



The Red Widow Murders

Carter Dickson

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The Red Widow Murders is a modern mystery with a shuddering historic background. The scene is laid in Lord Mantling's mansion on Curzon Street, in a room called the Red Widow's Chamber. In 1802, a man had died there; in 1825, a girl; in 1870 and 1876, two gentlemen were mysteriously found dead. Then the room had been sealed up.

Now, many years later, eight men and a woman gathered around a table for a sinister experiment. Among them are Sir Henry Merrivale, the rumbling, grumbling, grand old man who has become one of our best-loved detectives; Lord Mantling of the flaming hair and booming voice; Guy Brixham, his brother, sardonic and uneasy behind his glasses; Ravelle, the blond Frenchman, smiling and debonair; little, inoffensive Bender. Which one of them would draw the Ace of Spades and be escorted into the Red Widow's Chamber? Is it a death trap? ...Poison? ... Or WHAT?

The Red Widow Murders Details

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From Reader Review The Red Widow Murders for online ebook

Maria says

Al principio muy bien, me recordaba un poco a Agatha Christie y esas investigaciones costumbristas. Peero, poco a poco se ha ido yendo hacia un lugar surrealista, donde las pistas no tienen pies ni cabeza y el final es muy inverosímil, difícil de creer y lioso, después de todo lo visto anteriormente...
No me ha gustado mucho...

March says

After the movie-industry setting of *The White Priory Murders*, the third H.M. adventure is a return to the heavy-handed gothic atmosphere of *The Plague Court Murders*. Once more the style is a mixture of Poe, Leroux, and Chesterton, with *A Tale of Two Cities* and *Wieland* stirred in. The mystery involves nearly a half dozen cases of "murder by room" over the course of more than a century, beginning around the time of the French Revolution. The novel commits a number of genre "sins" (incorporating curare, hypnotism, and even briefly ventriloquism) and the solution is pretty bonkers, with method and motive equally contrived and everything hinging on somebody's minor ailment that is inadequately clued and about which the reader is flatly deceived (see Ch. 12: "The only cut or puncture etc." --outright cheating!). Most of the suspects blend together too, and I had trouble visualizing the shutters: they appear to be internal metal shutters with rusted bolts, but with two inch openings between the slats? Whatever. I missed the elegant simplicity of the solution to *The White Priory Murders* or the narrative drive of *The Judas Window*. Still, HM is in good form, "Lord love-a-duck" and all.

Himitsu_no_ai says

It was fun reading this one. Pretty good. A little confusing at one time, but a very pleasant read all in all.

Manuel Alfonseca says

During most of its development, this novel was interesting, but at the end, during the explanations given by Sir Henry Merrivale, the author makes a dreadful mistake that leaves the whole plot at the level of the absurd. To avoid spoilers I won't say what it was, but for me the novel went down pitifully.

Nancy Oakes says

The Red Widow Murders is book three in the series featuring Sir Henry Merrivale (HM to his friends). And this one is a doosie. It seems that a group of people have gathered at the home of Lord Mantling, where nine of them draw cards to see who will spend a few hours alone in the so-called Red Widow's room, the scene of unexplained deaths going back to 1803. The cards are revealed, and it is one Mr. Bender who goes off to

spend the night alone. Every fifteen minutes someone asks if he's okay, and he always answers. When time's up the other 8 people open the door, and there lies Bender, dead. But there was no way in or out of that room, and he'd been answering their queries the entire time. So how could this happen? Sir Henry Merrivale to the rescue, to uncover the truth.

Fun fun fun! There's something to be said about the pleasure of reading these old, vintage mystery novels, with their often elaborately-plotted crimes and solutions that even if you tried, you couldn't guess. Especially in this one, where there are a number of suspects, plenty of clues, and an equal number of red herrings left for the reader to sift through. The Red Widow Murders also offers its readers a great backstory which in and of itself is a bit chilling.

Unlike some of his other works, The Red Widow Murders isn't weighted down by a lot of archaisms, and it moves at a very nice pace. The characters are well drawn, the atmosphere is perfect, the story is a good one, and the mystery will leave you hanging until the very end. This one I can definitely recommend, especially to fans of golden-age mystery novels and of John Dickson Carr in particular. It's not a cozy novel by any stretch, and modern readers of mystery may find it a bit slow considering the fast pace of novels nowadays. However, if you are a dyed-in-the-wool fan of vintage crime, like me, it really is worth every minute you put into it.

