



# Page Turners

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## Monroe Township Library

### Books with Bite (Cooking/Holiday)

### December 2025

**A Very Merry Bromance – by Adams, Lyssa Kay**

**ROMANCE ADAMS**

Tis the season for a Bromance Book Club matchmaking mission! This time, they're pulling out the mistletoe for everyone's favorite country music star, Colton, and his second chance at love. Country music's golden boy Colton Wheeler felt the most perfect harmony when he was with Gretchen Winthrop. But for her, it was a love him and leave him situation. A year later, Colton is struggling to push his music forward in a new direction. If it weren't about to be the most magical time of year and the support of the Bromance Book Club, he'd be wallowing in self-pity. It's hard for immigration attorney Gretchen not to feel a little Scrooge-ish about the excess of Christmas when her clients are scrambling to afford their rent. So, when her estranged, wealthy family reaches out with an offer that will allow her to better serve the community, she's unable to say no. She just needs to convince Colton to be the new face of her family's whiskey brand. No big deal... Colton agrees to consider Gretchen's offer in exchange for three dates before Christmas. With the help of the Bromance Book Club, Colton throws himself into the task of proving to her there's a spark between them. But Gretchen and Colton will both need to overcome the ghosts of Christmas past to build a future together.

**Ritz and Escoffier: The Hotelier, The Chef, and the Rise of the leisure Class**  
 – by Barr, Luke                      647.9409 BAR (Available through the Consortium)

In early August 1889, Cesar Ritz, a Swiss hotelier highly regarded for his exquisite taste, found himself at the Savoy Hotel in London. He had come at the request of Richard D'Oyly Carte, the financier of Gilbert & Sullivan's comic operas, who had modernized theater and was now looking to create the world's best hotel. D'Oyly Carte soon seduced Ritz to move to London with his team, which included Auguste Escoffier, the chef de cuisine known for his elevated, original dishes. The result was a hotel and restaurant like no one had ever experienced, run in often mysterious and always extravagant ways--which created quite a scandal once exposed.

**Kitchen Confidential: Adventures in the Culinary Underbelly - by Bourdain, Anthony**  
     B BOURDAIN (Available through the Consortium)

Over two decades ago, the New Yorker published a now infamous article, "Don't Eat Before Reading This," by then little-known chef Anthony Bourdain. Bourdain spared no one's appetite as he revealed what happens behind the kitchen door. The article was a sensation, and the book it spawned, the now iconic Kitchen Confidential, became an even bigger sensation and mega bestseller. Frankly confessional, addictively acerbic, and utterly unsparing, Bourdain pulls no punches in this memoir of his years in the restaurant business.

Fans will love to return to this deliciously funny, delectably shocking banquet of wild-but-true tales of life in the culinary trade, laying out Bourdain's more than a quarter-century of drugs, sex, and haute cuisine. Including a handwritten introduction and annotations done by Bourdain about a decade after the book was originally published, this edition also features previously unpublished photos to accompany the now-classic text.

**Recipe for a Perfect Wife – by Brown, Karma**    FIC BROWN

Alice Hale left a career in publicity to become a writer and follow her husband to the New York suburbs. Unaccustomed to filling her days alone in a big, empty house, she is captivated by a vintage cookbook found buried in a box in the old home's basement, and by the cookbook's previous owner. As Alice cooks her way through 1950s housewife Nellie Murdoch's past, she realizes that within the cookbook's pages are clues about Nellie's life-- including an unsent letters penned to her mother. Uncovering a more sinister side to Nellie's marriage, Alice begins to take control of her life-- and protect herself with a few secrets of her own.

**My Life in France – by Child, Julia**    B CHILD

The legendary food expert describes her years in Paris, Marseille, and Provence and her journey from a young woman who could not cook or speak any French to the publication of her cookbooks and becoming "The French Chef."

**Recipe for Persuasion – by Dev, Sonali****ROMANCE DEV**

When chef Ashan Raje joins the cast of a hit reality television show to save her restaurant, she finds herself paired with her first love, soccer star and celebrity Rico Silva.

