

Murderer Is a Fox

Ellery Queen

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Ellery Queen : Murderer Is a Fox before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Murderer Is a Fox:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Excellent!By Jeffrey L. SmithWho was Agatha Christie's favorite mystery writer? Ellery Queen. There's a reason...0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Three StarsBy Sidney E. WechslerCharacters remained too confusing.4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Ellery Returns to Wrightsville - Psychological Premise May Not Be Entirely Convincing, But the Solution is Classic Ellery QueenBy Michael WischmeyerThe Murderer is A Fox (1945) is the second of four stories set in the small New England town of Wrightsville. Ellery Queen is persuaded to come back to Wrightsville to investigate a murder committed twelve years earlier. Bayard Fox had been found guilty of poisoning his wife and is serving a life sentence. His son Davy, now returning from the Pacific as a war hero, suffers from a delusion that he has inherited his father's murderous instincts and becomes fearful that he might kill his young wife.Ellery Queen does not appear in the first fifty pages. The long prologue develops the psychological premise that the trauma resulting from Davy Fox's harrowing wartime escape reawakened his boyhood memories of his mother's murder. Davy views his medals as proof of his own murderous tendency. The Murderer is a Fox was well-received in 1945, but I suspect that many readers today might not find the psychological characterization of Davy Fox to be entirely convincing.Nonetheless, the plot is well-constructed and offers unexpected twists. Ellery's task is daunting as the evidence that led to the conviction of Baynard Fox appears incontrovertible, and Ellery's painstaking analysis seems to confirm that no one other than Baynard could have poisoned his wife.The Murderer is a Fox has been applauded for the strong development of the characters, and indeed, they are more faceted than those in earlier stories. I was especially intrigued with Baynard Fox,

a man imprisoned for twelve years that was either entirely innocent or a superb actor. Even minor characters like Emmeline DuPre, Dolores Aikin, and Judge Eli Martin prove interesting. Some may consider the critical evidence as being somewhat weak, and that the logic involves some intuition. There is some justification for this view, but I was not at all uncomfortable with Ellery's chain of logic. The ironic ending was a surprise. For readers new to Ellery Queen: The Ellery Queen reputation rests firmly on a foundation of nine early novels (1929-1935) recognizable by their so-called nationalities titles like *The French Powder Mystery*, *The Greek Coffin Mystery*, *The Egyptian Cross Mystery*, and *The Siamese Twin Mystery*. These stories are exceptionally well-constructed puzzle mysteries. Ellery Queen's solutions are examples of dazzling logic. In the following years the Ellery Queen stories became more experimental, offering more realistic personalities, more social commentary, and varied settings. The traditional challenge to the reader was quietly discarded. Ellery became more mature, more complex, and occasionally even expressed self doubt. Regardless of these changes, the mystery always remained the central focus. *The Murderer is a Fox* dates from a transitional period about midway in the Ellery Queen canon.

Mystery Novel