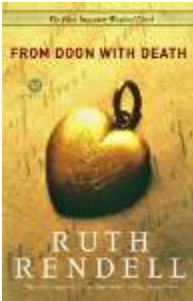


# The Works of Ruth Rendell

## Chief Inspector Wexford

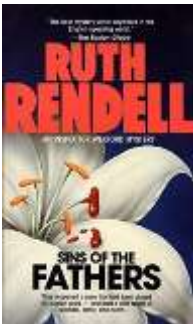
(24 novels, 2 short story collections)



### **From Doon with Death (1964)**

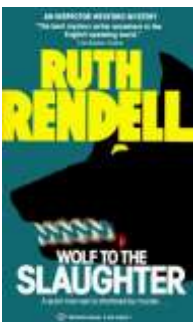
There is nothing extraordinary about Margaret Parsons, a timid housewife in the quiet town of Kingsmarkham, a woman devoted to her garden, her kitchen, her husband. Except that Margaret Parsons is dead, brutally strangled, her body abandoned in the nearby woods.

Who would kill someone with nothing to hide? Inspector Wexford, the formidable chief of police, feels baffled -- until he discovers Margaret's dark secret: a trove of rare books, each volume breathlessly inscribed by a passionate lover identified only as Doon. As Wexford delves deeper into both Mrs. Parsons' past and the wary community circling round her memory like wolves, the case builds with relentless momentum to a surprise finale as clever as it is blindsiding.



### **Sins of the Fathers (1967) a.k.a. A New Lease of Death**

It was a brutal, vicious crime -- sixteen years old. A helpless old woman battered to death with an axe. Harry Painter hung for it, and Chief Inspector Wexford is certain they executed the right man. But Reverend Archery has doubts . . . because his son wants to marry the murderer's beautiful, brilliant daughter. He begins unravelling the past, only to discover that murder breeds murder -- and often conceals even deeper secrets...



### **Wolf to the Slaughter (1967)**

It was better than a hotel, this anonymous room on a secluded side street of a small country town. No register to sign, no

questions asked, and for five bucks a man could have three hours of undisturbed, illicit lovemaking.

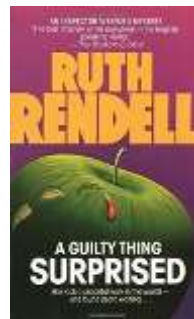
Then one evening a man with a knife turned the love nest into a death chamber. The carpet was soaked with blood -- but where was the corpse?

Meanwhile, Anita Margolis had vanished -- along with the bundle of cash she'd had in her pocket. There was no body, no crime - nothing more concrete than an anonymous letter and the intriguing name of Smith. According to headquarters, it wasn't to be considered a murder enquiry at all. Chief Inspector Wexford, however, had other ideas.



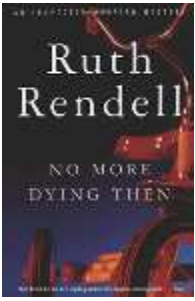
### **The Best Man to Die (1969)**

Who could have suspected that the exciting stag party for the groom would be the prelude to the murder of his close friend Charlie Hatton? And Charlie's death was only the first in a string of puzzling murders involving small-time gangsters, cheating husbands, and loose women. Now Chief Inspector Wexford and his assistant join forces with the groom to track down a killer...



### **A Guilty Thing Surprised (1970)**

Elizabeth Nightingale found peace and tranquility on her nightly walks through the rich, dense forests surrounding Myfleet Manor. But the peace she treasured was shattered one night when she found death waiting in the woods. It seemed a straightforward enough case. But Detective Chief Inspector Wexford discovered that beneath the placid surface of the Nightingales' lives there were undercurrents and secrets that no one had ever suspected.

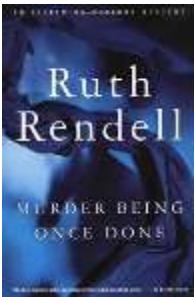


### **No More Dying Then (1971)**

What kind of a person would kidnap two children?

That is the question that haunts Wexford when a five-year-old boy and a twelve-year-old girl disappear from the village of

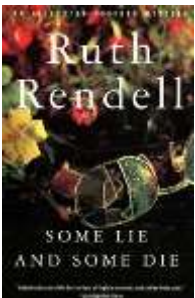
Kingsmarkham. When a child's body turns up at an abandoned country home one search turns into a murder investigation and the other turns into a race against time. Filled with pathos and terror, passion, bitterness, and loss, **No More Dying Then** is Rendell at her most chillingly astute.



### **Murder Being Once Done (1972)**

A young girl, with no name, no possessions, and no past, is murdered in a vast, overgrown London cemetery. Wexford's doctor has prescribed no alcohol, no rich food and, above all, no police work. But when the young girl's body is found in the

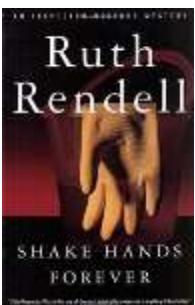
cemetery and the local police, under the command of Wexford's nephew, are baffled, Wexford decides to brave his doctor's wrath and the condescension of the London police by doing a little investigating of his own.



### **Some Lie and Some Die (1973)**

In spite of dire predictions, the rock festival in Kingsmarkham seemed to be going off without a hitch, until the hideously disfigured body is discovered by two lovers in a nearby quarry. And soon Wexford is investigating the links between a local girl

gone bad and a charismatic singer at the festival, who inspires an unwholesome devotion in his followers. **Some Lie and Some Die** is a devilishly absorbing novel, in which Wexford's deductive powers come up against the aloof arrogance of pop stardom.

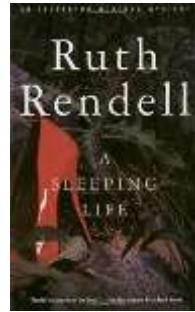


### **Shake Hands Forever (1975)**

The bed was neatly made, and the woman on top neatly strangled. According to all accounts, Angela Hathall was deeply in love with her husband and far too paranoid to invite an unknown person into their home. So who managed to gain entry and strangle

her without a struggle? That is the problem facing Inspector Wexford in **Shake Hands Forever**. Perhaps it was the mystery

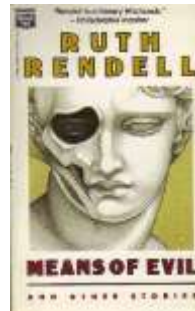
woman who left her fingerprints on the Hathall's bathtub? Perhaps it was Angela's husband who lied about a stolen library book? And why was the Hathall home, usually so unkempt, exquisitely clean the day of Angela's death? Then a neighbor--friendly, knowing, disarmingly beautiful--offers Wexford her assistance. And what begins as a rather tricky case turns into an obsession that threatens to destroy the Inspector's career--as well as his marriage.



