

**From the Stacks**  
**By Julie Orf**  
**Dunklin County Library**  
**02/07/2026**

The human fascination with the macabre is rarely about a desire for violence itself, but rather a deep-seated psychological curiosity about the boundaries of our own nature. By consuming stories of murder and high-stakes crime, readers are able to explore the darkest corners of the human psyche from the absolute safety of their own living rooms. This "vicarious thrill" allows for a controlled confrontation with fear, providing a unique chemical rush of adrenaline followed by the relief of survival. Furthermore, the genre often appeals to our innate desire for justice and order, as the narrative structure usually demands that a puzzle be solved and a wrong be righted. Ultimately, we peer into the abyss of true crime because it offers a mirror to our own morality, forcing us to wonder what separates the average person from the perpetrator.

When the gavel fell on Felicity Wild, she offered one cryptic truth: "I may not be innocent, but I'm innocent of this." Journalist Reenie Bigelow is not buying the verdict. Reenie knew Felicity before the grad school fallout and the neon-lit nights, and she knows her childhood friend is not a killer. Digging through the rot of Felicity's past, Reenie finds a prosecution story full of holes and a defendant who refused to say a word in her own defense. The silence is deafening, but Reenie's gut is louder. In a city built on staged scenes and convenient lies, Reenie is betting everything on the one thing she knows is real: Felicity Wild does not lie. Jacquelyn Mitchard's "The Birdwatcher" explores female friendship along with money, power, and the desire to protect loved ones.

Ann Cleeves' detective Jimmy Perez returns in a new setting with his family in the novel "The Killing Stones". Detective Jimmy Perez has built a quiet life in Orkney with his family until the disappearance of his oldest friend, Archie Stout, shatters the peace. After a stormy crossing to the island of Westray, Perez discovers Archie's body at an archaeological dig, his skull crushed by an ancient, spiral-carved stone stolen from a local museum. This murder suggests cold premeditation, but the investigation quickly becomes personal. Haunted by lifelong ties to the victim's wife and plagued by rumors of Archie's affair with a mysterious local artist, Perez finds his objectivity slipping. In a community where everyone is a friend and every lead is a betrayal, he must decide if he can truly see the killer hiding in plain sight.

A wedding in the Hollywood Hills turns lethal when a newlywed's "accidental" death reveals a pattern of sinister tragedies. HSI agent Carmen Sanchez and security expert Jake Heron soon realize they are hunting the Honeymoon Killer, a predator who does

not just crave murder, but feasts on the prolonged grief of those left behind. The killer has set his sights on Carmen and Jake, intending to destroy one just to watch the other crumble. In this twisted game of predator and prey, the duo must find the killer before they become the final pieces of his macabre masterpiece. Jeffery Deaver and teams up with author Isabella Maldonado for this thrilling novel where perfect couples make perfect victims in "The Grave Artist."

"Evil Bones" by Kathy Reichs pulls forensic anthropologist Temperance Brennan into twisty magnetic tale of the macabre. In Charlotte, North Carolina, a series of mutilated animals displayed in bizarre tableaux takes a dark turn when forensic anthropologist Tempe Brennan is called to a possible human scene. Though the victim is a pet, the escalating cruelty drives Tempe to team up with the cantankerous "Skinny" Slidell to catch the culprit. Experts warn that the killer is "upping the ante," a prophecy fulfilled when a woman is found posed in a macabre mimicry of the earlier animal sacrifices. As those close to Tempe begin to vanish, she realizes she is the centerpiece of a sick game, forcing her into a race against time to confront the nature of pure evil.