

MYSTERY FICTION SUBGENRES

Mystery fiction is where the main character is asked to solve a puzzle. Often, the reader is trying to solve the puzzle along with the main character.

Traditional Mysteries

- Feature a professional or amateur detective (but not a private detective)
- Violence is minimal
- Usually the murderer and the victim know each other
- Susan Wittig Albert, Christine Barber, Gail Bowen, Alan Bradley, Margaret Coel, Hilary Davidson, Chris Grabenstein, Naomi Hirahara, Craig Johnson, G. M. Malliet, Louise Penny, Julia Spencer-Fleming

Cozy Mysteries

- Crime occurs “off-stage”
- The world is pleasant and comfortable, except for the crime
- Light-hearted and often humorous
- Common subjects include crafts, cats, hobbies, and cooking
- Often have puns or clever titles (The Long Quiche Goodbye, Sticks and Scones, The Crepes of Wrath)
- Donna Andrews, James K. Cleland, Diane Mott Davidson, Elizabeth J. Duncan, Carolyn Hart, Julie Hyzy, Rita Lakin, Elaine Viets

Historical Mysteries

- Emphasis of the story is on the setting
- Atmospheric appeal and historical detail
- Rhys Bowen, Rebecca Cantrell, Barbara Cleverly, Ariana Franklin, Jason Goodwin, Philip Kerr, Anne Perry, Stefanie Pintoff, C. J. Snasom, Kelli Stanley, Jeri Westerson, Jacqueline Winspear

Procedurals

- Most realistic type of mystery
- Follows police and other professional characters (i.e. investigative journalists, park rangers, game wardens, etc.)
- Sandi Ault, Nevada Barr, Giles Blunt, C. J. Box, James Lee Burke, Jan Burke, Ann Cleeves, Michael Connelly, Colin Cotterill, Deborah Crombie, Garry Disher, Linda Fairstein, Barbara Fradkin, Tana French, Reginald Hill, Arnaldur Indridason, Stuart MacBride, Margaret Maron, Brad Parks, Qui Xiaolong, Peter Robinson, Hank Phillippi Ryan, Fred Vargas

Private Investigators

- The “lone wolf” style detective
- Often deals with relevant topics in the news
- Dark atmosphere and a rich setting
- Ken Bruen, Sean Chercover, Reed Farrell Coleman, John Connolly, Robert Crais, Robert Fate, William Kent Krueger, Dennis Lehane, Laura Lippman, Walter Mosley, Marcia Muller, Robert B. Parker, Linda L. Richards

Crime Capers

- Humorous, adventurous, and clever
- Main character is the criminal
- Usually involves one or more non-violent crime, and something goes wrong
- Lou Berney, Deborah Coonts, Janet Evanovich, Harley Jane Kozak, Sophie Littlefield

Genreblends

- Emphasis is still on the mystery, but has elements of other genres
- Science fiction, fantasy, western, classical literature, romance
- Jim Butcher, Charlaine Harris, Steve Hockensmith, J. D. Robb