

## Set the Scene for Murder

The setting of a book can have a bearing on so many things: *how* people talk and *what* they talk about, the economy, community issues, the geography and how it influences the characters' lives and concerns, who fits in and who doesn't ... the list goes on and on.

I chose to set the Waterside Kennels mystery series in the high Ozarks because I love the region. There's an old folk saying about the Ozark Mountains: *It's not that the mountains are so high, it's just that the valleys are so deep.* Scattered throughout those deep valleys and across the mountains are tiny towns and isolated villages, thick woodlands, and families that have held the land for eight generations or more. It's a region with vast swaths of untouched forests and clear streams, where a patient observer can see elk, black bear, mountain lion, and wild boar.

The Ozarks are a beautiful but potentially dangerous region, where tourists tend to get lost, or fall off the bluffs, or drown in the lakes. It's also a place where legends live on, and folktales are passed along from one generation to the next, keeping the old stories alive. I'm indebted to writers such as Phillip Steele and Vance Randolph for their work in capturing the magic of the Ozarks, and to Mr. Steele in particular for sharing those stories with me.

Treasure legends, ghost stories, superstitions and lore—what's truth? What's not? Find the right mix, and you have a story, waiting to be told.

\*

You'll find elements of the traditional cozy mystery in my work: an amateur sleuth, a small community, connections to local law enforcement, and a mystery my sleuth is motivated to solve. No coarse language or explicit, graphic violence here. There is an eclectic group of characters, a hint of romance, and plenty of plot twists to keep you guessing.

I do push the traditional definition of a cozy, though, by introducing more suspense, more villainy than you might see in a light-hearted, whimsical romp. My characters—including the dogs!—are good, bad, and sometimes both. That might be why my work has been called "a cozy with an edge." Whatever you call it, the book is the sort you finish with a sense of satisfaction. Mystery solved, justice served, and the villains get their comeuppance.

\*

***Deadly Ties:*** Dogs. Family. Friends. Treasure. Stories and rumors from the past. Secrets and lies. They're all at the heart of this story. When trouble begins at the kennel, Maggie will have to dig into the past for answers if she wants to have a future. Because her search just might lead to murder.

*Available now in Paperback, Kindle, and Audiobook editions*

Website: <http://dogmysteries.com>

Amazon: <http://tinyurl.com/luva72t>

Facebook Author Page: <http://tinyurl.com/ozk3uja>

Find me on Goodreads: [https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/7302683.Susan\\_Holmes](https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/7302683.Susan_Holmes)

Follow me on Twitter: @dogmysteries <https://twitter.com/dogmysteries>