? She has nowhere to go. She arrives at the airport, resolved to put the family conflict behind her and focus on her work, but now her mother's critical voice fills her with doubts. Has she been wasting her life? Faced with the enormity of her next decision, Sabrina breaks down at the ticket counter. The ticket agent pulls her aside and offers her the life-altering opportunity to revisit some of her key life choices, both personal and professional. Sabrina suddenly is given the rare chance to answer the burning question: has she been foolish to sacrifice so much for her dream of becoming a Michelin inspector? And will a spark with an aspiring Danish chef change her priorities altogether?

Roberts, Sheila. [Love on the Shelf](#) (MIRA \$18.99)

Alice Willoughby and her mom run HEA Books, a cozy shop devoted to love stories and the people who crave them. Alice is great at matching customers with their perfect happily-ever-after...she just can't seem to find her own. Enter Parker Black, a disillusioned radio host who's reinvented himself as a romance-bashing shock jock. Bitter from his breakup with a romance author who turned love into a four-letter word, Parker takes aim at the entire genre—and his on-air rants start stirring up trouble for Alice's loyal customers and their partners. Parker's crusade leads to spirited debates and bookstore protests, but when unexpected sparks fly between the two of them Alice begins to wonder if her favorite

trope—enemies to lovers—might actually be playing out in real life. Parker may claim romance is a lie...but is he protesting a little too much?

Ryan, Kennedy. [Score](#) (Grand Central \$18.99)
More than a decade after their disastrous breakup, Verity and Monk must work together on the set of an epic Harlem Renaissance biopic. With Monk, now a world-class musician, creating the score, and Verity, an award-winning screenwriter, penning the script, there's Oscar buzz before shooting even begins. This once-in-a-lifetime project could catapult them both to new heights, but can they put the past behind them for the sake of the film ... for the sake of something more?

Smith, Dandy. [The Wedding Vow](#) (Kensington \$18.95)

Verity and Linden Lockwood vowed to spend the rest of their lives together, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, till death do they part. Five years later they've kept their promise to never let their love die, to never slip into becoming one of those couples. But a year after Linden is brutally and inexplicably murdered in their picture-perfect home, Verity's world shatters again. They're not the golden couple she thought they were. Linden had been having an affair. Determined to uncover the identity of the other woman, Verity delves into her husband's life. Everyone is a suspect: her neighbour, her best friend, her assistant ... even her cousin. But as she unearths Linden's shocking secrets, Verity realizes she didn't know her husband at all.

Waldman, Ayelet. [A Perfect Hand](#) (Knopf \$28)
SIGNED

Miss Alice Lockey, daughter of a tenant farmer, has by dint of hard work, innate intelligence, and a cunning ability to predict the moods of her betters, raised herself to the

lofty status of lady's maid to Jemima Alderwick at Alderwick Park. But when a visiting servant, a valet named Charlie Wells, catches her eye, Alice begins to understand the constraints of her position. In a ploy to spend time with the object of her affection, Alice attempts to arrange a romance between Lady Jemima Alderwick and Charlie's employer, one Baronet Sir Nigel Wynstowe. If only they would fall in love—then Alice and Charlie might live together as man and wife! Challenged by Lady Jemima's love for another and Sir Wynstowe's eccentric personality, Alice must use all of her cunning to bring about this unlikely romantic union. Or, as the beginning of women's suffrage begins to percolate in the drawing rooms and salons of London, will Alice discover a different sort of path for herself?

Warren, Tiffany L. [A Harlem Wedding](#) (Harper-Collins \$19.99)

From *The Unexpected Diva* author Tiffany Warren—a dishy and dramatic novel of the Harlem Renaissance and its most famous Black debutante, Yolande Du Bois, daughter of W.E.B. Du Bois, whose spectacular wedding to poet Countee Cullen was the society event of the year...even though the bride and groom were not-so-secretly in love with other people.

Webb, Heather. [The Hope Keeper](#) (Sourcebooks \$16.99)

Elisabeth Beaumont comes from a renowned jeweler family, but after the untimely death of her twin brother in 1919, she's left on her own to run the failing family business. Desperate for work, she approaches the affluent crowd her brother Julien once courted to expand Beaumont Jewelers. Their ringleader is wealthy socialite Evalyn McLean, owner of the world's most infamous gemstone, rumored to curse all who travel within its orbit. The Hope

Diamond. As Elisabeth is swept into Evalyn's toxic world of dark opulence, the lines defining who she is and where she belongs begin to blur, leading Elisabeth to question all she once believed. When tragedy strikes one night, not only is Elisabeth's fragile friendship with Evalyn put to the test, but her carefully constructed glamorous new life comes crashing down. Now Elisabeth must face the truth about her brother's death and decide what matters most.

