

From the Stacks

By Julie Orf

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Women are not simply writing more than ever before; they are reshaping the literary landscape. Today, women authors dominate bestseller lists, lead major publishing houses, and command vast online readerships. This visibility stands in sharp contrast to earlier eras, when many talented women felt compelled to hide behind male pseudonyms to be taken seriously.

George Eliot was in fact Mary Ann Evans, who adopted a male name so her novels, including "Middlemarch" and "The Mill on the Floss", would be judged on merit rather than dismissed due to her gender. Likewise, Louisa May Alcott, beloved author of "Little Women", published her darker, sensational fiction under the male pseudonym A. M. Barnard to protect her reputation and ensure publication.

Those barriers have largely fallen. Feminist movements expanded women's access to education and professional advancement, opening doors in both writing and publishing. More women now serve as editors, agents, and executives, influencing what stories reach the public. Meanwhile, social media and online reading communities amplify women's voices directly to readers, fueling explosive growth in genres traditionally written by and for women.

On move-in day at Tiffin Academy, the "happy chaos" is upended by a shock: the school has leaped seventeen spots to rank #2 in the country. It feels like a mistake. Tiffin is known more for parties and gourmet dining than academic rigor or winning sports teams. As the campus celebrates, the prestige quickly turns to paranoia. A new app, ZipZap, begins leaking scandalous blind items that target everyone from queen bee influencer Davi Banerjee to the school's secretive Admissions Director. At Tiffin, everyone has something to hide, and now everyone is watching. Elin Hilderbrand's latest novel "The Academy" is a partnership with her daughter, Shelby Cunningham.

Meagan Church delivers a domestic drama entitled, "The Mad Wife", with a smile, an apron, and a casserole. For five years, Lulu Mayfield has played the part of the flawless 1950s housewife, masking a haunting past with perfect gelatin salads. After the birth of her second child, her curated reality begins to crack. The arrival of a new neighbor, Bitsy, turns Lulu's unease into an obsession. Beneath Bitsy's relentless smile, Lulu senses something sinister, a discovery that pulls her into a web of unsettling truths. As she digs deeper, her own sanity is called into question. Is Lulu spiraling into madness, or has she stumbled upon a terrifying reality hidden behind the white picket fence?

Across centuries, the Rue des Gobelins remains a site of secrets and survival. In 1664, Alouette Volland is stripped of her artistic dreams and cast into the brutal Salpêtrière asylum after her father's unjust arrest. Within those walls, she must find unlikely allies to endure. Centuries later in 1939, medical student Kristof Larson risks his career and life to shield his Jewish neighbors from the Nazi occupation. Linked by a single location, both must fight to preserve their humanity against the crushing weight of history. In "Skylark", Paula McLain weaves two defiant journeys of rescue across time, revealing how the threads of history and hope unexpectedly intertwine.