

A Murder in Pieces

Four Complete Cases · Forty Puzzles · The Armchair Detective
Casebooks

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How This Book Works



This volume holds four separate murders. Each one is told across ten chapters, and each chapter ends at a puzzle. Solve the puzzle and you have done what the detective did: broken the cipher, searched the room, opened the safe, developed the photograph, walked the passage. Solve all ten and you have read a complete mystery.

The cases stand alone. Read them in order or pick the one whose opening page you like best. Difficulty climbs inside every case, and the four cases themselves grow harder as the volume goes on.

Each case ends with a reckoning that names the murderer. The sealed confession for every case waits at the very back of the book, behind its answer key. No peeking until you have made your accusation.

CASE ONE

The Greywater Silence



Greywater House
The late Sir Reginald Vane

TEN CHAPTERS. TEN PUZZLES. ONE KILLER.

The Persons of Interest



Keep this page in mind. You will come to know each of them rather better than they would like. The victim, Sir Reginald Vane, was found in the study of Greywater House.



Hugo

Age 69 · Diplomat

"Terrified of thunderstorms"



Greta

Age 65 · Jewel Appraiser

"Never without a pocket watch"



Alice

Age 50 · Master Chef

"Collects rare orchids"



Ben

Age 44 · Retired Colonel

"Claims to sleepwalk"



CHAPTER ONE

The Anonymous Note

They found Sir Reginald Vane at first light, slumped across the writing desk in the study at Greywater House, a wine glass in glittering pieces on the floor, and the whole house pretending to sleep. The doctor needed only one breath of the glass to say the word aloud: poison. No door had been forced. No window stood open. Whatever had entered that room had been invited, and had walked out again on quiet, familiar feet.

The detective arrived before the frost had lifted, and stood a long while in the doorway, learning the room the way one learns a face. The lamp had burned itself out. The blotter was squared. The dead do not tidy their own desks, and yet nothing was disturbed. Nothing except a single card, folded twice over, still held in Sir Reginald Vane's cold hand as though it were the last thing worth keeping in this world.

The card was covered edge to edge in a private cipher, each letter traded for another with a patience that spoke of practice. Sir Reginald Vane had written it in the final hours, dreading precisely the night that came, and had meant the truth to outlive it. Somewhere beneath that lattice of wrong letters, the dead were still speaking.

Decode the card, and let them speak first.



The Anonymous Note

EASY - CRYPTOGRAM ♦



A card, still folded in the dead hand, every letter disguised.

How to solve. Each letter has been swapped for another (the same swap throughout, and no letter stands for itself). Spaces and punctuation are shown unchanged. Let them guide the sentence. Write each real letter on the line above its code. Starter letters given: **E, H, I, T**. Use the key grid to track your swaps.

I T H E I E
 P R A W Q N R P X Y Z Q S C T Y , U X C L
 T H I T H E H T H T E
 A W P V : A W Q W H X Y A W H A D C F G Q Y Z N
 I E I E T I I
 L P X Q V Z P T Q Y A C C U P X Y T N . P
 T T E T H E E T
 A G F V A Q Y A W Q L G C X J J F Q V A
 E E T H T H I
 E Q X Q H A W A W P V G C C R .

CIPHER KEY

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
T												
N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
		I	E						H			

