

**“*Unveiling the Agatha Christies of Aotearoa*”: A selective annotated bibliography on crime fiction by New Zealand women writers from 2000 – 2019.**

**by**

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## 1. Background

Since the early nineteenth century, crime fiction has since become extremely popular and the genre had grown into multiple subgenres (Schlobin, 1978, p.37). Some of the more common subgenres are –

- “*whodunit*” fiction which is the most common form and it provides the readers with clues that would eventually reveal the crime
- legal thrillers - where characters are usually lawyers or policemen
- inverted detectives - where the plot reveals the criminal at the beginning and then the story works back to it (Stuff, 2016)

Although each subgenre has its distinction, all crime fiction shares some basic yet essential elements. (Study.com, 2019):

- a) A significant crime that is the key to any crime story
- b) The hero or heroes of the crime story who is the protagonist
- c) The suspects of the crime story that is relevant to the story’s suspense and intrigue.
- d) The criminal must be intelligent, sneaky, and almost able to get away with it.
- e) A make-believable story is also necessary to make crime fiction worth reading.

Women have long turned to crime fiction - both as readers and writers - because it explores the places where male writers and readers often fear to tread; where female power, terror, and rage intertwined with each other (North & South, 2019). Women crime writers have always had a particularly keen nose for the layered, intersectional kinds of injustice where gender meets the age, socioeconomic position, race, and class (The Conversation, 2019). What used to silence them now give themselves a voice and the right to control their narrative and so their literature would now implement the same literary techniques as other male writers. This change shows that although society has always had excellent crime authors such as Lee Child, Stephen King, John Grisham, or Raymond Chandler who excel at writing gruesome plots of revenge and retribution, it seems that crime fiction is increasingly becoming a woman’s domain. In fact, according to Rachel Kester, “the world of crime fiction owes much of its success to the creation of female crime writers who took the genre solidified by Poe and Conan Doyle and expanded it.” (Kester, 2019) Furthermore, as their research value is increasingly recognized, the study of crime fiction literature by female authors is a growing body of work. Studies that have made use of many female crime fiction collections to

examine national or cultural identity include those of Pieri (2011), Hall (2016), and Skene-Melvin (1995) of Italy, Germany, and Canada respectively. Marrall's (2016) annotated bibliography examined authors who are non-Caucasian women that write speculative fiction - some of which are crime genre for adult and young adult audiences.

This bibliography will display an important aspect of our culture in New Zealand crime fiction from what Allport (2018) states that "New Zealand authors have slowly chipped away at establishing crime as a credible – and lucrative – genre" (NZ BookLovers, 2018). Crime and mystery novels as a category of thriller and suspense genre are not unique to New Zealand. However, the popularity of New Zealand female crime fiction does not seem to progress well among the local Kiwis unlike the espionage and noir crime literatures that are a huge international commercial success (Stuff, 2016). According to the *2018 Book Reading in New Zealand* report, the 2018 statistics indicates that locals are not "actively seeking New Zealand authors and needed to either "come across" books by New Zealanders or to be given a reason or recommendation to seek out books by New Zealanders." (New Zealand Book Council, 2018, p.38) This statement means that the growing interest rate is not as high as there is no such bibliographic guide available on the genre for both the public and research librarians to make use of around New Zealand even though it is, in fact, a national treasure with its unique characteristics.

Settings in fiction, as in any literature, are not merely static geographic locations where the action takes place. It can make a difference between a dull piece of work and one that captures the mind of the reader literally because whether it is a local or a foreign reader, the setting transports them to a new place and environment (Schlobin, 1978, p.39). One of the first crime novels published in New Zealand is *The Devil's Half Acre* in 1900 and it is a Victorian fiction about a murder mystery set in the mid-Otago's goldfields during the colonial period written by Louisa Alice Baker (Wikipedia, 2019). It carries with it an expectation that the literature produced will not only have some lasting sense of social impact and history, but that it will be able to communicate a collective desire for our cultural character to be seen. Not only it is to be seen as unique and distinctive, but one where the creative contribution New Zealand makes to the world can also in our own way, takes place on a local and international stage.

## 2. Bibliographic Gap

To begin with, no evidence of an annotated bibliography on New Zealand crime fiction in particular, has been found. Furthermore, because crime fiction is not so ubiquitous in our literary print media (and in the past sat within general titles and main genres), it is so hard to extract this information with precision. A basic search on Google and using ‘Crime fiction in NZ’ and ‘NZ women writers’ reveals a broad range of news links, articles, and a mixture of profiles for both genders. However, when the list of search results is vetted for ‘NZ female crime authors’, the search relevance is not as impressive as only one male author is displayed firstly as a recommendation for a Booksellers website. Furthermore, apart from Wikipedia’s ‘New Zealand Women Writers’, there are no other resources featured to support the love for the local crime genre or future research purposes.

This means that this is the first attempt at compiling an annotated bibliography to address the literature gap of crime fiction written by Kiwi women writers. It mainly attempts to present selected fiction from the previous two decades that specifically address the growing female authorship of crime fiction in New Zealand. Although when it comes to writing the entries, this bibliography will attempt to emphasize on the local geographic settings where the crime plot was conceived in the stories and this will be the principal element throughout this project.

### 3. Objectives.

#### a. Purpose.

The majority of crime fiction literature in print or online that are currently being consulted in New Zealand public libraries is mainly focus on fiction written by male authors or non-New Zealand content (Wellington City Libraries, 2015). Therefore, the purpose of this bibliography is to reflect the emphasis on nurturing this literary culture into the future by establishing the significance of the local women writers of New Zealand. Having examined the literature, I hope that this annotated bibliography will benefit library staff and patrons by providing a critical description of Kiwi female crime fiction as well as a finding aid to access the novels onsite. This bibliography may also be an opportunity for local public libraries around the country to develop their readers' services through the promotion of local crime fiction. This can be achieved by introducing readers to the genre and expanding their reading repertoire into the unexplored collection of New Zealand crime fiction stories written by our very own local women (NZ Herald, 2018). There will be a use of qualitative research approach that will allow for both the description and interpretation of the novels in order to "identify patterns, themes or biases" (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013, p. 140). It allows for some of the most valuable information about our local crime fiction heritage to be highlighted. Overall, this annotated bibliography aims to increase the understanding of New Zealand's crime fiction literature by raising the awareness of local women authors making a prominent mark in the crime fiction world (Massey University, 2014).

#### b. Scope.

This annotated bibliography is intended to be selective rather than comprehensive in scope. The scope of the bibliography is limited to a parameter of novels published from the early-2000s onwards with a preference for more recent publications in 2019 that are relevant to this development in NZ female authors of crime fiction (The Conversation, 2019). Therefore, this bibliography will be comprised of 50 entries on different crime genre plots and fortunately, the resources selected for this bibliography are all freely available (this will be explained more in the 'Proposed Method' section). Some of the most useful resources that are available in public libraries are either physical or digital and many of the printed crime fiction books in

most libraries' collections are in English with only a couple of them in Te Reo or Braille. Item locations will be provided in the entries so that readers may locate their nearest copy and the call number details will indicate where the items are available for lending, or that they have to be requested via Interloans. The criteria for inclusion in this bibliography is that each novel listed is relevant to both the growth of crime fiction literature based in a local place and the increase of female authorship within New Zealand. Thus, this selective annotated bibliography will take on the approach of creating a descriptive and analytical review (Crimefiction lover, 2018) as well as emphasizing the novel's setting. In addition to an organized reading list, the annotated bibliography will also be indexed to facilitate access for patrons who prefer to undertake their search via other elements such as the title, author, publishers, item location and themes.

### c. Intended Audience.

At first, the intended audience of this bibliography is for readers who live in Auckland and who love crime genres and it is also targeted towards current and upcoming authors, public and academic librarians, and researchers. However, I intend for my bibliography to be useful to a broader audience as possible. This broad audience would likely include tertiary or even high-school students studying English literature. Moreover, this bibliography will also be useful for the faculty of Arts particularly the English and Creative Writing departments in developing and teaching courses as well as selecting reading materials for students. Creative Writing students, in particular, may find it useful to have a sense of what is presently being published as they go about their work. Local historians, archivists, and feminists activists seeking to promote New Zealand's literary achievements will be drawn to the 'Interesting Fact' section above the bibliography entry. While it is not intended for the general public across New Zealand to be the primary users of this bibliography, it is written as such that it is accessible enough for those interested to source a murder mystery plot close to home. For patrons living outside of Auckland or if a copy is held at the National Library catalogue, they can do so via their local library's database and request for Interloans. If it were made freely available in print and PDF format, any of the groups mentioned above could make use of the bibliography whichever way they saw fit (Zimmerman, 1982, p.239).

#### 4. Proposed Methods.

A basic search engine served as a starting point. Many of the resources that can be found in a basic Google search using the term “NZ Crime Fiction by NZ Female Writers” are very vague introductory links such as the Wikipedia entry giving a list of all the women authors in New Zealand. CrimeWatch.co.nz and the Spinoff were also used to identify relevant materials. Although I’ve come across some basic finding aids online that might direct me to the crime fiction collection, the attention is paid to significant overseas works rather than New Zealand items. This shows that if we in New Zealand do not know of our local female crime authors well enough to publicize them, we certainly should not expect international publications to do so.

I used a range of avenues in conducting my search – primarily searching the online catalogues of the Auckland Council Libraries and the National Library of New Zealand. The Auckland Council Libraries’ catalogue has a function that allows users to search their collection’s ‘*Popular Reads – Nga Pukapuka Rorotu*’ specifically. However, in an attempt to sort the full number of these entries by publication date, it appeared to have produced failed results in the catalogue and so this feature in itself did not prove entirely useful. I also conducted a physical search of the Council Libraries’ ‘*New Titles – Nga Taitara Hou*’ part of which is permanently displayed on specially allocated shelves. These books are marked wherever they are held in the libraries by a red or yellow sticker on the cover and/or spine. Therefore, relying entirely on the Auckland Council Libraries’ collection - either in catalogue-based or physical searches – would have been insufficient. However as it can be seen that there is a lack of a consistency in what is included in this collection. While some books that were written by local women authors but published by overseas publishing houses are included, others appear to have slipped through the cracks. However, my own knowledge of the local literary scene assisted me in filling some of these gaps. Thus, I was able to conduct known author searches on names such as “Vanda Symon” and “Paddy Richardson”, and sort their results by date to find relevant publications.



