

CRASH COURSE

IN CRIME,
MYSTERIES,
& THRILLERS

NoveList



Panelists



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Metadata Librarian III
NoveList



libraryreads.org

Crime

Books that focus on the planning or committing of a crime and offer detailed descriptions of the criminal underworld, from the perspectives of those who live in it.

Mysteries

A novel in which a detective—police, private, amateur, or retired—works to solve a crime, often a murder. The reader is provided the clues along the way as well.

Thrillers & Suspense

Thrillers deal in crimes, their detectives, criminals, and their motives. When done well, there is a sustained and gradually heightened sense of suspense and anxiety.

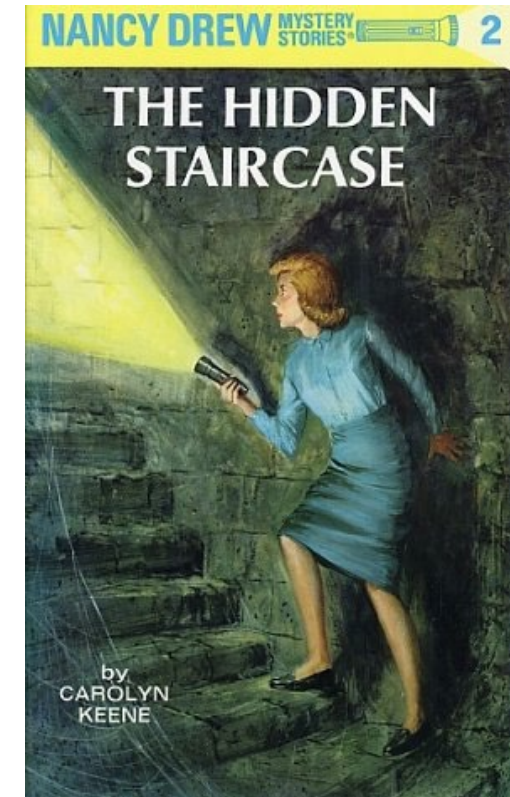
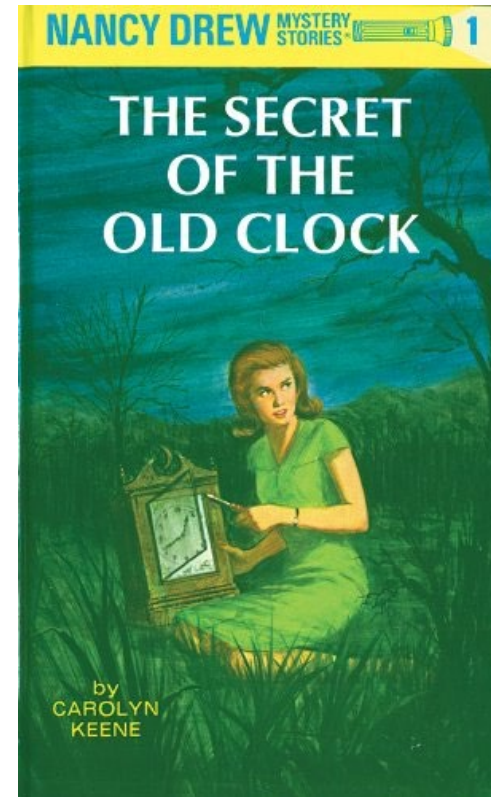
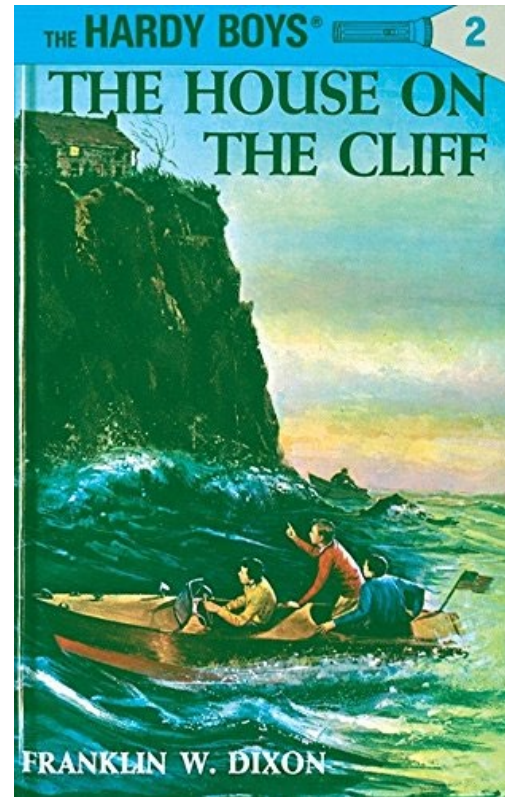
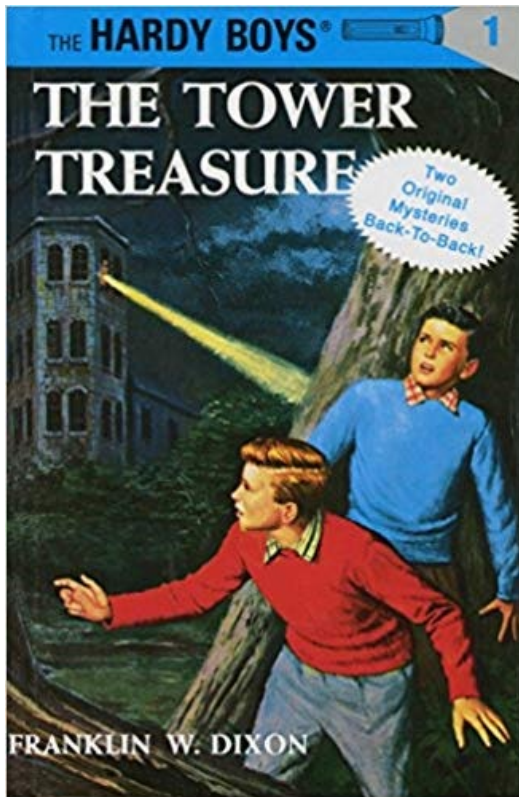
History of the Genre

In 1887 Arthur Conan Doyle introduced Sherlock Holmes and the genre was born.



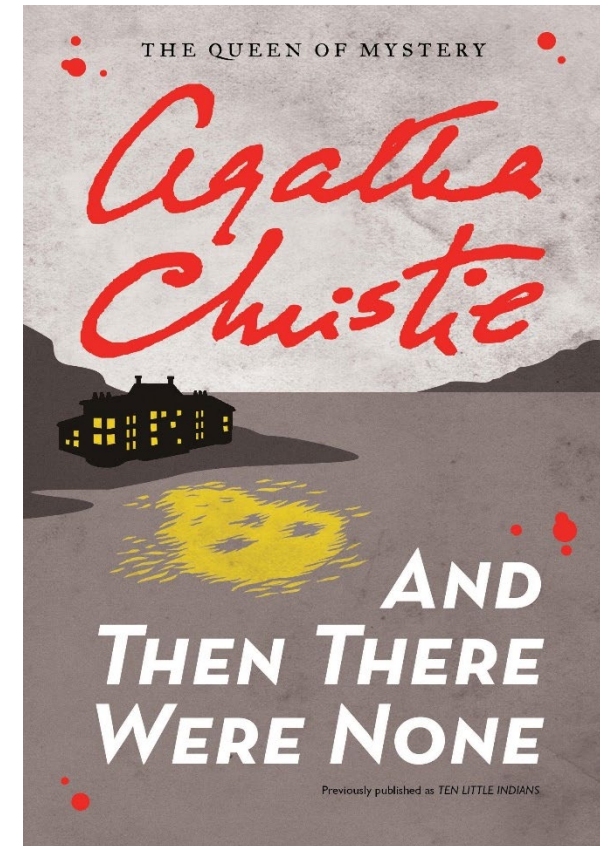
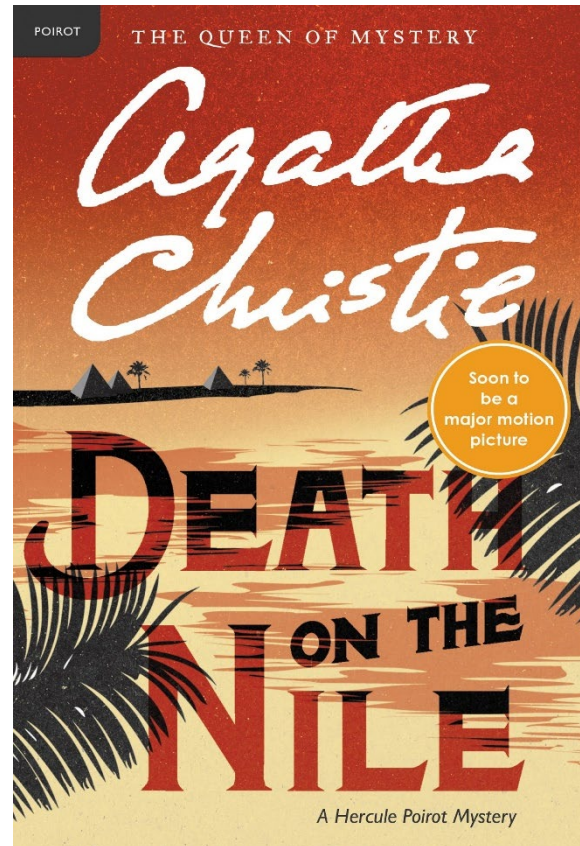
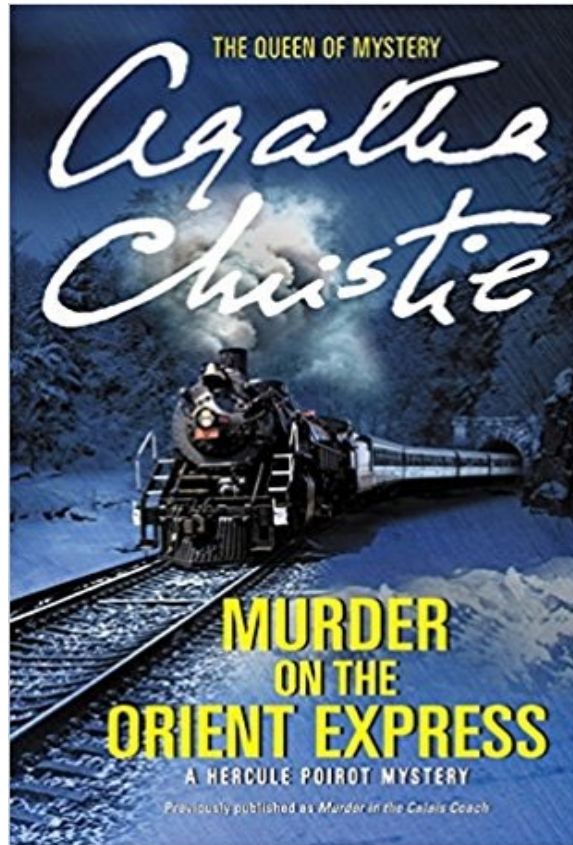
Nancy Drew & The Hardy Boys

In the 1920s Edward Stratemeyer introduced the juvenile mystery with the Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew series.



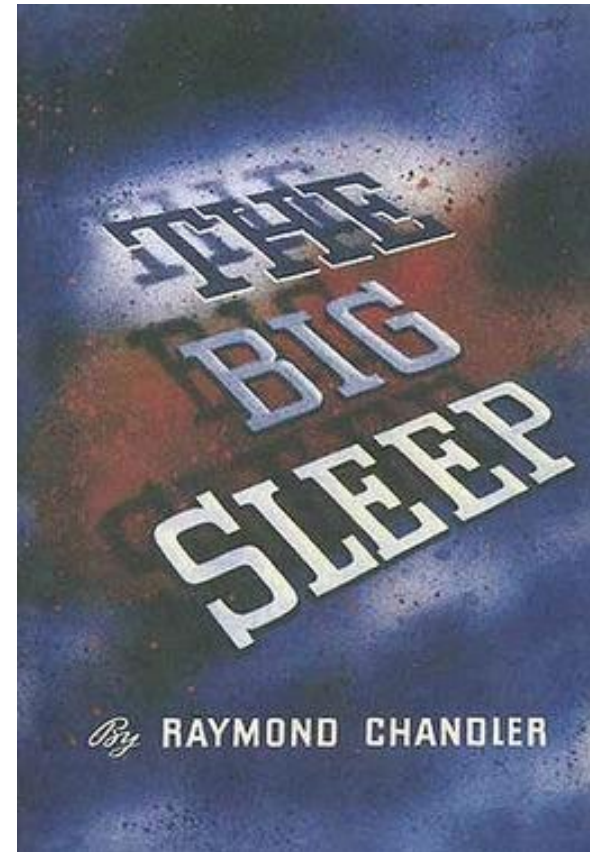
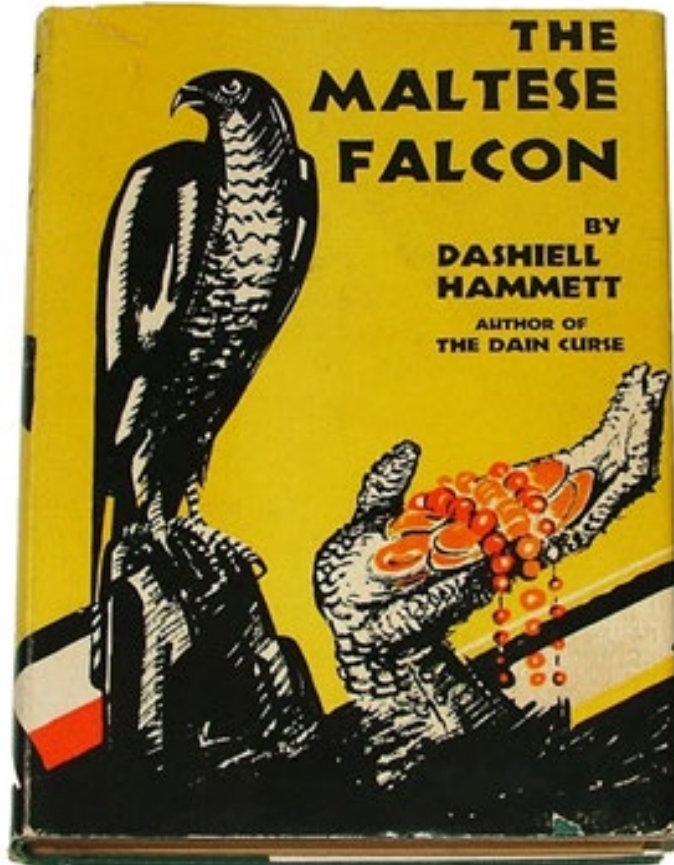
Agatha Christie

The 1930s gave rise to Agatha Christie. Her novel *And Then There Were None* is the best-selling mystery novel of all-time.



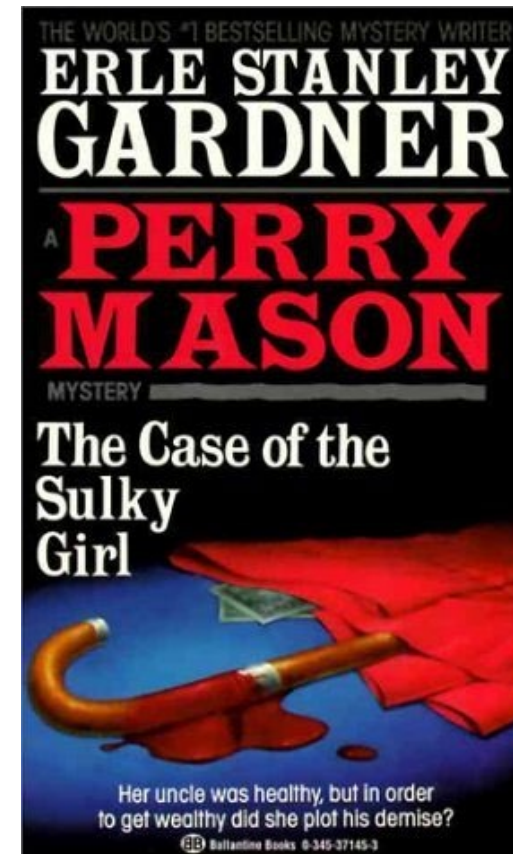
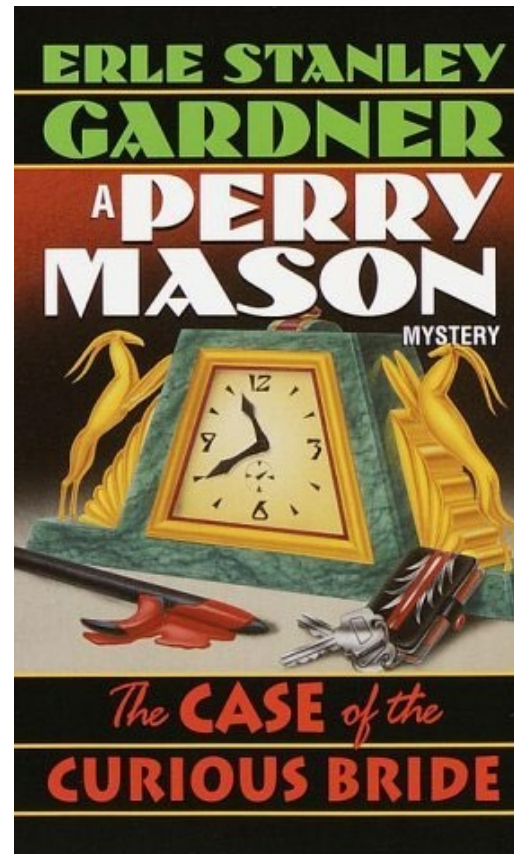
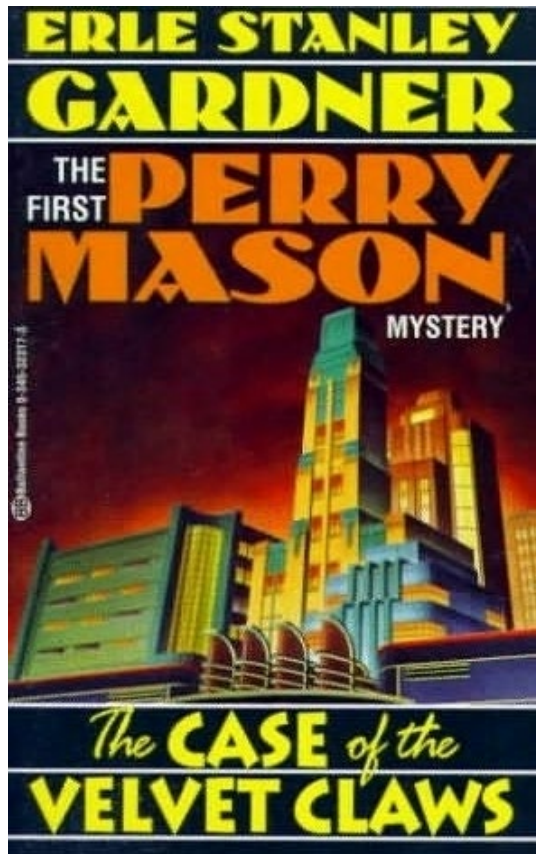
Hard-boiled

Dashiell Hammett (30s) and Raymond Chandler (40s) are credited as the founders of the hard-boiled school of detectives.



