

## History Comes Alive In Fiction Reading List

*The Da Vinci Code, Dan Brown* One of the most popular novels of all time and a fun romp of twisty puzzles.

*The Templar Legacy, Steve Berry* “Two forces vie for Templar treasure and learn that...the treasure’s true nature could change the world.”

*The Last Templar, Raymond Khoury* “An archaeologist and an FBI agent ...race across three continents to recover the lost secret of the Templars.”

*The Judge Dee Mysteries, Robert Van Gulik* A wonderful series about a 7<sup>th</sup> century judge who investigates crime during China’s Tang dynasty.

*The Last Kingdom, Bernard Cornwell* One of my favourite authors, Cornwell brings the world of early Britain to us in vivid colours. Also check out his King Arthur series.

*The Eagle and The Raven, Pauline Gedge* Better known for her marvellous books set in ancient Egypt, this novel offers a fascinating picture of the British Celtic people’s struggles against the Romans.

*Dunstan, Conn Iggulden* An absorbing look at late Saxon England: “welcome to the original game for the English throne.”

*Satan In St. Mary’s, Paul Doherty* Stars Hugh Corbett, a mediaeval investigator and keeper of the king’s secret seal. Doherty has published 20 books in this series as well as many other books on historical subjects.

*A Rare Benedictine, Ellis Peters* Peters (Edith Pargeter) work is credited with popularizing historical mysteries which have since become a significant force in mystery publishing. Her Brother Cadfael books tell the story of a Welsh Benedictine monk who solves mysteries in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. To date, the series has generated \$6.5 million in sales.

*A Burnable Book, Bruce Helsing* Superbly written novel featuring poet and sometime spy John Gower. “In Chaucer’s London, betrayal, murder, royal intrigues, mystery and dangerous politics swirl around the existence of a prophetic book that predicts the deaths of English kings.”

*The Name of the Rose, Umberto Eco* One of the most outstanding historical mysteries, indeed novels in any form, written in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1327 Brother William of Baskerville investigates the deaths of monks in an Italian abbey.

*Mistress of the Art of Death, Ariana Franklin* Adelia, a gifted female forensic specialist solves a string of murders in medieval Cambridge.

*The Daughter of Time, Josephine Tey.* A stunningly well plotted examination of whether history has accurately portrayed Richard III wrapped in an absorbing mystery story.

*Labyrinth, Kate Mosse* A huge bestseller, Mosse expertly weaves two narratives: the story of Alice Tanner who becomes caught up in the history of Carcasson in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and a young woman who lived in those times.

*Revelation, C.J. Sansom* I adore his books. They star Mathew Shardlake, a hunch backed lawyer who works on commission to solve crimes for the strong men behind the Tudor royals, Thomas Cromwell, and Thomas Cranmer.

*Heresy, S.J. Parris* You’ll fall in love with the delightful rogue, scholar, philosopher and ex-monk Girodano Bruno as he investigates conspiracies that threaten the English crown.

*Ashes of London, Andrew Taylor* The author meticulously researches his books and is a superb writer. He’s written a variety of award-winning crime fiction. This series features James Marwood, a spy and son of a traitor in Restoration England.

*An Instance of the Fingerpost, Iain Pears* One of the best historical mysteries ever written, the novel set in 17<sup>th</sup> century England tells the story of a heinous murder from the viewpoint of four separate characters. Ingenious!

*The Music of the Spheres, Elizabeth Redfern* An overlooked gem, this fascinating and beautifully written novel features Jonathon Absey, a reporter for a tabloid in 1795 London. While pursuing leads on serial murders, Absey encounters a strange group of Astronomers.

*The Club Dumas, Arturo Perez-Reverte* One of my all time favourite novels, Perez-Reverte manages to give us a story steeped in mystery and suspense while at the same time painting a brilliant portrait of the world of Alexandre Dumas.

*The Meaning of Night & The Glass of Time, Michael Cox* These two books are one long-running narrative of a mystery, romance and chilling story of retribution. Internationally acclaimed, the books are “page turning Victorian mysteries from a master storyteller.”

*Fingersmith, Sarah Waters* A brilliantly plotted story about the lives of two young women living in Victorian England. The novel ends with a stunning twist.

*The Bookman's Wake, John Dunning* “A richly nuanced novel that juxtaposes past and present when Denver ex-cop and book dealer, Cliff Janeway, searches for a book and a killer.”

*Archangel & The Ghost, Robert Harris* World renowned author Harris paints a vivid picture of Stalinist Russia in Archangel. I'm cheating a bit by including his novel, *The Ghost* here, but it's one of the best thrillers with a political theme that I've ever read.

*Child 44, Tom Rob Smith* This debut novel was met with huge acclaim when it was first published and rightly so. “In a country ruled by fear, no one is innocent” in Stalinist Russia.

### **Canadian Authors**

*A Fiend In Human, John M. Gray* This author deserves all the accolades I can give for his brilliantly written mystery. Edmund Whitty, a salacious tabloid scribe, pursues a serial killer through London in 1852.

*The Outlander, Gill Adamson* It's not hard to believe that Ms. Adamson is also a poet when we consider the vibrant, lyrical prose that flows through this novel. That the author has also fashioned a narrative of nail biting suspense is a huge accomplishment.

*Alias Grace, Margaret Atwood* Atwood "takes us back in time and into the life of one of the most enigmatic and notorious women of nineteenth century" in early Ontario. A wonderful read from beginning to end.

*Gold Fever, Vicki Delany* Delany's Klondike series is engaging and each book poses an intriguing mystery. Lots of great details about life during the Yukon gold rush.

*Except the Dying, Maureen Jennings* The Murdoch novels feature a 19<sup>th</sup> century Toronto police detective. They are not only engaging mysteries, but also give us a revealing picture life in the city during those times.

*The Winter Sea, Susanna Kearsley* The author masterfully moves this mystery/romance between contemporary times and Jacobin Scotland. Reminiscent of Daphne Du Maurier's Frenchman's Creek.

*The Mesopotamian Trilogy, D.J. McIntosh* The trilogy includes three novels: *The Witch of Babylon*, *The Book of Stolen Tales* and *The Angel of Eden*. CNN called *The Witch of Babylon*, "one of six historical thrillers to get you hooked along with work by Umberto Eco, Kate Mosse, Wilbur Smith, Dan Brown and Agatha Christie."