### **A Sleeping Life (1978)**

Rhoda Comfrey's death seemed unremarkable; the real mystery was her life. In **A Sleeping Life**, master mystery writer Ruth Rendell unveils an elaborate web of lies and deception painstakingly maintained by a troubled soul. A wallet found in Comfrey's handbag leads Inspector Wexford

to Mr. Grenville West, a writer whose plots revel in the blood, thunder, and passion of dramas of old; whose current whereabouts are unclear; and whose curious secretary--the plain Polly Flinders--provides the Inspector with more questions than answers. And when a second Grenville West comes to light, Wexford faces a dizzying array of possible scenarios--and suspects--behind the Comfrey murder.



### **Means of Evil: And Other Stories (1979)** (short story collection)

According to the London Sunday Express, Ruth Rendell is "one of the best novelists writing today." For readers new to her work, this collection of five mysteries, all cases for Detective Chief Inspector Wexford, is a perfect introduction.

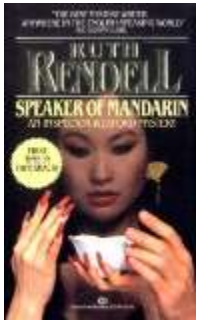
In Wexford, Rendell has created a rare and endearing character. Like all memorable and remarkable individuals, Wexford is a man of great intuitive power. His best performances are flashes of insight, solutions that seem more inspired by instinct than intellect.



### **Put On By Cunning (1981) a.k.a. Death Notes**

Sir Manuel Camargue, yesterday one of the most celebrated musicians of his time, today floats face down in the lake near his sprawling English country house. The consensus is accidental death -- but

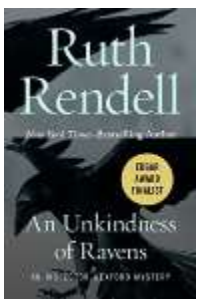
Inspector Wexford knows the stench of murder most foul when he smells it. Particularly in the company of two suspects -- one, the victim's fiancée, who is too young to be true, the other his daughter who may be no kin and even less kind...



### **The Speaker of Mandarin (1983)**

There were some things about Chief Inspector Wexford's trip to China that he could never have dreamt of. That an old woman would haunt him from one city to the next. That a man would be tragically drowned. Or that, back in England, he would be investigating the murder of one of his

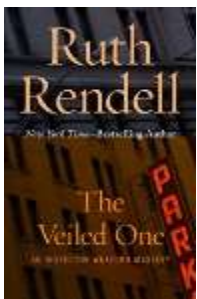
fellow tourists.



### **An Unkindness of Ravens (1985)**

Rodney Williams's disappearance seems typical to Chief Inspector Wexford -- a simple case of a man running off with a woman other than his wife. But when another woman reports that her husband is missing, the case turns unpleasantly

complex. Wexford agrees to investigate the disappearance of a neighbor's husband and finds a connection with a man-hating girls' club.



### **The Veiled One (1988)**

When Chief Inspector Wexford enters the parking garage, the woman is already dead, slumped between two cars, concealed under a velvet shroud. The inspector doesn't even notice her as he drives away.

Only later, when he sees on the news that

an old woman was garroted in the shopping mall garage, does he realize how close he was to discovering the body. In a case that starts with a hidden corpse, the truth will be dangerously elusive.

Before Wexford can sink his teeth into the elderly woman's murder, he is nearly killed himself—by a politically motivated car bombing targeting his daughter. With the inspector in the hospital, the case falls to his partner, the intrepid Mike Burden, who must solve both mysteries before the shopping mall killer strikes again. He's got a suspect . . . but will he be able to make him talk?



### **Kissing the Gunners Daughter (1992)**

The fifteenth book to feature the classic crime-solving detective, Chief Inspector Wexford. The thirteenth of May is famously the unluckiest day of the year. Sergeant Caleb Martin of Kingsmarkham CID had no idea just how terminally unlucky it would prove, as he embarked upon his last day on

earth... Ten months later, Wexford is confronted with a murder scene of horrific brutality. At first the bloodbath at Tancred House looks like the desperate work of a burglar panicked into murder. The sole survivor of the massacre, seventeen-year-old Daisy Flory, remembers the events imperfectly, and her confused account of the fatal night seems to confirm this theory. But more and more, Chief Inspector Wexford is convinced that the crime lies closer to home, and that it has sinister links to the murder of Sergeant Martin...



### **Simisola (1994)**

When a young, black woman goes missing in Kingsmarkham, Wexford must respond to a test not only of his powers of deduction, but of his basic beliefs and prejudices. Only eighteen black people live in Kingsmarkham. One of them is Wexford's new doctor, Raymond Akande. When the doctor's

daughter, Melanie, goes missing, the Chief Inspector takes more than just a professional interest in the case. Melanie, just down from university but unable to find a job, disappeared somewhere between the Benefit Office and the bus stop. Or at least no one saw her get on the bus when it came... When the body of a young black woman is discovered, Wexford must overcome his underlying prejudices to allow his investigative skills to succeed.

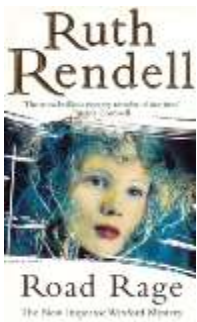


### **Blood Lines: Long and Short Stories (1995)**

Hailed by Patricia Cornwell as "unequivocally the most brilliant mystery writer of our time," Ruth Rendell now delivers an all-new collection of 11 long- and short-story mysteries. As always with

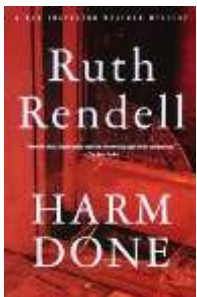
Rendell, these stories of mystery and wrongdoing shine their light into the dark places of the human psyche. In this collection, only the title story is a Wexford tale.





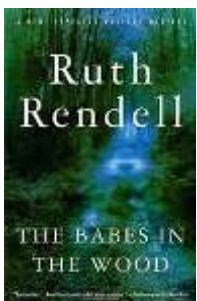
### Road Rage (1997)

The woods outside of Kingsmarkham were lovely, dark, and deep. And they were about to vanish forever when the new highway cut through them. While Chief Inspector Wexford privately despaired about the loss of his hiking grounds, local residents and outsiders were organizing a massive protest. Some of them were desperate enough to kidnap five hostages and threaten to kill them. One hostage was Wexford's wife, Dora. Now, combining high technology with his extraordinary detecting skills, Wexford and his team race to find the kidnappers' whereabouts. Because someone has crossed from political belief to fanaticism, and as the first body is found, good intentions may become Wexford's personal path to hell.



