

dissolution the shardlake series

Dissolution the Shardlake Series is a captivating historical crime fiction series penned by author C.J. Sansom. Set against the turbulent backdrop of Tudor England, the series follows the life and investigations of Matthew Shardlake, a hunchbacked lawyer navigating the dangerous political and religious upheavals of the 16th century. With its richly detailed settings, complex characters, and intricate plots, the series has garnered a dedicated readership and critical acclaim. In this comprehensive overview, we will delve into the series' chronological order, major themes, character development, and why it remains a must-read for fans of historical mysteries.

Overview of the Shardlake Series

Introduction to the Series

The Shardlake series is a collection of historical detective novels set primarily during the reign of Henry VIII. Each book combines authentic historical detail with compelling storytelling, creating an immersive experience that transports readers to Tudor England. The novels revolve around Matthew Shardlake, a lawyer and investigator who often finds himself embroiled in cases involving political intrigue, religious conflicts, and personal moral dilemmas.

Publication Order and Chronology

While the series was published in a specific sequence, the chronological order of the events aligns with the publication order:

1. **Dissolution** (2003)
2. **Dark Fire** (2004)
3. **Sovereign** (2006)
4. **Revelation** (2008)
5. **Heartstone** (2010)
6. **Tombland** (2018)

However, some readers prefer to follow the chronological timeline, which begins with the earliest events in the Tudor period.

Deep Dive into Dissolution

Plot Summary

is the first installment in the series, published in 2003. It introduces us to Matthew Shardlake, a lawyer working in London during the 1530s. The story is set against the backdrop of Henry VIII's break from the Catholic Church and the ensuing dissolution of the monasteries. When a young monk, Brother Guy, is found dead in the monastery of Scarnsea, Shardlake is drawn into a complex investigation that uncovers corruption, political manipulation, and religious upheaval.

Key plot points include:

- The mysterious death of Brother Guy.
- Investigation into the monastery's finances and practices.
- Political tensions surrounding Henry VIII's religious reforms.
- Personal dilemmas faced by Shardlake as he navigates dangerous alliances.

Through his investigation, Shardlake uncovers a web of secrets that threaten his safety and challenge his moral convictions.

Major Themes in Dissolution

This novel explores several prominent themes:

1. **Religious upheaval:** The upheavals caused by Henry VIII's break from Rome are central, highlighting the tension between faith, politics, and personal belief.
2. **Moral integrity vs. political expediency:** Shardlake's moral compass often conflicts with the political realities of Tudor England.
3. **Power and corruption:** The novel examines how those in power manipulate religious and political institutions for personal gain.
4. **Justice and law:** As a lawyer, Shardlake's pursuit of justice reflects the complexities of law during turbulent times.

Character Development in Dissolution

The series begins with Shardlake's introduction as a morally upright and introspective lawyer. Key character traits include:

- **Dedication to justice:** His commitment to uncovering truth despite risks.
- **Physical disability:** His hunchback shapes his worldview and interactions.
- **Personal integrity:** A strong sense of morality that guides his decisions.

Other notable characters include:

- **Brother Guy:** The young monk whose death sparks the investigation.
- **Jack Barak:** A Jewish financier involved in the case.
- **Thomas Cromwell:** The influential statesman who plays a significant role in the political backdrop.

Subsequent Books and Their Significance

Dark Fire

Set during the time of the Pilgrimage of Grace, Shardlake investigates a mysterious fire and a secret that could threaten national security. Themes of loyalty, political intrigue, and religious conflict deepen.

Sovereign

This novel delves into the political machinations surrounding the royal succession and the threat of rebellion. The story underscores themes of loyalty, power, and betrayal.

Revelation

Centered around the investigation of a murder linked to the royal court, this book explores conspiracy, espionage, and the dangerous game of court politics.

Heartstone

Set during the final years of Henry VIII's reign, the novel examines personal relationships, the decline of the king's health, and the ongoing religious upheaval.

Tombland

The most recent installment, set in 1549, focuses on unrest in Norwich and the aftermath of religious reforms. It highlights social upheaval, justice, and the resilience of ordinary people.

Why the Dissolution Series Continues to Captivate Readers

Authentic Historical Detailing

Sansom's meticulous research ensures that each novel vividly portrays Tudor England, from the political landscape to daily life. Readers gain an immersive experience that educates as it entertains.

