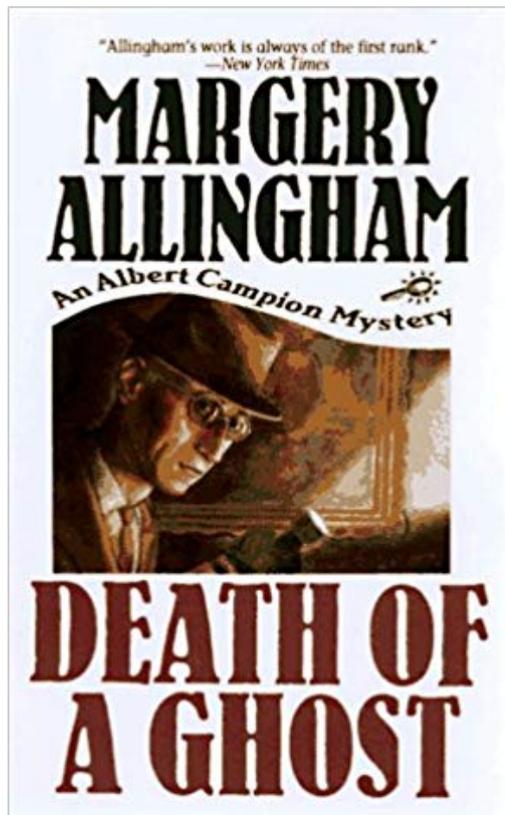


Death of a Ghost (Albert Campion, No 6) by Margery Allingham



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ISBN: 0786704411

ISBN13: 978-0786704415

Author: Margery Allingham

Book title: Death of a Ghost (Albert Campion, No 6)

Pages: 192

Publisher: Carroll & Graf Pub; Reprint edition (June 1, 1997)

Language: English

Category: Mystery

Size PDF version: 1487 kb

Size ePUB version: 1497 kb

Size FB2 version: 1351 kb

Other formats: txt doc mobi azw

The first killing took place at a crowded art show, in full view of the cream of London society. For the second killing, only the victim and the murderer were present. Now the scene was set for the third--a lavish dinner party with vintage wines, and with Albert Campion's death as the main course.



Reviews of the [Death of a Ghost \(Albert Campion, No 6\)](#) by Margery Allingham

Runehammer

First published in 1934, "Death of a Ghost" is the sixth in the popular Campion mystery series by English author Margery Allingham. I actually discovered the series when it was on "Mystery" on PBS about a decade ago. Campion, a brilliant sleuth with a mysterious past, appears to be a foppish, unremarkable socialite in horn-rimmed glasses. Reading them in order from the first one, I have enjoyed the Campion series. Interestingly, I discovered that P.D. James also believed this to be Allingham's best Campion novel as I do to date.

"Death of a Ghost" centers on famous artist John Lafcadio. Before his death, he selected 12 of his paintings and left instructions that they were to be revealed and offered for sale starting five years after his death, one a year to keep his name and work in the public. The action takes place within the realm of the art world; Campion is invited to the annual posthumous exhibit of Lafcadio's work at his wife's home. Here, this art gala turns deadly when the lights go out and a young artist is murdered. Campion and the reader are now both caught up in solving this artistic mystery.

"Death of a Ghost" is cleverly written depicting a cat-and-mouse game between Campion and the increasingly daring killer. Although Allingham's plot and prose style is a bit stand-offish and slow to develop at times, this story is smooth, well-paced, and gives just enough clues to keep the reader engaged. The plot is carefully crafted and quite clever; while one can eventually guess the murderer, the ending is still tense and a bit of a surprise. Her characters are well developed and interesting, especially our hero, Campion. I have enjoyed these stories, but it is the insights into human frailties and the hypocrisy of aging models and failed artists that elevate this book to one of her best.

MarF

Book originally published in 1934.

One of the treasures for Kindle users is the large run of Margery Allingham mysteries. She was among the best of that outstanding group of writers in Great Britain (and Ngaio Marsh, born in New Zealand) who were Masters of the Classic Mystery. Some readers will be familiar with Allingham from the fine British television series starring her literary hero, Albert Campion, which is well worth seeing if you have not done so.

This is a good one. Campion appears without his man-of-all-work and former criminal assistant, but with his good friend, the Scotland Yard detective.

The setting is mostly the home of a now deceased 'Great Artist', who has arranged for a dozen unseen paintings by him to be shown, one at a time, for twelve years, beginning a decade after his death. Mr. Campion is at the annual affair at which one of the new paintings is to be shown for the first time when murder strikes. Mr. Campion rallies to the aid of the widow of the artist, being a good friend of the family, and of the artistic entrepreneur who manages the business end of the release of these pictures and their sale. What is distinctive in this, as compared to her other books, is that Campion is convinced of the identity of the murderer rather early on, but neither he nor the police can find any evidence supporting this contention. Will the Killer strike again? Why kill these particular people? Will he ever make a mistake such as would allow the police to charge him with a crime?

As always, I found an Allingham book to be eminently satisfying: stylistically she shows a fine mordant wit and superior style, the story is interesting, the key characters well developed, and the whole reflects a high degree of professionalism and command of her materials.

Scream_ I LOVE YOU

This mystery was written about 1930 and takes place then. Unlike modern novels, the author here takes some time to set the scene and develop the characters, so it does feel a bit slow at first. But once a murder happens, the pace quickens and it becomes interesting and absorbing. The hero of Allingham's mysteries is an amateur "celebrity detective" whose name may or may not be Albert Campion. He seems to be highly connected to proper society and possibly uses a false name, possibly to hide a noble family connection. He's a smart detective but not infallible, almost getting beaten by the villain. An interesting aspect of this book is that about half-way through, Campion figures out who the murderer is so the story becomes not a who-done-it but a how-done-it and a why-done-it. This was an okay book but not a great read. A question I have: Why aren't some of Allingham's books not in the public domain, considering how old they are?

Riavay

I'm reading the Campion mysteries in order (I read a few many years ago and didn't really like them, thought they were "Sayers Light"). I realize now how wrong I was - Allingham is a great writer, and Campion in this, his sixth outing, is really maturing. He's no longer just the vacuous "universal uncle", using a well-bred, slightly simple facade to hide his intelligence and slip into the background, observing and solving his mysteries. In this mystery, set among the bohemian artsy set of 1930s London, he's hunting a bold, possibly insane killer; one of the fascinating story angles is that Campion knows fairly early on whodunnit, but Allingham handles the cat-and-mouse between Campion and the increasingly daring and unstable killer masterfully. I see in these reviews some readers were not thrilled with this departure for Campion, but I was really impressed by Allingham's portrayal of the pathos and hypocrisy of aging models, failed artists, and manipulative poseurs who make money off the fruits of the art world.

Eigeni

All of Allingham's mysteries are outstanding, but this, so far, has been my favorite. Her plots are creative without the excessive complications of many other writers of the genre. I especially admire that she begins the solution of the mystery as it develops, rather than springing the clues upon the reader in the last chapter. Her approach is similar to that of Dostoyevsky, in Crime and Punishment.

Pruster

One of the best of Allingham's stories. This has been a re-read for me for years, so I was glad to get it in Kindle format

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