### Harm Done (1999)

The search for the body commenced. Then the victim walked into town. Behind the picture-postcard façade of Kingsmarkham lies a community rife with violence, betrayal, and a taste for vengeance. When sixteen-year-old Lizzie Cromwell reappears no one knows where she has been, including Lizzie herself. Inspector Wexford thinks she was with a boyfriend. But the disappearance of a three-year-old girl casts a more ominous light on events. And when the public's outrage turns toward a recently released pedophile and another suspect turns up stabbed to death, Wexford must try to unravel the mystery before any more bodies appear, and before a mob of local vigilantes metes out a rough justice to their least favorite suspect. In **Harm Done**, the violence is near at hand, and evil lies just a few doors down the block.

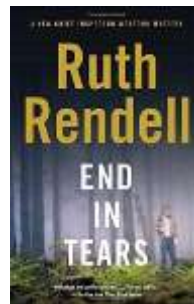


### The Babes in the Wood (2002)

After weeks of rain, Chief Inspector Wexford has just finished moving his books and furniture upstairs to protect them from the rising waters when the telephone rings. Two local teenagers and their babysitter have gone missing. Wexford isn't particularly worried, since these things usually sort themselves out. But as hours stretch into days, he begins to suspect he has a kidnapping on his hands. The stakes get even higher when a member of the missing trio turns up dead in the woods nearby.

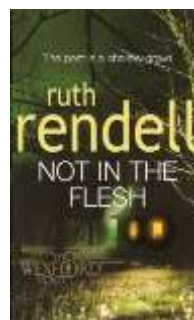
In the course of his investigation, Wexford must deal with a

neighbor whose alibi is questionable, a religious cult and its sylvan rituals, someone close to the children's family who nurses a terrible secret, and the babysitter's ex-husband, who reveals the woman's hidden penchant for violence. In **The Babes in the Wood**, Ruth Rendell draws the reader into a riveting story that alternates between Chief Inspector Wexford's domestic life - his worries about the security of his home and his daughter's odd new boyfriend - and his determination to see through a kaleidoscope of lies and bring a murderer to justice..



### End in Tears (2005)

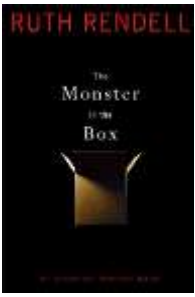
At first there was no reason to link the killings. The first one, months earlier, seemed totally random: a lump of concrete pushed off an overpass onto a passing car. By contrast, the gruesome bludgeoning death of Amber Marshalon, returning home late from a night out clubbing with friends, was obviously calculated. The killer had been seen waiting for the girl in a nearby wood. But when Chief Inspector Wexford discovers that Amber had been the driver right behind the crushed car - and that she'd been driving a silver Honda, while the car in front of her was a gray Honda - he knows that someone wanted the teenager dead badly enough to kill twice to get the job done. And as it turns out, this murderer's plans are only just getting underway. Can Wexford unravel the complex knots that connect these murders in time to save future victims? Or is he, as he begins to fear, losing his touch and fast becoming a relic of another time?



### Not in the Flesh (2007)

Searching for truffles in a wood, a man and his dog unearth something less savory-a human hand. The body, as Chief Inspector Wexford is informed later, has lain buried for ten years or so, wrapped in a purple cotton shroud. The post mortem cannot reveal the precise cause of death. The only clue is a crack in one of the dead man's ribs.

Although the police database covers a relatively short period of time, it stores a long list of Missing Persons. Men, women and children disappear at an alarming rate -- hundreds every day. So Wexford knows he is going to have a job on his hands to identify the corpse. And then, only about twenty yards away from the woodland burial site, in the cellar of a disused cottage, another body is discovered.



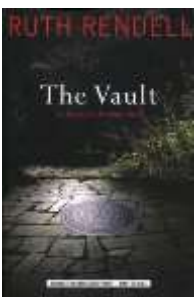
### **The Monster in the Box (2009)**

'He had never told anyone. The strange relationship, if it could be called that, had gone on for years, decades, and he had never breathed a word about it. He had kept silent because he knew no one would believe him. None of it could be proved, not

the stalking, not the stares or the conspiratorial smiles, not the killings, not any of the signs Targo had made because he knew Wexford knew and could do nothing about it.'

Wexford had almost made up his mind that he would never again set eyes on Eric Targo's short, muscular figure. And yet there he was, back in Kingsmarkham, still with that cocky, strutting walk. Years earlier, when Wexford was a young police officer, a woman called Elsie Carroll had been found strangled in her bedroom. Although many still had their suspicions that her husband was guilty, no one was convicted. Another woman was strangled shortly afterwards, and every personal and professional instinct told Wexford that the killer was still at large. And it was Eric Targo. A psychopath who would kill again...

As the Chief Inspector investigates a new case, Ruth Rendell looks back to the beginning of Wexford's career, even to his courtship of the woman who would become his wife. The past is a haunted place, with clues and passions that leave an indelible imprint on the here and now.



### **The Vault (2011)**

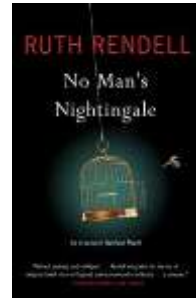
Wessex is retired -- or would be, if murder and danger would only leave him alone.

The impossible has happened. Chief Inspector Reg Wexford has retired. He and his wife now divide their time between

Kingsmarkham and a coach house in Hampstead belonging to their actress daughter, Sheila. For all the benefits of a more relaxed way of life, Wexford misses being the law. But a chance

meeting in a London street, with someone he had known briefly as a very young police constable, changes everything. Tom Ede is now a Detective Superintendent, and is very keen to recruit Wexford as an adviser on a difficult case.

The bodies of two women and a man have been discovered in the old coal hole of an attractive house in St John's Wood. None carries identification. But the man's jacket pockets contain a string of pearls, a diamond and a sapphire necklace as well as other jewelry valued in the region of £40,000. Wexford is intrigued and excited by the challenge -- until this new investigative role brings him into serious physical danger.



