

# Psychological Suspense

Ruth Rendell and Minette Walters have long been famous for psychological suspense novels depicting sociological issues such as domestic abuse, inequality, and homosexuality. These novels often depict the darker side of the protagonists psyche, and the effect of society on the human mind. There are now several writers penning works in this genre.

**Abrahams, Peter.** Abrahams is Stephen King’s favorite suspense writer. Joyce Carol Oates described Abrahams novels as “gratifyingly attentive to psychological detail, richly atmospheric, layered in ambiguity.”

## Series

Echo Falls

1. *Down the Rabbit Hole* (2005)
2. *Behind the Curtain* (2006)
3. *Into the Dark* (2008)

## Novels

*The Fury of Rachel Monette* (1980)  
*Tongues of Fire* (1982)  
*Red Message* (1986)  
*Hard Rain* (1988)  
*Pressure Drop* (1989)  
*Revolution Number 9* (1992)  
*Lights Out* (1994)  
*The Fan* (1995)  
*A Perfect Crime* (1998)  
*Crying Wolf* (2000)  
*Last of the Dixie Heroes* (2001)  
*The Tutor* (2002)  
*Their Wildest Dreams* (2003)  
*Oblivion* (2005)  
*End of Story* (2006)  
*Nerve Damage* (2007)  
*Delusion* (2008)  
*Reality Check* (2009)  
*Bullet Point* (2010)



## Alvtegen, Karin.

Karin Alvtegen, b. 1965, is one of Scandinavia's most widely read authors.

Recognized for her artful characters and psychological thrillers, her books are best sellers worldwide.

*Missing* (2003)  
*Guilt* (2004)  
*Betrayal* (2005)  
*Shame* (2006)  
*Shadow* (2009)

**Anders, Donna.** Anders is known for strong female protagonists, often single mothers overcoming terrifying situations.

**Novels**



*Ketti (1991)*  
*Mari (1991)*  
*Sun of the Morning (1991)*  
*Paradise Moon (1992)*  
*The Flower Man (1995)*  
*Another Life (1998)*  
*Dead Silence (2000)*

*In All the Wrong Places (2002)*  
*Night Stalker (2003)*  
*Afraid of the Dark (2004)*  
*Death Waits for You (2006)*  
*Sketching Evil (2007)*

**Armstrong, Charlotte.** American suspense novelist that wrote early psychological thrillers with quirky and odd characters. Her greatest success was *The Unsuspected* which was made into a movie with Claude Rains.

**Series**

*MacDougal Duff*

1. *Lay On, Mac Duff! (1942)*
2. *The Case of the Weird Sisters (1943)*
3. *The Innocent Flower (1945)*  
*aka Death Filled the Glass*

**Novels**

*The Unsuspected (1946)*  
*The Chocolate Cobweb (1948)*  
*Mischief (1950)*  
*The Black-Eyed Stranger (1951)*  
*Catch as Catch Can (1952)*  
*aka Walk Out on Death*  
*The Trouble in Thor (1953) (writing as Jo Valentine)*  
*aka And Sometimes Death*  
*The Better to Eat You (1954)*  
*aka Murder's Nest*  
*The Dream Walker (1955)*  
*aka Alibi for Murder*  
*A Dram of Poison (1956)*  
*Mask of Evil (1958)*  
*The Girl with a Secret (1959)*  
*Something Blue (1959)*  
*The Seventeen Widows of San Souci (1959)*

**Charlotte Armstrong (continued)**

*Who's Been Sitting in My Chair?* (1962)

*Then Came Two Women* (1962)

*The Witch's House* (1963)

*The One-Faced Girl* (1963)

*A Little Less Than Kind* (1963)

*The Mark of the Hand* (1963)

*The Turret Room* (1965)

*Dream of Fair Woman* (1966)

*I See You* (1966)

*Lemon in the Basket* (1967)

*The Gift Shop* (1967)

*The Balloon Man* (1968)

*Seven Seats to the Moon* (1969)

*The Protege* (1970)

*Chocolate Cobweb (Library of Crime Classics Series)* (1991)

**Bauer, Belinda.** Bauer grew up in England and South Africa.

She won the CWA Gold Dagger award for her first novel *Blacklands*.