Using the catalogues of national, tertiary, public and special libraries, relevant crime fiction books were found with the following keyword search term examples: New Zealand AND women AND crime fiction AND murder mystery AND female authors. Subject headings: Crime fiction, New Zealand, New Zealand women authors.

In concluding the search, the items for inclusion in this annotated bibliography of female crime fiction were selected using the following criteria:

- Written by a New Zealand female author
- The story is set in a New Zealand geographic location
- Published between January 2000 and December 2019
- Currently held as a bibliographical record in an Auckland public library catalogue and/or the National Library in Wellington.

The national Interloans service will be utilized for loanable material that is held outside of Auckland.

So far, the limitations of this research resulted from the nature of the data, its location, and retrieval. Firstly, New Zealand crime fictions today are much more likely to be held in library collections rather than the older ones and are therefore easier to retrieve at leisure. With the help of Google and the local libraries' databases, I looked at more than 180 crime fiction novels of various settings, contents, and descriptions. However, due to the time available, it was not possible to consult all the crime fiction novels held in libraries around New Zealand. Moreover, the scope of this project has meant that I would not be able to address all the novels written by Kiwi female authors listed as comprehensively as I would have liked for this collection as I only want to address crime fiction that has been published in NZ between the early 2000s until 2019 and that the setting of the plot is a local place – and this has narrowed my search results to just 50 novels relevant to my project.

In addition, the major issue with accessibility to the collections is the lack of available knowledge of what is contained in each item without viewing it such as the lack of a comprehensive finding aid in either an annotated bibliography or complete catalogue records (Chamberlain, 2007, p.74). When I was searching the catalogue, there is limited information that currently tells Auckland Libraries' patrons what exactly is in the collection that is not just at the item level, but within the crime fiction collection as well. Items only available in print are seen located in the National Library and the New Zealand local libraries system.

a. Covid-19

When the country moved into Alert Level Four in March 2020, the lockdown implemented that all public libraries are to remain closed until Alert Level Two in late May. Fortunately, during this period, I was able to access most of the books online via the Auckland Libraries E-Collections website and a couple of them would have to be retrieved physically when all libraries in Auckland were fully opened in early June. In terms of Interloans, only three books were required for this project that needed to be sourced out from The National Library and Nelson Public Library. Interloan requests were made at the beginning of Alert Level 3 due to the significant courier delays around NZ at this period. Fortunately, all three items were efficiently delivered in time before this project was due.

## 5. Bibliographic Methods.

### a. Organization

This annotated bibliography will be created by using the Zotero reference management software, version 5.0.74. The sources will be arranged chronologically as the intention is to trace the gradual development of NZ crime fiction novels from the 2000s onwards and the growth of New Zealand women authors specifically. As Zotero is an online, open-access reference management system and also allows the formation of groups and storage of files, it is hoped that this bibliography will be freely available, highly useful and sharable tool (Harner, 2000). It will also offer an opportunity for ongoing collaborative work and continuous development through user input. Therefore, Zotero's record of continuous development and support without losing data, and compatibility with various search engines and databases makes it an ideal choice to create this bibliography (Harner, 2000). Another software EndNote was considered initially to acquire experience of using another reference management software, but limited time and resources have prevented me from choosing this application.

### b. Format.

When used by teachers, librarians and other professionals, annotated bibliographies often provide a useful summation of the book's plot, themes and any underlining subject matter which is useful as some users may not have time to read a book cover-to-cover (Schlobin, 1978, p.38). However, this annotated bibliography will be presented differently, in that a significant category of its intended audience would likely use it not only for academic purposes, but as a finding aid to guide their reading for pleasure (Zimmerman, 1982, p.246). As such, when I am about to write the annotation in describing the novel with a strong narrative component, I will have to avoid 'spoiling' the resolution of the plot. For casual readers however, this kind of information could ruin the reading experience.

The citation style of the bibliography will follow the APA style according to the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Sixth Edition (2009), a format commonly used for social science publications (Leedy & Omrod, 2013, p.73). The bibliographic information will be first recorded with the annotation following on the next line. Entries will be generally limited to 200 words.

From the start, it was planned for the bibliographic entries to be arranged based on subject and from then on, chronologically based on the title of each book. However, I have decided to have the entries numbered and arranged chronologically by publication date and then divided into 19 categories: beginning with 2000 until 2019. This allows for instance, a sense of how much time may pass between the publications of two books in the same series. In the instances where more than one item appears in the same year, entries are listed alphabetically by the author's surname. The author will be the main identifier for the users as their first level of classifying an item for reading selection. Under each bibliography heading, a short definition of library location, call number, theme, and if plausible, a fact about the author's biography or the novel's context will be included to help guide users who may not be familiar with the book. The reason that an entry would contain multiple library locations with the associated call numbers is so that it can assist the users to locate copies of the novel from their nearest repository. Overall, this structure provides not only the historical context for each annotation but also suggests some sense of narrative framework about where the story of the issues, events and personalities informing the interpretation of the novel's plot has emerged. Moreover, this allows for a progressive overview, if read consecutively, by pinpointing the evolving nature of the sources. The subject and theme of the novel are also provided above each entry. At the end of the bibliography will be an index of keywords to facilitate navigation within the entries (Leedy & Omrod, 2013, p.187). The indices will also give a means of accessing the entries by subject of themes so that users may still seek out genre terms like 'romance', 'thriller' or other terms like 'Te Reo Maori' if they desire.

## 6. Dissemination.

The current bibliography is prepared using the personal account of the bibliographer (Rachel Paul) as it forms a part of the coursework and research project for a Master of Information Studies at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. For the sake of convenience with regards to the INFO580 submission process, this annotated bibliography will be presented as a digital PDF file. The final document will be available through the digital repository of the Victoria University of Wellington and will be offered to the Creative Fibre collection in a print format following its completion. Moreover, on completion of the degree, the bibliography will be made available as an independent and open-access library and advisory tool for the intended audience by circulating the information in New Zealand through the MIS email group and the LIANZA website.

As far as options for future dissemination, this bibliography could serve its function as a finding-aid in either print or digital formats. Other avenues of distribution via the professional GLAM sector networks, the MIS Research ArchiveSpace, local libraries, and the National Library of New Zealand could be explored, as well as the local and the international network of crime fiction authors, collections, and publishing industry contacts. While it would perhaps be of more use as a website or an eBook, these formats will not be plausible options at this stage and would not be practical as an INFO 580 submission. It is assumed that in the future, a research article or chapter may develop from the existing project for possible submission to a peer-reviewed journal in crime fiction literature. An article in academic journals relevant to archival and academic library studies will be more effective in making more audience aware of the existence of this bibliography thereby increasing its utility and potential to serve socially relevant research and work on the topic of Kiwi women authors and crime fiction. Moreover, to have the most impact for the intended audience of library staff and patrons, it would be useful if this bibliography remains closely connected to the collection to which it pertains so that library patrons could have access to the bibliography to complement their searching of the catalogue (De Taille, 2000, p.128). Thus through this network, this bibliography could reach a variety of practitioners that are interested in the local literary achievement of NZ female crime writing.

## 7. Bibliographies.

2000.

1. **Grimshaw, Charlotte. (2000). *Guilt*. Lancaster Place, London: Abacus.**  
**Location (Call No.):** Central City (GRI NZ, GRIM (for in library use)) & Takapuna (GRIM)  
**Subject / Theme:** Marginality, Social

The novel consists of seventeen chapters with a snapshot photo of Grimshaw at the back of the book alongside a brief synopsis of the plot. The front of the novel has a blurry image of a hand, the title in green and a review by the *Observer*. As the author had lived a significant part of her life in England, the novel was published by Abacus, a division company and is sold for £9.99 (Grimshaw, 2012). The story outlines the encounter between a promising young lawyer named Maria Wallis and a budding novelist named Marcus Klein in an Auckland nightclub called Quays. What occurs the morning after drives the two protagonists into a more dangerous path of twisted loyalties and being haunted by past psychological scars. Having practised as a shipping lawyer, Grimshaw sets the scene of the nightclub situated at the far edge of Auckland's freight yards as one of the main settings for her story. She also describes the city nightlife with such familiarity that local readers will be able to recognize the city's streets and eateries upon reading. Furthermore, as a criminal lawyer, Grimshaw weaves a complicated but intriguing murder mystery that both the characters had to unfold.

2. **Skinner, Gwen. (2000). *Secrets of the Symphony*. Wellington, New Zealand: Horizon Place.**  
**Location (Call No.):** Central City (General SKIN NZ, Crime SKI NZ) & Takapuna (Action SKI)  
**Subject / Theme:** Action, Adventure  
**Interesting fact:** This is Skinner's first debut novel (Kiwicraig, 2011).

Even though the *Secrets of the Symphony* was said to be Skinner's first fiction novel, it is not her first piece of published writing. The book contains a page before the prologue about the author and her journey in 1968 around the world in a home-built yacht which led her to publish many non-fiction titles before this novel. The book features a black background with the title in white and red and has an aerial view of an outline of a body within a crime scene. The novel contains nine chapters including the prologue and an epilogue – the longest chapter of all is chapter five and it contains mostly cliff-hangers and turning points of the story. Although the novel is about a thriller crime plot set within the Tamaki Symphony Orchestra based in Wellington, Skinner incorporates the international settings of Moscow, Hong Kong and Milan into her story to illustrate the worlds of the Mafia and the Chinese drug cartels. Moreover, Skinner's expertise as a professional violinist and newspaper journalist is evident in her portrayal of the musician characters and her narrative of unfolding the crime of the Italian and Hong Kong perpetrators.

2001.

3. **Grace, Patricia. (2001). *Dogside Story*. Auckland, New Zealand: Penguin Books.**  
**Location (Call No.):** Central City & Waitakere Central (General GRA NZ) Takapuna (General GRAC) and Manukau (GRA)  
**Subject / Theme:** Maori, Families  
**Interesting fact:** Long listed for the Man Booker Prize (Penguin Random House New Zealand, 2019).

