

Meritorious Mysteries

April 1999

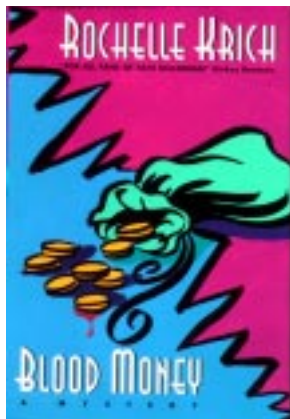
by Molly Weston

Hardcover

Blood Money
Rochelle Krich

Avon

JESSICA DRAKE HAS ONLY RECENTLY LEARNED of her Jewish heritage. Interest in her latest case intensifies when she recognizes a clue that ties an unidentified elderly victim to the Holocaust. Her quest to find the identity of the dead man leads her first to LA's upscale retirement homes, then to more questions regarding her own past, and, finally, to the world of international banking and the attempts to restore the fortunes of Holocaust families. Krich uses her own family memories to enrich the tapestry that she weaves in her engrossing fiction. Rabbi Small is back—and he lives as a savvy, caring LA police detective!



A House by the Side of the Road
Jan Gleiter

St. Martin's

FOLLOWING HER ST. MARTIN'S MALICE DOMESTIC WINNER, *Lie Down with Dogs*, Gleiter proves that the prize was indicative of the writer she will become. Gleiter writes of women, many women, and readers eventually learn why they are integral. First we meet Hannah Ehrlich, an caring, elderly woman, and her young friend Jane. Enter Angie, a brash, jarring woman—too pretty for her own good. Then Meg Kessinger appears. Meg, who's just inherited her great aunt's house in rural Pennsylvania. To hold our interest, Gleiter introduces murder; but the folks in our sleepy village haven't a clue there's anything wrong. By the time they realize something's amiss, we're hooked, hung, and turning pages faster and faster! Don't miss this special tale.

Malice in Miniature
Jeanne Dams

Walker

WHAT COULD BE A BETTER SETTING for a cozy mystery than an English doll house museum? Even the change in her marital status can't keep Anglophile Dorothy Martin away from meddling in a good cause: When her housekeeper's son is accused of theft, Dorothy surely must rise to the occasion, especially when the crime scene is so enticing! Dams' characters are captivating, her puzzles are clever, and her settings are well-drawn. I always look forward to a rainy Sunday when there's a new Sherebury tale on my table.

The Kidnapping of Aaron Greene
Terry Kay

William Morrow

RARELY DOES A MAINSTREAM NOVELIST write a mystery that engages me, but there's always an exception. Atlanta's banking world gets a chance to show its true colors when a mail boy in one of the large banks is kidnapped and the ransom notice is directed, not at his parents, but at the bank. To ensure full and complete media coverage, communication from the kidnappers is directed to *Atlanta Constitution* reporter Cody Yates. What takes the story out of the commonplace is Kay's ability to show multiple viewpoints and to make the reader identify with the shy nobody, Aaron Greene. Don't be surprised if this book haunts your own moral conscience!

The Ice Pick Artist
Harold Adams

Walker

ITNERANT SIGN-PAINTER CARL WILCOX has hung up his brushes and picked up his pen at his family's South Dakota hotel, where you'd think he could stay out of trouble. Not so. Trouble just follows some people like a stray dog, and fortunately for readers, Carl is one of them. When he rents one room to a comely young woman who shows an interest in the town, and another to a surly man with poor handwriting, you can pretty much guess what's going to happen. But how? That's the question Carl must answer when murder comes into his own backyard. Historical mystery lovers just can't miss this opportunity to see Adams' sepia-colored story of the Great Depression.

A Breach of Promise

Anne Perry

Fawcett

VICTORIAN SCANDALS SEEM RIDICULOUS to modern readers—but Anne Perry turns our scorn toward ourselves by ripping today's situations from the headlines and dropping them into another time and place. So deft is her skill, we often don't recognize the story she's using until the final pages are turned and all the culprits are revealed, both those in her story and in ours. Sir Oliver Rathbone is hired to defend a brilliant young architect in a suit brought by a lovely young woman's family, when the young man refuses to marry her. This case requires all of the skill of Rathbone's entire team, including private inspector William Monk and Crimean War nurse Hester Latterly, and it may require you to burn some midnight oil.

Home Fires

Margaret Maron

Mysterious

ALREADY SHORT-LISTED FOR THE AGATHA AWARD, *Home Fires* provides a look at race relations in the rural South that's mighty real from my side of the fence. Judge Deborah Knott's family has always been close to the black families who are their neighbors on the farm, and she's been concerned about the young black DA who is particularly tough on the black miscreants she prosecutes in court. Before Deborah can delve too deeply into the situation, her teenage nephew is part of a group arrested vandalizing a cemetery. But then the real trouble starts—a black church burns. Maron's Colleton County is not the New South—it's the Real South!