**Novels**

*Blacklands* (2010)

*Darkside* (2011)

*Finders Keepers* (2012)

**Booth, Stephen.** English author known for his atmospheric psychological thrillers set in England's Peak district.

**Series**

*Ben Cooper and Diane Fry*

1. *Black Dog* (2000)

2. *Dancing with the Virgins* (2001)

3. *Blood on the Tongue* (2002)

4. *Blind to the Bones* (2003)

5. *One Last Breath* (2004)

6. *The Dead Place* (2005)

7. *Scared to Live* (2006)

8. *Dying to Sin* (2007)

9. *The Kill Call* (2009)

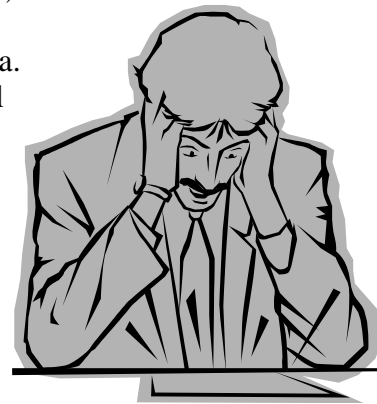
10. *Lost River* (2010)

11. *The Devil's Edge* (2011)

**Cook, Thomas H.** American literary psychological crime author. Cook is a winner of the Edgar Award for *The Chatham School Affair*.

**Series**

Frank Clemons

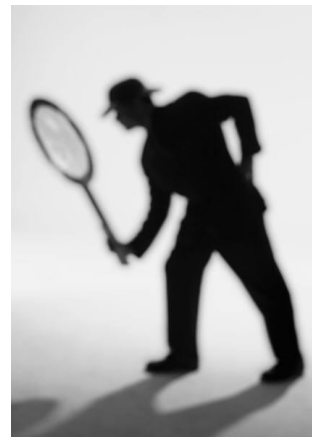


**Cook, Thomas H. (continued)**

1. *Sacrificial Ground* (1988)
2. *Flesh and Blood* (1989)
3. *Night Secrets* (1990)

**Novels**

- Blood Innocents* (1980)  
*The Orchids* (1982)  
*Tabernacle* (1983)  
*Elena* (1986)  
*Streets of Fire* (1989)  
*The City When it Rains* (1991)  
*Evidence of Blood* (1991)  
*Mortal Memory* (1993)  
*Breakheart Hill* (1995)  
*The Chatham School Affair* (1996)  
*Instruments of the Night* (1998)  
*Places in the Dark* (2000)  
*Taken* (2002)  
*The Interrogation* (2002)  
*Moon Over Manhattan* (2002) (with Larry King)  
*Into the Web* (2004)  
*Peril* (2004)  
*Red Leaves* (2005)  
*The Murmur of Stones* (2006)  
    aka *The Cloud of Unknowing*  
*Master of the Delta* (2008)  
*The Fate of Katherine Carr* (2009)  
*The Last Talk With Lola Faye* (2010)  
*The Quest for Anna Klein* (2011)



**Dahl, K.O.** Norwegian author of dark police procedural/psychological thrillers.

**Series**

Frank Frolich

1. *The Fourth Man* (2007)
2. *The Man in the Window* (2008)
3. *The Last Fix* (2009)

**Novels**

*Lethal Investments* (2011)

**Fossum, Karin.** Norwegian author describes what she likes best about writing crime novels. “The drama. The tragedy. The psychology. The mystery.”

