

Midmonth BookNotes

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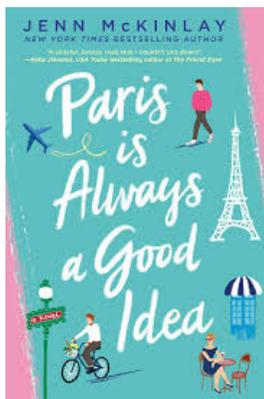
Summertime and the Reading Is Easy

Take a Trip

While traveling right now might be off the table for almost all of us, there are plenty of wonderful books that can transport you to another place including Jenn McKinlay's latest sublimely entertaining book.

McKinlay, Jenn. [Paris Is Always a Good Idea](#) (Berkley \$16)

It's been seven years since Chelsea Martin embarked on her yearlong post-college European adventure. Since then, she's lost her mother to cancer and watched her sister marry twice, while Chelsea's thrown herself into work, becoming one of the most talented fundraisers for the American Cancer Coalition, and with the exception of one annoyingly competent coworker, Jason Knightley, her status as most successful moneymaker is unquestioned. When her introverted mathematician father announces he's getting remarried – to a woman he has only known two weeks – Chelsea realizes that not only has she not been truly happy one time during the last seven years, she can't even fake being happy for her father. Now, in a last-ditch effort to recapture the elusive feeling of happiness, Chelsea decides to recreate her European sabbatical, where if Chelsea has any luck she just might stumble across one (or more) of the three men - Colin (Ireland), Jean Claude (France), and Macelino (Italy) – who stole her heart years ago, and who might just help Chelsea find it again. I found this to be the perfect literary balm for the turbulent times in which we all find ourselves and completely concur with this review from *Book-*



list, which concluded “Cozy mystery maven and contemporary romance star McKinlay proves she is also a master at romantic women’s fiction with this dazzling novel that delivers everything McKinlay’s fans expect – deliciously acerbic wit, delightfully relatable characters, and deeply funny dialogue – all deftly poured into a plot that also thoughtfully examines what true happiness really means.”

Book another destination with

Bowen, Brenda. [Enchanted August](#) (Penguin \$16)

If you loved the movie *Enchanted April* (and really, who didn't?), you will want to pick up this marvelous debut which transports the movie's setting to a picture-perfect island off the coast of Maine, where four women struggling with loss, disappointment, and overwork find a new lease on life.

Colgan, Jenny. [Where Have All the Boys Gone](#) (Morrow \$16.99)

The answer to question raised in the title of this charming book is the Scottish Highlands. In particular: Fairlie, which is now the destination of sick-of-being-single Londoner Katie, who is determined to see if the tiny town's reputation for a plethora of available men holds true.

Gaynor, Hazel and Heather Webb. [Meet Me in Monaco](#) (Morrow \$16.99)

Pretend to be a movie star (or their dreaded nemesis: a *paparazzi*) in glamorous Cannes of the 1950s in this entrancing tale of struggling perfumer Sophie Duval, who forges an unexpected friendship with Grace Kelly.

Phillips, Susan Elizabeth. [Dance Away with Me](#)
(Morrow \$28.99)

Run away to a small town high in the Tennessee mountains, where you will not only wonder at the natural beauty surrounding you but also be diverted by your sexy neighbor and the antics of the quirky residents of Tempest.

Prior, Hazel. [How the Penguins Saved Veronica](#)
(Berkley \$16)

Escape the heat of summer in deliciously cool Antarctica, where eighty-five-year-old Veronica McCree is on a mission to convince a reluctant team of scientists that they need to rescue an orphaned baby penguin.

Williams, Beatriz. [The Golden Hour](#)
(Morrow \$116.99)

Experience the gorgeous sun and warm sands of the Bahamas circa 1941 as newly widowed journalist Lenora “Lulu” Randolph arrives in Nassau to investigate the governor and his wife (the banished from England Duke and Duchess of Windsor) for a fashionable New York magazine.

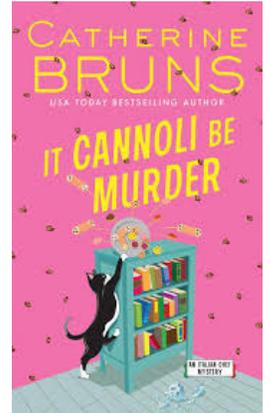
Cozy Corner

Alexander, Ellie. [Nothing Bundt Trouble](#)
(St. Martin’s \$8.99)

Spring has sprung in Ashland, Oregon, and everything at Torte seems to be coming up buttercream roses. But just when Juliet Capshaw seems to have found her sweet spot—with her staff set to handle the influx of tourists for this year’s Shakespeare festival while she moves back into her childhood home—things take a dramatic turn. Jules discovers a long-forgotten journal in her deceased father’s belongings that details one of the most controversial cases in Ashland’s history: a hit-and-run accident from the 1980s. Or was it? Now it’s up to Jules to parse through a whole new world of details from another era, from unraveling cassette tapes to recipes for Bundt cakes, before an old enemy brings the Capshaw “pastry case” to a modern-day dead end. The latest in Alexander’s award-winning Bakeshop books is a sweet treat for cozy fans, and since this particular title features a “cold case,” it makes an excellent introduction to the series for those who may not have read any before.