**Heartburn – by Ephron, Nora****FIC EPHRON (Available through the Consortium)**

Cookbook author Rachel Samstat--out of analysis and seven months pregnant--discovers that her husband is into analysis and an affair and suffers six weeks of intensive heartburn.

**Like Water for Chocolate – by Esquirel, Laura****FIC ESQUIVEL**

This classic love story takes place on the De la Garza ranch, as the tyrannical owner, Mama Elena, chops onions at the kitchen table in her final days of pregnancy. While still in her mother's womb, her daughter to be weeps so violently she causes an early labor, and little Tita slips out amid the spices and fixings for noodle soup. This early encounter with food soon becomes a way of life, and Tita grows up to be a master chef, using cooking to express herself and sharing recipes with readers along the way.

**Love and Saffron – by Fay, Kim****FIC FAY**

In the vein of the classic 84, Charing Cross Road and Meet Me at the Museum, this witty and tender novel follows two women in 1960s America as they discover that food really does connect us all, and that friendship and laughter are the best medicine.

**Lessons in Chemistry – by Garmus, Bonnie****FIC GARMUS**

Chemist Elizabeth Zott is not your average woman. In fact, Elizabeth Zott would be the first to point out that there is no such thing as an average woman. But it's the early 1960s and her all-male team at Hastings Research Institute takes a very unscientific view of equality. Except for one: Calvin Evans; the lonely, brilliant, Nobel-prize nominated grudge-holder who falls in love with--of all things--her mind. True chemistry results. But like science, life is unpredictable. Which is why a few years later Elizabeth Zott finds herself not only a single mother, but the reluctant star of America's most beloved cooking show Supper at Six. Elizabeth's unusual approach to cooking ('combine one tablespoon acetic acid with a pinch of sodium chloride') proves revolutionary. But as her following grows, not everyone is happy. Because as it turns out, Elizabeth Zott isn't just teaching women to cook. She's daring them to change the status quo.

**Be Ready When Luck Happens – by Garten, Ina****B GARTEN**

Ina Garten, the author of thirteen best-selling cookbooks, beloved Food Network personality, Instagram sensation, and the cultural icon whose face has launched a thousand memes, shares her personal story with readers hungry for a seat at her table.

### The Cookbook Collector – by Goodman, Allegra FIC GOODMAN

Twenty-eight-year-old Emily is the CEO of Veritech, twenty-three-year-old Jess is an environmental activist and graduate student in philosophy. Pragmatic Emily is making a fortune in Silicon Valley, romantic Jess works in an antiquarian bookstore. Emily is rational and driven, while Jess is dreamy and whimsical. Emily's boyfriend, Jonathan, is fantastically successful. Jess's boyfriends, not so much, as her employer George points out in what he hopes is a completely disinterested way.

### Savvy Summers and the Sweet Potato Crimes – by Jackson-Opoku, Sandra MYS JACKSON-OPOKU

When Savvy Summers first opened Essie's soul food café, she never expected her customer-favorite sweet potato pie to become the center of a murder investigation. But when Grandy Jaspers, the 75-year-old neighborhood womanizer, drops dead at table two, she suddenly has more to worry about than just maintaining Essie's reputation for the finest soul food in the Chicagoland area. Even as the police deem Grandy's death an accident, Savvy quickly finds herself—and her beloved café—in the middle of an entire city's worth of bad press. Desperate to clear her name and keep her business afloat, Savvy and her snooping assistant manager, Penny Lopés, take it upon themselves to find who really killed Grandy. But with a slimy investor harassing her to sell her name and business, customers avoiding her sweet potato pie like the plague, and her police sergeant ex-husband suddenly back in the picture, will Savvy be able to clear the café's name and solve Grandy's murder before it all falls apart? After all, while Savvy always said her sweet potato pie was to die for, she never meant literally.

