

Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute 1982 Volume I: Society and the Detective Novel

Good-bye Magnum PI

Curriculum Unit 82.01.02 by Jane K. Marshall

Most teachers are dismayed when they first realize how rarely students read solely for pleasure. Many student deficits in writing, thinking. and reading skills have been attributed to student alienation with regard to the written word. Teachers have cause to view nostalgically a time when students were able to get "lost" in a book, for such an involvement fostered high reading scores. individualism, and an ability to sort through ideas. The main purpose of "Good-bye Magnum PI" will be to encourage, cajole, or seduce, if need be, students into the individualized world of reading.

TV has long been labeled the scourge of the classroom. Many of today's students are so used to being "tuned-in" and/or entertained passively, they expect, or wish, to be met each day by a glib entertainer rather than a teacher. This, of course, upsets many of us. More upsetting is the realization that students have somehow been denied thoughtful or thought-provoking entertainment. TV detective series are fun when one needs to "tune-out" or escape. They should be regarded as insidious when the viewer fails to realize anything else exists. Needless to say, I am tired of hearing of the plastic heroes and watered-down plots which are fed to my students, much as nourishment is given to comatose patients.

TV programs such as "Magnum PI" are popular, I believe, because they are of a serial nature. The viewer becomes intrigued by an appealing character, and looks forward to renewing the acquaintance week after week. It's fun to watch the hero time and again outwit those who make life unpalatable, dangerous, and evil. We wish we could do the same. My point is that it's more fun to do this when one has a choice of the entree. Reading allows choices of when one wants to renew acquaintance, with whom, and in what setting. Thus reading should be equated with freedom.

This unit will introduce students to various detective heroes. Initially the class will have common readings to accomplish this goal. Following this introduction, students will choose a particular series hero with whom they wish to become familiar. They will be expected to read three or four novels featuring this hero. I believe such an approach will provide students with a comfortable experience with reading, and perhaps foster the notion that reading can be a recreation.

Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes would probably be an appropriate character to introduce to students initially. Most students are familiar with this character via Saturday afternoon TV fare, and an introductory discussion concerning the idiosyncrasies of Holmes undoubtedly would set the scene for a comfortable reading experience. Recordings are available for both "The Speckled Band" and "The Adventure of the

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Norwood Builder"; often these "read-along" recordings help to create a mood of excitement and/or suspense, for they feature mood music, sound effects, and other grabbers. (Sound effects are occasionally corny, and yet I have sat in front of a class gearing up for the first howl of laughter, only to be amazed by the total concentration with the text of my students.)

Sherlock Holmes also provides students with a model of at least one type of detective (the scientific, intellectual, arm-chair type) who would become the precursor to such notables as Hercule Poirot, Nero Wolfe, et al. At some point students will be asked to compare and contrast Holmes, Poirot, and Wolfe; I believe students will be able to discern patterns of personality which exist among these characters, and thereby come to a sense of the development of the genre.

Many students are daunted by literature assuming, I guess, that books are written by supermen whose life experiences are totally alien to their own. The idea that writing might in some sense be considered a craft never occurs to them. I believe that a study of the genre will ultimately serve as an encouragement for students to write. Following reading. discussion, and the study of various authors and their heroes, students will be required to write a mystery of their own.

This assignment will not produce future Christies, Stouts, et al. One hopes it will encourage creativity and promote a better understanding of literature. It might be maintained that students understand well only that with which they have been creatively involved. Requiring that students attempt to emulate the genre will necessarily encourage their engagement in a more rigorous appraisal of the art form. Studying is prerequisite to imitation. And, in a sense, "Imitation is the best form of flattery."—even when it's forced.

Students should be introduced to a fairly large number of detectives of literature: male and female, young and old, foreign and American, hard-boiled and intellectual. These might include: Jane Marple, Hercule Poirot, Nero Wolfe, Travis McGee etc. While it can be maintained that readers are drawn into the mystery genre because of the intrigue of the puzzle, the full-blown habit which I am trying to instill in my students is, I believe, born of a fascination with character. Here, then, is where we shall begin with my realizing that the choices must be large and varied enough to hook all.

The wide scope of readings, in addition, will allow many and varied discussions on a variety of topics such as setting in the detective novel (How important is it? What can we as readers learn about various times and places?), character in the detective novel (What is the role of the stereotyped character?—the individualized character?), and theme in the detective novel (What statements is an author able to make about human nature, environmental pressures, or cultural trends?).

