

A Cracking of Spines: Bibliomysteries (Bookshop, Library, Publisher, Writers, Collectors et al)

“This is a place of mystery, Daniel, a sanctuary. Every book, every volume you see here has a soul. The soul of the person who wrote it and of those who read it and lived and dreamed with it. Every time a book changes hands, every time someone runs his eyes down its pages, its spirit grows and strengthens. This place was already ancient when my father brought me here for the first time, many years ago. Perhaps as old as the city itself. Nobody knows for certain how long it has existed, or who created it. I will tell you what my father told me, though. When a library disappears, or a bookshop closes down, when a book is consigned to oblivion, those of us who know their place, its guardians, make sure it gets here. In this place, books no longer remembered by anyone, books that are lost in time, live forever, waiting for the day when they will reach a new reader’s hands. In the shop we buy and sell them, but in truth books have no owner. Every book you see here has been somebody’s best friend...According to tradition, the first time somebody visits his place, he must choose a book, whichever he wants, and adopt it, making sure it will never disappear, that it will always stay alive. It’s a very important promise. For life’ explained by father. ‘Today, it’s your turn.’”

In the enchanting bibliomystery, *Shadow of the Wind* by **Carlos Luis Zafon**, a father takes his son, ten-year-old, Daniel Sempere, to Barcelona’s ‘Cemetery of Forgotten Books’, a labyrinthine library of obscure and forgotten titles. This event was to be life-changing, as the book chosen by the boy ‘stood out timidly on one corner of a shelf bound in wine-coloured leather. The gold letters of its title gleamed in the light bleeding from the dome above. I drew near and caressed them with the tips of my fingers, reading to myself - *The Shadow of the Wind* Julian Carax.’

Years ago when reading this, I remember being absolutely captivated by it, almost but not quite reading it in one sitting! Glorious - I loved it. Though there is of course that special feeling when trawling secondhand bookshops and markets and finding that elusive title or spotting on a high shelf, one of the Penguin Green crime classics, pondering whether you’ve already got it but buying it anyway, just in case! I’ve several hundred of them now and not that many duplications - though at least three copies of **G V Galwey’s** *The Lift and the Drop* - it may take some time to find them...

Margery Allingham: *Flowers for the Judge* (9780099492825) (Amazon)

Anthony Berkeley: *Jumping Jenny* (9780712354707)(Amazon)

Murder in the Basement (9780712353946) (Amazon)

The Silk Stocking Murders (9780008333898)(Amazon)

Nicholas Blake: *End of a Chapter* (9780099565567)(Amazon)

Anthony Boucher: *The Baker Street Regulars* (9781613161821)(Amazon)

Rocket to the Moon (9781613161364)(Amazon)

Gwen Bristow & Bruce Manning: *The Gutenberg Murders* (9781915014528)(Amazon)

John Bude: *The Cheltenham Square Murder* (9780712356480)(Amazon)

Death in White Pyjamas & Death Knows No Calendar (9780712353168)(Amazon)

Christopher Bush: *The Case of the Happy Warrior* (9781913054090)(Amazon)

The Case of the Missing Men (9781912574254) (Amazon)
The Case of the Silken Petticoat (9781913527051)(Amazon)
The Case of the Amateur Actor (9781913527136) (Amazon)(There can be few people who would wish to go so far as to murder a literary agent?)

R.T. Campbell: Bodies in a Bookshop (9780486784434)(Amazon)
John Dickson Carr: Till Death Do Us Part (9780712353793)(Amazon)
Agatha Christie: The Body in the Library (9780008196530)(Amazon)
Edmund Crispin: Love Lies Bleeding (9780008124151)(Amazon)
Henrietta Clandon: This Delicate Murder (9781913054939)(Amazon)
Elizabeth Daly: And Dangerous to Know (14) (9781631940620)(Amazon)
Any Shape or Form (9) (9781934609729)(Amazon)
Arrow Pointing Nowhere (7) (9781934609248)(Amazon)
The Book of the Crime (16) (9781631940934)(Amazon)
Book of the Dead (8) (9781934609569)(Amazon)
Book of the Lion (13) (9781631940262)(Amazon)
Deadly Nightshade (2) (9781937384791)(Amazon)
Death and Letters (15) (9781631940729)(Amazon)
Evidence of Things Seen (5) (9781933397726)(Amazon)
House Without a Door (4) (9781933397351)(Amazon)
Murders in Volume 2 (3) (9781933397016)(Amazon)
Night Walk (12) (9781631940002)(Amazon)
Nothing Can Rescue Me (6) (9781933397887)(Amazon)
Somewhere in the House (10) (9781937384043)(Amazon)
Unexpected Night (Henry Gamadge/1) (9798479632433) (Amazon)
The Wrong Way Down (11) (9781937384739)(Amazon)

