

The first in a proposed series about Israel Armstrong, ruffled and befuddled bookmobile librarian in a small town in Northern Ireland, *The Case of the Missing Books* by Ian Sansom (2006), introduces not only Israel, who travels from London to start a new job as town librarian at the Tumdrum and District Library, but also a whole cast of local eccentrics. The story is a classic "fish out of water" tale. The plot: an overeducated cityslicker arrives in a rural backwater where wiley locals contrive to pull the wool over his eyes about how 15,000 library books have disappeared. *The Case of the Missing Books* is a charming satire in this tradition. The book reminded me of Bill Forsyth's 1983 movie, *Local Hero*, or more recently, *Waking Ned Devine* or *Saving Grace*, all movies based in the U.K. where the townsfolk's mistrust of authority binds them together, results in heart-warming hijinks, features endearingly nutty locals and ends happily.

*The Case of the Missing Books*, a mobile library mystery is the funniest book I've read in a while and I would recommend it to anyone who for example, has finished all the #1 Ladies Detective Agency books by Alexander McCall Smith, and is looking for a gently humorous, character driven, "cozy" kind of mystery.