

Most of the time, you find yourself either reading great literature or trash. It seems like there is less and less in the middle. Either you are reading something because it is good for you and because you'll feel a sense of accomplishment upon completing it, or you're reading it because it is entertainment. We look at books the same way we look at food. Either they are delicious, or they are good for us. Never both.

That is why I like murder mystery books so much. Mystery books manage to take the middle ground. They exercise the mind by allowing us to try to solve difficult puzzles while at the same time tantalizing us with suspense. I have been reading mystery books since I was a little kid. I used to read Hardy boys and Nancy Drew mysteries. The Nancy Drew mystery books, in fact, were my first love. I remembered how tense I would become as the suspense would build and build. My parents would come in, and I would pretend to go to sleep. As soon as they would leave, however, I would take out my flashlight and continue reading the mystery book. I could never stop before the end.

Nowadays, I love nothing better than to read my children's mystery books. My children have inherited my love of literature, and I am pleased to indulge them any time they wish. I read them ghost stories, mythology, memoirs, and all other types of literature. But their very favorite are children's mystery books. They just cannot get enough. After I leave at night, they will continue reading on their own. I pretend I don't notice, but inwardly smile remembering how I used to do the same thing as a child.

Of course, I have not given up mystery books myself. I have always loved a great puzzle, and that type of love tends to persist over a lifetime. Nowadays, I have less time to dive into mysteries than when I was young. During the work week, I often have no time to pick up a book except to read to my children. Yet not only do I get to enjoy reading with them, but I also set aside time for myself. Whenever on vacation, I will take along as many mystery books as will fit in my bag. I like nothing better than to sit on the beach and read mysteries.