

The series of mystery novels "co-authored" with Sneaky Pie Brown, Rita Mae Brown's tiger cat, stars, not too surprisingly, a cat, one Mrs. Murphy, a gray tiger cat who helps her "human" Mary Minor "Harry" Harristeen, postmistress of the hamlet of Crozet, Virginia, in solving crimes. Mrs. Murphy, fat cat Pewter Shiflett, Corgi Tee Tucker, and a "Greek chorus" of cats and dogs comment sardonically on the crazy behavior of humans. If this sounds impossibly kittenish, suspend your judgment and give these well-written, amusing mysteries a try. *Murder, She Purred*, aired on *The Wonderful World of Disney*, starring Rikki Lake and Blythe Danner, was based on the characters created by the Browns.

1. ***Wish You Were Here*** (Bantam, 1990)

A series of "wish-you-were-here" postcards depicting a cemetery grave leads to some gruesome murders.

2. ***Rest in Pieces*** (Bantam, 1992)

A corpse with no head, fingerprints, or clothes may have a connection with a handsome stranger who is taking an interest in Harry.

3. ***Murder at Monticello*** (Bantam, 1994)

Archeological investigations of Thomas Jefferson's home at Monticello have turned up the corpse of a man buried in a slave cabin in 1803.

4. ***Pay Dirt*** (Bantam, 1995)

A biker from Los Angeles who arrives at Ash Lawn, James Monroe's home, later turns up murdered, and the Croze National Bank loses \$2 million to a computer virus.

5. ***Murder, She Meowed*** (Bantam, 1996)

Jockey Nigel Danforth is stabbed in the heart at the annual steeplechase at Montpelier, the home of James and Dolley Madison.

6. ***Murder on the Prowl*** (Bantam, 1998)

The premature obituaries of the headmaster and a teacher at St. Elizabeth's school turn out to be portents of the actual deaths of the two.

7. ***Cat on the Scent*** (Bantam, 1999)

Dissension at an Albemarle County Commission meeting over plans for a new reservoir leads to a frozen corpse in the refrigerator of a local food plant, and the murder of a local landowner during a Civil War battle reenactment.

8. ***Pawing Through the Past*** (Bantam, 2000)

As Harry Harristeen plans Crozet High's Class of 1980 twentieth reunion, several of her male classmates are shot.

9. ***Claws and Effects*** (Bantam, 2001)

A series of attacks and murders at the local hospital take Crozet's denizens' minds off of the rotten February weather, and directly involve Harry as one of the attackees.

10. *Catch as Cat Can* (Bantam, 2002)

Harry must balance the romantic attentions of her ex-husband and a diplomat from Uruguay, the upcoming Dogwood Festival, and the theft of some unusual hubcaps.

11. *Tail of the Tip-Off, The* (Bantam, 2003)

Construction company owner H.H. Donaldson falls dead in the parking lot of the "Clam", the University of Virginia's sports complex, after a women's basketball game.

12. *Whisker of Evil* (Bantam, 2004)

Harry and her pets stumble upon the throat-slashed body of 34-year-old breeder Barry Monteith.

13. *Cat's Eyewitness* (Bantam, 2005)

Harry quits her job as postmistress when her animal companions are banned from her workplace, and retreats with best friend Susan Tucker to a monastery in the Blue Ridge Mountains.

14. *Sour Puss* (Bantam, 2006)

Harry Haristeen and Fair, her veterinarian ex-husband, remarry and put in a quarter acre of Petit Manseng grapes in order to participate in the Virginia Piedmont's growing wine industry.

15. *Puss 'n Cahoots* (Bantam, 2007)

At an equestrian event in Kentucky, Harry's friend Joan loses a beloved piece of jewelry and Jorge, a groom at Joan's farm is found murdered.

16. *Purrfect Murder, The* (Bantam, 2008)

A local ob-gyn and a wealthy middle-aged woman are murdered. Harry's friend Tazio Chappars is suspected of the latter murder, but perhaps the two murders are connected.

17. *Santa Clawed* (Bantam, 2008)

The murder of Christopher Hewitt, monk and former insider trader, resembles the murder of Brother Speed, monk and former jockey.

18. *Cat of the Century* (Bantam, 2010)

Aunt Talley Urquhart is looking forward to celebrating her 100th birthday at her alma mater, William Woods University. But accusations of mishandling college funds and the shooting death of Flo Langston, class of '74, followed by taunting messages in the computer in-boxes of various WWU alumnae, interfere.

19. *Hiss of Death* (Bantam, 2011)

Was the death of OR nurse Paula Benton, one of the organizers of the 5K Run for Breast Cancer Awareness, due to a hornet's sting? Or was it murder?

20. *Big Cat Nap, The* (Bantam, 2012)

Car accidents and a few murders, all involving a local auto repair shop and perhaps a nearby racetrack, arouse Harry's suspicions. Cats Pewter, who discovers a body, and Mrs. Murphy and