Martin Edwards (Ed): Murder by the Book: Mysteries for Bibliophiles (9780712353694) (Amazon)

Bernard J. Farmer: Death of a Bookseller (9780712353281)(Amazon)

An honest policeman, Sergeant Wigan, escorts a drunk man home one night to keep him out of trouble and, seeing his fine book collection, slowly falls into the gentle art of book collecting. Just as the friendship is blossoming, the policeman's book-collecting friend is murdered. To solve the mystery of why the victim was killed, and which of his rare books was taken, Wigan dives into the world of 'runners' and book collectors, where avid agents will gladly cut you for a first edition and then offer you a lift home afterwards. This adventurous mystery, which combines exuberant characters with a wonderfully realised depiction of the second-hand book market, is sure to delight bibliophiles and classic crime enthusiasts alike.

John Ferguson: The Death of Mr. Dodsley (02/23) (9780712354721)(Amazon)

J. S. Fletcher: The Middle of Things (9781915475060)

The Yorkshire Moorland Mystery (Hbk: 9781915475121; Pbk: 9781915475008)

Who Killed Alfred Snowe? (Hbk: 9781915475138; Pbk: 9781915475015)

The murder of Mr Alfred Snowe, a genial and inoffensive antiquarian, comes as a decided shock to his native town of Wrenchester. By a lucky coincidence, Ronald Camberwell, well-

known partner in the Chaney and Camberwell Detective Agency, has been playing cricket in the neighbourhood and agrees to assist the bewildered police.

Soon Chaney and Camberwell are off on a complicated trail and, after several more people have lost their lives in the strange chain of events following the old antiquarian's death, they find themselves faced with losing both the murderer and the fortune he killed for.

Only with skill and tenacity will the dogged duo confound the heinous plans of the evil villain!

Brian Flynn: The Case of the Black Twenty-Two (9781913054373)(Amazon)

Elizabeth Gill: What Dread Hand (9781911579212)(Amazon) (London Theatre world)

Bruce Graeme: And a Bottle of Rum (7) (9781899000388)(Amazon)

A Case for Solomon (3) (9781899000302)(Amazon)

A Case of Books (6) (9781899000364)(Amazon)

House with Crooked Walls (2) (9781899000289)(Amazon)

Seven Clues in Search of a Crime (1) (9781899000265) (Amazon)(Bookseller and amateur detective, Theodore Terhune)

Ten Trails to Tyburn (5) (9781899000340)(Amazon)

The Undetective (4) (9781899000241)(Amazon)

W. F. Harvey: The Mysterious Mr. Badman (9780712354370)(Amazon)

Michael Innes: Appleby's End (9781912194414)(Amazon)

The Long Farewell (9781912194636)(Amazon)

The Secret Vanguard (9781912194162)(Amazon)

Stop Press (9781912194155)(Amazon)

W. Bolingbroke Johnson: The Widening Stain (9781613161692)(Amazon)

Francis Lockridge: Death on the Aisle: A Mr. & Mrs North Mystery (9781613161180) (Amazon)

Vernon Loder: Death of an Editor (9781915475152)

The Essex Murders (9781915475053)

E.C.R. Lorac: Bats in the Belfry (9780712352550)(Amazon) (Notting Hill)

Checkmate to Murder (9780712353526) (Amazon)(Hampstead)

Death of an Author (01/23) (9780712354677)(Amazon)

Post After PostMortem (9780712354752)(Amazon)

These Names Make Clues (9781728261188)(Amazon)

Otto Penzler (Ed): Golden Age Bibliomysteries: Anthology (08/23) (9781613164211) (Amazon)

