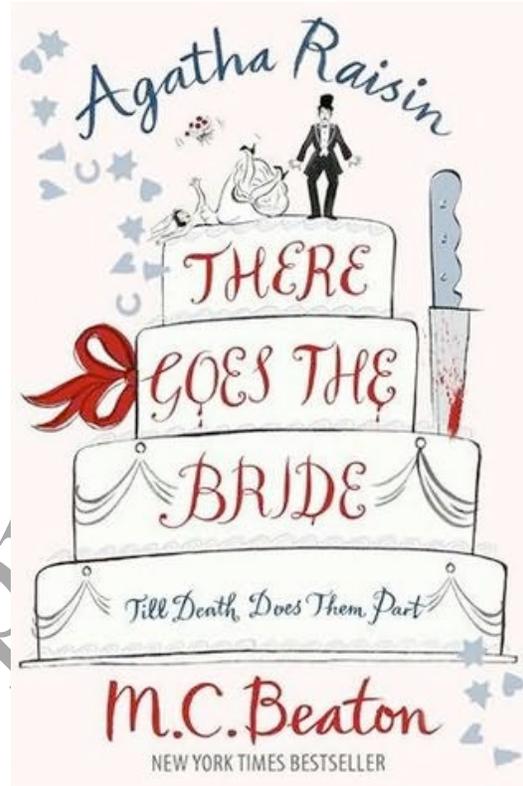


# Six for the Summer

## *Suspended Sentences*

by Jim Napier

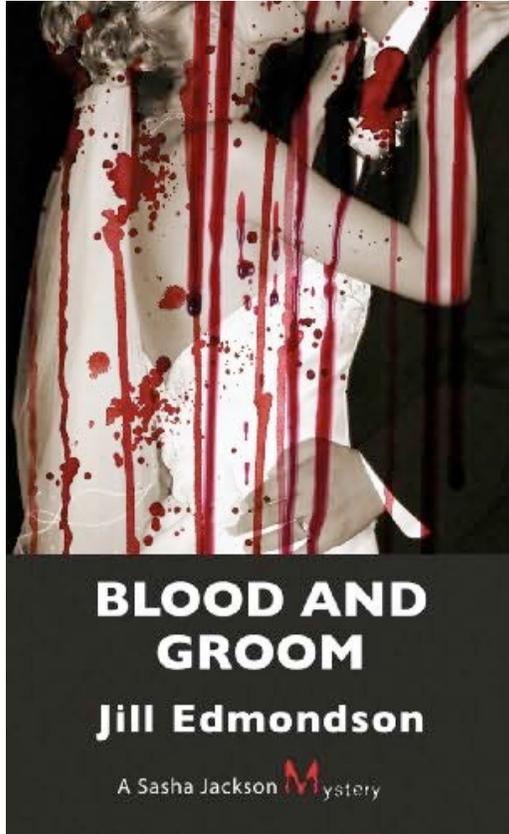
Now that Canada Day has come and gone and we are well and truly into summer, it's time to think about packing up and heading for the cottage, visiting our in-laws and their unwieldy broods, or perhaps vacationing in more exotic climes. Whether you'll be spending your time on a chaise lounge enjoying a placid lakeside view, willfully ignoring your nearest and not-so-dearest, or in an airport waiting area cooling your heels during an interminable pre-boarding, a book or two will not go amiss. Here are half a dozen entertaining tales to help the time pass effortlessly; amusing all, they run the gamut from cozies to gently hard-boiled (guess that means soft-boiled, right?) and from historical and familiar settings to enticing foreign lands. Enjoy!



**M. C. Beaton,**  
***There Goes The Bride***  
(Minotaur Books, 2009)

Summer is traditionally a time for weddings, and British author M.C. Beaton has skillfully drawn on that tradition as a basis for some ever-so-slightly dark humour. Village sleuth Agatha Raisin is not looking forward to the wedding of her ex-husband to a head-turning younger woman. The good news is that the plans are permanently cancelled when, minutes before the ceremony, the trophy bride is shot and killed; the bad news is that Agatha is the prime suspect. The author of nineteen previous Agatha Raisin stories, together