Loot

Aaron Elkins

William Morrow

IF YOU MISS THE ESPIONAGE STORIES that abounded after World War II and during the Cold War, perhaps you'll find just what you're looking for in the world of art theft! If you wonder at my parallel, let me explain. *Loot* begins during the final days of the War, in a brigade of trucks hauling priceless canvases through Austria. We follow one particular truck throughout the prologue, and then we come to present-day Boston. Art expert Benjamin Revere gets a call from a seedy pawnshop owner who declares that he's just received a genuine Velaquez. Thinking only to humor the old man Ben goes to his shop only to find...a really old, really fine Impressionist painting, that might really be a Velaquez. Now get ready for an international trek that will keep you on the edge of your seat. Then tell me that the art mystery wasn't spawned by the espionage novel!

The Poyson Garden

Karen Harper

Delacorte Press

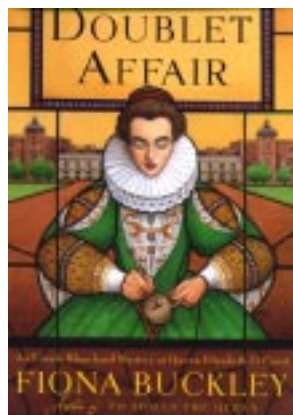
BLOODY QUEEN MARY IS TAKING NO CHANCES that her half sister will supplant her. After imprisoning Princess Elizabeth in the Tower of London, she exiles her to Hatfield House and surrounds her with spies. A letter from a woman long presumed dead plunges the young princess into an escapade that could be the end of England itself. Elizabeth proves to be a valiant sleuth, combining the gentleness of her mother, Anne Boelyn, and the determination of her father, Henry the Eighth. Unwilling to accept the chicanery of Mary's reign, Elizabeth uncovers and resolves old secrets. If only history books had been so compelling!

The Doublet Affair

Fiona Buckley

Scribner

IF SIR LANCELOT WAS THE HERO of Arthur's Court, surely Ursula Blanchard is his equal in Elizabeth's! Forced to go undercover as a governess to five unruly children, Ursula soon finds keeping her cover is the



least of her worries. Her employers are old friends who make no secret of their Papal loyalties. Leonard Mason seems totally engrossed in ridiculous inventions (a flying machine, of all things!), his wife Ann is totally ineffectual, and several others of the household are surely not what they seem. Buckley engages the reader from page one and doesn't let go until the final paragraph is finished with a "whew!"

Misery Loves Maggody

Joan Hess

Simon & Schuster

AFTER THEIR NEW YORK FIASCO, Ruby Bee and Estelle swore they'd never leave Maggody again, but the pull of Graceland via a four-day Elvis Presley Pilgrimage is just too much for the aging rock and rollers. Not even Arly can imagine the trouble in store for the two when they hit Memphis, but long-time Maggody fans won't be too surprised to see strippers, fraternity mama's boys, and a professor of popular culture as fellow travellers. There's plenty of action in Maggody before the pilgrims have to call for help, so plan to stay awhile with Pastor Verber, Kevin and Delilah, and all the other Buchannons before heading off to the riverboat casinos. This might very well be the best story out of Arkansas this year!

Paperback

Spike It
Chris Niles

Berkley

THE MORNING AFTER was too much like the night before, and news radio reporter Sam Ridley lets one word slip by him onto the air. The word almost costs him his job, and unemployment might be as good as being relegated to *Female AM*, but Sam's last news assignment, the murder of a young woman, just won't turn him loose. Assignments for his new job almost give him enough time to work the murder case, and he thinks he's on to something. He must be. The strangest people keep beating up Sam! This is a gritty, witty debut with an engaging hero. Welcome Sam Ridley to your hard-boiled amateur sleuth collection.



Murder Can Singe Your Old Flame
Selma Eichler

Signet

THERE'S NO REASON DESIREE SHAPIRO should come to the aid of Bruce Simon. After all he'd dumped her. But would he be louse enough to push his wife, a flight attendant, onto the subway tracks? His story of an international drug smuggling ring sounds just screwy enough for the police to suspect him, but just reasonable enough for Desiree to take the case. Grab a pint of your favorite ice cream and curl up in an easy chair for a rollicking visit with the most self-accepting queen-sized PI since Bertha Cool!

Sew Deadly
Jean Hager

Avon

BED AND BREAKFAST OWNER TESS DARCY has learned a lot about small towns since inheriting Iris House from her aunt, and now she's learning about quilting. As a volunteer at the local senior center, she soon sees the sharp side of one of the seniors. After a pot luck luncheon at the center, the woman is poisoned, and the ensuing events speak of mean-spirited relatives, altered wills, and long-time enmity. As always, there are plenty of suspects, and Tess has her work cut out for her. This time, Hager includes recipes that will make your mouth water.

Fade to Black
Della Borton

Fawcett

IF YOU'RE HOOKED ON THE AMERICAN MOVIE CHANNEL, you'll welcome Gilda Liberty and her crazy movie-loving family. The whole clan (and much of Hollywood) is called to Eden, Ohio for the funeral of great-aunt Mae Liberty, an 82-year-old Oscar winner and proprietor of the Paradise movie theater. Mae's last word was, quite appropriately, "Rosebud." The Liberty family rivals anything Hollywood ever filmed: Most of them worked in the industry, and they're all named for famous stars. Don't try to keep them straight—there's a family tree in the front of the book. Just relax and enjoy the glitter and the glitz. Hooray for Hollywood!

