

A SURVEY: Things I Don't Want in MY Crime Fiction!!

(The 2020 online version)

Great! You are participating in our experimental survey created for the Manchester Public Library Mystery Book Club: "Things I don't want in MY crime fiction." Perhaps it will help you to get clarity about the books you do not like (and therefore the books you DO like). Or, perhaps, if a large enough number of our members participate in the survey, it will help to guide our book nominating/selecting process in future years.

This is an anonymous exercise; however, to increase the assurance of anonymity, I encourage you to use the online version of this survey, located here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/KYKXFFB>

On the following two pages are the same 74 items that are on the online survey.

For each item, ask yourself, "Is this something I would rather not have in the crime fiction books I might read?"

CHECK items that you do NOT want to read in your mystery or thriller books.

LEAVE items unchecked if they are tolerable or do not bother you one way or another.

Do not worry if you end up with nothing checked, a few checked, or many checked. Just be honest to your feelings.

I just don't like (would rather not read) a book that ...

LANGUAGE - 1:

- 1) Has 1-2 F-Words
- 2) Has 5-8 F-Words
- 3) Has a heavy dose of F-Words throughout

ANIMALS - 1:

- 4) Has pets as central characters
- 5) Has talking animals
- 6) Has search, rescue, and or guard dogs as central characters

LANGUAGE - 2:

- 7) Uses God's name as an exclamation 1-2 times (sometimes called blasphemy)
- 8) Uses God's name as an exclamation 5-8 times
- 9) Uses God's name as an exclamation liberally throughout

PLOT ELEMENTS:

- 10) Describes rape of adult(s) in the plot
- 11) Has child abduction/kidnapping in the plot
- 12) Describes teens having sex together

WRITING STYLE:

- 13) Was written last year
- 14) Was written in the 1980s
- 15) Was written in the 1930s
- 16) Was written in the 1890s

HISTORICAL:

- 17) Has a plot that takes place in 1973
- 18) Has a plot that takes place in 1830
- 19) Has a plot that takes place in 1300.
- 20) Has a plot that takes place in the future.

VICTIM CHARACTERISTICS:

- 21) Describes a child (age 1-12) being murdered.
- 22) Describes a teenager (13-17) being murdered.
- 23) Describes a 30 year old healthy male adult being murdered.
- 24) Describes a 40 year old disabled, wheelchair-bound adult being murdered.
- 25) Describes a 60 year old politician being murdered.
- 26) Describes an 88 year old home-bound male being murdered.

ANIMALS - 2:

- 27) Describes the killing of any pet.
- 28) Describes the killing of ANY four-legged animal (for reasons of anger, vengeance, etc.; not for securing food).

TYPES OF CENTRAL CHARACTERS - 1:

- 29) Has a priest or rabbi or minister as a central character
- 30) Has ordinary housewives as amateur sleuths.
- 31) Has a librarian, wedding planner, or classroom teacher as a central character.
- 32) Has cooks or chefs as central characters
- 33) Has an accountant, banker, or corporate CEO/CFO as a central character.
- 34) Has a leading character that is gay
- 35) Has a leading character that is trans
- 36) Has archeologists as central characters
- 37) Has a doctor or medical professional as a central characters
- 38) Has medical examiners/coroners as central characters
- 39) Has a central character that talks like a political liberal
- 40) Has a central character that talks like a political conservative
- 41) Has a central character that's a military officer
- 42) Has a central character that's CIA or a spy
- 43) Has a central character that frequently talks about gay issues and civil rights.
- 44) Has a central character that frequently talks about racism and civil rights.

AUTHOR CHARACTERISTICS:

- 45) Has a male author
- 46) Has a female author
- 47) Has an author listed that didn't write it; it was "ghostwritten."
- 48) Has an author that is continuing a series written started by a different, now deceased, author.

I just don't like (would rather not read) a book that ...

ROMANCE AND SEX IN THE BOOK:

- 49) Alludes to love-making scenes several times (... "and they closed the door")
- 50) Briefly describes love-making (kissing, hugging, fondling) -- heterosexual
- 51) Briefly describes love-making (kissing, hugging, fondling) -- homosexual
- 52) Has detailed love-making described in one scene with naming genitalia and specifics of action
- 53) Has detailed love-making described in four scenes with naming genitalia and specifics of action

LEVELS OF VIOLENCE:

- 54) Has any kind of murder in the plot (??)
- 55) Has a general description of a violent crime, just to let you know what happened, whether a shooting or bludgeoning,... (a description with few details and no blood).
- 56) Has a detailed description of a violent crime, so you can visualize what the perpetrator did and what the victim experienced.
- 57) Has a description of crime scene analysis that includes blood spatter evidence and retrieval of semen evidence.
- 58) Has a detailed description of torture, slashing, and/or a ritualistic killing in one or two scenes of the book.
- 59) Has detailed descriptions of torture, slashing, and/or a ritualistic killing in three or more scenes of the book.
- 60) Has a detailed description of a suicide.
- 61) Includes the vivid details of an autopsy.

TYPES OF MYSTERY BOOKS:

- 62) Has courtroom dialog in multiple chapters.
- 63) Has an evolving romance as a main sub-plot (it occupies at least a few paragraphs in every chapter and half of a chapter at least a few times).
- 64) Has elements of the supernatural that play a key role in plot development (ghosts, intervention by God or gods in the plot, demons, telepathy, astrology, etc)
- 65) Has frequent funny dialog, wisecracks, or comical actions (on every few pages).

GEOGRAPHICAL SETTINGS:

- 66) Has England as a location for the plot and characters.
- 67) Has Italy as a location for the plot and characters.
- 68) Has Iceland as a location for the plot and characters.
- 69) Has India as a location for the plot and characters.
- 70) Has Japan as a location for the plot and characters.

UNUSUAL ENDINGS:

- 71) Ends with the death of the main hero character.
- 72) Ends with the death of the "bad guy" from gun battle, building fire (etc) in which the villain dies with no arrest or jail.
- 73) Ends with the "bad guy" apparently escaping to "live another day" or perhaps to pop up in another book.
- 74) Ends with the "bad guy" never quite identified; a key mystery is unsolved.