

british library crime classics

British Library Crime Classics have become a beloved genre for fans of vintage detective stories, noir mysteries, and classic whodunits. These editions celebrate the golden age of British crime fiction, showcasing tales that blend intriguing plots, memorable characters, and a distinctive sense of Britain's cultural history. The British Library's commitment to preserving and promoting these works has introduced a new generation to the timeless appeal of early 20th-century crime literature. Whether you're a seasoned mystery aficionado or a newcomer eager to explore the roots of detective fiction, British Library Crime Classics offer a rich and engaging reading experience.

Overview of British Library Crime Classics

The British Library Crime Classics series was launched to revive and reintroduce forgotten or overlooked crime novels from the early 20th century. This collection spans from the 1920s to the 1950s, encompassing a variety of styles and subgenres, from traditional detective stories to gritty noir.

Origins and Mission

The series was established with the aim of:

1. Preserving Britain's literary heritage in crime fiction
2. Introducing lesser-known authors to modern audiences
3. Celebrating the craftsmanship of classic crime writers
4. Providing high-quality editions with authoritative introductions and annotations

The initiative was inspired by a desire to showcase the diversity and richness of Britain's crime writing history beyond the most famous authors like Agatha Christie and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

What Sets Them Apart?

British Library Crime Classics distinguish themselves through:

- Careful curation of overlooked gems and forgotten masterpieces
- High-quality reproductions of original editions
- In-depth introductions by crime fiction scholars and authors
- Supplementary notes that contextualize the stories historically and culturally

Notable Titles and Authors in the Series

The series features a diverse range of stories, from cozy mysteries to hard-boiled detective tales. Here are some standout titles and authors that have contributed to its popularity:

Freeman Wills Crofts

Crofts was renowned for his meticulously plotted detective stories, emphasizing logic and cause-and-effect.

- **The Cask:** A masterful tale of a missing wine cask and a clever detective's unraveling of the mystery.
- **Holidays are Murder:** Combines holiday cheer with a chilling crime, showcasing Crofts' skill at integrating setting with plot.

E.C.R. Lorac (pseudonym of Edith Caroline Rivett)

Lorac's work captures the atmospheric side of British crime, often set in Cornwall or other atmospheric locales.

- **Death in the Vale:** A classic locked-room mystery with a haunting rural setting.
- **Crime Counter:** Delves into police procedures and social nuances of post-war Britain.

John Rhode (a pseudonym for Cecil John Charles Street)

Known for his scientific approach to solving crimes.

- **Tragedy in Blue:** Features Dr. Priestley, a recurring detective character known for logical deduction.
- **The Golden Age of Detective Fiction:** Rhode's stories often involve intricate puzzles and forensic details.

Other Noteworthy Names

- **Margery Allingham:** Known for her clever sleuth, Albert Campion, blending mystery with social commentary.
- **Nicholas Blake:** The pseudonym for poet Cecil Day-Lewis, famous for his detective Nigel Strangeways series.
- **G.D.H. and Margaret Cole:** Political and social mysteries reflecting their leftist views.

Themes and Styles of British Library Crime Classics

The stories within this series are distinguished by several recurring themes and stylistic elements:

Traditional Detective Fiction

Many stories follow the classic detective formula:

1. Introduction of a crime—often murder or theft
2. Introduction of a detective or investigator
3. Clues and red herrings leading to the solution

4. Resolution that reveals the culprit through logical deduction

Gothic and Atmospheric Settings

Many stories are set in:

- Remote villages or countryside estates
- Seaside towns with foggy piers and coastal cliffs
- Old mansions or castles with hidden passages

Post-War Britain and Social Commentary

A significant number of titles reflect the societal changes after WWII, exploring:

- Class distinctions and social mobility
- Economic hardships and their impact on crime
- Urbanization and the decline of traditional rural communities

Scientific and Logical Approaches

Authors like Crofts and Rhode emphasized:

- Forensic science and technical details
- Methodical investigations and puzzle-solving

Why Read British Library Crime Classics?