In *Dogside Story*, Patricia Grace gives the readers a sense of modern-day Maori culture and thinking. Especially interesting are the connections with global tourism and Maori diaspora and how the characters deal with the social and personal issues. The story centres around a young man and his daughter in which Te Rua, the father and the main character of the story, harbours a deep and disturbing secret in which his extended family could be affected if it was revealed. Grace depicts a mythical Maori tale at the opening of the novel and she projects the narrative voice of the main characters' emotions distinctly. The scene is set in a rural Maori coastal community on the East Coast region of New Zealand where the author emphasizes on the main attraction of this location where visitors would arrive at this community, "*wanting to be the first in the world to see the new millennium sunrise*" (p.18). Overall there is a theme of universality and humanity in her novel as well as a foreboding tragedy as Grace wants her readers to be reflective of the plot rather than being immense in the turning points of the story.



4. **Neale, Emma. (2001). *Little Moon*. Auckland, New Zealand: Random House.**  
**Location (Call No.):** Central City (General NEA NZ, General NEAL NZ), Takapuna (General NEAL) & Waitakere (General NEA NZ)  
**Subject / Theme:** Family, Domestic  
**Interesting fact:** Recipient of the Todd New Writer's Bursary award (Writers Files, 2020).

On the first page of the book, it contains a picture of Neale and a brief description of her background. On the third page, the author explained that the idea for this novel “sprang from a short, cryptic article that appeared in the ‘World in Brief’ section of the Independent newspaper in November 1996...” (p.3). The book has ten chapters in total with a dedication sentence before the first chapter. The covers of the book feature only two colours of green and purple with the title at the front and a plot summary at the back. This is perhaps a means to which Neale wishes to complement with her chosen imagery for the front cover of her novel – an illustration of the ‘*La Promenade*’ by a ‘M.Chagall’ in which she cited at the back of the title page. The novel mainly focuses on Wellington as the primary setting and Auckland as the next location in the storyline. Unlike the previous two entries where there were multiple locations, this novel has more of a domestic setting where Neale wants to focus on the main protagonist, Julie’s contemplation of her brother’s death and her relationship with her mother and step-father.

2002.

5. **Johnston, Christine. (2002). *The Shark Bell*. Victoria, Australia: Penguin House.**  
**Location (Call No.):** Central City (General JOHN NZ, General JOH NZ) & Takapuna (General JOHN)  
**Subject / Theme:** Family, History

This is Johnston's first novel (Christchurch City Libraries, 2020), and it is set in the suburban neighbourhood of Dunedin in the year of 1969. It focuses on the daily lives of a collection of families in the St. Kilda beach area and the tragedy that they all encounter. Published by Penguin House, the logo is shown on both the front and back covers with an excerpt and summary of the plot at the back and a photo of a beach on a gloomy weather's day by a 'Reg Graham' and designed by an 'Athena Sommerfield'. The novel itself has seven chapters with numbered sections and a prologue. The first page itself elaborates the author's accolades and accomplishments. There are four pages at the end of the novel being dedicated to four New Zealand writers – Jackie Davis, Lloyd Jones, Charlotte Randall and Elizabeth Smither – each with their publication for the year alongside an excerpt and its reviews. The book is an indispensable reference for Johnston's familiarity of her birthplace Dunedin where the setting of St. Kilda itself is so well painted in her novel and she depicts a wealth of domestic realism where the characters are realistically portrayed.

2003.

6. **Else, Barbara. (2003). *The Case of the Missing Kitchen*. Auckland, New Zealand: Random House.**

**Location (Call No.):** Central City (ELSE NZ, ELS NZ (for in library use)) & Takapuna (General ELSE)

**Subject / Theme:** Detective, Mystery

This novel may be appealing to the locals in Wellington as Else mentions a few landmarks, buildings and cafes that a local resident can recognize. The front cover of the book has a mustard yellow background with an image of a ladies' duffel bag overflowing with kitchen utensils scattered near a plate of a fried egg. The back of the book cover displays at first a question with a larger font size; "*Is someone murdering the middle-class matrons of Khandallah?*" What follows after it is a brief summary of the plot and four reviews from her previous novels, '*The Warrior Queen*', '*Three Pretty Widows*' and '*Eating Peacocks*'. The novel revolves around Suzie, a single mother that lives in Khandallah, a suburb of Wellington who had to race against time to solve a crime and find her children who have been kidnapped. The novel has four parts with twenty-three chapters in total – the biggest is part two with ten chapters. Moreover, each part has a title allocated to it respectively; '*Ugly Sisters*', '*So Many Cooks*', '*Men In Suits*', and '*Proud Flesh*'.

7. **Knox, Elizabeth. (2003). *Daylight*. Wellington, New Zealand: Victoria University Press.**

**Location (Call No.):** Central City (General KNOX NZ, General KNO NZ), Takapuna (General KNOX) & Waiheke Island (General KNOX NZ)

**Subject / Theme:** Vampires, Europe

**Interesting fact:** Author of many best-selling books including *Billie's Kiss*, *Black Oxen* and *The Vintner's Luck* (Thompson, Margie, 2003).

In comparison with the previous six entries, this book is the thickest in volume with 365 pages. The cover at the front has a silhouette of a female swimmer looking towards an entrance to a cave. The back cover has a detailed description of the plot, a statement review from 'Emma Donoghue', author of *Slamerskin*, and a brief outline about Knox's publications and honorary awards. The novel consists of eighteen chapters with a map of Italy and France facing the Mediterranean Sea before the first chapter. Although most of the novel is set from Italy to Genoa, Auckland is also depicted as a reminiscence setting to portray the main character named Brian "Bad" Pehlan and his previous career as a bomb disposal expert. It can be seen that the author is familiar with Europe and Auckland as she reveals every technical detail of the location, the topology of the landscape, the architecture of the churches and the timetables of public transport. The storyline depicts a murder mystery of a body found floating in a bay where Brian and a Jesuit priest had to investigate and begins to suspect that all was not as it seems.

2004.

**8. Grace, Patricia. (2004). *Tu: A Novel*. Auckland, New Zealand: Penguin Books.****Location (Call No.):** Awataha Marae (Historical GRAC), Central City (GRA, General GRA NZ, GENERAL GRAC (for in library use)) Takapuna (Historical Grac), Manukau (GRA NZ) & Waitakere (General GRA NZ)**Subject / Theme:** World War, Maori**Interesting fact:** Grace was the first Maori woman to publish a collection of short stories (Graham-Mclay, Charlotte, 2020).

Born in Wellington in 1937, Patricia Grace has drawn on the war experience of her father and other relatives. Although it is a fictional story, *Tu* is based on historical facts from 1940 of World War II and that his mysterious return as the sole survivor, dominates this plot. Most of the novel is narrated by Tu in which he is responding in his later years to the questions of his nephew and niece who are looking for answers to the family secrets in the past. The novel begins and ends by his letters sent to them with his war diary that he annotated in Italy, along with the back story of his relatives in Papakura and Wellington. The front cover of the novel consists of an image that is a poignant cover photo of a 'John Taua', the "*only soldier in the Maori battalion to have been awarded a medal for bravery*" (p.1). The back of the book is simpler with only the synopsis of the plot. It has forty-one chapters, a dedication page at the beginning to 'Sergent Edward Gunson', and a page with the '*Maori Battalion Marching Song*' and Maori definitions for '*Tumatauenga*' and '*Te Hokowhitu-a-Tu*' (p.3).

2005.

9. **Jutson, Andrea. (2005). *Senseless*. Auckland, New Zealand: Williams & Whiting.**  
**Location (Call No.):** Central City (Crime JUT)  
**Subject / Theme:** Supernatural, Detective

Although *Senseless* was published in 2005, the plot of the crime begins in 2003 in Auckland as the primary setting. The book itself contains twenty-eight chapters with a prologue and an epilogue. The novel features barman and reluctant medium name James Paxton, an Englishman who tries to escape his reputation back home in England but ends up hunting murderers in the city of Auckland. The novel's front cover features a phrase, "*When the dead speaks... pretend you can't hear*" and is split between the top and bottom of the book respectively. Being born and raised in Auckland as well as spending a year in England, Jutson described both settings explicitly and linked both the United Kingdom and New Zealand through the narrative of her main character, Paxton (Kiwicraig, 2009). It can be seen that what is different from other entries is the use of Italics as one of the main fonts in this novel. Jutson does this to emphasise the thoughts of the dead and the perspectives between a psychic and his 'dead' clients. Her previous career in journalism reflects in the way how she accurately portrays the journalist characters and the police.

2006.

10. **Lawn, Judy. (2006). *Daisies Never Die: A Rose Rountree Mystery*. Austin, United States: Zumaya Publications LLC.**

**Location (Call No.):** Wellington National Library of New Zealand (P 823 NZ LAW 2006 – via Interloans)

**Subject / Theme:** Mystery, Paranormal

Lawn develops her characters in an interesting manner as this novel has a more feminine theme to it in which the main characters are predominantly females, and the theme depicts the variety of the character's daily lives. The plot takes place in Wellington, New Zealand where Averil Matthew spends some time organizing her deceased aunt's cottage and discovers a love letter of a hidden family member. Averil enlists the help of a local mystery writer and part-time detective Rose Rountree to help her solve this mystery. The plot is intriguing, and the style is engaging as readers may find that Lawn's writing style is similar to Agatha Christie where the story is set in the same timeline as many of her mysteries as well. The author also lays a mystery trail that has many clues and red herrings for the readers and it is only when the two characters progress to find the clues that an answer starts to become evident. It is a comical story with love, loss and peace at the end. The front cover of the novel has an image of an armchair and a picture frame of a heart shaped by a ring of daisies.

2007.