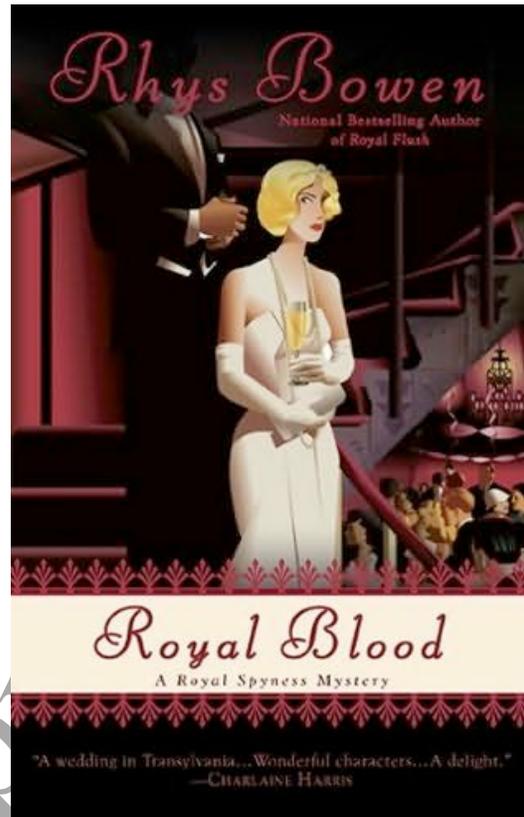
with half a dozen novels featuring the exploits of Scottish policeman Hamish MacBeth, Beaton can usually be counted on for a diverting tale, and this one does not disappoint.



***Jill Edmondson,  
Blood and Groom***  
(Dundurn, 2009)

Canadian author Jill Edmondson has also mined the fertile field of matrimonial mayhem, this time with the story of a bridegroom who doesn't quite make it to the alter. Former rock-band singer-turned-private-investigator Sasha Johnson is hired by the former bride-to-be to find the culprit and prove she wasn't involved. It turns out that Gordon, her murdered fiancée, had no shortage of enemies. Makes you wonder why she wanted to marry him in the first place. A fast-paced, soft-boiled debut

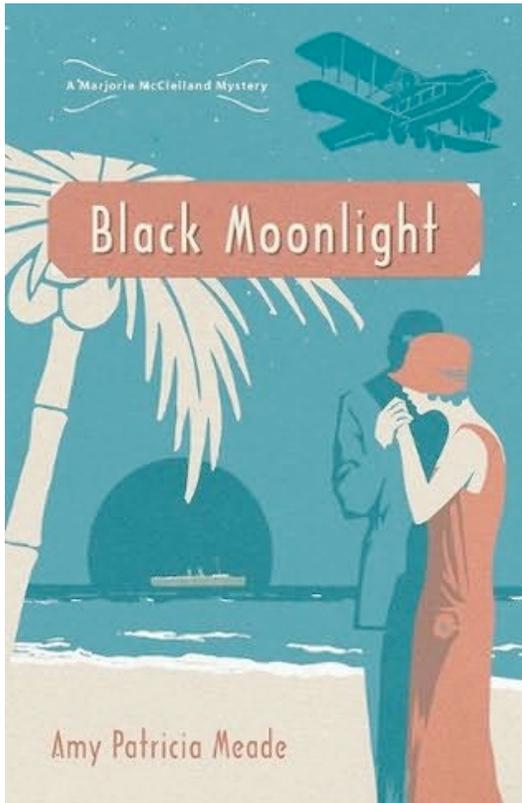
novel with a strong, distinctive voice, and a sassy protagonist.



***Rhys Bowen, Royal Flush***  
(Berkley Prime Crime, 2009)

With nine witty novels chronicling the misadventures of Welsh police constable Evan Evans under her belt, Rhys Bowen has turned her talents lately toward a series of historical tales describing the exploits of Lady Georgiana, a minor (and impoverished) member of the British Royal family, thirty-fourth in line for the throne and badly in need of a gainful occupation. *Royal Flush* is Georgiana's third such outing, and finds the London-based aristocrat trying to make ends meet when her clientele decamps for the countryside for the summer holidays. Hiring herself out as a dinner and theatre companion proves to be a mistake, and she is sent to Castle Rannoch in the Scottish Highlands to keep an eye on the visiting American