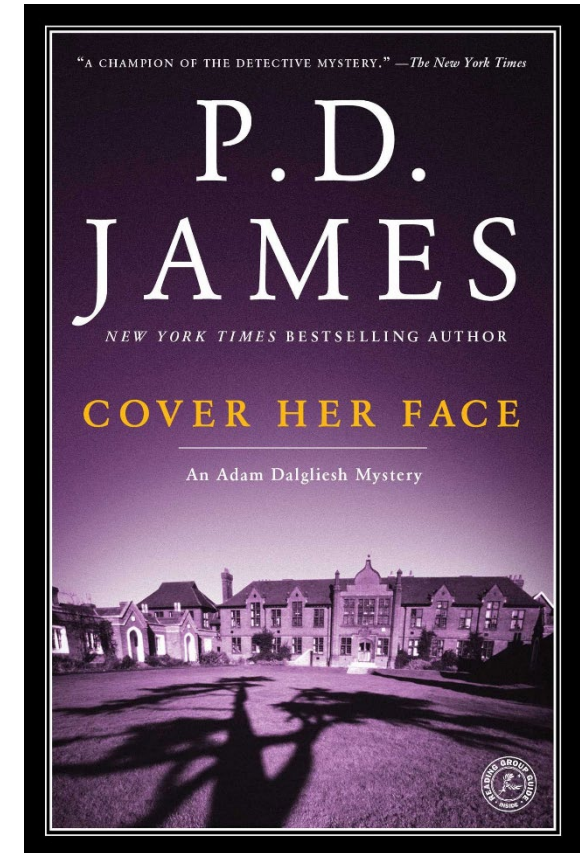
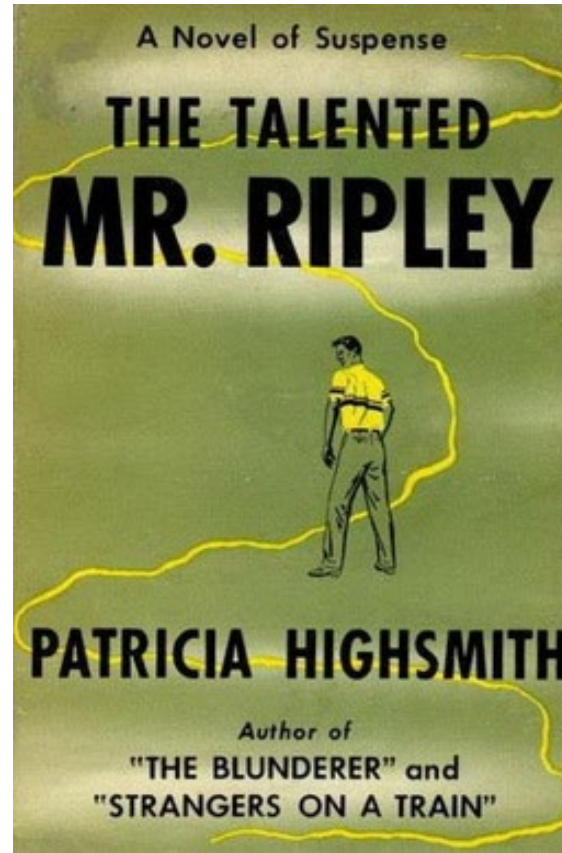
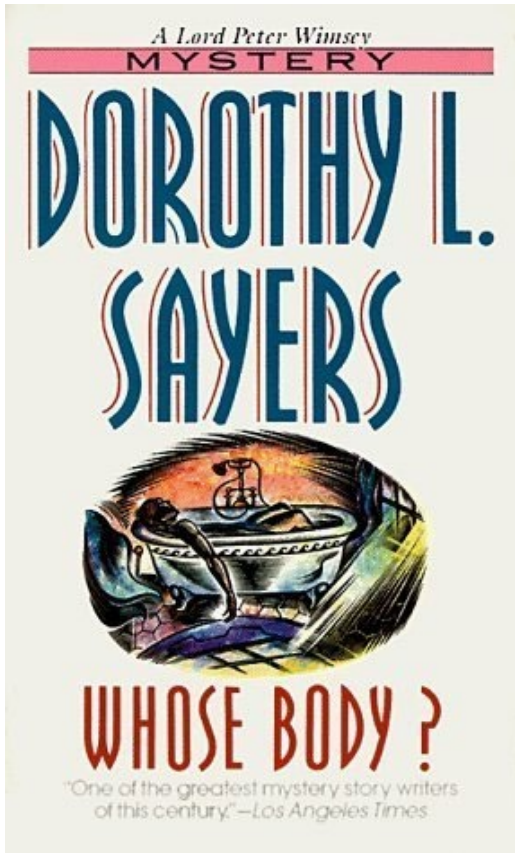
Perry Mason

In the 50s Earl Stanley Gardner, a lawyer and author, gave us Perry Mason, about whom he wrote 80 books.



Famous Ladies

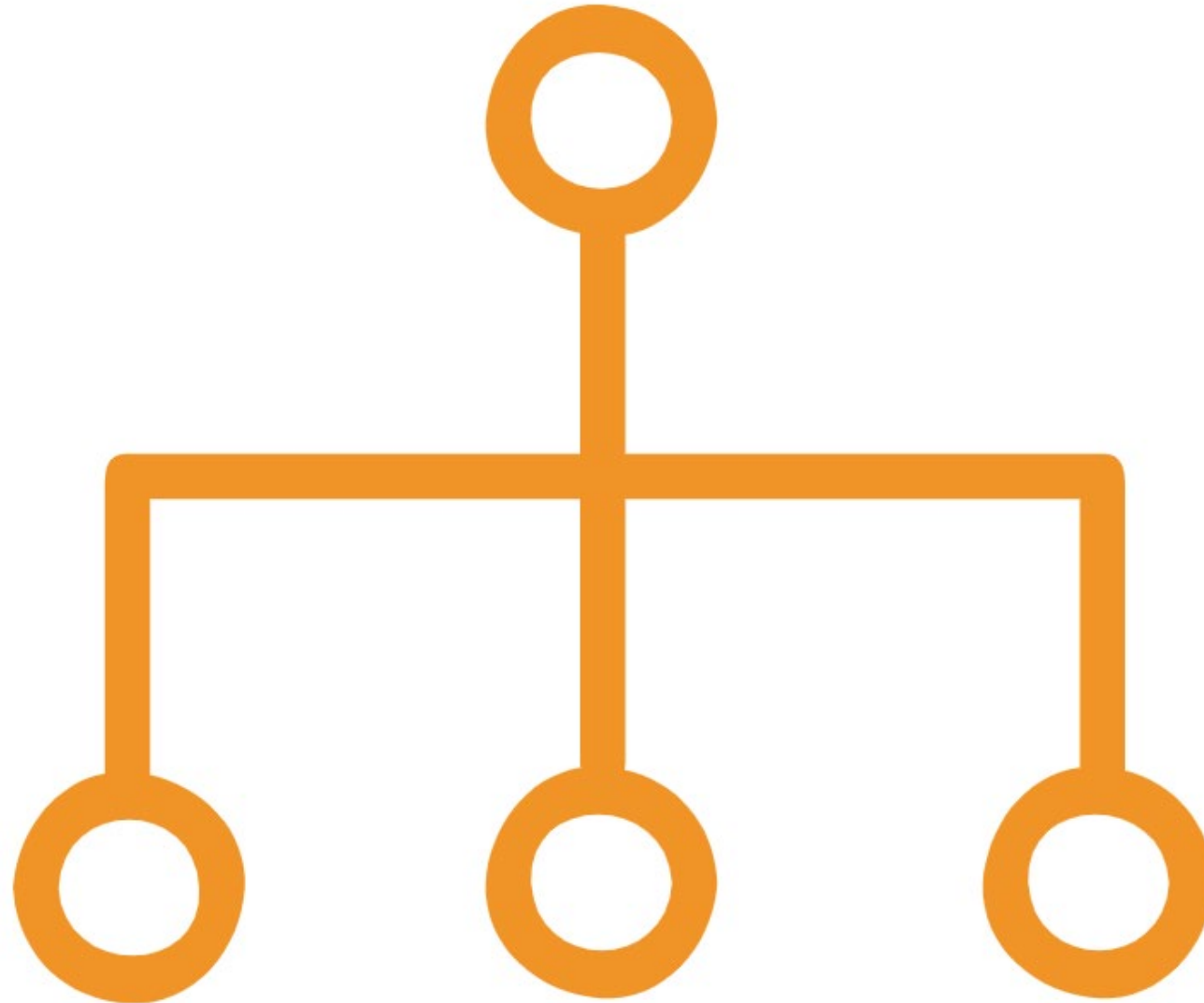
Dorothy Sayers (20s), Patricia Highsmith (50s), and P.D. James (60s).



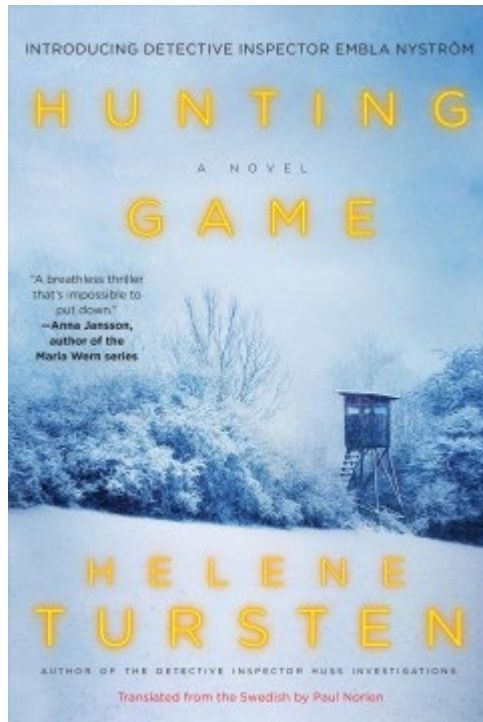
Why read crime, mysteries, & thrillers?

- Pacing
- Twists and turns
- Armchair detective
- Window into the dark mind of the criminal

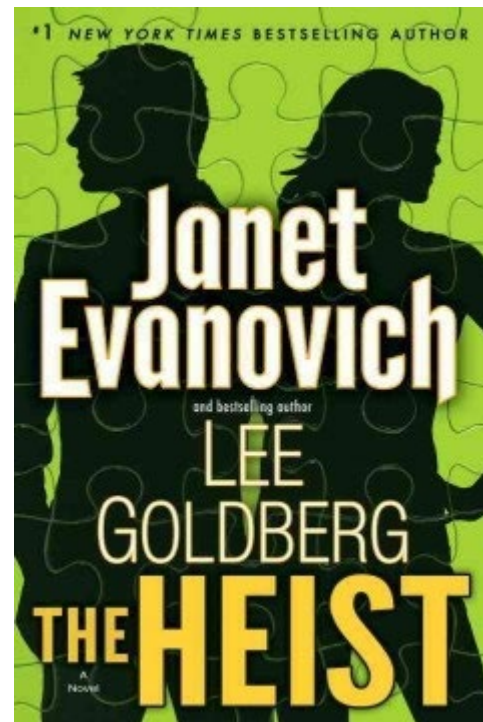
Crime, Mysteries, & Thrillers Subgenres



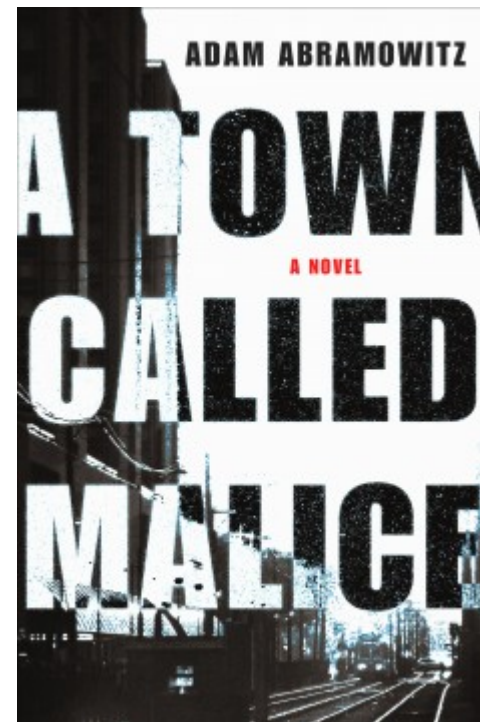
Crime Fiction Subgenres



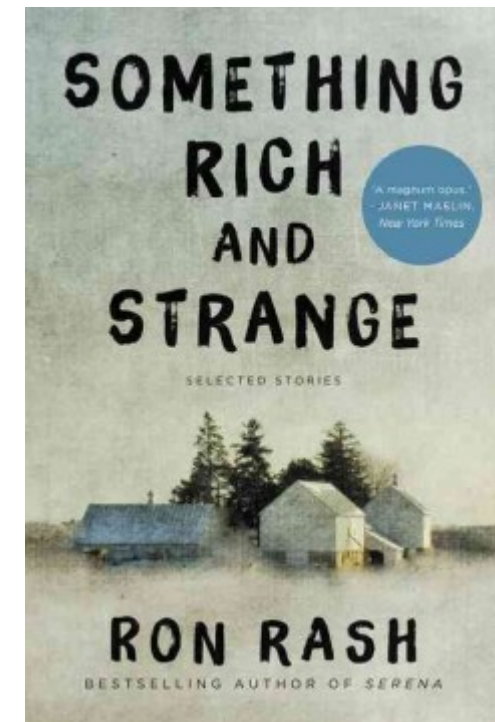
Scandinavian Crime Fiction



Caper Novels

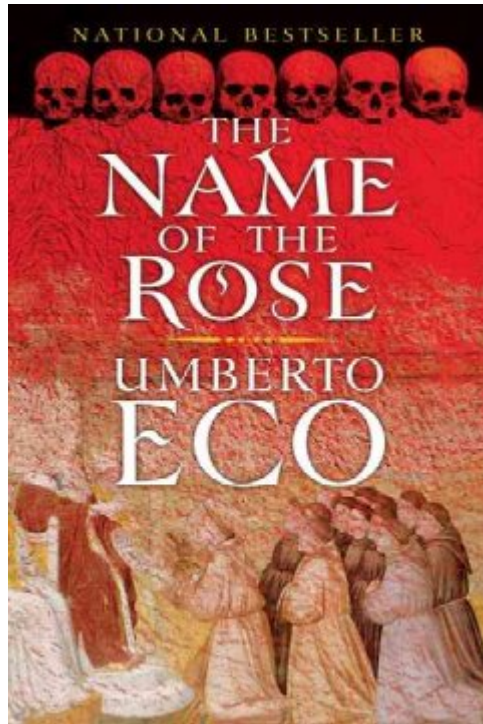


Noir Fiction

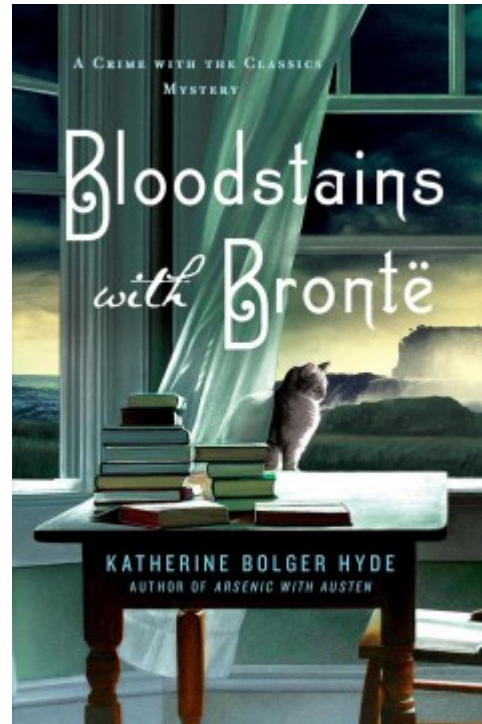


Rural Noir

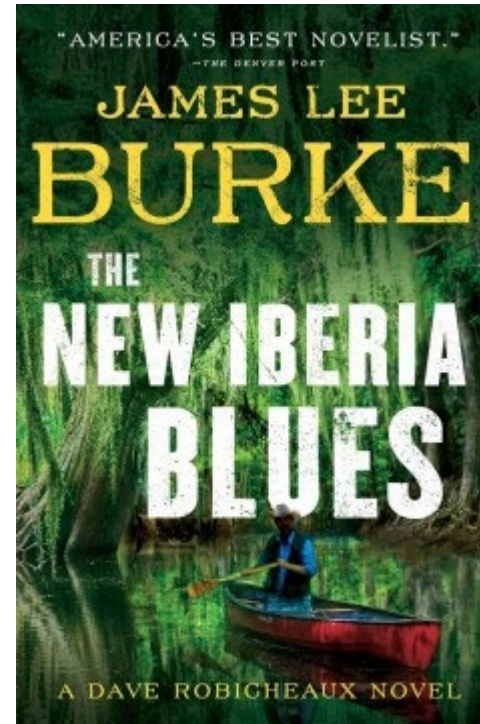
Mystery Subgenres



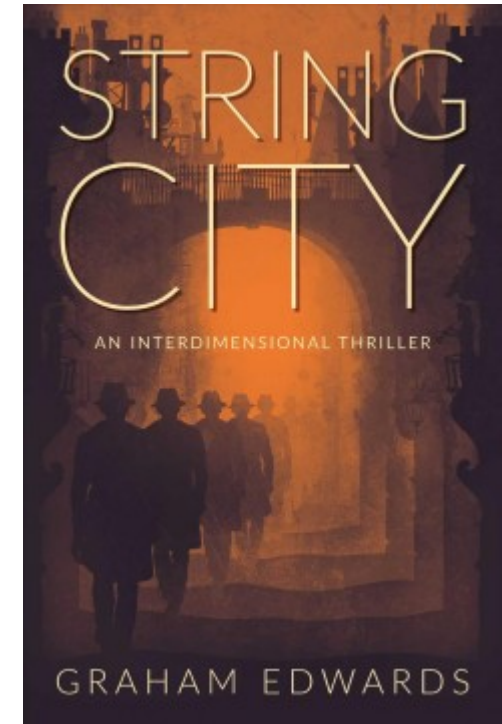
Historical



Cozy

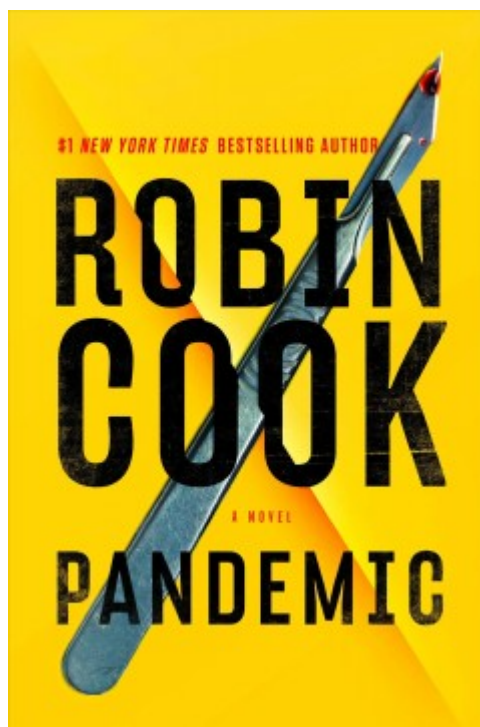


Procedurals

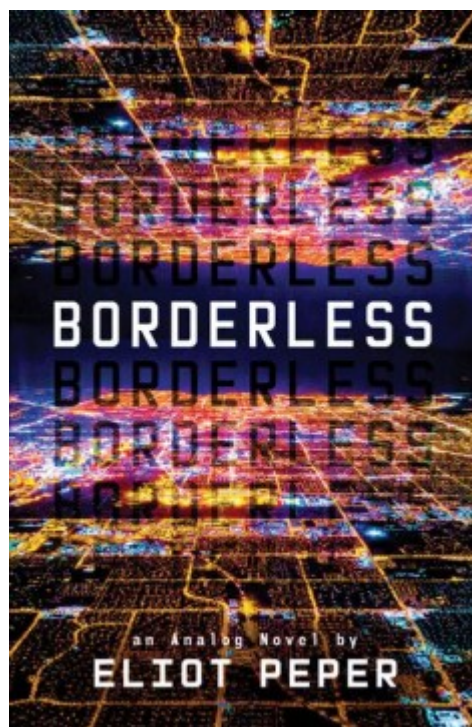


Speculative

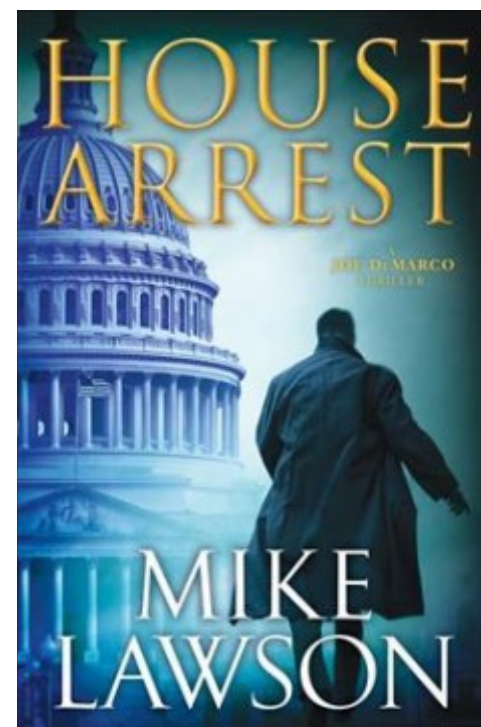
Thrillers and Suspense Subgenres



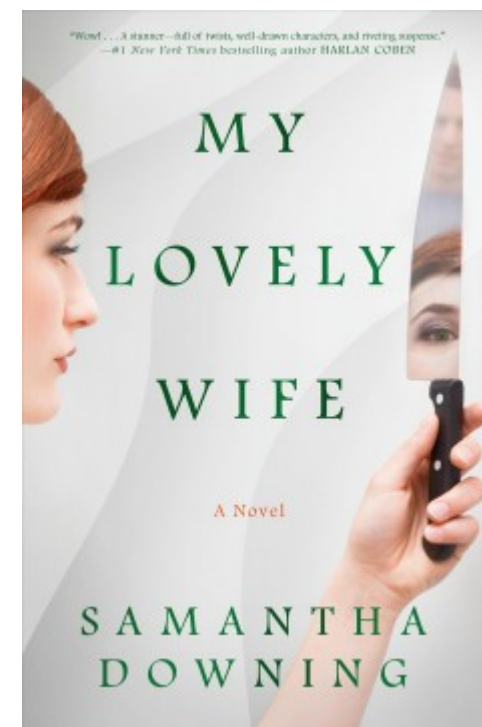
Biological



Technological



Political



Psychological

Menacing

Suspenseful

Bleak

Descriptive

Brooding

Intricately
plotted

Atmospheric

Complex

Darkly
humorous

Strong female

Flawed

Dramatic

Disturbing

Introspective

Nonlinear

Gritty

Violent

NoveList Themes



Characters

Behind the Iron Curtain

Framed!