Bruns, Catherine. [It Cannoli Be Murder](#)
(Sourcebooks \$7.99)

Six months after her husband’s death, Tessa Esposito is hoping to drum up reservations for her restaurant’s grand opening. And since a signing with bestselling author, Preston Rigotta, is sure to draw a crowd, Tessa agrees to cater her cousin’s bookstore event, but the event soon takes a sour turn when Preston’s publicist, an old high school rival, arrives and begins to whisk up their old grudges. That night, a fight breaks out in front of the crowd, and it becomes clear there’s bad blood in Harvest Park. And when the publicist is found dead on the bookstore floor the next morning, a stray cannolo at her side, Tessa knows who will be framed as the prime suspect. This is the second in the deliciously entertaining new Italian Chef series, which debuted last year with [Penne Dreadful](#) (Sourcebooks \$7.99).



Collette, Abby. [A Deadly Inside Scoop](#)
(Berkley \$16)

Recent MBA grad Bronwyn “Win” Crewse has just taken over her family’s ice cream shop in Chagrin Falls, Ohio, and she’s going back to basics beginning with renovating Crewse Creamery, and filling the menu with delicious, homemade ice cream flavors; many from her grandmother’s original recipes. But unexpected construction delays mean Win misses the summer season, and the shop has a literal cold opening: the day she opens her doors an early first snow descends on the village and keeps the customers away. To make matters worse, that evening, Win finds a body in the snow, and it turns out the dead man was a grifter with an old feud with the Crewse family. *PW* called this fun and frosty series launch “a tasty treat for cozy fans.”

Delany, Vicki. [Tea & Treachery](#)
(Kensington \$26)

As the proud proprietor and head pastry chef of Tea by the Sea, a traditional English tearoom on the picturesque bluffs of Cape Cod, Roberts has her hands full, often literally. But nothing keeps her busier than steering her sassy grandmother, Rose, away from trouble. Rose operates the grand old Victorian B & B

adjacent to Lily's tea shop . . . for now. An aggressive real estate developer, Jack Ford, is pushing hard to rezone nearby land, with an eye toward building a sprawling golf resort, which would drive Rose and Lily out of business. Tempers are already steaming, but things really get sticky when Ford is found dead at the foot of Rose's property and the police think *she* had something to do with his dramatic demise. Lily can't let her grandmother get burned by a false murder charge. So she starts her own investigation and discovers Ford's been brewing bad blood all over town. *PW* lauded this "well-crafted series launch from Delany (The Sherlock Holmes Bookshop series)" saying "fans of culinary cozies will be sure to come back for more."

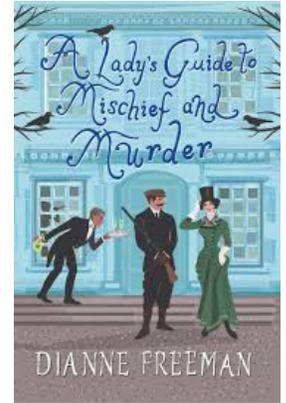
DiRico, Maria. [Here Comes the Body](#)
(Kensington \$7.99)

After her philandering husband took a powder, Mia Carina returned home to Astoria, where she now lives with her *nonna* and her oversized cat Doorstop, and works at Belle View, her father's catering hall, a popular spot for weddings, office parties, and more; despite the planes that occasionally roar overhead on their way to LaGuardia and rattle the crystal chandelier. The first thing on Mia's work to-do list is planning a bachelor party for a less-than-gentlemanly groom. But it goes awry when the gigantic cake is wheeled in and a deadly surprise is revealed. Since some of Mia's family associates are on the shady side, the NYPD wastes no time in casting suspicion on Mia's father. Now, Mia's going to have to use all her street smarts to keep him out of Rikers Island. This is the first in the author's new Catering Hall Mystery series

Freeman, Dianne. [A Lady's Guide to Mischief and Murder](#) (Kensington \$26)

Frances, the widowed Countess of Harleigh, desperately needs a venue for her sister Lily's imminent wedding (let's just say the happy couple jumped the gun celebrating before taking their vows, and now time is of the essence to marry). So, when Frances' neighbor and very good friend George Hazleton offers the use of his family's Hampshire estate Risings, Frances thinks all of her prayers have been answered. But soon after the guests have gathered at Risings to attend the ceremony and enjoy the usual country pursuits (shooting, horseback riding, and romantic interludes in secluded gardens), mysterious accidents begin befalling both the guests and the estate's staff

alike. Frances suspects these "accidents" are deliberate attempts to harm Lily's fiancé Leo, and unless Frances can quickly flush out the culprit, the peal of wedding bells may give way to the toll of funeral bells. Miss watching *Downton Abbey*? Freeman's Agatha award-winning new series is the perfect literary substitute. Not only does the latest in the Countess of Harleigh series by Freeman deftly capture the manners and mores of the time, her writing is spiced with the same delectably dry sense of wit that the Dowager Countess of Grantham, Violet Crawley, wielded with such aplomb. Start with [A Lady's Guide to Gossip and Murder](#) (Kensington \$15.95).



