

Mystery Recommendations from Roseburg Library Kris Wiley for The News-Review

The scorching weather over the past couple of weeks presented the perfect opportunity to hit the books, and I leaned in on a couple of mystery series I recommend.

I fell for Ann Cleeves' Vera Stanhope series earlier this year, and I am working my way through the audiobooks on the CloudLibrary and Libby digital platforms. If you like your detectives acerbic, your plots character driven and your settings English, you might like these books in which folks are connected in unexpected ways.

While I was hold for my next Vera book, I listened to "Raven Black," the first title in Cleeves' Shetland series featuring Detective Inspector Jimmy Perez.

Scotland's Shetland Islands are one of the main characters, and they are described so vividly I felt as though I was standing on their wind-swept coast in the north Atlantic.

Perez is a Shetland native who is divorced, lives alone and leads a small police force in his homeland. He is introspective and deliberate, an opposite sort of detective from Stanhope.

"Raven Black" opens with the death of 16-year-old Catherine Ross, who was newly arrived to the island with her dad, a teacher at the local school. Catherine's body is found by Fran Hunter, an artist who is divorced from a prominent Shetlander and Perez's former best friend.

There are any number of suspects, from the old loner who lives down the road to the area's playboy to one of Catherine's teachers. Matters are complicated further by Fran's discovery of another body, this one of a 6-year-old girl who went missing eight years before.

Detective Inspector Taylor from Inverness arrives to take over the case, but it's Perez with his innate understanding of human nature who solves it.

I recommend reading both series in order for the best experience. The ninth book in the Shetland series, "The Killing Stones," drops Sept. 30, and there are 11 Vera Stanhope books.

Following my time armchair traveling to the UK, I was in the mood for a fast-paced mystery. That led me to "Nightshade," the first in a new series by blockbuster writer Michael Connelly of Harry Bosch fame.

"Nightshade" introduces Stilwell, a Los Angeles County Sheriff's detective relegated to Santa Catalina Island after a serious dustup on the mainland. Stil has settled into his position, and he enjoys a routine life on the island that includes a burgeoning relationship with Tash, the island's assistant harbormaster.

Then two cases upend Stil's peace and quiet. First, a buffalo is poached. Second, a woman's body is found offshore. Stil's nemesis is assigned lead detective of the woman's case, but Stil won't let it go, even when he ruffles his boss' feathers and draws the ire of a shady businessman and a potentially corrupt mayor.

Stil's tenacity makes him – and Tash – a target, but even when he has to go rogue, he remains determined to solve both mysteries.

Connelly has created another winning detective, and I look forward to more plot-driven stories featuring Stil and Catalina Island.

Next week's events

Thursday, Sept. 11, 11:30 a.m. – Program for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities: painting class with Create & Sip Studio. Registration requested at library@roseburgor.gov.

Thursday, Sept. 11, 6:30 p.m. – Geology of Table Rocks presented by Larry Broeker