Missing memories

Real life monsters

Rookie on the beat

Sherlock Paws

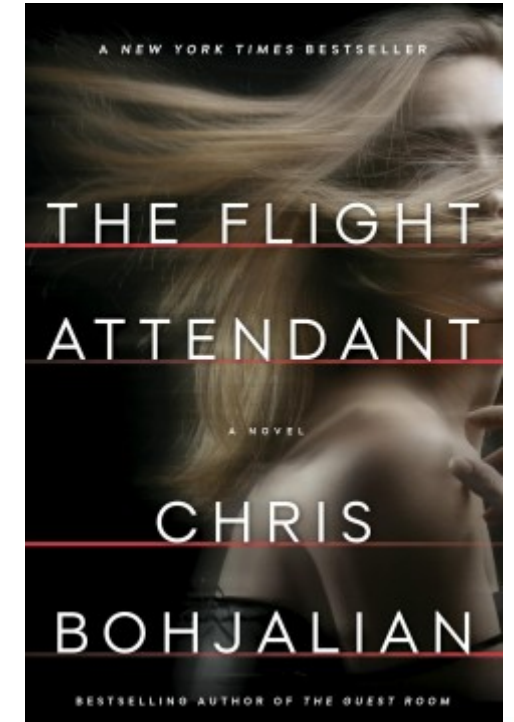
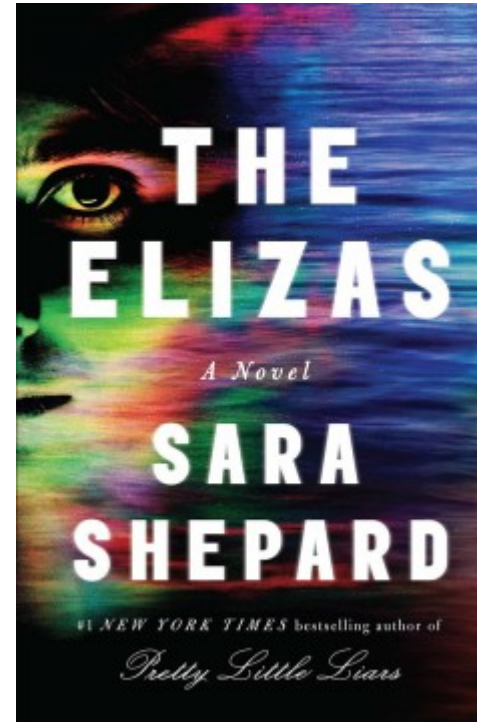
Starring famous figures

Too good to be true

Unreliable narrator

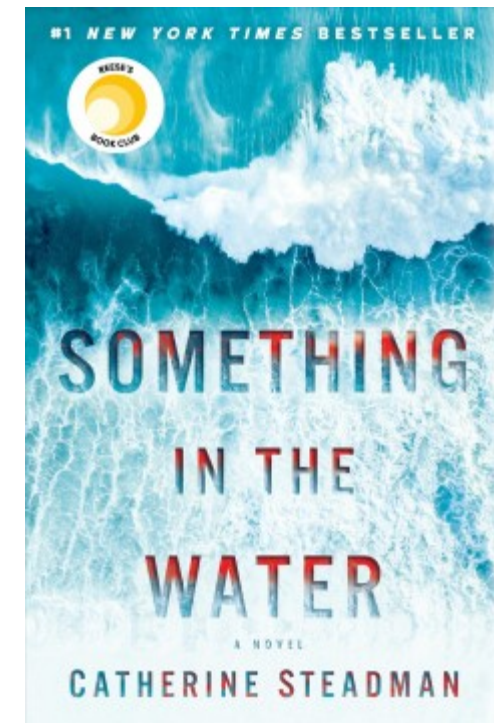
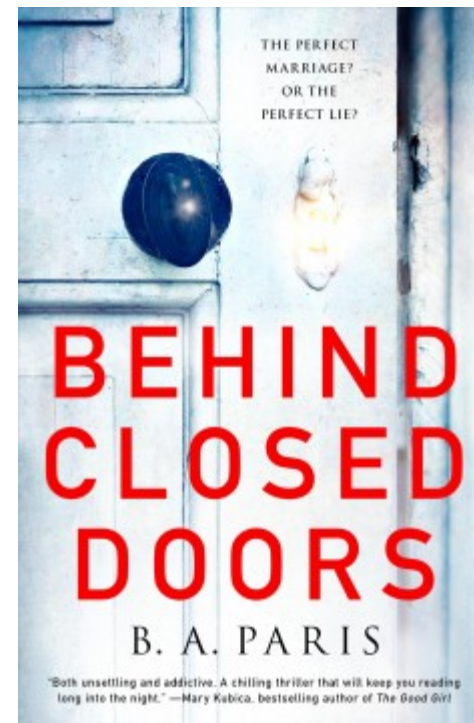
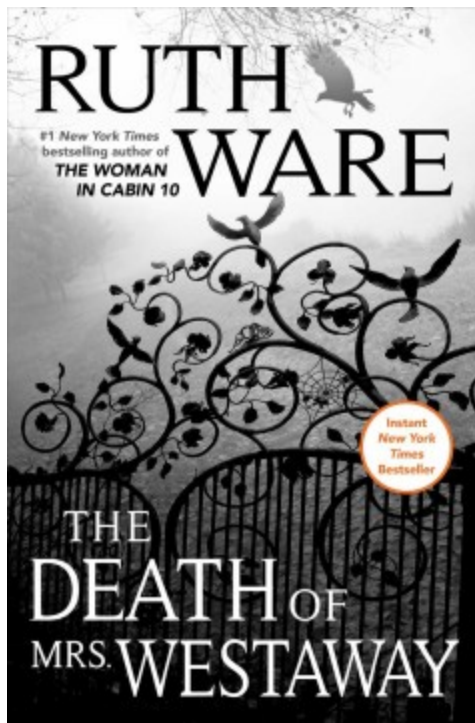
Missing Memories

Where am I? Who am I? A gap in the main character's memory withholds information vital to the plot. Amnesia in these stories could span a couple of days or years.



Too Good to be True

Whether it's a perfect marriage, the appearance of a "long lost" family member, or a stranger who inserts himself into the main character's life, something doesn't add up. Each has secrets that can harm or even kill.



Setting

Criminal masterpieces

Inspired by real events

Rural police

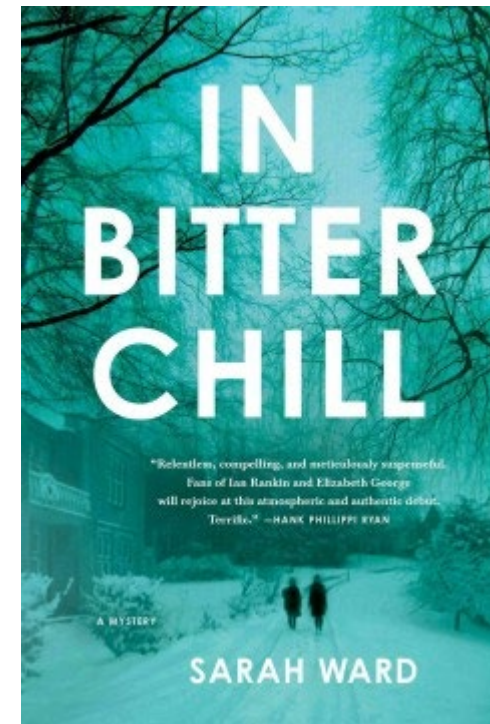
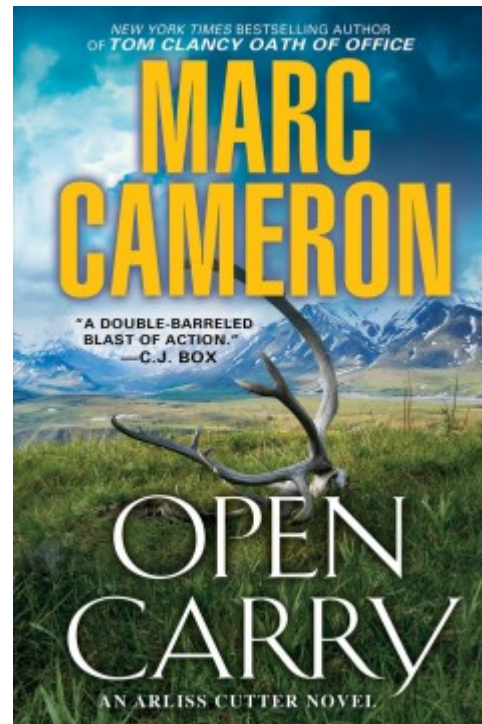
Small town police

The butler did it!

Urban police

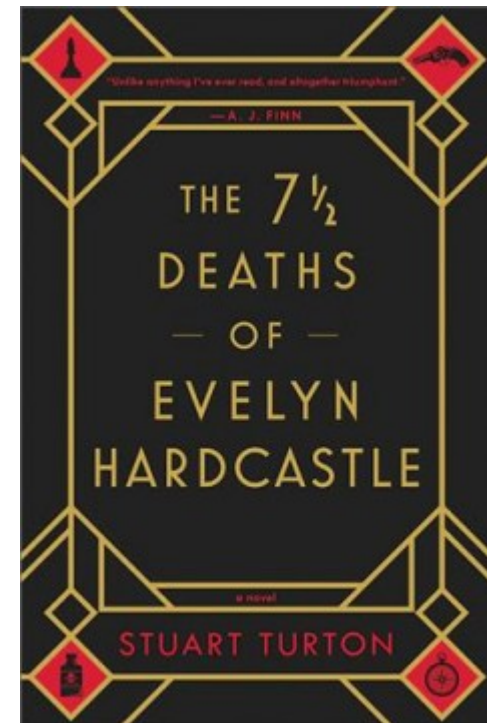
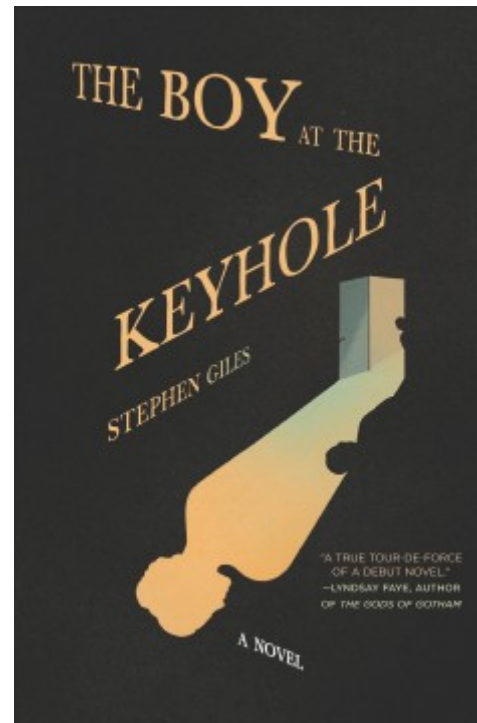
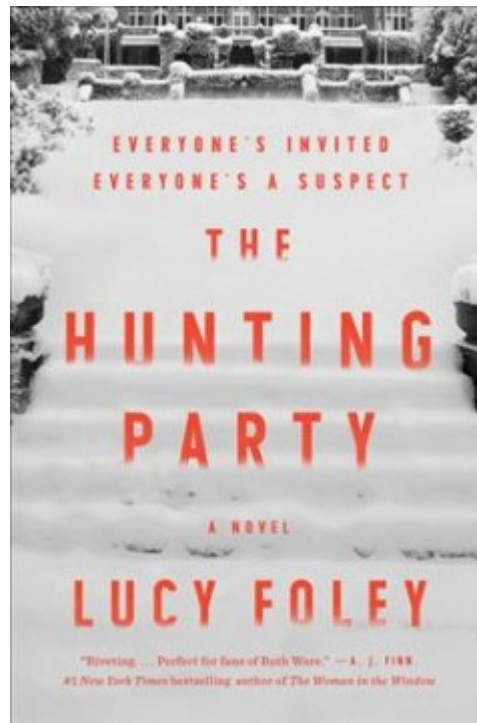
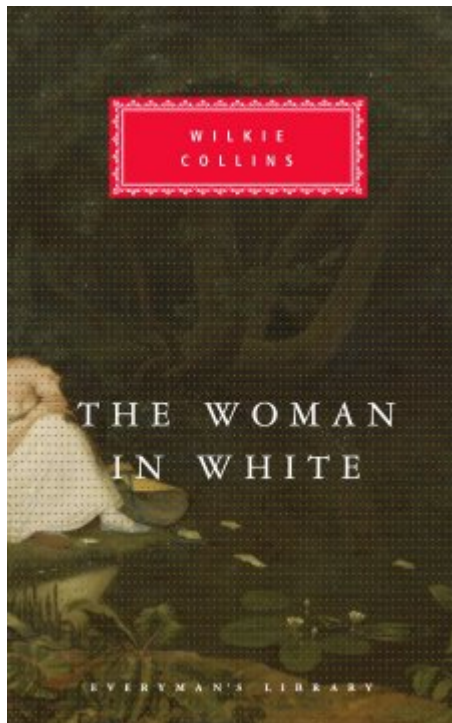
Rural Police

Crime is not absent in the country—it's just more spread out. These police may not have fancy forensics labs and specialized units, but they'll close the case just the same.



The butler did it!

The butler, of course, manages an estate, whose house and sprawling grounds are perfect for hiding secrets—and bodies. Characters gather in these remote, luxurious settings and cannot leave until the mystery's solved.



Plot

Ancient enigmas

Beyond the grave

Locked room mysteries

On the run

Proving own innocence

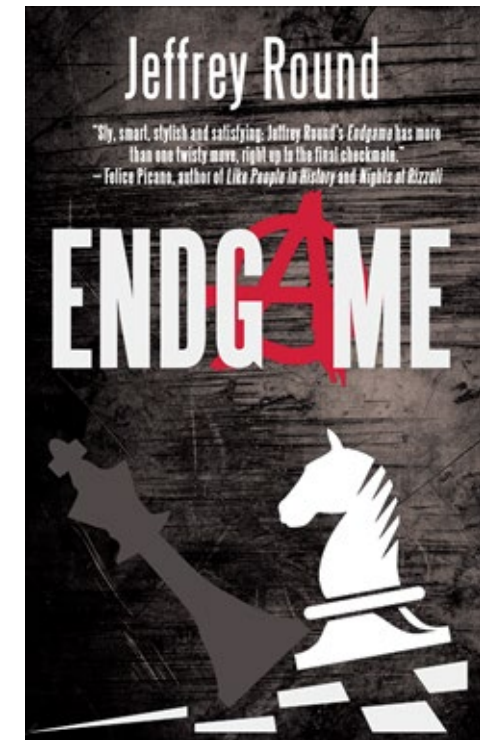
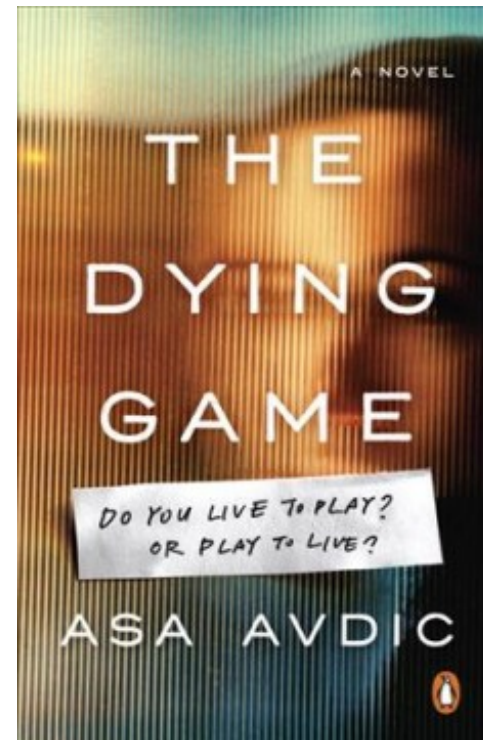
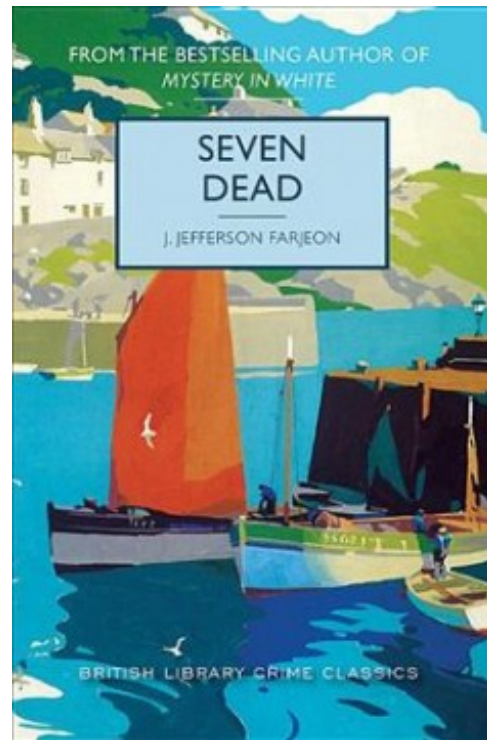
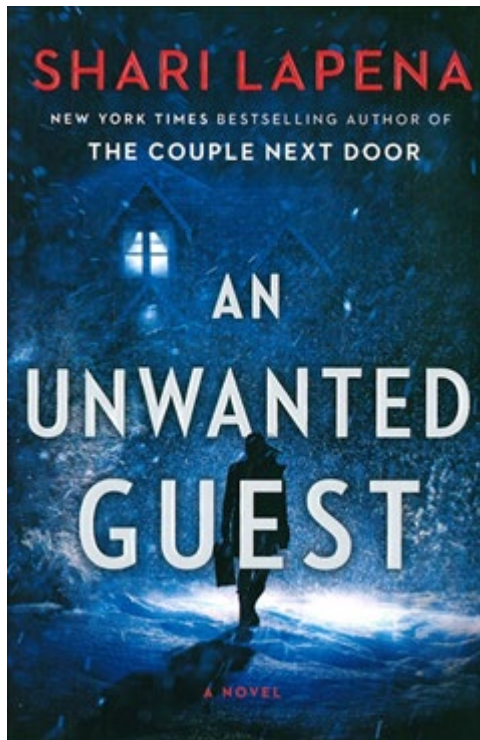
Race against time

