



Miraculous Mysteries

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Impossible crime stories have been relished by puzzle-lovers ever since the invention of detective fiction. Fiendishly intricate cases were particularly well suited to the cerebral type of detective story that became so popular during the 'golden age of murder' between the two world wars. But the tradition goes back to the days of Edgar Allan Poe and Wilkie Collins, and impossible crime stories have been written by such luminaries as Arthur Conan Doyle, G.K. Chesterton, Dorothy L. Sayers and Margery Allingham.

This anthology celebrates their work, alongside long-hidden gems by less familiar writers. Together these stories demonstrate the range and high accomplishment of the classic British impossible crime story over more than half a century.

Miraculous Mysteries Details

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Download and Read Free Online Miraculous Mysteries Martin Edwards (Editor)

From Reader Review Miraculous Mysteries for online ebook

Stephen Robert Collins says

This classic collection of locked room mysteries that have not been published for years. Short story collections like this often have rare out of print stories. Authors like Sax Rohmer, William Hope Hodgson, G.K. Chesterton, Sapper & lots more.

Carol says

E-Galley provided through the generosity of Penguin Press and Netgalley for my honest review. This title is part of The British Library Crime Classics and is available for purchase as of June 6, 2017.

Miraculous Mysteries is a compilation that's like a bag of potato chips. Once you open its pages, you will not be able to stop at just one.

Many including me love locked room mysteries. The quest to figure out how a crime is committed in a space with no way for the perpetrator to exit is delicious to say the least. The solving of these mysterious mysteries is good for this aging brain and good fun too.

Thank heavens for GR friends, in this case Sue Drees who gave the wonderful authors of this collection their due. Some old friends and some new acquaintances for me. Most familiar to me were Dorothy L. Sayers, G.K. Chesterton, Margery Allingham, and Arthur Conan Doyle, but don't expect a Sherlock story. Nicholas Olde, Sax Rohmer, and Austin Freeman are a few that I will need to research.

Love the old-fashioned look of The British Library Crime Classics covers, the hues and tones and the content is top-notch too. Miraculous Mysteries: Locked Room Mysteries and Impossible Crimes is a book I need to own. It's a solid collection and a must for fans of this genre, edited by Martin Edwards.

Lisa Kucharski says

A highly enjoyable mix of "impossible" or locked room mysteries. The nice thing is the variety and the fact that some of the stories would be close to impossible to come upon now. The introductions by Martin Edwards is a nice way to find out some background on the authors some of which were kept secret while they were writing. So there is a variety of hard to find and some of the more familiar names of the Golden Age of Detection.

The last story by Allingham was a fun one, and after listening to the situation I, like Campion, quickly got the idea of what happened to the missing couple. Ha! A fun read for mystery lovers.

Robin Stevens says

Delightful locked-room mysteries from well-known and less-known Golden Age authors, these were fun to read and great work-outs for my brain! Some of these stories have dated less well than others, though ... (12+)

Please note: this review is meant as a recommendation only. Please do not use it in any marketing material, online or in print, without asking permission from me first. Thank you!

Lesya says

I've always been a fan of locked-room mysteries. I went through a streak when I read every book I could find by John Dickson Carr. Now, as part of the British Library Crime Classics series, editor Martin Edwards presents sixteen stories from the "Golden Age of Murder" in *Miraculous Mysteries: Locked-Room Murders and Impossible Crimes*.

Edwards' introductions are always fascinating. He presents the background and history of the type of stories in the anthology. The "Golden Age of Murder" was the period between the two world wars when a number of authors, mostly British, were writing intriguing detective and mystery stories. In this collection, Edwards has gathered stories by authors such as Arthur Conan Doyle, G.K. Chesterton, Dorothy L. Sayers, Michael Innes. Usually, it is the character they are best known for who investigates and reveals the truth behind the seemingly impossible crime. For those of us fascinated by the history of the mystery genre, Edwards' brief introductions to each story are invaluable. He includes biographical information about the author, the background of their writing, a little about their sleuth, and, often, the history of the story we are about to read.

The stories in this collection are set in family chapels, museums, family homes, trains. My favorite story in the collection is Dorothy L. Sayers' "The Haunted Policeman". Lord Peter Wimsey and Harriet Vane are new parents, but Wimsey finds time to assist a policeman with a missing house. Each story is clever and detailed.

The last time I read one of the books in British Library Crime Classics, I went back and bought all the previous books, and pre-ordered two forthcoming volumes. It's a joy to remember some of the authors I loved years ago, and to discover new ones. And, there's nothing I appreciate more than classic *Miraculous Mysteries*.

Martin Edwards' website is www.martinedwardsbooks.com

Gigi says

A satisfying collection of impossible crime short stories, many of which were new to me. The introductions by Martin Edwards are especially interesting to set the stage.

