



OFF THE SHELF
North Olympic Library System
2210 South Peabody Street
Port Angeles, WA 98362

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RE: Cuddle Up with a Cozy Mystery

On a cold and blustery day, there is nothing better than a comforting book, especially one labeled cozy. But what exactly is a cozy mystery? This very popular genre is defined by the feelings it evokes in readers, namely warm, engrossed, and contented. The mystery element can be very strong or barely present, but it generally does not include graphic “adult” elements or intense action scenes. These elements more often take place off the page. Typically the hero is an amateur sleuth, the setting is a small village or community of some kind and there is a whole series revolving around one or the other. Overall a cozy mystery is a gentle, feel-good book, perfect with a hot beverage and a snuggly blanket.

Think Agatha Christie writing about Miss Marple or Poirot, Ellis Peters with Cadfael, or Dorothy Sayers and Lord Peter Wimsey. If this type of British and/or historical setting is your cup of tea, try *Sidney Chambers and the Shadow of Death* by James Runcie, the first of the Grantchester books with an unconventional clergyman at the center. *Her Royal Spyness* by Rhys Bowen features a penniless member of the extended royal family in 1930s London, while the titular character in *Maisie Dobbs* by Jacqueline Winspear was a nurse in World War I who sets up as a private investigator after the war is over.

Another unique factor of the genre is that many series have a theme, such as knitting or coffee...or cats. There are many mystery-solving cats like Rita Brown’s Sneaky Pie Brown. But dog lovers can count on Chet, the lovable canine narrator of *Dog on It*, who solves crimes with his human private investigator companion. In *The Tale of Hill Top Farm* by Susan Albert Wittig

there are talking woodland animals who solve mysteries that the bumbling humans can't, in the lake district of England.

It is common for cozy mysteries to have a strong leading lady. *Crocodile on the Sandbank* by Elizabeth Peters has the heroine, a Victorian feminist, dashing around Egypt. *Cocaine Blues* by Kerry Greenwood follows the spitfire Miss Fisher as she leaves English society for Australia in the roaring twenties. If you enjoyed the warmth of Precious Ramotswe in the beloved *The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency* by Alexander McCall Smith, try one of his other series like *The Sunday Philosophy Club: an Isabel Dalhousie Mystery*.

For your cozy mystery fix, visit the Sequim Branch Library at 630 North Sequim Avenue, or get in touch with your friendly library staff by calling 360.683.1161, or sending an email to Discover@nols.org. Library staff are available to help you find your next great read! And as always, the library is always open at www.nols.org.





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