### **No Man's Nightingale (2012)**

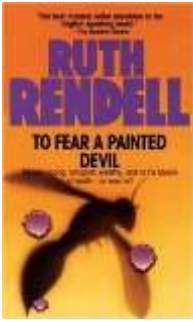
A female vicar named Sarah Hussein is discovered strangled in her Kingsmarkham vicarage. A single mother to a teenage girl, Hussein was working in a male-dominated

profession. Moreover, she was of mixed race and wanted to modernize the church. Could racism or sexism have played a factor in her murder?

Maxine, the gossipy cleaning woman who discovered the body, happens to also be in the employ of retired Chief Inspector Wexford and his wife. Wexford is intrigued by the unusual circumstances of the murder, and when he is invited by his old deputy to tag along with the investigators, he leaps at the chance.

As Wexford searches the Vicar's house, he sees a book on her bedside table. Inside the book is a letter serving as a bookmark. Without thinking much, Wexford puts it into his pocket. Wexford soon realizes he has made a grave error in removing a piece of valuable evidence from the scene without telling anybody. Yet what he finds inside begins to illuminate the murky past of Sarah Hussein. Is there more to her than meets the eye?

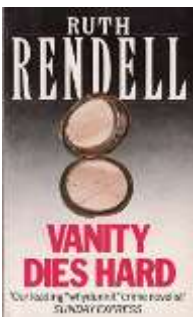
# Stand-Alone Novels



**To Fear a Painted Devil** (1965) [*not in libraries*]

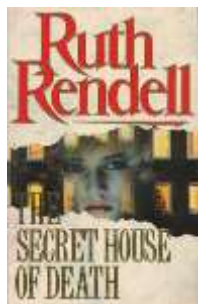
Gossip in tiny Linchester is raised to new heights when young Patrick Selby dies on the night of his beautiful wife's birthday party. The whole neighborhood was there, witness to the horrible attack of wasps Peter suffered at the end of the evening.

But did Peter die of the stings? Dr. Greenleaf thinks not. After all, wasps aren't the only creatures that kill with poison...



**Vanity Dies Hard** (1965) a.k.a. **In Sickness and in Health**

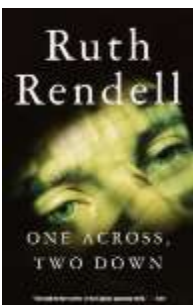
Alice Whittaker was 37, rich but dowdy, with no career. Her life a lonely failure, she had got by with the one thing she did have - money. Then handsome Andrew Fielding came into her life, and just as suddenly her beautiful friend, Nesta, vanished from it - leaving a trail of confusing clues.



**The Secret House of Death** (1968)

Susan Townsend was the only resident with no interest in the affair going on next door in Orchard Drive, or in the neighborhood gossip about it. Yet it was Susan who found the bodies of the lovers locked in death.

And it was Susan whose own life would be imperiled by a monstrous crime.



**One Across, Two Down** (1971)

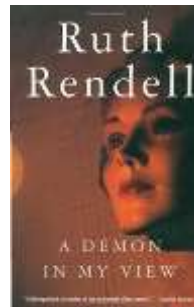
There are only two things that interest Stanley: the crosswords and getting his hands on his mother's money, which he has dreamed about for 20 years. He finally realizes that he must construct a puzzle of his own in order to give death a helping

hand.



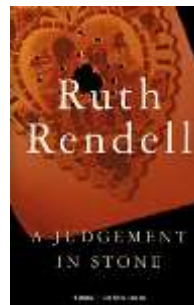
**The Face of Trespass** (1974)

A chilling novel of obsession and violence. Two years ago, he had been a promising young novelist. Now he barely survives in a near derelict cottage with only his own obsessive thoughts for company. Two years of loving Drusilla—the rich, unstable girl with everything she needed, and a husband she wanted dead. The affair was over. But the long slide into violence had just begun...



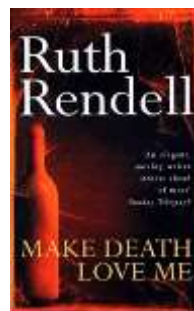
**A Demon in My View** (1976)

Arthur Johnson's loneliness has perverted his desire for love and respect into a carefully controlled tendency for violence. One floor below him, a scholar finishing his thesis on psychopathic personalities is about to stumble upon one of Johnson's many secrets.



**A Judgement in Stone** (1977)

Four members of the Coverdale family died in the space of 15 minutes on St Valentine's Day. Eunice Parchman, the housekeeper, shot them down on that Sunday evening while they were watching opera on television, and was arrested two weeks later. But the tragedy neither began nor ended there.



**Make Death Love Me** (1979)

Alan Groombridge is married to a woman he doesn't like, is a bank manager of a tiny branch, and is doomed to a life of boredom and tedious routine. All that saves him is a fantasy of stealing enough of the bank's money for just one year of freedom.



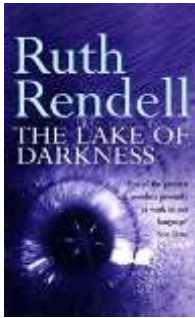
**Talking to Strange Men** (1980)

Safe houses and secret message drops, double crosses and defections—it sounds like the stuff of sophisticated espionage, but the agents are only schoolboys engaged in harmless play. But John Creevey doesn't know this.

To him, the messages he decodes with painstaking care are the communications of dangerous and evil men, and as he comes

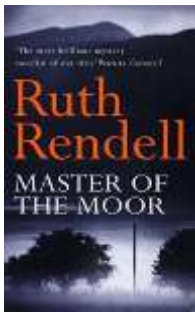


face to face with the fact of his beloved wife Jennifer's defection, he begins to see a way to get back at the man she left him for. And soon the schoolboys are playing more than just a game.



### **The Lake of Darkness (1980)**

Martin Urban wins the pools and decides to help those less fortunate. Finn also comes into money and wants to help people - but only if the price is right. The good intentions of the one become fatally entangled with the macabre madness of the other.



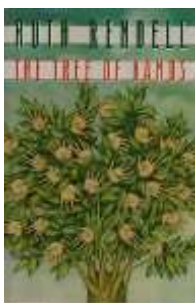
### **Master of the Moor (1982)**

The Vangmoor was a dark, forbidding place. One victim had been found there with her face disfigured and her hair shorn close to the scalp. Then a second woman disappeared on the moor, and a sense of dread gripped the 50 local men who searched for her. Someone was watching; was it the killer?