Leah says

Locked doors don't guarantee safety...

Over the last couple of years, I have developed something of an addiction for the themed anthologies being

published under the British Library Crime Classics label. This one concentrates on “impossible” crimes - “locked room” mysteries and others of the kind where the emphasis is more on how it was done than on whodunit. As always, the stories have been selected by Martin Edwards who gives a brief introduction to each one telling a little about the author. They're printed in rough chronological order, covering the period from the beginning of the 20th century (or just before) through to 1960.

There are lots of well-known names here – Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Dorothy L. Sayers, Margery Allingham, etc – as well as some more obscure authors, some of whom have appeared in the earlier anthologies and some who I think are making their first appearance. The crimes are a lot of fun, ranging from the fiendishly clever but quite possible to work out if you have that kind of mind, to ones that rely on something that couldn't have been known – trick doors or things of that nature. I did guess a few, but was baffled by plenty, and even the easier to solve ones are still entertaining.

As with all anthologies, the quality is variable but I must say I think the average standard throughout this collection is actually higher than in some of the earlier collections. Perhaps this kind of puzzle just appeals more to me, but I don't think that's it, really – I think this is just a particularly good group of stories. There are sixteen of them in total, and I ranked ten of them as either 4 or 5 stars, with only one getting a rating lower than 3 (and that was the GK Chesterton story, which can be put down to my own prejudice – I simply don't enjoy his style).

Great fun! I now feel quite qualified to bump off anyone who annoys me in ways that will baffle the greatest detective minds...

NB This book was provided for review by the publisher, Poisoned Pen Press.

www.fictionfanblog.wordpress.com

Ivonne Rovira says

Martin Edwards' anthology of “locked-door” mystery short stories from the Golden Age proves a mixed bag. Unfortunately, Edwards, an English solicitor and a mystery writer in his own right, front-loaded the collection with the dross, saving the gems for last. I nearly abandoned the book because the short stories at the beginning were so forgettable! So let this review serve as a warning to skip ahead.

Edwards includes a few fine short stories from well-known authors: Dorothy L. Sayers (“The Haunted Policeman”), Michael Innes (“The Sands of Thyme”), Edmund Crispin (“Beware of the Trains”), and Margery Allingham (“The Villa Marie Celeste”). Not all of *Miraculous Mysteries*' stories literally feature a locked room; however, all center on an “impossible crime” unraveled by a clever detective, whether professional or amateur. Other short stories that make the anthology worth the price are Nicolas Olde's “The Invisible Weapon,” Grenville Robbins' “The Broadcast Murder,” Sapper's ironic “The Music Room,” “Death at 8:30” by Christopher St. John Sprigg (the author of the fabulous *Death of an Airman*, a writer sadly cut down in his youth fighting in the Spanish Civil War), E. Charles Vivian's “Locked In,” and G.D.H. and Margaret Cole's “Too Clever by Half,” my personal favorite.

In the interest of full disclosure, I received this book from NetGalley and Poisoned Pen Press in exchange for an honest review.

Christopher Roden says

A mixed bag, but nonetheless very entertaining.

Judy Lesley says

I received an e-ARC of this book of short stories through NetGalley and Poisoned Pen Press. Thank you.

This collection of short stories has a lot going for it. Included in this book are 16 locked room, or often called impossible, puzzles needing a solution. Luckily for those of us who especially enjoy these older classics there were some fine deductive thinkers on the scene. As is almost a standard for a collection of this type the editor, Martin Edwards, has included a brief biographical segment at the beginning of each story to help the reader understand the placement that author had in crime fiction of that period. The stories are arranged more or less in chronological order so I got a nice mixture of authors I was familiar with bumping up against those I didn't know at all.

Here is a list of the story titles and authors:

The Lost Special by Arthur Conan Doyle (not a Sherlock Holmes/Dr. Watson story)
The Thing Invisible by William Hope Hodgson
The Case of the Tragedies in the Greek Room by Sax Rohmer
The Aluminum Dagger by R. Austin Freeman
The Miracle of Moon Crescent by G. K. Chesterton
The Invisible Weapon by Nicholas Olde
The Diary of Death by Marten Cumberland
The Broadcast Murder by Grenville Robbins
The Music-Room by Sapper (not a Bulldog Drummond story)
Death at 8:30 by Christopher St. John Sprigg
Too Clever By Half by G. D. H. and Margaret Cole
Locked In by E. Charles Vivian
The Haunted Policeman by Dorothy L. Sayers (a Lord Peter Wimsey story)
The Sands of Thyme by Michael Innes (a John Appleby story)
Beware of the Trains by Edmund Crispin (a Gervase Fen story)
The Villa Marie Celeste by Margery Allingham (an Albert Campion and Inspector Luke story)

There was only one story I didn't particularly enjoy and only one that I solved as it was unfolding. Altogether a very pleasant time of enjoying short snippets of wonderfully written stories at my leisure.