Gerber, Daryl Wood. [A Sprinkling of Murder](#)
(Kensington \$15.95)

Since childhood, Courtney Kelly has loved fairies. After her mother died when Courtney was ten, she lost touch with that feeling of magic. A year ago, at age twenty-nine, she rediscovered it when she left her father's landscaping business to spread her wings and start a fairy garden business and teashop in beautiful Carmel, California. At Open Your Imagination, Courtney teaches garden design and sells everything from fairy figurines to tinkling wind chimes. Now she's starting a book club tea. But the light of the magical world she's created inside her shop is darkened one night when she discovers neighboring dog-grooming business owner Mick Watkins dead beside her patio fountain. To make matters worse, the police suspect Courtney of the crime. To clear her name and find the real killer, Courtney will have to wing it. But she's about to get a little help from an unexpected source. According to *PW*'s review of this "enchanted series launch," Agatha Award-winning Gerber "makes what could have been unbearably cute convincing. Cozy fans will wish upon a star for more."

Harris, Sherry. [From Beer to Eternity](#)
(Kensington \$7.99)

Chloe Jackson is making good on a promise: help her late friend's grandmother run the Sea Glass Saloon in the Florida Panhandle. To Chloe's surprise, feisty Vivi Slidell isn't the frail retiree Chloe expects. And

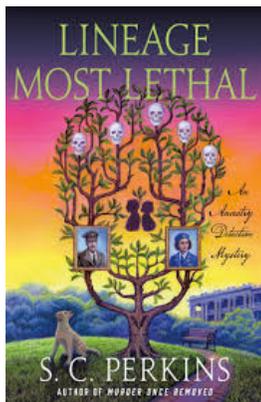
Emerald Cove is less a sleepy fishing village than a panhandle hotspot overrun with land developers and tourists. When a Sea Glass regular who's mysteriously crossed the cranky Vivi is found dead behind the bar, guess who's the number one suspect? In trying to clear Vivi's name, Chloe discovers the old woman isn't the only one in Emerald Cove with secrets. Under the laidback attitude, sparkling white beaches, and small town ways something terrible is brewing. And the sure way a killer can keep those secrets bottled up is to finish off one murder with a double shot: aimed at Chloe and Vivi. This is the launch for the author's new Sea Glass Saloon series.

Herbert, A.L. [Murder with Honey Ham Biscuits](#)
(Kensington \$26)

When Halia Watkins, the owner of Mahalia's Sweet Tea, is invited to serve as a guest judge on the popular cooking competition show *Elite Chef*, she's delighted to add some extra flavor to the mix. But as filming ramps up in Washington D.C., there are too many fiery personalities in the kitchen. Halia discovers that pulling off her small screen debut unscathed means contending with a longtime competing restaurant owner, an infamously crass hospitality mogul, and a group of cutthroat contestants vying for culinary glory. The competition sizzles with only a few finalists left standing, and goes cold when the gorgeous young frontrunner is found dead. This is the latest tasty entry in Herbert's Mahalia Watkin's series that began with [Murder with Fried Chicken and Waffles](#) (Kensington \$7.99).

Perkins, S.C. [Lineage Most Lethal](#)
(St. Martin's \$26.99)

It's the week before New Year's Eve and genealogist Lucy Lancaster is ready to mix work and play at the beautiful Hotel Sutton, enjoying herself while finalizing the presentation for her latest client, hotel heiress Pippa Sutton. However, shortly after arriving at the hotel, Lucy is stopped in her tracks when a strange man comes staggering toward her. She barely has time to notice his weak, sweaty appearance before he presses a classic Montblanc pen onto her hand, gasps, "Keep them safe," and



collapses at her feet, dead. When Lucy shows the fountain pen to her grandfather, an avid collector and World War II veteran, she's in for another shock. Not only does Grandpa recognize the Montblanc, he also reveals a secret: he was an Allied spy during the war and the pen is both a message regarding one of his wartime missions and the key to reading a microdot left by the dead man. I was crazy for [Murder Once Removed](#) (St. Martin's \$7.99), the first in Perkin's Ancestry Detective series, which not only won the Malice Domestic Best First Traditional Mystery competition, but then went on to final in the Agatha awards. I was equally delighted with *Lineage Most Lethal*.