There are numerous reasons to delve into this series, whether you're a casual reader or a dedicated crime fiction enthusiast:

Historical and Cultural Insights

These stories offer a window into Britain's social fabric across the early 20th century, reflecting attitudes, customs, and societal issues of their time.

Celebration of Craftsmanship

The stories showcase the craftsmanship of master storytellers who meticulously crafted plots with clever twists and engaging characters.

Introduction to Lesser-Known Authors

While the series features celebrated writers, it also shines a light on lesser-known authors deserving of recognition.

Quality Editions and Supplementary Material

Each book includes:

- Author biographies
- Historical context
- Analysis of the story's themes and significance

Perfect for Collectors

The editions are beautifully designed, making them attractive additions to any book collection.

How to Access British Library Crime Classics

The series is widely available through various channels:

1. **Bookstores:** Both physical and online stores stock these editions.
2. **Libraries:** Many public libraries carry the series, allowing readers to borrow and explore at their leisure.
3. **E-books and Audiobooks:** Digital formats are available for convenient reading or listening on the go.
4. **Official Website:** The British Library offers information about current and upcoming titles, along with special editions and author interviews.

Conclusion

British Library Crime Classics serve as a vital bridge between the golden age of detective fiction and modern readers eager to explore its origins. By reviving forgotten stories and authors, the series enriches our understanding of Britain's literary heritage while providing compelling mysteries that stand the test of time. Whether you're captivated by intricate puzzles, atmospheric settings, or social commentary, these editions offer something for every crime fiction enthusiast. Dive into the series and discover the fascinating world of British crime stories that continue to intrigue and inspire audiences today.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the most popular British Library Crime Classics editions available today?

The British Library Crime Classics feature a wide range of vintage detective and mystery stories, with popular editions including works by authors like Freeman Wills Crofts, John Bude, and E.C.R. Lorac, often praised for their authentic period charm and engaging plots.

How can I access the British Library Crime Classics collection?

The British Library Crime Classics are available through various channels including physical copies in libraries and bookstores, as well as in digital formats via online retailers and subscription services like the British Library's digital catalog or e-book platforms.

Are British Library Crime Classics suitable for modern readers?

Yes, these classics are appreciated for their timeless storytelling, cleverly crafted plots, and rich historical context, making them appealing to modern mystery enthusiasts interested in vintage detective fiction.

Which authors are most prominently featured in the British Library Crime Classics series?

The series features authors such as E.C.R. Lorac, John Bude, Freeman Wills Crofts, E.C.R. Lorac, and Margery Allingham, among others, highlighting some of the most influential writers of the Golden Age of Detective Fiction.

What is the focus of the British Library Crime Classics collection?

The collection focuses on rediscovering and preserving lesser-known and overlooked crime fiction from the early to mid-20th century, showcasing the golden era of detective and mystery stories.

Are British Library Crime Classics based on real historical settings?

Many of these stories are set in authentic historical settings, often reflecting British society and landscapes from the 1920s to 1950s, providing a fascinating glimpse into the era's culture and social norms.

Can I find British Library Crime Classics in audiobook format?

Yes, several titles from the British Library Crime Classics series are available in audiobook format, making them accessible for listeners who enjoy detective stories on the go.

What distinguishes British Library Crime Classics from modern detective fiction?

British Library Crime Classics are distinguished by their vintage style, emphasis on atmospheric settings, and intricate plotting characteristic of the Golden Age of Detective Fiction, offering a nostalgic and authentic experience.

Are new titles regularly added to the British Library Crime Classics series?

Yes, the series continues to expand, with new titles and rediscovered works being added regularly, highlighting the ongoing effort to preserve and celebrate classic detective fiction.

Where can I find recommendations for the best British Library Crime Classics to start with?

Recommendations can be found on literary blogs, the British Library's official website, and reading communities like Goodreads, often suggesting starting with popular titles or authors like Freeman Wills Crofts or E.C.R. Lorac for a taste of the series.