### **The Killing Doll (1984)**

In a shabby London suburb, sixteen-year-old Pup Yearman dabbles in magic. But for Pup's older sister Dolly, the magic is more than dabbling. Deformed by a facial birthmark, Dolly desperately wants to be cured, and her obsession with Pup's magic sends her on a dangerous downward spiral into confusion, madness, and possibly murder. And meanwhile, in a squalid boardinghouse not far away, a young Irishman sharpens a set of butcher knives...



### **The Tree of Hands (1984)**

Mopsa, driven by a past scarred by madness and violence. Benet, stricken by the most grievous loss any woman can bear. Carol, trapped in a life of crushing drabness no lover can change. Three mothers joined by a single thread of terror, whirled into a spiral of kidnapping, murder, and a final, reckless affirmation of love.



### **Live Flesh (1986)**

After ten years in prison for shooting -- and permanently crippling -- a young policeman, Victor Jenner is released to a strange new world and told to make a new life for himself. It's hard to fill the days, but at least there's one blessing -- he was never convicted for all those rapes he committed.

Then Victor meets David, the policeman he shot all those years ago, and David's beautiful girlfriend, Clare. And suddenly Victor's new life is starting to look an awful lot like the old one...



### **Heartstones (1987)**

Sixteen-year-old Elvira's mother is dead. Elvira is sad, of course, but not so sad as her younger sister Spinny. Spinny is afraid their father, Luke, will be heartbroken, but Elvira knows better - after all, Luke has her to take her mother's place. But then Luke brings home a pretty young woman and introduces

her as his fiancée, and Elvira decides that she will stop at nothing to stop her father's marriage...



### **The Bridesmaid (1989)**

When Philip Wardman's feminine ideal, a Greek goddess, appears in the flesh as Senta Pelham, Philip thinks he has found true love. But darker forces are at work, and Senta is led to propose that Philip prove his love by committing murder.



### **Going Wrong (1990)**

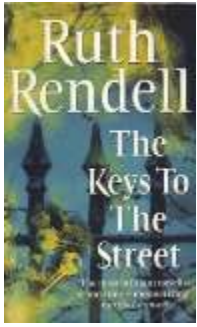
The dark, good-looking Guy is from a council flat. Leonora has a mews house in Holland Park, and her mother doesn't care for Guy - or the way he makes his money. His obsession with Leonora increases, even after they have grown apart, until eventually it creates in him a murderous madness.



### **The Crocodile Bird (1993)**

When her mother, Eve, tells Liza that she must leave their home, she is terrified. Although she is 17, she has never played with a child of her own age and has almost

no knowledge of a world described by her mother as evil. But their enclosed life together is over because Eve has killed a man.



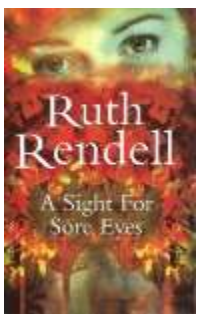
### **The Keys to the Street (1996)**

Set in and around London's Regents Park, where the city's wealthiest, poorest, kindest, and most vicious citizens all cross paths, this newest novel by the Edgar and Gold Dagger-winning author of Crocodile Bird tells of the deadly thanks a young woman risks receiving in return for an act of selfless generosity.



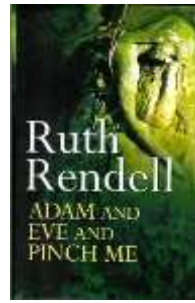
### **Thornapple (1998)**

Twelve-year-old James lives with his parents and sister. He has a scientific mind and a load of jars, all containing poisons which he has manufactured from plants in the garden - his favorite being Thornapple. When cousin Mirabel and her baby come to stay, James is captivated by Mirabel, who has been rejected by her boyfriend. Mirabel's aunt June, who had also rejected her, suddenly puts her into her good books again, but when June dies, supposedly of gastric complications and leaving Mirabel a large sum of money, James has his doubts as to the true cause of death [description from several websites].



### **A Sight for Sore Eyes (1998)**

**A Sight for Sore Eyes** tells three stories, and for the longest time, the reader has no inkling of how they will come together. The first is a story of a little girl who has been scolded and sent to her room when her mother is brutally murdered; as Francine grows up, she is haunted by the experience, and it is years before she even speaks. Secondly, we become privy to the life of a young man, Teddy, born of unthinking young parents, who grows up almost completely ignored. Free of societal mores, he becomes a sociopath, who eventually discovers that killing can be an effective way to get what he wants. Thirdly, we meet Harriet, who from an early age has learned to use her beauty to make her way in the world. Bored by marriage to a wealthy, much older man, she scans the local newspapers for handymen to perform odd jobs around the house, including services in the bedroom. When these three plots strands finally converge, the result is harrowing and unforgettable



### **Adam and Eve and Pinch Me (2001)**

A mystery surrounds three women and three men who have recently disappeared completely from their lives. There are other women too, unknown to one another, who have had relationships with a dark-haired man who is no longer around.



### **The Rottweiler (2003)**

Rendell returns to a darkly atmospheric London to explore how the lives of a small group of people from very mixed backgrounds are affected dramatically by a series of apparently motiveless murders. The first girl had a bite mark on her neck, but the police traced the DNA to her boyfriend. Nevertheless, when the tabloids got hold of the story, they immediately called the killer 'The Rottweiler', and the name stuck. The latest body was discovered very near Inez Ferry's antique shop in Marylebone. Someone spotted a shadowy figure running away past the station, but couldn't say for sure if it was a man or a woman. There were only two other clues. The murderer seemed to have a preference for strangling his victims and then removing something personal - like a cigarette lighter or a necklace... Since her actor husband died, too early into their marriage, Inez supplemented her modest income by taking in tenants above the shop. The unpredictably obsessive activities of 'The Rottweiler' would exert a profound influence on this heterogeneous little community, especially when the suspicion began to emerge that one of them might be a homicidal maniac.



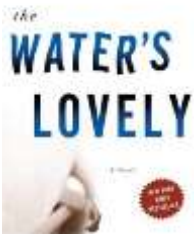
### **Thirteen Steps Down (2004)**

A classic Rendellian loner, Mix Cellini is superstitious about the number 13. Living in a decaying house in Notting Hill, Mix is obsessed with 10 Rillington Place, where the notorious John Christie committed a series of foul murders. He is also infatuated with a beautiful model who lives nearby - a woman who would not look at him twice. Mix's landlady, Gwedolen Chawcer is equally reclusive - living her life through her library of books. Both landlady and lodger inhabit weird worlds of their own. But when reality intrudes into Mix's life, a long pent-up violence explodes.