Historical Fiction, Mysteries, Romance, and More

Allain, Suzanne. [Mr. Malcolm's List](#)
(Berkley \$16)

After several years spent searching for a wife who will meet the qualifications on his own well-crafted list, the Honorable Mr. Jeremy Malcolm is beginning to despair of ever finding this paragon. Until Selina Dalton arrives in town. Selina, a vicar's daughter of limited means and a stranger to high society, is thrilled when her friend Julia Thistlewaite invites her to London, until she learns it's all part of a plot to exact revenge on Mr. Malcolm. Selina is reluctant to participate in Julia's scheme, especially after meeting the irresistible Mr. Malcolm, who appears to be very different from the arrogant scoundrel of Julia's description. But when Mr. Malcolm begins judging Selina against his unattainable standards, Selina decides that what is fit for the goose is fit for the gander. *PW* called this "effervescent" love story "a charmer," and I completely agree.

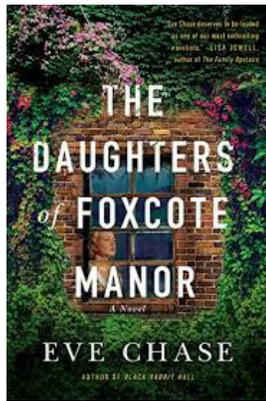
Center, Katherine. [What You Wish For](#)
(St. Martin's \$27.99)

Samantha Casey loves everything about her job as an elementary school librarian on the sunny, historic island of Galveston, Texas—the goofy kids, the stately Victorian building, the butterfly garden. But when the school suddenly loses its beloved principal, it turns out his replacement will be none other than Duncan Carpenter—a former, unrequited crush of Sam's from many years before. When Duncan shows up as her new boss, though, he's nothing like the sweet teacher she once swooned over. He's become stiff, and humorless, and obsessed with school safety. Now, with

Duncan determined to destroy everything Sam loves about her school in the name of security-and turn it into nothing short of a prison-Sam has to stand up for everyone she cares about before the school that's become her home is gone for good. *Kirkus* had this to say "The story's message, that people should choose joy even (and especially) in difficult and painful times, seems tailor-made for this moment. A timely, uplifting read about finding joy in the midst of tragedy, filled with quirky characters and comforting warmth."

Chase, Eve. [The Daughters of Foxcote Manor](#) (Putnam \$27)

England, 1970. On the one-year anniversary of the Harrington family's darkest night, their beautiful London home goes up in flames. Mrs. Harrington, the two children, and live-in nanny Rita relocate to Foxcote Manor, ostensibly to recuperate. But the creeping forest, where lost things have a way of coming back, is not as restful as it seems. When thirteen-year-old Hera discovers a baby girl abandoned just beyond their garden gate, this tiniest, most wondrous of secrets brings a much-needed sunlit peace, until a visitor detonates the family's tenuous happiness. All too soon a body lies dead in the woods. Forty years later, London-based Sylvie is an expert at looking the other way. It's how she stayed married to her unfaithful husband for more than twenty years. But she's turned over a new leaf, having left him for a fresh start. She buried her own origin story decades ago, never imagining her teenage daughter would have a shocking reason to dig the past up--and to ask Sylvie to finally face the secrets that lead her back to Foxcote Manor. *PW* said "Gothic suspense fans will be delighted" with this atmospheric mystery from British author Chase.



Daria, Alexis. [You Had Me at Hola](#) (Avon \$15.99)

After a messy public breakup, soap opera darling Jasmine Lin Rodriguez finds her face splashed across the tabloids. When she returns to her hometown of New York City to film the starring role in a bilingual romantic comedy for the number one streaming service in

the country, Jasmine figures her new "Leading Lady Plan" should be easy enough to follow; until a casting shake-up pairs her with telenovela hunk Ashton Suárez. After his last telenovela character was killed off, Ashton is worried his career is dead as well. Joining this new cast as a last-minute addition will give him the chance to show off his acting chops to American audiences and ping the radar of Hollywood casting agents. To make it work, he'll need to generate smoking-hot on-screen chemistry with Jasmine. Easier said than done, especially when a disastrous first impression smothers the embers of whatever sexual heat they might have had. With their careers on the line, Jasmine and Ashton agree to rehearse in private. But rehearsal leads to kissing, and kissing leads to a behind-the-scenes romance worthy of a soap opera. While their on-screen performance improves, the media spotlight on Jasmine soon threatens to destroy her new image and expose Ashton's most closely guarded secret. *PW* concluded their starred review of this steamy rom-com with "Daria breathes effortless life into a cast of messy, loving, talented, and downright hilarious characters reader will adore. A sense of Latinx culture and pride exudes from every page, elevating an already entertaining story. Romance fans won't want to miss this."

