

For many of us, December issues in the coldest—and shortest—days of the year. Here in the MMD Book Club we're leaning in to the winter season with feel-good fiction (and memoir!) to warm our hearts and stoke bookish discussions. As always, I can't wait to read with you this season, and to dive into the ensuing delightful literary conversations.

## December



Main Pick: ***Mastering the Art of French Eating: Lessons in Food and Love*** by Ann Mah

Flight Pick: ***Relish: My Life in the Kitchen*** by Lucy Knisley

Ann Mah's delectable memoir is a rich account of culinary—and expat—life in Paris, City of Light and city of her dreams, where she sinks in for three glorious years when her diplomat husband is stationed there ... that is, before he gets reassigned to Iraq, alone, stranding her in an unknown city. You'll be cheering her on as she tentatively explores the city, dabbles in its cuisine, and begins to build her own community far from home.

We're pairing this with another memoir focused on good food and the people we share it with: Lucy Knisley's utterly delightful graphic memoir about coming of age in the kitchen, surrounded by good food and people who love it, and love her. Both books are guaranteed to make you hungry, and include recipes I'm eager to make (if I haven't already!).

## January



Main Pick: ***The Late Bloomers' Club*** by Louise Miller

Flight Pick: ***Evvie Drake Starts Over*** by Linda Holmes

Who's ready for a story about new beginnings and fresh starts? Our 40-ish heroine Nora Huckleberry runs the diner her parents first opened in small town Vermont. It's not just her job; it's her whole identity. But when Peggy the Cake Lady dies and leaves her home to Nora and her sister, Nora is forced to make some unwelcome choices—ones that affect not only Nora and Kit, but the entire community. A lovely story about love, hospitality, and changing direction—with plenty of baking, as you may expect from a novelist who is also a pastry chef!

We're pairing this with another fresh-start story: Linda Holmes's warm and witty novel about a grieving widow and a disgraced Major League pitcher, who have new beginnings thrust upon them after each suffers their own kind of tragedy.

## February



Main Pick: ***Kitchens of the Great Midwest*** by J. Ryan Stradal

Flight Pick: ***With the Fire on High*** by Elizabeth Acevedo

Please, I beg you, don't read the jacket copy on this one! Stradal's novel-in-stories spans more than thirty years and takes us to half as many kitchens, introducing us to fancy chefs and Lutheran church ladies, portraying the food of a region and the unlikely threads that bind us, with a satisfying, full-circle ending.

After our phenomenal chat with our friend Liz this fall, which left so many of us eager to read her other works, we're pairing this with her soaring sophomore prose novel about a talented young teen who longs to make her professional chef dreams come true, even though the deck seems stacked against her.

It is so good to be among people who are reading—especially in the cozy season ahead. Happy reading, friends! - Anne