Needless to say, the scope of this unit seems broad. Yet perhaps it should be. Various angles, activities, and directions may provide a loose enough framework to make some sort of impact on all students.

PART ONE: INTRODUCING THE HEROES

This section of "Good-bye Magnum PI" seeks to provide the teacher of detective fiction with "personality profiles" of various fictional detectives as well as an annotated bibliography of the shorter introductory works. Various ideas for introductory lesson plans are also included.

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Sherlock Holmes

Little needs to be said regarding Holmes for all are probably familiar with the character through film. It is important to point out however, that some of the Holmes' films were not derived from Arthur Conan Doyle's works. Students might be interested in learning that many Holmesian adventure films were created during World War II, and served as anti-Nazi propaganda. While these works cannot be considered as classic detective fare, they serve to illustrate the tremendous popularity of the character; indeed, the public has continued to clamor for Holmes in any form. Most recently at least two authors have recreated the character of Holmes in their own fiction.

The idiosyncratic nature of Holmes has caused the character to be emblazoned in the minds of many readers. A. Conan Doyle was able to create a character who is fantastic enough to capture reader interest and, at the same time, realistic enough to provide reader identification. Holmes is the quintessential intellectual. Through methods of deduction, induction, and an acute sense of the power of observation, Holmes is able to come to grips with stimuli whose dimensions would overwhelm most. I believe that readers are able to identify with Holmes because he exhibits qualities relative to the human condition. Holmes is not a superman, but rather the pipe-smoking master of a sardonic wit which belies an essentially lonely man.

Readings: "The Speckled Band". This relatively short story provides many clues for the detective/reader. While the denouement may be surprising for the neophyte reader of detective fiction, students will readily agree that the author has played fair. There is at least one "red herring" in the story, yet logic points to the only possible culprit. Many specific clues are provided as to the way the murders were committed. This is not a "who done it" but rather a "how did he do it" story.

"The Adventure of the Norwood Builder". The gimic of this plot has been rewritten in many mysteries, for it features a murder which, in fact, never happened. A blackmailer stages his own murder, and Holmes, once again, solves the mystery through shrewd observation of physical detail. As with "The Speckled Band" the title offers a clue for the detective/reader.

Hercule Poirot

Agatha Christie created her prissy, yet charming Belgian detective soon after World War I. There were many Belgian refugees living in England during the war, and Christie probably created Poirot with this in mind. Poirot is certainly a memorable character, and the foreign element seems to add to his appeal.

Christie wisely bestowed Poirot with comic qualities of manner and appearance which allow the reader a superior stance in relation to the character. Who cannot help laughing at, and yet secretly loving, a little man with an egg-shaped head, a ridiculously long mustache, and a host of personal eccentricities which render him flamboyant and essentially human?

Poirot's mode of operation is not unlike Holmes's. Both rely upon a superior intellectual ability, and both are contrasted with men of average ability (Watson, Hastings). Yet, Poirot is essentially a warm character while Holmes is cold. Poirot, as clown, match-maker, and all-around mother hen, becomes involved with other characters. The reader must regard him as affectionate, humorous, and wise.

Reading: "Four and Twenty Blackbirds". Poirot solves this case through an interest in things gastronomical and a knowledge of human behavior. Poirot's interaction with a complaining maid adds a touch of humor to this tale of family squabbles, greed, and murder.

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Jane Marple

Jane Marple is the precursor to Mrs. Pollifax and the Snoop Sisters. She might be characterized as anybody's grandmother. While she exhibits an interest in things one might assume the elderly care about (flowers, knitting, gossip), she is also a cracker-jack detective. Readers take delight in this sometimes dithery, old woman's interest in murder and her uncanny ability to out-fox those younger and more physically able.

Miss Marple is essentially provincial—if provincial means living in one place all of one's life. Yet, St. Mary Mead has provided her with essential (though in some cases vicarious) experiences with various emotions and/or examples of human interaction and reaction. Thus Miss Marple is able to draw upon past experiences and a working knowledge of the human condition in solving her cases. Many readers are fond of Jane Marple because she appears to be average; she exhibits the qualities of simplicity and humility.

