

Mystery Series Recommendations from Roseburg Library  
Kris Wiley for The News-Review

I love mysteries that feature well-developed characters and a great sense of time or place, and I recently discovered a couple of new favorite series.

I am late to the Vera Stanhope party, but at least I made it. And now I can't get enough of the prickly Detective Inspector Stanhope, brilliantly written by Ann Cleeves.

Based in Northumberland, England, DI Stanhope appears nearly halfway through the first book in the series, "The Crow Trap." By that time, we have been introduced to three women who move into a cottage to complete an environmental assessment on land being considered for mining – and one of them is killed.

Stanhope excels at interviewing and leans on the book's secondary characters to sort the lies from the sordid truth.

"The Crow Trap" teased details of Stanhope's childhood, and I expect more of the complicated relationship with her father to be revealed as the series progresses.

If you enjoy latching onto a compelling protagonist – flaws and all – give the Vera Stanhope series a try. To date, there are 11 novels and two short stories. Bonus for ear readers: The audiobooks are fantastic.

Thanks to members of the library's Online Book Group, I'm enamored with the Commissario Guido Brunetti series by Donna Leon.

Venice, Italy, comes alive in this series, which starts with "Death at La Fenice," and I've taken to referencing a map while I'm reading so I can follow Brunetti around town.

In the two books I have read, Brunetti comes across as a shrewd detective with a sense of humor who has an understanding wife and typical teenage kids. He reminds me of Louise Penny's Chief Inspector Armand Gamache.

In "Death at La Fenice," which is Venice's opera house, Brunetti is called on to investigate the death of a conductor by cyanide poisoning. Brunetti peels the layers of the musician's life, all the way back to Nazi Germany.

Leon just published the 33<sup>rd</sup> book in the series (it debuted in 1992), so I have some catching up to do.

Finally, I enjoy immersing myself in late 1940s New York City with the Lillian Pentecost and Will Parker series by Stephen Spotswood. If you like snappy dialogue and hardboiled detective series, these books might be for you.

Pentecost is New York's premier detective, and Parker is her protégé. Together they tackle murder and corruption in their uniquely unorthodox way.

The series starts with "Fortune Favors the Dead," in which the duo investigates the locked room death of a wealthy widow.

Pentecost and Parker make friends and nemeses as the series continues, and those relationships make every new title a must read for me. The fifth book, "Dead in the Frame," publishes next month.

#### Next week's library events

Tuesday, January 28, 10 a.m. – Grab-and-go kids craft kits while supplies last

Tuesday, January 28, 3-5 p.m. – Maker Space Time

Wednesday, January 29, 10:15 a.m. – Storytime with Aurora

Thursday, January 30, 10:15 a.m. – Storytime with Aurora

Thursday, January 30, 6:30 p.m. – Silent Book Group