Davis, Fiona. [The Lions of Fifth Avenue](#) (Dutton \$27)

It's 1913, and on the surface, Laura Lyons couldn't ask for more out of life; her husband is the superintendent of the New York Public Library, allowing their family to live in an apartment within the grand building, and they are blessed with two children. But headstrong, passionate Laura wants more, and when she takes a leap of faith and applies to the Columbia Journalism School, her world is cracked wide open. As her studies take her all over the city, she is drawn to Greenwich Village's new bohemia, where she discovers the Heterodoxy Club; a radical, all-female group in which women are encouraged to loudly share their opinions on suffrage, birth control, and women's rights. Soon, Laura finds herself questioning her traditional role as wife and mother. But when valuable books are stolen back at the library, threatening the home and institution she loves, she's forced to confront her shifting priorities head on . . . and may just lose everything in the process. Eighty years later, in 1993, Sadie Donovan struggles with the legacy of her grandmother, the famous essayist Laura Lyons, especially after she's wrangled her dream job as a curator

at the New York Public Library. But the job quickly becomes a nightmare when rare manuscripts, notes, and books for the exhibit Sadie's running begin disappearing from the library's famous Berg Collection. Determined to save both the exhibit and her career, the typically risk-adverse Sadie teams up with a private security expert to uncover the culprit. However, things unexpectedly become personal when the investigation leads Sadie to some unwelcome truths about her own family heritage; truths that shed new light on the biggest tragedy in the library's history. *PW* ended their review with "Davis illuminates the world of special books through keen descriptions of the library and rare book dealers, while leading readers through the twin mysteries of the missing books. The characters and story are stellar, but the real star of the show is the library, which Davis evokes beautifully."

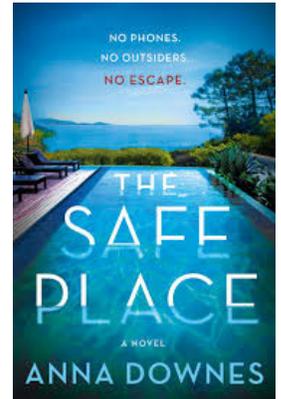
Donoghue, Emma. [The Pull of the Stars](#)
(Little, Brown \$27.99)

In an Ireland doubly ravaged by war and disease, Nurse Julia Power works at an understaffed hospital in the city center, where expectant mothers who have come down with the terrible new flu are quarantined together. Into Julia's regimented world step two outsiders -- Doctor Kathleen Lynn, a rumored Rebel on the run from the police, and a young volunteer helper, Bridie Sweeney. In the darkness and intensity of this tiny ward, over three days, these women change each other's lives in unexpected ways. They lose patients to this baffling pandemic, but they also shepherd new life into a fearful world. With tireless tenderness and humanity, carers and mothers alike somehow do their impossible work. While set during the 1918 flu epidemic, Donoghue's latest mesmerizing novel has a remarkable contemporary resonance. *Kirkus* called it "Darkly compelling, illuminated by the light of compassion and tenderness; Donoghue's best novel since *Room*."

Downes, Anna. [The Safe Place](#)
(St. Martin's \$26.99)

Emily Proudman just lost her acting agent, her job, and her apartment in one miserable day. So, of course when her old boss financial investment wizard Scott Denny turns right around and offers her a new position – details to be worked out at a later date – Emily can't say yes fast enough. The job turns out to be that of summer housekeeper/cook/nanny/assis-

tant to Scot's wife Nina, who lives with their medically challenged young daughter Aurelia on the Denny's remote, beautiful estate in the French countryside. Initially enchanted by the lovely Nina and the "quirky" Aurelia, Emily falls headlong into this oasis of wine-soaked days by the pool. But soon Emily discovers her new employers are hiding secrets, and if she doesn't play along, the consequences could be deadly. Downes deftly channels her own inner Daphne du Maurier, in initial stages of this marvelously spooky debut what with the book's naïve young protagonist, dashing mysterious older man, a wife that seems to be perfection personified, and an elegant (if creepy in the corners) estate that comes complete with its own moniker of *Querencia* (the place where one's strength is drawn from, where one feels at home). But midway through, the book takes a turn to the darker gothic world of Shirley Jackson (*We Have Always Lived in the Castle*). Mesmerizing and unsettling in equal measures.



Forry, Lauren A. [They Did Bad Things](#)
(Arcade Crimewise \$25.99)

In 1995, six university students moved into the house at 215 Caldwell Street. Months later, one of them was found dead on the sofa the morning after their end-of-year party. His death was ruled an accident by the police. The remaining five all knew it wasn't, and though they went on with their lives, the truth of what happened to their sixth housemate couldn't stay buried forever. Twenty years later, all five of them arrive - lured separately under various pretenses - at Wolfheather House, a crumbling, secluded mansion on the Scottish isle of Doon. Trapped inside with no way out and no signal to the outside world, the now forty-somethings fight each other, and the unknown mastermind behind their gathering, as they confront the role they played in their old housemate's death. They are given one choice: confess to their crimes or die. *PW* gave this a star saying "Forry expertly maintains the nail-biting suspense while fully developing her characters. Agatha Christie fans won't want to miss this one" Though I would add that like Christie's brilliant *And Then There Were None*, readers will be hard pressed to find any character in this dark and compelling book that they might actually like.

