



## Death-Watch

*John Dickson Carr*

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## **Death-Watch** John Dickson Carr

In the shadowy hallway of the clockmaker's old house a policeman is found murdered, a steel clock hand embedded in his neck. A thing with gilt-painted hands scuttles across London roof-tops. These are just two of the frightening scenes in Dr. Gideon Fell's most frightening case- a case that starts with a knife-wielding shoplifter and ends with a portly detective using a mad-man to capture a murderer.

## **Death-Watch Details**

Date : Published September 1st 1984 by MacMillan Publishing Company (first published 1935)

ISBN : 9780020188506

Author : John Dickson Carr

Format : Paperback 256 pages

Genre : Mystery, Detective, Crime, Fiction

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## From Reader Review Death-Watch for online ebook

### Abigail says

A clever and entertaining mystery. I enjoyed reading this and trying to solve the puzzle.

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### Bill says

Here is a mystery that is like one of those picture puzzles people like to put together on storm evenings with their family and friends, but this one is one of those 1,000 piece puzzles, full of what may seem confusing and misleading pieces.

To the rescue comes Dr Gideon Fell, that over sized genius with an uncanny ability to see how these weird pieces just might fit together.

This is not one of John Dickson Carr's famous locked room mysteries, but it is close, since most of the action and all of the suspects live in one London house.

Again, Carr proves to be the master of the knotty, many piece mystery.

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### Berry says

I'm only not giving Death Watch a one star because it was mostly readable and I love JDC. Plus, it wasn't as bad as Poison in Jest and I did give that one a lone star.

Unfortunately this was another of Carr's that practically gave me a headache. The plot relies too much on the architecture and physics of the setting. Page after page, Carr lays out the blueprints of the murder scene: doors, stairs, passages, trap doors. Hell, I could have used a frigging diorama of the scene because the tortured description didn't exactly paint the picture. Possibly because I stopped caring and my attention lagged. The rest of it isn't much better. In fact, I skimmed the last chapter, completely annoyed with the whole book. If Carr has me hooked, I'm game for the overlong, rambling crossing of Ts and dotting of Is his detectives usually do in the denouement, but if not then reading the final twenty pages is tantamount to water boarding my last nerve.

Death Watch lacks the high concept, atmospheric, impossible murder mystery that Carr often—not mostly, from what I have read of his—excels at. The clockmaker stuff never really adds much to the story, either. This is just another lackluster house whodunit, without any interesting or fun characters.

And while more could have been done with clocks, much more could have been done with the b-story, the department store murder. An impossible murder set in Selfridge's sounds fun, doesn't it?

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## **Kate says**

For my full review click on the link below:

<https://crossexaminingcrime.wordpress...>

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## **Maria Beltrami says**

A pretentious and convoluted murder , put in place with a tool out of the ordinary, from a character with an unlikely psychology. A method of investigation based on evidence at the limit of nebulosity and caricature characters make this full-bodied classic yellow English one of the most boring I've ever read.

Not to mention that the back cover is misleading.

I thank Open Road Integrated Media and Netgalley for giving me a free copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

Un assassinio pretestuoso e arzigogolato, messo in opera con uno strumento fuori dal comune, da un personaggio dalla psicologia improbabile. Una metodica di indagine indiziaria al limite della nebulosità e personaggi caricaturali rendono questo corposo giallo classico inglese uno dei più noiosi che abbia mai letto. Senza contare che la quarta di copertina è fuorviante.

Ringrazio Open Road Integrated Media e Netgalley per avermi concesso una copia gratuita di questo libro in cambio di una recensione onesta.

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## **Karen says**

Originally published in 1935, DEATH-WATCH is the fifth book in the Dr Gideon Fell series by "golden-age" writer John Dickson Carr.

After marrying an Englishwoman, Dickson moved to London, the setting for many of his novels. Referred to as one of the "Golden Age" writers of mysteries, most of the books relied on complex plots, although Dickson was a particular proponent of the "locked room" style of puzzle. Dr Gideon Fell is one of the great solvers of the seemingly impossible crime and in DEATH-WATCH he is working closely with Inspector Hadley to solve the odd mystery of the death of an undercover policeman. The house in which the policeman died is that of clockmaker Johannus Carver, who is then connected to another case - the wounding of a store detective - and the theft of jewellery and a unique watch, also connected to the house via the maker.

DEATH-WATCH really is a classic "Golden-Age" mystery, with a complex plot relying on connections and circles within circles. To say nothing of wading through a lot of red-herrings and around a lot of possible suspects. Much of the investigating relies on the keen observation of Dr Fell, who notes, sees and considers all the actions, and comments of everyone who lives in the house. Needless to say the police are there to run errands, pick up evidence and generally serve the machinations of the Great Detective.

Obviously this is old style mystery writing, so it is very wordy compared to current standards, and quite convoluted in places. There's also a decided propensity to write hysteria and oddity into just about every female character in the book - they are either prone to suspicious behaviour, over the top outbursts, mad personal affectations, or completely bland. In DEATH-WATCH this tendency seemed to be even more pronounced than normal even allowing for the time that the novel was originally written.

If you are a fan of Golden-Age mystery writing, then you might already have come across the Dr Gideon Fell novels. If they are new to you, and you can handle the wordiness and the attitude towards women then this book is perfectly readable as a starting point, or a point in the middle, or even if you're in the mood to work your way through the series from the beginning.

