

Mean Streets and Cozy Villages: Six versions of the Mystery Story

Wk 1, They are all the same, or are they? A brief discussion of popular culture, genre, and the mystery as moral fantasy. And Edger Allen Poe's *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* which may be the first detective story. You can read it in about an hour at: <https://poemuseum.org/the-murders-in-the-rue-morgue/>

or hear it read by actor Christopher Lee at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HtkQ3N3Fd4k> .

Wk 2, Little old ladies and other amateur detectives, The “who done it?”, in which death disturbs a cozy English village, and an amateur detective restores order to their world.

Example: Agatha Christie's *The Mirror Cracked from Side to Side* (1962), and/or film *The Mirror Cracked* (1980) with Angela Lansbury. (Amazon Prime, Brit Box, Apple TV, etc)

Wk 3, The hard-boiled detective, More murder and other crimes, a private detective solves the crime, defends his honor, and demonstrates that humanity itself is flawed.

Example: Dashiell Hammett's *The Maltese Falcon* (1930) or the film of the same title with Humphrey Bogart (1941). (Amazon Prime, Apple TV, etc.)

Wk 4, Cop stories, Still more murders, or other crimes, and a team to solve the case and bosses to be served.

Example: Henning Mankell's *Firewall* (Brit Box or Peacock, British series *Wallander* starring Kenneth Branagh,) Season 2 is a three part adaptation of Firewall.)

Wk 5, Caper Movies, The focus is on complicated plots to steal a treasure, but there may be murders. Here we explore why we like crooks.

Example: *Ocean's 11* (2001) Based on the 1960 novel of the same name by George Clayton Johnson, which was also made into a film with Frank Sinatra as Danny Ocean and the rest of the “rat pack” in other roles. (both film are available on Amazon Prime)

Wk 6, Diverse Detectives, Murders and other crimes. Here the detective's mastery of two cultures allows him or her to solve a mystery. The tale often exposes underlying cultural differences and tensions.

Example: Tony Hillerman's *The Dark Wind* (1982) adapt for TV as the series *Dark Winds* Navaho police detectives Joe Leaphorn and Jim Chee (Amazon Prime, Netflix)