Sins of a Shaker Summer
Deborah Woodworth

Avon

IN ALL MY VISITS TO SHAKER VILLAGES, I've always inferred that the reason the Shakers died out was lack of procreation. Now Deborah Woodworth offers another contributing factor in this fine Southern series: murder! Sister Rose Callahan, recently appointed eldress of the North Homage village in Kentucky, has an influx of believers from back East, but she'd probably be better off with the evil she knows. The newcomers have taken over the Medicinal Herb Gardens—and even all the kitchen herbs; the new trustee has changed Rose's protocols; and Patience's trances are stirring up trouble everywhere. I look forward each spring to visiting Kentucky without having to drive through the mountains!

Dying to Get Even
Judy Fitzwater

Fawcett

ATLANTA WRITER JENNIFER MARSH might have a hard time getting through life but for the guidance of Maxie Malone, the confident protagonist of the stack of mystery novels she's written (but not published). When she's asked to help an elderly friend charged with the death of her ex-husband, Jennifer (through Maxie) knows exactly what to do. She'd probably be better off without Maxie's help, but then we'd be deprived of the writings of one of the funniest new mystery authors since Janet Evanovich. Fitzwater's been nominated for an Agatha award for *Dying to Get Published*. Go ahead, get a copy and see why mystery fans are still laughing!

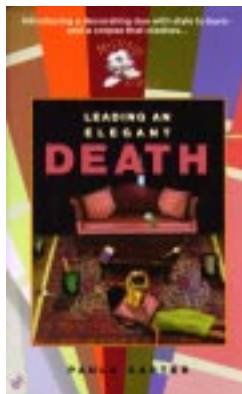


Leading an Elegant Death

Paula Carter

Berkley

IF YOU EQUATE MARTHA STEWART to a situational comedy, you'll probably get a kick out of this new series! Hillary Scarborough is a Southern Belle with a TV home show. Jane Ferguson is a single mom whose ten-year-old has more flair for fashion. When Hillary hires Jane as her personal assistant, somehow you know the body in the living room is just won't be Hillary's idea of understated elegance. Fans of Jill Churchill and Anne George, grab yourself a mint julep, fasten your seatbelt (Hillary's car is a gold Cadillac, which she drives like a tank), and enjoy the ride.



The Fax of Life

Leslie O'Kane

Fawcett

MOLLY MASTERS GETS A CHANCE for a business-paid trip back to Boulder—or so she thinks. Her planned workshop at a fancy resort for hopeful greeting card writers turns into the vacation from hell when she hires a friend of a friend to plan the logistics. The workshop attendees all have a score to settle and the Red Fox Resort redefines rustic even before a landslide blocks the road back to Boulder. When Molly is framed for murder, we know what's going to happen to that particular camel. Leslie O'Kane is known for her humorous quips on mystery panels; when she has time to write them, they work even better. Enjoy!

Meritorious Mysteries

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Trade Paper

The Hunt Club

Bret Lott

Harper Perennial

HOLDEN CAULFIELD IS ALIVE AND WELL in North Charleston, South Carolina! His name is changed, of course, and he speaks with a Southern accent, but it's the same boy, haunted by the life he's forced to live. Huger (pronounced YOU-gee) Dillard's mom and dad are divorced; his uncle was blinded by an explosion. Huger's mom drives him to his uncle's property every weekend, where he spends his time helping the hunters who come to shoot, drink, and brag. A gruesome murder victim left on the property sets off a sequence that jolts Huger from boy to adult and proves once again that today is built on yesterday. I don't like to read about bad things happening to children; but Lott's beautiful writing held me to the story that will continue to haunt me.

Detecting Women Pocket Guide — 3RD Edition

Willetta L. Heising

Purple Moon Press

IDON'T KNOW HOW ANY MYSTERY READER can get along without this invaluable resource! Virtually every living woman who writes series mysteries is listed, with her books (in order). But wait, there's more: Date of publication, award nomination, check boxes (you decide what the second one is for!), alternate titles, and blank spaces to include names of new titles. All this is in a legible, pocket-sized, well-bound book that fits nicely in purse or briefcase. To top it all off, the fingerprint on the cover was designed by syndicated cartoonist Bill Holbrook, known in mystery circles as Teri's husband!

The Untold Story of Frankie Silver

Perry Deane Young

Down Home Press

MUCH TO THE CHAGRIN of my daddy, the deacon, and my mama, the schoolteacher, one of my favorite songs as a kid was "Frankie and Johnny." I could—and did—belt it out on any occasion. No matter how bad the connotations of the song for a six-year-old, the real story is much grimmer. The Depression era honky-tonk song is based on a harsh legend about a young woman who killed her husband, chopped his body into bits, and burned parts of it in her fireplace. Convicted of murder and sentenced to death, Frankie Silver was hanged in Morganton, North Carolina on July 12, 1833. Frankie's historical advocate now reveals the harsh reality of the legendary mountain men and the horror faced by their women.