Additional Resources

British Library Crime Classics: A Definitive Exploration of a Literary Phenomenon

The British Library Crime Classics series has revolutionized the way readers experience the golden age of detective and crime fiction. From their meticulous curation to their stunning cover art, these volumes have carved out a niche for aficionados and new readers alike. In this comprehensive review, we delve into the origins, significance, and standout features of this captivating series, offering insights into why it has become a cornerstone for fans of classic crime literature.

Introduction to the British Library Crime Classics

The British Library Crime Classics series is a curated collection of vintage crime novels, primarily from the early to mid-20th century. Launched in 2013, the series aims to resurrect forgotten masterpieces of detective, mystery, and crime fiction, bringing them into the modern spotlight. Curated by the British Library Publishing division, these editions are designed to appeal both to dedicated crime fiction enthusiasts and newcomers eager to explore the genre's roots.

What sets the British Library Crime Classics apart is their commitment to authenticity, quality, and comprehensive contextualization. Each volume is carefully edited to preserve the author's original voice, often accompanied by detailed introductions, author biographies, and annotations that enrich the reading experience.

Historical and Cultural Significance

Reviving the Golden Age of Crime Fiction

The series predominantly features works from what is often called the 'Golden Age' of detective fiction, roughly spanning the 1920s to the 1950s. This period was marked by prolific authors like Agatha Christie, Dorothy L. Sayers, and G.K. Chesterton, but also by many lesser-known writers whose work has now been rediscovered through this series.

The importance of this era lies in its pioneering narrative techniques, iconic detective characters, and innovative plotting styles. The British Library Crime Classics serve as a portal into this fascinating period, allowing modern readers to appreciate the genre's evolution and its influence on contemporary crime fiction.

Preservation of Literary Heritage

Beyond nostalgia, the series plays a vital role in preserving and promoting literary heritage. Many of these works fell into obscurity over the decades, overshadowed by more modern or commercially successful crime novels. By reissuing these titles, the British Library ensures that this rich vein of cultural history remains accessible.

Furthermore, the series accentuates regional and social diversity, revealing a spectrum of British life through stories set in various locales—from bustling London streets to quiet countryside villages. These settings provide an authentic window into Britain's social fabric during the interwar and post-war periods.

Design and Production Quality

Stunning Cover Art

One of the most immediately noticeable aspects of the British Library Crime Classics is their eye-catching cover design. Each edition features artwork inspired by vintage posters, period advertisements, or classic pulp covers, creating a nostalgic yet modern aesthetic. This visual approach not only attracts collectors but also signals the series' commitment to celebrating the era's visual culture.

The covers often feature bold typography and vibrant colors, making them stand out on bookshelves. This cohesive visual identity has contributed significantly to the series' popularity among bibliophiles and design enthusiasts.

Physical Quality and Presentation

The editions are produced with high-quality materials, including sturdy hardcover bindings, thick paper stock, and well-thought-out typography. Many volumes include:

- **Introductory Essays:** Providing historical context, author backgrounds, and thematic overviews.
- **Author Biographies:** Offering insights into the lives of writers, enriching understanding of their work.
- **Annotations and Notes:** Clarifying references, regional dialects, or period-specific details.
- **Maps and Illustrations:** Occasionally included to enhance the storytelling or setting.

This attention to detail makes each book a collectible item, suitable for both casual reading and serious bibliophile collections.

Notable Titles and Their Significance

The series boasts an extensive catalog, but some titles stand out for their influence, originality, or enduring popularity.

"The Secret of the Black Trench" by E.C. R. Lorac

This novel is a prime example of the British Library's commitment to uncovering hidden gems. Lorac's work combines atmospheric settings with intricate plotting, exemplifying the classic British detective story.

"Death in the Tunnel" by Miles Burton

Set in the London Underground, this novel offers a unique setting rarely explored in crime fiction, showcasing the versatility of the genre during its Golden Age.

"The Case of the Missing Lady" by G.D.H. and Margaret Cole

This collaboration between a husband-and-wife team demonstrates the diversity of authors represented in the series, blending wit, social commentary, and clever plotting.

Why These Titles Matter

These works exemplify different facets of the era—be it atmospheric storytelling, innovative settings, or social commentary—highlighting the series' breadth and depth.