Complex Characters and Moral Ambiguity

Shardlake is a deeply human protagonist, flawed yet principled. The series' characters often face moral dilemmas, reflecting the complexities of real life during tumultuous times.

Engaging Plotlines and Twists

Each book features intricate plots with surprises and twists that keep readers engaged. The mysteries are well-crafted, blending historical accuracy with compelling storytelling.

The Series' Contribution to Historical Fiction

The Shardlake series stands out for its combination of detailed historical context and compelling mystery narratives, making it a benchmark in historical crime fiction.

Conclusion: The End of the Series and Its Legacy

As of 2023, the series has concluded with "Tombland," but the impact of the Shardlake series endures. Its success lies in its ability to transport readers to a pivotal period in history while exploring universal themes of justice, morality, and human resilience.

For fans of historical mysteries, engaging characters, and richly detailed settings, the Dissolution the Shardlake series offers an unparalleled journey into Tudor England's darkest and most fascinating days. Whether you are discovering the series for the first time or revisiting its pages, it remains a testament to C.J. Sansom's storytelling mastery and dedication to authentic historical fiction.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the main plot of 'Dissolution' in the Shardlake series?

'Dissolution' follows lawyer-detective Matthew Shardlake as he investigates a series of suspicious deaths at King's College during the dissolution of the monasteries in 1537, uncovering political and religious intrigue.

How does 'Dissolution' fit into the overall Shardlake series?

'Dissolution' is the first book in C.J. Sansom's series, establishing Shardlake's character and setting the historical context of Tudor England, which continues throughout the series.

What historical events are depicted in 'Dissolution'?

The novel depicts the dissolution of the monasteries under Henry VIII and the political upheaval of 16th-century England, providing a vivid backdrop for the mystery.

Is 'Dissolution' a standalone novel or part of a series?

'Dissolution' is the first installment in the Shardlake series, followed by several sequels that continue Shardlake's investigations.

What are the main themes explored in 'Dissolution'?

Themes include religious reform, political corruption, justice, and the struggle between personal morals and societal obligation.

Has 'Dissolution' been adapted into any other media?

As of now, 'Dissolution' has not been officially adapted into film or television, but its popularity has led to interest in possible adaptations.

Who is the protagonist in 'Dissolution' and what is his background?

The protagonist is Matthew Shardlake, a hunchbacked lawyer and investigator, known for his intelligence, integrity, and moral resolve amid turbulent times.

Why is 'Dissolution' considered a significant historical mystery novel?

It combines meticulous historical detail with compelling mystery storytelling, offering readers an immersive experience of Tudor England's political and religious upheaval.

Additional Resources

Dissolution of the Shardlake Series: A Comprehensive Exploration

The Shardlake Series, penned by British author C.J. Sansom, stands as a pinnacle of historical crime fiction set against the turbulent backdrop of Tudor England. Spanning multiple books, this series intricately weaves together suspense, historical authenticity, and compelling character development. As the series concludes with *Lamentation* (2014), readers and critics alike have pondered the significance of its "dissolution"—not just in a literal sense within the narrative but also in terms of its thematic closure, character arcs, and its place within historical fiction. This detailed review aims to

dissect the series' journey, its thematic depths, character evolution, and the implications of its conclusion, providing a nuanced understanding of its "dissolution."

The Foundations of the Shardlake Series

Historical Context and Setting

- Time Frame: The series is set during the tumultuous years of Henry VIII's reign, primarily between 1532 and 1543.
- Historical Events: Major events such as the Dissolution of the Monasteries, the Break with Rome, and political machinations form the backdrop.
- Authentic Atmosphere: Sansom's meticulous research ensures authenticity in depiction of Tudor law, society, and politics.

Main Protagonist: Matthew Shardlake

- Background: A hunchbacked lawyer working as a junior royal solicitor.
- Personality Traits: Morally upright, introspective, empathetic, and often conflicted.
- Character Arc: Shardlake's journey from a cautious lawyer to a more morally driven figure provides the emotional core of the series.

