

Gay Detective Novel: Lesbian and Gay Main Characters & Themes in Mystery Fiction

Judith A Markowitz



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Gertrude Stein called it the only really modern novel form that has come into existence, yet the mystery genre was a century old before it featured its first gay main character. Since then, lavender detective fiction has been one of the fastest growing segments of the genre, incorporating gay and lesbian cultural elements and offering crossover appeal, yet it is still marginalized and largely unknown to mainstream readers. also providing new, more accurate images of lesbians and gay men than generally found in mainstream literature and popular media. This survey of gay and lesbian detective fiction examines series and groundbreaking stand-alone novels published since 1964, analyzing main characters, themes, plot elements and more. Author interviews provide insights that are incorporated into the analyses. The work begins with an overview of gay and lesbian detective fiction, and an outline of the mystery genre's development. Subsequent chapters, arranged by the main character's profession (police, private investigator, amateur sleuth, etc.), examine the series or work in the contexts of mainstream mystery fiction and gay and lesbian culture. and lesbian themes, and provides a thematically organized list of works and authors.

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