

Mid-Stafford Murders by Roderick Ramage - chapter by chapter synopsis

In this book are sixteen deaths and one attempted murder. None of the twelve chapters, one for each month, is connected to any other, except that, in most of them, an ordinary, commonplace (except for those involved) accident, such as might be reported in a local newspaper, is given an improbable backstory and turned into an implausible murder.

January pedant in canal	a pedantic exponent of Fowler irritates other drinkers at the public bar and ends up in the canal
February M6 bicyclist	a racing bicyclist takes to the M6 to race his brother going through the town and pays the price of getting involved in a diamond heist
March icicle	a tearaway ASBO kid turns out good but his memories of a schoolboy fantasy with an icicle dagger plays on his conscience
April Facebook suicide	a girl with a lisp who in secondary school is good at algebra and supports Amnesty is taunted by the school bully and her gang and when they do it on Facebook she commits suicide
May Miss Marple	the one whodunit without a solution - a chapter with the title "Miss Marple" must have a body, prone with a knife in it
June Market Square shoot-out	two youngsters from Stafford's Capulets and Montagues kill each other in a real world acting-out of a computer duelling game
July slavery	a slave master's victim's anonymity enables him to exact (illegal) justice where the police and the CPS failed because Parliament had unwittingly decriminalised slavery
August flying saucers and sorcery	the coroner's court got embroiled in death by alien abduction but was spared evidence of death by sorcery
September three for the price of two	the prosecution never thought of a three barrelled shotgun but the murderer's new wife is about to spill the beans in her new book
October evil old git	the author in his slow and beaten up old Land Rover pickup annoyed a BMW driver who tried and failed to blow him up in revenge but at least the police got their man
November dog	Maupassant's tale of a Sicilian vendetta is replayed in a quiet and respectable Stafford street
December the Crown	the author's local is given its very own legend helped by a haunted chair and a real unsolved crime from another part of the country
and in an appendix April (again) Marius' letter	April is the only credible story so here it is retold in an alternate universe in which the geeky boy who was inveigled into creating the fatal FB pages falls into courtly love with the victim and writes her a love letter – Marius' letter to Cosette – which averts the unhappy ending

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