### Spiced: A Pastry Chef's True Stories of Trials by Fire, After- Hours Exploits and What Really Goes on in the Kitchen – by Jurgensen, Dalia

641.5092 JUR (Available through the Consortium)

Spiced is Dalia Jurgensen's memoir of leaving her office job and pursuing her dream of becoming a chef. Eventually landing the job of pastry chef for a three-star New York restaurant, she recounts with endearing candor the dry cakes and burned pots of her early internships, and the sweat, sheer determination, and finely tuned taste buds—as well as resilient ego and sense of humor—that won her spots in world-class restaurant kitchens. With wit and an appreciation for raunchy insults, she reveals the secrets to holding your own in male-dominated kitchens, surviving after-hours staff parties, and turning out perfect plates when you know you're cooking for a poorly disguised restaurant critic. She even confesses to a clandestine romance with her chef and boss—not to mention what it's like to work in Martha Stewart's TV kitchen—and the ugly truth behind the much-mythologized "family meal."

**The Lost Baker of Vienna – by Kurtzman, Sharon**  
(Available through the Consortium)

**FIC KURTZMAN**

In 2018, Zoe Rosenzweig is reeling after the loss of her beloved grandfather, a Holocaust survivor. She becomes obsessed with finding out what really happened to her family during the war. Vienna, 1946: Chana Rosenzweig has endured the horrors of war to find herself, her mother, and younger brother finally free in Vienna. But freedom doesn't look like they imagined it would, as they struggle to make a living and stay safe. Despite the danger, Chana sneaks out most nights to return to the hotel kitchen where she works as a dishwasher, using the quiet nighttime hours to bake her late father's recipes. As she tries to balance her love of baking against her family's need for security, Chana finds herself caught in a dangerous love triangle, torn between the black-market dealer who has offered marriage and protection, and the apprentice baker who shares her passions. The Lost Baker of Vienna affirms the unbreakable bonds of family, while shining a light on the courageous spirit of WWII refugees as they battle to survive the overwhelming hardships of a world torn apart.

**Aftertaste – by Lavelle, Daria**

**FIC LAVELLE**

What if you could have one last meal with someone you've loved, someone you've lost? Combining the magic of *Under the Whispering Door* with the high-stakes culinary world of *Sweet bitter*, *Aftertaste* is an epic love story, a dark comedy, and a synesthetic adventure through food and grief.

**The Mistletoe Motive – by Liese, Chole**

**(Available on Hoopla)**

He loathes the holidays. She loves them. She's full of festive cheer. He's brimming with Bah, Humbugs. Besides unreasonably seasonable names, the only thing Jonathan Frost and Gabriella Di Natale have in common is a healthy dose of mutual contempt. Well, that and the same place of employment at the city's most beloved independent bookstore, Bailey's Bookshop. But when the store's owners confess its dire financial state, Jonathan and Gabby discover another unfortunate commonality: the imminent threat of unemployment.

With the Baileys' requests to minimize expenses, win new customers, and make record sales dancing in their heads, Jonathan and Gabby conclude—barring a financial Christmas miracle—one of them will soon be cut from the payroll. Neither are willing to step down from their position, so they strike a bargain: whoever has more sales in December gets to stay on in the new year; the loser will resign. With a lifetime's worth of festive tricks up her sleeve, Gabby should easily outsell her nemesis, except the unreadable Mr. Frost's every move seems purely designed to throw her off her game. As if that wasn't bad enough, Gabby's deceptive ex won't quit pursuing her, and her anonymous online friend suggests they take a break. Worst of all, as the pressure mounts to save the bookshop and her job, Gabby meets a new, tender side of Jonathan. Is this the same man she's called her cold-hearted enemy?

Maybe he's got a motive she just can't figure out—or maybe Jonathan Frost isn't as chilly as she once thought. Maybe Jonathan and Gabby already know—and love—each other in ways they never thought possible.