Shadow organizations

Vacation interrupted

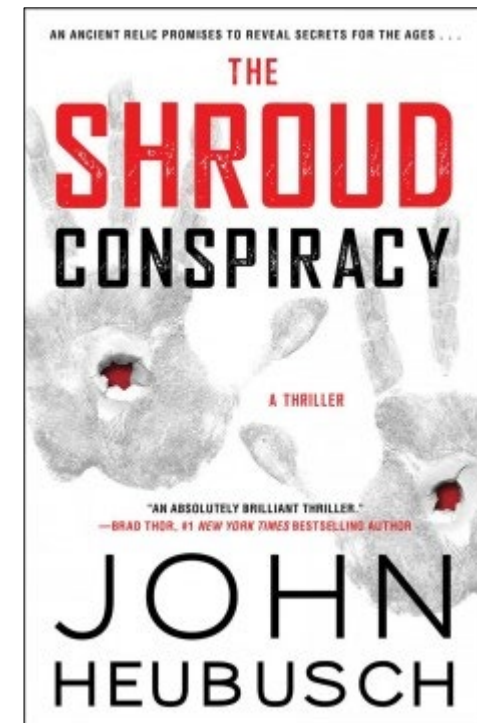
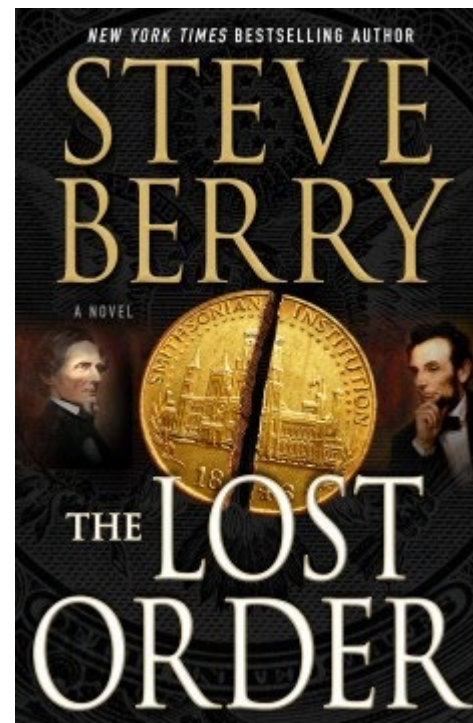
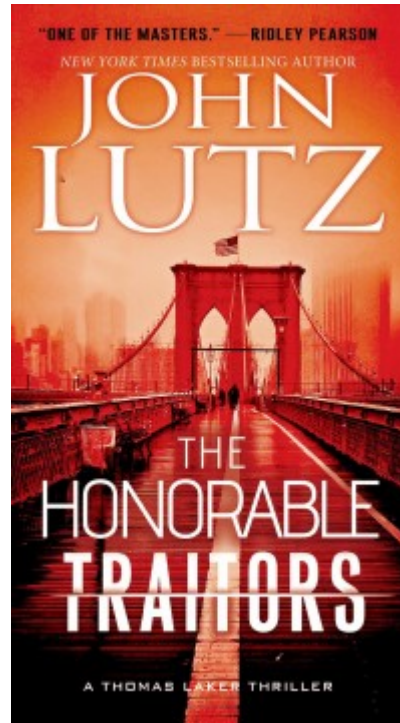
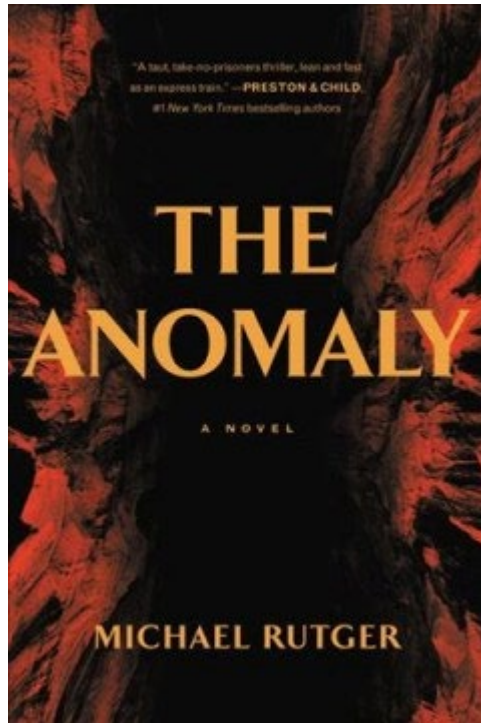
Locked Room Mysteries

Featuring seemingly impossible crimes (such as those that require an escape from a room locked from the outside), these mysteries appeal to readers who like devilishly difficult puzzles.

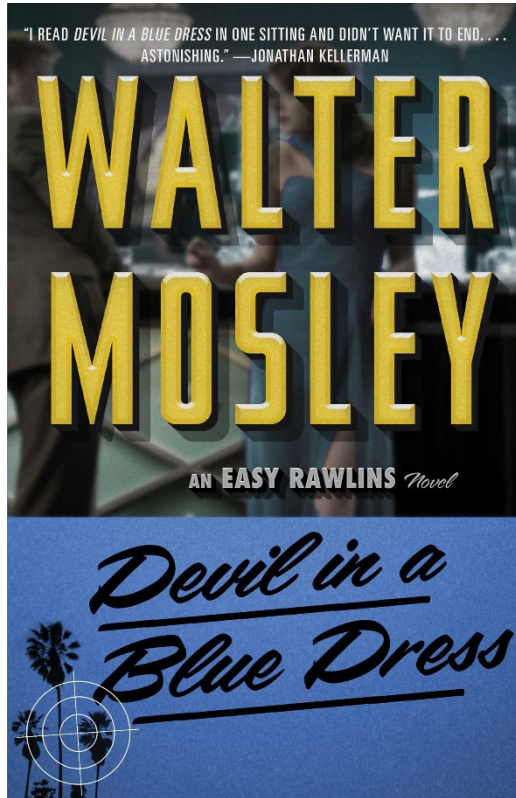


Ancient Enigmas

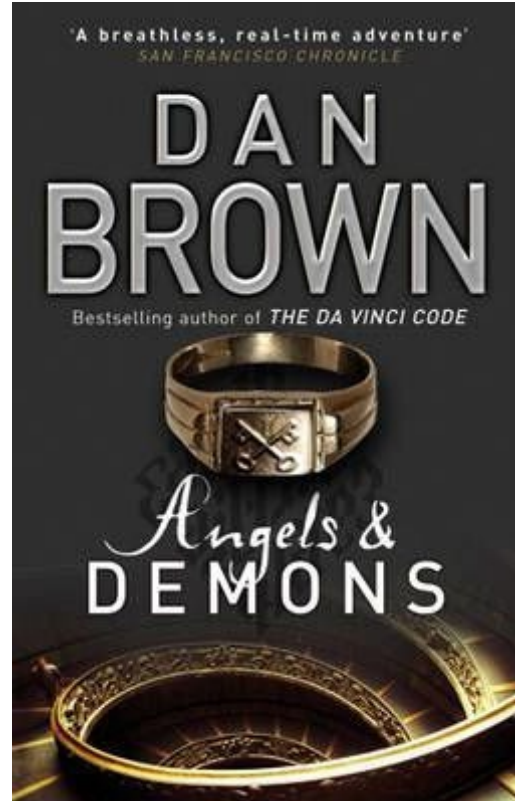
The modern-day protagonist follows a trail of artifacts, codes, and mystic symbols into a centuries-old mystery, often guarded by a secret society or religious order.