**Series**

*Inspector Sejer*

1. *Don't Look Back* (2002)
2. *He Who Fears the Wolf* (2003)
3. *When the Devil Holds the Candle* (2004)

**Fossum, Karin. (continued)**

4. *Calling Out For You* (2005)  
*aka The Indian Bride*
5. *Black Seconds* (2007)
6. *The Water's Edge* (2009)
7. *Bad Intentions* (2010)
8. *The Caller* (2011)

**Novels**

*Broken* (2008)

**Fremlin, Celia.** Winner of the Edgar Award, Fremlins' books combined mystery and horror, and depicted married women's lives in the 1950's.

*The Hours Before Dawn* (1958)

*Uncle Paul* (1959)

*Seven Lean Years* (1961)



*aka Wait for the Wedding*

*Troublemakers* (1963)

*The Jealous One* (1965)

*Prisoner's Base* (1967)

*Possession* (1969)

*Appointment with Yesterday* (1972)

*The Long Shadow* (1975)

*Spider-orchid* (1977)

*With No Crying* (1980)

*The Parasite Person* (1982)

*Listening in the Dusk* (1990)

*Dangerous Thoughts* (1991)

*The Echoing Stones* (1993)

*King of the World* (1994)

**French, Nicci.** Husband and wife team Nicci Gerrard and Sean French write dark psychological thrillers.

**New Series**

Frieda Klein

1. *Blue Monday* (2011)

**Novels**

*The Memory Game* (1996)

*The Safe House* (1998)

*Killing Me Softly* (1998)

*Beneath the Skin* (2000)

*The Red Room* (2001)

*Land of the Living* (2003)

*Secret Smile* (2003)

*Catch Me When I Fall* (2005)

*Losing You* (2006)



**French, Nicci (continued)**

*Until It's Over (2008)*

*What to Do When Someone Dies (2009)*

*Complicit (2010)*

*aka The Other Side of the Door*

**French, Tana.** Irish author of police procedural/psychological thrillers. Her first novel

*In the woods* won the Edgar award.

**Series**

Rob Ryan and Cassie Maddox

1. *In the Woods (2007)*

2. *The Likeness (2008)*

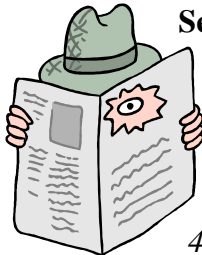
3. *Faithful Place (2010)*

**Fyfield, Frances.** English solicitor and novelist with two series and stand alone novels.

She is the winner of the Duncan Lawrie Dagger for *Blood with Stone*. P.D. James said “there are a few crime writers whom we think of primarily as novelists...

There is no one higher on this list than Frances Fyfield.”

**Series**



Helen West

1. *A Question of Guilt (1988)*

2. *Trial by Fire (1990)*

*aka Not That Kind of Place*

3. *Deep Sleep (1991)*

4. *Shadow Play (1993)*

5. *A Clear Conscience (1994)*

6. *Without Consent (1996)*

*A Helen West Omnibus (omnibus) (2002)*

*A Second Helen West Omnibus (omnibus) (2004)*

Sarah Fortune

*Shadows On the Mirror (1989)*

*Perfectly Pure and Good (1994)*

*Staring At the Light (1999)*

*Looking Down (2004)*

*Safer Than Houses (2005)*

**Novels**

*The Playroom (1991) (writing as Frances Hegarty)*

*Half Light (1992) (writing as Frances Hegarty)*

*Let's Dance (1995)*

*Blind Date (1998)*

*Undercurrents (2000)*

*The Nature of the Beast (2001)*

*Seeking Sanctuary (2003)*

*The Art of Drowning (2006)*

*Blood from Stone (2008)*

*Cold to the Touch (2009)*



**Goodman, Carol.** A former Latin teacher, Goodman writes psychological thrillers set in New York and Italy with some gothic and supernatural elements.

**Series**

*Fairwick Chronicles*

1. *Incubus* (2011)

**Novels**

*The Lake of Dead Languages* (2002)

*The Seduction of Water* (2003)

*The Drowning Tree* (2004)

*The Ghost Orchid* (2006)

*The Sonnet Lover* (2007)

*The Night Villa* (2008)

*Arcadia Falls* (2009)

**Hannah, Sophie.** English poet, children's author, and creator of the psychological thriller series featuring Simon Waterhouse and Charlie Zaiter.



