

## Murder Must Advertise

*D.Sayers*

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Sayers worked as a copywriter at an advertising agency, and the mystery is now set in the gossipy office of such an establishment. She was no doubt quite good at coming up with copy and to instigate campaigns, one of which apparently is still alive and active. Advertising is a rather dubious activity as far as morals are concerned with its propagation of lies. But the lies are rather modest and produced tongue in cheek and are also necessary to keep people consuming not only things that they absolutely need but also such things they believe that they need. Now to serve the consumer society may seem to be the real moral issue, on the other hand things are not so clear cut out of mindless consumerism other things may appear.

Now the evocation of the mood in the office with the backstage intrigues and rampant rumors is well done, but the plot of murder seems a bit far-fetched. Being part of an office seem a natural venue for the author's daily activities, but being part of the drug scene with wild parties seems much more of a fantasy on her part. Noteworthy though is that the problems of drugs go so far back and that cocaine played already back then such a rôle. But cocaine was expensive and the prerogative of the smart set which she tries to portray. Her gentleman sleuth Wimsey still strikes the reader as a kind of caricature, and the various personages in the office do not individually come off as successfully evoked as they do collectively, so if you read the book in snatches over a period of time, it is hard to remember who is who. The plot hinges on a clever trick not to be revealed in a review, be it sufficient to remark that it is exactly the kind of trick congenial to those who pursue cross-word puzzles as a stimulating past time, a set to which Sayers most likely belonged.

Wimsey (the name obviously being a wink to 'whimsy') does show a certain callousness at the end when having heard the confession of the killer advises him to walk home, well-knowing that he is shadowed and, as so many others in the novel, marked to get killed. This is of course a beautiful solution, his case will not come up, and his family will be spared the disgrace and left only with the sorrow.

The overall impression is one of rather meandering tale, with many digressions, no doubt a delight to write, but not necessarily a delight to read.

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