### The Secret of the Orange Blossom Cake – by Linden, Rachel

FIC LINDEN

A magical cookbook and a summer on her family's Italian olive farm help a brokenhearted social media chef cook up a satisfying new life. Rising star Jules Costa loves re-creating vintage recipes for her popular online cooking show. But when personal and professional disaster strikes, her only chance to save her career is to complete her new cookbook before the end of the summer. Panicked, Jules returns to her family's beloved olive farm on the shores of Italy's stunning Lake Garda. Seeking culinary inspiration, she's hoping to convince her spunky eighty-year-old Nonna Bruna to share her precious collection of family recipes. Jules's plans quickly go awry as she discovers that Nonna's cookbook has magical and unpredictable powers. It reveals only one recipe at a time, offering a cooking experience guaranteed to satisfy the chef's palate and bring clarity to their life. Yet the pages remain stubbornly blank for Jules. To make matters worse, the olive farm is in deep financial trouble, and Jules soon uncovers a web of family secrets involving the cookbook and a lost recipe for orange blossom cake that holds the key to everything. Then there's Nicolo, the boy next door, who broke her young heart years ago. He is now all grown up, even more attractive, and the only person poised to help Jules find answers. In a whirlwind summer beyond her imagination, Jules begins to unravel the mysteries baked into her family's history and discovers the essential ingredients to create the future of her dreams.

### From Scratch – by Locke, Tembi

B LOCKE

It was love at first sight when Tembi met professional chef, Saro, on a street in Florence. There was just one problem: Saro's traditional Sicilian family did not approve of him marrying a black American woman, an actress no less. However, the couple, heartbroken but undeterred, forges on. They build a happy life in Los Angeles, with fulfilling careers, deep friendships and the love of their lives: a baby girl they adopt at birth. Eventually, they reconcile with Saro's family just as he faces a formidable cancer that will consume all their dreams. From Scratch chronicles three summers Tembi spends in Sicily with her daughter, Zoela, as she begins to piece together a life without her husband in his tiny hometown hamlet of farmers. Where once Tembi was estranged from Saro's family and his origins, now she finds solace and nourishment--literally and spiritually--at her mother-in-law's table. In the Sicilian countryside, she discovers the healing gifts of simple fresh food, the embrace of a close-knit community, and timeless traditions and wisdom that light a path forward. All along the way she reflects on her and Saro's incredible romance--an indelible love story that leaps off the pages. In Sicily, it is said that every story begins with a marriage or a death--in Tembi Locke's case, it is

both. Her story is about loss, but it's really about love found. Her story is about travel, but it's really about finding a home. It is about food, but it's really about chasing flavor as an act of remembrance.

### Arsenic and Adobo – by Manansala, Mia

MYS MANANSALA

The first book in a new culinary cozy series full of sharp humor and delectable dishes—one that might just be killer.... When Lila Macapagal moves back home to recover from a horrible breakup, her life seems to be following all the typical rom-com tropes. She's tasked with saving her Tita Rosie's failing restaurant, and she has to deal with a group of matchmaking aunties who shower her with love and judgment. But when a notoriously nasty food critic (who happens to be her ex-boyfriend) drops dead moments after a confrontation with Lila, her life quickly swerves from a Nora Ephron romp to an Agatha Christie case. With the cops treating her like she's the one and only suspect, and the shady landlord looking to finally kick the Macapagal family out and resell the storefront, Lila's left with no choice but to conduct her own investigation. Armed with the nosy auntie network, her barista best bud, and her trusted Dachshund, Longganisa, Lila takes on this tasty, twisted case and soon finds her own neck on the chopping block..

### The Second Worst Restaurant in France – by McCall Smith, Alexander

FIC MCCALL SMITH

In a delightful sequel to the best-selling comedic novel *My Italian Bulldozer*, we are in a French village where the local restaurant's haute cuisine leaves a lot to be desired--and two books into an astounding ninth series from one of our most beloved authors.

Renowned cookbook writer Paul Stuart, renewed and refreshed from his time in Tuscany, has returned to Scotland to work on his new book, *The Philosophy of Food in Six Easy Chapters*. Writing, though, is complicated by Paul's changed domestic circumstances. His editor and new girlfriend, Gloria, has moved in with him despite not being specifically invited, and she's brought her two rather demanding Siamese cats. When Paul's cousin, Chloe, suggests Paul visit her in the French countryside, Paul jumps at the chance. However, once he arrives, he finds his fortunes tangled up with the infamous local restaurant that gives the book its title. In this story about a man who prides himself on his taste finding delight in the most unexpected places, we have Alexander McCall Smith at his most witty and charming.