Moonlight Reader says

The British Library Crime Classics series has published a number of anthologies edited by Martin Edwards. I was looking for a locked room mystery to fill a square in a Halloween bingo game, and thought that this one would fit the bill splendidly. And so it did.

Only one of the stories was an unredeemable clunker - the abysmal *The Case of the Tragedies in the Greek Room* by Sax Rohmer.

My favorite stories were *The Lost Special* by Arthur Conan Doyle, a clever non-Holmes story about a train that simply disappears, *The Miracle of Moon Crescent* by G.K. Chesterton, an extremely complicated Father Brown mystery that was previously published in *The Incredulity of Father Brown*, and *Too Clever By Half* by GHD and Margaret Cole, which makes the point that complicated plots should be avoided.

The remaining stories are all entertaining, and contain all of the secret passages, disappearing weapons, and complicated murderous devices that a reader needs to be satisfied with a locked room/impossible crime. The story by Dorothy Sayers would be a charming Wimsey tale that follows directly on the heels of Harriet Vane giving birth to the Wimsey heir, with a suitably lighthearted solution but for the fact that it contains a disgusting racial slur which rather ruined the whole thing for me, so fair warning should be provided. Yes, different times, yada yada yada. Nonetheless, the slur used is indefensible, and shocking to the modern reader.

Sue says

This collection provides quite a mixture of mystery stories, all of the impossible, locked room variety. Locked room stories are not always my favorite mysteries, but there are some very good ones in this collection; a few are quite clever in unexpected ways. There are also a few that were, for me, quite forgettable (especially, for some reason, at the beginning). Most stories are set in the pre-WWII years of Britain, with only one later. One story, by Dorothy Sayers, uses a derogatory word never used now which bothered me as I read, but I realize was a part of a different time (written in the 1930s).

Many of the stories I enjoyed were written by authors completely unknown to me before. Some of these writers had lengthy careers in mystery writing, others wrote little in the genre or worked in other fields entirely. So those seeking more materials may find more authors to seek out elsewhere. Edwards continues to provide brief but fairly complete biographies on each writer.

If you are a fan of golden age mysteries, particularly of the locked room variety, then this book will be a good choice for you.

A copy of this book was provided by the publisher through NetGalley in return for an honest review.

Aoife says

This review can also be found on my blog

Of course, impossible crimes immediately makes one think of the typical locked room mystery: a room, locked from the inside, with a dead body. Most of the stories are exactly that but a few also feature miraculously disappearing weapons, bodies, trains or whole houses.

The Lost Special - Arthur Conan Doyle

How can a whole train disappear without a trace? The case is once again solved by...nobody really.

This story had some similarities to the Conan Doyle story in *Blood on the Tracks* and not only because both stories feature a seemingly impossible crime involving a train. Just like *The Man with the Watches*, this story has no detective, just somebody involved in the crime who explains it all, once it won't have any consequences for him anymore. That's...cheap. And while I fully understand Doyle's reluctance to make up a

detective, even just for a single story, this simply isn't what I expect from a 'proper' mystery.

The Thing Invisible - William Hope Hodgson

An invisible thing held the dagger that stabbed the butler in the chapel. That's what everybody who was there when it happens claims. So was there really a ghost or is there another explanation? Carnacki the Ghostfinder investigates.

Carnacki is yet another 'rival' of Sherlock Holmes and the stories are set up in a similar way, with the narrator being a friend of Carnacki. But the difference is that the two don't actually work together. In *The Thing Invisible* Carnacki comes to visit the narrator after he solved the case and tells him all about it which rather defeats the purpose in my opinion. Especially because a sizeable part of the narration is spent on Carnacki explaining how scared he was in the chapel, with frequent interjections a la 'You must really understand how terrified I was at that point' which rather killed the atmosphere instead adding to it. Which is a shame, because if you strip away all that, a clever impossible crime remains. But I almost didn't notice because I got so bored while reading.

The Case of the Tragedies in the Greek Room - Sax Rohmer

Two people end up dead in a museum room. Both times a Greek harp has been removed from its case but not stolen. It's still in the room.

After the - for Martin Edwards - very lukewarm introduction to this story I didn't expect much but this story is fun. It's clearly pulp fiction with its high drama, impossible science, beautiful women and ridiculous coincidences. But it's also fun.

The Aluminium Dagger - R. Austin Freeman

An unlikeable man is stabbed in a locked room by a left-handed person. But was he really?

Thorndyke is...reliable. I never came across a Thorndyke-story I didn't enjoy but I can also see how Freeman's obsession with scientific details isn't for everybody. Still, a very realistic locked-room mystery is a nice change

The Miracle of Moon Crescent - G.K. Chesterton

Three Atheists stand in a room. Behind them a locked door. A priest walks in and wants to speak to the man behind the locked door. The man is missing.

