

Mysteries Involving Arts and Antiquities

Ideas for Reading on the
White Bear Lake Mystery Book Club's
March 2006 Theme

Albert, Susan Wittig. Tale of Hill Top Farm.

When children's author Beatrix Potter moves from London to the Lake District, she has only sketching in mind, which she hopes will take her mind off her late fiancé, but the sudden, suspicious death of one of the townspeople brings her to sleuthing.

Andrews, Donna. Revenge of the Wrought Iron Flamingos.

Ornamental blacksmith Meg Langslow is part of an historic recreation of the Siege of Yorktown, complete with cannons, costumes and a crafts fair. Roger Benson, a businessman marketing a game designed by Meg's brother, comes to blows with one of the other participating blacksmiths. Later Meg discovers Benson's body in the storage area of her shop -- with her dagger in his back.

Andrews, Sarah. Earth Colors.

Asked to investigate a famed painting that may be a counterfeit, forensic geologist Em Hansen discovers that she is on the trail of a murderer when her client begins to suffer the effects of poisoning.

Banks, Oliver. Carravaggio Obsession.

Amos Hatcher is an "art cop" on permanent retainer to the International Association of Art Dealers. When a small-time art dealer about to make a killing in stolen paintings is found dead with a knife in his back, Amos travels to Rome to investigate.

Block, Lawrence. The Burglar Who Painted Like Mondrian.

Used bookstore owner and part-time burglar Bernie Rhodenbarr must come up with a priceless Mondrian as ransom for his friend's kidnapped cat--and finds himself entangled in a web of murder and deception.

Campbell, Ann. Wolf Tracks.

When New England antiques dealer Annie O'Hara and her clue-sniffing canine companion, Claudius, are hired to find a stolen jacket, they discover the thief dead in the middle of a frozen lake. Annie believes that a stolen miniature, and the subsequent deaths of the thief's sister and a nearby school's elderly teacher, are all linked and decides to investigate, getting herself deep into trouble.

Cameron, Dana. Site Unseen.

Archaeologist Emma Fielding unearths evidence of a seventeenth-century coastal Maine settlement that predates Jamestown, one of the most significant archaeological finds in years. But the dead body that accompanies it embroils Emma and her students in a different kind of exploration.

Charles, Kate. Dead Man Out of Mind.

Emotions run high at St. Margaret's parish when a beloved curate is murdered and a woman vicar is chosen to replace him. Church historian David Middleton-Brown and his companion, painter Lucy Kingsley, sympathize with the woman, but when money from the church disappears and a parishioner is killed, Lucy and David begin a desperate search for a dangerous murderer.

Christie, Agatha. Murder in Mesopotamia.

While accompanying his friend Hastings to a dig in Iraq, Hercule Poirot becomes involved in the murder of an archaeologist's wife.

Coker, Carolyn. Appearance of Evil.

A statue is defaced and a homeless man shot to death in the fenced-in garden of California's elite Huntington Museum. LAPD cops Tine Robeson and Eduardo Lopez investigate, but are repeatedly thwarted by missing or uncooperative witnesses, and leads that go nowhere. Onto the scene comes art restorer Andrea Perkins, whose penchant for crime solving soon finds her inextricably involved in the case.

Comfort, B. A Pair for the Queen.

77-year-old portrait painter Tish McWhinny restores an old, unsigned dog painting for a friend's godson. Much to her dismay, she next sees the painting at a dog show, for sale, with a famous signature on it. Before she can complain to the godson, someone kills him and steals the painting. Tish investigates.

Creasey, John. The Baron and the Arrogant Artist.

The famed Fiora jewels are missing from a museum and everyone thinks former jewel thief turned antiques dealer John Mannering has them. Mannering dons his former persona, 'The Baron', to discover who has the loot.

Dunbar, Catherine. False Images.

