



READING GUIDE

December, 2025

Dramatic Murder

Elizabeth Anthony

In short

First published in 1948 and lost for over 75 years, this lost Christmas novel returns to bedazzle a fresh audience of mystery-lovers.

In detail

She could imagine the headlines all too well...

DEATH ON POSSETT ISLAND

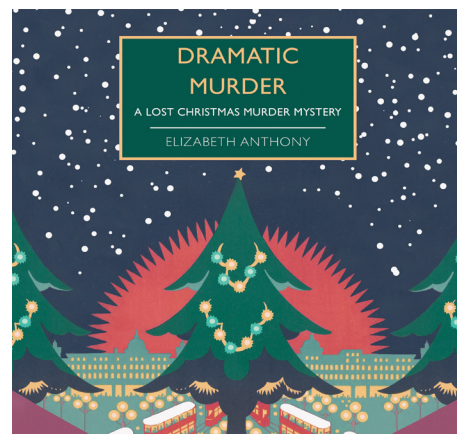
Well-known Playwright Found Dead on Christmas Tree.

Dimpson McCabe - Dimpsie - has invited all of his closest friends of the theatre world to join him for Christmas at his castle on a private island some hours' drive from Edinburgh. The festivities have barely had a chance to begin when poor Dimpsie is found draped atop the Christmas tree, electrocuted by the lights with which it is festooned.

The Sherriff's Court yields a verdict of Accidental Death, but in the swirling snow suspicion is dancing among the flakes. Through Dimpsie's cadre of directors, producers, actors and agents runs a hot streak of hidden grievances and theatrical scheming, and as the group return to London the dogged Inspector Smith begins to circle, seeking to find the leading man or prima donna responsible for this ghoulish crime.

Discussion points

1. How does the setting of Possett Castle contribute to the overall mood of the story? In what ways does the wintery backdrop enhance the mystery?
2. What do you think of Inspector Smith as a detective? How does he approach the investigation, and what are his strengths and weaknesses?



3. Considering the book was originally published in 1948, how do you think the historical context influences the characters and their actions? Are there elements that feel particularly relevant today?
4. How satisfying did you find the resolution of the murder mystery? Did it meet your expectations, and what did you think about the final reveal?

Next, you should listen to...

The Christmas Appeal by Janice Hallett

Murder In Vienna by E.C.R. Lorac

Mr Pottermack's Oversight by R. Austin Freeman