The Series' Appeal to Diverse Readers

For Crime Fiction Enthusiasts

The series offers a treasure trove of classic detective stories that often challenge modern conventions. Many of these novels feature amateur sleuths, eccentric detectives, or police procedurals, providing a varied palette of narratives.

For Literature and History Buffs

Beyond suspense and mystery, these books serve as historical documents that reflect Britain's social and cultural landscape. They reveal class distinctions, gender roles, and regional identities, making them valuable for academic or personal exploration.

For Collectors and Aesthetic Enthusiasts

The beautiful editions and collectible nature of the series appeal to those who value design and physical books as objects of art.

Criticisms and Challenges

While the British Library Crime Classics have garnered widespread praise, some criticisms exist:

- Selection Bias: The series predominantly features British authors, potentially limiting diversity within the genre.
- Modern Sensibilities: Some stories contain racial, gender, or social stereotypes reflective of their time, which may challenge contemporary readers.
- Repetition of Tropes: As with any genre's golden age, some plots and character archetypes may feel dated or predictable.

However, the series' editors often address these issues through detailed introductions and contextual notes, encouraging critical engagement.

Conclusion: Why the British Library Crime Classics Matter

The British Library Crime Classics series is an essential addition to any crime fiction lover's library. Its meticulous curation, high-quality production, and dedication to historical authenticity make it stand out in the crowded world of book series.

By resurrecting forgotten masterpieces and presenting them with reverence and style, the series not only pays homage to the genre's history but also enriches the contemporary literary landscape. Whether one is a seasoned detective fiction aficionado or a newcomer curious about the roots of modern crime stories, these editions offer an engaging, enlightening, and visually stunning journey into Britain's crime fiction heritage.

In sum, the British Library Crime Classics are more than just books—they are cultural artifacts, artful objects, and gateways into a bygone era of intrigue, wit, and storytelling craftsmanship. They remain an invaluable resource for anyone eager to explore the roots of detective fiction and appreciate the enduring appeal of Britain's crime-writing legacy.

[British Library Crime Classics](#)

british library crime classics: British Library Crime Classics Set British Library, The, 2016-10-27

british library crime classics: The Long Arm of the Law Martin Edwards, 2018-01-02
Mystery crime fiction written in the Golden Age of Murder Tired of newspaper headlines that accuse

cops of malfeasance or worse? Veteran editor Edwards has the perfect antidote: 15 reprints of stories from 1908 to 1966 showing English police officers at (generally) their most sterling. —Kirkus Reviews In classic British crime fiction, dazzling detective work is often the province of a brilliant amateur—whereas the humble police detective cuts a hapless figure. The twelve stories collected here strike a blow for the professionals, with teasing mysteries to challenge a hard-working police officer's persistence and scrupulous attention to detail. As in his previous anthologies for the British Library Crime Classics series, Martin Edwards introduces readers to fascinating neglected gems of British crime writing as well as uncovering lesser-known stories by the great novelists of the golden age. Each of these stories combines realism with entertainment, skilfully blending the conduct of a criminal investigation with a compelling murder-mystery plot.

british library crime classics: Resorting to Murder Martin Edwards, 2015-06-02 Mystery crime fiction written in the Golden Age of Murder This volume in Poisoned Pen's British Library Crime Classics series is ideal summer vacation reading. —Publishers Weekly Holidays offer us the luxury of getting away from it all. So, in a different way, do detective stories. This collection of vintage mysteries combines both those pleasures. From a golf course at the English seaside to a pension in Paris, and from a Swiss mountain resort to the cliffs of Normandy, this new selection shows the enjoyable and unexpected ways in which crime writers have used summer holidays as a theme. These fourteen stories range widely across the golden age of British crime fiction. Stellar names from the past are well represented—Arthur Conan Doyle and G. K. Chesterton, for instance—with classic stories that have won acclaim over the decades. The collection also uncovers a wide range of hidden gems: Anthony Berkeley—whose brilliance with plot had even Agatha Christie in raptures—is represented by a story so (undeservedly) obscure that even the British Library does not own a copy. The stories by Phyllis Bentley and Helen Simpson are almost equally rare, despite the success which both writers achieved, while those by H. C. Bailey, Leo Bruce and the little-known Gerald Findler have seldom been reprinted. Each story is introduced by the editor, Martin Edwards, who sheds light on the authors' lives and the background to their writing.

