

Mystery Suggestions from Mean Streets and Cozy Villages participants

Donna Leon's **Commisario Brunetti** series, beginning with *Death at La Fenice*, are set in Venice. They are beautifully written with strong characters, history, and modern Italy. Both her male and female characters are intelligent and creative. Interesting factoid: Donna Leon is American who lived for years in Venice. Although her mysteries have been translated into several languages, she has not approved Italian translation as she does not want celebrity while visiting. MB, SF

Robert Barnard was a British author of over thirty novels, beginning with *Out of the Blackout*. Each book was different, well written, witty, and interesting. Also, a critic, he wrote *A Talent to Deceive: An Appreciation of Agatha Christie* LE

Laurie R. King's **Mary Russell & Sherlock Holmes** series, first book in series is *The Beekeeper's Apprentice*. At the top of my favorite mystery series. This and the next series below are the only mysteries derived from Conan Doyle's stories that both echo the "real" Sherlock Holmes and still create a totally believable character to interact with him. (JP)

Sherry Thomas' **Lady Sherlock** series, first book *A Study in Scarlet Women*. The author not only creates an amazing character, but her Victorian style of writing is spot on. I attended the author's talk that was part of the Hill Country Authors series and was deeply impressed to find that the author didn't speak English until her teens. Amazing series by a talented author. (JP)

Alexander McCall Smith wrote a set of warm cozies set in Botswana featuring **Precious Ramotswe** beginning with *No. 1 Ladies Detective Agency*. (I forgot who suggested this, but I concur, they are charming and fun. JHM)

Louise Penny's **Chief Inspector Gamache** series, first book *Still Life*. The author successfully combines the elements of cozy and police procedural mysteries and creates a main character who is both wise and impulsive, kind and yet brutal. She

creates a small town with non-typical cozy inhabitants and displays an impressive knowledge of the Quebec Surety. (JP)

C. S. Harris' **Sebastian St. Cyr** series, first book *What Angels Fear*. Set in the Georgian era, the author takes the stereotypical peer-as-detective character and makes him complex and intelligent, his friends and family interesting, and the mysteries themselves way beyond run-of-the-mill. (JP)

Elly Griffiths' **Ruth Galloway** series, first book *The Crossing Places*. Set in the modern, yet still atmospheric Norfolk coast, nonetheless the novels teem with the past because the main character is a forensic archaeologist named Ruth Galloway. That, along with what becomes an increasingly complicated relationship with the local Detective Chief Inspector, and Ruth's best friend, a druid named Cathbad, makes the series succeed in both the cozy and the police procedural genres. (JP)

Charles Todd's (but actually a son [David Watjen]/mother [Caroline Todd] team until her death in 2021) Inspector **Ian Rutledge** series, first book *A Test of Wills*. The authors create a police inspector who returns from WWI to his Scotland Yard position but brings two debilitating secrets with him. He's haunted both by shell shock and the constantly taunting voice of Hamish MacLeod, a young Scots soldier he was forced to execute on the battlefield for refusing an order and moments before a shell from their own artillery buried Rutledge's regiment alive. Only Rutledge survived because of a small air pocket between his face and Hamish MacLeod's body. A brilliant inspector, Rutledge, is constantly a hair's breadth away from his secrets being exposed in a post-war society that has no compassion for returning soldiers with psychological problems. (JP)

Ruth Ware's *The Woman in Cabin 10*, *One Perfect Couple*, etc. I read mostly newer novels of Psychological Thrillers, Suspense. In addition to Ware, I recommend "The Last One" by Will Dean. Books you can't put down! CG.

Alex Michaelides *The Silent Patient* and Liz Moore's *The God of the Woods*. I also like Anne Cleeves books which became the Vera Stanhope series, "Vera." I have not read, Jeffrey Mahan

Gaston Leroux, *The Mystery of the Locked Room*, but it is supposed to be one of the first “locked room” novels. SF

Chad Zunker, writes short “legal thriller” mysteries. Such as *The Wife you Know* and *All He has Left*. ML

I love Tana French’s novels, which are set in Ireland. Very engaging and suspenseful I think. Also, Carlene O’Conner, another Irish writer. Her novels include *No Strangers Here* and *Some of Us are Looking*. NN

Frances Brody’s **Kate Shackleton** mysteries, series is set in England in the 1920s and into the early 30s. Kate was widowed in WWI and has built a career for herself as a strong single woman in a traditional man’s field. She is very much ahead of her time & even drives a car. There are 14 or 15 of the Kate Shackleton mysteries, starting with *Dying in the Wool* in 2009. AR