Reading: "The Tape-Measure Murder". Miss Marple solves this case on the strength of a piece of "mundane" evidence—a dressmaker's pin. While there are many "red herrings" in this story, the reader is soon cognizant of Miss Marple's reasoning through her many comments on human nature. (A widower, who does not weep openly, yet appreciates the beauty of a flower, cannot be the murderer.) The motive in this case is a spinster's jealousy.

Nero Wolfe

Nero Wolfe is indeed a character, and many readers have been mesmerized by his unique personality. He is an egotistical, cantankerous, lazy, fat woman-hater whose verbal repartee annoys many a character of lesser intellectual capacity. His tastes are elitist; his interests include orchids, gourmet food, and "good" rugs. Perhaps the long list of Wolfe's dislikes sum up his character best: all haggling and quibbling, anything that moves (except his elevator), being touched, gin-drinkers (they're all barbarians), television, paper cups, restaurants, being read to, coarse talk, diamonds, etc. ¹

Surely Wolfe is idiosyncratic to the extreme. He is opinionated, snobbish, and. Like Holmes, particularly cerebral. He is also extremely honest. Readers are often impressed by this honesty. They are literally astounded by such statements as, "I carry this fat to insulate my feelings. They got too strong for me once or twice and I had that idea. If I had stayed lean and kept moving around, I would have been dead long ago." ²

Reading: "Fourth of July Picnic". This detective story depends upon the amusing and then forceful, qualities of Wolfe's personality. When the story opens we are privy to his usual refusal to be coerced outside of his townhouse. Flattery and an appeal to his gastronomical side finally insure that Wolfe will attend the Independence Day Picnic of the United Restaurant Workers of America. His attendance proves to be most important as the celebration is marred by the murder of one Philip Holt.

Wolfe's superior intellect enables him to figure out who did it, and his intimidating nature serves to entrap the culprit—as usual—at West 35th Street, in Wolfe's own study.

Travis McGee

Travis McGee, an unabashed beach bum, who does "salvage work" (recovering stolen goods, rescuing lost souls, avenging murders, etc.) reflects in some sense the restlessness born of recent cultural and societal changes. He is clearly sickened by a society whose technology has grown faster than its wisdom to put it to good use, and he often questions the morality of the materialistic "fun-lovers" of his world.

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His outward cynicism belies an essentially romantic quality, however. He is the adolescent within us who knows he can save the damsel in distress from the evil of a corrupt world. Though he is tough, brutal when necessary, and physically resilient, he admits to emotional trauma, and therefore is believable.

Reading: Nightmare in Pink. Travis is asked by an old friend, a hospitalized veteran, to locate the man who killed his sister's fiance. In the process, Travis uncovers an embezzlement scheme, puts an insane doctor out of business, and saves a girl from a life of bitter loneliness. As usual, the action is taut. McGee overcomes incredible odds through brute strength and streetwise savvy.

Ideas for Introductory Lesson Plans

- 1. An opening discussion of current TV detective series ("Magnum PI" et al.) would probably prove useful in introducing this unit. Detective series have always been a part of TV's offerings, and it is likely that students would be able to come up with reasons for their continued popularity. Undoubtedly, the discussion will focus on the series plots, which are usually action-packed and therefore vicariously thrilling. the glamour which usually surrounds the main character, and the broad theme of good vs evil. After recalling a typical series plot, students should be encouraged to create an original story-outline complete with a brief character sketch of a "hero" of their choice. Such a project should be assigned only after much brain-storming. It should be treated lightly by the teacher, and viewed as "fun" by the students. for its primary purpose is to encourage students to begin to think about the genre and their reaction to it.
- 2. Experience has taught me that visual stimuli usually provide students with an interest in a subject area and a spring-board for discussion. At this point students will be provided with photographs of the series heroes we will be studying. An ensuing discussion will include student responses to each character (reaction to dress, physical attributes, as well as much surmising as to personality). Students will also be provided with "personality profile sheets" (see end Part I) for each detective. (They will simply check off adjectives which they think pertain to each personality.) These sheets may or may not prove accurate; students will refer to them again after they have become acquainted (through reading) with each character.
- 3. Prior to reading each of the shorter selections, students should be advised of the setting of the story. and, as the teacher deems necessary, particular information about the detective. Teachers may want to use material from *The Annotated Sherlock Holmes* or *Nero Wolfe on 35th Street*, for example. Both books are fun to peruse as they include pictures of the detectives' residences, family information, and descriptions of the detectives' acquaintances, outside interests, etc. The teacher should keep in mind, however, that students must be allowed to come to their own conclusions about each character; in depth discussions of personality should come after reading.
- 4. Following the reading of each story, students will write reactions to setting, plot, and character. The teacher may wish to write specific study guide questions to provide direction. Many of these questions should deal with the series hero, for students will be asked to make their later reading choices based on their reaction to character.
- 5. At this point the teacher should provide students with additional information about the personalities of each detective. (See Part I—profiles and suggested readings for teachers—teacher bibliography) Specific idiosyncrasies of character will prove interesting, if not amusing, to students, and may cause them to get excited about renewing acquaintance with their own particular detective.
- 6. Students will choose a particular series hero. They will describe his/her personality and tell why