### I Loved, I lost, I Made Spaghetti – by Melucci, Giulia

641.594 MEL

From failure to fusilli, this deliciously hilarious story of Giulia Melucci's fizzled romances and the mouth-watering recipes she used to seduce her men, smooth over the lumps, and console herself when the relationships flamed out. From an affectionate alcoholic to the classic New York City commitment-phobe, to a hipster aged past his sell date, and not one, but two novelists with Peter Pan complexes, Giulia has cooked for them all. She suffers each disappointment with resolute cheer (after a few tears) and a bowl of

pastina (recipe included) and has lived to tell the tale so that other women may go out, hopefully with greater success, and if that's not possible, at least have something good to eat.

Peppered throughout Giulia's delightful and often poignant remembrances are fond recollections of her mother's cooking, the recipes she learned from her, and many she invented on her own inspired by the men in her life. Listeners will howl at Giulia's boyfriend-littered past and swoon over her irresistible culinary creations.

**Julia: a novel inspired by the extraordinary life of Julia Child– by Moore, Heather B. FIC MOORE**

Julia leaves behind a privileged life in California to join the OSS during World War II, decoding covert messages and aiding the Allied effort. Amid her far-reaching missions, she meets Paul Child, whose love leads her to postwar Paris. There, Julia Child's daring pursuit of French cuisine transforms her into a culinary trailblazer and icon, forever changing the way America cooks.

**The Hundred-Foot Journey – by Morais, Richard FIC MORAIS**

Born above his grandfather's modest restaurant in Mumbai, Hassan Haji first experienced life through intoxicating whiffs of spicy fish curry, trips to the local markets, and gourmet outings with his mother. When tragedy pushes the family out of India, they eat their way around the world before settling in a small village in the French Alps. There they open an inexpensive Indian restaurant opposite the esteemed French relais of chef Madame Mallory.

**Tantrum – by Moulton, Rachel Eve FIC MOULTON(Available through the Consortium)**

Thea's third pregnancy was her easiest. She wasn't consumed with anxiety about the baby. She wasn't convinced it was going to be born green, or have a third eye, or have tentacles sprouting from its torso. Thea was fine. Her baby would be fine.

But when the nurses handed Lucia to her, Thea just knew. Her baby girl was a monster. Not only was Lucia born with a full set of teeth and a devilish glint in her eye, but she's always hungry. Indiscriminately so. One day Lucia pointed at her baby brother, looked Thea dead in the eye and said, "I eat."

Thea doesn't know whether to be terrified or proud of her rapacious baby girl. And as Lucia starts growing faster and talking more, dark memories bubble to the surface-- flashes from Thea's childhood that won't release their hooks from her heart. Lucia wants to eat the world. Thea might just let her.

Crackling with originality and dark humor, Rachel Eve Moulton's Tantrum is a provocative exploration of familial debt, duty, and the darker side of motherhood.

### Delicious! – by Reichl, Ruth

FIC REICHL

Working as a public relations hotline consultant for a once-prestigious culinary magazine, Billie Breslin unexpectedly enters a world of New York restaurateurs and artisanal purveyors while reading World War II letters exchanged between a plucky twelve-year-old and James Beard.

