

## What is a Cozy Mystery?

I'm often asked what is a *cozy mystery*. Readers know the term *traditional mystery*. It is a whodunit mystery with clues and red herrings. Often a traditional mystery features a protagonist who is a professional, like a private detective or police officer. They can be set in small towns or large cities.

So how is a cozy mystery different than a traditional mystery?

Well, most often the protagonist in a cozy mystery is an amateur sleuth, a person who has no official capacity to investigate, but usually someone invested in finding the truth. Perhaps the protagonist is the suspect in a murder, or she is a shop owner whose friend or family member is the suspect or the victim.

A cozy mystery should be comfortable to read. I often say, "Think how it feels to curl up in a comfy chair with a cup of tea." These are feel-good books. Yes, there is a murder, but the author doesn't dwell on the state of the dead body or provide lots of gory or gruesome details.

Also in a cozy, though the pace must move along, the author doesn't need to keep the reader on pins and needles from the start. The author can ease into the story by providing details about the people and location. Often cozies involve a theme or "hook," as it's called in the publishing industry. Hooks may include crafting, food, books, and more. A cozy reader loves to learn more about these themes.

A cozy rarely has bad language, though many have smatterings of it. A cozy rarely has explicit sex on the page.

In a nutshell, a cozy reader should feel comfortable sharing a cozy mystery with her great aunt as well as her teenaged daughter.

Savor the mystery!