

THE SHETLAND TEA MURDER

A DO-IT-YOURSELF MURDER
MYSTERY BY ANN CLEEVES

To celebrate the publication of *Cold Earth*, Ann Cleeves—author of *Vera* and *Shetland* fame—has written a murder mystery based around a traditional Shetland tea. *Shetland* is the setting of the popular crime series featuring detective Jimmy Perez.

The following script is designed to be read by four actors. Directions on how to stage the murder mystery event are also included.

Enjoy! Any questions, comments, or pictures of your event can be sent to martin.quinn@stmartins.com

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

4 ACTORS
parts are written for
two men and two women

ONE HOST
someone to host
and chair the event

PAPER & PENCILS
for the participants
to take notes

DIRECTIONS

INTRODUCTION – TO BE READ TO PARTICIPANTS

This evening we're not in _____ but in Shetland, at Sunday Tea. This is a community meeting that brings people together in Shetland once a week to catch up on local news, hear music, and sell homemade items. This Sunday began like any other as the Shetland Tea committee met early to set up today's tea, until the body of committee member, Minnie Laurenson, was found. Only the people at the Sunday tea committee could have committed the murder – they were the only ones present in the hall and nobody else had access. Detective Jimmy Perez has been called but he is delayed on the mainland due to storms. One of the suspects standing before you is a killer, and in the absence of the detective your task is to deduce which of them stabbed Minnie Laurenson.

WITNESS STATEMENTS

Introduce the witnesses in turn and they step forward to read their statements:

- **MAVIS GRIND**, lives in Ravenswick and runs the post office and community shop.
- **KATHRYN ROGERSON**, lives in Lerwick with her parents. She is an island councillor's daughter, and the new teacher at the local Ravenswick school.
- **STUART HENDERSON**, wealthy owner of holiday chalets.
- **ANDY HAY**, plays the fiddle and works as a barman at the Mareel cultural centre.

INTERVAL

Take a break as participants and try to figure out the mystery. It could be a good time to feature Ann Cleeves titles for folks that are interested. If your actors are sufficiently confident, they can stay in character and mingle with the audience answering the questions.

DECISION TIME

Call your audience back to their seats, hand out the competition form, and ask them to decide who killed Minnie Laurenson and why. (The why is important... they have a one in four chance of being right about the who...) Make sure everyone writes their name on the form. Collect them in, and decide who has come closest to the solution.

PRIZE

Announce the winner and provide a prize. **Minotaur Books** will provide three Ann Cleeves Shetland Series books to use as a prize. Email martin.quinn@stmartins.com if interested.

DISCOVER ANN CLEEVES AT ANNCLEEVES.COM

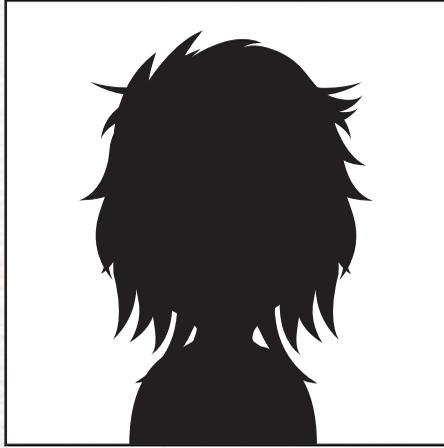


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— THE —
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MAVIS GRIND

WITNESS STATEMENT №1



The Sunday Tea isn't an old Shetland tradition. I don't remember it when I was a peerie lassie, for example. Then Sunday was for the kirk and maybe for a family walk in the afternoon if the weather was nice. There was no work done on a Sunday, no men out in the fields, no washing on the line. My mother cooked a fine lunch of course, and cleared it up afterwards, but somehow that didn't count as work. Things are very different now.

The Sunday Teas bring folk together and that can only be a good thing. Each community chooses a day to hold its Tea and in the spring and summer there can be several in the islands in the same week. Our Ravenswick Teas have been so successful that we run them right into the autumn. In the spring we hold a plant sale—Jane Hay brings along some of the plants from her polycrub—and in October we have a bit of music.

There's always some argument about where the money we raise should go. We have a committee to organize the Teas and make that decision. There's me, Kathryn Rogerson, who's the new teacher at the school, Stuart Henderson who runs those fancy chalets on the coast for holiday makers, Jane Hay's son Andy, and Minnie Laurenson. At least, there was Minnie Laurenson. But now, of course, she's dead—and that's why you're all here today.