**Series**

*Spilling CID*

1. *Little Face* (2006)

2. *Hurting Distance* (2007)

aka *The Truth-Teller's Lie*

3. *The Point of Rescue* (2008)

aka *The Wrong Mother*

4. *The Other Half Lives* (2009)

aka *The Dead Lie Down*

5. *A Room Swept White* (2010)

aka *The Cradle in the Grave*

**Novels**

*Gripless* (1999)

*Leaving and Leaving You* (1999)

*Cordial and Corrosive* (2000)

*The Superpower of Love* (2001)

*First of the Last Chances* (2003)

*Lasting Damage* (2011)

*Kind of Cruel* (2012)



**Highsmith, Patricia.** American novelist well known for disturbing characters and plots including the *Ripley* series and *Strangers on a train*.

**Series**

*Ripley*

1. *The Talented Mr. Ripley* (1955)

2. *Ripley Under Ground* (1970)

3. *Ripley's Game* (1974)

4. *The Boy Who Followed Ripley* (1980)

**Highsmith, Patricia (continued)**

*5. Ripley Under Water (1991)*

*The Ripley Novels (omnibus) (2000)*

*The Complete Ripley Novels (omnibus) (2008)*

**Novels**

*Strangers On a Train (1950)*

*The Price of Salt (1952) (writing as Clare Morgan)*  
*aka Carol*

*Deep Water (1957)*

*A Game for the Living (1958)*

*This Sweet Sickness (1960)*

*The Cry of the Owl (1962)*

*The Two Faces of January (1964)*

*The Glass Cell (1964)*

*A Suspension of Mercy (1965)*

*The Blunderer (1966)*

*Those Who Walk Away (1967)*

*The Tremor of Forgery (1969)*

*A Dog's Ransom (1972)*

*Edith's Diary (1977)*

*People Who Knock On the Door (1983)*

*Found in the Street (1986)*

*Small G: A Summer Idyll (1995)*



**Holding, Elizabeth Sanxay.** Raymond Chandler chose her as 'the best character and suspense writer (for consistent but not large production)', picking *The Blank Wall* (1947) as one of his favourites among her books; it was filmed as *The Reckless Moment* in 1949 (by Max Ophuls) and as *The Deep End* (with Tilda Swinton) in 2001.

**Series**

*Heaven's Falling*

*Too Many Bottles (1951)*

*aka The Party Was the Pay-Off*

*The Virgin Huntress (1951)*

**Novels**

*Invincible Minnie (1920)*

*Rosaleen Among the Artists (1921)*

*Angelica (1921)*

*The Unlit Lamp (1922)*

*Miasma (1929)*

*Dark Power (1930)*

*The Death Wish (1934)*

*The Unfinished Crime (1935)*



**Holding, Elizabeth Sanxay (continued)**

*The Strange Crime in Bermuda (1937)*

*The Obstinate Murderer (1938)*

*aka No Harm Intended*

*Who's Afraid? (1940) aka Trial by Murder*

*Speak of the Devil (1941)*

*aka Hostess to Murder*

*Kill Joy (1942)*

*aka Murder Is a Kill-Joy*

*Lady Killer (1942)*

*The Old Battle-ax (1943)*

*Net of Cobwebs (1945)*

*The Innocent Mrs. Duff (1946)*

*The Blank Wall (1947)*

*Miss Kelly (1947)*

*Widow's Mite (1953)*



**Diane Janes.** British author with two psychological mysteries.

**Novels**

*The Pull of The Moon (2010)*

*Why Don't You Come for Me? (2011)*

**Joss, Morag.** Joss is an English writer who grew up in Scotland and has written what she calls a fairly lighthearted series featuring Sara Selkirk, and more darker, psychological suspense novels.