<http://www.austcrimefiction.org/reviews/>...

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### **J.V. Seem says**

Classic John Dickson Carr! ...what more is there to say?

...okay, \*fine\*...

Even though not among the top rack of his novels, this is one of the signature crime novels of his, that keeps me guessing until the very end, with everyone a suspect and the solution being as startling as always.

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### **Nancy Oakes says**

An undercover policeman is murdered in the home of clockmaker Johannus Carver. The policeman had come there based on a tip he'd received concerning a suspect who had not only been on a shoplifting spree, but who had also murdered someone during one of the crimes. The policeman was stabbed in the neck with the hand of a clock, and Dr. Fell is on hand just after the crime occurs. There are a multitude of suspects, a lot of red herrings and a serious mystery at work here. And there's Dr. Fell, whose verbal parry with Inspector Hadley over the guilt or innocence of a particular suspect was magnifico, as were his musings on the Spanish Inquisition (I know, nobody expects the Spanish Inquisition!). Anyway...a delight from start to finish.

I'd definitely recommend this one to Golden-Age mystery fans, or to those wondering whether or not to try one of Carr's Fell novels, I'd say this would be a fine one with which to start. It was a bit wordy, but that seems to be the norm among that group of mystery writers, so don't let that bother you. I've actually become quite used to Carr's style by now (this is #5 in a row by him I've read this month), and though it may be a bit off-putting to modern mystery readers, it's still quite well done. Just take it slow and absorb.

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### **Laura Rye says**

Not the best in the series so far, but not the worse...

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### **Anna says**

3.5 rounded up. A clever mystery but I thought the clues could easily have been manipulated in such a way as to make any of the suspects the culprit and did not definitively point to one person which is perhaps why our detective had to force a confession at the end. I even wondered if the author had not quite decided which

was to be the guilty party until late in the writing of the book. Still I would love to read more John Dickson Carr.

Popsugar Challenge 2017 advanced: a book recommended by an author you love. (Agatha Christie and Dorothy Sayers)

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### **Andrew Schneider says**

I've been reading the Gideon Fell series as character research for my role in a production of "Whodunnit." Up until now, I've found the series rather dry and implausible. "Death-Watch" was billed, on its cover, as one of Fell's greatest cases. It does not disappoint. It has all the intricacies of the usual Fell mystery, emphasizing the puzzle of the murder plot over character development. The puzzle is a truly engaging one, though, in which Carr manages to baffle while playing completely fair with the readers. He also creates a truly dastardly villain.

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### **Christine Cody says**

Devilishly complicated and thoroughly entertaining, this Dr. Gideon Fell mystery leaves the reader guessing until the end. In a character-driven plot revealing the foibles and secrets of every person, they all seem guilty (though we hope many will remain innocent). Living in a boarding house in London, this motley group of adults leads a dysfunctional, familial sort of existence. With unrequited love, secretly fulfilled love, and roommates like this, anybody might become a murderer.

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### **Cindy says**

I enjoyed this mystery, but it didn't really capture my attention as well as it could have. Also, it was obvious to me that the book was written with the ending in mind, and then everything else had to fit. That made it really hard to solve the mystery, because the author concealed everything important until the end. I like Gideon Fell mysteries because he's so outrageous, but for that reason, I like them best in small doses.

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### **Johnny says**

From the early 20th century until today, I can think of no greater master of the "closed door" mystery genre than John Dickson Carr. *Death Watch* originally published in 1935 features an unlocked front door and a locked trap door. The mystery still centers on those within an extended household, but it isn't *quite* the "closed door" mystery for which Carr is famous.

Still, *Death Watch* has a rather unique murder weapon, a plethora of suspects, a convergence of coincidences, and an intriguing jockeying for the solution between Detective Inspector Hadley and Carr's favorite sleuth, the Renaissance Man known as Dr. Gideon Fell. The narrator tells us: "Dr. Fell always said that he would rather argue with Hadley than almost anybody else, because each on various points supplied the common sense that the other lacked. They differed violently on everything each of them liked, and agreed only on what they disliked, which is the basis of friendship." (p. 34) Mentioning the narrator, a

certain professor named Walter S. Melson serves as the narrator after he encounters the mystery while working on a deadline for one of the inevitable “publish or perish” projects necessary to academia. Interestingly to me, Melson has one of the same problems in academia as I do, “...nothing roused his wrath except the expounders of the ‘Theory of Teaching.’” (p. 104)

The case is rather unusual, but as Dr. Fell himself says, “Those things only seem odd because a fact is stated out of its proper context.” (p. 7) *Death Watch* is particularly intriguing because some of the characters are quite polished at misdirection. As the protagonist notes early on, there are entirely too many coincidences in this novel. But it is discerning the real coincidences from the deliberate misdirection that makes things interesting.

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### **Pietro De Palma says**

This republication of the first edition, which had expressed the problems of translation, had the merit to iron out problems, giving to the novel a translation fully acceptable. Merit was a subsequent translator and editorial consultant of the publishing house Mondadori, Igor Longo, whom I knew at the time and that was one of my friends, who returned brilliance to the text which manages to understand the steps difficult parts of the novel, and at the same time could to make the reader a participant in that hypnotic atmosphere of the novel by which it seems to be pregnant. Memorable scene on the roofs, by the light of the moon, which recalls the atmosphere typical by Connington, that so Carr liked (for example that by "Tragedy at Renthorpe")

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