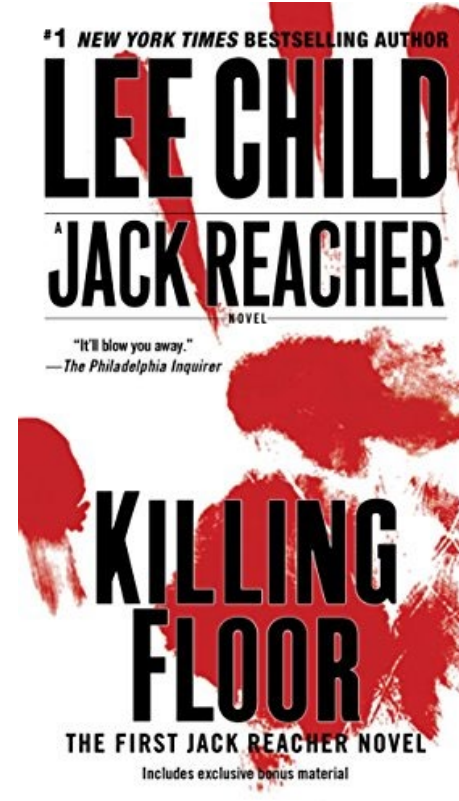
Popular Series



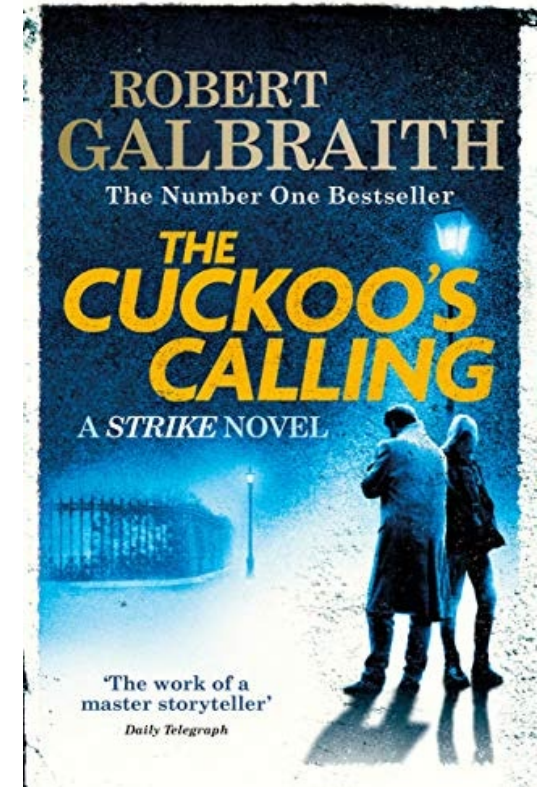
Easy Rawlins Mysteries



Robert Langdon Novels

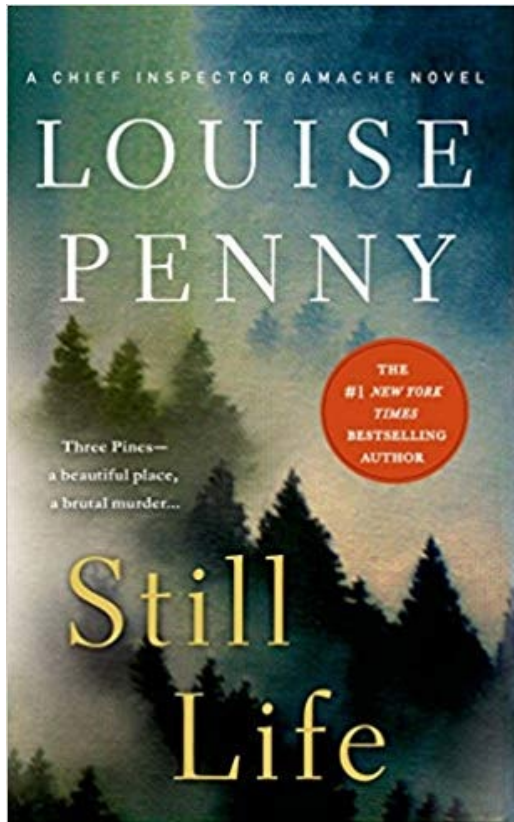


Jack Reacher Novels

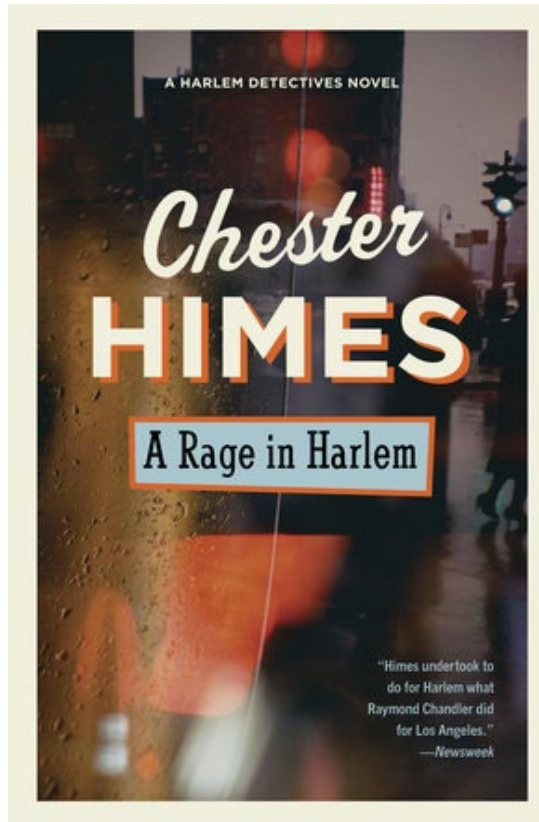


Cormoran Strike Novels

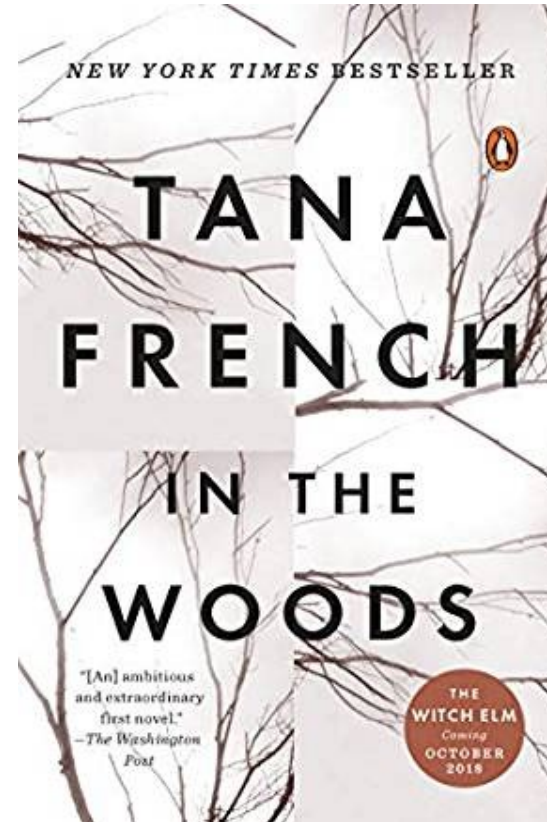
Popular Series



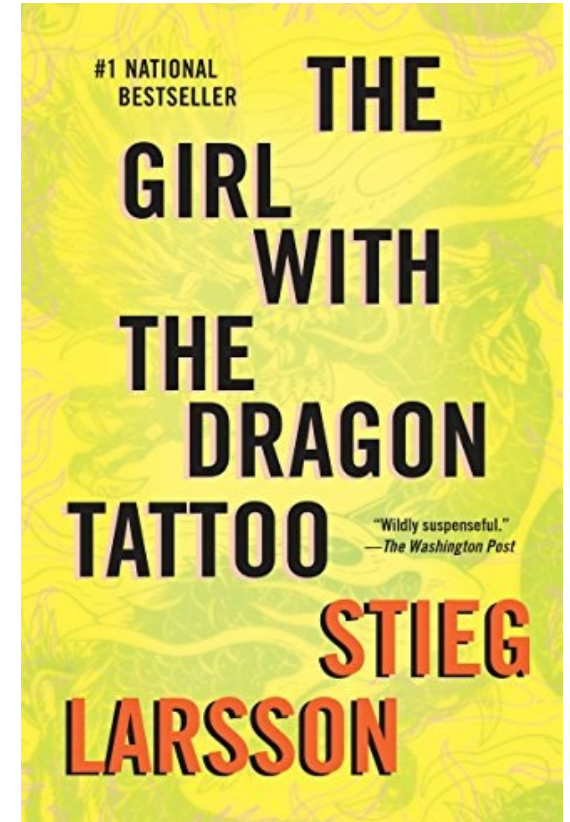
Inspector Armand Gamache Mysteries



Coffin Ed Johnson and Grave Digger Jones Mysteries

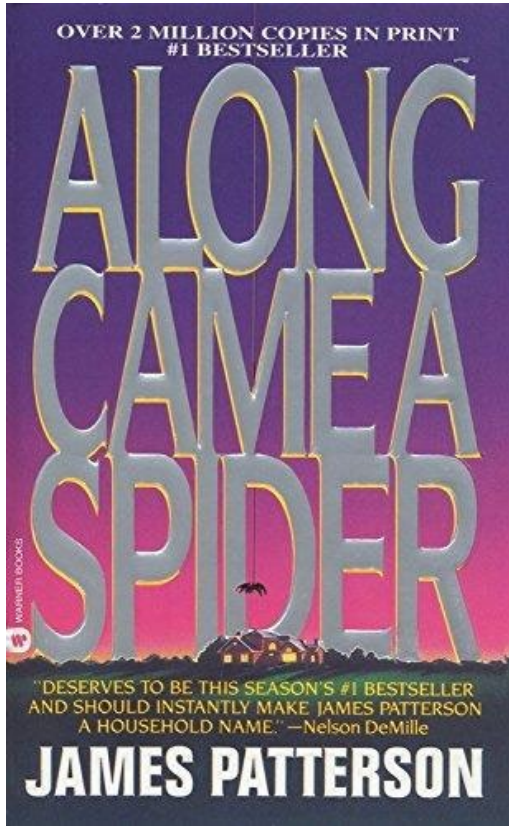


Dublin Murder Squad Novels

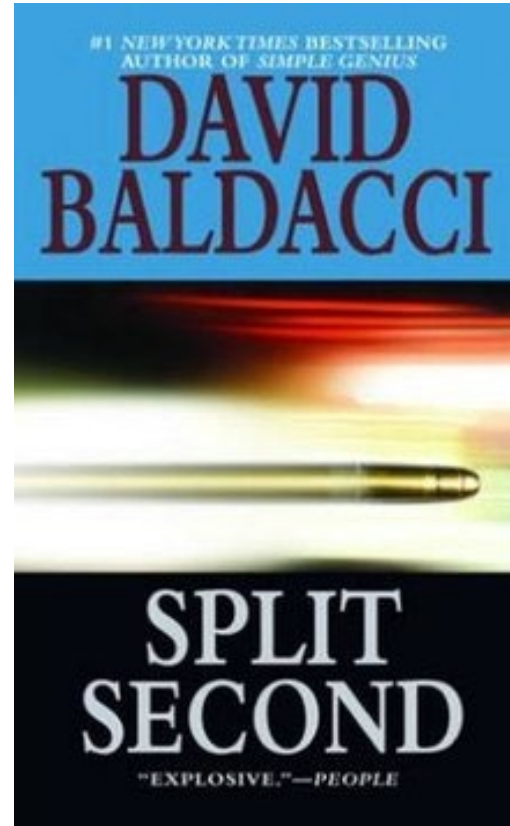


Millennium Novels

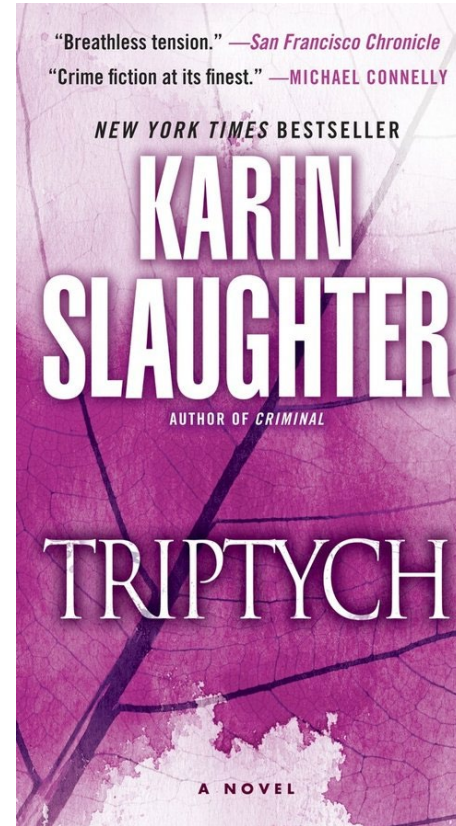
Popular Series



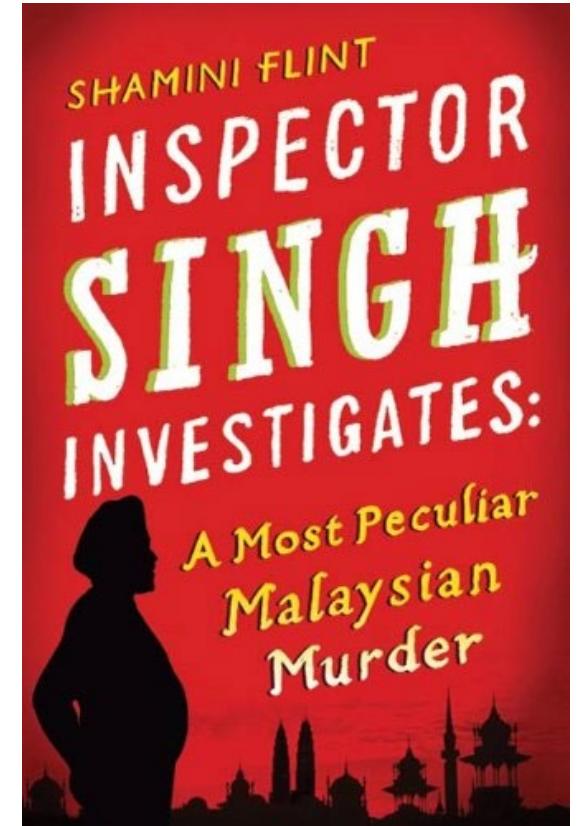
Alex Cross Novels



Sean King and Michelle Maxwell Novels



Will Trent Series



Inspector Singh Investigates

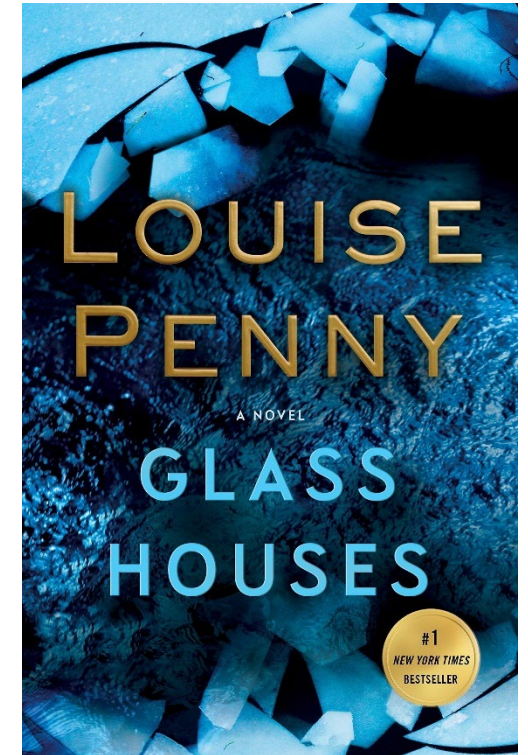
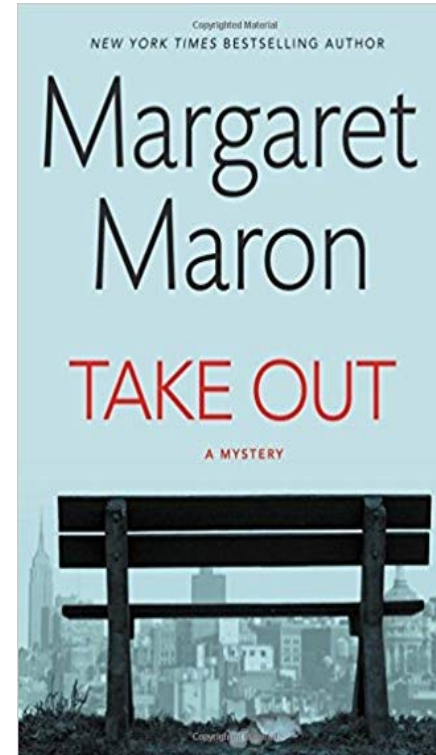
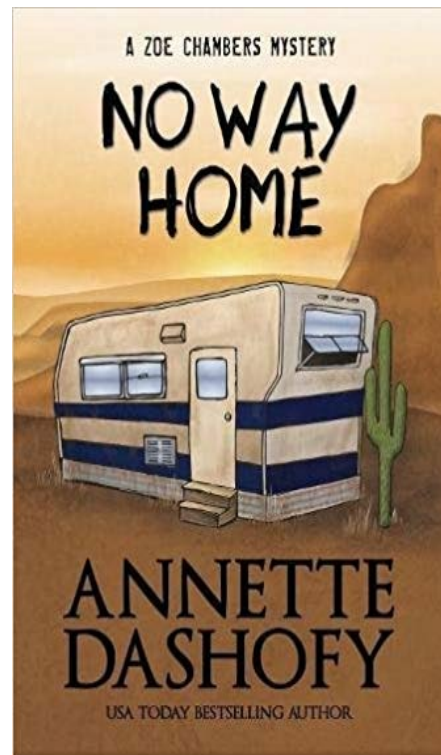
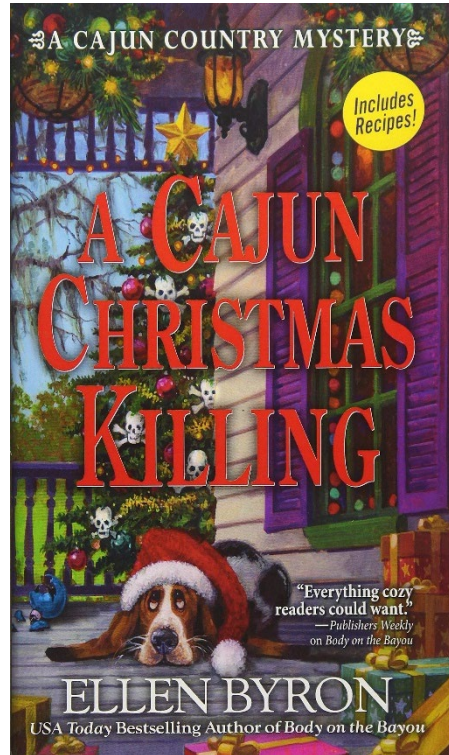
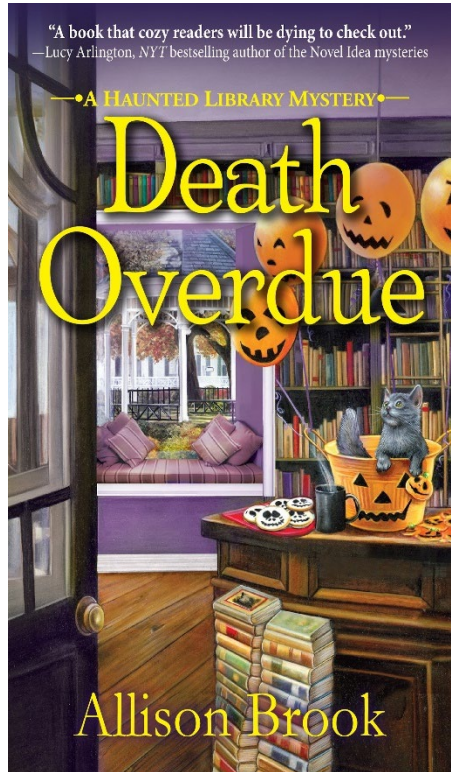
Awards

The **Agatha Awards** goes to a writer in the cozy mystery sub-genre (i.e. closed setting, no sex or violence, amateur detective).

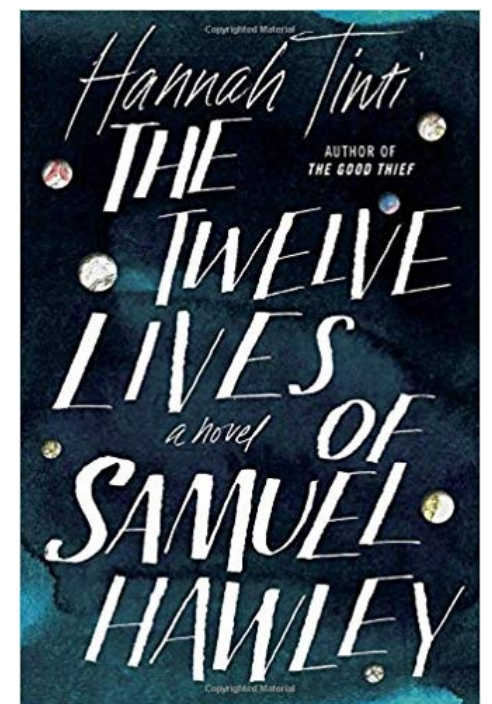
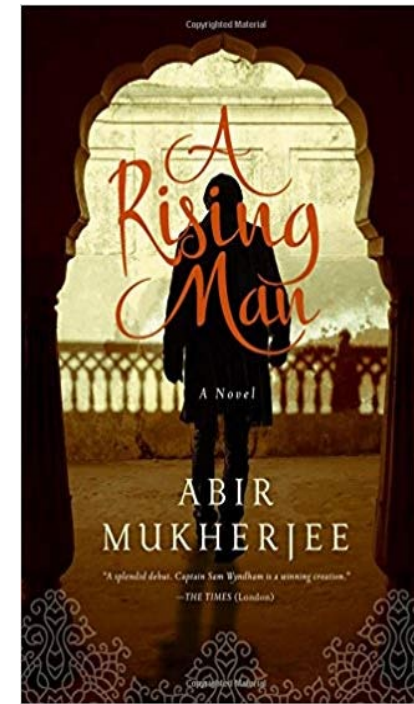
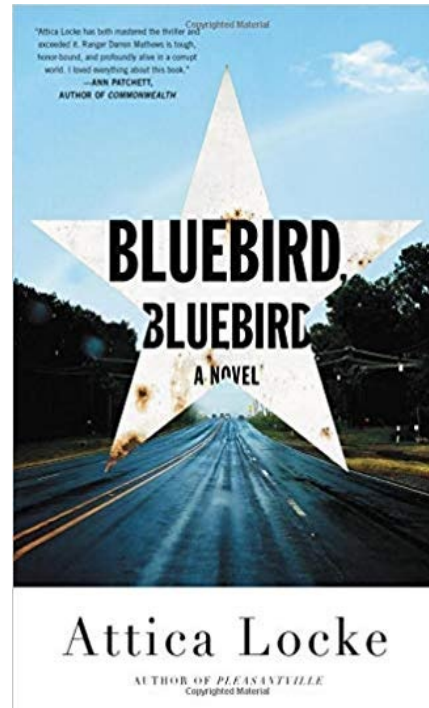
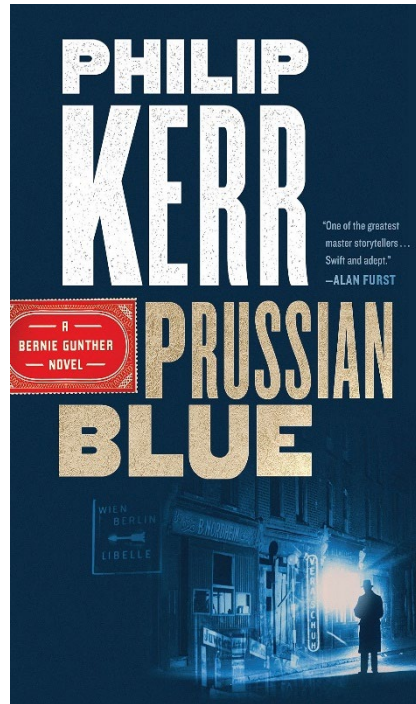
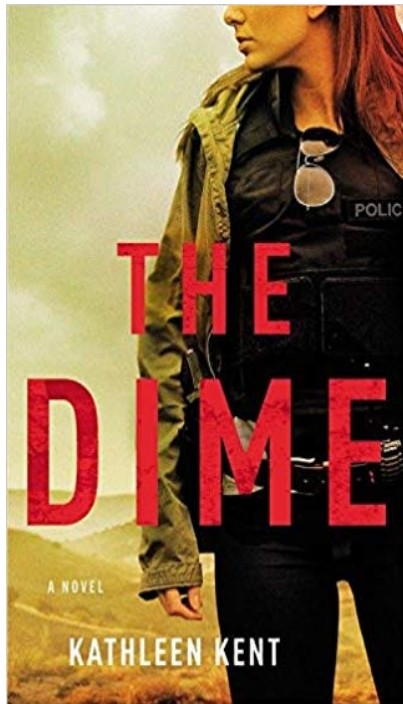


The **Edgar Allan Poe Awards** (popularly called the **Edgars**) are presented every year by the Mystery Writers of America.

2018 Agatha Award Shortlist



2018 Edgar Award Shortlist



Helping Readers



Crime, Mysteries & Thrillers Starter Pack

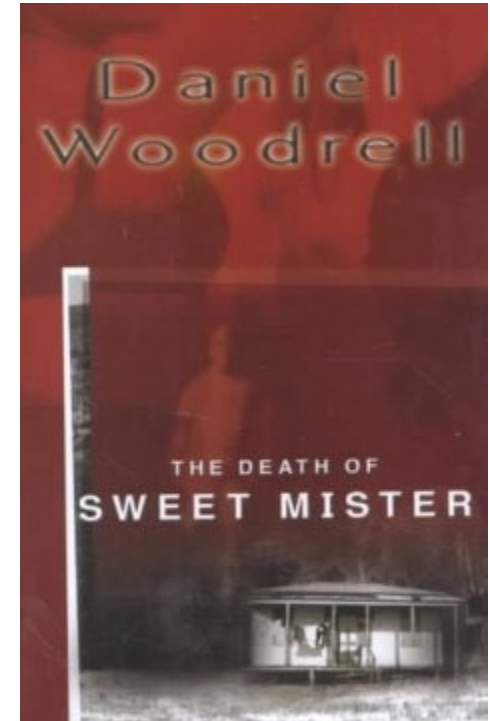
- ✓ Representative of genre
- ✓ Well-reviewed
- ✓ Wide appeal
- ✓ Stand-alone or series starter
- ✓ Available on audio



Rural Noir

The Death of Sweet Mister by Daniel Woodrell (2001)

- Selected for 2013 RUSA Listen List Award
- **Genres:**
 - Rural noir; Southern fiction; Literary fiction
- **Themes:**
 - Unhappy families
 - Sad small towns
- **Appeal:**
 - Authentic and flawed characters; Bleak; Gritty;
 - Menacing; Strong sense of place



Scandinavian Crime Fiction

The Darkness by Ragnar Jonasson (2018)

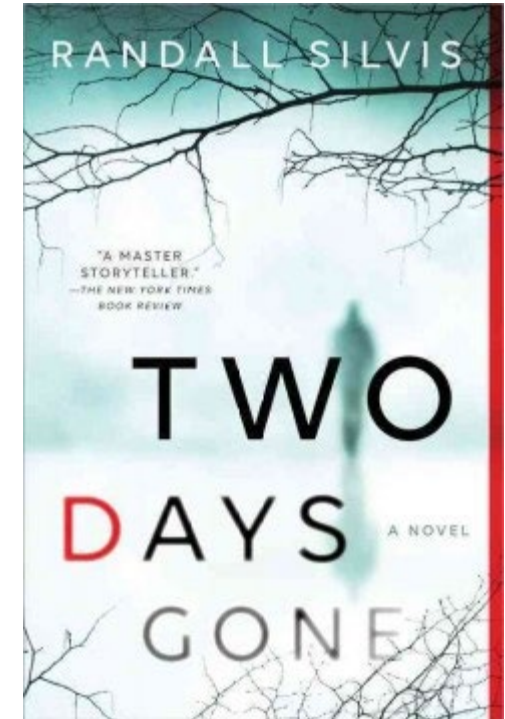
- Starred reviews from Booklist and Publishers Weekly
- First book in series
- **Genres:**
 - Scandinavian crime fiction; Translations
- **Themes:**
 - Urban police
- **Appeal:**
 - Intricately plotted; Atmospheric; Bleak; Suspenseful; Compelling; Gritty



Police Procedurals

Two Days Gone by Randall Silvis (2017)

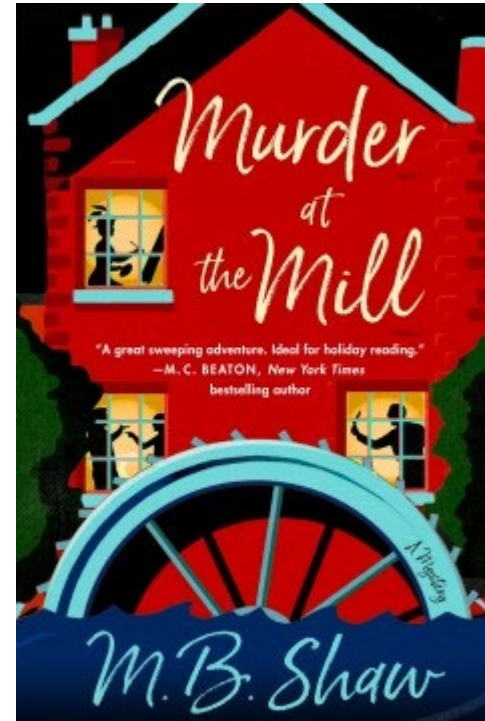
- Starred review from Library Journal
- First book in series
- **Genres:**
Police procedurals; Mysteries
- **Themes:**
On the run
- **Appeal:**
Flawed characters; Intricately plotted; Haunting;
Melancholy



Cozy Mysteries

Murder at the Mill by M. B. Shaw (2018)

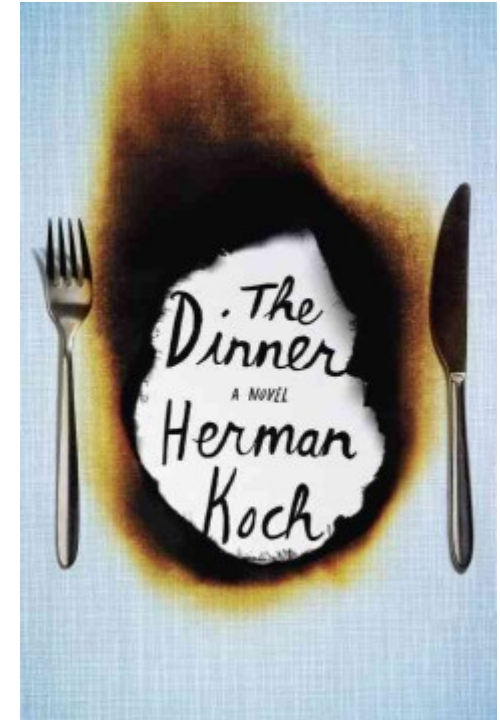
- Book 1 in new series
- **Genres:**
Cozy mysteries; Holiday mysteries
- **Themes:**
Life in small towns
- **Appeal:**
Atmospheric; Engaging; Likeable characters



Psychological Suspense

The Dinner by Herman Koch (2012)

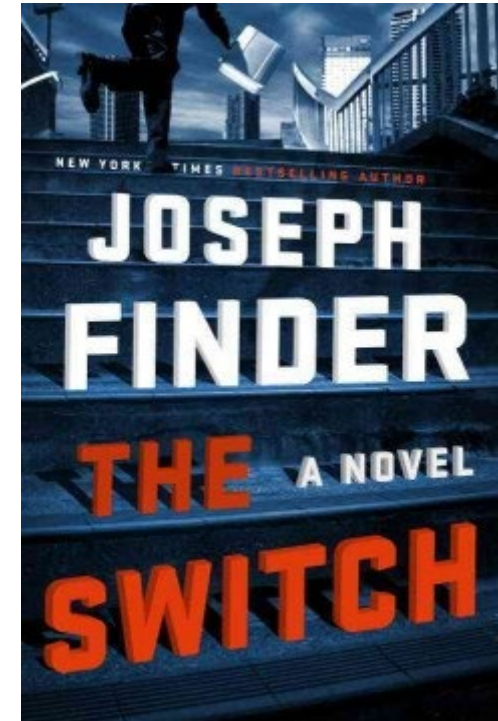
- ALA Notable Book 2014: NYT Notable Book 2013
- Starred review from Publishers Weekly
- **Genres:**
Psychological suspense; Satirical fiction; Books to movies; Translations
- **Themes:**
Unhappy families; Family gatherings
- **Appeal:**
Twisted characters; Intricately plotted; Disturbing; Descriptive; Sardonic



Political Thrillers

The Switch by Joseph Finder (2017)

- Starred review from Booklist
- **Genres:**
Political thrillers; Thrillers and suspense
- **Themes:**
On the run
- **Appeal:**
Fast-paced; Intricately plotted; Suspenseful



NoveList Resources



Genre outlines

Keeping up pages

Recommended reads lists



Getting Up to Speed in Mystery

by Jessica Zellers

[Print this genre outline](#)

What is Mystery fiction?