11. **Corbalis, Judy. (2007). *Mortmain*. Auckland, New Zealand: Random House New Zealand.**

**Location (Call No.):** Central City (General COR NZ, General CORB NZ (for in library use)), & Takapuna (Historical CORB)

**Subject / Theme:** Historical, Family

This is a novel about how the grimace of the past erases expectations and overrules out possibilities. The picture of inter-wars colonial life in New Zealand in the early 1800s that Corbalis depicts in her story is claustrophobic, compelling, but generally optimistic as the younger generation struggle to find their solutions to the limitations of the society. The novel is set in Castleton – a fictional town in Wairarapa and is driven by the stories of three families; the bureaucratic lawyers, the eccentric aristocrats and the Maori family “*that lived outside town*” (p.7). In the midst of each family’s stories, red-haired young girls are being silently murdered unknowingly. Overall, *Mortmain* is divided into three parts, and between each paragraph, Corbalis inserted a chess symbol featuring a pawn, a castle, knight, the king and queen and the bishop. The front cover of the novel features a photograph from Waipu Museum and the Bridgeman Art Library of a colonial woman driving a horse cart in a jungle. The back of the novel features the plot summary and a photograph of a street in Carterton, Wairarapa South, taken in the 1800s from the Alexander Turnbull Library.



12. **Symon, Vanda. (2007). *Overkill*. Auckland, New Zealand: Penguin Books.**  
**Location (Call No.):** Central City (Crime SYM NZ, General SYMO (for in library use)), Birkenhead, Mt. Roskill, Pakuranga & Ranui (Crime SYMO NZ)  
**Subject / Theme:** Policewoman, Southland  
**Interesting fact:** Symon has been a three-time finalist for the Ngaio Marsh Award for Best Crime Novel (Christchurch City Libraries, 2020).

*Overkill* is the first of the Sam Shephard series by Symon. Set in a rural community of Matuara, the town is shocked when a young mother is found dead. It quickly becomes apparent to Shepherd that this is not a suicide it initially appears to be. The sense of the township is created well and the readers will find themselves transported into the remote but idyllic region of the country. The setting is emphasised through Symon's prose and it also ensures that the crime is unique in the reasons behind it by making it an original backdrop. The first five pages of the novel are dedicated to four pages long of 'Praise for *Overkill*' and a brief description of the author. The last three pages of the book have an acknowledgment page and three images of the 'Lori Anderson Series' books by international crime author Steph Broadribb. The front cover contains a scenic view of a remote town with dark clouds above it and the back features the synopsis with more reviews for *Overkill*. Police Inspector Sam Shephard is depicted as a charismatic character and Symon has ensured that readers will want to meet her again in the next series.

13. **Laird, Pam.C. (2007). *The Shadow World*. Masterton, New Zealand: Fraser Books.**

**Location (Call No.):** Central City (General LAI NZ) & Waitakere (General LAIR NZ, General LAIR)

**Subject / Theme:** Japanese, Private Schools

What is interesting about this novel is that Laird gives an ‘*authorial statement*’ before the start of the story (p.ii). She explains that her work of fiction is based out of a real event and the reason behind her depiction of the main characters in the plot. *The Shadow World* is a fictionalized account based on an incident that took place in February 2003 in Auckland where a group of classmates murdered a Japanese student at an international college. The story is interwoven by four students who encountered the murder as witnesses. The cover of the novel has a black and white design of an Oriental calligraphy design by a ‘Stuart Laird’. The back cover is a plain backdrop with the plot summary and the publication logo of Fraser Books. The novel is separated into five parts and is categorized with the four seasons. For example, the Japanese translation of a season such as “*Autumn = Aki*”, sets the framework to the plot in each section (p.97). The first page of the book contains three quotations from Emily Bronte (*Stanzas*), Emily Dickinson (*One Need Not Be*), and Shakespeare (*Sonnet 65*).

2008.

14. **Jutson, Andrea. (2008). *The Darkness Looking Back*. Auckland, New Zealand: Random House New Zealand.**

**Location (Call No.):** Central City (Crime JUT NZ, General JUTS (for in library use)) & Takapuna (Crime JUTS)

**Subject / Theme:** Supernatural, Murder Mystery

The novel again features the main duo protagonists – Detective Constable Andy Stirling and medium James Paxton in tracking down from a grisly murder without a motive to a serial killer in Auckland who is out to target women ‘*with too much love to give*’ (p.52). Like the previous novel, Jutson’s depiction and use of Paxton and his psychic abilities is once again the main highlight of her work. Neither contrived nor clichéd, Jutson portrays Paxton in this story to be a fascinating and reasonably complex character who hates the publicity – unlike the average ‘psychic’ tabloid columnist or a fraudulent TV celebrity. The title in the front cover of the novel is followed by the phrase ‘*Love is all around...*’ and the back of the novel is a plain black background with a plot summary. The book contains thirty-five chapters including a prologue with the date – *January 2004* and an epilogue. A section for ‘*Acknowledgements*’ is placed at the last page of the book where Jutson gave her ‘*Heartfelt Gratitude*’ to a ‘Detective Senior Sergeant John Gutt’, the team at Random House and finally her family and friends.

15. **Symon, Vanda. (2008). *The Ringmaster*. Auckland, New Zealand: Penguin Books.**  
**Location (Call No.):** Central City (Crime SYM, General SYMO (for in library use)) & Ranui (Crime SYMO NZ)  
**Subject / Theme:** Police, Murder Mystery  
**Interesting fact:** Symon hosts a monthly local radio call 'Write On' focusing on writers and the world of books (Oar, 2020).

*The Ringmaster* is the second publication in the Sam Shephard series. In this story, Sam has moved to Dunedin and is in detective training when the body of a young university student is found in the Botanic Gardens. As with the first book, the humour is pitched perfectly. There is also a strong sense of place and sensibility. The settings in and around Dunedin are well evoked and well used in the story. The book would make an interesting if not gruesome trail of the city. Through all this, Symon plots a smart trail of clues, red herrings and escalating tensions leading to a dramatic conclusion. While Sam is the main focus of *The Ringmaster*, Symon yet again gives the readers a good cast of secondary characters that contribute significantly to the story. The front cover of the book is designed by '@Seven.co.nz' of a circus tent against a sunset backdrop and Symon's photography by 'Glenn Symon'. Below the title has the initial phrase '*The Main Act is Murder*'. The back of the book has a red background with the summary and two reviews of Symon's first book, *Overkill*.

2009.

16. **Fowler, Dorothy. (2009). *What Remains Behind*. Auckland, London: Random House New Zealand.**

**Location (Call No.):** Central City (General FOWL, General FOWL NZ (for in library use))

**Subject / Theme:** Archaeology, Mystery

The novel is about a land sale in the Davis family which becomes the latest archaeological dig for Chloe Davis. As she returns to the site in Kaipara, she attempts to work towards finding the foundation of a place of worship as it was a prominent landmark for the Kaipara Harbour community which had been burnt in the 1880s. There are two distinct timelines to this novel and both are presented in the first person. The current day narrative is told from the perspective of Chloe on the dig and her relationship with her old friend Bill and sister, Phaedra. The present-day timeline also takes in the mystery of a missing local farmer from some years before. Another timeline is of the past in the pages of a diary written by Charity, a young girl who was taken to the mission by her mother in the 1880s. The front cover of the book features a close-up shot of an auburn-hair woman taken from her back as she looks to a faded image of a church – both the title and author are placed on the left side of the cover. The novel contains twenty-one chapters with a page of ‘*Acknowledgements*’ at the front.

17. **Grimshaw, Charlotte. (2009). *Provocation*. Lancaster Place, London: Abacus.**  
**Location (Call No.):** Central City (General GRIM) & Takapuna (Action GRIM)  
**Subject / Theme:** Action, Crime  
**Interesting fact:** Shortlisted for the Creasey First Crime Fiction Award (Kimbofo, 2017).

*Provocation* by Grimshaw is set in Auckland in the late 1990s and it tells the story of Stella, a young law student who is living with Stuart, a criminal barrister who has a suspicious past. She agrees to help Stuart with one of his cases, a 35-year-old married man named Carlos Lehman who has been charged with the murder of his neighbour. The defence is provocation (hence the title of the book). The book consists of eighteen chapters – each has a title allocated to it around the theme of the chapter. The front of the novel has a review statement from a ‘Gillian Slovo’, and the back of the novel features another review by a ‘Sarah Dunant’. It can be seen that Grimshaw portrays Auckland as a rather glamorous city underpinned by the current of danger. She displays two sides of life in New Zealand – that of the educated urban elite and she contrasted this category with those from the rural welfare state – and depicts as many themes about social justice as it does with criminal justice. Essentially, this book is about power, whether it is personal, financial, or political – who has it, who can use it and how to acquire it.

18. **Kelly, Lindy. (2009). *Bold Blood*. Auckland, London: Random Harper Collins Publishers.**

**Location (Call No.):** Central City (General KEL NZ, General KELL NZ, Crime KEL NZ)

**Subject / Theme:** Equestrian, Murder

There is much detail in this novel about eventing and equestrian. In fact, the readers will be entertained with depictions of training, teaching, showing and working with a horse - all of these are the main elements of this novel. The story is interwoven with the mystery of why the main protagonist, Caitlin's mother was attacked, and why dangerous things happen at events and home. Overall, Kelly strikes a nice balance by using local references as the setting is taken place between Wellington and Nelson without exaggerating in any contrived attempt to display '*Kiwi-ness*' onto a universal story. Populating a plot of assaults, arsons, horse theft and murder with a diverse cast, Kelly portrays a rich life in the eventing world along with the way the horses are depicted as not mere props but full-blown characters with personalities of their own. The novel consists of thirty chapters with a '*Foreword*' page before the first chapter by a 'Mark Todd CBE' about the author. The back of the novel consists of the plot's synopsis and a mini-biography of Kelly's love for horses and her past career in equestrian - similar to Skinner's entry in page 15 of this bibliography.

19. **Loates, Lyn. (2009). *Butterscotch*. Auckland, London: David Ling Publishing Limited.**

**Location (Call No.):** Central City (General LOA NZ, General LOAT NZ (for in library use)) & Takapuna (LOAT)

**Subject / Theme:** Mystery, Murder

*Butterscotch* depicts a dark and compelling tale set in Christchurch in the 1950s about 8-year-old Helen Mainyard's connection to several murky incidents including the Parker-Hulme murder. Rather than portray the characters' past and present to the readers, Loates relies on journalistic techniques to show the reasons for their existence, job choices, familial histories and their hidden motives. The setting in the novel alternates between Christchurch and England. Christchurch, as it was in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, is dynamically recreated. When the story moves to England, the excitement in the novel's storyline appears to decrease. Back in Christchurch, it reverts to its believability and a surprise ending. The front of the novel consists of two photos by a 'Stephen Woodram' – one of a close-up face of a young girl and another is a tree. The back of the novel has the plot summary and a short biography of Loates with her photo attached. The novel consists of thirty-two chapters with a '*Dedications*' page at the front, another page with an abstract of the 1954 Victoria Park Murder (p.iii) and an '*Acknowledgements*' page at the end of the novel.