Jill Hutchinson says

Another "locked room" mystery featuring Sir Henry Merrivale from John Dickson Carr, writing as Carter Dickson. This is the type of book that you love to hate....the stories are extremely unbelievable, the major and continuing characters are not particularly appealing, and there are multiple solutions presented until the actual "how dunnit" is presented in the final few pages.

In this tale, a room in the home of a titled Englishman is purported to be haunted and anyone venturing into the room alone meets death apparently by poisoning. At a dinner party, a group of friends, including Merrivale, decide to test the curse to prove it false. But, of course, the occupant of the room dies in the locked room, alone and it is up to Merrivale and his cohorts to solve the mystery. It is as unlikely as it seems but somehow you can't stop reading this book or any of this series, just to discover what improbable conclusion the author devises to wrap up the story.

Bruna says

Un classico caso di "delitto nella camera chiusa" con soluzione altrettanto classica, ma non per questo deludente. Come sempre, tanto fumo negli occhi e divertimento assicurato per gli amanti del genere.

Luis says

Un libro raro de encontrar, pero su autor resulta prolífico a la hora de narrarnos crímenes que parecen imposibles a simple vista. Pero rompiendo los moldes de la premeditación y la lógica, se llega a una solución tan simple que nos hace parecer estúpidos.

Solo por eso se merece un galardón.

Laura Rye says

..not his best so far, but quite good compared to other mystery writers....things get a little far-fetched and stretched out, but its quite ingenious....highly recommended

Annie Jones says

This is a very cleverly worked out story. Each time something seems to be worked out it is disproved and the reader goes back to start thinking it out again. It kept my interest to the end even though it is a bit dated. A really good read.

Irfan Nurhadi says

This is the third Merrivale novel, chronologically. And the last one that i read.

Early Merrivale is rather serious, compared to latter appearances that made him almost a buffon but always funny for me, nonetheless. And in this novel, you could see that there were no hanky panky in our larger-than-life character.

The compelling point of this novel, as many of Carr's did, was the locked-room aspect. A room that kills. Anyone who stay alone in that room always died. With no poison found in it, and no secret passage or the like, what really happened? Is it really a cursed room connected to the victims of French revolution?

As expected from Carr, there are a thick atmosphere combined with historical background that he use as the set-up of the mystery. A family tainted with mad blood. Tragedy from the French revolution. A room that kills. A madman who killed the family's pet. And a challenge to stay in that mysterious room ending, of course, with a murder at hand.

There's so much going on in this novel, as I said above. But overall, the mystery is intriguing and the solution.. I'm a bit divided in regards to the solution. (view spoiler) But overall, I liked it. The idea behind the murder is ingenious (considering its era).

Colin says

This started well,i really liked the premise of a haunted room that kills anyone who spends the night alone there.The back story to the different deaths in the room over a space of a 100 years or so was gripping too.So far so good, but then about 3/4's of the way through, the story seemed to run out of steam and i just couldn't wait to finish it.This is reasonably early on in Carr's career and he's still learning his craft,better was to come, but this is definitely worth a read.

Colin says

A room that kills, and even better a room that's locked up tight and carefully watched while the killing is taking place. Want more? How about having the victim call out repeatedly that he's fine at intervals when it's later revealed that he was actually dead at the time. Add in a family of odd individuals with a equally odd history stretching back to the French Revolution at its bloodiest and you have the basis for Carter Dickson's (AKA John Dickson Carr) The Red Widow Murders.

This is a frankly terrific mystery with Sir Henry Merrivale at his peak and in his pomp, investigating and shedding light on an atmospheric tale set in a creepy house.

Effortlessly entertaining, smooth, pacy and literate. A superb example of Golden Age Detection.

Monica Willyard says

This mystery captured my imagination in an unique way. It taught me to be observant and to examine my own "logic" for holes. These are classic mysteries done in the puzzle style. They aren't talked about much these days, and that's a shame. I read this one as a teenager, and its lessons serve me well today. I wouldn't have grasped and applied these ideas from reading a book on philosophy, It's funny where our true teachers come from. :)

Jan says

Really good; a real "forehead-slapper."