I swear the Father Brown stories I've read before weren't that...preachy. Or perhaps my memory is playing tricks on me since I watched much more adaptations (which in some cases are only very loosely based on the stories) than read Chesterton. This story felt like a religious treatise with some murder in the background and that was rather...exhausting. And dull.

The Invisible Weapon - Nicholas Oide

The case seems clear-cut. A man is dead. Another man who had a motive to kill him stayed in the same house and he had the opportunity. But there's a tiny detail: the murder weapon is nowhere to be found and the suspect wouldn't have had the time to get rid of it. How can you batter someone to death with your bare hands?

Even though the question is not "Who killed the man behind closed doors?" but "Where did the weapon go?" this is one of the most typical locked room mysteries in this collection. The solution is brilliant but also plain and simple once explained (and relies on some very convenient coincidences)

The Diary of Death - Marten Cumberland

A crazed serial killer has developed an obsession with a once-famous actress. She died impoverished but left

a diary behind in which she accused her former friends of abandoning her. Somebody has gotten hold of that diary and is now out for revenge. One of the actress's friends is convinced he is next so he takes precautions and locks himself up. But...

...you will be surprised by what happens next.

The focus of this story isn't that much the impossible aspect (the solution to that is rather simple) but the story of the actress and who (and why) would be out to avenge her. As such it is...nice.

The Broadcast Murder - Grenville Robbins

A radio announcer is murdered live on air. All the nation could listen to it. But when the police enter the radio-station there is no body to be found.

The Music Room - Sapper

The owner of a mansion entertains his guests with a story about a decades-old unsolved murder about an unknown man, found in a locked room, beaten to death. One day later there's a very recent body in one of the rooms.

I'm putting these two together because I was bothered by very similar things in them. For me, a satisfying ending is important for a mystery. That doesn't mean that it has to turn out that the most unlikeable character has to turn out to be the killer and everybody else gets to live happily ever after. But some sort of feeling that in the end, people got what they deserved is nice. And that isn't the case in either of those stories. In one case the guilty party even remains completely free (for reasons that make no sense at all), in the other, the author takes great pains to point out how unsatisfying and depressing the ending is.

Death at 8.30 - Christopher St. John Sprigg

A blackmailer is on the loose. He demands money and threatens to kill when his demands aren't met and he has done so already three times. When he finds another victim and promises death at 8.30 on a certain day, the police want to stop him and make sure the man is guarded well when that time comes.

Spoiler: it goes badly. But I called the 'how' very quickly, and the rest of the story was somewhat underwhelming.

Too Clever By Half - G.D.H. and Margaret Cole

*A man shoots himself. His brother-in-law - who had reason to kill him - was downstairs with a group of people when the shot fired. So was it really suicide? Or is the brother-in-law perhaps...*drumroll*...to clever by half?*

Another quite classical story told in a somewhat unusual manner but still fun.

Locked In - E. Charles Vivian

Suicide seems to run in the family when a man shoots himself twenty-three years after his father. There seems to be no question that it was suicide since it happened behind closed doors. But is it really? (No it's not)

Nothing special. And a solution that felt like cheating.

The Haunted Policeman - Dorothy L. Sayers

While making his rounds a constable hears a blood-curdling scream. It comes from house number 13 and when he peeks through the letter-box he sees a dead body. But when he returns with a fellow officer there is

no house number 13. And when they check all the houses on the street there is no body - and no interior that looks like the one the constable saw. Fortunately, the constable later bumps into Lord Peter (who needs fresh air after the stressful experience of watching his wife deliver their son) who can't resist such a good mystery.

And it is a great one. It is again a very typical impossible mystery - with a solution that makes sense but is also quite insane - but Wimsey is a great character.

The final three stories *The Sands of Thyme* by Michael Innes, *Beware of the Trains* by Edmund Crispin and *The Villa Marie Celeste* by Margery Allingham are all fairly short and there is little to say about them. They're all enjoyable but not particularly memorable.

All-in-all I did enjoy *Miraculous Mysteries* more than *Blood on the Tracks* but that has to do with the fact that I enjoy trying to figure the how of an impossible mystery more than reading about trains.

Susan says

A selection (16) of 'locked room'mysteries, mainly published in the early 20th century. There were a couple I really enjoyed while the rest I would say were adequate, with various writing styles. Overall the collection was an interesting mix, and of the authors, I had read other stories from just over half.

If your interest lies in short stories and British classic mysteries then this book will be of interest.

A NetGalley Book

Ingrid says

Short stories about solving seemingly impossible crimes. Some were better than others, but I enjoyed reading them.
