



Detective Fiction

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A serial killer is on the loose in Naples, Florida, an enclave of wealth and privilege on the Southwest Gulf Coast. At first, the murders have been disguised as accidents, but when Police Chief Wade Hansen becomes suspicious, Mayor Charles Beaumont orders him to apprehend the killer before the truth becomes public knowledge.

Hansen reaches out to retired Chicago homicide detective Jack Starkey. Starkey, who has been shot three times: twice on the job and once in the army, is enjoying every cop's retirement dream, but at the same time, misses the thrill of the hunt, so he accepts the job.

As the bodies stack up like cordwood, Starkey searches for anything that the victims might have in common. He decides to go undercover as a member of the Naples elite in an attempt to get himself noticed by the killer, drawing the attention of Count Vasily Petrovich, who operates a hedge fund named for the Atocha, a Spanish galleon that sank in a hurricane off the Florida Keys in 1622.

When Starkey discovers that all of the victims so far had been investors in that fund, and that the count is not a count at all, but a member of the Russian mafia he suspects that the Atocha Fund might have a substantial penalty for early withdrawal.

Meanwhile, William Stevens, a Chicago Tribune police reporter, has been writing a series of best-selling crime novels based upon his pal Starkey's career. Starkey's alter-ego is Chicago homicide detective Jack Stoney.

Things are not what they seem, plot twists abound, and the bullets begin to fly. Starkey, in desperation, reaches out to the fictional Stoney, to help him catch the killer.

Detective Fiction Details

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Author : William Wells

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From Reader Review Detective Fiction for online ebook

pamela claffy says

I liked the Chicago references. Light reading. He got the detecting wrong but I liked the mob guys helping him.

Bill says

I won a paperback copy of “Detective Fiction” by William Wells, on Goodreads.com and am posting an honest review. I gave it a rating of 2.5 stars, adjusting up to 3 stars.

An interesting concept—a retired Chicago homicide detective, Jack Starkey, living in Florida, acting as a copy editor to a Chicago writer of detective stories based on cases Starkey worked. Reluctantly lured into investigating suspicious deaths ruled as suicides in the exclusive high-dollar town of Naples, Starkey bases some of his investigative methods on the damn-the-torpedoes, charge! tactics of his fictional counterpart Jack Stoney. He goes undercover as a rich investor recently moved to Naples. He has to maintain his cover while dealing with his gorgeous girlfriend (as to why she chose him, nobody knows).

The witty prose that Starkey presents as the story unfolds, was, to me, the highlight of the book. There was nothing exceptional about the storyline. It moved along to the expected conclusion.

There were some glaring errors that a copy editor should have caught. On page 90, his mother’s name is given as Grace and also as Alice, depending on which cemetery marker you choose to believe. On page 109, Starkey talks of ‘the ten million eagles’ deposited to his Ameritrade bank account. He’d needed 10 million dollars to use as a phony investor when he infiltrated an investment company. An ‘eagle’ is a gold coin with a face value of ten dollars, so ‘ten million eagles’ would be 100 million dollars. Someone forgot to do their research.

Also, the stiff paper cover folded over to simulate a faux hardcover/dustjacket doesn’t work. If you lay the book flat, the folded edge of the cover tries to unfold, and the cover rises up from the pages of the book.

Margie says

I really tried to like this book--especially since the Amazon reviews were all so positive. The characters and plot just didn't grab my attention. I'd force myself to read a chapter, and then, a week would go by until I would pick it up again. By that time, I had forgotten what was going on. Finally on page X, I gave up.

gary says

On the right track.

Little corny, but has a good chance. Maybe a little less flip and more substance. Needs a little more adventure for Stoney

Lora says

I won a book in a Goodreads giveaway that was lost in the mail. The publisher was nice enough to send this book in its place. I'll review as soon as I read it.

Ben Fortel says

I received this book as a winner of a Goodreads giveaway.

I sometimes struggle with first-person perspective because it means the narrator/protagonist has to tell the reader background information in a way that feels a bit forced, so it took me a bit longer than normal to get into the story, but once I did, I really enjoyed it.

I liked the characters and the twists in the plot. I was fun to think about how geriatric villains would operate.

My family and I took a trip to Naples, FL last summer, and it was really fun to read a mystery set in that town. I am looking forward to passing this book on to my sister-in-law, who lives there.

Colleen says

I won this book from Goodreads giveaways and am leaving an honest review.

The book took me awhile to get into, not because the story was not entertaining, but there was something I didn't like about the protagonist. He just wasn't very complicated as a character, basically just seemed like his thoughts revolved around naked women of less than half his age, in pretty much every situation. I eventually got used to him, and got into the story, and ended up being more entertained than I thought it would be.

