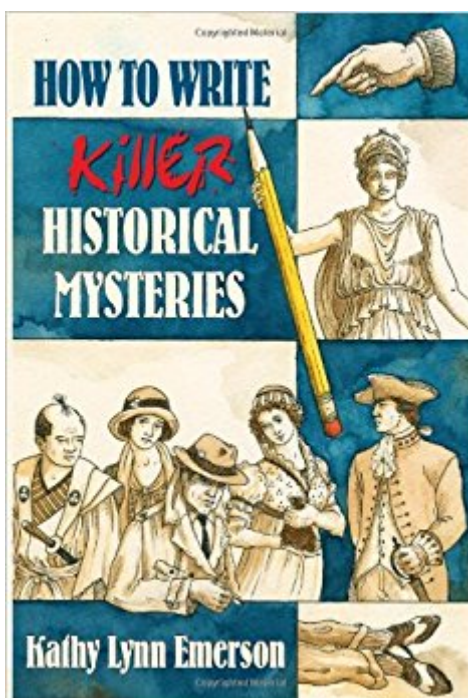


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# How To Write Killer Historical Mysteries: The Art And Adventure Of Sleuthing Through The Past



## Synopsis

The core of the book is Emerson's personal take on writing and selling historical mysteries, but it also includes contributions from over forty other historical mystery writers • practical advice, anecdotes, and suggestions for research • and input from assorted editors, booksellers, and reviewers. For both historical mystery writers and readers.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Emerson, author of the Lady Appleton and Diana Spaulding mystery series, turns her hand to how it's done in this useful guide to writing historical crime fiction. Drawing on her own works and those of her fellow historical-mystery writers (Kerry Greenwood, Alan Gordon, Carola Dunn, and others), she lays out, in commonsense sequence, the stages of planning and writing a historical mystery. Chapters on choosing setting and character, research, crafting a plot, and selling your book offer much of the same information as similar chapters in other how-to books for mystery writers, but the information is nicely tailored for this particular genre. Published writers probably won't find much here that they don't already know, but budding historical novelists will discover a wealth of helpful tips and may want to keep a notebook handy to jot them down. The book finds its niche and fills it well. --David Pitt

"...a comprehensive guide, full of seasoned advice and rich examples." -- Hallie Ephron, author of Writing and Selling Your Mystery Novel "I can't imagine a

question about historical mysteries that isn't answered here. Do not start writing your historical mystery without this book! -- Carolyn Wheat, author of How To Write Killer Fiction

Maybe it was just that nearly every topic I was hoping to gain more insight, and yes, somewhat in-depth information on was merely skimmed over, but overall I did not find this to be so helpful as I thought it would be. Not that I expect any book on writing to hold the reader's hand and describe outlines or set rules in step by step detail - and anyway, there is no one size fits all way to write - but some ideas for dealing with writing obstacles unique to historical fiction would have been nice. Instead, the author mostly cites published novels that dealt with a particular topic, but nothing by way of how those books or authors made use of the subject matter. For instance, I am highly interested in how to incorporate a gay detective (implied or otherwise) into the plot, and the one example given of a published book of that genre made no mention of anything but the title. And that homosexuality was illegal and specialized research into the specific time period was needed. It's appreciated information, and not faulty, per se, but only scratches the surface and did not prove at all helpful for my aims. There were several other examples of similar not-very-helpful paragraphs that barely give credence to a topic save for mentioning it. There was some good advice on research, and the entirety of Chapter 7 on Plots, Subplots & Building Suspense was exceptionally well done, with actual writing advice that avoided a preachy, set in stone way of doing things attitude. Very helpful and one chapter I've referred to several times - although it is not really specific to the sub genre of historicals and is more of a run of the mill mystery plotting guide. It also did cover a few topics I haven't come across anywhere else, such as an entire chapter devoted to anachronisms. For the historical mystery writer, this book is worth reading for that alone. Just make sure you have other available writing resources if you're new to historical mysteries because you may still have some unanswered ponderings if you use this one on its own.

Emerson's prose is engaging and her advice is right on target. I have read many historical mysteries -- excellent and trite, and the advice Emerson offers to novice writers aligns with the good to excellent books I have read. While I haven't read any of her books, I had read some of the books she refers to. This one is a keeper -- and I got several new historical mystery authors to check out. Bulls eye!

Good read, good advice.

This is a practical, yet inspiring, explanation of ways to organize, research and prepare for the creative and inspired process of actually writing. Though there are as many ways to proceed as there are authors, this includes the important things one needs to take care to make a cohesive, credible story and characters. Historical mysteries have their own character that needs to be carefully constructed. Highly recommended.

If you're picking up your pen for your first attempt at writing, it will do. But overall, I found it a waste of money. I had a hard time finding any new information. It needs more specifics, not generalities.

A great reference guide for the beginner as they begin to think about writing any historical novel.

A really helpful book. So many excellent examples, and so many topics covered. If you're interested in writing historical mysteries, or even in reading them with a more critical eye, this is the book for you.

I bought this book primarily because I'm writing an historical fantasy; whether or not there will be a murder in it...well, that remains to be seen. My thought was that this might be able to provide me with more resources for research (the U.S. homefront during World War II), and I was right, even suggesting certain series that might be worth a look-see as to how that author dealt with how people felt during that period in time, the slang used, all the little nuances that are important to historical fiction. (Unless it's been written as pure comedy, would you really want to read something that has anachronistic dialogue? Not me. :-)) What this book won't do is give you a how-to on writing fiction. IMHO, the author wisely leaves that to others, focusing on what she said she would do (no tangents, here); things like primary and secondary sources of research, book titles, character names, etc. A nice resource if writing historical fiction is your thing.

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