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FOR EVERYONE WHO HASN'T READ EVERYTHING

The Best Cozy Mysteries • Meg Wolitzer • South Korean Novels in English Translation
Adventure Sports: Nonfiction • New Books Guide, Book Group, Reader Picks and More!

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BEYOND MISS MARPLE THE BEST COZIES

BY JESSICA TEISCH

In *The Murder at the Vicarage* (1930), Agatha Christie immortalized Miss Jane Marple, the shrewd, elderly spinster of the fictional English village of St. Mary Mead. A woman of independent means, she sweetly meddled in her neighbors' business while solving local crimes and never dropping a knitting stitch.

With Miss Marple, who appeared in a dozen novels and more short stories, Christie, who wrote during the Golden Age of Detective Fiction, may very well have perfected the traditional “cozy.” Though this subgenre of crime fiction takes many forms, it has some defining features. The crime and detection usually occur in a small, intimate, and enclosed community, in which the murderer knows the victim and ultimately turns out to have a personal motive. The protagonist is routinely an amateur sleuth and frequently a woman—nosy, well educated, and intuitive about human nature and the community's social dynamics. Cozies are often character driven, lighthearted, and rich in humor; murders are frequently bloodless (death by poison!); relationships are regularly chaste; and the amateurs often enlist the help of local police (conveniently sometimes a husband or friend) to solve the crimes. The genre, however, can also take the form of a small-town police procedural. As Marilyn Stasio, the crime columnist for the *New York Times Book Review*, acknowledges, “The abiding appeal of the cozy mystery owes a lot to our collective memory, true or false, of simpler, sweeter times.”

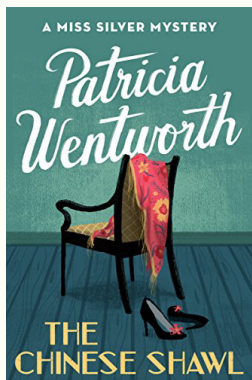
COZIES ARE OFTEN CHARACTER DRIVEN, LIGHTHEARTED, AND RICH IN HUMOR.

In the past couple of decades, the cozy genre has exploded in popularity (and, in some series, has become more graphically violent). Today's cozies center on different themes, from felines to books, holidays, food and coffee, archaeology, antiquing, and even fashion. We've chosen a few series on some loosely structured topics to highlight the variety of the genre.

IF YOU LIKE MISS MARPLE

MISS SILVER

by PATRICIA WENTWORTH

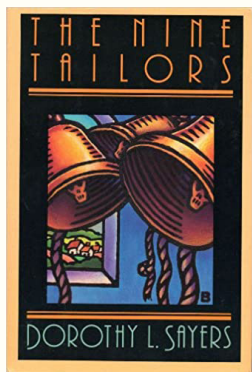


Like Christie, Wentworth was another master of English mystery writing. In the 1920s, she introduced Miss Maud Silver, who, along with Miss Marple, is the quintessential English cozy heroine. The dowdy spinster, a retired governess-turned-private investigator whose fondness for knitting, Tennyson, thefts, and art forgeries masks her profound intelligence, appears in 32 novels published between 1928 and 1961. Much to the chagrin of Scotland Yard, Miss Silver

successfully infiltrates the dysfunctional households and crimes of the upper class. Unlike Miss Marple, however, who plays a lone hand, Miss Silver relies on inductive reasoning and shares her thought processes and actions as she solves crimes. One of the standouts is *The Chinese Shawl* (1943), in which Miss Silver must intervene in an age-old family feud that results in murder.

LORD PETER WIMSEY

by DOROTHY L. SAYERS



Sayers, a British author and playwright, is best known for her farcical capers starring amateur sleuth Lord Peter Wimsey—a dapper English dilettante and gentleman amused by his chosen hobby and often assisted by his valet, his Chief Inspector brother-in-law, and his wife. Set between the two World Wars, the 20-plus novels and short story collections, published between 1923 and 1972, address contemporaneous issues—from advertising to women’s education

and veterans’ health. In *The Nine Tailors* (1934), the ninth in the series, Wimsey must solve a two-decades-old case of missing jewels—and the mysterious corpses dotting the countryside. Sayers, who received much less recognition for her whodunits than Christie did, at least in America, is well worth exploring.

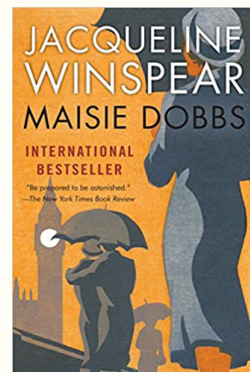
FURTHER READING

MRS. POLLIFAX | DOROTHY GILMAN • 14 TITLES
STARTING WITH *THE UNEXPECTED MRS. POLLIFAX* [1966]
PETER SHANDY | CHARLOTTE MACLEOD • 10 TITLES
STARTING WITH *REST YOU MERRY* [1979]
HOMER KELLY | JANE LANGTON 18 • TITLES
STARTING WITH *THE TRANSCENDENTAL MURDER* [1964]
DAISY DALRYMPLE | CAROLA DUNN 22 • TITLES
STARTING WITH *DEATH AT WENTWATER COURT* [1994]

FOR HISTORY BUFFS

MAISIE DOBBS

by JACQUELINE WINSPEAR



The best-selling Maisie Dobbs series was inspired by Winspear’s grandfather’s experience in World War I. Maisie, who first appeared in *Maisie Dobbs* (F AGATHA AWARD, 2003), which takes place in England between 1910 and 1929, is a quirky, educated psychologist and private investigator who worked as a nurse during the war and deals in wartime secrets and traumas—her own included. In the 14th and most recent in the series, *To Die But Once* (2018), Maisie

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