Thematic Depth and Narrative Structure

Core Themes Explored

- Justice and Morality: The series probes the nature of justice in a corrupt and changing political landscape.
- Religious Turmoil: The dissolution of monasteries and religious upheaval are central themes, reflecting societal transformations.
- Power and Corruption: The series examines how power corrupts and influences legal and personal decisions.
- Personal Loss and Redemption: Shardlake's personal struggles and quest for moral integrity resonate throughout.

Narrative Style and Approach

- Historical Fiction Meets Mystery: Each volume combines intricate murder mysteries with rich historical detail.
- Character-Driven Stories: While plot twists are essential, character development remains at the forefront.
- Authentic Language and Dialogue: Sansom employs period-appropriate language, enhancing immersion.

The Series' Evolution and Key Installments

Early Books: Foundations and Introduction

- Dissolution (2003): Introduces Shardlake amidst the early Dissolution of the Monasteries, setting the tone for the series.
- Dark Fire (2004): Moves into political intrigue surrounding the theft of a potentially dangerous chemical.
- Sovereign (2006): Explores the complex relationship between law and monarchy.

Mid-Series Development

- Revelation (2009): Delves deeper into political conspiracies and religious conflicts.
- Heartstone (2010): Focuses on the Peasants' Revolt, blending social unrest with personal battles.
- Lamentation (2014): The final installment, bringing closure to Shardlake's personal and professional journey.

Character and Plot Arcs

- Shardlake's internal struggles with faith, morality, and duty evolve across the series.
- Supporting characters, such as his assistant Jack Barak and his personal circle, develop richly.
- The series' plotlines intertwine historical events with fictional mysteries, culminating in a satisfying yet poignant conclusion.

The Dissolution of the Series: Analyzing Its Closure

Thematic Closure

- The Dissolution as a Metaphor: The dissolution of monasteries symbolizes the upheaval of old structures—both religious and societal—that Shardlake witnesses and navigates.
- Moral and Personal Resolution: By *Lamentation*, Shardlake confronts his past, moral dilemmas, and personal losses, achieving a form of inner dissolution and renewal.
- Historical Reflection: The series' end mirrors the broader dissolution of the medieval order, emphasizing transformation and loss.

Character Resolution

- Shardlake's Personal Growth: His journey from cautious lawyer to a man who embraces moral conviction culminates in *Lamentation*, where he faces personal sacrifices.
- Relationships: Key relationships, such as with his apprentice Barak, are resolved in ways that reflect growth, loyalty, and change.
- Legacy and Impact: Shardlake's actions and decisions in the final book underscore themes of integrity and the cost of justice.

Series' Narrative Closure

- Plot Resolutions: The mysteries introduced in earlier books find their resolutions, providing a sense of completeness.
- Historical Ending: The series concludes at a pivotal moment in Tudor history, capturing the societal upheaval and personal upheavals of the era.
- Author's Intent: Sansom has stated his intention was to craft a finite series with a clear narrative arc, rather than an indefinite saga.

Implications of the Series' Dissolution

Literary Significance

- The series is celebrated for its meticulous historical accuracy combined with compelling storytelling.
- Its closure underscores the importance of narrative arcs in historical fiction, providing readers with a satisfying ending.

Impact on Readers and Critics

- The series' ending has been largely praised for its emotional resonance and thematic depth.
- Some fans wish for more installments, but the conclusion respects the narrative's natural progression.

Legacy in Historical Crime Fiction

- The Shardlake Series set a high standard for historical mysteries, influencing subsequent authors.
- Its "dissolution" symbolizes the end of an era in literary storytelling—one that balances history, morality, and personal growth.

Final Thoughts: The Significance of the Series' Dissolution

The dissolution of the Shardlake Series is emblematic of both its thematic core and its place within the broader landscape of historical fiction. It marks the end of a carefully crafted narrative that explored profound themes of justice, faith, and societal change. Through Shardlake's personal journey, Sansom captures the essence of a tumultuous period in English history, making the series not just a collection of mysteries but a reflection on transformation—both personal and societal.

The series' conclusion provides a sense of closure that respects the complexity of its characters and the historical context. It underscores the importance of narrative integrity, demonstrating that a well-rounded story can find its natural endpoint without succumbing to the temptation of indefinite continuation. For fans and newcomers alike, the Shardlake Series remains a testament to the power of historical storytelling, and its "dissolution" stands as a fitting testament to a series that has left an indelible mark on the genre.