Frazier, Jean Kyoung. [Pizza Girl](#)
(Doubleday \$24.95)

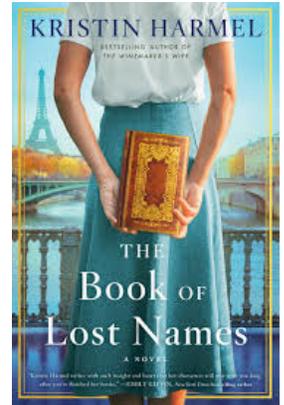
Eighteen years old, pregnant, and working as a pizza delivery girl in suburban Los Angeles, our charmingly dysfunctional heroine is deeply lost and in complete denial about it all. She's grieving the death of her father (whom she has more in common with than she'd like to admit), avoiding her supportive mom and loving boyfriend, and flagrantly ignoring her future. Her world is further upended when she becomes obsessed with Jenny, a stay-at-home mother new to the neighborhood, who comes to depend on weekly deliveries of pickled-covered pizzas for her son's happiness. As one woman looks toward motherhood and the other toward middle age, the relationship between the two begins to blur in strange, complicated, and ultimately heartbreaking ways. This debut got a major write-up in the *New York Times Book Review* as well as some review love from a number of sources including *PW* which said "This infectious evocation of a young woman's slackerdom will appeal to fans of Halle Butler and Ottessa Moshfegh, and will make it difficult not to root for the troubled and spirited pizza girl."

Hall, Alexis. [Boyfriend Material](#)
(Sourcebooks \$14.99)

Luc O'Donnell is tangentially—and reluctantly—famous. His rock star parents split when he was young, and the father he's never met spent the next twenty years cruising in and out of rehab. Now that his dad's making a comeback, Luc's back in the public eye, and one compromising photo is enough to ruin everything. To clean up his image, Luc has to find a nice, normal relationship...and Oliver Blackwood is as nice and normal as they come. He's a barrister, an ethical vegetarian, and he's never inspired a moment of scandal in his life. In other words: perfect boyfriend material. Unfortunately apart from being gay, single, and really, really in need of a date for a big event, Luc and Oliver have nothing in common. So they strike a deal to be publicity-friendly (fake) boyfriends until the dust has settled. Then they can go their separate ways and pretend it never happened. But the thing about fake-dating is that it can feel a lot like real-dating. And that's when you get used to someone. Start falling for them. Don't ever want to let them go. *PW* said Hall "breathes new life into the fake-dating trope, with this effervescent queer rom-com."

Harmel, Kristin. [The Book of Lost Names](#)
(Gallery \$27.99)

Eva Traube Abrams, a semi-retired librarian in Florida, is shelving books one morning when her eyes lock on a photograph in a magazine lying open nearby. She freezes; it's an image of a book she hasn't seen in sixty-five years; a book she recognizes as *The Book of Lost Names*. The accompanying article discusses the looting of libraries by the Nazis across Europe during World War II, an experience Eva remembers well, and the search to reunite people with the texts taken from them so long ago. The book in the photograph, an eighteenth-century religious text thought to have been taken from France in the waning days of the war, is one of the most fascinating cases. Now housed in Berlin's *Zentral- und Landesbibliothek* library, it appears to contain some sort of code, but researchers don't know where it came from; or what the code means. Only Eva holds the answer; but will she have the strength to revisit old memories and help reunite those lost during the war? When it came time to create the plot for her latest heart-wrenching historical novel, Harmel was inspired by a true story from World War II about a young woman with a talent for forgery, who helped hundreds of Jewish children escape the Nazis.



Jarvis, Nicole. [The Lights of Prague](#)
(Titan \$14.95)

On the quiet streets of Prague all manner of otherworldly creatures lurk in the shadows. Unbeknownst to its citizens, their only hope against the tide of predators are the dauntless lamplighters - a secret elite of monster hunters whose light staves off the darkness each night. Lamplighter Domek Myska leads a life teeming with fraught encounters with the worst kind of evil: *pijavica*, bloodthirsty and soulless vampiric creatures. Despite this, Domek finds solace in his moments spent in the company of his friend, the clever and beautiful Lady Ora Fischer - a widow with secrets of her own. When Domek finds himself stalked by the spirit of the White Lady - a ghost who haunts the baroque halls of Prague castle - he stumbles across the sentient essence of a will-

o'-the-wisp, a mischievous spirit known to lead lost travellers to their death, but who, once captured, are bound to serve the desires of their owners. After discovering a conspiracy amongst the *pjavica* that could see them unleash terror on the daylight world, Domek finds himself in a race against those who aim to twist alchemical science for their own dangerous gain. PW observed that “Jarvis debuts with a refreshing historical fantasy about class and power in 19th century Prague.”

