

Media Information for Susan Van Kirk

Author Photo available at <http://susanvankirk.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Susan-Van-Kirk-Picture.jpg>

Author Biography

Susan Van Kirk grew up in Galesburg, Illinois, and was educated at Knox College and the University of Illinois. She taught high school English for thirty-four years in the small town of Monmouth, Illinois. She taught an additional ten years at Monmouth College. Her short story, “War and Remembrance,” was published by *Teacher Magazine* and became one of the chapters in her 2010 creative nonfiction memoir, *The Education of a Teacher (Including Dirty Books and Pointed Looks)*.

Her mystery novels about the town of Endurance, *Three May Keep a Secret* (2014) and *Marry in Haste* (2016) were published by Five Star Publishing/Cengage and were released in new editions in 2019. An Endurance e-book novella titled *The Locket: From the Casebook of TJ Sweeney*, features her Endurance detective. The third Endurance mystery, *Death Takes No Bribes* (2017), was re-released in 2019. *The Witch’s Child* (2021) is the fourth Endurance novel. All four novels were republished by Harlequin Worldwide Mystery in 2020-2023.

A Death at Tippitt Pond (2023) is a standalone book published in 2019 and republished in 2023.

Coming up is a three-book contract with Level Best Books. *Death in a Pale Hue* (June 2022), *Death in a Bygone Hue* (June 2023), and *Death in a Ghostly Hue* (June 2024.)

You can follow her on her Facebook page, Susan Van Kirk Author; Pinterest; and at her website, <http://www.susanvankirk.com> She is a member of Mystery Writers of America and Sisters in Crime. For 2019-2023, she’s president of the Guppy Chapter, the online chapter of Sisters in Crime, with over a thousand members.

Cozy Mysteries with a Regional Flavor

Van Kirk’s Endurance mysteries feature the small town of Endurance, Illinois. Their titles are aphorisms from Ben Franklin’s *Poor Richard’s Almanac*. While you won’t find this small town on any map, it exists in downstate Illinois and in the minds of its 15,000 fictitious inhabitants.

Susan Van Kirk's mysteries include aspects of Midwest history. The settling of the land and history of the region, the Underground Railroad, the centennial celebration of Endurance's past, the huge Victorian homes that still exist in the older sections of town, and a cold case from the 1940's Big Band era braid historical threads through the mysteries.

Twists and turns fill each mystery, often with small-town flavor and romance. Grace Kimball is the main character, a high school teacher who has recently retired in the first novel, *Three May Keep a Secret*. One of her former students and now-friend, TJ Sweeney, is the Endurance detective who often asks for Grace's help. Kimball finds herself in a deadly situation when she uncovers secrets that threaten hidden lies from the past. Attracted to the new newspaper editor in town, she begins working for him. But when murders occur, Grace wonders about his past.

TJ Sweeney gets her own moment to shine in an ebook novella, *The Locket: From the Casebook of TJ Sweeney*. A cold case murder leads Sweeney to investigate a crime from the 1940s.

Marry in Haste, the second novel, examines two marriages one hundred years apart and tied together by a dark and gloomy Victorian mansion. Readers see the small town in the late 1800s.

Grace goes back to her old high school when the principal is murdered in *Death Takes No Bribes*. There she helps her former student, Detective TJ Sweeney, investigate the suspicious death. Complicated relationships, deadly motives, and school policies collide as they try to stay ahead of the deadly challenge of a killer who is always a step ahead of them.

The fourth novel, *The Witch's Child*, finds Grace trying to help a former student, Fiona Mackenzie, bring her deceased mother back to Endurance for burial. The town remembers the murder trial ten years earlier when Fiona's mother was found guilty of murders and sent to prison. Her mother was a self-proclaimed witch, and now, with Fiona's return, someone is murdering people involved in that trial. Social media fuels the fire, and Grace and TJ try to find the killer.

A small town called Sweet Iron, Illinois, is the setting for a cozy mystery about Beth Russell, historical researcher and genealogist. *A Death at Tippitt Pond* is a mystery involving a ghostly presence, a stranger in the shadows watching Tippitt House, and mortal danger. When Beth discovers a huge secret in her family tree, she decides to uncover the truth about the background of her family. Once her intentions are known in the little town, people who have a great deal to lose by her discoveries begin to push back, hoping to keep her from revealing what really happened that day at Tippitt Pond.

Praise for Susan Van Kirk's Books:

Three May Keep a Secret

“Van Kirk’s appealing mystery debut introduces recently retired teacher Grace Kimball ... mystery fans will find a lot to like.” —***Publishers Weekly***

“Van Kirk keeps Grace, TJ, Grace’s police friend, and the reader guessing and the pages turning. Van Kirk pits Grace against the murderer leading to an exciting climax.” —***the Gumshoe Review***

Marry in Haste

“*Marry in Haste* clearly showcases author Susan Van Kirk as a master of the genre and with a genuine flair for originality.” —***Midwest Book Review***

“After reading this book, it’s easy to see Van Kirk has a knack for mystery and a deep understanding of women from any time period. We strongly urge you to pick up a copy and be prepared to enjoy this hard-to-put-down mystery.” —***Killer Nashville reviews***

The Witch’s Child

“Brilliant! Susan Van Kirk penned another outstanding read, this time with an element of witchcraft along with the murderous trinity of revenge, greed, and fraud. Grace is sure her former student is just collateral damage of the town’s prejudice, fears, and long memories putting her in conflict with law enforcement. But, there are other motives not to be overlooked, making this a book I couldn’t put down.” —Kathleen Costa, Reviewer, ***King’s River Life Magazine***

A Death at Tippitt Pond

“The best cozy mystery genre reads are steeped in small-town atmosphere and interpersonal connections. *A Death at Tippitt Pond* cultivates these facets to create an absorbing mystery fueled by history, emotional attachments, and physical danger. It’s highly recommended for genre fans who look for unlikely heroes in small-time operators, from librarians to researchers.”

—D. Donovan, Senior Reviewer, *Midwest Book Review*

“*A Death at Tippitt Pond* is a fast-paced tale of love, murder, and hope.” —**Debra H. Goldstein**, author of the Sarah Blair mystery series

Death in a Pale Hue

“The author did a great job in staging this multi-plot drama that had everything I love in a mystery— a solid plot, a likeable cast of characters, and a small-town setting... This was a well-written and evenly paced whodunit that I could not put down, quickly becoming a page-turner as I had to know who was doing what to whom.” —Dru Ann Love, Author Champion, Book Advocate, MWA Raven Award Winner

“*In Death in a Pale Hue*, Susan Van Kirk paints the engrossing portrait of a small town where murder is no match for the warmth and power of friends and family.” —Ellen Byron, Agatha and Lefty Award-Winning Author

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