Mysteries are puzzles. The author provides clues to the solution but obscures some information so the puzzle cannot be solved too easily. Along with the detective, readers are drawn into the puzzle while attempting to solve it.

What happens in a Mystery?

Mysteries tend to examine human nature in depth, probing the why almost as frequently as the who and the how. They are also morality plays, and justice, or the restoration of order, is at the heart of the solution in a mystery. Readers expect the good guys to win and the bad guys to be punished, even when by-the-books legal justice is not an option.

Most mysteries involve a crime, usually murder. An investigator discovers whodunnit and brings the culprit to justice. Each mystery story describes the investigation, while simultaneously exploring the lives of the victim, the murderer, and the detective.

Some mysteries focus on the central puzzle, while others place more emphasis on character development. Detectives run the gamut from amateur detectives and snoops (à la Agatha Christie's Miss Marple) to seasoned police detectives and hard-boiled private investigators. And it's not only characters that show a wide range. The stories themselves run the gamut from cozy, with the body off stage, to hardboiled, with a distinctive noir edge and tone. Some mysteries have strong elements of suspense and intrigue, creating fast-paced stories wherein characters face deadly danger throughout the investigation.

Why do people like Mysteries?

Some fans read mysteries because they like to solve the case before the detective; others enjoy participating in the investigation. All appreciate the ordered universes these writers create, where good and bad are generally readily identifiable and justice triumphs in the end.

Most readers love series, which dominate the genre. Readers enjoy following the lives of both the detectives and the well-developed secondary characters from book to book. For some readers, the detective is at least as important as the puzzle, and fans expect to find all titles in the series they love so they can read them in order.

Many currently popular mysteries focus on social issues such as political and corporate corruption, child abuse, and drugs. Still others combine the mystery with characteristics from other genres. Some readers prefer historical settings; others seek paranormal elements – vampire detectives, for example. International settings abound, from Scandinavia to Australia and beyond.

"Some fans read mysteries because they like to solve the case before the detective; others enjoy participating in the investigation."



ABOUT MYSTERIES

Mysteries describe puzzling events (often a crime or murder), and a protagonist who investigates to learn the truth. They range from cozy who-dunnits to gritty police procedurals, and readers may have strong preferences. NovelList tone appeals can help refine search results to suit different tastes.

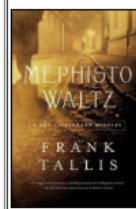
GENRE ESSENTIALS

- Getting up to Speed in Mysteries
- All About Mystery (Teens)
- All About Mystery (Older Kids)

AWARDS TO KNOW

- Agatha Awards
- Edgar Allan Poe Awards
- Library Journal Best Mystery Books

Explore MYSTERY themes...



EXAMPLE:
Locked room mysteries
The scene of the crime has no obvious point of entry (or was securely locked). These mysteries ask both who and howdunnit.

[Find more books with this theme!](#)
[Learn all about themes here.](#)

LOVE THESE LISTS!

- | | | |
|---------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Adults | Teens | Older Kids |
| Accidental Sleuths | For Fans of Sherlock | Funny Mysteries |
| Christian Mysteries | Mystery Must-Reads | Mystery Stories |
| Getting Cozy | Supernatural Mysteries | Puzzle-ing Mysteries |
| Nordic Noir | Teen Detectives | |

We Recommend...



Supernatural Thrillers



Watch me disappear
(Jun 2017)
By: Brown, Janelle

Popularity:★★★★☆



Fellside
(Apr 2016)
By: Carey, M. R., 1950-

Popularity:★★★★☆



A time of torment
(Aug 2018)
By: Connolly, John, 1988-

Popularity:★★★★☆



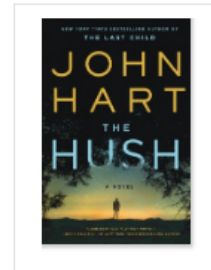
The boys of summer
(Sep 2018)
By: Cox, Richard, 1970-

Popularity:★★★★☆



Jericho
(Apr 2016)
By: Gordon, Alex

Popularity:★★★★☆



The hush
(Feb 2018)
By: Hart, John, 1965-

Popularity:★★★★☆



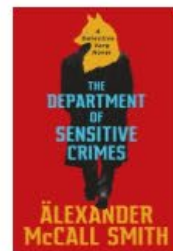
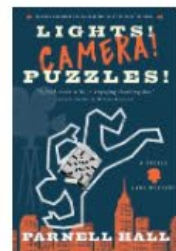
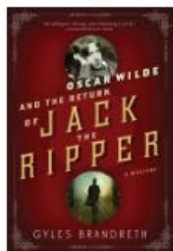
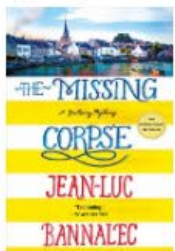
Genre browse

Adult Teen Ages 9-12 Ages 0-8

New and Popular in... Mysteries

Forthcoming Mysteries [View All](#)

Upcoming who-done-its for your reading pleasure.



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Lists

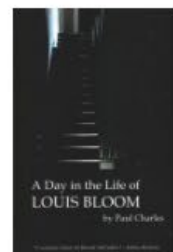
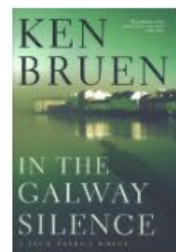
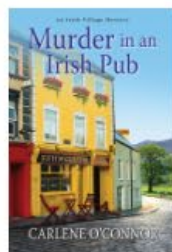
- Classic Mysteries
- Christian Mysteries
- Fatally Funny
- Mysteries, Thrillers, and Crime: Canadian Authors
- Best Mysteries 2018

Helping Readers

- Keeping Up . . . Mystery
- Getting Up to Speed in Cozy Mysteries
- Gone But Not Forgotten: Emma Lathen
- Subgenre Special: Historical Mysteries
- African-American Fiction Authors
- Diverse Reading: Mysteries and Thrillers
- The Blue Line: Police Procedurals around the World

Unluck of the Irish [View All](#)

Irish Mysteries



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Police Procedurals [View All](#)

Get read your Miranda rights.

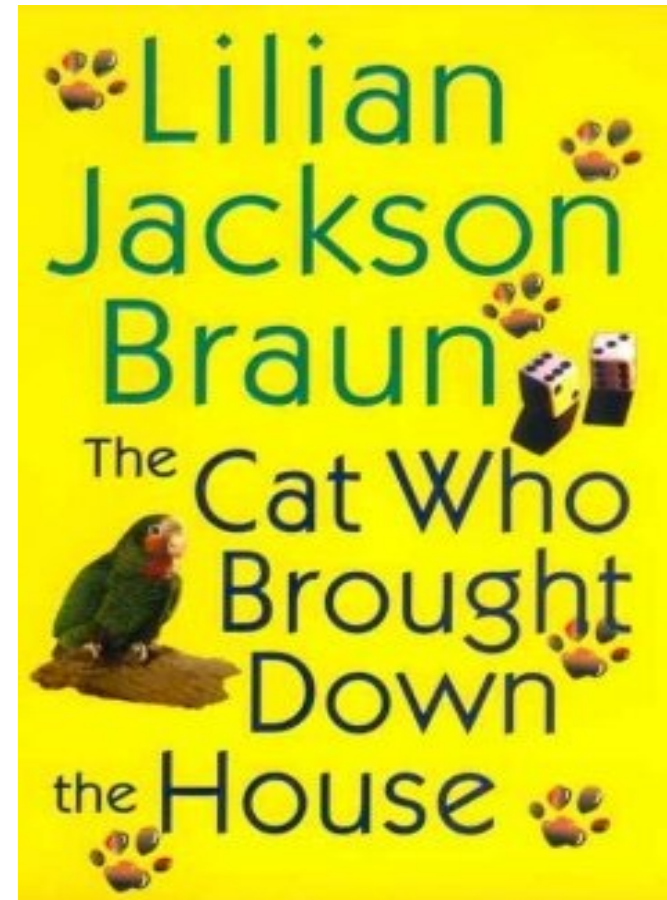
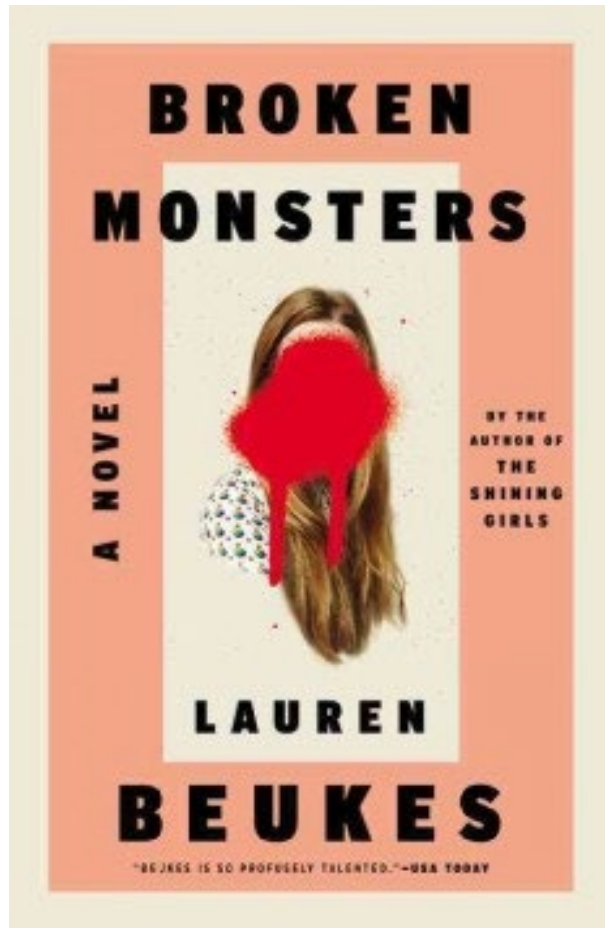


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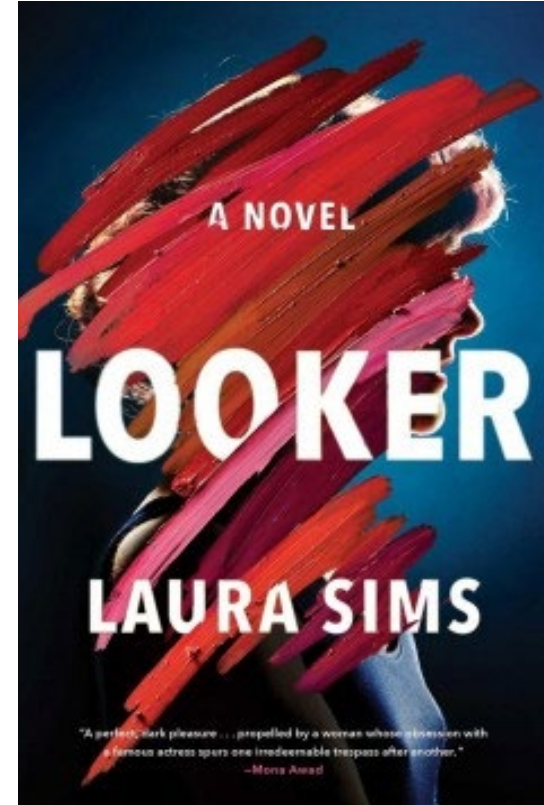
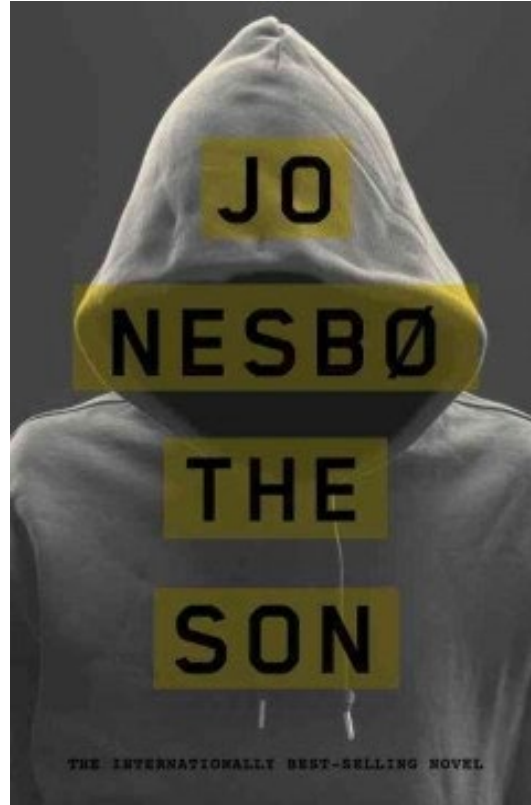
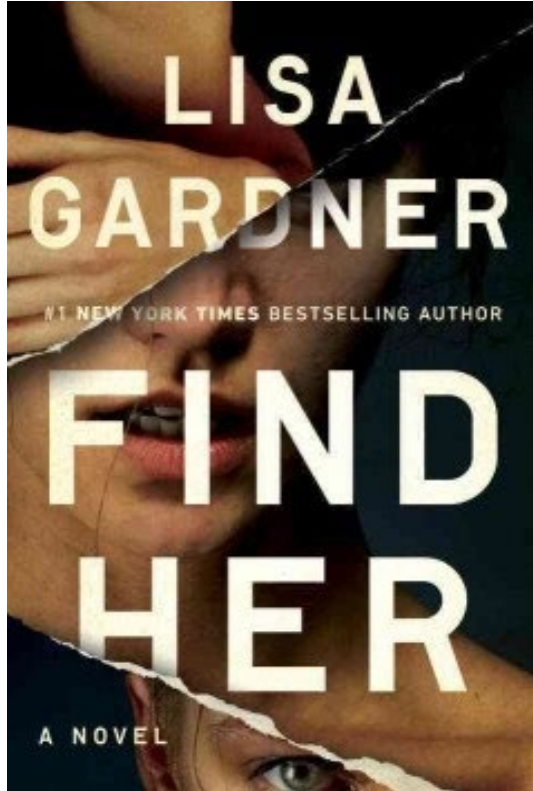
Appeal + Genre



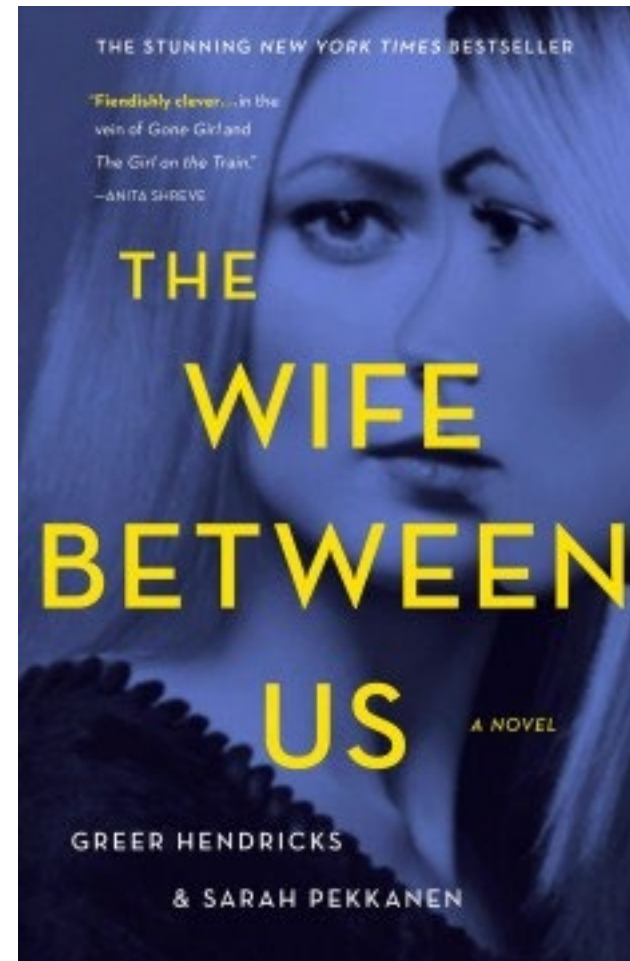
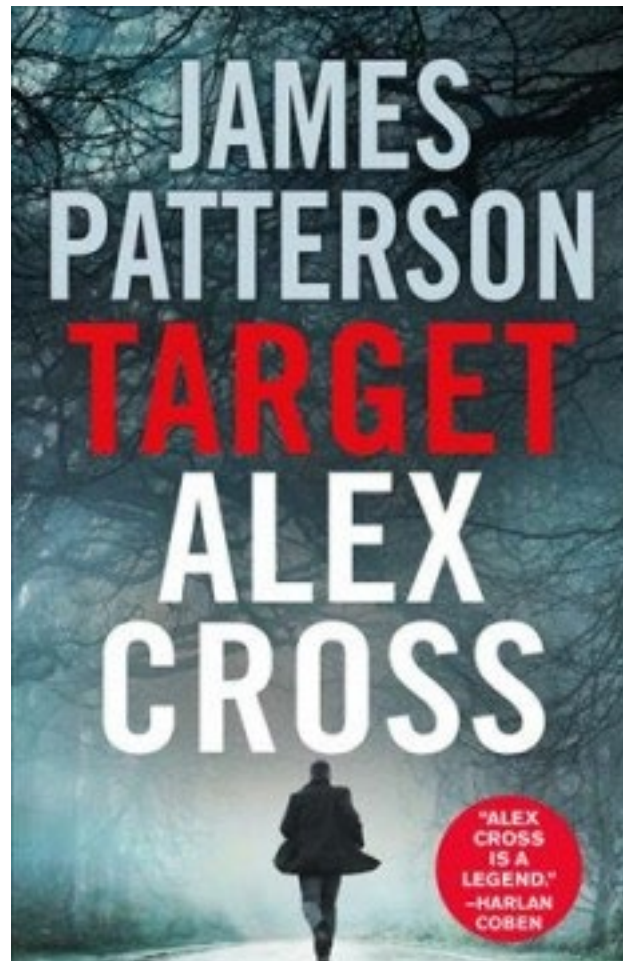
Are you looking for something **creepy** and **disturbing** or more **amusing** and **heartwarming**?