In essence, the dissolution of the Shardlake Series is not merely the end of a sequence of books but a deliberate, thematically resonant closing chapter that encapsulates the tumult, transformation, and moral complexities of Tudor England. It invites readers to reflect on the enduring themes of justice, change, and personal integrity—making its ending both satisfying and profoundly meaningful.

Dissolution The Shardlake Series

dissolution the shardlake series: Dissolution C. J. Sansom, 2003 It is 1537, a time of revolution that sees the greatest changes in England since 1066. Henry VIII has proclaimed himself Supreme Head of the Church. The country is waking up to savage new laws, rigged trials and the greatest network of informers ever seen. And under the orders of Thomas Cromwell, a team of commissioners is sent throughout the country to investigate the monasteries. There can only be one outcome: dissolution. But on the Sussex coast, at the monastery of Scarnsea, events have spiralled

out of control. Cromwell's Commissioner, Robin Singleton, has been found dead, his head severed from his body. His horrific murder is accompanied by equally sinister acts of sacrilege. Matthew Shardlake, lawyer and long-time supporter of Reform, has been sent by Cromwell to uncover the truth behind the dark happenings at Scarnsea. But investigation soon forces Shardlake to question everything that he hears, and everything that he intrinsically believes ...

dissolution the shardlake series: Dissolution C. J. Sansom, 2004-04-27 The first novel in the Matthew Shardlake Tudor Mystery series—the inspiration for the Hulu original series *Shardlake*! *Dissolution* is an utterly riveting portrayal of Tudor England. The year is 1537, and the country is divided between those faithful to the Catholic Church and those loyal to the king and the newly established Church of England. When a royal commissioner is brutally murdered in a monastery on the south coast of England, Thomas Cromwell, Henry VIII's feared vicar general, summons fellow reformer Matthew Shardlake to lead the inquiry. Shardlake and his young protégé uncover evidence of sexual misconduct, embezzlement, and treason, and when two other murders are revealed, they must move quickly to prevent the killer from striking again. A “remarkable debut” (P. D. James), *Dissolution* introduces a thrilling historical series that is not to be missed by fans of *Wolf Hall* and *Bring Up the Bodies*. Awarded the CWA Diamond Dagger – the highest honor in British crime writing

dissolution the shardlake series: Dissolution C. J. Sansom, 2012-06-26 The first novel in the Matthew Shardlake Tudor Mystery series—the inspiration for the Disney+ original series *Shardlake*! *Dissolution* is an utterly riveting portrayal of Tudor England. The year is 1537, and the country is divided between those faithful to the Catholic Church and those loyal to the king and the newly established Church of England. When a royal commissioner is brutally murdered in a monastery on the south coast of England, Thomas Cromwell, Henry VIII's feared vicar general, summons fellow reformer Matthew Shardlake to lead the inquiry. Shardlake and his young protégé uncover evidence of sexual misconduct, embezzlement, and treason, and when two other murders are revealed, they must move quickly to prevent the killer from striking again. A “remarkable debut” (P. D. James), *Dissolution* introduces a thrilling historical series that is not to be missed by fans of *Wolf Hall* and *Bring Up the Bodies*. Awarded the CWA Diamond Dagger – the highest honour in British crime writing.

dissolution the shardlake series: Revelation C. J. Sansom, 2009-02-05 The fourth novel in the Matthew Shardlake Tudor Mystery series—the inspiration for the Hulu original series *Shardlake*! In 1543, while Tudor England is abuzz with King Henry VIII's wooing of Lady Catherine Parr, Matthew Shardlake is working to defend a teenage boy, a religious fanatic being held in the infamous Bedlam hospital for the insane. Then, when an old friend is murdered, Shardlake's search for the killer leads him back not only to Bedlam but also to Catherine Parr and the dark prophecies of the Book of Revelation. Hailed as a virtuoso performance (The Denver Post) and historical fiction writing at its best (The Tampa Tribune), *Revelation* is a must-read for fans of Hilary Mantel, Margaret George, and Philippa Gregory. Awarded the CWA Diamond Dagger – the highest honor in British crime writing

dissolution the shardlake series: Contemporary Authors New Revision Series Amanda D. Sams, 2008-03 In response to the escalating need for up-to-date information on writers, Contemporary Authors® New Revision Series brings researchers the most recent data on the world's most-popular authors. These exciting and unique author profiles are essential to your holdings because sketches are entirely revised and up-to-date, and completely replace the original Contemporary Authors® entries. For your convenience, a soft-cover cumulative index is sent biannually.