It all started just like every other Shetland Tea Sunday. The committee got to the hall in the morning to set up. We'd had a meeting the week before in Minnie's house at Tain, and that had been a kind of niggling, fractious affair, with everyone bickering about where the profit from this month's Tea should go. In the past we've all got on splendidly, but Stuart had the bright idea to invite a couple of younger people onto the committee, and since Kathryn and Andy got involved, nothing has been straightforward. Kathryn is one of those women who seem shy and biddable, but who get what they want by being persistently obstructive in the politest sort of way. It's impossible to argue with her without appearing rude!

I've always thought Andy an arrogant young man. Charming enough on the



MAVIS GRIND

WITNESS STATEMENT №1

surface but underneath you feel that he's sneering. He's one of those young men that hang around Mareel; they're all arty talk, tattoos and piercings. He plays the fiddle like a dream though and we definitely have visitors to the October Teas who come just to hear his music. He dropped out of uni and he works at Mareel now, serving behind the bar. So really, he has nothing at all to be arrogant about. I run the post office and the community shop in Ravenswick and I'm serving the public just like him.

When we arrived at the hall this morning we still hadn't come to a decision about a suitable place for the money to go. Stuart didn't really care. He's got far more money than he needs and as long as he has a holiday in the sun every year and enough cash to keep his wife in fancy designer clothes, he's happy enough. I'm not sure why he joined the committee at all. Andy was all for a donation to the Youth Theatre in Mareel. I wasn't having that! That arts centre has already taken too much of the council's money and if kids want to prance about on a stage, let them pay for it themselves. Kathryn thought we should support the Ravenswick Playgroup. I've never had bairns myself and I don't see why the young mums can't look after their own offspring. Besides, it was about time Miss Kathryn Rogerson learned that she can't always get her own way. So I backed Minnie Laursen's idea of a donation to the Textile Museum.

The thing you need to know about Minnie is that she was a great knitter and spinner and that when Professor Grieve cuts her up at the post mortem he'll probably find yarn in her body instead of veins. It was what she lived for. I learned to knit when I was a girl of course and I can still make bonnets and mittens and scarves if I'm pressed. But Minnie was famous for her skill and her knowledge of the old patterns. And as our Teas coincide with Shetland Wool Week it seemed appropriate to give our cash to the institution that keeps the traditions alive. So when we all met in the hall this morning I chatted to Stuart and got him on side too and that was our decision made. Three of the committee backed Minnie's plan and we had our majority.

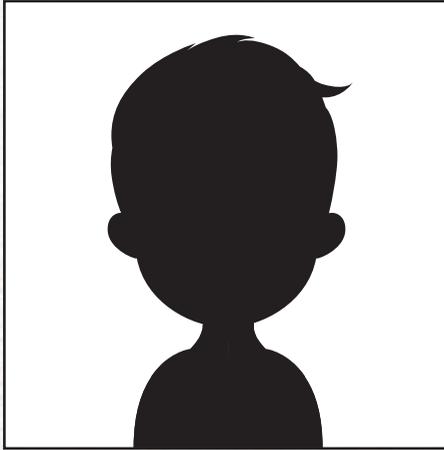
Do I think one of the youngsters killed Minnie in a fit of pique? Because we out voted them? Of course not. But somebody killed her with her own scissors while we were laying out the cakes and the bannocks. And it must have been one of the committee, because we were the only people with access to the hall when she died. She'd brought her knitting because she had an all-over jersey to complete for an American client and she'd decided not to go home for lunch. Her scissors were in her knitting bag, longbladed and very sharp. We'd all seen her use them when we stopped for coffee earlier in the day. Minnie could knit anywhere in any spare moment. I was in the kitchen, filling up the urns for tea and when I went back into the hall she was dead. The scissors were sticking out of her back and there was blood on her knitting. She'd been using natural colours, grey and murril and white; the splashes of red looked like an unusual design, part of the pattern. Of course I screamed. It was a horrible sight.



