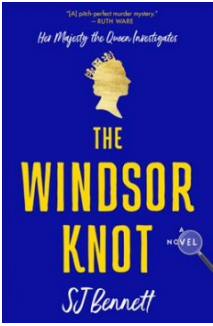


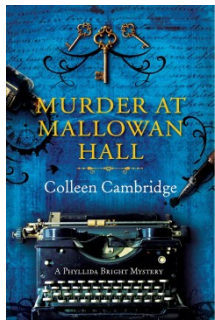
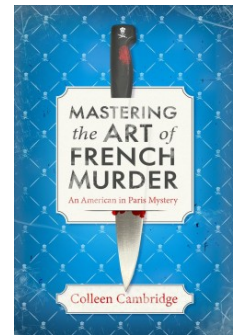
# Jackie's Summer Buzz 2024

## *Must-read Mystery Series*



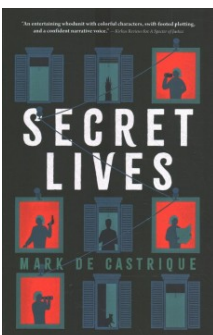
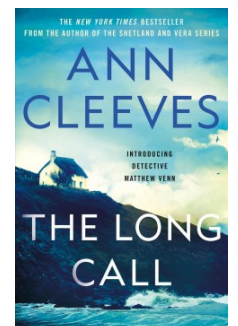
Bennett, S.J. **Her Majesty the Queen Investigates** (2021) - start with *The Windsor Knot*  
A delightful and unique collection of mystery novels in which Queen Elizabeth II herself takes on the role of a sleuth. Combining real-life royal situations with fictional crime-solving, the series offers a charming blend of intrigue, wit, and royal protocol. These novels stand out for their inventive premise, engaging plots, and the endearing portrayal of the Queen as a keen observer with a knack for solving mysteries. Bennett skillfully balances the charm of a cozy mystery with the sophistication of a royal setting, creating stories that are both entertaining and thought-provoking.

Cambridge, Colleen. **American in Paris** (2023) - start with *Mastering the Art of French Murder*  
This enchanting blend of historical fiction and cozy mystery is set against the glamorous and atmospheric backdrop of post-World War II Paris. The series follows Tabitha Knight, an American expatriate who finds herself immersed in the vibrant cultural scene of Paris. While living with her grandfather and his partner, she befriends Julia Child whose burgeoning culinary career provides an intriguing backdrop to the mystery. Julia's character is portrayed with warmth and authenticity, contributing to the novel's rich historical texture.



Cambridge, Colleen. **Phyllida Bright** (2021) - start with *Murder at Mallowan Hall*  
Phyllida Bright, the fictional housekeeper to the famed mystery writer Agatha Christie, stars in Cambridge's first series set in post-WWI England. Rich in historical detail, snappy dialogue, and well-crafted plots, the series explores themes of social class, gender roles, and power dynamics within the grand households of the era. The novels are infused with a sense of nostalgia and elegance, evoking the charm of the early 20th century.

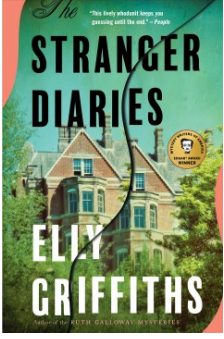
Cleeves, Ann. **Detective Matthew Venn** (2019) - start with *The Long Call*  
Matthew Venn, a thoughtful and introspective detective inspector working in North Devon, England, stars in these quiet, moody mysteries. The series delves into themes of faith, community, and belonging, often contrasting Venn's past with his present. Cleeves masterfully weaves personal and professional conflicts into the narrative, creating a multifaceted view of her characters.



De Castrique, Mark. **Ethel Fiona Crestwater** (2022) - start with *Secret Lives*  
Ethel Fiona Crestwater, an octogenarian retired FBI agent with a sharp mind and a knack for solving crimes, is the unconventional protagonist in this new(ish) series. Set in modern-day Washington, D.C., de Castrique combines humor, wit, and suspense to form mysteries that highlight the wisdom and experience of its elderly sleuth. De Castrique skillfully balances humor and suspense, creating mysteries that are both entertaining and thought-provoking, all while challenging stereotypes about elderly people. The Washington, D.C. setting adds a layer of political intrigue and complexity to the narratives.