20. **Vanda, Symon. (2009). *Containment*. North Shore, Auckland: Penguin Group.**  
**Location (Call No.):** Central City (Crime SYM NZ, General SYMO (for in library use))  
**Subject / Theme:** Salvage, Detective

Once again, *Containment* shows Symon's talent for well-rounded characters, unique alibis and Dunedin touches that gives the readers a strong sense of the student-packed coastal city while depicting even more about Sam Shephard's personal life. This third novel of the popular local series now shows her as a constable detective in Dunedin. A beached container ship found in Aramoana, encounters with looters and assault is just the start of the novel. This is written in the popular 'whodunit' style, and Symon's research creates a very realistic scenario. The story in the novel is another one of those that at first seems like it will follow a predictable path but then ventures off in several unexpected ways. While Shepherd is the main character in the story, the supporting cast and her interactions with the other policemen in her team, her boss, her parents, cop boyfriend and best friend Maggie, are very prominent. The novel contains seventy-three chapters although most parts of the chapters are a page long or in an abstract length. The novel consists of a prologue to Symon's 4th Shephard series, *Bound* and an excerpt each from her novels, *Overkill* and the *Ringmaster*.

2010.

21. **Malane, Donna. (2010). *Surrender*. Auckland, New Zealand: HarperCollins Publisher Limited.**

**Location (Call No.):** Central City (MAL NZ, MALA NZ (for in library use)), Mt. Roskill (Crime MALA NZ), Ranui (General MALA NZ) & Takapuna (Crime MALA)

**Subject / Theme:** Family, Investigation

**Interesting fact:** Winner of the Inaugural 2010 New Zealand Society of Authors – Pindar Publishing Prize (NZ on Screen, 2020).

This is the first book in the Diane Rowe series as *Surrender* is a part of a two books series that is set in Wellington and features a private investigation scenario. Told from Rowe's point of view, the action is fast-moving and the style is witty, pointed and neatly arranged. While the novel would be worth reading as a character study of the heroine alone, Malane includes in an absorbing mystery storyline, some well-evoked Wellington settings, and a great cast of well-drawn supporting characters. Even quite minor characters feel authentic and the main cast has all some subtle layers and depth. Like the narrative itself, they provide a few surprises and revelations and keep the readers guessing until the end. Consist of thirty chapters, the plot begins with a short poem by James K. Baxter on '*High Country Weather*' (p.ii). The book ends with a page of an excerpt for Malane's next book in the series that features Rowe again. The front cover of the novel features a quote '*Some truths should stay buried*', and the back of the novel features the summary and a review from *New Zealand Listener*.

22. **Richardson, Paddy. (2010). *Hunting Blind*. North Shore, New Zealand: Penguin Group Books.**

**Location (Call No.):** Central City (Crime RIC NZ, General RICH (for in library use))

**Subject / Theme:** Thriller, Mystery

**Interesting fact:** Richardson's work has been highly commended in the Katherine Mansfield and the Sunday Star Times Award (Bookswarm, 2020).

Richardson wrote this novel from her hometown city of Dunedin, and she has set this gripping story in the familiar territory around the coastal city itself, Central Otago, Kaikoura and the West Coast. It is a story of a family in Wanaka, who at a school picnic, lost Gemma, their 4-year-old daughter. Stephanie, her older sister, becomes the main narrator for the rest of the book as she studies in Dunedin as a psychiatrist. For readers who are familiar with South Island, the landscapes, the town and cities that Richardson portrays in the novel will look familiar and the story takes on a different dimension for being so recognizably set in New Zealand. Richardson brings the readers into the aftermath of high-profile tragedies and the ongoing effects that remain long after the media leaves and as the rest of the country begin to forget about the news. The plot moves back and forward in time and the writing really captures how the past influence the present. The book consists of forty-five chapters with a biography of Richardson at the front page, two pages of '*Acknowledgements*' and an excerpt from her book, '*A Year to Learn a Woman*'.

2011.

23. **Healey, Karen. (2011). *The Shattering*. Park Avenue, New York: Hachette Book Group.**

**Location (Call No.):** Central City (HEA, HEAL (for in library use))

**Subject / Theme:** Suicide, Paranormal

*The Shattering* is a supernatural thriller based on the efforts of a trio of teenagers to prove that their elder brothers' deaths were not suicide but murdered by a serial killer. Healey depicts a portrait of New Zealand's multi-cultural society in which Maori Keri, Pacific Islander Sione and pakeha Jenna are each subject to the expectations of their family and culture. What is unique in this novel than previous bibliographies is that the author has provided contact information for suicide counselling, hotlines and a glossary of Maori and Samoan terms (p.241). The primary setting is taken place in Summerton, a West Coast town near Nelson. And in the novel, Healey addresses some very serious and real issues – teen suicide, coming out, grief, confidence, identity, and handles all of them with the respect and attention they deserve. There is a mixture of genres throughout the plot whereas in the first half of the book, the story seems contemporary and rooted in a modern-day period but in the second half of the novel, the focus becomes much more based on fantasy in Maori and Polynesian mythology.

2012.

24. **Darragh, Jill. (2012). *The Case of the Distant Relative*. Feilding, New Zealand: Rangitawa Publishing.**

**Location (Call No.):** Central City, Pakuranga & Ranui (Historial DARR NZ)

**Subject / Theme:** Women Suffrage, History

The story is located in Wellington a few months before New Zealand women were granted the right to vote in 1893 and the plot revolves around Sophia Holmes. She is ready to set up a business and start a new life when she becomes involved in a murder and sets off to find out the truth. Interwoven into the story is a drama of the women's suffrage movement as it gains momentum throughout the county and this history also made its way into the life of the protagonist. Even though this novel is a work of fiction, there are many aspects of the story that makes it believable. The book is 269 pages long with a very lengthy bibliography that shows the author has done considerable research to present the facts about political history and Wellington's settings as they were at that time. The author also includes plenty elements of murder, arson, intrigue, and romance to keep the plot consistent. The novel has thirty-four chapters with the date placed at the beginning of each chapter that indicates like a diary format. The prologue of the story had two quotations from Kate Sheppard and Wilkie Collins.

25. **Green, Maureen. (2012). *Snatched*. New Delhi, India: Avenue Publishing.**  
**Location (Call No.):** Central City (Crime GREE)  
**Subject / Theme:** Kidnapping, Detective

The story takes place in Auckland and it is about a detective named Cameron Fuller who is still haunted by the disappearance of his little brother to baby snatchers that took place thirty years ago. He now faces with a suspiciously similar case since his brother's kidnap. As his team investigates the snatching of Mandy-Jane Olsen, a 5 months old baby, the hidden agenda of the dark underbelly of New Zealand society is revealed. The readers will observe how Green paints a harshly violent picture where greed is a strong motive but taking revenge seems more prominent in the novel. The book consists of forty-seven chapters with a prologue and a flashback scene on 16th November 1980 to illustrate the kidnapping of baby Tim, Detective Cameron's brother. What is different about this book than other entries is that it is publish in a large-print format. The front cover of the novel shows a ripple in the water with a shadowy deck of playing cards and a baby pram. The back of the novel consists of the summary and a photograph of another water ripple at the bottom with a logo of Avenue Publishing.

26. **Symon, Vanda. (2012). *The Faceless*. Auckland, New Zealand: Penguin Group.**  
**Location (Call No.):** Central City & Pukekohe (Crime SYMO NZ, Crime SYMO (in library use)), Takapuna & Warkworth (Crime SYMO)  
**Subject / Theme:** Detective, Mystery

*'The Faceless'* is a crime thriller with building violence but it is also a novel about friendship and forgiveness, self-belief and redemption. Told from multiple perspectives, the novel follows the story of three troubled people thrown together due to "a moment of madness" (p.18). Two of the characters' point of view, the kidnapped Billy and the novel's detective, are female and the novel depicts themes of hypocrisy among the religious and workplace discrimination alongside the potential for women to find power from women of mythology and their female ancestors. *The Faceless* is a bit of an off-tangent from the Sam Shephard novels. Although the readers will find a lack of witty humour from Sam, they would be equally absorbed into the race against the clock in Bill and Max's crisis and the villain Bradley's world. The setting is set on the red-light district of Auckland's Karangahape Road – a contrast to the Southern setting of Sam Shephard series in Dunedin. The back of the novel features the synopsis and three reviews by the *Listener*, *Dominion Post* and *Her Magazine*. The chapters are segmented by the four main characters – Billy, Max, Bradley and later Meredith who is Bradley's partner.

2013.

27. **Catton, Eleanor. (2013). *The Luminaries*. Wellington, New Zealand: Victoria University Press.**

**Location (Call No.):** Albany, Central City & Waitakere (Historical CATT, 823 CATT (for in library use)), Birkenhead, Botany, Central City, Epsom, Glen Innes, Manukau, Mt. Albert, Papakura, Parnell & Ranui (Historical CATT NZ) & Devonport (General CATT)

**Subject / Theme:** Immigrants, Criminal Investigation

**Interesting fact:** Novel was awarded 'The Man Booker Prize Award 2013' (APNZ, 2013).

*The Luminaries* has all the elements of an almost imitation of a Charles Dickens mystery novel: long-lost siblings, forgeries, opium-dens, misplaced riches, a hidden cache of letters, illegitimate offspring, assumed identities, a séance, and a witty and philosophical narrator's voice (Carr, 2020). This novel is unique than other bibliographies as Catton includes astrology elements to the plot. Horoscope charts at the start of each part, chapter titles that reference zodiac signs, and lunar cycles are depicted consistently throughout the book. The primary setting is set in 1860 during a gold rush and early settlement in New Zealand but later on in the novel, Catton includes Hokitika and Dunedin as the story progresses. The setting at least for most foreign readers had many novelties and interest as Victorian elements are portrayed significantly where it focuses on London and also it has similarities to the Wild West along with its distinctive character. What is also different about this book than previous entries is that the plot synopsis is positioned inside the front cover of the novel whereas the back of the novel consists of four reviews by *NZ Herald*, *The Telegraph*, *Peter Hobbs* and *The Guardian*.