E. & M.A. Radford: Death of a Frightened Editor (9781913054991)(Amazon)

John Rowland: Murder in the Museum (9781464205798)(Amazon) (Reading Room)

R.E. Swartwout: The Boat Race Murder (9781915475039)

Francis Vivian: The Sleeping Island (9781912574414)(Amazon)

Dead Opposite the Church (9781912574773)(Amazon)

Victor L. Whitechurch: Murder at the College (9781999900489)(Amazon)

Francis Hatton had gone to the university town of Exbridge to attend a committee meeting at St. Oswald's College. At the luncheon adjournment Hatton remained behind to eat his sandwiches, to read the report of the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Monuments, and to meet death – for Death, swift and unforeseen, struck him down in that brief hour.

Clifford Witting: Murder in Blue (9781912916504)(Amazon)

John Rutherford, bookseller and sometime novelist, discovers the bludgeoned corpse of a policeman one evening while taking a stroll in a rainstorm. The overturned bicycle is what first catches Rutherford's eye before spotting PC Johnson's body sprawled on the sodden ground of Phantom Coppice. When Inspector Charlton is called in to find the murderer, he realises that the perpetrator of this crime may be prepared to go to extreme lengths to cover their tracks . . .

“The victim lay in a pool of blood in a library room. Pictures had been taken from every angle, so she could see the shelving and the arrangement of books on all four walls. The black and whites were vivid and sharp, clear enough that the titles could be read and the jacket formats identified. Her eyes travelled along one row and she saw some famous old books. *All the Kings Men, Elmer Gantry, Miss Lonelyhearts, Manhattan Transfer...* He did have a weak spot for limiteds: a shot over the body towards the window wall showed a good-sized selection of books in slip-cases. She asked for a magnifying-glass, and the detective, fascinated, got her one from the desk drawer. *Grapes of Wrath* in two volumes, *Anthony Adverse* in three... ‘looks like a Limited Editions Club’, she said. The detective said ‘oh’, the way people do when they have no idea what you’re talking about.”

(*The Bookman's Wake* by John Dunning)

Here's a small selection of contemporary mysteries:

Merryn Allingham: The Bookshop Murder (9781800196827)(Amazon)

Robert Barnard: Death in Purple Prose (9781447238720)(Amazon)

Lawrence Block: The Burglar in the Library (9781726778671)(Amazon)

Simon Brett: The Liar in the Library (9781786894861)(Amazon)

Raymond Chandler: The Big Sleep (9780241956281)(Amazon)

John Colapinto: About the Author (9781841156408)(Amazon)

Helen Cox: Murder by the Minster (Kitt Hartley/1) (9781529402209)(Amazon)

Laurence Cosse (translated by Alison Anderson): A Novel Bookstore (9781933372822) (Amazon)

Amanda Cross: The Question of Max (9781509820115)(Amazon)

Joanna Dobson: Death Without Tenure (9781590585863)(Amazon)

John Dunning: Booked to Die (9780743410656)(Amazon)

A Bookman's Wake (9781501142857 - beware as rather expensive in pbk!) (Amazon)

Umberto Eco: The Name of the Rose (9780099466031)(Amazon)

Jon Fasman: The Geographer's Library (9780143036623)(Amazon)

Jasper Fforde: The Well of Lost Plots (9780340825938)(Amazon)

Robert Galbraith: The Silkworm (9780751549263)(Amazon)

John Harvey: Living Proof (Resnick 7) (9780099585732)(Amazon)

Hazel Holt: The Cruellest Month (Bodleian Library) (9781603810524)(Amazon)

P. D. James: Original Sin (9780571350759)(Amazon)

Erin Kelly: The Ties that Bind (9781444728392)(Amazon)

Ross King: Ex-Libris (9780142000809)(Amazon)

Renee Knight: Disclaimer (9781784160227)(Amazon)

Peter Lovesey: Bloodhounds (9780751553659)(Amazon)
The Circle (9780751553581)(Amazon)
S. G. MacLean: The Bookseller of Inverness (Historical, 1746) (9781529414172)(Amazon)
Barry Maitland: The Marx Sisters (9781628723731)(Amazon)
G. M. Malliet: Augusta Hawke (9781448306022)(Amazon)
Anne Morice: Dead on Cue (9781914150296) (Amazon)(When Tessa's Scotland Yard husband Robin is invited to speak at the renowned and respectable Alibi Club, she is excited to be surrounded by the members – all mystery writers of the first rank, although one is missing.

