



The Greene Murder Case

S.S. Van Dine (pseudonym) , Willard Huntington Wright

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This carefully crafted ebook: "THE GREENE MURDER CASE (Mystery Classic)" is formatted for your eReader with a functional and detailed table of contents.

The Greene Murder Case focuses on the murders, one by one, of members of the wealthy and contentious Greene family. The family comprises two sons and three daughters under the rule of their mother, a bedridden invalid who spends her days feeling sorry for herself and cursing her ungrateful children. The family is required to live in the Greene mansion under the terms of their father's will. Philo Vance takes a hand when, one evening, a daughter of the Greene family is shot to death and another one is wounded. S. S. Van Dine is the pseudonym used by American art critic Willard Huntington Wright when he wrote detective novels. He was an important figure in avant-garde cultural circles in pre-WWI New York, and under the pseudonym he created the immensely popular fictional detective Philo Vance.

The Greene Murder Case Details

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Author : S.S. Van Dine (pseudonym) , Willard Huntington Wright

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From Reader Review The Greene Murder Case for online ebook

Martina Sartor says

Una sontuosa dimora di stampo antico in piena Manhattan; una delle famiglie più importanti della città, i Greene, pervasa da odi e antichi rancori; un omicidio... E poi un altro e un altro ancora. La serie sembra non finire mai. Gli ingredienti per costruire un ottimo giallo classico ci sono tutti. Non manca il più importante: un investigatore dilettante d'eccezione, Philo Vance. L'investigatore snob, coltissimo, amante del lusso e dell'arte creato da S.S. Van Dine nel 1926, torna in questo romanzo per risolvere un caso intricatissimo col suo tipico metodo: studio psicologico dei personaggi, dell'osservazione attenta e della rielaborazione di indizi apparentemente inspiegabili.

La famiglia Greene è caratterizzata da una insolita clausola legata al testamento del defunto capofamiglia Tobias Greene: la vedova e i 5 figli dovranno rimanere a vivere nella dimora di famiglia per 25 anni, per aver diritto all'eredità. Questa convivenza forzata crea col tempo malumori e rancori fra i figli e anche verso la madre, presentata come un'arpia dominatrice che approfitta della sua infermità per angariare i figli. In una fredda notte invernale, dopo un'abbondante nevicata, un misterioso assassino prende di mira la famiglia Greene: la figlia primogenita Julia viene uccisa, mentre la più giovane, Ada, riesce miracolosamente a salvarsi. Uno degli altri fratelli, Chester, non crede alla teoria del ladro e del tentato furto. Così chiede l'intervento del procuratore distrettuale di New York Markham che, aiutato dall'amico Philo Vance, inizia subito le indagini.

Questo è solo l'inizio della storia in cui l'indagine, man mano che passano i giorni, diventa sempre più serrata ed impellente per fermare la sanguinosa catena di delitti che sta praticamente sterminando i Greene.

Abilissimo, S.S. Van Dine, nel creare un'atmosfera sempre più cupa e tesa e nel coinvolgere attivamente il lettore nelle indagini: ad un certo punto ci ritroviamo anche noi a ragionare con Philo Vance, a sospettare questo o quello e poi ad eliminare i sospettati dalla nostra personale lista... per forza di cose. Arriviamo anche noi alla conclusione che, come diceva Sherlock Holmes, "eliminato l'impossibile, ciò che resta, per improbabile che sia, deve essere la verità".

Autore delle famose "20 regole per scrivere romanzi polizieschi" (riportate integralmente alla fine del libro), in realtà secondo me anche Van Dine non le rispetta proprio alla lettera. Faccio solo un esempio. La regola n. 1 recita così: "Il lettore deve avere le stesse opportunità dell'investigatore di risolvere il mistero. Tutti gli indizi devono essere presentati e descritti con chiarezza." Ecco, proprio in questo romanzo una prova chiarificatrice viene presentata al lettore solo un capitolo prima della cattura del colpevole, quando ormai Vance ha già in mente la soluzione! Non una trasgressione vera e propria della regola, dunque, ma quasi...

E says

These are not overly imaginative detective thrillers. I enjoy them because Van Dine was evidently a very well-read and -traveled man. I learn plenty about art, literature, and foreign words and phrases, which makes the books enjoyable. The actual cases are okay. This one was a bit like Agatha Christie, in that people kept dying and the pool of possible perpetrators kept shrinking. What's interesting it's that these books are not detective stories, etc. Sure, there are plenty of clues (or "clews," as spelled at the time) and red herrings, but the murders are solved as Vance plumbs the "psychology" of the case. He sits around and thinks for a while and then announces that he's solved it. This novel had a grand action scene thrown in at the end to change things up a bit, but the basic formula was the same.

Erika Bonaparte says

This book reminded me of the old 1930-1940's black & white detective films that have given great pleasure on the years. I definitely plan to read the remaining books S.S. Van Dine wrote in this wonderful series Philo Vance (think William Powell). Highly recommend!

Nancy says

Very old school. Had to keep a dictionary handy -lots off words and phrases no longer in use. A fairly unpleasant set of characters and I found it hard to be charmed by Philo Vance or his shadow, the author. A period piece.

Rick Mills says

This is a good diminishing-pool-of-potential-victims novel as the Greenes are eliminated one by one, with no apparent motive. As Van Dine novels go, not overly complex and Philo Vance stays relatively focused without wandering off into abstract monologues on irrelevant matters too often.

Notable quotes:

"This affair is too complicated to be untangled by the unravelling of details."

"The person who sat in that library night after night and read strange books by candlelight is the key to everything."

Philo Vance: "The intruder must have left the room."

Sibella Greene: "I suppose he must have, if he's not there now."

??? ??? says

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March says

The hapless Greenes are not much protected by Philo Vance, who for all his vaunted brilliance fails to unlock the puzzle until nearly all of them are dead. But this is one of the most quaintly enjoyable of this campy series -- that is, up to the denouement, which is a footnoted slog.

Hugely influential -- see Queen's Tragedy of Y, Allingham's Police at the Funeral, Christie's Crooked House, etc.

Kenchiiin says

There were enough clues, it was a fair game :)

Irina Pennestrì says

Very interesting crime story, intriguing, fastly readable. This book took me back to the old tunes when we used to pause, think, make previsions, use our brains so to speak!

Puzzle Doctor says

Good classic mystery. Full review at classicmystery.blog

Peggy says

A little longer than it probably needed to be, but it kept my interest piqued to the end. Lots of older books mentioned and used in the storyline. Good solid mystery. Not any really 'likable' characters for me.

Francesco says

4,5

Allie Day says

Borrowed an original 1850s copy from The London Library, had no idea what to expect but was hooked from the first few pages ...

L. (Vacation All I Ever Wanted) says

Okay, I can understand when the first victim is killed yeah, it's a tragedy, but no reason to move out of the house. But when the *second* person is killed, that's when someone with just an ounce of common sense should have been saying "I need to get out of here!" But nooooooooo. These stupid people just stay and stay, therefore they just die and die. Therefore, the murderer was doing the world a favor by eliminating these useless people.

Arthur Pierce says

Van Dine's detective novels have a very "old-fashioned" quality about them; THE GREENE MURDER case was published in 1928 but feels as if it was written 20 years earlier. One suspects Wright wrote his novels almost as an exercise or self-challenge, and used detective stories of the past as his models. Despite the multiple murders in THE GREENE MURDER CASE, the story unfolds very methodically, and I found it pretty slow-going until around the half way point; I'm not sure if it picked up for me at that point because the narrative became more compelling, or because by then I had gotten used to the author's style. There is little characterization here, the mystery trumping everything else in importance.