dissolution the shardlake series: Sovereign C. J. Sansom, 2012-06-26 The third novel in the Matthew Shardlake Tudor Mystery series—the inspiration for the Disney+ original series *Shardlake*! C. J. Sansom has garnered a wider audience and increased critical praise with each new novel published. His first book in the Matthew Shardlake series, *Dissolution*, was selected by P. D. James in The Wall Street Journal as one of her top five all-time favorite books. Now in *Sovereign*, Shardlake faces the most terrifying threat in the age of Tudor England: imprisonment in the Tower of London.

Shardlake and his loyal assistant, Jack Barak, find themselves embroiled in royal intrigue when a plot against King Henry VIII is uncovered in York and a dangerous conspirator they've been charged with transporting to London is connected to the death of a local glazer. Awarded the CWA Diamond Dagger - the highest honour in British crime writing.

dissolution the shardlake series: Dark Fire C. J. Sansom, 2005-12-27 The second novel in the Matthew Shardlake Tudor Mystery series—the inspiration for the Hulu original series *Shardlake*! In 1540, during the reign of Henry VIII, Shardlake is asked to help a young girl accused of murder. She refuses to speak in her defense even when threatened with torture. But just when the case seems lost, Thomas Cromwell, the king's feared vicar general, offers Shardlake two more weeks to prove his client's innocence. In exchange, Shardlake must find a lost cache of Dark Fire, a legendary weapon of mass destruction. What ensues is a page-turning adventure, filled with period detail and history. Atmospheric and engaging (Margaret George), this second book in Matthew Shardlake Tudor Mystery series delves again into the dark and superstitious world of Cromwell's England introduced in *Dissolution*. Awarded the CWA Diamond Dagger - the highest honor in British crime writing

dissolution the shardlake series: Heartstone C. J. Sansom, 2011-04-19 The fifth novel in the Matthew Shardlake Tudor Mystery series—the inspiration for the original Disney+ series *Shardlake*! Summer 1545. A massive French armada is threatening England, and Henry VIII has plunged the country into economic crisis to finance the war. Meanwhile, an old servant of Queen Catherine Parr has asked Matthew Shardlake to investigate claims of monstrous wrongs committed against a young ward of the court. As the French fleet approaches, Shardlake's inquiries reunite him with an old friend-and an old enemy close to the throne. This fast-paced fifth installment in C. J. Sansom's richly entertaining and reassuringly scholarly series (Marilyn Stasio, *The New York Times Book Review*) will enchant fans of *Wolf Hall*, *Bring Up the Bodies*, and *The Other Boleyn Girl*. Awarded the CWA Diamond Dagger - the highest honour in British crime writing.

dissolution the shardlake series: 100 Most Popular Contemporary Mystery Authors Bernard A. Drew, 2011-05-18 Provide your mystery fans with background information on their favorite writers and series characters, and use this as a guide for adding contemporary titles to your collections. This book examines 100 of today's top mystery novels and mystery authors hailing from countries such as the United States, Great Britain, France, Italy, South Africa, and Australia. Equally valuable to students writing research papers, readers craving new authors or more information about their favorite authors, and teachers seeking specific types of fiction to support curricula, *100 Most Popular Contemporary Mystery Authors: Biographical Sketches and Bibliographies* provides revealing information about today's best mysteries and authors—without any spoilers. Each of the accomplished writers included in this guide has established a broad audience and is recognized for work that is imaginative and innovative. The rising stars of 21st century mystery will also be included, as will authors who have won the Mystery Writers of America Grand Master Award.