RUTH RENDELL

### The Water's Lovely (2006)

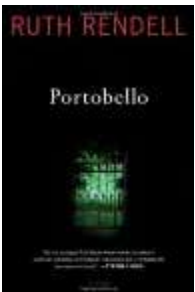


Weeks went by when Ismay never thought of it at all. Then something would bring it back or it would return in a dream. The dream always began in the same way. She and her mother would be climbing the stairs, following Heather's lead through the

bedroom to what was on the other side, not a bathroom in the dream but a chamber floored and walled in marble. In the middle of it was a glassy lake. The white thing in the water floated towards her, its face submerged, and her mother said, absurdly, "Don't look!"

The dead man was Ismay's stepfather, Guy. Now, nine years on, she and her sister, Heather, still live in the same house in Clapham. But it has been divided into two self-contained flats. Their mother had lived upstairs with her sister, Pamela. And the bathroom, where Guy had drowned, had disappeared.

Ismay worked in public relations, and Heather in catering. They got on well. They always had. They never discussed the changes to the house, still less what had happened that August day. . . But even lives as private as these, where secrets hang in the air like dust, intertwine with other worlds and other individuals. And, with painful inevitability, the truth will emerge.



### Portobello (2008)

The Portobello area of West London has a rich personality - vibrant, brilliant in color, noisy, with graffiti that approach art, bizarre and splendid. An indefinable edge to it adds a spice of danger. There is nothing safe about Portobello...

Eugene Wren inherited an art gallery from his father near an arcade that now sells cashmere, handmade soaps and children's clothes. But he decided to move to a more upmarket site in Kensington Church Street. Eugene was fifty, with prematurely white hair. He was, perhaps, too secretive for his own good. He also had an addictive personality. But he had cut back radically on his alcohol consumption and had given up cigarettes. Which was just as well, considering he was going out with a doctor. For all his good intentions, though, there was something he didn't want her to know about...

On a shopping trip one day, Eugene, quite by chance, came across an envelope containing money. He picked it up. For some reason, rather than report the matter to the police, he wrote a note and stuck it up on lamppost near his house: 'Found in

Chepstow Villas, a sum of money between eighty and a hundred and sixty pounds. Anyone who has lost such a sum should apply to the phone number below.'

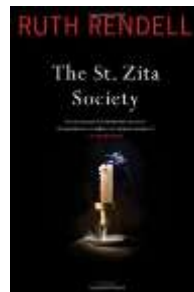
This note would link the lives of a number of very different people - each with their obsessions, problems, dreams and despairs. And through it all the hectic life of Portobello would bustle on.



### Tigerlily's Orchids (2010)

When Stuart Font decides to throw a house-warming party in his new flat he invites everyone in his building. The party will be one everyone remembers. But not for the right reasons....

Living opposite, in reclusive isolation, is a young, beautiful Asian woman, christened Tigerlily by Stuart. As though from some strange urban fairytale, she emerges to exert a terrible spell on the occupants of Lichfield House.



### The Saint Zita Society (2012)

Life in the well-manicured London locale of Hexam Place is not as placid and orderly as it appears. Behind the tranquil gardens and polished entryways, relationships between servants and their employers are set to combust.

Henry, the handsome valet to Lord Studley, is sleeping with both the Lord's wife and his university-age daughter. Montserrat, the Still family's lazy au pair, is helping to hide Mrs. Still's illicit affair with a television actor - for a small fee. June, the haughty housekeeper to a princess of dubious origin, is hard at work forming a 'society' for servants to address complaints about their employers. Meanwhile, a disturbed gardener, Dex, believes a voice in his cellphone is giving him godlike instructions - that could endanger the lives of all who reside in Hexam Place.



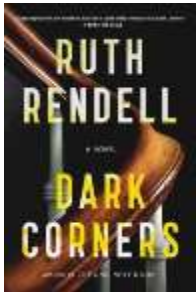
### The Girl Next Door (2014)

In the waning months of the second World War, a group of children discover a tunnel in their neighborhood outside London. For that summer of 1944, the subterranean space becomes their "secret garden," where the friends play games, tell their fortunes,

and perform for each other.

Six decades later, construction workers make a grisly discovery beneath a house on the same land: a tin box containing two skeletal hands, one male and one female. As the hands make national news, the friends come together once again, to recall their long ago days for a detective. Then the police investigation sputters, and the threads holding their friendship together begin to unravel. Is the truth buried amid the tangled

relationships of these aging men and women and their memories? Will it emerge before it's too late?



**Dark Corners (2015)**

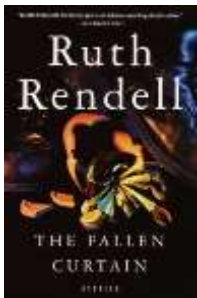
When his father dies, Carl Martin, a philosophy graduate and struggling novelist, inherits a house in a trendy London

neighborhood. Carl needs cash, however, so he rents the

upstairs room and kitchen to the first person he interviews, Dermot McKinnon. That was colossal mistake number one. Mistake number two was keeping his father's bizarre collection of homeopathic "cures" that he found in the medicine cabinet, including a stash of controversial diet pills. Mistake number three was selling 50 of those diet pills to a friend, who is then found dead. Now Dermot seizes a nefarious opportunity and begins to blackmail Carl, followed by his refusal to pay rent and a truly creepy invasion of Carl's space.

Ingeniously weaving together two storylines that finally merge in one shocking turn, Ruth Rendell describes one man's spiral into darkness - and murder - as he falls victim to a diabolical foe he cannot escape.

## Collections (not including Insp. Wexford omnibuses)

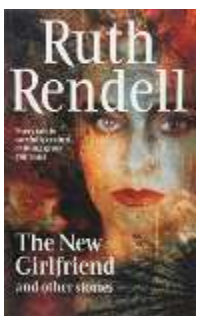


**The Fallen Curtain (1976)**

A stranger lures a child into his car with the promise of sweets. A young man spots his fiancé's double in a public park of ill repute. An executive visits the secluded home of a former employee whose intentions are frightfully unclear. A modest soul weds the

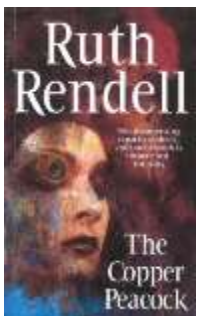
woman he rescues from suicide--only to fall victim to an unfathomable form of possessiveness?. In the eleven tales gathered in **The Fallen Curtain**, Ruth Rendell lays bare the

twisted inner workings of the unbalanced mind.