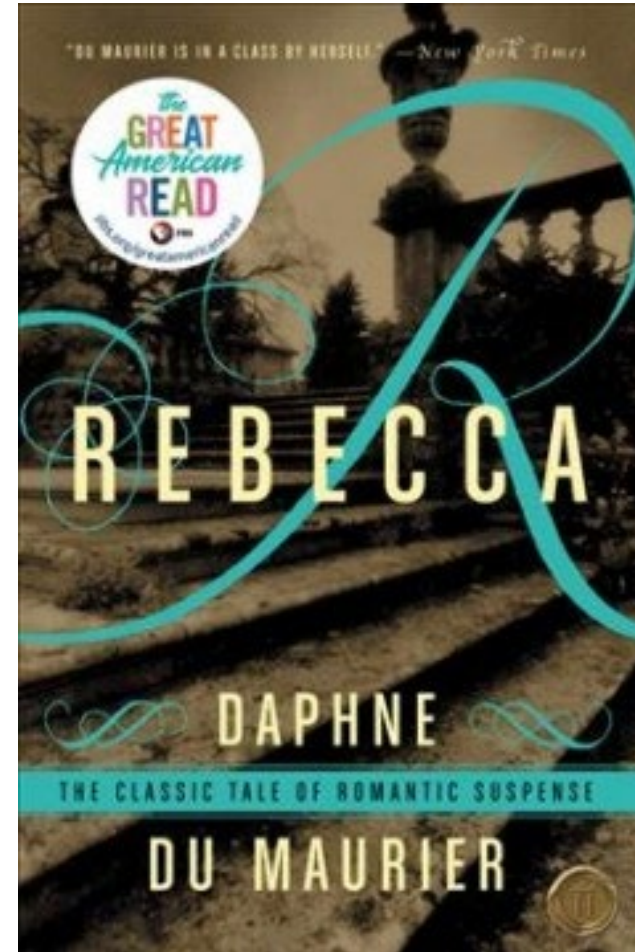
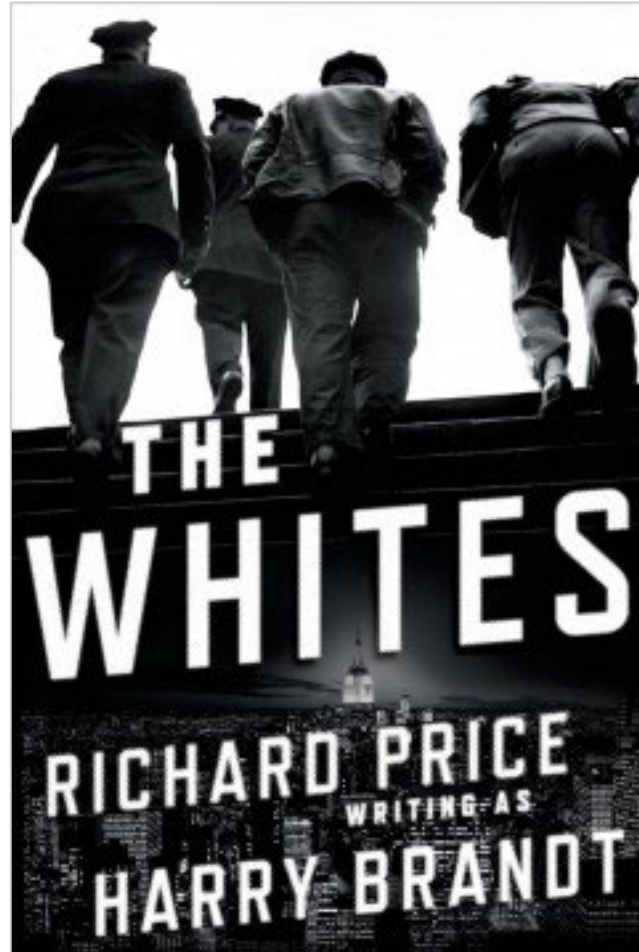
What type of characters do you like **strong female** leads, **complex** and **flawed**, or **unreliable narrators**?



Are you looking for something **fast-paced** or something more **compelling** and **psychological**?



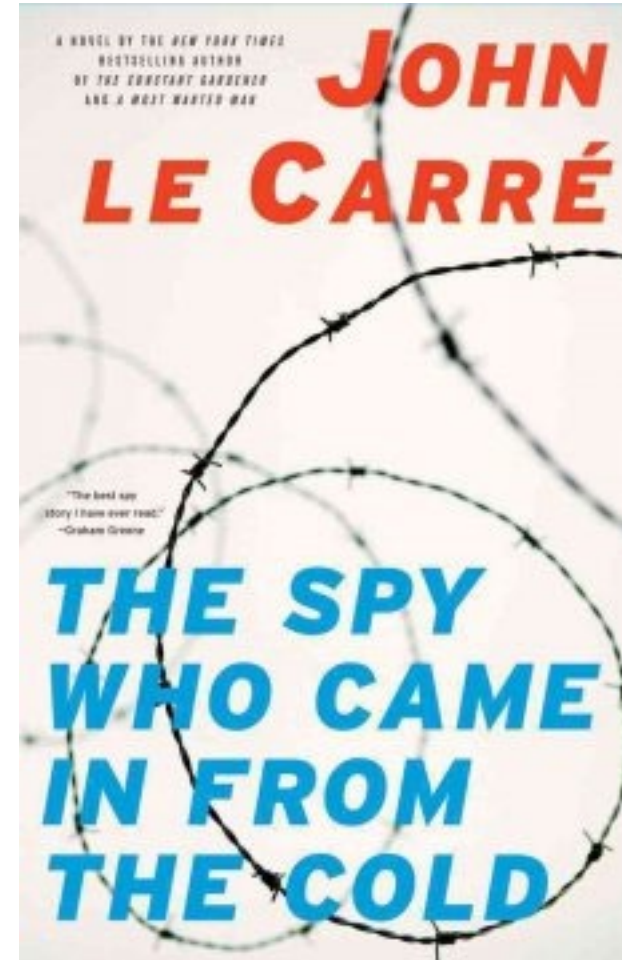
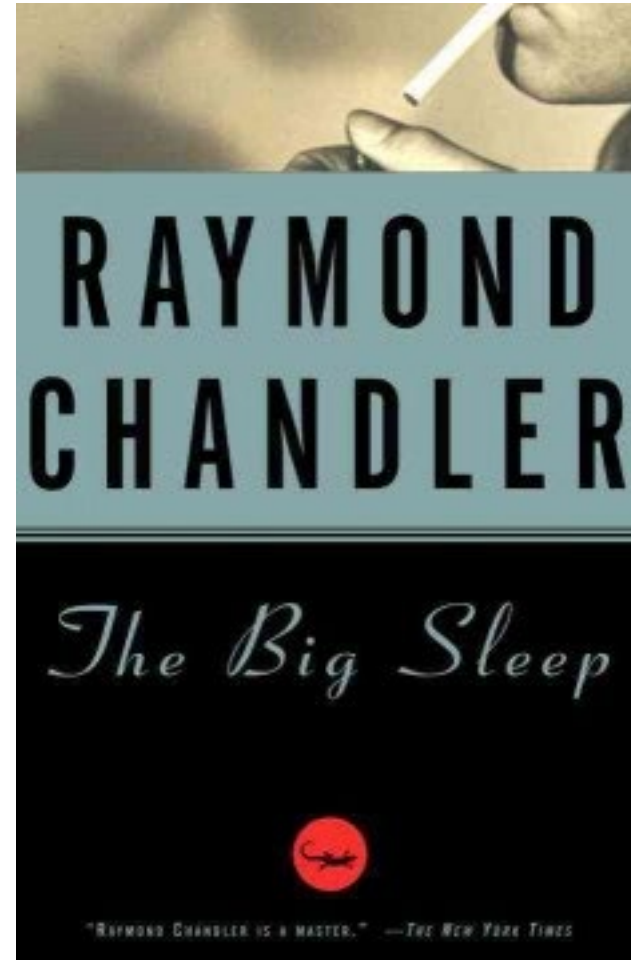
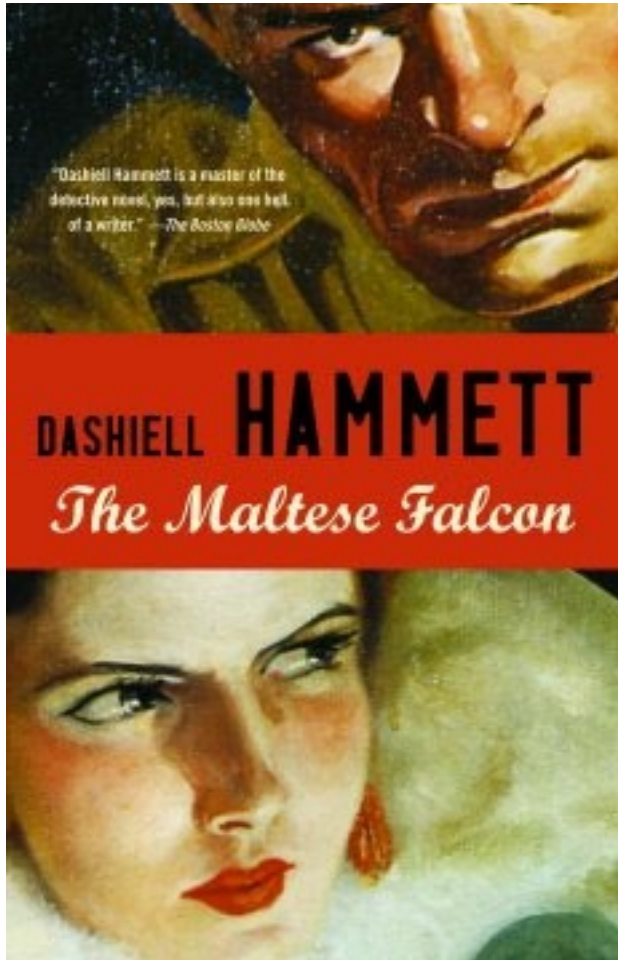
Are you looking for something **gritty** or something more **lyrical** and **lush**?



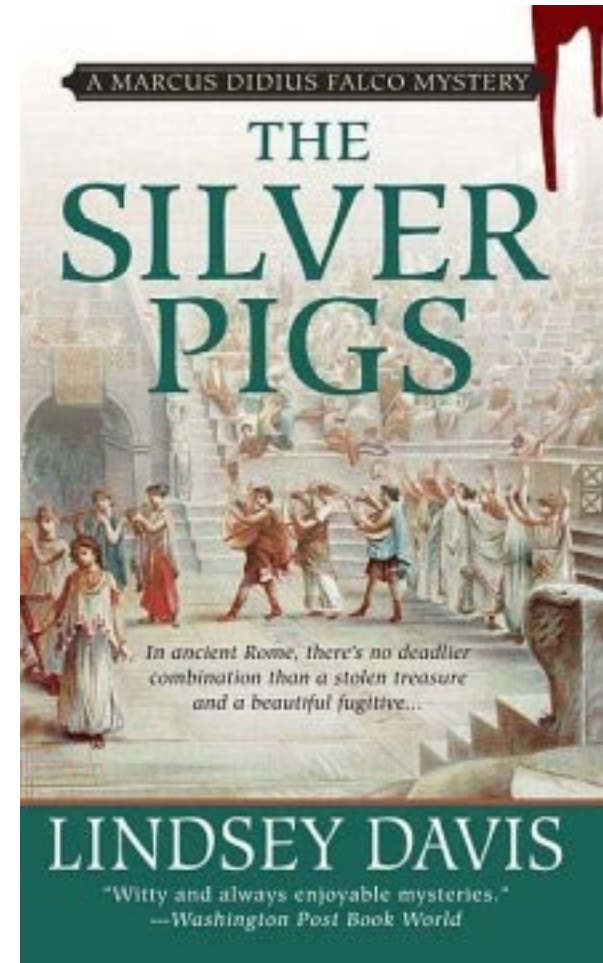
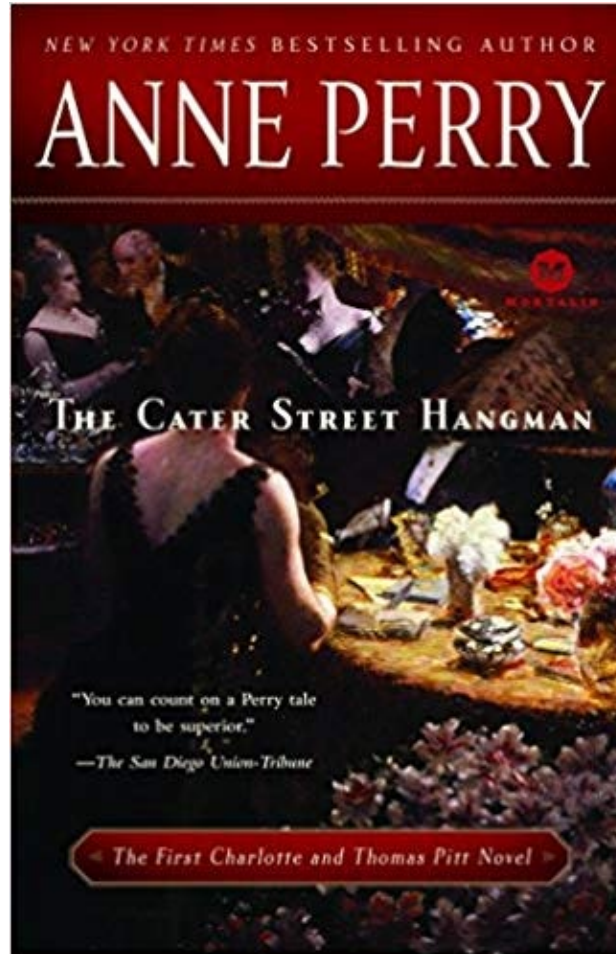
For readers who have read it all...



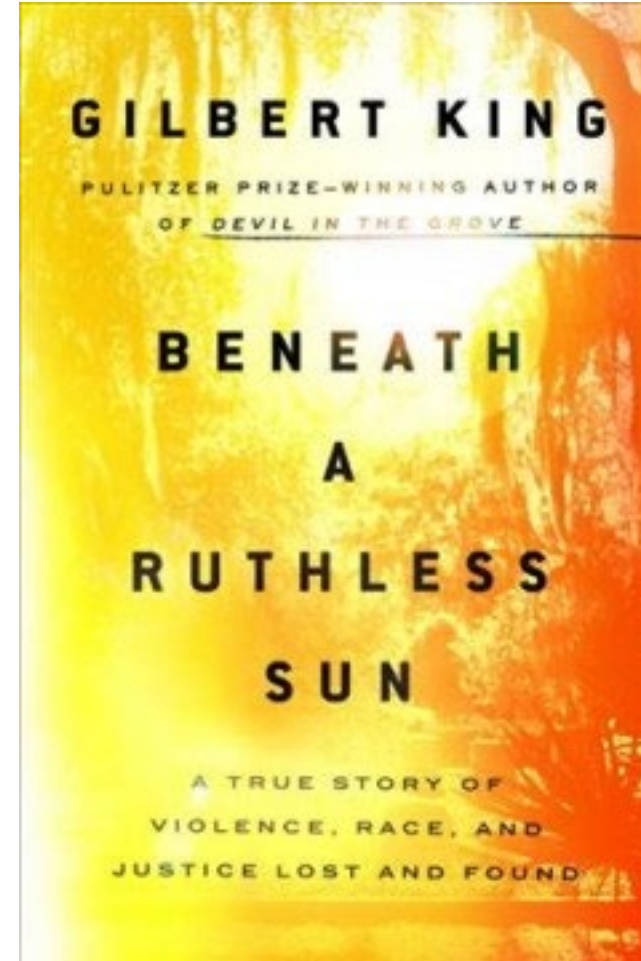
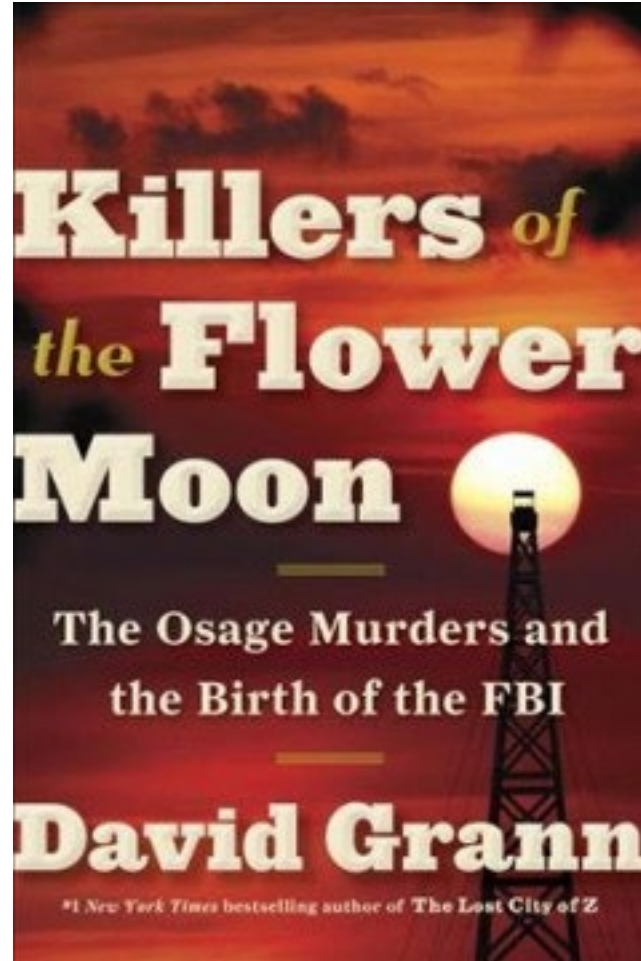
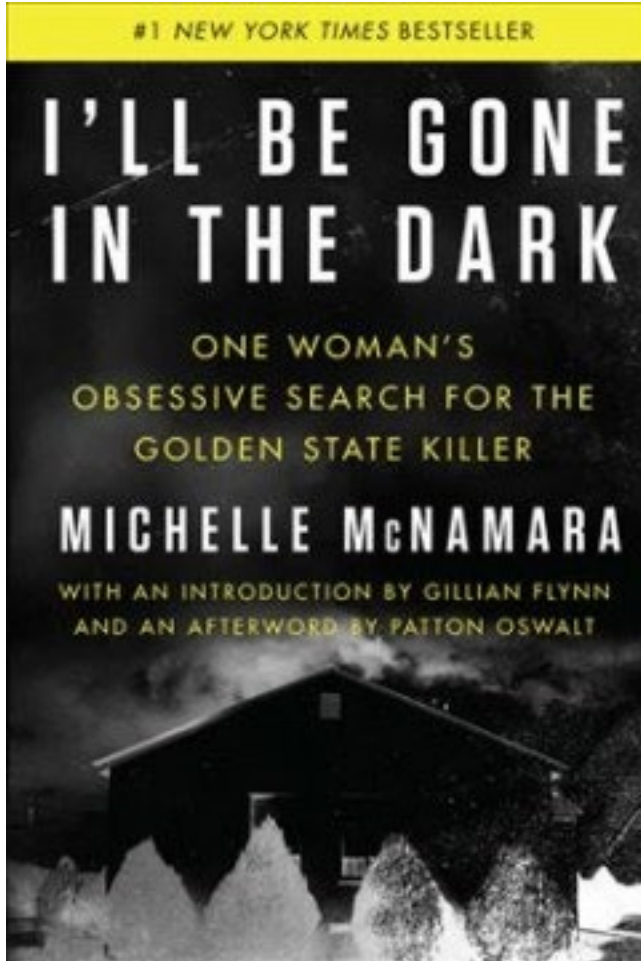
Try some classics...



Try some historical...



Try some true crime...