Zigman, Laura. [The Author Weekend](#) (Blackstone \$29.99)

Everything needs to be just right for bestselling mystery writer Faye Wader's first-ever fan weekend. Her sales might be slipping—only a little!—but her readers still love her enough to pony up for three days and two nights on Great Misery Island. The retreat is precisely planned, from the small-batch artisanal doughnuts to the peri-menopausal Mermaid Meditation, by Faye and her beleaguered assistant, Jade—an aspiring author who can't seem to finish her own novel. Faye's long-time agent and editor will be there, as well as Faye's number one fan, Peggy Mercer, who has been first in line at every one of Faye's events. When news comes that the weekend will be crashed by glamorous, charismatic rival novelist Abby Schuss, Faye thinks things can't get worse ... until one of the attendees is found dead in her room, setting off an unexpectedly murderous chain of events that makes prepub anxiety seem like a day at the beach. How far is Faye willing to go to get exactly what she wants from her Author Weekend?

Nonfiction

Baker, Theo. [How to Rule the World](#) (Penguin \$32)

Seventeen-year-old Theo Baker showed up for freshman year at Stanford University as a tech-obsessed coder. It seemed like paradise. But Baker soon discovered a culture that embraced corner-cutting, that vested infinite excess and access in the hands of kids with few safeguards to catch bad behavior. Stanford, he realized, was less a school than a business. The product? Students. Especially those special few identified as the next trillion-dollar startup founders. For them, there were secret societies, “pre-idea” funding offers, and social calls from billionaires, all with the expectation that these geniuses would soon join the ruling elite. At the helm of this business was Marc Tessier-Lavigne, a superstar neuroscientist and wealthy biotech executive. But when Baker joined the student newspaper and started poking around the Stanford president’s record, he discovered never-reported allegations of research misconduct in studies published across two decades bearing Tessier-Lavigne’s name. This is the incredible journey of a reluctant teenage reporter who uncovered a story that shook the scientific world and became front-page news across the country.

Coyne, Tom. [A Course Called Home](#) (Avid Reader \$30)

Tom Coyne has spent his career traveling the world and playing legendary courses from St. Andrews to Shinnecock. One day, at the urging of a course superintendent who is hoping to save his local nine-hole gem from shuttering just shy of its one hundredth anniversary, Coyne pays a visit to Sullivan County Golf & Country Club in upstate New York. When he arrives, the course is buried under ice and

snow; what he can see of the clubhouse is falling apart. By the time he leaves, all he can see is his next adventure: discovering how owning a course is vastly different from playing one. *A Course Called Home* is Coyne’s most personal and profound book yet: a heartfelt and often humorous chronicle of restoration, resilience, and finding purpose in unexpected places.

Crowther, Gail. [Marilyn and Her Books](#) (Gallery \$30)

Far from the spotlights of the Hollywood film sets and the flashbulbs of the press, Marilyn Monroe was a great reader and lover of books. Her association with writers did not stop at reading their words on the page. She was, of course, briefly married to one of America’s best-known playwrights, Arthur Miller, and met a number of other writers who moved in his literary world. But she also met authors independently of Miller, many of whom were fans of her films and keen to meet her. Through her deep research, Gail Crowther delves into Marilyn’s personal book collection and recounts some of these meetings, like when she shared an apartment with Shelley Winters in West Hollywood, where they entertained Dylan Thomas and Christopher Isherwood for drinks (probably several drinks), after which Monroe arranged for Thomas to meet his childhood hero, Charlie Chaplin. Or when *Life* magazine arranged for Monroe to be interviewed by Dame Edith Sitwell at the Sunset Tower Hotel, and Sitwell was both charmed and blown away by Monroe’s intelligence.

