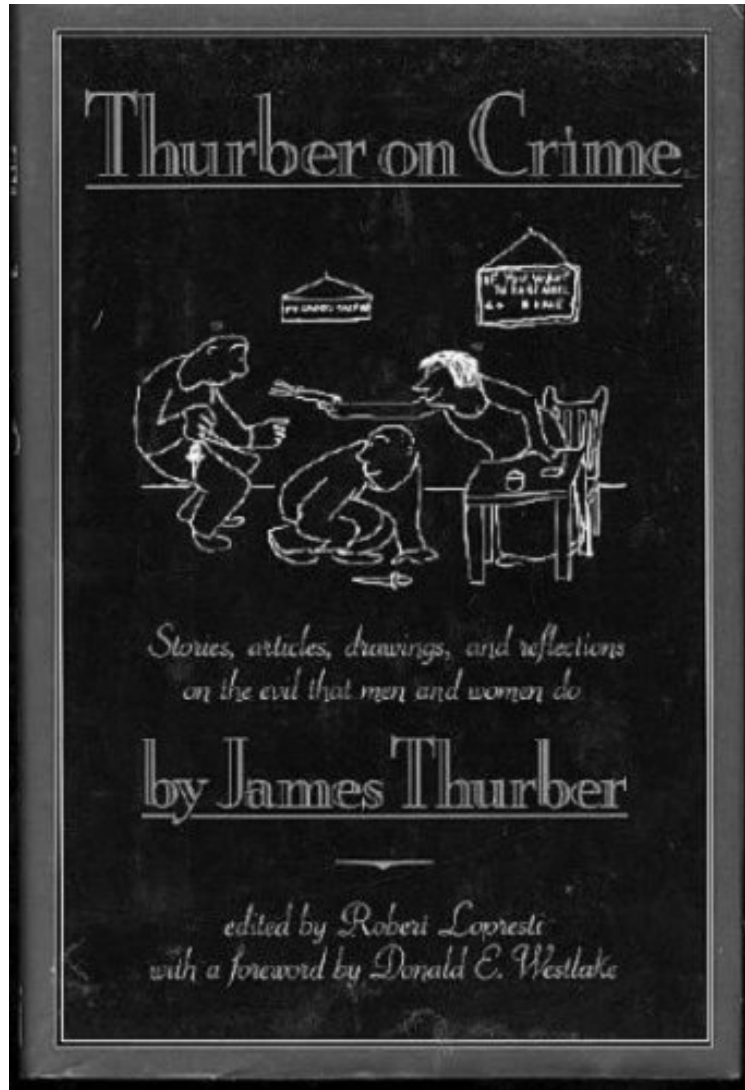


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## Thurber on Crime

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**James Thurber : Thurber on Crime** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Thurber on Crime:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Nothing Like It By James G. Bruen Jr. Off-beat and idiosyncratic, the gentle stories, snippets, and cartoons in Thurber on Crime will make you chuckle, laugh, wince, and groan. A few may even baffle you, especially those that seem no more than sketches whose purpose Thurber never discovered. As crime writer Donald E. Westlake says in the Foreword; "Thurber on crime. There's nothing in the world quite like it." 4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Macbeth Murder Mystery makes the whole thing worthwhile By Orrin C. Judd James Thurber, best remembered today as the creator of Walter Mitty, is one of the group of staff writers who

earned *The New Yorker* its reputation as the "greatest magazine in the world, perhaps the best that ever was," as the old commercial used to inform us. There were several different types of writers in that group, the infamously long essays were turned out by folks like Joseph Mitchell and Berton Roueche (my two favorites), while shorter pieces, drawings, poems, etc., were the province of Thurber, Robert Benchley, E. B. White and several other polymaths. Considering the range of his duties, that he was writing for a weekly magazine, and the length of his career (the pieces in this collection span a period from 1929 to 1961), you could probably fill numerous volumes with Thurber's work and indeed there are plenty of collections of his varied output available, many published during his life but many others posthumous. Though he would not be considered a crime writer, this book happens to be organized around the topic of crime, and that serves to give it a thematic coherence that a random anthology would lack. Included are drawings, stories, and articles that cover a whole range of topics, fiction and nonfiction. Plenty of folks only look at the cartoons in *The New Yorker*, and if you enjoy that style of humor, you'll enjoy Thurber's drawings. His artwork borders on the amateurish--and since he eventually went blind, it got worse as he went along--but it's certainly distinctive. Most all of the stories are written with the wry wit for which Thurber was best known--in his Introduction, Donald E. Westlake calls it "gentle comedy." There's an especially good true tale about an employee who stole tens of thousands of dollars from Harold Ross, the magazine's publisher, before being caught. Though ostensibly an attempt to understand the thief, who ended up committing suicide, Thurber turns it into an opportunity to poke fun at Ross. But far and away the best thing in the book, and one of the best stories I've ever read, is "The Macbeth Murder Mystery." An American woman visiting an English hotel accidentally grabs *The Tragedy of Macbeth* instead of one of the cheap mysteries she intended. Undaunted, she simply reads the play as a whodunit, and to the narrator's astonishment, decides that the Macbeths are not guilty. Her explanations, full of perfectly rational references to the traditions and conventions of the detective genre, eventually ensnare the narrator and the reader, and when, by the end of the story, he's offered his own solution to the mystery and is ready to take on Hamlet, we too are carried away by the demented logic of the tale. The book's worth reading for that story alone; the rest is gravy. GRADE : B+

One of the greatest American humorists of our century, Thurber was not a man to shrink from danger--as long as he was safely ensconced behind his typewriter or drawing board. Here is a collection of ruminations on everyday villainy--stories, articles and drawings on the evil that men and women do. 32 line drawings.

From Publishers Weekly Crime seems as American as apple pie in this assemblage of Thurber's (1894-1961) stories, articles, essays and drawings. With cheerful equanimity he catalogues the horrible things that men and women do to each other in pieces on domestic strife, gangland rubouts, kidnapping, murder, robbery, smuggling, Prohibition, etc. Among the 36 selections, "The Catbird Seat," "The Lady on 142," fables about dogs and many other works will be familiar to Thurber enthusiasts, but five of the stories haven't appeared in any previous Thurber collection. He parodies spy novels; reads *Macbeth* as an Agatha Christie whodunit; and spins a Kafkaesque parable about a man who joins a secret organization, the purpose of which remains hidden from him. Thurber's crisp, non-sensationalistic crime reportage puts modern practitioners to shame. The delightfully unpredictable writing is enlivened by his jaunty cartoons. Mystery Guild selection. Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc.