

## The Best American Mystery Stories 2018

Edited by Louise Penny

In the 22nd volume of this evergreen series, guest editor Penny (“Chief Inspector Gamache” novels) features 20 selections that travel as far back as the Old West and as far abroad as the Serengeti. Andrew Bourelle sets the tone early with the suitably nasty slice of modern noir “Y Is for Yangchuan Lizard”; Michael Bracken’s “Smoked” has a reformed motorcycle gang member’s anonymity threatened by the sudden popularity of his barbecue restaurant. In “Phantomwise: 1972,” the longest and most haunting story, Joyce Carol Oates recasts Lewis Carroll’s Alice as a college girl in her own tormented Wonderland, torn between the young professor who has impregnated her and an old visiting poet. Other highlights include Alan Orloff’s super-twisty “Rule Number One,” which packs an impressive number of double-crosses in ten pages, and Michael Connelly’s solid-as-expected “The Third Panel.” Memorable entries from literary stalwarts Louis Bayard, T.C. Boyle, James Lee Burke, and Lee Child round out the collection.

**VERDICT** The range of authors, styles, and settings in these tales ensures every reader will find something to remember. A worthy supplement to all mystery collections.

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