Art restorer Leone Fleming becomes the target of a stalker after she discovers that a work purported to be a valuable heirloom is a fake. She's convinced that her harasser is the son of the family that's trying to sell the painting for an enormous price. Her father, a noted judge, disagrees, but he has more serious concerns: a killer whom he sentenced to prison is out--and looking for revenge.

Fiffer, Sharon. Dead Guys Stuff.

Collectibles fanatic Jane Wheel makes an estate sale purchase that turns out to include a well-preserved human finger, apparently belonging to a deceased bar owner. Jane's parents themselves own a pub, and when their landlord is found murdered with his finger nearly detached, Jane calls for the assistance of the retired police detective who encourages her sleuthing.

Fowler, Earlene. Sunshine and Shadows.

California amateur sleuth and folk art museum curator Benni Harper investigates a fatal stabbing and the creepy phone calls, hate mail, and attacks on her own truck that seem to be linked to the murder.

Gash, Jonathan. Ten Word Game.

Antiques dealer Lovejoy is on the run, wanted for stealing a forgery he created himself. He plans to flee the country on a cruise ship, but is tricked onto a ship as it sails and held by criminals who want his knowledge to commit a daring theft abroad.

Geary, Joseph. Spiral.

When biographer Nick Greer attempts to find a lost painting that was the best work of his subject, he becomes entangled with mobsters and multiple murders.

Geisler, Barbara. Graven Images.

The 12th century abbey at Shaftesbury is nearly bankrupt, threatening the completion of a much-needed altarpiece for St. Edward's chapel. Worse, its tranquility is disrupted by the murder of a townswoman. Abbey sacrist Dame Averilla and altarpiece sculptor Master Hugo befriend an old Jew falsely accused of the murder and attempt to discover the truth.

Hanson, Rick. Spare Parts.

Modestly successful sculptor and ex-policeman Adam McCleat is pressured into looking for his sister's husband, who is missing from a dentists' convention in Seattle.

Hamilton, Lyn. Magyar Venus.

After the unveiling of the Magyar Venus—a head and torso of a woman carved from mammoth ivory during the Upper Paleolithic period—one of antique dealer Lara McClintock's friends commits suicide. Determinedly tracing the Venus's provenance to Budapest, Lara discovers a truth that arises from the secrets of the past.

Hammond, Gerald. Grail for Sale.

The owner of a rather ramshackle Scottish castle and a stranded American antiques restorer team up against a well-known local crook.

Henderson, Lauren. Chained.

Sculptor and part-time sleuth Sam Jones loves her new job as a stunt double for a BBC miniseries until she is mistaken for someone else and kidnapped on the set. After escaping, she vows to get to the bottom of the situation, especially after a friend's boyfriend is killed.

Hillerman, Tony. Talking God.

Navajo Tribal Police Lieutenant Joe Leaphorn and Officer Jim Chee are in Washington, D.C, each using vacation time to follow separate cases that connect in clash of violence at the Smithsonian Institution's Museum of Natural History.

Holtzer, Susan. Something to Kill For.

Computer expert and amateur detective Anneke Haagen is scouting Ann Arbor garage sales with her friend Sheila, a local antiques and collectibles dealer, when they discover the body of Ellen, another local collector, bludgeoned to death with a rock. Ellen's friends ask for Anneke's assistance in the investigation.

Knight, Kathryn Lasky. Dark Swan.

Children's book illustrator Calista Jacobs and her teenage son Charley are house-sitting in Boston's Beacon Hill neighborhood when Calista finds the body of a wealthy neighbor and becomes involved in the family's secrets.

Massey, Sujata. Samurai's Daughter.

Antiques dealer Rei Shimura is researching a project to trace the story of 100 years of Japanese decorative arts through her own family's history. Her boyfriend, lawyer Hugh Glendinning, is involved in a class action lawsuit on behalf of people forced to engage in slave labor for Japanese companies during World War II. Suddenly, when one of Hugh's clients is murdered, their two projects intertwine.