28. **Edwards, Mandy. (2013). *Mystery at Dead Man's Ridge*. Cromwell, New Zealand: Mandy Edwards Publishing.**  
**Location (Call No.):** Central City (EDWA)  
**Subject / Theme:** Farmlife, Theft

This bibliography is unique from the other entries as Edwards covers some mature topics in a very child-like friendly and modern way while the quality and plot style follows very much in the footsteps of the popular 1940s to 1960s children's authors (NZIBS, 2020). The scene is set in rural Otago in New Zealand with the landscapes and the farming life that feels very realistic and the introduction of the young characters to rural life. Edwards also brings into this environment many of the common issues that face any growing child - shifting friendships, adults frailties, substance abuse, abandonment, physical abuse, the nuclear family and the frequent absence of loved one. This means that the issues are tackled realistically through the perspectives of the young characters. What is also different about this novel so far is that it has the least pages than other entries and five pages of the book have colourful illustrations of the plot (p.42-47). It also comes with a coloured map and a black and white sketch for each chapter. The chapters themselves are not numbered but depicted in titles. The front cover of the novel is painted by an 'Amelia Hamilton' of a pasture scene with attractive and bright pastels.

29. **Malane, Donna. (2013). *My Brother's Keeper*. Auckland, New Zealand: HarpersCollins Publishers.**

**Location (Call No.):** Central City, Mangere Bridge, Manukau, Pakuranga, Panmure & Ranui (General MALA NZ)

**Subject / Theme:** Ex-convicts, Detective

Diane Rowe is once again the main character here. In this novel, Rowe is shown to be a savvy private investigator although a little vulnerable in some of her approaches. While that makes her fully rational and real, it sets her up for more peril than she needs to get herself into. Still, she is a unique and strong woman doing a challenging job and trying to make sense of her love interest at the same time. Finding out what happened seven years ago becomes the key. This time she is asked by a woman who just got out of prison, to locate her teenage daughter even though the woman was convicted of killing her daughter years before she was high on drugs. The story takes place in both Auckland and Wellington and while this plot is intricate and heads off in many directions, it is reasonably a stable storyline. However, the readers also would get a great sense of place with vivid descriptions of both the cities. Even though there is a real possibility that the readers could guess the truth at the beginning of the plot, Malane puts more emphasis on making them understand the reason of the crime.

30. **McCormack, Trish. (2013). *Glacier Murder: A Philippa Barnes Mystery*. Wellington, New Zealand: Glacier Press.**  
**Location (Call No.):** Central City, Kumeu, Mahurangi, Papatoetoe & Ranui (Crime MCCO NZ)  
**Subject / Theme:** Westland, Investigation

The beginning of the book opens to a scene of the protagonist and an unnamed woman friend as they wait for a jury to return their verdict. The story of the murder investigation is then told primarily in a flashback and the book concludes with the delivery of the jury verdict. The thriller is set on the West Coast of New Zealand's South Island – an area Trish McCormack knows inside and out (AustCrimeFiction, 2006). Trish makes the landscape come alive in the readers' mind via its changing moods, the beauty and the danger. As well as describing in detail the settings for what is a complex and gripping narrative, McCormack draws on personal knowledge of glaciers and their twists and turns. The book consists of thirty-five chapters including the prologue and the epilogue. The author also includes a page on '*Dedications*' and '*Acknowledgements*' before the prologue and a few pages of the '*Author's Note*'. There is also a prologue to her sequel, '*Assigned to Murder*'. The characters are portrayed to be consistent from one book to the next and their personality traits, by and large, enables them to be easily recognized.

31. **Richardson, Paddy. (2013). *Cross Fingers*. Auckland, New Zealand: Hachette New Zealand.**

**Location (Call No.):** Central City, Glen Innes, Mt Roskill, Otara, Ranui, St Heliers, & Takapuna (Crime RICH NZ)

**Subject / Theme:** Springbok tour, Journalists

**Interesting fact:** Three of Richardson's novels have been translated and published in Germany (Kiwicraig, 2010).

This book concentrates heavily on the character of Rebecca Thorne who is a journalist documenting the Springbok tour in Eden Park, Auckland. Everything is seen through her eyes and within her understanding. She goes about her role as a journalist with a persistent, almost fanatical dedication. The story of the tour protests is told through her interviews with several participants – protestors and cops, and it is the clues and observations in those accounts that lead her to the violent murder of a young man. As well as being a murder mystery novel, this story is a study of how the government of New Zealand became almost indistinguishable from a totalitarian regime as it saw to it that the Springbok tour of 1981 in New Zealand went ahead. The novel consists of forty chapters with a prologue before the first chapter, and a page of 'Acknowledgements' and the author's biography at the end. Another aspect that came out in the book was the anti-gay laws in 1986. This novel is unique because it gives the readers a chance to look at the turning point of the Apartheid perspectives in New Zealand.

2014.

32. **Costelloe, Sarah. (2014). *Forecast*. Beijing, China: Asia Pacific Offset Ltd.**  
**Location (Call No.):** Central City, Mt Albert, Ranui, Waiuku & Whangaparoa (COST)  
**Subject / Theme:** Young adults, Thriller

*Forecast* is the debut novel from Costelloe; the first book in a new series written primarily for Kiwi teenagers to enjoy. It tells the story of a 16-year-old Holly Armstrong who has moved away from her home, family, and friends in London to the serene, peaceful town of Piha in the North Island of New Zealand. Holly has moved there in the hopes of moving on from the dreadful incident that has left her drowning in guilt and anxiety ever since. When Holly realizes that there may be a connection between her dreams and deaths, it becomes clear that she needs to discover the full truth about the community of Piha before her friends become the next victims. This book basically has everything - murder, supernatural elements, a distinctly New Zealand theme and a rather complicated romance genre. Costelloe also illustrates the beach town with focus to the coastal nature. The front cover of the novel has an image designed by an 'Alistair Gillies' of a girl holding a surfboard and gazing at the ocean in front of her. There are twenty-two chapters in the novel with a prologue and the author's biography on the last page.

33. Cox, Nettie. (2014). *Final Retribution: A West Coast Murder Mystery*. Nelson, New Zealand: The Copy Press.

**Location (Call No.):** Ranui & Takapuna (Crime COX NZ)

**Subject / Theme:** Homecoming, Police

The title '*Final Retribution*' is seen depicted in huge, signage letters at the top of the cover. The bottom of the cover contains the author's name and the sub-headings, '*A West Coast Murder Mystery*'. The back cover of the novel contains a plain teal background with the story's plot in black writing. The novel contains twenty-two chapters with a prologue and an epilogue included in as well. There is also a page of dedications in which Cox dedicated to her family and the West Coast community. The story is about Detective Inspector Clyde Landen who decided to take two weeks of annual leave in Northern Buller (the main setting of the plot) on the West Coast of the South Island. However, Clyde's arrival coincides with a body being washed up on a beach, and it becomes evident that the young man has been murdered. The author's description and her imagery of the town portray her background as she spent her childhood days in the Buller district (North & South, 2019). There is also a prominent presence of the mining community that contributes to the West Coast's sustainable region in trading.

34. **Holman, Dinah. (2014). *A History of Crime: The Southern Double-Cross*. Auckland, New Zealand: Ravensbourne Book Limited.**  
**Location (Call No.):**Albany (Crime HOLM NZ), Central City & Mangere (Crime Historical HOLM NZ), Devonport (General HOLM)  
**Subject / Theme:** Attempted Murder, Maori

What is unique about this novel is that it does not assume the readers know anything about New Zealand history or the darker side of Victorian society or politics so Holman takes care to set the scene. For New Zealanders, this book will help explain the bitter grievances that Ngai Tuhoe held about their land. The story begins in 1887 on a ship from Australia bound for Auckland. The story moves along with frantic escapes from discovery, safe places that are rendered dangerous, murdering of meek and timid characters, and finally a fast development in the climax but to a happy ending. It follows a concert tour of soprano Frederique Bonelli and tenor Francesco Bartellin but the main thread is that of their unveiling of the corruption and excesses of those purchasing land illegally. The novel reads well as the characters and relationships are well developed. The novel consists of nineteen chapters with a preface at the beginning and an epilogue at the end. Holman also includes a postscript after the epilogue to give a brief overview of the Waitangi Tribunal and the legal issues that the Ngai Tuhoe community faced in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (p.219).

35. **Richards, Lila. (2014). *The Tarot Murders: An Isabel Sinclair Mystery*.  
Christchurch, New Zealand: Bluewood Publishing.**  
**Location (Call No.):** Wellington National Library of New Zealand via National  
Digital Heritage Archive (INTERLOANS)  
**Subject / Theme:** Psychic, Crime

The novel consists of thirty-three chapters including a paragraph at the end of the book about the author. There is also three pages dedicated to the '*Other Books by Lila Richards*' where the author gives 3 abstracts for each of her novels, '*Vicious Circle*', '*A Different Hunger*' and '*Restitutions of the Blood*' (p.282-284). The setting is taken place in Christchurch and the plot of the story is based around the multiple murdering of the Psychic Connection panel members of a radio show. Both Detective Isabel Sinclair and Detective Sergeant Declan Kelly venture to solve the identity of the killer from '*The Magician*' tarot cards that are left behind with the corpse. Unlike previous entries, Richards does not focus much of describing the scene of Christchurch vividly but that she places more emphasis on the internal scenes of the radio show, The Sun's newsroom and the inner sanctuaries of the Order and the occult practices. The front cover of the novel depicts a background of '*The Hermit*' tarot card facing downwards with 'Bluewood Publishing' located on the top right-hand corner. The title is located in the middle of the frame and the author's name on the bottom of the book.