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they chose him/her. 7. A Study of the Development of the Genre through Comparison/Contrast of Series Heroes	
7. N Study of the Bevelopment of the define through companson, contrast of Series heroes	
Sample Questions	
A. In what ways are Holmes, Poirot, Wolfe alike? Did Christie, Stout refer to Holmes in creating	
their own characters? B. What are the differences between Holmes, Poirot, Wolfe? Did these differences change the	
tone of the stories in any way?	
C. How are Poirot/Marple alike/different?D. Why might a reader choose Marple stories? Is Chrisite making a point about women? elderly	
people? Do you like the way Marple is portrayed? 5. Contract Travia McCoo with all of the aformantioned characters. How is the gonra changed?	
E. Contrast Travis McGee with all of the aformentioned characters. How is the genre changed? How does the author (John D. MacDonald) feel about his character? Is Travis John D. MacDonald?	
Personality Profile Sheet	
Directions Simply put a check next to the adjectives which you think pertain to the character in question.	
lonelyshrewdfun-lovingtaciturnshy	
egotisticalwiseemotionalwittyenergetic	
patientsnobbishoffensivemildpleasant	
trickyjovialfriendlyflamboyantphlegmatic	

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___likeable ___out-going ___serious ___secretive ___weak

___gruff ___intense ___lazy ___humble ___strong ___kind

sarcasticamusingelitistintellectualpractical
toughstaidpoliterudecoldaffectionate
sophisticatedextraordinarypessimisticinquisitive
honestself-deprecatingemotion-lessquick-tempered
optimisticcourageousidealisticrealisticsmug
impatient generous idiosyncratic stand-offish

PART TWO: THE NOVEL

Students will be given ample time to read three novels which feature a series hero of their choice. The teacher should indicate that these are free-reading assignments; on-going study guides will not be provided as these might detract from the recreational aspect of the readings. Students, however, will be expected to accomplish a project following the completion of each work.

These projects will vary in terms of sophistication. As students, through reading, become more familiar with the genre, particular author, and the character of the detective, the projects will move up in terms of three levels of questions. These levels will include:

- 1. Literal (who, what, where, why, how questions)
- 2. Generalization (discussion of generalizations about the text with regard to plot, character, style)
- 3. Author's Intention (What is the meaning of the story? Does the author address issues of human nature, human interaction, environmental pressures, cultural trends?)

LEVEL ONE QUESTIONS—LITERAL (to follow first novel)

The first part of this assignment simply asks the student to recall major incidents of the plot. The questions are objective and direct. I think, however, that these questions will promote a careful reading of the text. Students should be encouraged to engage in a more subjective discussion following the objective test. The discussion questions provided are meant to encourage individual response. These questions will also set the scene for subsequent readings and the more difficult questions which will follow these readings.

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Sample Assignment—Level I Questions

Title	Author	

Objective Questions

- 1. What crime was committed?
- 2. Who was the culprit?
- 3. Who was the victim?
- 4. What was the motive?
- 5. Where did this occur?
- 6. How was the crime committed?
- 7. How was the detective able to solve the crime/bring the villain to justice?

Subjective Questions

- 1. When did you (reader) figure out the mystery? Explain.
- 2. Who did you think was responsible initially? Why?
- 3. How would you expect the detective to behave in the next novel you read?
- 4. Where do you think the next story will take place?
- 5. Who would you recommend this book to?
- 6. What new insights do you have about your particular detective?
- 7. What have you learned about the detective novel? (structure, pace, etc.)