british library crime classics: Quick Curtain Alan Melville, 2017-12-05 Mystery crime fiction written in the Golden Age of Murder Melville's jaunty, chatty tone gives us an insider's look at everyone connected to the theater world, including critics who recycle their reviews. —Booklist 'Don't talk bunk!' said Mr Douglas. 'You can't carry on with the show with a man dying on stage. Drop the curtain!' When Douglas B. Douglas—leading light of the London theatre—premieres his new musical extravaganza, *Blue Music*, he is sure the packed house will be dazzled by the performance. What he couldn't predict is the death of his star, Brandon Baker, on stage in the middle of Act 2. Soon another member of the cast is found dead, and it seems to be a straightforward case of murder followed by suicide. Inspector Wilson of Scotland Yard—who happens to be among the audience—soon discovers otherwise. Together with Derek, his journalist son, Wilson takes charge of proceedings in his own inimitable way. This is a witty, satirical novel from the golden age of British crime fiction between the world wars. It is long overdue for rediscovery and this new edition includes an informative introduction by Martin Edwards, author of *The Golden Age of Murder*.

british library crime classics: Story Of Classic Crime In 100 Books Martin Edwards, 2018-07-05

british library crime classics: Foreign Bodies Martin Edwards, 2018-03-06 Mystery crime fiction written in the Golden Age of Murder Edwards has done mystery readers a great service by providing the first-ever anthology of golden age short stories in translation, with 15 superior offerings from authors from France, Japan, Denmark, Austria, Germany, Holland, Mexico, Russia, and elsewhere; even Anton Chekhov makes a contribution. —Publishers Weekly STARRED review Today, translated crime fiction is in vogue—but this was not always the case. A century before Scandi noir, writers across Europe and beyond were publishing detective stories of high quality. Often these did not appear in English and they have been known only by a small number of experts. This is the first ever collection of classic crime in translation from the golden age of the genre in the

20th century. Many of these stories are exceptionally rare, and several have been translated for the first time to appear in this volume.

british library crime classics: *Continental Crimes* Martin Edwards, 2017-08-01 “[A] superb . . . anthology of . . . short stories by British writers set in continental Europe. . . . Those unfamiliar. . . . will find this the perfect introduction.” —Publishers Weekly, starred review Discover the captivating treasures buried in the British Library's archives. Largely inaccessible to the public until now, these enduring crime classics were written in the golden age of detective fiction. A man is forbidden to uncover the secret of the tower in a fairy-tale castle by the Rhine. A headless corpse is found in a secret garden in Paris—belonging to the city's chief of police. And a drowned man is fished from the sea off the Italian Riviera, leaving the carabinieri to wonder why his socialite friends at the Villa Almirante are so unconcerned by his death. These are three of the scenarios in this new collection of vintage crime stories. Detective stories from the golden age and beyond have used European settings—cosmopolitan cities, rural idylls and crumbling chateaux—to explore timeless themes of revenge, deception, murder and haunting. Including lesser-known stories by Agatha Christie, Arthur Conan Doyle, G. K. Chesterton, J. Jefferson Farjeon and other classic writers, this collection reveals many hidden gems of British crime. “The field is so rich, in fact, that veteran editor Edwards can't have had much trouble in plucking these plums and near-plums--a feast for the equally nostalgic.” —Kirkus Reviews “Fans of classic British crime fiction will appreciate this anthology, and the vivid locations should lure readers who enjoy atmospheric reads.” —Library Journal