dissolution the shardlake series: Henry VIII in Twenty-First Century Popular Culture Jonas Takors, 2017-03-23 Each age produces its own Henry(s). This innovative study in popular culture examines how novels, films, TV-series and historiography shape new versions of Henry VIII for the twenty-first century. From *The Other Boleyn Girl* to *The Tudors*, 2009's quint-centenary celebrations of Henry's coronation and *Wolf Hall*, (hi)stories are produced, distributed and used in very different ways. In each case, the producers' intentions, the narrative and the targeted audiences all contribute to the discourses on Henry VIII. However, there no longer exists a universally accepted popularization of Tudor history, so certain representations can lead to intense debates, for instance in case of the TV-show *The Tudors*. Detailed studies of how audiences appropriate the narratives complement a thorough analysis of each text. In this manner, the monograph examines how different sense-resources are shaped into histories in various new subgenres and how the audiences, too, actively compare these histories. All of this takes place within an increasingly diverse historical culture. Simple notions of history as a top-down process are refuted as the role of the consumers and the use which they make of the individual histories is highlighted.

dissolution the shardlake series: Detecting the Social Mary Evans, Sarah Moore, Hazel Johnstone, 2018-09-15 This book analyses the ways in which twenty-first century detective fiction provides an understanding of the increasingly complex and often baffling contemporary world — and what sociology, as a discipline, can learn from it. Conventional sociological accounts of fiction generally comprehend its value in terms of the ways in which it can illustrate, enlarge or help to articulate a particular social theory. Evans, Moore, and Johnstone suggest a different approach, and demonstrate that by taking a group of detective novels, we can unveil so far unidentified, but crucial, theoretical ideas about what it means to be an individual in the twenty-first century. More specifically, the authors argue that detective fiction of the last forty years illuminates the effects of urban isolation and separation, the invisibility of institutional power, financial insecurity, and the failure of public authorities to protect people. In doing so, this body of fiction traces out the fault-lines in our social arrangements, rehearses our collective fears, and captures a mood of restless disquiet. By engaging with detective stories in this way, the book revisits ideas about the promise and purpose of sociology.

dissolution the shardlake series: Winter in Madrid C. J. Sansom, 2014-01-07 Awarded the CWA Diamond Dagger – the highest honour in British crime writing. A #1 internationally bestselling novel set in post-Civil War Spain by the author of *Dominion* and the Matthew Shardlake Tudor Mystery series. September 1940: the Spanish Civil War is over, Madrid lies in ruin, while the Germans continue their march through Europe, and General Franco evades Hitler's request that he lead his broken country into yet another war. Into this uncertain world comes a reluctant spy for the British Secret Service, sent to gain the confidence of Sandy Forsyth, an old school friend turned shady Madrid businessman. Meanwhile, an ex-Red Cross nurse is engaged in a secret mission of her own. Through this dangerous game of intrigue, C. J. Sansom's riveting tale conjures a remarkable sense of history unfolding and the profound impact of impossible choices.

dissolution the shardlake series: Lamentation C.J. Sansom, 2015-02-24 As Henry VIII lies on his deathbed, an incendiary manuscript threatens to tear his court apart. Summer, 1546. King Henry VIII is slowly, painfully dying. His Protestant and Catholic councilors are engaged in a final and decisive power struggle; whoever wins will control the government. As heretics are hunted across London, and radical Protestants are burned at the stake, the Catholic party focuses its attack on Henry's sixth wife -- and Matthew Shardlake's old mentor -- Queen Catherine Parr. Shardlake, still haunted by his narrow escape from death the year before, steps into action when the beleaguered and desperate Queen summons him to Whitehall Palace to help her recover a dangerous manuscript. The Queen has authored a confessional book, *Lamentation of a Sinner*, so radically Protestant that if it came to the King's attention it could bring both her and her sympathizers crashing down. Although the secret book was kept hidden inside a locked chest in the Queen's private chamber, it has inexplicably vanished. Only one page has been recovered -- clutched in the hand of a murdered London printer. Shardlake's investigations take him on a trail that begins among the backstreet printshops of London, but leads him and his trusty assistant Jack Barak into the dark and labyrinthine world of court politics, a world Shardlake swore never to enter again. In this crucible of power and ambition, Protestant friends can be as dangerous as Catholic enemies, and those with shifting allegiances can be the most dangerous of all.