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ANDY HAY

WITNESS STATEMENT №2



I'm not sure how I allowed myself to get bullied into joining the Sunday Teas committee. It was my mother's fault. She said now that I was back from uni I should commit myself to the community. She said I'd made the decision that I wanted to stay in Shetland so I should prove that I was serious. I joined the committee just to get her off my back. And because Kathryn Rogerson said she'd be there too. I've always had a soft spot for Kathryn. She's older than me of course, but I've admired her since we were in the Youth Theatre together. Her father's a councillor with his fingers in many pies and she's very much a daddy's girl. I'm not sure he approves of me so our friendship is unlikely to develop into anything more serious.

I'm usually at the Teas anyway playing my fiddle; it's a fun way to get my name out and I sell CDs after the gig. I had a soft spot for Minnie Laurenson too. She was our neighbour. We live in Gilsetter, the croft near the shore in Ravenswick; my dad's a farmer and my mother has a horticultural business. Tain, where Minnie lived, used to be a croft too, but Dad bought up her land when it was too much for her to manage and after that, she was just left with the house. We used to visit a lot when we were younger. She had a fat, idle cat called Sammy and she made us the biscuits that we call peat. She's famous for writing spiky letters to the Shetland Times.

The committee meeting last week was the first time I'd had much contact with her since I dropped out of university and she seemed a bit crabby and irritable. Sammy had died over the summer, according to Mum, so perhaps that had something to do with it.

Maybe she was just feeling lonely and a peerie bit old. I'd always had the impression that she and Mavis were best pals, but there seemed to be some tension between them in the run up to the Teas. They were both in Minnie's kitchen when the meeting ended and I heard Mavis Grind say: 'You're not going to get away with this Minnie Laurenson. I'll see you in your grave before I do.' We'd been arguing throughout the meeting about the funds from the Teas, so maybe it was about that. I don't think so though. I've always considered Mavis Grind a malicious gossip—she spread rumours at



ANDY HAY

WITNESS STATEMENT №2

one time that I had a drug problem—and that sounded downright nasty. Of course I didn't take the threat against Minnie seriously at the time but now it seems more sinister.

This morning I was the last to arrive. I was on a late shift at Mareel last night and then there was a bit of a party at a friend's house, so I was in no state to be here at the crack of dawn. The deal is that folk bring their baking to the hall between eleven and twelve. In other places the arrangements are more flexible but Mavis rules Ravenswick with a hand of iron. She's always been queen bee and we all do as she says. Word has it that there was once a man in her life but I'm not sure if that's true. Who on earth would put up with her?

I got to the hall at about midday just as the last tins of cakes and bannocks had been delivered. I made myself a cup of coffee in the kitchen and took it outside to drink. It was warm enough, out of the breeze. I needed a cigarette if I'm honest. My mother thought I gave up smoking years ago, so don't tell her.

I stopped to chat to Minnie on my way through the hall with my coffee. She'd brought her lunch from home—you'd have thought there'd be enough food in the place but it wouldn't be her style to nick any of the homebakes brought for the Teas. She taught me in Sunday School when I was a boy and is the most honest person you can imagine. She'd just put a chair up to one of the trestle tables and she'd pulled a sandwich from her bag. There was a knitting belt round her waist with one needle stuck into it and she was clacking away with the others, even when she was speaking to me. It looked like a complicated pattern but she didn't even seem to be looking at it.

'Are you well, Andy?' she said. *'Are you sure it was the right thing to do, coming back to the islands?'*

I said I thought it was. I enjoyed being back with my family and friends.

There was a pause before she spoke. Then she said: 'Just you take care, boy. Sometimes it's the people closest to you who stab you in the back.' And wasn't that weird? It sounds almost prophetic, as if she knew something terrible was about to happen.

I went out with my coffee then. I'm not sure how long I was on the grass outside the hall. A quarter of an hour maybe. The sun was out and there was a great view over the headland. Then I heard a terrible scream and I ran inside. Mavis Grind was there looking down at Minnie's body and the scissor blade was sticking out of her back.

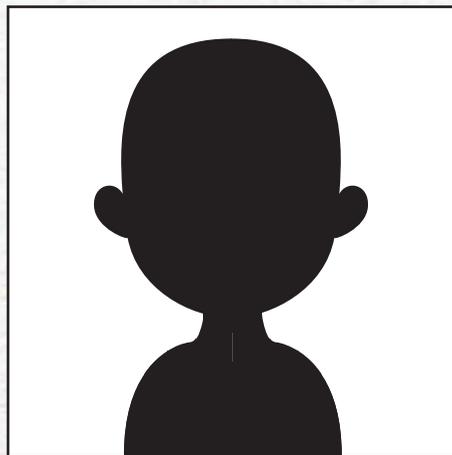
I didn't see anyone go into the hall while I was sitting outside. I might have dozed for a while but I was right by the door and would have woken up if anyone went passed. There is a back door to the hall but that was locked and only the committee members have the keys. I have no idea why anyone would want to kill a harmless old lady like Minnie Laurensen. She was a part of my childhood and I feel that my life has changed, that in some strange way I've had to grow up very quickly.