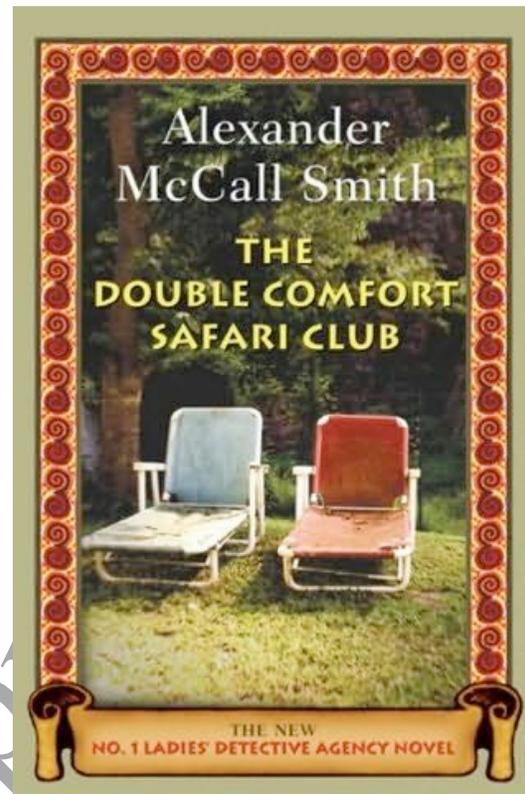
divorcée Mrs. Simpson, and, somewhat less plausibly, to prevent the Prince of Wales from being killed. Winner of eight major mystery writing awards, Bowen's tales are rooted in historical fact, and combine an entertaining puzzle with her trademark sly humour.



**Amy Patricia Meade,**  
***Black Moonlight***  
(Midnight Ink, 2010)

A captivating tale set during the flamboyant 1930s. Hoping for a romantic getaway mystery writer Marjorie McClelland and her husband, millionaire Creighton Ashcroft, have sailed to a small island near Bermuda, only to find the family home infested with relatives. When one of the gathering is found murdered it falls to Marjorie to discover the killer. The fourth in her series featuring the author-turned-sleuth, Meade's story is reminiscent of the urbane crime-solving duos of

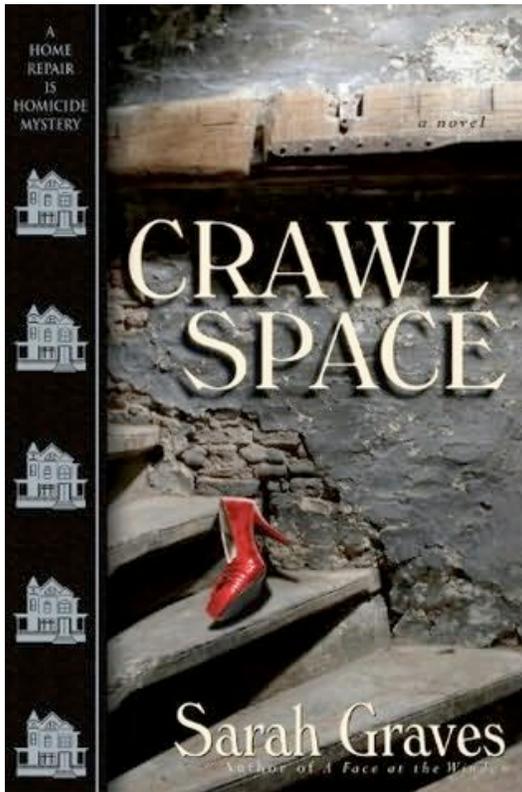
the classic film era, and will appeal to fans of Agatha Christie, Dorothy L. Sayers, and Marjory Allingham.



**Alexander McCall Smith,**  
***The Double Comfort Safari Club***  
(Knopf Canada, 2010)

He's back: the author of the best-selling *No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency* has penned his latest adventure chronicling the adventures of Private Detective Precious Ramotswe in her native Botswana. In this tale the engaging sleuth journeys with a friend to a safari camp in the countryside to give a large sum of money to a guide at the request of a former guest. A routine task on the face of it; but before long she begins to sense that something is wrong, and soon she experiences other anomalies. Drawing on her unfailing good humour, her legendary sense of patience, and her insights into human nature, this reincarnation of a certain other sleuth

from the English village of St. Mary's Mead can be counted on to set things right.



***Sarah Graves, Crawl Space***  
(Bantam, 2010)

American author Sarah Graves has carved out a notable niche with her *Home Repair is Homicide* mysteries. When author Carolyn Rathbone arrives in the village of Eastport, Maine to gather facts for a new book about a series of local murders, the villagers are less than pleased. Her research will rekindle old animosities and create new suspicions, and cause someone with a deadly secret to take extreme measures to make certain that the past remains buried. It falls to ex-Wall Street denizen turned home-restorer Jacobia “Jake” Triptree to sort things out and bring a killer to justice; but before it is over she will find that the tables are turned, and the hunter has become the hunted.

So there you have it: six easy pieces, each as diverting as a mint julep, emphatically *not* tied to oil spills, Wall Street shenanigans, or self-serving global summits. They offer instead a brief respite from the cares of the world. After all, that’s what summer’s for, isn’t it?

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