



# The Devil's Fountain

*Eduardo R. Casas*

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## **The Devil's Fountain** Eduardo R. Casas

The long dormant unsolved case of the missing Gardners; a wealthy Miami couple who mysteriously disappeared from their Las Palmas estate over seven years ago, is revived when forensics accountant Ed Castillo is hired to audit the assets of their estate. He sets in motion a laborious search for their whereabouts, one that uncovers more than he bargained for.

Investigate along with Castillo the strange mysterious case of the vanishing Gardners; unravel the mystery of the fountain and learn the sinister provenance of its terrifying history. While you uncover the shocking secrets concealed within and discover the surprising and astounding revelations found in the Las Palmas mansion.

## **The Devil's Fountain Details**

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## **Eduardo Casas says**

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Uncover the shocking secrets concealed in its history and discover the surprising and astounding revelations as you unravel the mystery of the fountain and learn of the sinister past of the Las Palmas mansion.

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## PREFACE NOTES

### AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

A startling discovery is made after forensics accountant Ed Castillo accepts a project to inventory and value the bequeathed assets of a large estate, a requirement of the decedent's last will and testament. This inheritance represents one of the largest private fortunes in the country; it is comprised of an estimated monetary value of nearly a billion dollars. The vast fortune belongs to one of the most prominent, oldest, and most venerable Florida families; for over seven centuries, this legacy has been the birthright of all eligible descendants who can trace their lineage to the aristocratic and affluent Castañeda dynasty.

Before the bequeathed riches can be awarded, an unusual document ... an encrypted manuscript containing a rhythmic enciphered message, its imprinted parchment paper ornately embossed with the ancestral emblem and the scroll itself wax sealed, stamped and engraved with the ancient brass seal of the Castañeda heraldic crest, must be removed from safekeeping and a formal procedural ritual must be observed. This requires that the seal be broken by the trustee of the estate in the presence of witnesses during a ceremony attended by all of the possible intended inheritors. The cryptic cadenced message of the scroll's riddle must be then deciphered before the quest for the will can proceed. This message will provide a guide to the location of a mysterious old will, which must be found and unearthed from its undisclosed location. Then a series of trials must be passed, conditions met and legal requirements followed to ensure that all the unusual provisions found in the codicil of the will are being adhered to.

According to provisions of this ancient will, known as "The King's Vellum," dating back to a grant made by King Ferdinand II of Spain to the Conde de Castañeda, the entire fortune will be awarded to one heir, of which five remain alive ...for now. However there can only be one living relative to inherit all of the wealth.

One of the most valuable assets of the Castañeda heritage and one of the most prized and coveted possessions of the Gardners' was the historically significant and strategically located ancestral home of the Castañedas. This grand manor, known as "Las Palmas," is a valuable piece of prime real estate. Many are vying to possess this valuable estate, and although legend warns that the imposing ancient fountain, which graces the great courtyard is cursed, it does not appear to be deterring anybody from aggressively pursuing its purchase. This property, located in the affluent neighborhood of Coco Plum on the intracostal, near the shores of Biscayne Bay in Miami Florida is the largest and most beautiful of all the properties on Coco Plum.

Castillo is soon persuaded to undertake the investigation of the nearly seven-year old unsolved missing person's case of the Gardners, whose ancestors were the Castañedas. They were the wealthy couple who left

the lucrative, and now bitterly contested, yet to be adjudicated will.

The Gardners were reported missing by their nephew during one hurricane wind-whirling afternoon, almost seven years ago. They were presumed dead, brutally murdered, based on the amount of blood found at the scene. Their nephew Stephen quickly became the prime suspect, hounded by the police, and facing seemingly irrefutable incriminating evidence of his guilt, he is soon accused, arrested, and brought to trial.

Castillo is drawn-in and begins to delve into the financial issues of the estate and into their disappearance and possible murders. Manny, his cousin, a former Miami detective, and Dr. Pierre De Baptist, the Miami medical examiner and a close friend are enlisted to aid in Stephen's defense.

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I sincerely hope that you enjoy this second of my little fairytales, and that you take pleasure in the journey discovering clues that identify who the killer or killers are.

## PROLOGUE

### STORMY WEATHER AND VANISHING LIVES

It had been a harsh hot summer, followed by a long hot autumn. Prior to the day dawning on this gusty sultry morning, Biscayne Bay had been draped in a thick heavy shroud of grey fog that gently rolled and swirled over the surface of the water like the billowing vapors of a boiling caldron.

As the day dawned, the night's darkness began its measured retreat, slowly yielding to the soft and subtle morning light that was just beginning to peer over the horizon. The piercing bright golden rays, having been diffused and mellowed through the fog, infused the water with a muted luminous golden blush, while simultaneously imbuing the surroundings with a numinous iridescent glow.

The sun continued its perceptible assured rise, while the prevailing breeze subsided. Although you could not see the undulating waves beneath the blanket of fog, you could hear their hypnotic mesmerizing rhythm in the silence of daybreak; a repetitive, cadenced, methodical cycle... a musical metric beat of softly lapping water delicately splashing the shore and tenderly caressing the jetty's retaining boulders with its gentle flow. One could easily imagine thousands of these diminutive curling white caps, smoothly rippling in orderly succession over the surface of Biscayne Bay, like animated miniature Japanese Hokusai woodblock prints, of the Great Wave of Kanagawa.

The rhythmic waves, combined with the gentle blowing wind and the surrounding dimness of the morning twilight, merged to form an amalgam; a mystical union of tranquility and peace, a remarkable occurrence that was more mythical than real... one that could be described as a mesmerizing, almost spiritual, and bewitching mood. You could sit in this soothing serene setting and listen for hours on end, lost in the midst of the stillness in time... not a bad place in which to die I would think. Unfortunately, this idyllic peaceful setting was not meant to last; this was literally ... the calm before the storm.

"Alright ... enough of this horseshit ... what happened here?" Those were the very words spoken by then chief of detectives, Thomas Walsh, as he approached the crime scene, officially opening the case, and beginning the investigation of the disappearance of the Gardners and Rosa Maria.

Merged review:

Excellent Mystery see description.

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**SonyaA. says**

I was the lucky winner of this book in a Goodreads First Reads giveaway.

Now this was an excellent book!

So many twists I didn't see coming. I thought the characters were upbeat and seemed completely real. The plot was great.

The suspense and mystery made me want to keep reading it. The book did a good job letting the readers know the background information very well. It also tied everything together. I highly recommend this book to anyone who wants a good mystery.

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