STUART HENDERSON

WITNESS STATEMENT №3

— THE —
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Angie made me join the Teas committee. She's my wife and I've generally found that it's a good plan to go along with what she says. There was a bit of bad feeling in the community when we built our holiday complex in the parks not very far from the kirk. Minnie called it blasphemous: 'All those folk drinking and carrying on so close to a house of God.' There were other objections too, but the council came to our point of view in the end. We made them see that Ravenswick Haven wasn't just a business proposition, but a way of bringing work to this part of Shetland. The locals don't realize how much we've invested in the scheme—we built it on a piece of boggy wasteland and we had to drain a pool. It was worth the effort though. The chalets have been booked out since they went up and they're especially busy at this time of year, when everyone's here for Wool Week. Anyway, Angie decided it might smooth things over with our neighbours if I volunteered for the committee, so that's what I did.

I think I might know why Minnie and Mavis fell out. Mavis had a gentleman friend, a man from the south. They met when he first came to the islands years ago. He was married then and as far as I know he's still married today. He's too mean to stay in our complex; our neighbour runs a B&B and he stays with her. He claims that he comes to Shetland each year to study the birds; I'd say it's a very different bird that he's interested in. He's elderly now, but there's definitely a spring in his step when he walks over to the post office every evening just as Mavis is closing for the day. Perhaps Minnie saw them together. Mavis Grind has always been discreet about her gentleman friend but it's hard to keep secrets in Shetland. Maybe Minnie threatened to tell the chap's wife what was going on. I'm happy for people to take their pleasure where they can, but Minnie could be a hard woman and she'd see it as her duty to put an end to the affair.

I got to the hall at ten and Mavis and Minnie were already there then. Young Kathryn Rogerson arrived soon after. She's recently taken up a post as teacher in Ravenswick School and everyone thinks very highly of her. I decided we needed some younger people involved in the Teas committee.



STUART HENDERSON

WITNESS STATEMENT №3

Kathryn lives with her parents in Lerwick but she's very much become a part of the community, and I was delighted when she agreed to join us. Minnie was a school governor and had appointed Kathryn, so it seemed odd that she hadn't been enthusiastic about having her on the committee. She was perfectly prepared to include Andy Hay with his weird clothes and druggie friends though. Elderly people can have these strange prejudices. Perhaps she liked Andy because she'd known him since he was a small boy and she considered Kathryn an outsider.

As soon as Kathryn arrived, Minnie took herself off to the kitchen to wash the cups and saucers, leaving Kathryn and Mavis Grind to greet the folk coming in with their homebakes. I'd started pulling the trestles out of the big cupboard under the stage. We put four together to act as a counter. And then I pinned up the bunting and set out the small tables where folk sit for their Teas. Mavis makes table decorations and is very particular, but we have the preparation down to a fine art by now. Andy Hay turned up just as all the hard work was finished. That's very much his style!

I decided to go home for my lunch. One of the chalet residents had a complaint about a faulty light switch. Angie said my son had sorted it out but I wanted to check. Small details like that can ruin a company's reputation. It only takes one bad review on TripAdvisor to keep the visitors away. I went out through the back door of the hall and through the kitchen, because that was closest to where my car was parked. Minnie was still there. She'd washed and dried all the crockery—though I'm sure it had been put away clean the last time it was used—and she was sitting on her own in a corner of the room. I asked if anything was wrong. She didn't seem like her usual self. She looked up, kind of surprised, as if she hadn't realized I was there until I'd spoken.

'Sometimes it's very hard to do the right thing,' she said. 'I'm struggling with my conscience, Stuart.'