Murdock Mysteries on Acorn TV. Murdock is a brilliant, nerdy detective. The series is set in Toronto at the end of the 19th century and into the 20th century. It’s very clever and weaves in famous figures of the time - like Mark Twain and Nikola Tesla. They’re always producing new inventions & techniques that foreshadow our current times. Acorn TV currently carries 18 of the 19 seasons. Each season has about 18 episodes, so this will keep you entertained for a long time AR

Novels Jeffrey mentioned during the class

Michael Connelly, **Harry Bosch** series, the source for the Bosch TV series. JHM

Ross MacDonald, **Lew Archer** series, including novels such as *The Drowning Pool* and *The Moving Target*. In his day, MacDonald was hailed as the primary heir of Hammett and Chandler. JHM

Robert van Gulik, *The Celebrated Cases of Judge Dee*, based on earlier Chinese stories JHM

James Thurber, "The Macbeth Murder Mystery" *New Yorker* short story
<https://detective.gumer.info> JHM

Carolyn Keene, *The Secret of the Old Clock*, 1930 Superstitions of the Scottish Play, (Nancy Drew Diaries series) 2025, The first and most recent **Nancy Drew** novels. JHM

Mickey Spillane, *I the Jury* (1947), tough guy fiction for returning GIs. JHM

Dashiell Hammett, *Red Harvest*, the first novel featuring the **Continental Op** investigates corruption in a Montana mining town. *The Dain Curse* deals with a curse on a family, a diamond heist, and a morphine-addicted daughter. (both 1929) JHM

Raymond Chandler, *The Big Sleep*, (1939) The first novel featuring detective **Philip Marlow**. Chandler, always proud of his dialog, claims hoodlums adopted the phrase "the big sleep" as a term for death after reading his novel. *The Simple Art of Murder* (1950) Short stories, proceeded by Chandlers influential critique of the cozy and defense of the hardboiled detective of the same title. JHM

Sue Grafton, *A is for Alibi*, the first **Kinsey Millhone** novel, rethinks the hardboiled novel with a female protagonist.

Donald E. Westlake, *The Hot Rock* (1970) The first of a series of humorous books about criminals and their crimes. JHM

Grace Li, *Portrait of a Thief*, blends the heist genre with ethnic exploration, five Chinese American's steal back Chinese art from American museums. JHM

Dana Stabenow, *A Cold Day for Murder* (1992) Edgar Award winning first mystery about Aleut sleuth **Kate Shugak**. JHM

Joe R. Lansdale, *A Savage Season* (1990) The first of a series of darkly humorous novels about two East Texans, liberalish, straight, white **Hap** and his more conservative, gay, Black buddy, **Leonard**, together they get drawn into solving mysteries. JHM

Stuart M. Kaminsky has two series. The **Toby Peters** novels are set in Hollywood during the late 1930s and 40s, and all involve the movie business, for example, *Murder on the Yellow Brick Road*, begins with the murder of a munchkin. The **Inspector Porfiry Petrovich Rostnikov** novels, such as *The Man who Walked like a Bear*, feature a Moscow police inspector. JHM

Donald E. Westlake wrote a series of caper novels about criminals and their crimes, beginning with *The Hot Rock* in 1970. JHM

Grace Li, *Portrait of a Thief*, uses the heist genre to explore ethnic identity in a novel about Chinese American's who steal back Chinese art from U.S. museums. JHM

James Lee Burke has been writing his **Dave Robicheaux** novels for almost 30 years. Set in Louisiana Cajun culture, the most recent is *The Hadacol Boogie*. JHM

P.D. James, *An Unsuitable Job for a Woman* explores male resistance to the possibility of a woman as a professional detective. JHM

Walter Mosely, **Easy Rawlins** mysteries, like *Devil in a Blue Dress*, puts a Black man at the center of a hardboiled story. JHM

Dana Stabenow's **Kate Shugak** is an Inuit woman who solves mysteries in a remote village in Alaska. The first is *A Cold Day for Murder*.

William Marshall wrote a series of police procedurals set in Hong Kong before it was turned over to China. The fictional Yellow Thread Street Police Station is staffed by an intercultural team of cops. The novels are wild, funny, and often deal with quite violent murders. The first novel is named for the police station. JHM

Jeffrey Mahan