### Food Person – by Roberts, Adam

FIC ROBERTS

A delectable comedy of manners about cooking, ambition, and friendship set in the food world as a young and socially awkward writer takes a job ghostwriting the cookbook for a famous (and famously chaotic) Hollywood starlet. Isabella Pasternack is a food person. She revels in the beauty of a perfectly cooked egg, she daydreams about her first meal at Chez Panisse, and every inch of her tiny apartment teems with cookbooks, from *Prune* to *Cooking by Hand* to *Roast Chicken and Other Stories*. What Isabella is not, unfortunately, is a gainfully employed person. In the wake of a disastrous live-streamed soufflé demonstration, Isabella is summarily fired from her job at a digital food magazine and must quickly find a way to keep herself in buckwheat and anchovy paste. When offered the opportunity to ghostwrite a cookbook for Molly Babcock, the once-beloved television actress now mired in scandal, Isabella warily accepts. Unfortunately, Molly quickly proves herself to be a nightmare collaborator: hungover, flakey, shallow, and-worst of all-indifferent to food. But between Molly's bizarre late-night texts, goofy confessions, and impromptu road trips, Isabella reluctantly begins to see Molly's charms. Can Isabella corral Molly out of the gossip rags and into the kitchen? Can she find the key to Molly's heart and stomach? Or will Isabella's devotion to her culinary idols and Molly's monstrous ego send the entire cookbook-and both of their careers-up in flames? A mouth-watering, hilarious debut peppered with insider food world detail-the real writers behind celebrity chef cookbooks, the hot restaurants that run on the backs of their sous-chefs, the secret to perfect blinis à la Russe-Adam Roberts' *Food Person* is a literary soufflé-a deceptively light, deliciously rich, showstopping confection.

### The Kitchen Front – by Ryan, Jennifer

FIC RYAN

From the bestselling author of *The Chilbury Ladies' Choir* comes a new World War II-set story of four women on the home front competing for a spot hosting a BBC wartime cookery program and a chance to better their lives. Two years into World War II, Britain is feeling her losses; the Nazis have won battles, the Blitz has destroyed cities, and U-boats have cut off the supply of food. In an effort to help housewives with food rationing, a BBC radio program called *The Kitchen Front* is putting on a cooking contest--and the grand prize is a job as the program's first-ever female co-host. For four very different women, winning the contest presents a crucial chance to change their lives. For a young widow, it's a chance to pay off her husband's debts and keep a roof over her children's heads. For a kitchen maid, it's a chance to leave servitude and find freedom. For the lady of the manor, it's a chance to escape her wealthy husband's increasingly

hostile behavior. And for a trained chef, it's a chance to challenge the men at the top of her profession. These four women are giving the competition their all—even if that sometimes means bending the rules. But with so much at stake, will the contest that aims to bring the community together serve only to break it apart?

### Tastes Like Shakkar – by Sharma, Nisha

ROMANCE SHARMA

In the hilarious follow-up to the breakout rom-com *Dating Dr. Dil*, Nisha Sharma adds shakkar and mirch to Shakespeare's iconic comedy *Much Ado About Nothing* for one sweet and spicy love story. Bobbi Kaur is determined to plan a celebration to remember her best friend's wedding. But she has two problems that are getting in her way: 1. The egotistical, and irritatingly sexy, chef Benjamin "Bunty" Padda is supposed to help her with the menu since he's the groom's best friend, and 2. Someone is trying to sabotage the wedding. With aspirations of taking over her family's event planning business, Bobbi knows that one misstep in managing the Kareena Mann and Prem Verma (Vermann) party, along with the other weddings on her plate, will only give her uncle another reason not to promote her. That means Kareena's big day, and Bobbi's future career are on the line. Bunty will do anything for his best friend, even though he has his hands full in finding a new location for his next restaurant while also playing mediator between his brother and father, the celebrated Naan King. When Prem asks Bunty to help with the wedding menu, he agrees, especially since it puts him in close proximity to the delicious Bobbi Kaur. When a mystery shaadi saboteur starts leaving threatening notes, and cancelling cake orders, Bunty and Bobbi have no choice but to call a truce and face the volatile attraction they have for each other. Through masquerade fundraisers and a joint bachelor-bachelorette trip to Vegas, this chef and wedding planner explore their growing connection all while trying to plan a wedding at Messina Vineyards in a time crunch. But once the shaadi saboteur is caught and the wedding is over, will their love story have a happily ever after? With the return of the meddling aunties (who are scary good at finding information) and a lot of hilarity and hijinks, Bobbi and Bunty's romance is an event you don't want to miss.

