CRASH COURSE
IN CRIME, MYSTERIES, & THRILLERS
Panelists

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NoveList
The top ten books published this month that librarians across the country love.

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
Intricately plotted
Descriptive
Suspenseful
Brooding
Atmospheric
Flawed
Disturbing
Gritty
Introspective
Complex
Darkly humorous
Strong female
Dramatic
Nonlinear
Violent
Menacing
Bleak

NoveList Themes
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Characters</th>
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<td>Behind the Iron Curtain</td>
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<td>Missing memories</td>
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<td>Rookie on the beat</td>
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<td>Sherlock Paws</td>
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<td>Starring famous figures</td>
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<td>Too good to be true</td>
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<td>Unreliable narrator</td>
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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.
<table>
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<th>Setting</th>
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<td>Criminal masterpieces</td>
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<td>Inspired by real events</td>
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<td>Small town police</td>
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<td>The butler did it!</td>
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<td>Urban police</td>
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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.
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<th>Plot</th>
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<td>Locked room mysteries</td>
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<td>On the run</td>
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<td>Proving own innocence</td>
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<td>Race against time</td>
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<td>Shadow organizations</td>
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<td>Vacation interrupted</td>
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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

1. *Death Overdue* by Allison Brook
2. *A Cajun Christmas Killing* by Ellen Byron
3. *No Way Home* by Annette Dashofy
4. *Margaret Maron Take Out* by Margaret Maron
5. *Louise Penny Glass Houses* by Louise Penny
2018 Edgar Award Shortlist

THE DIME
Kathleen Kent

PRUSSIAN BLUE
Philip Kerr

BLUEBIRD BLUEBIRD
Attica Locke

A RISING MAN
Abir Mukherjee

THE TWELVE LIVES OF SAMUEL HAWLEY
Hannah Tinti
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)

- 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
**Getting Up to Speed in Mystery**

by Jessica Zelless

Find this genre outline

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### 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 ugly almost as frequently as the virtuous and their flaws. As a result, mystery stories can often serve as social commentaries. The character of the detective is often an entry point into the story, giving readers a chance to experience the journey of the mystery through another’s eyes.

### Most Mysteries Involve Crime

A mystery is usually structured around a crime, a murder, or some other form of personal or social evil. The investigation that follows is the real meat of the mystery, allowing readers to experience the thrill of detection and the satisfaction of solving the puzzle.

### What do people like about Mysteries?

Many people enjoy mysteries because they like to solve the case before the detective, others enjoy the escapist nature of the genre, and some are drawn to the intellectual challenge of unraveling the clues.

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### 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-dunits to gritty police procedurals, and readers may have strong preferences. Novelists tone apples can help refine search results to suit different tastes.

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### Explore Mystery Themes...

- Locked-room mysteries
- The classic whodunit
- The modern psychological thriller

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### Love These Lists!

- **Adults:**
  - Classic Mysteries
  - Current Mystery
  - Historical Mysteries

- **Teen:**
  - Fantasy Mysteries
  - Science Fiction Mysteries

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### We Recommend...

- *The Lost Man* by Jane Johnson
- *Watcher in the Woods* by Deborah Harkness
- *The Last Man* by James McManus

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### Awards to Know

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

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**Supernatural Thrillers**

- *The Boy in the Water* by Dan Snider, 1970
- *Jericho* by Gordon Aikin, 1990
- *The Hush* by Ham plank, 1990

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**Recommended Reads Lists**
Genre browse

Forthcoming Mysteries  View All
Upcoming who-done-its for your reading pleasure.

Unluck of the Irish  View All
Irish Mysteries

Police Procedurals  View All
Get your Miranda rights

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 Lathion
Subgenre Special: Historical Mysteries
African-American Fiction: Authors
Diverse Reading: Mysteries and Thrillers
The Blues Line: Police Procedurals around the World
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

Watcher in the Woods
Kelley Armstrong

My Lovely Wife
Samantha Downing

Everyone’s Invited
Everyone’s a Suspect
The Hunting Party
Lucy Foley

“Wow! . . . A tense—full of twists, well-drawn characters, and meeting suspense.”
—#1 New York Times bestselling author Harlan Coben
VILLAGE MURDER MYSTERIES

PAST
ECCENTRIC AMATEUR DETECTIVE
VILLAGE GREEN

ELEGANTLY PLOTTED MURDER
WELL-TO-DO SUSPECTS

PRESENT
OVERWORKED ALCOHOLIC COP
BLEAK HINTERLAND

DEPRESSINGLY SENSELESS SLAUGHTER
MISFITS AND OUTCASTS

FUTURE
DRONECOP 400
POISONED WASTELAND

ALGORITHMICALLY PRECISE ASSASSINATION
LOCAL WARRIORS

Questions?
CRASH COURSE IN FANTASY

Live event May 23rd 2pm Eastern
Thank you

Learn more at

ebscohost.com/novelist & libraryreads.org
Finding Crime, Mysteries, & Thrillers in NovelList