

CHILLING READS TO LOOK OUT FOR

Some recommendations from the latest batch of crime novels

A Zouache may not be the obvious heroine for a crime novel, but November sees her debut in Fidelis Morgan's wonderful Restoration thriller *Ummatural Fire*. From debtor to private eye, this Countess is an aristocrat, fleeing for her life through the streets of 17th-century London. Featuring a colourful cast of misfits and brilliantly researched period detail, *Ummatural Fire* has a base in the mysterious science of alchemy, and will appeal to adherents of both crime and historical fiction.

B Minette Walters is one of the most acclaimed writers in British crime fiction whose books like *The Sculptress* have made successful transitions to our TV screens. Preoccupied with developing strong plots and characterisation rather than with crime itself, she has created some disturbing and innovative psychological narratives. *The Shape of Snakes* is set in the winter of 1978. Once again Walters uses her narrative skills to lead the reader astray (there is a clever use of correspondence between characters), before resolving the mystery in her latest intricately plotted bestseller which is full of suspense. Once again she shows why she is such a star of British crime fiction.

C Elizabeth Woodcraft's feisty barrister heroine in *Good Bad Woman*, Frankie, is a diehard Motown music fan. As the title suggests, despite her job on the right side of the law, she ends up on the wrong side – arrested for murder. No favourite of the police – who are happy to see her go down – in order to prove her innocence she must solve the case, one that involves an old friend and some uncomfortable truths a bit too close to home. *Good Bad Woman* is an enthralling, fast-paced contemporary thriller that presents a great new heroine to the genre.

D *Black Dog* is Stephen Booth's hugely accomplished debut, now published in paperback. It follows the mysterious disappearance of teenager Laura Vernon in the Peak District. Ben Cooper, a young Detective Constable, has known the villagers all his life, but his instinctive feelings about the case are called into question by the arrival of Diane Fry, a ruthlessly ambitious detective from another division. As the investigation twists and turns, Ben and Diane discover that to understand the present, they must also understand the past – and, in a world where none of the suspects is entirely innocent, misery and suffering can be the only outcome.

E Andrew Roth's deservedly celebrated Roth Trilogy has drawn to a close with the paperback publication of the third book, *The Office*, set in a 1950s cathedral city. Janet Byfield has everything that Wendy Appleyard lacks: she's beautiful, she has a handsome husband, and an adorable little daughter, Rosie. At first it seems to Wendy as though nothing can touch the Byfields' perfect existence, but old sins gradually come back to haunt the present, and new sins are bred in their place. The shadows seep through the neighbourhood and only Wendy, the outsider looking in, is able to glimpse the truth. But can she grasp its twisted logic in time to prevent a tragedy whose roots lie buried deep in the past?

F And finally, Reginald Hill has a brilliant new Dalziel and Pascoe novel, *Dialogues*, released in the spring. The uncanny resemblance between stories entered for a local newspaper competition and the circumstances of two sudden disappearances attracts the attention of Mid-Yorkshire Police. Superintendent Andy Dalziel realises they may have a dangerous criminal on their hands – one the media are soon calling the Wordman. There are enough clues around to weave a tapestry, but it's not clear who's playing with whom. Is it the Wordman versus the police, or the criminal versus his victims? And just how far will the games go?

Part 4

You are going to read an article containing reviews of crime novels. For questions 20 – 34, choose from the reviews (A – F). The reviews may be chosen more than once.

Mark your answers on the separate answer sheet.

In which review are the following mentioned?

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|---|----|----------------------|
| a book successfully adapted for another medium | 20 | <input type="text"/> |
| characters whose ideal world seems totally secure | 21 | <input type="text"/> |
| a gripping book which introduces an impressive main character | 22 | <input type="text"/> |
| a character whose intuition is challenged | 23 | <input type="text"/> |
| the disturbing similarity between reality and fiction within a novel | 24 | <input type="text"/> |
| an original and provocative line in storytelling | 25 | <input type="text"/> |
| the main character having a personal connection which brings disturbing revelations | 26 | <input type="text"/> |
| the completion of an outstanding series of works | 27 | <input type="text"/> |
| the interweaving of current lives and previous acts of wickedness | 28 | <input type="text"/> |
| a deliberately misleading use of the written word | 29 | <input type="text"/> |
| a rather unexpected choice of central character | 30 | <input type="text"/> |
| an abundant amount of inconclusive information about a case | 31 | <input type="text"/> |
| a character seeing through complexity in an attempt to avert disaster | 32 | <input type="text"/> |
| a novel which displays the talent of a new author | 33 | <input type="text"/> |
| the characters' involvement in a crime inevitably leading to a painful conclusion | 34 | <input type="text"/> |