Morgan, Deborah. Death is a Cabaret.

Former FBI agent Jeff Talbot now investigates yard sales as a professional antique picker. Though he prefers finding hidden treasures to finding hidden bodies, he discovers that, for some collectors, the right item can be worth killing for.

Muller, Marcia. Tree of Death.

Hot-tempered curator Elena Oliverez threatens to kill her boss, Frank DePalma, when he orders her to put a particularly hideous piece of sculpture--donated by a wealthy patron of the new Museum of Mexican Arts--on display for the museum opening. So when someone kills Frank with the sculpture, Elena must conduct her own investigation to clear her name--or die trying.

Page, Katherine Hall. The Body in the Bookcase.

Caterer and minister's wife Faith Fairchild discovers the body of an elderly friend who had apparently surprised burglars ransacking her home. The Fairchilds themselves are the next target, and the parsonage is stripped of all their most precious possessions. Devastated and furious, Faith takes action, scouring pawnshops, antique marts, and auctions. As she turns up some of their stolen property, she is drawn onto a dangerous path of larceny and corruption in New England's venerable antique business -- a path that leads Faith to a killer!

Pears, Iain. Immaculate Deception.

Flavia de Stefano, the acting head of the Art Theft Department of the Italian Police Force, is faced with an impossible problem: retrieving a stolen artwork on loan to the Italian government without giving in to ransom demands. Flavia's search for an art thief soon becomes a hunt for a killer.

Peters, Elizabeth. Falcon at the Portal.

Amelia Peabody and family have arrived in Egypt for the 1911 archaeological season, and Amelia ends up investigating a theft of ancient artifacts and the death of an American found at the bottom of an excavation shaft. As accusations of drug dealing and moral misconduct fly, a child of mysterious antecedents sparks a crisis that threatens to tear the family apart.

Santlofer, Jonathan. Death Artist.

Kate McKinnon, a renowned art expert and television luminary of sorts, finds herself drawn into a series of ritualistic murders by someone who seems to have specifically targeted her, her celebrity, and her past.

Sheldon, Lee. Impossible Bliss.

Dan Shepard, the new police chief of Carmel, California, is faced with the impossible when a golfer vanishes from a sand trap. No-talent artist Herman de Portola Bliss is a potential witness. Shepard finds himself playing Watson to Bliss, who has a gift for detective work.

Silva, Daniel. Death in Vienna.

In this, the concluding volume of a trilogy featuring art restorer and sometime spy Gabriel Allon, an Israeli war claims office in Vienna is bombed, innocent people are dead, and a connection is suspected between neo-Nazis and an upcoming Austrian election. While investigating the bombing, Allon finds an intensely personal link between a man who may or may not be a long-hidden Nazi war criminal and his own Holocaust-devastated family.

Swan, Thomas. Final Faberge.

Scotland Yard's Jack Osby is pitted against killers in pursuit of a priceless Faberge egg commissioned by Rasputin.

Truman, Margaret. Murder at the National Gallery.

When a senior curator at the National Gallery discovers a lost Caravaggio, he concocts a masterly scheme to exhibit and exploit the masterpiece, which escalates into murder as an art form.

Wadley, Margo. Gripping Beast.

American Isabel Garth journeys to the Orkney Islands after her father's death to illustrate the journals he left about growing up there. Her stay begins ominously: a local "witch" scares her, a remodeler warns her away from her father's childhood home, and she suffers a series of mishaps. The plot escalates when Isabel discovers that her father's recently deceased childhood friend had discovered a Viking treasure and hid it from greedy relatives. The continuing search for this treasure results in murder.

West, Morris. Masterclass.

When young American art historian Max Mathers inherits priceless works of art, he is drawn into a maze of deception, murder, and greed spanning Italy, Switzerland, and the United States.

[Annotations from the library catalog, *Publisher's Weekly*, and *Library Journal*]