british library crime classics: *The Hog's Back Mystery* Freeman Wills Crofts, 2015-07-07 Mystery crime fiction written in the Golden Age of Murder 'As pretty a piece of work as Inspector French has done... On the level of Mr Crofts' very best; which is saying something.' —Daily Telegraph Dr James Earle and his wife live in comfortable seclusion near the Hog's Back, a ridge in the North Downs in the beautiful Surrey countryside. When Dr Earle disappears from his cottage, Inspector French is called in to investigate. At first he suspects a simple domestic intrigue—and begins to uncover a web of romantic entanglements beneath the couple's peaceful rural life. The case soon takes a more complex turn. Other people vanish mysteriously, one of Dr Earle's house guests among them. What is the explanation for the disappearances? If the missing people have been murdered, what can be the motive? This fiendishly complicated puzzle is one that only Inspector French can solve. Freeman Wills Crofts was a master of the intricately and ingeniously plotted detective novel, and *The Hog's Back Mystery* shows him at the height of his powers. This new edition of a classic mystery is introduced by the crime fiction expert Martin Edwards.

british library crime classics: *Serpents in Eden* Martin Edwards, 2016-03-01 Mystery crime fiction written in the Golden Age of Murder 'The lowest and vilest alleys in London do not present a more dreadful record of sin than does the smiling and beautiful countryside.... Think of the deeds of hellish cruelty, the hidden wickedness which may go on, year in, year out, in such places, and none the wiser.' —Sherlock Holmes Many of the greatest British crime writers have explored the possibilities of crime in the countryside in lively and ingenious short stories. *Serpents in Eden* celebrates the rural British mystery by bringing together an eclectic mix of crime stories written over half a century. From a tale of poison-pen letters tearing apart a village community to a macabre mystery by Arthur Conan Doyle, the stories collected here reveal the dark truths hidden in an assortment of rural paradises. Among the writers included here are such major figures as G. K. Chesterton and Margery Allingham, along with a host of lesser-known discoveries whose best stories are among the unsung riches of the golden age of British crime fiction between the two world wars.

british library crime classics: *The Spoilt Kill* M. Kelly, 2020-05-10

british library crime classics: *Murder by the Book* M. Edwards, 2021 In this collection of stories about the world of books and writing, authors kill and are killed, while books are stolen, hunted after, and found to provide intriguing clues to crime. Legendary detectives ranging from Sherlock Holmes and Father Brown to DCI Roderick Alleyn, Nigel Strangeways, and Superintendent Wilson pit their wits against ingenious criminals who don't always play it by the book... Continuing the miniseries of anthologies within the Crime Classics series, *Murder by the Book* focuses on the

objects and processes at the heart of what we love about the mystery genre - the books themselves and their writers. With Martin Edwards as librarian and guide, delve into an irresistible stack of tales perfect for every book-lover and armchair detective.--Provided by publisher.

british library crime classics: *Murder by Matchlight* E.C.R. Lorac, 2019-03-05 Mystery crime fiction written in the Golden Age of Murder A terrifically atmospheric puzzler...the ending is a stunner...like the best Golden Age crime fiction. —Booklist STARRED review 'A man who played about on the fringes of the Black Market, who had fought for Sinn Fein, who lived by his wits—and who finally became dangerous to somebody and was knocked over the head in the blackout. It may prove to be a sordid story, but I certainly find it an interesting one.' London, 1945. The capital is shrouded in the darkness of the blackout, and mystery abounds in the parks after dusk. During a stroll through Regent's Park, Bruce Mallaig witnesses two men acting suspiciously around a footbridge. In a matter of moments, one of them has been murdered; Mallaig's view of the assailant but a brief glimpse of a ghastly face in the glow of a struck match. The murderer's noiseless approach and escape seems to defy all logic, and even the victim's identity is quickly thrown into uncertainty. Lorac's shrewd yet personable C.I.D. man MacDonald must set to work once again to unravel this near-impossible mystery.

