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

**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)
*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.

*Betrayal* (2005)
*Shame* (2006)
*Shadow* (2009)
**Anders, Donna.** Anders is known for strong female protagonists, often single mothers overcoming terrifying situations.

**Novels**

- *Ketti* (1991)
- *Sun of the Morning* (1991)
- *Paradise Moon* (1992)
- *In All the Wrong Places* (2002)
- *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 Raines.

**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)

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
2. Dancing with the Virgins (2001)
6. The Dead Place (2005)
7. Scared to Live (2006)
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)
2. Flesh and Blood (1989)

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)


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

Novels
Lethal Investments (2011)


Series
Inspector Sejer
1. Don't Look Back (2002)
Fossum, Karin. (continued)
   aka The Indian Bride  
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)  
*Killing Me Softly* (1998)  
*Beneath the Skin* (2000)  
*The Red Room* (2001)  
*Catch Me When I Fall* (2005)  
**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)

**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
2. *Trial by Fire* (1990)
   *aka Not That Kind of Place*
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)
*Safer Than Houses* (2005)

**Novels**

*The Playroom* (1991) (writing as Frances Hegarty)
*Half Light* (1992) (writing as Frances Hegarty)
*Blind Date* (1998)
*Undercurrents* (2000)
*The Nature of the Beast* (2001)
*Seeking Sanctuary* (2003)
*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 Drowning Tree* (2004)
*The Sonnet Lover* (2007)
*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*
2. *Hurting Distance* (2007)
   aka *The Truth-Teller's Lie*
   aka *The Wrong Mother*
   aka *The Dead Lie Down*
   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)
Highsmith, Patricia (continued)
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)

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
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**

*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*


**Novels**

*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*

  aka *The Savage Altar*
Larsson, Asa. (continued)
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)

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

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
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)
Portobello (2008)
Tigerlily's Orchids (2010)

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)