**The New Girlfriend (1978)**

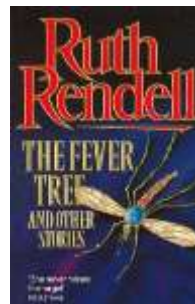
Murder, corruption, blackmail. All these are part of someone else's world, not part of the everyday lives of ordinary people...or are they?



**The Copper Peacock; and Other stories (1980) (one Wexford story included)**

A collection of crime stories, including one which features Chief Inspector Reg Wexford. The title story concerns a hideous bookmark given to a writer by his attractive cleaning lady. If only she had given herself, instead of

the copper peacock, she might have lived.



**The Fever Tree; and Other Stories (1982)**

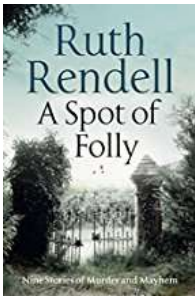
Eleven masterful, eerie suspense tales by the outstanding English mystery writer show what happens when the sinister thoughts of ordinary people are unleashed



**Piranha to Scurfy (2000)**

Nine deliciously frightening and exquisitely crafted tales of psychological terror from Ruth Rendell.

A self-appointed critic reads books only to catch out their errors of fact and usage, which he points out to their authors in vicious letters: Then one day he comes upon a book that attacks *him*. An elderly woman finally avenges herself on the man who raped her sixty years before. An idyllic village in the English countryside offers newcomers its own peculiar kind of hospitality and exacts a terrible price on those who reject it. Delivering high-voltage shocks with the elegance of a Henry James, **Piranha to Scurfy** is further evidence of Ruth Rendell's mastery of any form she puts her hand to



**A Spot of Folly (2017) [not in libraries]**

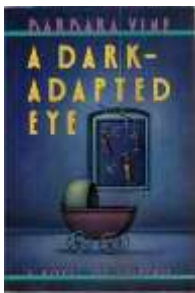
Ten and a Quarter of the most chillingly and compelling short stories, from the master of psychological suspense, Ruth Rendell. In these tales, a businessman boasts about cheating on his wife, only to find the tables turned. A beautiful country rectory

reverberates to the echo of a historical murder. A compulsive liar acts on impulse, only to be lead inexorably to disaster. And

a wealthy man finds there is more to his wife's kidnapping than meets the eye.

The stories are: Never Sleep in a Bed Facing a Mirror; A Spot of Folly; The Price of Joy; The Irony of Hate; Digby's Wives; The Haunting of Shawley Rectory; A Drop Too Much; The Thief; The Long Corridor of Time; In the Time of his Prosperity; and Trebuchet.

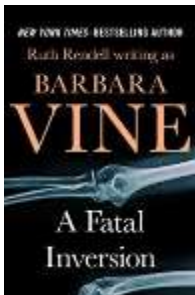
## Novels written as Barbara Vine



**A Dark Adapted Eye (1986)**

When Faith Severn's aunt was hanged for murder, the reason behind her dark deed died with her. For 30 years, the family hid the truth--until a journalist prompts Faith to peer back to the day when her aunt took knife in hand and entered a child's nursery.

Princess, a former fashion model with a penchant for marrying older, rich men, is the target once again of the man who had been her jailer five years.



**A Fatal Inversion (1987)**

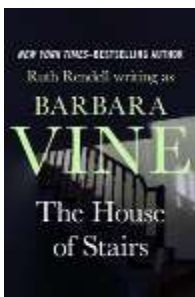
In the hot summer of 1976, a group of young people are camping in Wyvis Hall. Ten years later, the bodies of a woman and child are discovered in the Hall's animal cemetery. Which woman? Whose child?



**King Solomon's Carpet (1991)**

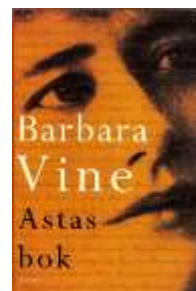
Jarvis lives in a crumbling house with a view of the Jubilee Line: he loves the tube with all its secrets - its hidden tunnels, its mysterious "ghost" stations, its incidents and accidents, which he records. He lives in a house which was once a school, but now

he lets out rooms.



**The House of Stairs (1988)**

Elizabeth Vetch and her recently widowed aunt Cosette move into the mysterious House of Stairs and find that troubled souls often come to roost there, and that murder lurks on the premises



**Asta's Book (1993) a.k.a. Anna's Book**

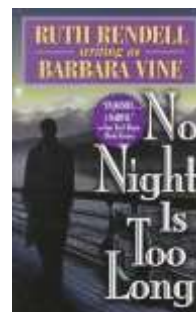
In 1905, Asta and her husband come to London from Denmark. With Rasmus away on business, Asta keeps busy by writing diaries. Published 70 years later, they seem to hold the key to an unsolved murder and to the mystery of a missing child. It falls to

Asta's granddaughter to unearth the truth.



**Gallowglass (1990)**

In the middle ages a gallowglass was the personal guard of the Celtic chief: the food taster, the right hand man, the expendable one who would die for his leader. Ruth Rendell, writing as Barbara Vine for the fourth time, here presents a tale of kidnapping, obsession, and loyalty told by

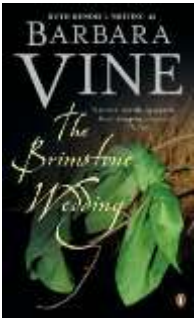


**No Night Is Too Long (1994)**

Tim Cornish thought he'd gotten away with murder. For months after he'd killed his lover off the Alaskan coast, there hadn't been a word about the murder. But then the letters started to arrive, giving intimate details of the murder. It seems that someone knows what Tim has done.

two men thrust into the part of modern gallowglass. The

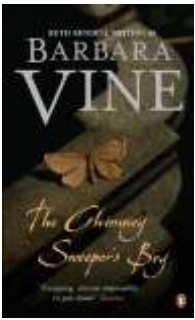




### **The Brimstone Wedding (1995)**

Both a finely crafted mystery and a disturbingly honest depiction of the kinship between love and madness, *The Brimstone Wedding* tells an unsettling story about the power and the poison of love. A gracious, dignified woman, who's dying in an English nursing home, reveals the secrets of her

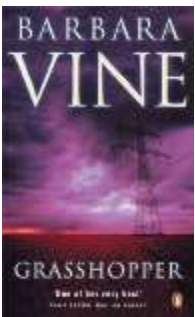
erotic past to her young caretaker.