**New and Forthcoming Paperbacks**

**September 2011**

*Among the Missing*

**Series**

*Sara Selkirk*

1. *Funeral Music (1998)*

2. *Fearful Symmetry (1999)*

3. *Fruitful Bodies (2001)*

**Novels**

*Half Broken Things (2003)*

*Puccini's Ghosts (2005)*

*The Night Following (2008)*

*Among the Missing (2011)*

*aka Across the Bridge*

**Larsson, Asa.** Suspenseful legal procedurals set in Sweden, more atmospheric and psychological like Rendell, than the fellow Swedish Henkell.

**Series**

Rebecka Martinsson

1. *Sun Storm (2006)*

*aka The Savage Altar*

**Larsson, Asa. (continued)**

2. *The Blood Spilt* (2007)

3. *The Black Path* (2008)

*Until Thy Wrath be Passed* (2011)

**Millar, Margaret.** Millar's books are from the Golden Age of mystery writing.

She wrote about the psychology of women and sociological themes are depicted in her fiction.

**Series**

Paul Pyre

1. *The Invisible Worm* (1941)

2. *The Weak-Eyed Bat* (1942)

3. *The Devil Loves Me* (1942)

Inspector Sands

1. *Wall of Eyes* (1943)

2. *Taste of Fears* (1945)

aka *The Iron Gates*

Tom Aragon

1. *Ask for Me Tomorrow* (1976)

2. *The Murder of Miranda* (1979)

3. *Mermaid* (1981)

**Novels**

*Fire Will Freeze* (1944)

*Experiment in Springtime* (1947)

*It's All in the Family* (1948)

*The Cannibal Heart* (1949)

*Do Evil in Return* (1950)

*Rose's Last Summer* (1952)

aka *The Lively Corpse*

*Vanish in an Instant* (1952)

*Wives and Lovers* (1954)

*Beast in View* (1955)

*The Soft Talkers* (1957)

aka *An Air That Kills*

*The Listening Walls* (1959)

*A Stranger in My Grave* (1960)

*How Like an Angel* (1962)

*The Friend* (1964)

*Beyond This Point Are Monsters* (1970)

*The Fiend* (1974)

*Banshee* (1983)

*Spider Webs* (1986)



**Murphy, Margaret.** English author with psychological thrillers set in Cheshire.

**Series**

Rickman and Foster

1. *The Dispossessed* (2004)

2. *Now You See Me* (2005)

**Novels**

*Goodnight, My Angel* (1996)

*The Desire of the Moth* (1997)

*Caging the Tiger* (1998)

*Past Reason* (1999)

*Dying Embers* (2000)

*Darkness Falls* (2002)

*Weaving Shadows* (2003)

**Oates, Joyce Carol (aka Lauren Kelly and Rosamond Smith)**

Author of approximately 50 novels, short stories and non-fiction books. Oates is a most prolific author and has produced some of the best literary fiction of our time. She won the National Book Award for *Them*, which depicts racial tensions in 1960's Detroit. She also has written psychological mysteries and suspense novels under the names Lauren Kelly and Rosamond Smith, as well as a few under her own name.

**Kelly, Lauren**

*Take Me, Take Me with You* (2004)

*The Stolen Heart* (2005)

*Blood Mask* (2006)

**Smith, Rosamond**

*Lives of the Twins* (1987)

aka *Kindred Passions*

*Soul/Mate* (1989)

*Nemesis* (1990)

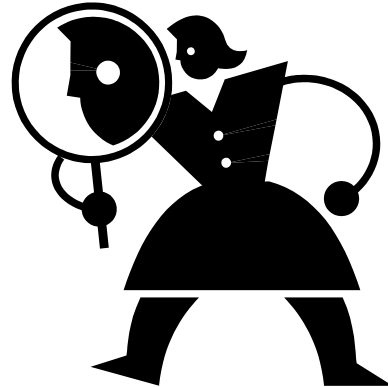
*Snake Eyes* (1992)

*You Can't Catch Me* (1995)

*Double Delight* (1997)

*Starr Bright Will Be With you Soon* (1999)

*The Barrens* (2001)



**Rayne, Sarah.** The daughter of an Irish comedy actor, Sarah spent many years in amateur theatre. From this experience she has always had an interest in old buildings and their atmosphere. Her novels are psychological thrillers with a supernatural feeling.