LEVEL TWO QUESTIONS—GENERALIZATION (to follow second novel)

The questions which comprise this section require that the student take a more critical stance. In most cases, the teacher will have to spend some time, prior to the asking of these questions, in helping his/her students to

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think critically. It might be worthwhile, at this point, to discuss the structure of a TV program with which all would necessarily be familiar; "Magnum PI", for example, would be assigned as mandatory viewing. Students would then be encouraged to discuss the climax of the plot as well as its pace, the development of the tone of the program, the language/dialogue of the players, and the personalities of the principles. Such an assignment would insure that students understand the technical nature of the questions which follow their second novel. At some point students might also be encouraged to compare/contrast the TV detective story with the literary detective novel.

Sample Assignment—Level II Questions (essay)

Title	Author	

- 1. Describe the climactic scene in your particular novel. How effective was it? (surprising? suspenseful?)
- 2. Compare and contrast the detective with the villain with regard to intelligence. personality, view of the world.
- 3. Discuss the ways in which your detective interacts with colleagues, friends. (style of dialogue—humorous? distant? open?)
- 4. What function do the colleagues serve? What functions do other minor characters serve?
- 5. Refer to the beginning of the novel. How does the author set the tone?
- 6. Study the last few pages of the story. How does the author end the novel? (further explanations, commentary)
- 7. Comment on the author's style. (descriptive? fast-paced? intellectually hard-boiled? modern? traditional?)

LEVEL THREE QUESTIONS—AUTHOR'S INTENTION

(to follow third novel)

The questions which follow the reading of the third book attempt to address the notion of theme in the detective novel. Students will undoubtedly remark that most detective novels celebrate the triumph of good over evil; I would not deny this. However, students should be encouraged to look for a message of a more subtle nature. It seems to me that most detective novels make a statement about time and place. Third level questions will encourage students to think about the author's view of his/her world. The teacher may be tempted to tell students of unfamiliar places and times; I do not think this advisable. Rather, the student should be encouraged to take on the role of detective. Most novels will contain pertinent clues with regard to particular cultures and settings.

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This final set of questions will also promote the comparison of all three novels read. The outcome of such a comparison, one hopes, will be a better understanding of the author.

Sample Assignment—Level III Questions (essay)

Title Author	
Title	
Title	

- 1. Besides its literal meaning, what is the title's significance?
- 2. Discuss the setting of the novel. Could the action have taken place anywhere else or during another tune? What is the author saying about the time/place.
- 3. How has the detective adapted himself/herself to his/her environment? Is this a function of the detective's personality over the environment?
- 4. Having read three novels by the same author, you are somewhat familiar with his/her concept of hero. How do you feel about the character? Does he/she fit your criteria of a hero?
- 5. Which of the three mysteries read do you consider the most effective with regard to pace, denouement, setting? Explain.
- 6. It is said that an author's personality is revealed through his work. Describe your author with regard to personality, interests, etc.

PART THREE: CREATIVE WRITING

This third and last section of the unit will focus on developing student imagination. I also wish to make one last attempt to insure that students pick up yet another detective novel on their own. It seems to me that a creative writing assignment will accomplish both goals.

It is not my intent to explain the process of mystery writing to my students. (I don't think I could.) Rather, I will ask them to review what they have learned thus far about the detective novel and their particular hero, and encourage them to attempt a sequel of sorts of their own. Such an assignment will enable students to focus on the series hero once more and allow them the vicarious thrill of getting him into and out of a situation of their choice. Thus the detective will become more real. The student, one hopes, may finally be "hooked" into

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wanting more encounters with his character. The student, in addition, will be exposed to an experience of a creative nature.

This assignment should be viewed as fun by teacher and student alike; the attempt is more important than the final product. Initial planning and discussion by each class is most necessary prior to starting any creative work. Some students may wish to engage in a writing contest of sorts (the best, the funniest, the most outlandish, etc.). Others may enjoy the idea of a parody. Many students are art-oriented and will express an interest in representing their hero visually (cartoon/comic strip). Some may wish to present a skit which depicts their hero and his surroundings. The teacher, in his/her quest for the generation of interest and excitement, should encourage a wide range of activity.

Of course, students will need their feet on the ground, to some extent, in order to structure their work. Review questions should be discussed which will promote serious thinking with regard to setting, plot, and character.