british library crime classics: *Suprise for Christmas* A M. Edwards,

british library crime classics: *It Walks by Night* John Dickson Carr, 2020-03-03 Discover the captivating treasures buried in the British Library's archives. Largely inaccessible to the public until now, these enduring crime classics were written in the golden age of detective fiction. With an introduction by Martin Edwards and featuring the Dickson Carr short story *The Shadow of the Goat* We are thrilled to welcome John Dickson Carr into the Crime Classics series with his first novel, a brooding locked room mystery in the gathering dusk of the French capital. In the smoke-wreathed gloom of a Parisian salon, Inspector Bencolin has summoned his allies to discuss a peculiar case. A would-be murderer, imprisoned for his attempt to kill his wife, has escaped and is known to have visited a plastic surgeon. His whereabouts remain a mystery, though with his former wife poised to marry another, Bencolin predicts his return. Sure enough, the Inspector's worst suspicions are realized when the beheaded body of the new suitor is discovered in a locked room of the salon, with no apparent exit. Bencolin sets off into the Parisian night to unravel the dumbfounding mystery and track down the sadistic killer. Penned during the golden age of mysteries, this thrilling investigation brings a detective face to face with the darkest parts of Paris. And after the thrilling conclusion of the locked room mystery, sit back and enjoy the short story *The Shadow of the Goat*, also included in this exclusive British Library crime classic.

british library crime classics: *Silent Nights* Martin Edwards, 2015-11-03 Mystery crime fiction written in the Golden Age of Murder Like an assortment of presents under a Christmas tree, there's something for everyone in this Yule-themed reprint anthology in the British Library Crime Classics series from Edwards. —Publishers Weekly Christmas is a mysterious, as well as magical, time of year. Strange things can happen, and this helps to explain the hallowed tradition of telling ghost stories around the fireside as the year draws to a close. Christmas tales of crime and detection have a similar appeal. When television becomes tiresome, and party games pall, the prospect of curling up in the warm with a good mystery is enticing—and much better for the digestion than yet another helping of plum pudding. Crime writers are just as susceptible as readers to the countless attractions of Christmas. Over the years, many distinguished practitioners of the genre have given one or more of their stories a Yuletide setting. The most memorable Christmas mysteries blend a lively storyline with an atmospheric evocation of the season. Getting the mixture right is much harder than it looks. This book introduces of readers to some of the finest Christmas detective stories of the past. Martin Edwards' selection blends festive pieces from much-loved authors with one or two stories which are likely to be unfamiliar even to diehard mystery fans. The result is a collection of crime fiction to savor, whatever the season.

british library crime classics: *Murder at the Manor* Martin Edwards, 2016-02-02 Mystery crime fiction written in the Golden Age of Murder [T]he entire book is filled with

country-house-mystery wonders: the closed-circle puzzle, the dying-message clue, and the sociopathic guest who invades the weekend house party. —Booklist The English country house is an iconic setting for some of the greatest British crime fiction. This new collection gathers together stories written over a span of about 65 years, during which British society, and life in country houses, was transformed out of all recognition. It includes fascinating and unfamiliar twists on the classic 'closed circle' plot, in which the assorted guests at a country house party become suspects when a crime is committed. In the more sinister tales featured here, a gloomy mansion set in lonely grounds offers an eerie backdrop for dark deeds. Many distinguished writers are represented in this collection, including such great names of the genre as Anthony Berkeley, Nicholas Blake and G.K. Chesterton. Martin Edwards has also unearthed hidden gems and forgotten masterpieces: among them are a fine send-up of the country house murder; a suspenseful tale by the unaccountably neglected Ethel Lina White; and a story by the little-known Scottish writer J.J. Bell.

