

# A sampler six-pack of fine storytelling

Death as a Fine Art,  
by Gwendolyn Southin.

TouchWood Editions, \$14.95

Be on alert, fans of the mystery style known as a “cozy” — in which, according to Wikipedia, “sex and violence are downplayed or treated humorously, and the crime and detection take place in a small, socially intimate community.”

Death as a Fine Art is another well-crafted morsel of escapism set in the fashionable art world of 1960s Vancouver.

Private detective Margaret Spencer is separated, with grown children, a successful estranged husband who can't see beyond his own 'keep-the-home-fires-burning' nose. And there's an upcoming wedding in which Margaret's outfit must compliment her mother-in-law's blue lace: A day of let's pretend from another time.

But there's a dead gallery owner, a long list of suspects, greed and lies carefully woven into a suspenseful story that will make you smile. Author Southin has created her 21st century Margaret Spencer in the sedate world of 1962. A refreshing read from beginning to end.