The teacher will need to structure time so as to provide individual and/or group encouragement and advice.

Sample Review Questions

- 1. What sort of setting fits your detective?
- 2. What are his/her interests?
- 3. Who are his/her friends?
- 4. How does he/she usually become involved in cases?
- 5. What talents does the detective have which enable him/her to solve cases?
- 6. Does your detective exhibit idiosyncratic behavior? Explain.
- 7. Does your author try to trick the reader? What sorts of ingenious clues does he/she make use of?
- 8. Is there usually a lot of action in your author's plots?
- 9. How does the detective behave after the denouement? Is he/she changed?
- 10. With what sort of situation/villain would you like to see your detective involved?

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SUGGESTED STUDENT READINGS

INTRODUCTORY STORIES

"The Speckled Band"—Arthur Conan Doyle

"The Adventure of the Norwood Builder"—Arthur Conan Doyle

"Four and Twenty Blackbirds"—Agatha Christie

"The Tape-Measure Murder"—Agatha Christie

"Fourth of July Picnic"—Rex Stout

Nightmare in Pink—John D. MacDonald

NOVELS

Sherlock Holmes—Arthur Conan Doyle

A Study in Scarlet

The Sign of Four

Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes

The Return of Sherlock Holmes

The Hound of the Baskervilles

The Valley of Fear

Hercule Poirot—Agatha Christie

The Mysterious Affair at Styles

Poirot Investigates

The Murder of Roger Ackroyd

The Mystery of the Blue Train

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Peril at End House Murder on the the Calais Coach The ABC Murders Murder in Three Acts Death on the Nile Appointment with Death The Patriotic Murders Murder in Retrospect Mrs . McGinty's Dead Dead Man's Folly Third Girl Halloween Party Elephants Can Remember Curtain Jane Marple—Agatha Christie The Murder at the Vicarage The Body in the Library The Moving Finger A Murder is Announced Murder with Mirrors A Pocket Full of Rye What Mrs. McGillicuddy Saw A Mirror Crack'd

A Caribbean Mystery

At Bertram's Hotel

Nemesis

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Nero Travis

Wolfe—Rex McGee—John

Rex D.

Stout MacDonald

Fer - de - Lance

The League of Frightened Men The Deep Blue Good-bye

The Rubber Band
The Red Box
Too Many Cooks
Some Buried Caesar
Over My Dead Body
Where There's a Will
The Silent Speaker
Too Many Women

Murder By the Book

In the Best of Families

Prisoner's Base

The Golden Spiders

The Black Mountain

Might as Well be Dead

If Death Ever Slept

Champagne for One

Plot it Yourself

Too Many Clients

The Final Deduction

Gambit

The Mother Hunt

A Right to Die

The Doorbell Ring

Death of a Doxy

The Father Hunt

A Purple Place for Dying Darker Than Amber Pale Grey for Guilt Dress Her in Indigo The Long Lavender Look

The Scarlet Ruse
The Green Ripper
Free Fall in Crimson

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NOTES

- 1. William S. Baring-Gould, Nero Wolfe on West Thirty Fifth Street, p. 15.
- 2. William S. Baring-Gould, Nero Wolfe on West Thirty-Fifth Street, p. 4.

TEACHER BIBLIOGRAPHY

Baring-Gould, William S., *Nero Wolfe on West Thirty Fifth Street*, Penguin Books Ltd., Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England, 1969.

This delightful book provides a wealth of information for Nero Wolfe fans. Beautifully researched.

Baring-Gould, William S., The Annotated Sherlock Holmes. Crown Publishers, New York, 1967.

A must for readers of Sherlock Holmes mysteries. Includes all sorts of information, illustrations, etc.

Berbrich, John D., ed., Crime and Detection, McGraw Hill Book Co., New York, 1974.

This anthology of detective fiction provides introductory material along thematic lines. An extensive list of serial detectives is also included.

Winks, Robin W., ed., Detective Fiction, Prentice Hall Inc., Englewood, Cliffs, New Jersey, 1980.

Fine critical essays as well as an excellent bibliography comprise this work.

Wynne, Nancy Blue, An Agatha Christie Chronology, Ace Books, New York, 1976.

This book provides plot summaries, chronological and other listings of Christie short stories and novels, as well as information about the author.

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