Anne Morice: Publish and be Killed (9781914150319)(Amazon)
Orhan Pamuk (Translated by Erdag Goknar): My Name is Red (9780571268832)(Amazon)
Diane Setterfield: The Thirteenth Tale (9781409192954)(Amazon)
George Sims: The Terrible Door (9781906288280)(Amazon)
Veronica Stallwood: Oxford Exit (9780340932919)(Amazon)
Rebecca Stott: Ghostwalk (9780753823576)(Amazon)
Andrew Taylor: Caroline Minuscule (9780340932919)(Amazon)
L. C. Tyler & Ayo Onatade (Eds.): Bodies in a Bookshop: Anthology (9781909619173) (Amazon)
L.C. Tyler: The Herring Seller's Apprentice (9780749018269)(Amazon)
Luis Fernando Verissimo (Translated by): Borges and the Eternal Orang-Utans (9780099461678)(Amazon)
Jill Paton Walsh: The Wyndham Case (Cambridge) (9780340839492)(Amazon)
Carlos Ruiz Zafon (Translated by Lucia Graves): The Shadow of the Wind (9781474609883)(Amazon)
Markus Zusak: The Book Thief (9781909531611)(Amazon)

Several special novels

Ray Bradbury: Fahrenheit 451 (9780006546061)(Amazon)
Italo Calvino (Translator by William Weaver): If on a Winter's Night a Traveller (9780099430896)(Amazon)
Penelope Fitzgerald: The Bookshop (9780006543541)(Amazon)
Nina George: Little Paris Bookshop (9780349140377)(Amazon)
Deborah Meyler: The Bookstore (9781448214020)(Amazon)
Menna Van Praag: The Dress Shop of Dreams (Cambridge) (9780749018726)(Amazon)
Salley Vickers: The Librarian (9780241330234)(Amazon)
Gabrielle Zevin: The Storied life of A. J. Fikry (9780349141077)(Amazon)

And here's my favourite selection on books about books - perfect for browsing!

Lewis Buzbee: The Yellow-lighted bookshop (memoir) (9781555975104)(Amazon)
Shawn Bythell: Confessions of a Bookseller (9781788162319)(Amazon)
John Curran: The Hooded Gunman: An illustrated History of Collins Crime Club (9780008192358)(Amazon)
Martin Edwards: The Life of Crime: Detecting the History of Mysteries and their Creators (9780008192426)(Amazon)

Christopher Fowler: The Book of Forgotten Authors (9781786484901)(Amazon)
Tom Gauld: The Revenge of the Librarians (9781838858216)(Amazon)
The Snooty Bookshop: 50 Literary Postcards (9781786891525)(Amazon)
Helene Hanff: 84 Charing Cross Road (9781860498503)(Amazon)
Ernest Heffer: Instructions to the Young Bookseller (9780900891960)(Amazon)
Susan Hill: Howard's End is on the Landing: A Year of Reading from Home
(9781846682667)(Amazon)
Lucy Mangan: Bookworm: A Memoir of Childhood Reading (9781784709228)(Amazon)
Robert McCrum: 100 Best Novels in English (9781903385470)(Amazon)
Andy Miller: The Year of Reading Dangerously: How Fifty Great Books Saved My Life
(9780007255764)(Amazon)
Cathy Rentzenbrink: Dear Reader: The Comfort and Joy of Books (9781509891559)
(Amazon)
R.B. Russell: Fifty Forgotten Books (9781913505509)(Amazon)
Martin Salisbury: The Illustrated Dust Jacket 1920-1970 (9780500519134)(Amazon)
Gabriel Zaid: So Many Books (9780954221782)(Amazon)

And two brilliant picture books:

Lane Smith: It's a Book (9781509884711)(Amazon)
Sarah Stewart: The Library (9780312384548) (Amazon)

This list is merely a drop in the ocean compared to our much more comprehensive list (It's a Book: The Pleasure of Reading) which we'll upload later in the year!
For now though I hope that this shortish list of book-related treats will encourage an enthusiastic cracking of spines among the bookshelves!

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