Fitzgerald, Isaac. [American Rambler](#) (Knopf \$32)

As a child, Isaac Fitzgerald was captivated by Johnny Appleseed, drawn to the legend by family ties, his father’s larger-than-life stories, and a shared restlessness to leave home and discover what lay beyond. In *American*

Rambler, he sets out on a year-long journey to follow Appleseed's path, walking (okay, sometimes driving, and at one point, even floating downstream) from Massachusetts to Indiana. On this journey, Fitzgerald turns a childhood fascination into a profound reckoning of loss and grief, ritual and faith, grimy gas station bathrooms and scenic apple picking. A moving blend of memoir, history, and travelogue, *American Rambler* is at once an ode to the American heartland, a meditation on escaping the breakneck pace of modern life, and a clear-eyed look at the myths—often violent, sometimes hopeful, frequently romanticized—at the very core of American identity and history.

Kaufman, Sarah L. [Verb Your Enthusiasm](#) (Penguin \$28)

Verbs are the underrated stars of the English language. They hold it all together. A complete sentence cannot exist without one, yet a single verb can create complete meaning. (See?) In this brilliant exploration of language, grammar, and style, Sarah L. Kaufman illuminates how all of us, professional writers and novices alike, can master the art of the verb and unlock the infinite potential of written expression.

Kelle, Isabel. [Dogs, Boys, and Other Things I've Cried About](#) (HarperCollins \$28)

From the social media superstar behind @SimonSits, Isabel Klee—known for her heartwarming tales of dog rescue—comes an utterly winning memoir about a twenty-something woman's search for true love in New York City and the dogs who helped her find it.

Lutz, Deborah. [This Dark Night](#) (W.W. Norton \$33.99)

Emily Brontë (1818–1848) was only twenty-seven-years old when she began work on one of the most important novels in the En-

glish language. Two years later in 1847, she completed *Wuthering Heights*. It took the world almost a century to catch up to Brontë's masterpiece, and it has taken even longer to know Brontë—an elusive figure, with a ghostly legacy provoked by her early death and the loss (and likely destruction) of almost all her personal papers. Drawing on formerly inaccessible notebooks and manuscripts, *This Dark Night* constructs a portrait of Brontë, her famous writing sisters Charlotte and Anne, and the effect of their sisters' and mother's tragic deaths. In the first full-length biography in over twenty years, renowned scholar Deborah Lutz sketches the days of a woman crafting otherworldly fiction while running her father's parsonage: writing interweaving with household work, daydreaming, and exploring the rough-hewn outdoors.

Schur, Michael & Joe Posnanski. [Big Fan](#) (Penguin \$35)

Bestselling authors and podcast hosts Joe Posnanski and Mike Schur love games—almost any game!—and they bring readers to the front row (and sometimes even right onto the field). Whether ringside at WrestleMania in Las Vegas, singing along with the maniacs at the World Darts Championships in London, or just watching eight straight hours of football at a Buffalo Wild Wings in Dallas, they take us along to the very heart of what it means to love something so much it hurts. Through crushing defeats and glorious wins, whether cheering penalty kicks with 65,000 fans in Liverpool or beholding a chess master castling in dead silence, *Big Fan* is about why we love what we love and how fandom connects us in a time when so much else pulls us apart.

Sherman, Casey. [The Killer and Frank Lloyd Wright](#) (Sourcebooks \$27.99)

Frank Lloyd Wright was more than the mind behind America's most iconic buildings—

he was a man whose turbulent private life captivated a nation. The famous architect's stormy marriage to Kitty Wright and his infamous affair with another woman, Mamah Borthwick, ignited one of the country's first celebrity scandals, splashed across headlines from coast to coast. Then, in August 1914, scandal turned to horror. A tragedy at Taliesin, the Wisconsin home Wright built as a monument to love, shook the very foundation of Wright's life—and catapulted him back to the front pages of newspapers across the country as readers clamored for glimpses of his very darkest moments. In *The Killer and Frank Lloyd Wright*, New York Times bestselling author Casey Sherman delves beyond the myth of Wright's genius to reveal a man of relentless ambition, consuming passion, and devastating loss. With haunting intimacy and propulsive storytelling, Sherman delivers a portrait of an artist who could not escape the shadows of his own making—and who rose, again and again, from the ashes.

Stern, Joanna. [I Am Not a Robot](#) (HarperCollins \$32)

You've heard the hype: AI will make us healthier, give every child a personalized tutor, run our businesses more efficiently, return hours of free time to our overworked brains, and make discoveries previously unimagined by humankind. The AI future is going to be unlike any other technological revolution. But what does that really mean? And will AI truly make life better? To find out, award-winning journalist Joanna Stern surrendered her life to artificial intelligence for one year. The results are both hilarious and unsettling.