**Novels**

*Tower of Silence* (2003)

*A Dark Dividing* (2004)

*Roots of Evil* (2005)

*Spider Light* (2007)

*The Death Chamber* (2007)

*Ghost Song* (2009)

**Rayne, Sarah (continued)**

*House of the Lost* (2010)

*Property of a Lady* (2011)

*What Lies Beneath* (2011)

**Rendell, Ruth.** Rendell is the author of three different sub-genres of mystery: the straight forward police procedurals with Rex Wexford, the deeper psychological stand alone novels, and the dark atmospheric novels written under the name Barbara Vine. P.D. James and Rendell, considered the queens of crime writing are also members of the House of Lords. John Mortimer has said “If it weren’t for a ridiculous literary snobbery about ‘crime writing’, Ruth Rendell would be acclaimed as one of our most important novelists.”

(non-Wexford titles)

**Novels**

*To Fear a Painted Devil* (1965)

*Vanity Dies Hard* (1965)

*aka In Sickness and in Health*

*The Secret House of Death* (1968)

*One Across, Two Down* (1971)

*The Face of Trespass* (1974)

*A Demon in My View* (1976)

*A Judgement in Stone* (1977)

*Make Death Love Me* (1979)

*The Lake of Darkness* (1980)

*Talking to Strange Men* (1980)

*Master of the Moor* (1982)

*The Tree of Hands* (1984)

*The Killing Doll* (1984)

*Live Flesh* (1986)

*Heartstones* (1987)

*The Bridesmaid* (1989)

*Going Wrong* (1990)

*The Crocodile Bird* (1993)

*The Keys to the Street* (1996)

*Thornapple* (1998)

*A Sight for Sore Eyes* (1998)

*Adam and Eve and Pinch Me* (2001)

*The Rottweiler* (2003)

*Thirteen Steps Down* (2004)

*The Water's Lovely* (2006)

*Portobello* (2008)

*Tigerlily's Orchids* (2010) Novels

**Writing as Barbara Vine**

*A Dark Adapted Eye* (1986)

*A Fatal Inversion* (1987)

*The House of Stairs* (1988)



**Vine, Barbara. (Rendell continued)**

*Gallowglass (1990)*

*King Solomon's Carpet (1991)*

*Asta's Book (1993)*

*aka Anna's Book*

*No Night Is Too Long (1994)*

*In the Time of His Prosperity (1995)*

*The Brimstone Wedding (1995)*

*The Chimney Sweeper's Boy (1998)*

*Grasshopper (2000)*

*The Blood Doctor (2002)*

*The Minotaur (2005)*

*The Birthday Present (2008)*

**Sewell, Kitty.** Swedish author brought up in Spain and Canada. Kitty Sewell has also lived in Alaska, Wales, and now lives with her husband in Grenada, Spain. She has written three psychological thrillers, a novel about the Spanish Civil War, and a biography of a transsexual.

Novels

*Ice Trap (2005)*

*Bloodprint (2009)*

**Walters, Minette.** English author who is often compared to Ruth Rendell, her first five psychological novels were adapted for television by the BBC.

Novels

*The Ice House (1991)*

*The Sculptress (1993)*

*The Scold's Bridle (1994)*

*The Dark Room (1995)*

*The Echo (1997)*

*The Breaker (1998)*

*Acid Row (2001)*

*The Shape of Snakes (2001)*

*Fox Evil (2002)*

*Disordered Minds (2003)*

*The Devil's Feather (2005)*

*The Chameleon's Shadow (2007)*

