

BARTON

LIBRARY

Dare to know

Cozy Mysteries

Mystery fiction that features amateur sleuths, socially intimate settings, and a light-hearted tone.

A sub-genre often featuring a highly educated amateur detective solving a crime within a close-knit, middle-class community (e.g., a small inn or summer house). Cozies may feature suspects that belong to a specific set of people such as bakers, knitters, or gardeners, or they may follow a theme. This sub-genre is closely related to the classic mystery formula, except for the lack of explicit sex, overt violence, or profanity, and the crime is typically a bloodless one. For instance, the actual act of murder is never described in detail, only the discovery of the body. There may be a police presence during the investigation, but they remain more or less accepting of the amateur sleuth. The tone can be serious, but is often lighthearted, playful, or humorous. Agatha Christie's *The Murder at the Vicarage* (1930), Elizabeth Daly's *Unexpected Night* (1940), Mary Rinehart's *The Yellow Room* (1945), and Lillian Jackson Braun's *The Cat Who Could Read Backwards* (1966) are classic examples.

Common Elements

No graphic descriptions of the crime

No gruesome details of the murder

Benefits of Reading

Introduces readers to quaint towns,
zany characters, and unlikely
professions and hobbies

Suggests to readers that ordinary
people can resolve situations and

bring order to chaos

Allows readers to follow the
investigation and find satisfaction in
its resolution

Modern Literary Examples

The 27-Ingredient Chili Con Carne Murders (1992) by Nancy Pickard with

Virginia Rich
Agatha Raisin and the Quiche of Death

(1992) by M. C. Beaton
<i>The Bark Before Christmas</i> (2015) by Laurien Berenson
<i>Board Stiff</i> (2014) by Kendel Lynn
<i>A Body on Fitzgerald's Bluff</i> (2018) by Anna Celeste Burke
<i>Catering to Nobody</i> (1990) by Diane Mott Davidson
<i>Catnap</i> (1992) by Carole Nelson Douglas
<i>Chocolate Chip Cookie Murder</i> (2001) by Joanne Fluke
<i>Crewel World</i> (1999) by Monica Ferris
<i>Death by Committee</i> (2019) by Alexis Morgan
<i>A Deepe Coffyn</i> (1989) by Janet Laurence
<i>Generous Death</i> (1984) by Nancy

Pickard
<i>Grime and Punishment</i> (1989) by Jill Churchill
<i>Last Wool and Testament</i> (2013) by Molly MacRae
<i>Malice in Maggody</i> (1987) by Joan Hess
<i>Murder with Peacocks</i> (1999) by Donna Andrews
<i>Pillow Stalk</i> (2012) by Diane Vallere
<i>Portrait of a Dead Guy</i> (2012) by Larissa Reinhart
<i>The Plot is Murder</i> (2017) by V. M. Burns
<i>Strangled Prose</i> (1986) by Joan Hess
<i>Tail Gait</i> (2016) by Rita Mae Brown
<i>Thyme of Death</i> (1992) by Susan Albert Wittig