I didn't know what to say to that. I've never been a religious man. For me Sundays are a day to relax with my family and have a few beers. And now they're a day to get together at the Teas. I mumbled something about how I was sure she'd make the right decision and I left the building. I don't know where Mavis Grind was then. Perhaps she was in the small room that we use as a cloakroom. The weather can be unpredictable at this time of the year and we always put up a coat rail for waterproofs. Minnie said she'd have her lunch and went into the main hall with her knitting bag. Andy wandered into the kitchen to make himself a coffee. I think Kathryn had already left by then. She said she'd go to the school to prepare some work for the next day.

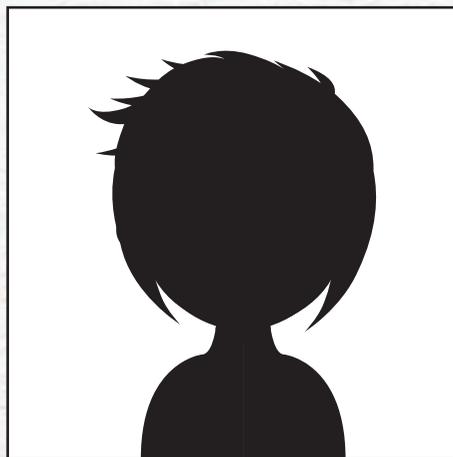
By the time I got back everything here was in chaos. Mavis had just called Jimmy Perez but he hadn't arrived yet. And Minnie Laursen was dead. She was the last of her generation in Ravenswick and I'll miss her.



KATHRYN ROGERSON

WITNESS STATEMENT №4

— THE —
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I knew from a small child that I wanted to be a teacher in Shetland. My dad was working in Aberdeen when I was born, but the family moved back when I was only a baby and all my memories are from here. My father's a lawyer and an island councillor, and we've always been close. He had great ambitions for me and after I did so well at uni I think he hoped I'd go for some high-powered job in the south. But this is all I've ever wanted: to teach small bairns in a little school in Shetland. Of course I'd love children of my own too, but so far the right man hasn't come along. My father says I'm just too picky and maybe he's right, but he's picky too and he hasn't liked any of the men I've taken home.

When Stuart Henderson asked me to be a member of the Ravenswick Teas committee of course I agreed. I know some local people were disappointed that I didn't move into the community when I got the job in the school, but I like to keep some distance between work and my personal life. This is a way of showing that I'm committed to the place and the children in my care without getting too entangled with the village and its politics. If I'd realized just how set in their ways the older members of the committee are and how much they'd resent new ideas, perhaps I'd have had second thoughts about joining up. But as Mavis Grind told you, I'm a stubborn woman and I won't be bullied. Now I'm here I'm determined to make the Ravenswick Teas an event for everyone, especially for the children and their families. In the past it's been a rather cliquey affair. But I certainly wouldn't kill an old woman because she disliked my ideas for involving new people, or because I didn't like the way she wanted to spend any funds raised.

In fact, we'd become closer in recent weeks, and that was all down to Minnie's passion for knitting and for keeping the old patterns alive. I'd invited her into the school to teach the children—the boys and the girls—to knit and she'd already been in for one session. She had great stories to tell about the wool and where the natural dyes came from.

I was pleased that Andy agreed to join the committee too. He's younger than me of course, but I knew him when we were children.



KATHRYN ROGERSON

WITNESS STATEMENT №4

We were both members of the Youth Theatre in Mareel and it's great that he's working there again. Of course I've never considered him in any sort of romantic light. He's a sweet boy but not very mature for his age. I think he had some problems with addiction when he was away in the south but he seems fine now and I'm hoping he'll agree to work with me on some community projects for teenagers if we can get the funding. I haven't floated that one past the committee yet! Mavis Grind was horrified when I suggested giving the Teas money to the playgroup, so what she'd make of a bunch of rowdy youths meeting in her precious hall I can't say . . . Even Minnie Laurenson would probably have been more open-minded.

I think I might suggest getting someone to look over the accounts—Mavis and Minnie have been joint signatories for the cheques since the Teas started, and it's probably time that the books were audited. My father might agree to do it for them.

I arrived at the hall at about the same time as Stuart. I've known him since I was a girl. He and Angie have been friends of my parents for years and he's like an unofficial uncle. People started arriving with their baking soon after and I sorted it, putting the fresh cream cakes into the fridge and the bannocks, scones and biscuits onto plates and trays covered with cling film to keep them fresh. Mavis Grind was with me, but she seemed to spend more time gossiping with her neighbours than helping out. Minnie stayed in the kitchen for most of the morning. She said the crockery would be dusty after being left in the cupboards for a couple of months. Whenever I went in she seemed happy enough. A bit quiet perhaps, but she'd never been one for idle chat.