Kwan, Kevin. [Sex and Vanity](#)
(Knopf \$26.95)

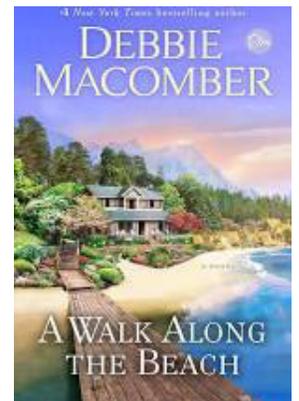
On her very first morning on the jewel-like island of Capri, Lucie Churchill sets eyes on George Zao and she instantly can't stand him. She can't stand it when he gallantly offers to trade hotel rooms with her so that she can have a view of the Tyrrhenian Sea, she can't stand that he knows more about Casa Malaparte than she does, and she really can't stand it when he kisses her in the darkness of the ancient ruins of a Roman villa and they are caught by her snobbish, disapproving cousin Charlotte. “Your mother is Chinese so it's no surprise you'd be attracted to someone like him,” Charlotte teases. The daughter of an American-born Chinese mother and a blue-blooded New York father, Lucie has always sublimated the Asian side of herself in favor of the white side, and she adamantly denies having feelings for George. But several years later, when George unexpectedly appears in East Hampton, where Lucie is weekend-ing with her new fiancé, Lucie finds herself drawn to George again. Soon, Lucie is spinning a web of deceit that involves her family, her fiancé, the co-op board of her Fifth Avenue apartment building, and ultimately herself as she tries mightily to deny George entry into her world--and her heart. Sound a bit familiar? Well, that is because Kwan, author of the insanely popular *Crazy Rich Asians* trilogy, decided to offer his own homage to E. M. Forster's *A Room with a View* in his latest gimlet-eyed look at the lifestyles of the rich and famous, in which he strove “to capture the delirious, frustrating, magical experience of first love, the intoxicating atmosphere of Italy in the summertime, and the comedy of manners that plays out within a privileged set people in often absurd (but hopefully entertaining) ways.

Lee, Jayci. [A Sweet Mess](#)
(St. Martin's \$16.99)

Aubrey Choi has been content running her highly successful bakery Comfort Zone and with its first expansion taking up all of her time, dating has been the least of her priorities. Then a one-night-stand with gorgeous Korean hunk Landon Kim makes her want things she didn't think she had time for. Too bad it turns out he's a celebrity food critic whose scathing review of Comfort Zone goes viral and nearly destroys Aubrey's business—and her fond memory of their night together. Landon tries to clean up the mess he made by offering Aubrey a spot on the new celebrity cooking show he's producing. She agrees to use this as a way to save her bakery and her reputation—no thanks to him—but vows to guard her heart. Now Aubrey and Landon find themselves sharing a villa in California wine country, which is a guaranteed recipe for disaster. For the next three weeks, baker and critic will tempt each other as they struggle to resist admitting that they have all the necessary ingredients for love.

Macomber, Debbie. [A Walk Along the Beach](#)
(Ballantine \$27)

The Lakey sisters are perfect opposites. After their mother died and their father was lost in grief, Willa had no choice but to raise her sister, Harper, and their brother, Lucas. Then, as an adult, she put her own life on hold to nurse Harper through a terrifying illness. Now that Harper is better and the sisters are living as roommates, Willa has realized her dream of running her own bakery and coffee shop, bringing her special brand of caretaking to the whole Oceanside community. Harper, on the other hand, is always on the go. Overcoming a terrible illness has given her a new lease on life, and she does not intend to waste it. When Harper announces her plan to summit Mount Rainier, Willa fears she may be pushing herself too far. Harper, for her part, urges Willa to stop worrying and do something outside of her comfort zone; like taking a chance on love with a handsome new customer. Sean O'Malley is as charming as he is intriguing; a freelance photographer whose assignments



take him to the ends of the earth. Soon Willa's falling for him in a way that is both exciting and terrifying. But life has taught Willa to hedge her bets, and she wonders whether the potential heartache is worth the risk. Life has more challenges in store for them all. But both sisters will discover that even in the darkest moments, family is everything.

Rees, Celia. [Miss Graham's Cold War Cookbook](#) (HarperCollins \$16.99)

World War II has just ended, and Britain has established the Control Commission for Germany, which oversees their zone of occupation. The Control Commission hires British civilians to work in Germany, rebuild the shattered nation and prosecute war crimes. Somewhat aimless, bored with her job as a provincial schoolteacher, and unwilling to live with her overbearing mother any longer, thirty-something Edith Graham applies for a job with the Commission, but she is also recruited by her cousin, Leo, who is in the Secret Service. To them, Edith is perfect spy material...single, ordinary-looking, with a college degree in German. Cousin Leo went to Oxford with one of their most hunted war criminals, Count Kurt von Stavenow, who Edith remembers all too well from before the war. He wants her to find him. Intrigued by the challenge, Edith heads to Germany armed with a convincing cover story: she's an unassuming Education Officer sent to help resurrect German schools. To send information back to her Secret Service handlers in London, Edith has crafted the perfect alter ego, cookbook author Stella Snelling, who writes a popular magazine cookery column. She embeds crucial intelligence within the recipes she collects. But occupied Germany is awash with other spies, collaborators, and opportunists, and as she's pulled into their world, Edith soon discovers that no one is what they seem to be. The closer she gets to uncovering von Stavenow's whereabouts--and the network of German civilians who still support him--the greater the danger.