### **The Chimney Sweeper's Boy (1998)**

This is the story of best-selling novelist Gerald Candless, whose sudden death from a heart attack leaves behind a wife and two doting daughters. To sort through her grief, one of his daughters, Sarah, decides to write a biography of her internationally celebrated father. Within hours of beginning

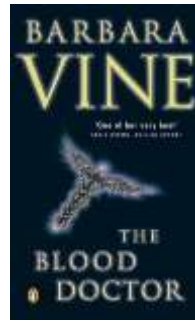
her research, Sarah comes across the first of what will be many shocking revelations. As her life is slowly torn apart, a terrible logic finally emerges to explain her mother's remoteness, her father's need to continually reinvent himself in his work, and a long-forgotten London murder.



### **Grasshopper (2000)**

*"They have sent me here because of what happened on the pylon."* When Clodagh Brown writes these words at the age of nineteen, she believes that she is leaving behind the traumatic events of her youth. But Clodagh soon learns that you can never entirely escape your past.

In the aftermath of the incident on the pylon--one of the great electrified structures that dot the English countryside like so many gargantuan grasshoppers--Clodagh goes off to university, moves into a basement flat arranged by her unsympathetic family, and finds freedom trekking across London's rooftops with a gang of neighborhood misfits. As she begins a thrilling relationship with a fellow climber, however, both Clodagh and the reader are haunted by the memory of the pylon and of the terrible thing that happened there--and by the eerie sense that another tragedy is just a footfall away.



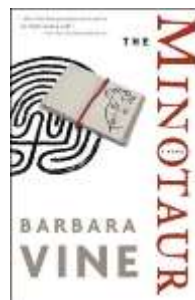
### **The Blood Doctor (2002)**

When Martin Nanther, Hereditary Peer in the House of Lords, is choosing the subject of his next biography, he becomes intrigued by the life of his own great-grandfather, Henry Nanther. So grateful was Queen Victoria for Henry's services as physician to the royal family that she granted him a

peerage, making him a lord, the first doctor ever to be so honored. Henry had been especially attentive to hemophiliacs in the royal family, for he was obsessed with blood. As he recounted in his diary, "Red is my favorite color. To me a splash of blood is beautiful, and I profoundly lack understanding of those who flinch or even faint at the sight of it."

As his research deepens, Martin begins to uncover hints that his great-grandfather's fascination with blood may have had its darker side. The murder of Henry's fiancée, the death of his young son, the remarkable number of relatives and friends who died mysteriously--could all these have been mere coincidence? Martin scours England and America for relatives whose attics or memories might hold clues, until finally the tragic truth stands revealed.

Drawing from the dark themes of obsession and murder that drive so many of Barbara Vine's extraordinary novels, *The Blood Doctor* is also enriched by domestic intimacies familiar to readers of Ruth Rendell's beloved Inspector Wexford novels and by details of Dame Rendell's own experience as a Life Peer in the House of Lords. Once again we have a masterful work from a storyteller of the highest order.

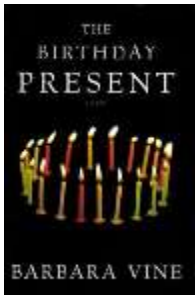


### **The Minotaur (2005)**

Kerstin Kvist didn't quite know what to expect when she took up a job with the Cosway family at their odd, almost grand home, Lydstep Old Hall, deep in the Essex countryside. The family turned out to be even odder than the house: the widowed

Mrs. Cosway lived with her three unmarried daughters, in thrall to the old lady. A mysterious fourth daughter - a widow herself and apparently quite rich - came and went, with ill-disguised contempt for the others. More puzzling still was Mrs. Cosway's son, John, a sad, self-absorbed figure in his thirties who haunted the house. There's madness in the family' offered one of the daughters by way of explanation, but Kerstin had trained as a nurse and knew it wasn't right to be administering such powerful drugs to a vulnerable figure like John. Barbara Vine's new book, her twelfth, is compelling in its depiction of the sex,

lies and secrets within an apparently respectable family, at a time when the sixties revolution hadn't quite reached rural England.



### **The Birthday Present (2008)**

Mention his name and most people will say, 'Who?' while the rest think for a bit and ask if he wasn't the one who got involved in all that sleaze back whenever it was ...? It's late spring of 1990 and a love affair is flourishing: between Ivor Tesham, a thirty-three year old rising star of Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government, and Hebe Furnal, a stunning North London housewife stuck in a dull marriage. What excitement Hebe lacks at home, however, is amply compensated for by the well-bred and intensely attractive Tesham - an ardent womanizer and ambitious politician. On the eve of her twenty-eighth birthday, Tesham decides to give Hebe a present to remember: something far more memorable than, say, the costly string of pearls he's already lavished upon her. Involving a fashionable new practice known as 'adventure sex', a man arranges for his unsuspecting but otherwise willing girlfriend to be snatched from the street, bound and gagged, and delivered to him at a mutually agreed venue...Set amidst an age of IRA bombings, the first Gulf War, and sleazy politics, "The Birthday Present" is the gripping story of a fall from grace, and of a man who carries within him all the hypocrisy, greed and self-obsession of a troubled era.



### **The Child's Child (2012)**

When their grandmother dies, Grace and Andrew Easton inherit her sprawling, book-filled London home, Dinmont House. Rather than sell it, the adult siblings move in together, splitting the numerous bedrooms and studies. The arrangement is unusual, but ideal for the affectionate pair - until the day Andrew brings home a new boyfriend. A devilishly handsome novelist, James Derain resembles Cary Grant, but his strident comments about Grace's doctoral thesis soon puncture the house's idyllic atmosphere. When he and Andrew witness their friend's murder outside a London nightclub, James begins to unravel, and what happens next will change the lives of everyone in the house. Just as turmoil sets in at Dinmont House, Grace escapes into reading a manuscript - a long-lost novel from 1951 called *The Child's Child* - never published, due to its frank depictions of an unwed mother and a homosexual relationship. The book is the story of two siblings born a few years after World War One.

This brother and sister, John and Maud, mirror the present-day Andrew and Grace: a homosexual brother and a sister carrying an illegitimate child. Acts of violence and sex will reverberate through their stories. *The Child's Child* is an ingenious novel-within-a-novel about family, betrayal, and disgrace. A master of psychological suspense, Ruth Rendell, writing as Barbara Vine, takes us where violence and social taboos collide. She shows how society's treatment of those it once considered undesirable has changed - and how sometimes it hasn't.

Ruth Rendell page on Wikipedia:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ruth\\_Rendell](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ruth_Rendell)  
(sadly, she doesn't have an official website)

Compiled for the  
Just Desserts mystery fiction discussion group  
Lincoln City Libraries – Lincoln, Nebraska  
April 2018 – sdc

