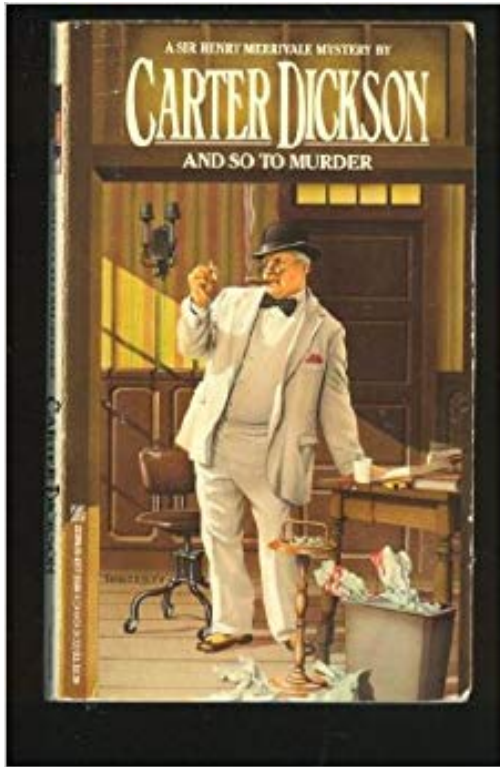


## And So to Murder *by* Carter Dickson



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## Reviews of the *And So to Murder* *by* Carter Dickson

Austan

This book was first published in 1940 and the story is during World War II. I read my dad's copy of this book when I was a teenager and loved it then, and still love it. It has remained one of my favorites. I recently got the Kindle edition so that I could read it while I traveled. It is a delightful book, with suspense, romance and comedy, set in a film studio in England. Of course, it is old-fashioned, given when it was written, but it is still a great read. I particularly recommend it to people who like Hercule Poirot, Miss Marple, Inspector Alleyn, Lord Peter Wimsey, and books of that ilk.

Qudanilyr

While Agatha Christie is widely acknowledged as the best of the so-called Golden Age of mystery writers in terms of plotting, just a step behind is John Dickson Carr, whose expertise in "locked room" mysteries outdoes even Christie's. However, even the best have their off days, or, in this case, off books, Carr's "And So to Murder," written under his pen name of Carter Dickson, has all the weaknesses prevalent in Carr's writing, a mystery that is sub-par by his standards, and a setting that was probably far more intriguing to readers in 1940, when the book was first published, than for those of today.

The detective in the Dickson novels is Sir Henry Merrivale, an eccentric MP (member of Parliament) somewhat reminiscent of Rumpole of the Bailey (although the Merrivale novels predated Rumpole's first appearance by decades). However, in "And So to Murder," Merrivale doesn't appear until the midway point in the book. Before that, the story revolves around intrigue on a movie set, where Monica Stanton, the young author of a best-selling romance novel, has been hired as a screenwriter. But, as soon as she arrives on set, she finds herself the target of a would-be assassin, who first tries to dump some deadly acid on her and then fires a shot at her. Monica's new boyfriend, William Cartwright, another writer working on a script at the studio, goes to Merrivale, who is working with the War Department, for help.

"And So to Murder" will be a disappointment for fans of Carr's intricate mysteries. Despite some close calls, no one gets hurt until fairly late in the book, and the explanation behind the crimes is rather mundane. Indeed, there's a paucity of real suspects, since most of the crimes occur in settings where only a handful of people were present, thus making it easier to guess the culprit. I've often had to go back after the explanation of the crime in one of Carr's novels to see how I was misled and how the actual crime occurred. There's no similar feeling of dazzlement at the end of "And So to Murder."

While Carr's usual meticulous plotting is somewhat on the thin side in this book, his other annoying mechanisms remain in full force. He uses overly florid language, creating overblown melodramatic situations, such as the romance between Monica and William here. It's the old first-they-hate-each-other-then-they-love-each-other routine, with the primary suspense involving whether William will shave his beard, because Monica prefers clean-shaven men. In addition, Carr has the annoying habit of not allowing characters to finish sentences that could reveal key plot points by having someone interrupt them, with the result being they never go back to their original train of thought. That's supposed to build suspense, but using it multiple times in a short book is frustrating.