Riley, Vanessa. [A Duke, the Lady, and a Baby](#) (Kensington \$15.95)

When headstrong West Indian heiress Patience Jordan questioned her English husband's mysterious suicide, she lost everything: her newborn son, Lionel, her fortune, and her freedom. Falsely imprisoned, she risks her life to be near her child, until The Widow's Grace gets her hired as her own son's nanny. But working for his unsuspecting new guardian, Busick

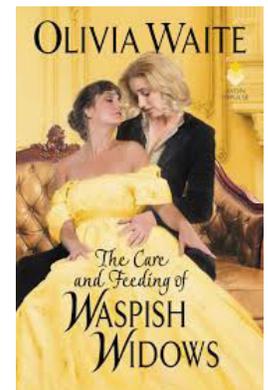
Strathmore, Duke of Repington, has perils of its own. Especially when Patience discovers his military strictness belies an ex-rake of unswerving honor and unexpected passion. A wounded military hero, Busick is determined to resolve his dead cousin's dangerous financial dealings for Lionel's sake. But his investigation is a minor skirmish compared to dealing with the forthright, courageous, and alluring Patience. Somehow, she's breaking his rules, and sweeping past his defenses. Soon, between formidable enemies and obstacles, they form a fragile trust, but will it be enough to save the future they long to dare together?

Turnbull, Bryn. [The Woman Before Wallis](#) (MIRA \$17.99)

In the summer of 1926, when Thelma Morgan marries Viscount Duke Furness after a whirlwind romance, she's immersed in a gilded world of extraordinary wealth and privilege. For Thelma, the daughter of an American diplomat, her new life as a member of the British aristocracy is like a fairy tale; even more so when her husband introduces her to Edward, Prince of Wales. In a twist of fate, her marriage to Duke leads her to fall headlong into a love affair with Edward. But happiness is fleeting, and their love is threatened when Thelma's sister, Gloria Morgan Vanderbilt, becomes embroiled in a scandal with far-reaching implications. As Thelma sails to New York to support Gloria, she leaves Edward in the hands of her trusted friend Wallis, never imagining the consequences that will follow.

Waite, Olivia. [The Care and Feeding of Waspish Widows](#) (Avon \$6.99)

When Agatha Griffin finds a colony of bees in her warehouse, it's the not-so-perfect ending to a not-so-perfect week. Busy trying to keep her printing business afloat amidst rising taxes and the suppression of radical printers like her son, the last thing the widow wants is to be the victim of a thousand bees. But when a beautiful beekeeper arrives to take care of the pests, Agatha may be in danger of being stung by something far more dangerous. Penelope Flood exists between two worlds in her small seaside town, the society of rich landowners and the tradesfolk. Soon, tensions boil over when the formerly



exiled Queen arrives on England's shores, and when Penelope's long-absent husband returns to Melliton, she once again finds herself torn, between her burgeoning love for Agatha and her loyalty to the man who once gave her refuge. As Penelope finally discovers her true place, Agatha must learn to accept the changing world in front of her. But will these longing hearts settle for a safe but stale existence or will they learn to fight for the future they most desire?

Webber, Heather. [South of the Buttonwood Tree](#)
(Tom Doherty \$25.99)

Blue Bishop has a knack for finding lost things. While growing up in charming small-town Buttonwood, Alabama, she's happened across lost wallets, jewelry, pets, her wandering neighbor, and sometimes, trouble. No one is more surprised than Blue, however, when she comes across an abandoned newborn baby in the woods, just south of a very special buttonwood tree. Sarah Grace Landreneau Fulton is at a crossroads. She has always tried so hard to do the right thing, but her own mother would disown her if she ever learned half of Sarah Grace's secrets. The unexpected discovery of the newborn baby girl will alter Blue's and Sarah Grace's lives forever. Both women must fight for what they truly want in life and for who they love. In doing so, they uncover long-held secrets that reveal exactly who they really are—and what they're willing to sacrifice in the name of family.

Winfrey, Kerry. [Not Like the Movies](#)
(Berkley \$16)

Chloe Sanderson is an optimist, and not because her life is easy. As the sole caregiver for her father, who has early-onset Alzheimer's, she's pretty much responsible for everything.

She has no time or interest in getting swept up in some dazzling romance. Not like her best friend, Annie, who literally wrote a rom-com that's about to premiere in theaters across America...and that happens to be inspired by Chloe and her cute but no-nonsense boss, Nick Velez.

As the buzz for the movie grows, Chloe reads one too many listicles about why Nick is the perfect man, and now she can't see him as anything but Reason #4: The

scruffy-bearded hunk who's always there when you need him. But unlike the romance Annie has written for them, Chloe isn't so sure her own story will end in a happily-ever-after.