### The Lager Queen of Minnesota – by Stradal, J. Ryan

FIC STRADAL

(Available through the Consortium)

Two sisters, one farm. A family is split when their father leaves their shared inheritance entirely to Helen, his younger daughter. Despite baking award-winning pies at the local nursing home, her older sister, Edith, struggles to make what most people would call a living. So, she can't help wondering what her life would have been like with even a portion of the farm money her sister kept for herself.

With the proceeds from the farm, Helen builds one of the most successful light breweries in the country and makes their company motto ubiquitous: "Drink lots. It's Blotz." Where Edith has a heart as big as Minnesota, Helen's is as rigid as a steel keg. Yet one day, Helen will find she needs some help herself, and she could find a potential

savior close to home. . . if it's not too late.

Meanwhile, Edith's granddaughter, Diana, grows up knowing that the real world requires a tougher constitution than her grandmother possesses. She earns a shot at learning the IPA business from the ground up--will that change their fortunes forever and perhaps reunite her splintered family?

Here we meet a cast of lovable, funny, quintessentially American characters eager to make their mark in a world that's often stacked against them. In this deeply affecting family saga, resolution can take generations, but when it finally comes, we're surprised, moved, and delighted.

### **Kitchens of the Great Midwest – by Stradal, J. Ryan** **FIC STRADEL**

When Lars Thorvald's wife, Cynthia, falls in love with wine--and a dashing sommelier--he's left to raise their baby, Eva, on his own. He's determined to pass on his love of food to his daughter--starting with puréed pork shoulder. As Eva grows, she finds her solace and salvation in the flavors of her native Minnesota. From Scandinavian lutefisk to hydroponic chocolate habaneros, each ingredient represents one part of Eva's journey as she becomes the star chef behind a legendary and secretive pop-up supper club, culminating in an opulent and emotional feast that's a testament to her spirit and resilience. Each chapter in J. Ryan Stradal's startlingly original debut tells the story of a single dish and character, at once capturing the zeitgeist of the Midwest, the rise of foodie culture, and delving into the ways food creates community and a sense of identity.

### **Delicious – by Thomas, Sherry** **ROMANCE THOMAS** (Available through the Consortium)

Famous in Paris, infamous in London, Verity Durant is as well-known for her mouthwatering cuisine as for her scandalous love life. But that's the least of the surprises awaiting her new employer when he arrives at the estate of Fairleigh Park following the unexpected death of his brother.

### **That Summer – by Weiner, Jennifer** **FIC WEINER**

While trying to pinpoint the root of her dissatisfaction with her life, Daisy Shoemaker begins receiving misdirected emails meant for another woman and starts living vicariously through her until she discovers that their connection was not completely accidental.

### **Black Cake – by Wilkerson, Charmaine** **FIC WILKERSON**

In this moving debut novel, two estranged siblings must set aside their differences to deal with their mother's death and her hidden past--a journey of discovery that takes them from the Caribbean to London to California and ends with her famous black cake. In present-day California, Eleanor Bennett's death leaves behind a puzzling inheritance for her two children, Byron and Benny: a traditional Caribbean black cake, made from a

family recipe with a long history, and a voice recording. In her message, Eleanor shares a tumultuous story about a headstrong young swimmer who escapes her island home under suspicion of murder. The heartbreaking journey Eleanor unfolds, the secrets she still holds back, and the mystery of a long-lost child, challenge everything the siblings thought they knew about their family, and themselves. Can Byron and Benny reclaim their once-close relationship, piece together Eleanor's true history, and fulfill her final request to 'share the black cake when the time is right?' Will their mother's revelations bring them back together or leave them feeling more lost than ever? Charmaine Wilkerson's debut novel is a story of how the inheritance of betrayals, secrets, memories, and even names, can shape relationships and history. Deeply evocative and beautifully written, *Black Cake* is an extraordinary journey through the life of a family changed forever by the choices of its matriarch.