36. **Richardson, Paddy. (2014). *Swimming in the Dark*. Auckland, New Zealand: Upstart Press Book.**

**Location (Call No.):**Clendon, New Lynn, Otara, Ranui, Takapuna, Waiheke Island, Waiuku, Wellsford & Whangaparoa (Crime RICH NZ)

**Subject / Theme:** Dysfunctional families, Crime

*Swimming in the Dark* is an atmospheric and psychological drama that explores the themes of family, oppression, fear and the strength it takes to rise above them. The book shifted effortlessly between the Southland settings of the present in the New Zealand town of Alexandra and the past in Leipzig, Germany. These two locations were contrasted with ease through Richardson's descriptive writing. Set in New Zealand, this contemporary and haunting tale unites four women, Serena and her sister Lynette and school teacher Ilse Klein and her mother Gerde, who are struggling against a legacy of fear, shame and guilt. The central figures are all portrayed as strong and unique and have endured many trials to become as they are. This novel does not hide away from the moral grey areas it encounters but instead it follows where they lead. It looks at questions of justice and judgement, of secrecy and silence, discrimination and freedom, and let the readers feel the uncertainties of the characters themselves as these issues arise. The novel consists of two parts – thirteen chapters in Part One and fifteen chapters in Part Two with an excerpt from 'Der Abscheid' by Hans Bethage (p.5).

37. **Shaw, Tina. (2014). *The Children's Pond*. Taupo, New Zealand: Pointer Press Limited.**

**Location (Call No.):** Birkenhead, Glen Eden, Highland Park, Mangere, Orewa, Otara, Pakuranga, Pukekohe, Ranui, Takapuna, Waiheke Island, Wellsford & Whangaparoa (Crime SHAW NZ)

**Subject / Theme:** Thriller, Psychological

The front cover of the novel conveys a sufficiently high degree of spookiness, mystery, and some anxiety including the enigmatic title. It is apparent, therefore, that the geographic scenery is going to be a significant part of the plot, the setting, and general atmosphere of the book. Jessica is a woman in her late thirty's who has moved from Auckland to Turangi to be close to her son who was recently sentenced to a restraint in Rangipo prison. Slowly the pieces of Jessica's early life and the lives of those she gets to build a connection with in Turangi, become more and more entangled until the main protagonist herself is at the centre of danger. What is unique about this novel is the author's description of fly fishing, which seems to be a highlight for the book. Moreover, Shaw dedicates this book to a 'Bruce' – "*who showed me the grace of fly fishing*" (p.ii). The novel consists of seventeen chapters with an '*Acknowledgement*' page at the end. There is a thriller overtone somehow for such a beautiful place and a beautiful river as if there is something more sinister hidden beneath in the undercurrents of the Turangi society.

2015.

38. **Clough, Tina. (2015). *Running Towards Danger*. Cambridge, England: Vanguard Press.**

**Location (Call No.):** Devonport, Glenfield, Pukekohe, Ranui (Crime CLOU NZ)

**Subject / Theme:** Detective, Feminism

The main premise of *Running Towards Danger* is about Karen, a witness to a gunshot murder who suddenly goes into hiding by escaping discreetly to a small township and tries to settle into the community by using a different name (Cara). The plot elements as they are, is delivered in an intense manner as there is a good sense of pace and menace in the story. There is a twist in the turning point of the story which fits into the builds up and this is appealing to readers who like to play the guessing game. Clough's description of an evocative small-town local setting is well illustrated as the main setting takes place in the Hawkes' Bay region of the North Island – a place where Clough is currently residing in (NZBookLovers, 2018). The novel consists of twenty-two chapters with an 'Acknowledgement' page and the author's biography at the front. The first chapter has a title '*The Danger Dream*', (p. 2) and the wordings in the page are italicised that denotes Karen's inner voice. The front cover of the novel shows an image of a fast-paced motion into a forest with the title in the middle and in yellow print.

39. **McCormack, Trish. (2015). *Cold Hard Murder*. Wellington, New Zealand: Glacier Press.**

**Location (Call No.):** Central City, Kumeu, New Lynn, Onehunga, Papakura, Papatoetoe & Ranui (Crime MCCO NZ)

**Subject / Theme:** Mystery, West Coast

A third book in the Philippa Barnes series, *Cold Hard Murder* is set in a “*spectacular region*” (p.13) on the West Coast of the South Island of New Zealand. Due to that sense of a closed-off environment and a small cast of possible suspects, the plotting here is off the old-fashioned mystery style with suspicion scattered throughout the storyline and plenty of clues and red herrings along the way. The natural beauty and sense of place is an interesting aspect of this book as McCormack depicts a setting that is remote enough to create a closed room type of scenario but wild enough to provide some threat and isolation. There are illustrations on shorelines, mountains and importantly to the story, an extensive underground cave system. The back of the novel features the plot summary and a brief biography of McCormack in the bottom left side of the cover. There are twenty-one chapters with a dedication to a ‘Cecilia Edwards’, ‘*Acknowledgement*’ page and a prologue beforehand. The plot ends with an epilogue, an ‘*Author’s Note*’ page and two pages of the prequel novels; ‘*Assigned to Murder*’ and ‘*Glacier Murder*’.

40. **Woodham, Jane. (2015). *Twister: A Mystery*. Wellington, New Zealand: Makaro Press.**

**Location (Call No.):** Birkenhead, Grey Lynn, Manukau, Pakuranga, Panmure, Papatoetoe, Te Manawa (Massey), Waiheke Island (Crime WOOD NZ)

**Subject / Theme:** Mystery, LGBT

**Interesting fact:** Woodham was a finalist in the 2016 Ngaio Marsh First Book Award (Blundell, Sally, 2016).

*Twister* is Woodham's debut novel featuring Detective Senior Sergeant Leo Judd who throws himself into a series of investigations into everything from animal torture to gay bashings and the death of a young schoolgirl. Set in Dunedin, it is apparent that Woodham knows the place that she lives in. She incorporates a lot of local landmarks, geographical elements and a strong sense of place. This crime novel emphasizes on the characters and their interpersonal relationships by investigating their motives and providing a mystery to solve. The characters are well developed, and the reader would get valuable insights about Leo through flashbacks into his childhood in England. There are three scenes that Woodham constructs in her story. First is a police procedural and a police comradeship. Second is about a marriage in crisis after the loss and grief of a child still missing. Finally, the third scene which is about the coming together of a lesbian relationship. Overall, the novel is simple and easy to read as Woodham skilfully constructs the plot and all the sub-plots together. She links up everything at the end of the story, including the red herrings.

2016.

**41. Haines, Penelope. (2016). *Death on D'Urville*. Otaki, New Zealand: Ithaca Publications.****Location (Call No.):** Albany, St. Heliers (Crime HAIN NZ)**Subject / Theme:** Aviation, Romance**Interesting fact:** Haines had a career background in nursing, management consulting, farm management and commercial pilot (Chapman, Lloyd, 2019).

This is the first novel of the Claire Hardcastle series. The setting of the novel interchanges between Kapiti Coast and Marlborough Sounds where the murder took place. Claire is a pilot flying to remote New Zealand islands which lends itself to her placing herself in a mystery of a homicide investigation due to the resulting remoteness of the crime scene. Operating out of Paraparaumu airport in the North Island, Claire being a commercial pilot and flying instructor, allows the author to play with several feminism themes including women working in what has traditionally been a male-dominated industry. There is a lot of attention to details when Haines describes the aviation scene as well as moving the main protagonist around different locations and integrating her with different groups of people in the story. Apart from an investigation setting, Haines also includes a romance genre where she reveals a growing attraction between Claire and investigator Detective Sergeant Jack Brody while attempting to help solve the murder. Overall, the novel leads the readers into a world of disputed Maori history, artefact smuggling and child abuse.

42. **Sussman, Fiona. (2016). *The Last Time We Spoke*. London, England: Allison & Busby Ltd.**

**Location (Call No.):** Avondale, Central City, Devonport, Northcote, Remuera, Titirangi & Whangaparaoa (General SUSS NZ), Central City & Takapuna (General SUSS (in library use))

**Subject / Theme:** Maori, Psychological

**Interesting fact:** Book was awarded winner of the Ngaio Marsh Award 2017 (Publica, 2020).

This novel is different from other entries so far as it is not a police procedural, detective story or actual crime thriller but instead, it deals with the aftermath of a terrible crime which also includes the before, during and the aftermath of the crime. Set on a rural North Island region, a farmer and his wife's wedding anniversary was disrupted by a home invasion by two Maori youths. The main plot displays Sussman's motives to show what it is like for the wife Carla, in dealing with the aftermath of the events as well as the perpetrator Ben, who is living with the consequences of his actions. The structure of the novel is in a third-person point of view as it changes between Carla and Ben, whose stories merge and separate throughout the book. And although the chapters alternate between them, it is also interspersed in an italicised, poetic manner from the '*Beyond*' addressed to Ben - presumably the Spirit of his ancestors. Overall, Sussman gives an insight into the two sides of Maori and Pakeha culture – those who have the privilege of a normal upbringing; in contrast to those who live in the underbelly of the society.

43. **Younger, Sue. (2016). *Days Are Like Grass*. Auckland, New Zealand: Eunoia Publishing Limited NZ.**

**Location (Call No.):** Albany, Avondale, Central City, Devonport, Glen Innes, Highland Park, Mangere Bridge, Mt. Albert, Mt. Roskill, Orewa, Pukekohe, Takapuna, Titirangi, Waiheke Island & Whangaparaoa (General YOUN NZ)

**Subject / Theme:** Medical, Family

In *Days Are Like Grass*, Younger has constructed a multi-layered story about consequences and past and present actions. Claire is a paediatric surgeon, a mother and a woman with a past. She is uncomfortable being back in her home country being haunted by the events from her childhood but immerses herself in work. The characters are realistically depicted and diverse, “*a motley lot*” (p.36) as the protagonist herself describes them – a Jew, the Caucasians, the Maori and the part-Maori girl “*with an English accent*” (p.29). The author creates a lot of dramatic elements in the story as the plot moves smoothly and briskly as a controlled narrative. Throughout the book, she portrays the plot in the present tense and much of it progresses by dialogue. There are attractive features of clear and lucid descriptions of Auckland, Starship Hospital and Waiheke Island that local readers can familiarise themselves with. Claire’s job also gives the reader a snapshot of the cases of child abuse in New Zealand that are currently being dealt with daily in real-life scenarios. Overall, there are medico-legal and ethical questions, family challenges, and themes about how one copes with the past and live alongside other people who think differently from oneself.