I'm guessing that the main attraction of "And So to Murder" for readers in the 1940's was its look behind the scenes at a film studio. That may have been like describing the lunar surface to readers of that era, but today's readers probably know far more than what Carr reveals. The only bit of interesting studio byplay, and the funniest storyline in the book by far, is an ongoing series of conversations between two studio executives as they discuss how they need to alter the events at the Battle of Waterloo to accommodate viewers' tastes and the actors who had been cast in the lead roles. Those sections, which, of course, have nothing to do with the actual mystery, are preposterous and often rather funny.

I've read over a dozen of Carr's books, but "And So to Murder" is the first that I can't give even a mild recommendation to. The mystery is mediocre at best, the romance is ridiculous, and much of the rest is uninteresting filler. Even those who enjoy Henry Merrivale's eccentricities will feel slighted since he only makes a rather brief appearance (which still allows him to explain the crimes).

Oveley

An ingenious murder on a British film set. Carr is known for his plots and locked-room murder mysteries, less as a stylist. However, in his sleuth Sir Henry Merrivale, he created a wonderfully comic character. "The Old Man" is childish, narcissistic, devious, and freakishly brilliant -- a worthy entry in the gallery of Great British Literary Eccentrics. Carr, born in Pennsylvania, lived in England for years and absorbed, to some extent, British attitudes, so the sensibility of the book is British, rather than American. This is a "cozy," but Carr tells the tale well. In fact, the book's a page-turner. At the Kindle price, it's a steal.

IGOT

And so to Murder is a novel by John Dickson Carr, known as the king of the locked door mystery. This Golden Age novel published in 1940 takes place in the world of the British film industry of that time. Monica Stanton is the daughter of a clergyman who had a surprised hit novel with the rather scandalous novel "Desire," and she has signed a contract to write a screenplay for the movie studio that is making film out of "Desire." She naturally expected to be writing the screenplay to her own novel, but instead she is writing the screenplay to a mystery novel being adapted to the screen. She and mystery writer William Cartwright have a love/hate relationship with some witty dialogue that makes me feel like I am watching a screwball comedy from the 1930's. A series of mysterious attempts on Monica's life, all involving Sulphuric Acid, brings in Chief Inspector Masters and eventually Sir Henry Merrivale to catch the would be killer.

I generally prefer Carr's Gideon Fell mysteries, as I am not enamored with Merrivale, but I found the setting and dialogue charming and very entertaining. I would definitely recommend this book to Golden Age mystery fans, or fans of 1930's screwball comedy movies.

Opilar

JDC is always full of surprises. Unfortunately his female characters are either good ole gals who smoke, drink, and curse as well as the men or prisses that are the victim of jokes, especially Merrivale. Occasionally I quite ready JDC because his idea of women can be very offensive. But the Merrivale novels are always funny. You won't get it. When I friend of mine said she did not like detective stories because she always figured it out,I lent her a John Dickson Carr.

Agalas

I started it but only got a quarter of the way through before stopping. It is not for me. Don't give up on it. Try a sample. I should have done so. Perhaps you will like it. The author is supposed to be very good. Cheers!

Fordregelv

A great writer from the golden age of mystery writing, I pounce on any of his many, many novels that I can get my hands on, whether he's writing as John Dickson Carr or Carter Dickson (and I'd love to find the novel he wrote as "Roger Fairbairn"). This is a goodie, a great mix of quirky romance and apparently unsolvable puzzler. I was fooled up until the very end, it contains good red herrings that do not insult the reader's intelligence.

Good story but the typos were irritating!

Had me guessing most of the time very tricky.

I really enjoyed the opening quite amusing.

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