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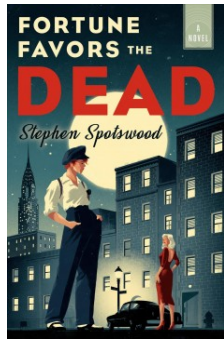
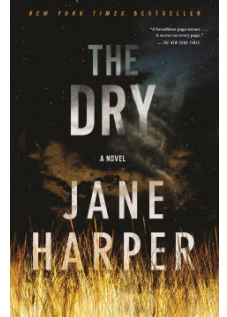


Griffiths, Elly. **Harbinder Kaur** (2019) - start with *The Stranger Diaries*

Sharp-witted and perceptive Detective Sergeant Harbinder Kaur investigates in Griffiths's latest series. Combining intricate plots, rich character development (including Sikh, lesbian Kaur), and a strong sense of place (the UK), Griffiths excels at blending traditional detective work with contemporary issues, such as cultural identity and social dynamics. Unique secondary characters sometimes take center stage and are equally well-developed and compelling.

Harper, Jane. **Aaron Falk** (2018) - start with *The Dry*

Featuring Federal Agent Aaron Falk, these novels combine taut, atmospheric storytelling with deeply human characters and intricate plots. Harper's skillful writing brings the rugged Australian setting to life, making it an integral part of the narrative and almost a character in itself. Themes of isolation, survival, and the harshness of the natural environment are reflected in the Australian setting. Harper's storytelling is both methodical and suspenseful, with a focus on character development and psychological depth.

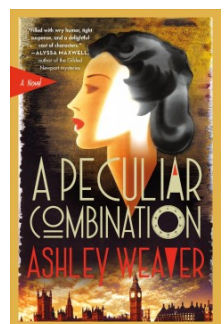
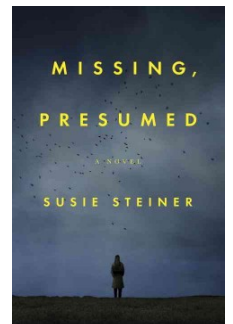


Spotswood, Stephen. **Pentecost and Parker** (2020) - start with *Fortune Favors the Dead*

A refreshing addition to the detective genre, set in 1940s New York City, the series features the dynamic duo of Lillian Pentecost, a brilliant private investigator with a debilitating illness, and her assistant Willowjean "Will" Parker, a former circus performer with a knack for solving mysteries. The novels are marked by their clever plots, richly drawn characters, and the vibrant, gritty atmosphere of post-war New York. With crisp, engaging prose and well-crafted dialogue, Spotswood explores themes of resilience, friendship, and the quest for justice.

Steiner, Susie. **Manon Bradshaw** (2016) - start with *Missing, Presumed*

Centered around Detective Sergeant (later Detective Inspector) Manon Bradshaw and set in Cambridgeshire, England, Bradshaw is a distinctive protagonist, known for her intelligence, insight, and deeply human flaws. A middle-aged woman navigating the challenges of single motherhood, professional pressures, and personal insecurities, Manon is portrayed with authenticity and depth. Family dynamics, social justice, and personal redemption all come into play as Steiner offers a realistic portrayal of modern police work.



Weaver, Ashley. **Electra McDonnell** (2021) - start with *A Peculiar Combination*

A combination of historical fiction and mystery set in World War II-era London, Weaver's latest series follows Electra "Ellie" McDonnell, a skilled safecracker and thief turned amateur sleuth, who is recruited by British Intelligence to aid in the war effort. Questions relating to duty, redemption, and the moral ambiguities of war are explored as Weaver skillfully blends historical facts with fiction, creating a vivid portrayal of wartime London and the clandestine operations of British Intelligence. The novels also incorporate elements of romance and suspense, adding depth to the narrative.