2017.

44. **Crutchley, Nikki. (2017). *Nothing Bad Happens Here*. Coromandel, New Zealand: Oak House Press.**

**Location (Call No.):** Albany, Central City, East Coast Bays, Glen Eden, Highland Park, Mangere Bridge, Manukau, Mt. Albert, Mt. Roskill, New Lynn, Orewa, Pakuranga, Pukekohe, Takapuna, Te Atatu, Warkworth, Wellsford & Whangaparaoa (Crime CRUT NZ)

**Subject / Theme:** Thriller, Investigation

**Interesting fact:** This is Crutchley's debut novel (Mather, Mike, 2018).

Set in the small town of Castle Bay in Coromandel, journalist Miller Hatcher is sent there when the body of a female backpacker who went missing for a while is discovered. The town caters mostly to the summer tourist trade and as Miller gets closer to understanding of what happened the night the tourist disappeared, another girl vanishes from the town. The author builds the tension to the point where Miller finds herself in jeopardy when she realises how close she is coming to uncovering the truth. There are several threads to this mystery in which Crutchley unravels deliberately and with apprehension, before wrapping them up together in a completely unexpected ending. The town itself becomes a character, full of vivid details and dark suspense surrounded by the town's looming jungle (p.88). Moreover, the novel is told from several different viewpoints as Crutchley created a well-elaborated suspense story with a complex and a likeable protagonist. Unlike other journalists, Miller is principled and sympathetic even though she has her own troubles. Overall, all of the supporting cast contribute to the setting of the place, the people and the hidden secrets of a community that is struggling with the combination of natural beauty and human cruelty.

45. **Haines, Penelope. (2017). *Straight and Level*. Otaki, New Zealand: Ithaca Publications.**

**Location (Call No.):** Central City, East Coast Bays & Papatoetoe (Crime HAIN)

**Subject / Theme:** Thriller, Kidnapping

*Straight and Level* is the second in a series of Haines' novels based once again around the central character, commercial pilot Claire Hardcastle. The plot centralizes around Claire's new adventure where she meets three new characters – Jim Mason, a property developer, Andrew Camborne, an investigative crime journalist and Melody, Jim's teenage daughter who becomes Claire's flying student. A failed police raid results in fugitive criminals abducting Claire and forcing her to fly them to the safety of a remote hideout. Thrown forcibly into a world of eco-terrorism, drug-smuggling and violence, Claire has to use all her initiative to survive. This is a part crime fiction, part romance story with some adventure included in by the scenic descriptions of Kapiti Coast and Paraparaumu and the situations in which the author can put a pilot in. In this series, the relationship aspects are significantly addressed as the adventure comes by as a way of kidnapping and enforced fight and the crime element is all about murder and corruption in the crime circles. There is also the empathy for the Maori perspective of the people and the land.

2018.

46. **Crutchley, Nikki. (2018). *No One Can Hear You*. Coromandel, New Zealand: Oak House Press.**

**Location (Call No.):** Birkenhead, East Coast Bays, Glen Eden, Mt Albert, Mt Roskill, Orewa, Papakura, Pt Chevalier, Pukekohe & St Heliers (Crime CRUT NZ)

**Subject / Theme:** Psychological, Feminism

Crutchley's book explores the darker elements of a society where young women who are considered troublesome can disappear without anyone noticing or caring but Crutchley gives these characters their humanity. The author has woven this concept together with a story of friendship, loss, drugs, abduction and murder. The novel begins in 2001 with the abduction and subsequent escape of troubled teen, Faith Marsden. And later as Faith and Zoe dig deeper into the growing cases of other missing women, the danger to them both comes closer and much more personal. The contrast between the seemingly happy families next door and the complicated going on in the home of Lilian, Zoe's mother and her daughter, is well contrasted as are the lives of her high school friends who stayed in town and those that tried to cut ties. The setting is depicted in a fictional country town of Crawton and Auckland. Fast-paced at the beginning, the thread of the story alternates between the characters and the chapters. Crutchley also describes the extent of the missing girl's trauma and also touches on Alzheimer's disease which is written in a very sensitive manner and highlights some of the key issues around its effect.

47. **Kidman, Fiona. (2018). *This Mortal Boy*. Auckland, New Zealand: Penguin Random House New Zealand Ltd.**

**Location (Call No.):** Albany, Avondale, Birkenhead, Blockhouse Bay, Central City, Devonport, East Coast Bays, Epsom, Glen Eden, Glenfield, Grey Lynn, Helensville, Howick, Kumeu, Mahurangi East, Mt. Albert, Mt. Roskill, New Lynn, Northcote, Orewa, Pakuranga, Parnell, Pukekohe, Remuera, St. Heliers, Te Atatu Peninsula, Titirangi, Waiheke Island & Waitakere Central (Historical KIDM NZ)

**Subject / Theme:** Historical, Murder

**Interesting fact:** Book received 3 awards:

- 1) Ockham New Zealand Book Awards Acorn Foundation Fiction Prize 2019
- 2) NZ Booklovers Awards
- 3) NZSA Heritage Book Award for Fiction (Stuff, 2019)

This novel is a fictionalized true crime story about Albert Black, the second last man to be executed in New Zealand. Kidman recreates the events leading up to the night from the scene of Albert murdering another young man at a milk bar in Auckland on July 26th 1955 and all that followed. The final chapters of the book detailing Albert's final days following his conviction and sentencing are poignant. As this novel is based on real events, there is a sense of foretelling about the outcome. However, the way in which the plot is narrated is sensitive and how the various issues are explored maintains the reader's interest. The setting of the story ranges from Belfast in Northern Ireland to Wellington and Auckland – in particular Queen Street, where the crime took place. Kidman used facts and extensive research to show what Wellington and Auckland were like in the early 1950s. She captures a time in New Zealand history when many adults were in a moral panic about teenagers. The book consists of twenty-eight chapters including a page of 'Afterword' and 'Acknowledgement' at the end of the novel. There is also a photo of Albert in his youth in page 286.

48. **West, Ella. (2018). *Rain Fall*. Auckland, New Zealand: Allan & Unwin Book Publishers.**

**Location (Call No.):** Birkenhead, Botany, Central City, Epsom, Manuwera, Mt. Albert, Pakuranga & St. Heliers (WEST)

**Subject / Theme:** Detective, Teen

**Interesting fact:** Book was long listed for the Ngaio Marsh Award 2019 NZ (Trebilcock, Gavin, 2019).

*Rain Fall* tells the story from the perspective of the main protagonist Annie, a 15-year-old living in a small West Coast town of New Zealand. In setting out to discover the truth, Annie uncovers secrets that could affect her community. West depicts that Westport life has revolved around the mines for many years. However, things are changing, and so the Westport community must adjust to these changes. The author packs the novel with mystery, murder, disappearance and other mysterious events and characters that instantly draws the readers into the book. It touches on environmental issues, the devastation people face from loss of livelihood in a small town and the teenage romance between Annie and Jack. West's description of rain, water and weather sets up the moody tone of *Rain Fall* as the rain is the central theme of this book and small-town life as well. The structure of the plot seems to switch from childish views and narrative of puppy love to older and more mature themes of crime and unemployment. Moreover, the scenes within the book describe the New Zealand countryside vividly and go into great detail so that the readers can envision exactly where Annie and the other characters are.

2019.

49. **Hayton, Katherine. (2019). *Miss Pettigrew Sees a Ghost*. Christchurch, New Zealand: Katherine Hayton.**

**Location (Call No.):** Albany, Orewa & Warkworth (Crime HAYT NZ)

**Subject / Theme:** Paranormal, Mystery

This entry is the first paranormal-themed book of Hayton's *Charity Shop Haunted Mysteries* and like all first series books, this novel has much introduction to the characters, clues and red herrings that appear throughout the plot at a reasonable rate. The main protagonist Emily, is working back into society after an accident that has left her scarred both emotionally and physically and unable to do certain things on her own. She is working at a charity shop by pricing items to be sold at an auction when she sees a drawing and a ghost named Cynthia Pettigrew, appears to her to tell her that she has been murdered. Hayton depicts Emily as a sympathetic character with plenty of personal issues to battle as well as the story events. The idea of having a middle-aged woman with a traumatic brain injury as the heroine is unique and compelling that readers cannot help but empathize on Emily's point of view and her attitude throughout the story. Therefore, Hayton constructs the storyline of the novel to inform her readers that finding out the truth about Miss Pettigrew's murder is secondary to discovering Emily's problems and her hardships in her daily life.

50. **Singh, Nalini. (2019). *A Madness of Sunshine*. Berkley, New York: Penguin Publishing Group.**

**Location (Call No.):** Nelson Public Library via Interloans (SING)

**Subject / Theme:** Thriller, Investigation

**Interesting fact:** Singh's books have appeared on New York Times, USA Today and the Publishers Weekly best-sellers list (Singh, Ashwini, 2020).

The plot takes on the characteristics of an Agatha Christie mystery. The story focuses around two characters – Will, who is a policeman with a past that is dark and tumultuous and Anahera who has come home to Golden Cove after leaving her village and vowing never to return. When Miriama, a young girl goes missing, Anahera finds herself helping Will to uncover the secrets of Golden Cove and its residents. While engaging, it is a slower read, and Singh emphasizes on building the town and its characters prior to introducing the overall mystery. What is unique about the novel is that her descriptions of landscapes are prominent throughout the plot. Her descriptions of the lone landscapes, deadly cliffs and coves would make the readers feel like they are part of the story as the picturesque setting adds another dimension to the scene that follows. Although Singh was born in Fiji, she was raised in NZ which adds authenticity to her novel. Thus, Singh's diverse background in her novel transports the reader to a remote but colourful township of the West Coast where she illustrates a community that is brimming with culture in her characters that ranges from Polynesian to Asian ethnicities.

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