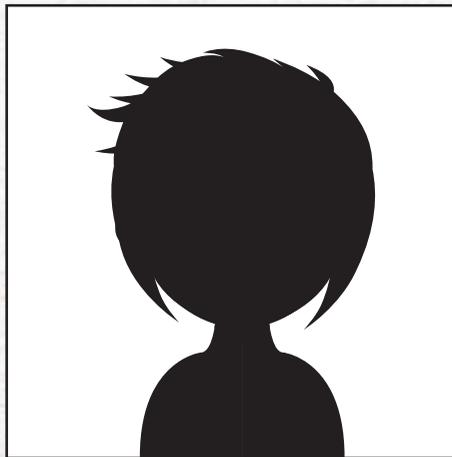
We had everything pretty well sorted by lunchtime and I decided to go to the school to eat the salad I'd brought with me. I told the others that I had work to prepare for the next day, but really I just wanted a bit of time to myself. I decided to walk down to the school. It was really a lovely day for the time of year and I needed the fresh air. I went out through the front door. Andy Hay was drowsing in the sun outside the hall—I don't think he saw me. I didn't stay long in school and it was just after one o'clock when I got back. I can't remember if Andy was still outside or not. I was quite preoccupied about a personal problem that's been troubling me for a while. I let myself into the hall through the back door into the kitchen, using my key. That was when I heard Mavis scream. It hardly sounded human at all. I rushed through to the main hall and there was Minnie, lying dead, her knitting still on her lap. With the bunting and the balloons, it just looked very grotesque.



KATHRYN ROGERSON

THE CONFESSION

THE CONFESSION



I stabbed Minnie Laurenson in the community hall today. She was threatening my father and everything he stands for, and I couldn't let her get away with that. I couldn't let it happen. Dad's a good man and he does what he thinks is best for the islands. He didn't support Stuart's application to build a holiday complex just because Stuart offered him a great deal of money if it passed smoothly through the planning committee. Dad knew it would bring in visitors to Ravenswick and increase prosperity for all its residents. There'd be more people using Mavis Grind's post office and Jane Hay's farm shop, so everyone would benefit. What did one little deception matter if the result was all that?

As Stuart said, it's hard to keep secrets in Shetland. Of course I knew that Mavis was carrying on with a married man from the south. Her lover is an enthusiastic amateur birdwatcher and he's been coming to the islands for years. He found a pair of breeding red-necked phalarope on the small pool that Stuart drained to build his holiday homes and he was horrified to discover the chalets on the site when he returned the following autumn. He told Mavis about the birds and she mentioned the fact to Minnie Laurenson. Minnie became suspicious—she'd never liked my father.

She first brought up the subject when she came to school to teach knitting to the bairns. 'It would be better if your father made a clean breast himself. Then I won't need to act. I'll give him a week.' Then I heard her talking to Stuart this morning. She told him she was planning to write a letter to the Shetland Times asking why the Henderson planning application had gone through so speedily, when there had been a rare species breeding on the site.

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PHOTO CREDIT: CHLOE HEALY



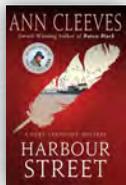
AMERICA LOVES ANN CLEEVES' VERA SERIES & SHETLAND SERIES

THE VERA TELEVISION SERIES

Ann is the author of the books behind the **VERA** series starring Brenda Blethyn, now airing on **PBS** in over 25 markets, on **Hulu**, and on the **Acorn** platform (available through Apple, Roku, and Samsung)

VERA SERIES PUBLICATION SCHEDULE

NOW AVAILABLE



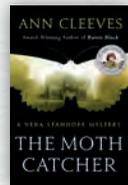
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BACKLIST TITLE AVAILABLE:

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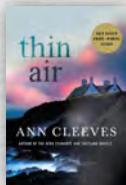
COMING IN 2018

THE SHETLAND TELEVISION SERIES

Ann is the author behind the BBC series **SHETLAND**, airing on PBS in 20 markets in the U.S. and on **Amazon Video**.

SHETLAND SERIES PUBLICATION SCHEDULE

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PUBLICITY

Ann will be traveling throughout the US during 2017 for event appearances and print and broadcast publicity.