dissolution the shardlake series: Descendants of Waverley Martha F. Bowden, 2016-08-11 *Descendants of Waverley* examines contemporary novelists' combination of historical authority and narrative art to create authentic and accessible depictions of the past. This technique, the "romance of history," challenges conventional theories that the novel as a genre erased the romance. Individual chapters establish the critical framework, analyze the strategies that authors use to romance history, and demonstrate the subgenres that exist in current historical fiction. While the author does not consider Walter Scott to be the inventor of historical fiction, she demonstrates the ways in which contemporary fiction's techniques reflect the form of the genre that Scott both developed and theorized in the *Waverley* novels (1814-1832). In writing his "historical romances," Scott drew on the forms of the fictions that preceded his work, especially Gothic fiction, and was

influenced by the fluid definitions of “romance” that permeated the theorizing of the novel and its development in the eighteenth century, where fiction was described as evolving from and replacing romances and referred to as “romances” themselves. She begins by tracing this history and moves on to discuss contemporary fiction, both as technique, in the uses of intertextuality, and in as form, in the increasing hybridity of contemporary fiction. This hybridity is reflected in such forms as the historical detective novel, the embedded narrative, and the biographical novel; the pedagogical elements inherent in the historical novel before Scott’s oeuvre continue into the present. The book ends with the recent phenomenon of historical fantasy; in this subgenre, the traits of more conventional historical fiction, such as intertextuality and the tension between the familiar and strange, combine with a playful form of fantasy that releases revenants among the Luddites and wizards into the Battle of Waterloo. John Frow’s theory of the slipperiness of genre is a critical component for explicating the most recent metamorphoses of historical fiction. The critical framework also develops from recent and eighteenth-century histories of the novel, twentieth- and twenty-first-century theories of Scott’s influence, and contemporary writers’ own reflections on what they do when they write historical novels.

dissolution the shardlake series: *Retroland* Peter Kemp, 2023-08-29 The essential companion for lovers of the contemporary novel Over the past fifty years, fiction in English has never looked more various. Books bulkier than Victorian three-deckers appear alongside works of minimalist brevity, and experiments with form have produced everything from verse novels to Twitter-thread narratives. This is truly a golden age. But what unites this kaleidoscopic array of genres and styles? Celebrated writer and critic Peter Kemp shows how modern writers are obsessed with the past. In a series of engaging and illuminating chapters, *Retroland* traces this novelistic preoccupation with history, from the imperial and the political to the personal and the literary. Featuring famous names from across the United Kingdom, United States, and the wider Anglophone world, ranging from Salman Rushdie to Sarah Waters, Toni Morrison to Hilary Mantel, this is a work of remarkable synthesis and clarity—a wonderfully readable and enjoyably opinionated guide to our current literary landscape.

dissolution the shardlake series: *Genreflecting* Diana Tixier Herald, Samuel Stavole-Carter, 2019-05-24 Librarians who work with readers will find this well-loved guide to be a treasure trove of information. With descriptive annotations of thousands of genre titles mapped by genre and subgenre, this is the readers' advisor's go-to reference. Next to author, genre is the characteristic that readers use most to select reading material and the most trustworthy consideration for finding books readers will enjoy. With its detailed classification and pithy descriptions of titles, this book gives users valuable insights into what makes genre fiction appeal to readers. It is an invaluable aid for helping readers find books that they will enjoy reading. Providing a handy roadmap to popular genre literature, this guide helps librarians answer the perennial and often confounding question What can I read next? Herald and Stavole-Carter briefly describe thousands of popular fiction titles, classifying them into standard genres such as science fiction, fantasy, romance, historical fiction, and mystery. Within each genre, titles are broken down into more specific subgenres and themes. Detailed author, title, and subject indexes provide further access. As in previous editions, the focus of the guide is on recent releases and perennial reader favorites. In addition to covering new titles, this edition focuses more narrowly on the core genres and includes basic readers' advisory principles and techniques.

dissolution the shardlake series: *Bloomsbury Good Reading Guide* Nick Rennison, 2009-01-01 Deciding what to read next when you've just finished an unputdownable novel can be a daunting task. The *Bloomsbury Good Reading Guide* features hundreds of authors and thousands of titles, with navigation features to lead you on a rich journey through some the best literature to grace our shelves. This greatly expanded edition includes the latest contemporary authors and landmark novels, an expanded non-fiction section, a timeline setting historical events against literary milestones, prize-winner and book club lists. An accessible and easy-to-read guide that no serious book lover should be without. The essential guide to the wild uncharted world of contemporary and

20th century writing. Robert McCrum, *The Observer*

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