



The Best American Mystery Stories 2004 (The Best American Series)

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Since its inception in 1915, the Best American series has become the premier annual showcase for the country's finest short fiction and nonfiction. For each volume, a series editor reads pieces from hundreds of periodicals, then selects between fifty and a hundred outstanding works. That selection is pared down to twenty or so very best pieces by a guest editor who is widely recognized as a leading writer in his or her field. This unique system has helped make the Best American series the most respected — and most popular — of its kind.

Assembled by best-selling suspense author Nelson DeMille, The Best American Mystery Stories 2004 contains a spectacular array of stories by mystery veterans and talented newcomers. Follow a chain reaction that saves a woman's life, visit a house haunted by a husband's violent killing spree, enter the high-stakes world of Las Vegas gambling, watch the line between reality and dream blur, travel with a bored salesman driven to crime, and much more. Encompassing all aspects of the genre, this year's selections are sure to quicken pulses, send chills down the spine, and keep readers continually guessing.

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The Best American Mystery Stories 2004 (The Best American Series) From Houghton Mifflin Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #1020075 in Books
- Published on: 2004-10-14
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.25" h x 1.12" w x 5.50" l, 1.11 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 432 pages

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

The eighth in Otto Penzler's popular series offers some fine writing, but mystery fans should be aware that the bulk of the entries amount to crime fiction. Out of the 20 stories from veteran bestsellers such as Stephen King and Joyce Carol Oates, as well as promising newcomers, only one—William J. Carroll Jr.'s "Height Advantage"—is a whodunit. The standout is Christopher Coake's "All Through the House," a chilling, multilayered account of a family massacre whose shifting perspectives, flashbacks and flash-forwards create a moving, painful and haunting effect that lingers long after the last page. Sherlockians will be amused and intrigued by Richard Lupoff's clever pastiche of Edgar Allan Poe's C. Auguste Dupin, "The Incident of the Impecunious Chevalier," which features a young Holmes calling on his literary ancestor to track down a certain legendary jeweled black bird. Jeffrey Robert Bowman's "Stonewalls," with its alternative explanation of the cause of Gen. Stonewall Jackson's death from friendly fire, will appeal to Civil War buffs with its gritty and compelling perspective on the barbarities of war. Fans of suspenseful and psychologically rich tales of con men and low-level crooks will enjoy this volume; devotees of Agatha Christie and other authors in the classic mystery tradition should seek satisfaction elsewhere.

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From [Booklist](#)

Here's the eighth entry in the popular best-of series (this time the celebrity editor is DeMille, author of such bestsellers as *The General's Daughter* and *The Lion's Gate*). It includes such notables as Stephen King, Dick Lochte, and Joyce Carol Oates, who seems to be a perennial cast member. There are also several new voices, younger writers who have only begun to leave their mark on the genre. The stories cover a variety of styles and themes, but what they have in common is a writer knowing what he or she wants to say and saying it well. The book is like a sampler of modern crime fiction, spotlighting the best the genre has to offer. The veteran writers show us they still have new tricks in their bags, while the (as yet) unknowns clearly mark themselves as people to watch. This series remains a must for all mystery collections. *David Pitt*

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About the Author

OTTO PENZLER is a renowned mystery editor, publisher, columnist, and owner of New York's The Mysterious Bookshop, the oldest and largest bookstore solely dedicated to mystery fiction. He has edited more than fifty crime-fiction anthologies.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Helen Elder:

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