british library crime classics: Murder in Piccadilly Charles Kingston, 2022-08-01 Charles Kingston's 'Murder in Piccadilly' is a quintessential whodunit that immerses readers in the shadowy alleys of London during a captivating era. Kingston's prose slices through the fog of the Roaring Twenties with precision, weaving a tale rich with suspense and punctuated by the social commentary of the time. DigiCat Publishing's special edition pays homage to both the content and literary heritage of the time period, reviving the classic for contemporary audiences with meticulous attention to restoring the original linguistic flourishes. As a cherished piece of the crime mystery genre, this narrative stands as testament to the era's literature, offering intrigue and reflection in equal measure. The journey of Charles Kingston into the literary realm is marked by his affinity for crafting intricate puzzles wrapped in the guise of fiction. 'Murder in Piccadilly's' conception may have sprung from Kingston's intrigue with the darker underbelly of London society, revealing the psychological interplay between characters representative of the period's complex social strata. His background, potentially peppered with encounters that fueled his imagination, culminates in a story that not only entertains but also challenges the reader to consider the subtleties of human nature when confronted with the ultimate crime. Readers who revel in the unraveling of a carefully constructed mystery set against the backdrop of historical richness will find 'Murder in Piccadilly' a delightful addition to their bookshelves. DigiCat Publishing's special edition ensures that this tale's legacy continues, reaching out to literary aficionados appreciative of the genre's golden age. Kingston's work, however precise and engaging in its own period, secures relevance even today, inviting a new generation to decode its secrets and revel in the intrigue of an era past but not forgotten.

british library crime classics: Guilty Creatures Martin Edwards, 2022-06-07 An unusually rewarding anthology whose most dangerous species remain Homo sapiens.— Kirkus Reviews Feline friends, canine companions and aviary associates are often the truest reflections of their owners and have played a crucial role in classic crime fiction—be they detectives, or delinquents. Martin Edwards reaches into the British Library of Crime Classics to collect mysteries featuring an animal cohort. Guilty Creatures celebrates an often-overlooked species of classic crime fiction. Since the dawn of the crime fiction genre, animals of all kinds have played a memorable part in countless mysteries, and in a variety of roles: the perpetrator, the key witness, the sleuth's trusted companion. This collection of fourteen stories corrals plots centered around cats, dogs, and insects alongside more exotic incidents involving gorillas, parakeets, and serpents—complete with a customary shoal of red herrings. The collection includes an introduction on animals in detective fiction by Martin Edwards. From the first detective story, Edgar Allan Poe's locked room puzzle 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue' onwards, animals, birds, and insects have played a memorable part in countless mysteries, and in a wide variety of ways. Count Fosco, the brilliantly characterized villain in Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White* was surrounded by a cockatoo, two canary-birds and a whole family of white mice, while the hound of the Baskervilles famously terrorised Dartmoor in Arthur Conan Doyle's superb Sherlock Holmes novel. Since then, many crime writers have written about members of the animal kingdom.

british library crime classics: Capital Crimes Martin Edwards, 2015-06-02 An eclectic collection of London-based crime stories from the Golden Age of Mystery, featuring work by Arthur Conan Doyle, Edgar Wallace and others. Capital Crimes presents seventeen tales of murder and mayhem that blend the familiar with the unexpected in a way that reflects the personality of London. Alongside classics by Margery Allingham, Anthony Berkeley and Thomas Burke are excellent and unusual stories by authors who are far less well known. The stories give a flavor of how writers have tackled crime in London over the span of more than half a century. Their contributions range from grizzly vignettes, cerebral whodunits, and an early serial-killer thriller set on the London Underground. What they have in common is an atmospheric London setting, and enduring value as entertainment. Each story is introduced by the editor, Martin Edwards, who sheds light on the authors' lives and the background to their writing.

british library crime classics: Somebody at the Door Raymond Postgate, 2017-12-05 Mystery crime fiction written in the Golden Age of Murder Steeped in atmosphere, with skillful plotting and intriguing characterization. —Booklist 'The death was an odd one, it was true; but there was after all no very clear reason to assume it was anything but natural.' In the winter of 1942, England lies cold and dark in the wartime blackout. One bleak evening, Councillor Grayling steps off the 6.12 from Euston, carrying £120 in cash, and oblivious to the fate that awaits him in the snow-covered suburbs. Inspector Holly draws up a list of Grayling's fellow passengers: his distrusted employee Charles Evetts, the charming Hugh Rolandson, and an unknown refugee from Nazi Germany, among others. Inspector Holly will soon discover that each passenger harbours their own dark secrets, and that the councillor had more than one enemy among them. First published in 1943, Raymond Postgate's wartime murder mystery combines thrilling detection with rich characters and a fascinating depiction of life on the home front.

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