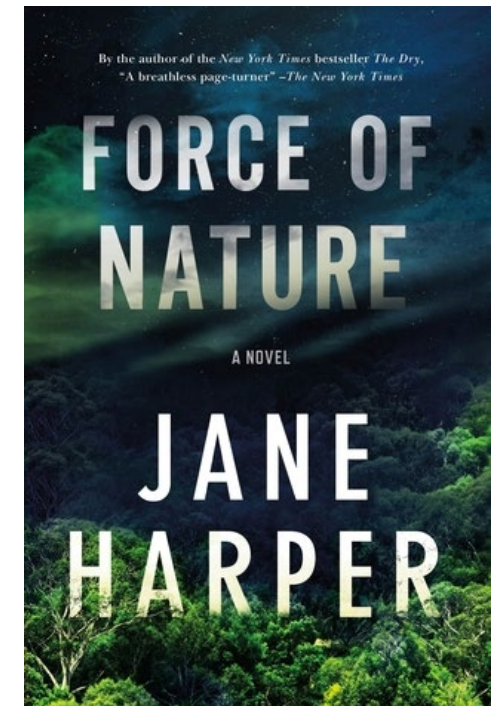
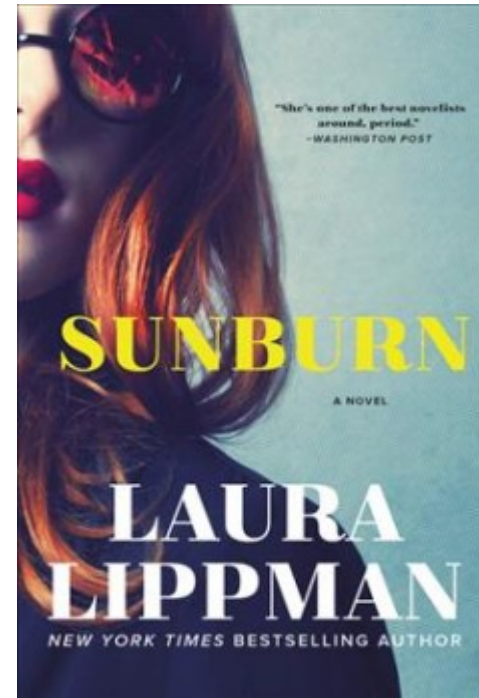
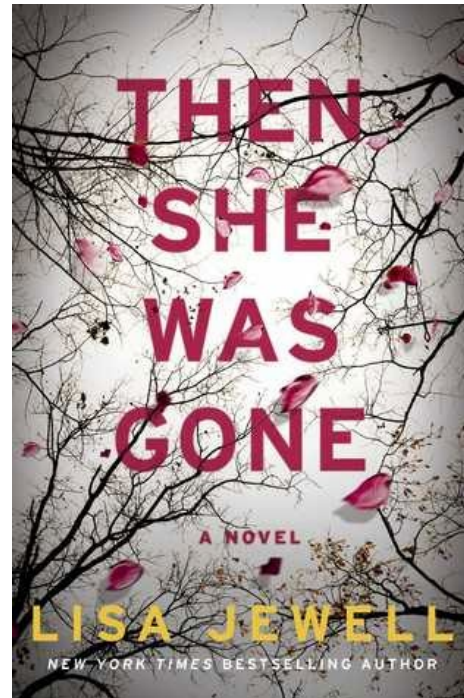
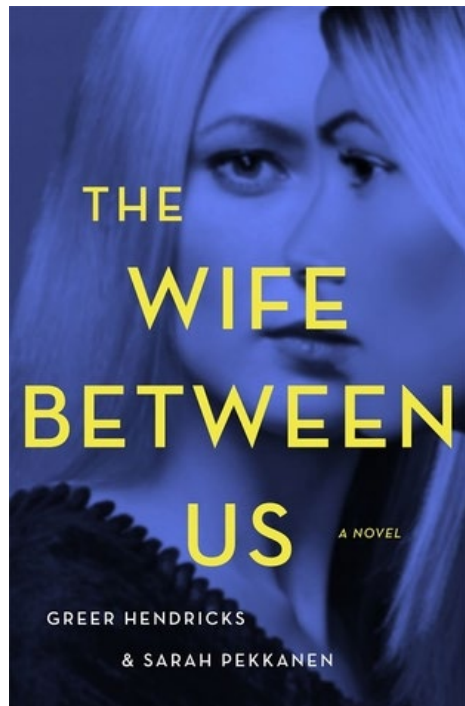


Trends



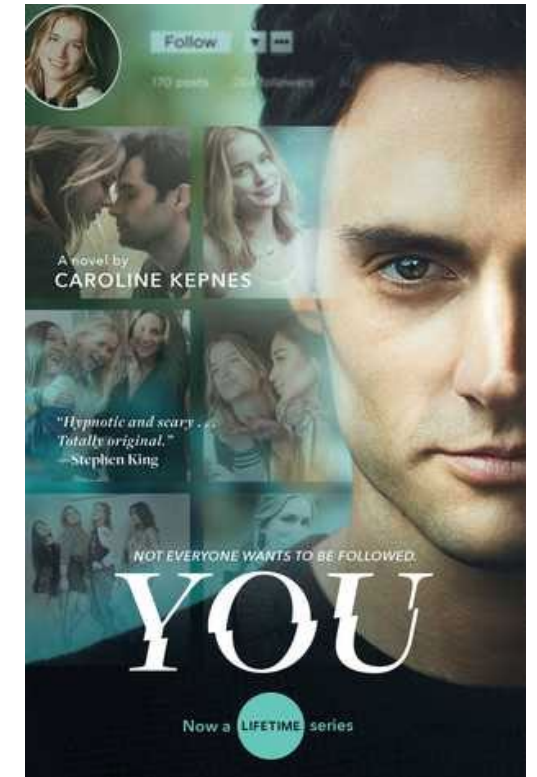
Women writing and starring

It's difficult to overestimate 2012's *Gone Girl* and its effect on the mystery and thriller genre.



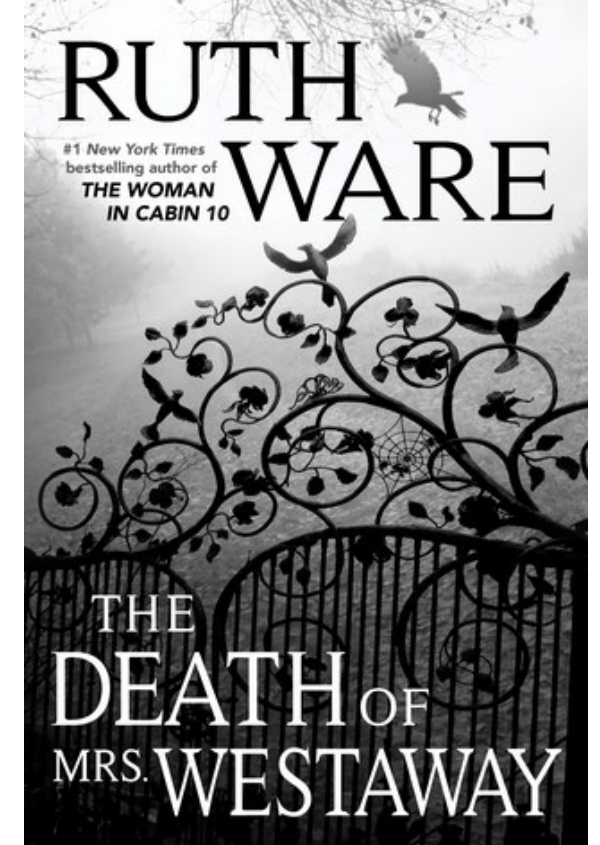
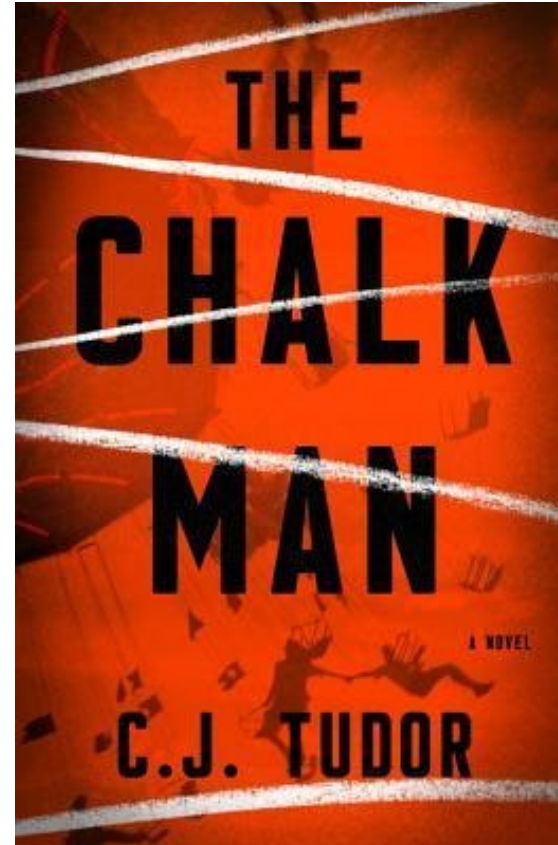
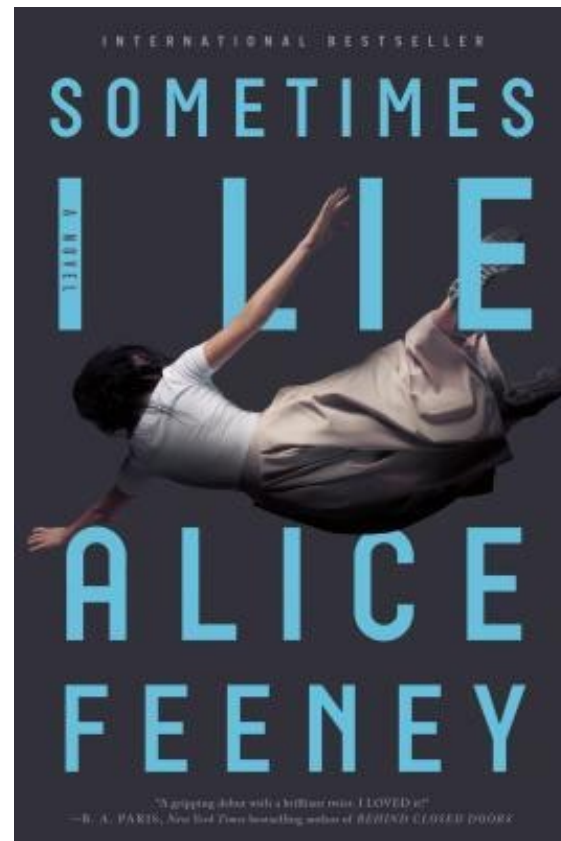
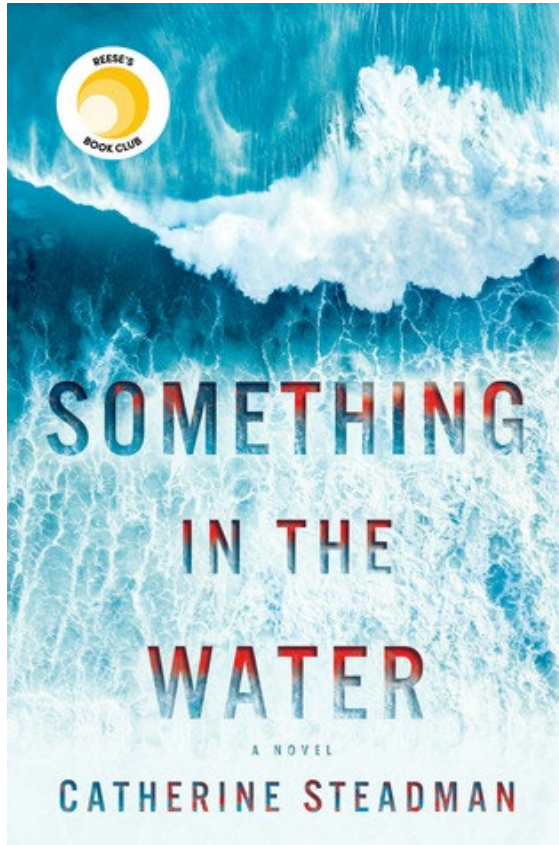
Make great movies and TV

Forget about genre. Mysteries and thrillers are mainstream fare now.

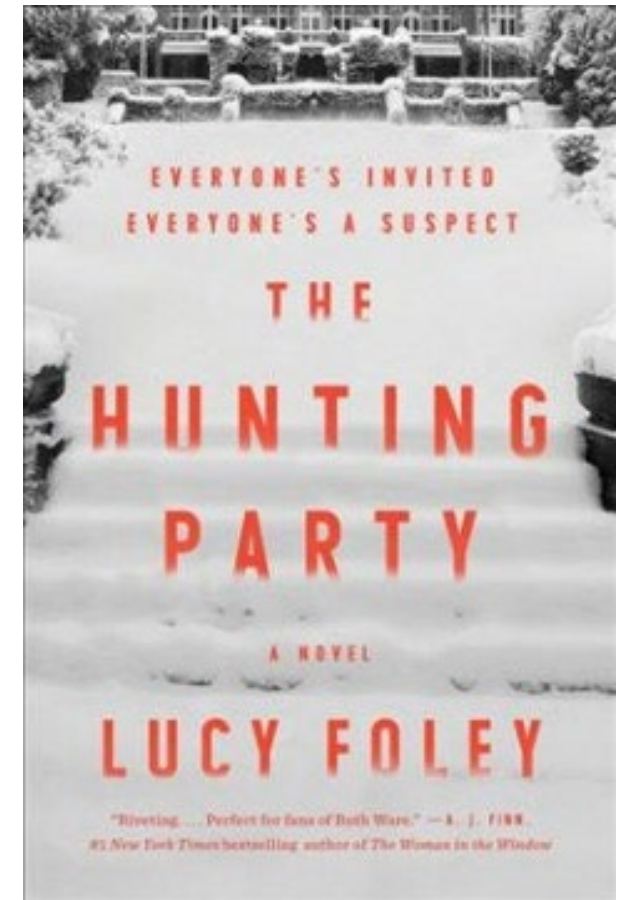
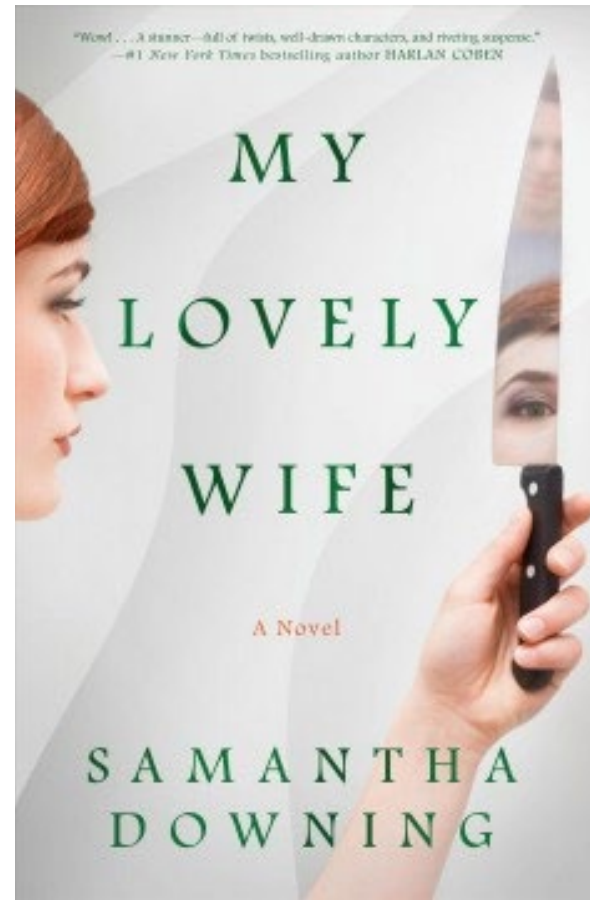
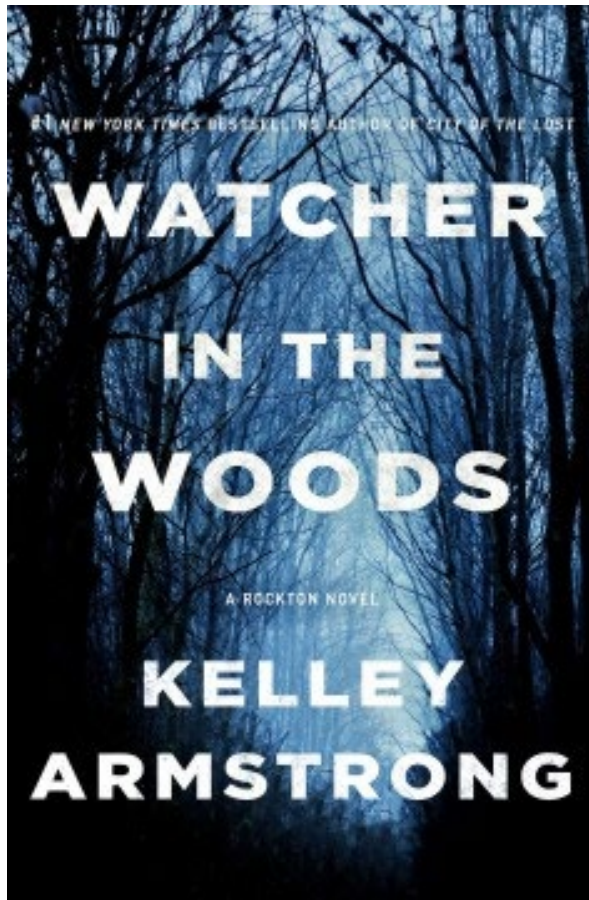


U.K. holds on to the genre

A new class of British mystery writers emerges.

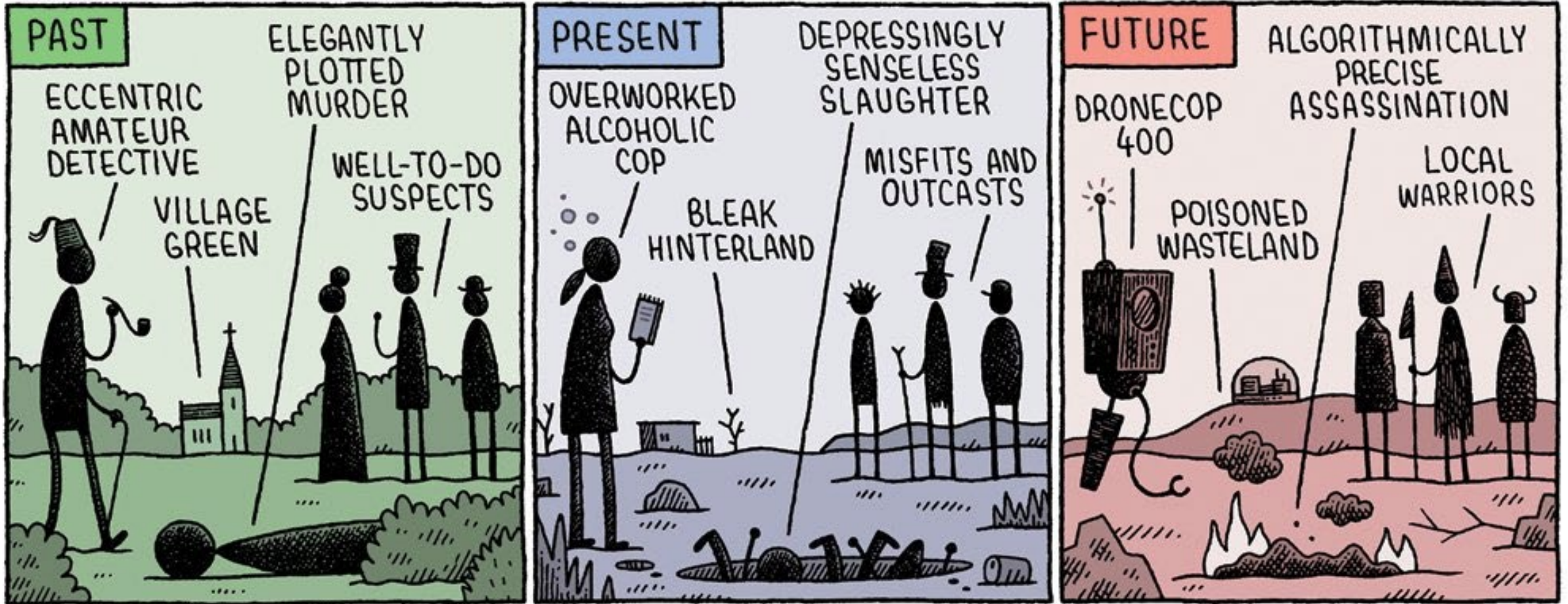


Books we can't wait to read



Questions?

VILLAGE MURDER MYSTERIES



TOM GAULD



CRASH COURSE IN FANTASY

Live event May 23rd 2pm Eastern

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