The story follows Jack Starkey, retired Chicago PD in his post-retirement Florida paradise, who gets involved in a serial murder case in a nearby town. He ends up being an average guy going undercover in an elitist community. It was not a complicated or dramatic read, it read mostly as a comedy due to the unfailing wry humor of the narrator. I never did quite warm up to liking Jack Starkey as a person, and couldn't really see what his catch of a girlfriend saw in him.

Karen says

I borrowed this copy from the library, and did not remember why I requested it.

The beginning was very confusing, as it is a chapter from a detective novel that the detective is proofreading.

I enjoyed the voice in this mystery, as I like a bit of sassy. Fortunately, the detective (retired) does not always speak the sassy aloud. It is a private insight into his character.

The plot was clever, and I am anxious to continue if this is a series.

Next time I won't wonder why the book has turned up at my library with my hold on it.

John Wheelles says

Here's a twist on the classic detective novel for you, this one has a fictional detective as one of the main characters. Okay, so I realize the book is detective fiction... but, in this case there are two detectives one a fictional character and one the detective the other is based on. We get to follow both of them to some degree. It's a fun twist and makes for an interesting tale! Pick up a copy, I'm sure you'll find this one entertaining!

Mila Bryan says

Great detective story with an interesting spin. Set in Florida with the main character being a retired police detective from Chicago.

Liisa says

This book is 5 stars to me mainly because of the humorous banter of the detective within. Add to this the surprising twists in plot with non-stop action, and you have a winner.

Sheila says

William Wells' Detective Fiction opens with a story within a story. The editor, Chicago Homicide Detective Sergeant Jack Starkey (retired), promises to make notes in the margin as he reads, and the reader is quickly intrigued. Starkey has a very individual viewpoint, humor, and pleasantly chatty style as he tells his tale. He also has a vested interest in his fictional counterpart, Jack Stoney, both financial and personal, as profits from the books are what keep his Florida bar, the Drunken Parrot, afloat.

Starkey has retired to a houseboat in Southern Florida. He runs a bar not too far from Naples, Florida's haunt of the rich and famous, and enjoys the company of beautiful Marisa. But he misses the chase and is delighted to help when the powers that be grow suspicious of deaths in Naples. Unfortunately, lacking the support of

the whole Chicago force of detectives and friends, Jack Starkey's about as untethered as his fictional alter-ego, committing himself to a dangerous cover and failing to spot the lies behind the truths. If Stoney would charge into an armed man's home without backup, Starkey will charge when equally blind and equally lacking support. But he's retired. The retired and the fictional are different.

Written with sharp dry humor, *Detective Fiction* invites the reader to follow Starkey's dream-driven journey to dream houses, dream boats, dream cars, dream girls (but don't tell Marisa) and nightmare dangers. Meanwhile there's a book to be edited, and a fictional character whose imagined bravery might inspire the real.

Bad guys are "brought to justice in a most satisfying way, the hero [gets] the girl, and the future look[s] bright," in the world of detective fiction. In the novel, Starkey lives his own detective/retirement fiction and this reader, for one, is eager for more at story's end.

Disclosure: I was given a free preview edition by the publisher and I offer my honest review.

Laura says

Our divorce was what was termed "amicable." I suppose that meant she didn't mind talking to me on the phone occasionally, and wouldn't consider it particularly good news if I were found floating face down in the Gulf of Mexico."

Meet Jack Starkey. He's a retired Chicago PD detective, who has used his disability funds and pension to move to Florida. There he bought a house boat and purchased a bar/eating joint. He also moonlights as a proofreader for an author who bases his crime detective off many of Jack's exploits while on the force. Of course, the fictional character is better looking, more of a loose cannon, and always gets the bad guys.

Jack is enjoying his relaxing days...but he's also feeling bored and rusty. So when the police chief of Naples, Florida approaches him with a consultant job, he is more than willing to listen. Several elderly citizens in Naples have died under suspicious circumstances, and Police Chief Wade Hansen feels that it was not these citizens "time to go". But what exactly is going on in Paradise? And can Starkey figure things out quietly so that the bucolic image Naples has quietly cultivated stays intact? There's property values to consider after all.

Bottom line: Wells has offered a lighthearted detective novel that attempts to play off some of the classic detective tropes. I thought I was going to really enjoy *Detective Fiction* 2 chapters in...but then the jocular tone started to grate on me. Jack just doesn't seem to take *anything* seriously, even when things get pretty dangerous. The plot was borderline implausible. Also, the red herring was revealed quite early--so the rest of the book felt like "oh, I guess that's what's happening now" more than a true mystery. Given 1.5 stars or a rating of "below average". Recommended only as a library check out.

Chick Marks says

Nice easy read with fun characters. The Florida layback style war reminiscent of Carl H. Will look for his other books.

