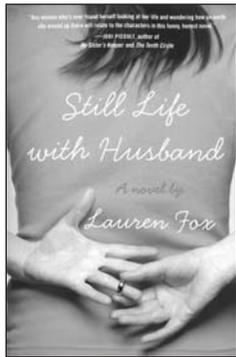


NOVEL IDEAS

By Chris Stuckenschneider



Still Life With Husband” by Lauren Fox should be required reading for every husband or wife contemplating an extra-marital affair. Finish the book and you won’t need to call Dr. Laura.

Meet Emily, a 30-year-old freelance writer married to steady-as-they-come Kevin. Emily’s always done the right thing, didn’t rebel as a teenager or make waves in college. Emily and Kevin have a good life together, but they’ve been polarized for some time about having children. Kevin wants them; Emily doesn’t.

Enter David Keller, a great-looking guy Emily sees in a restaurant when she’s out with her best friend, Meg, who just happens to be pregnant. David and Emily make eye contact — harps sound, electricity fills the air. Later they talk and there’s instant chemistry, feelings that lead Emily and single David down the slippery path of adultery.

“Still Life” has wonderful characters and a meaningful message about how dangerous it is to walk along a precipice, even though you believed you’d always be on moral high ground.

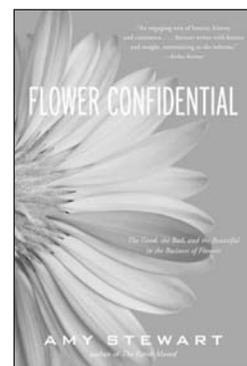
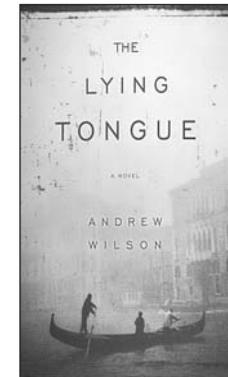
Venice, a city of sinister beauty — romantic yet steeped in mystery where twisty dark alleys snake alongside canals, often leading visitors astray. “The Lying Tongue” by Andrew Wilson is a wrenching read in which no one is quite who they seem to be.

Fate has dealt Adam Woods a perfect hand. The British college grad has happened onto a job teaching English to the son of a couple who live in Venice. The position affords Adam time to work on the novel he’s determined to write.

But when Woods arrives in Italy, he’s shocked. The job has fallen through. The Italian couple offers a solution — they know of an aged Englishman in Venice looking for a companion. Gordon Crace once wrote a best-selling book, but since hasn’t had any success as a writer.

Adam relishes the idea, contacts Crace and is hired. Soon Adam is more captive than companion to the recluse who won’t let the young man out of his sight. Crace’s home is filthy; his stories of murder and torture puzzle Adam, but energize him. He’s got to figure Crace out, discover the reason the author won’t discuss anything about his book, or his past.

Adam fabricates a reason to go back to London for a short visit. In actuality, Adam wants to research Crace’s roots. Despite the author’s obsession with privacy, Adam decides to write Crace’s biography. Once back on Italian soil, the worm turns — readers realize Crace and Adam are equally matched.



Author Amy Stewart spent a year traveling the globe visiting flower growers, greenhouses and florist shops to research “Flower Confidential, the Good, the Bad and the Beautiful in the Business of Flowers.” Read this book and you’ll never take a single red rose in a vase, or a bunch of Gerber daisies, for granted again.

This book is packed with information, yet reader-friendly. Stewart covers all aspects of cut-flowers, from breeding and growing to selling. In layman’s terms Stewart details and diagrams the parts of a flower and the process involved with pollination, a miracle many of us don’t consider. Equally as fascinating is the thorny process growers endure getting cut flowers from greenhouses in Ecuador, to delivery at your door.

Reading “Flower Confidential” will help you wile away the winter days, and just might inspire you to buy a few cut flowers for yourself, or for someone you love.



Books suggested in “Novel Ideas” can be checked out at Washington Public and Scenic Regional Library.

If you enjoyed “In the Company of the Courtesan” by Sarah Dunant, you can meet the author at the Brentwood Borders next Thursday, Feb. 22, at 7 p.m.

Dunant is on tour to promote the paperback release of “Courtesan.” The book was reviewed in “Novel Ideas” last February. It’s a work of historical fiction set in Florence and a New York Times bestseller. Dunant, a personal favorite, also penned “Birth of Venus.”

Other books you might find interesting:

“Loving Every Child, Wisdom for Parents,” by Janusz Korczak, edited by Sandra Joseph.

“Secondhand World,” by Katherine Min.

“In the Country of Men,” by Hisham Matar.

“The Lonely Patient, How We Experience Illness,” by Michael Stein, M.D.

“The Terror,” by Dan Simmons.