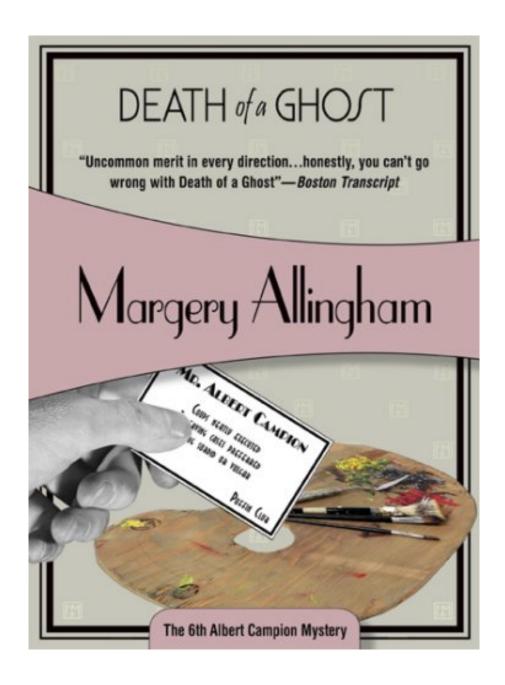


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### Review

"Wonderfully plotted...Allingham was a rare and precious talent" -- Washington Post

### About the Author

Margery Allingham is one of the best-known names in mystery fiction. The "Campion" novels have been extensively televised, and broadcast in the U.S. and the UK; a new series is currently under option. Who's Likely to Like This? Fans of Agatha Christie, Dorothy Sayers, Edmund Crispin and other writers of Britain's "Golden Age"

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Certain that his reputation would improve dramatically after his death, the painter John Lafcadio left several paintings with his agent, along with the instruction that the widowed Mme. Lafcadio should wait a suitable interval and then begin doling out the work to a newly ravenous public. Albert Campion, an old friend of the widow?s, is among the guests at Lafcadio?s fourth posthumous vernissage. The event is a success for all but one of the attendees?a young artist who is brutally murdered while others are sipping champagne. Shortly thereafter the wife of another painter in the Lafcadios? circle is poisoned, and Campion begins asking questions.

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The art world, one dead painter, his models, his wife and...

### By M.Ross

I had never read anything before by Margery Allingham but had heard about her. After I read Death of a Ghost, I decided to read all of her books....she is great. She puts together an exciting, different and well-ordered mystery with very good character studies. John Lafcadio was a well-known artist, dead now, whose wife had a big celebration once a year and shows a new painting of his. Everyone who is everyone comes. This time the party does not go smoothly.....for death comes! Albert Campion, friend of the family and some-time crime investigator looks into the murder. It's a good thing he does, because soon another body

show up.. He and his friend, Insp. Oates take a journey through the art world, the greed, self-centeredness, hunger fame is all around them.. they talk to John Lafcadio's old models who still live at his house with his wife, Belle. She seems to be the only sane one in the house. The story is smooth, even, well-paced, and give just enough clues, but not too many. The ending is a surprise. I can't wait to curl up with tea, scones and another book by Margery Allingham

15 of 15 people found the following review helpful.

Art's Labor Lost

By Marc Ruby<sup>TM</sup>

"Death of a Ghost" finds Albert Campion in attendance while the family of famous artist John Lafcadio prepares for a posthumous exhibit. Lafcadio, irritated at the thought that another artist, Charles Tanqueray, might outlive him, provided a series of paintings to be shown one at a time, after his death. Max Fustian, art dealer and general popinjay, has prepared a lavish event for this year's unveiling. He is aided in this effort by Belle, Lafcadio's wife and a cast of remarkable zanies that reside in and around the Lafcadio residence.

No sooner does the party start than Tom Dacre, another artist is murdered when the lights suddenly go out. Campion manages to keep his old friend Stanislaus Oates from arresting Lafcadio's daughter Linda who was Dacre's jilted lover, but now must seek a solution to what appears to be a perfect crime. To make matters worse, another household resident is murdered by poison in mysterious fashion. Campion begins to suspect he is facing an ingenious killer with few, if any, moral compunctions.

This is the type of mystery novel I think of as a `set piece.' By that I mean that long before the end the puzzle is completely defined, the rules set out, and it is now up to the detective (and the reader) to fit the pieces together and make it work out. In this case, almost exactly halfway through (shortly after the reader has guessed the killer) Campion half-deduces / half-intuits the criminal. He manages to convince Oates of his conclusion, and it is now up to them to discover motive, means and proof. This is no small task, and before the end Campion must risk his life to bring the case home.

This kind of writing always runs the danger of becoming an intellectual exercise or worse, boring. Allingham's skill is such that there is no danger of this. Instead, "Death of a Ghost" comes close to being a tour de force of characterization, which has always been Allingham's strength. Narrative is strong as well, and the novel, while not among Allingham's very best, is a great success and an enjoyable read.

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful.

the simple art of murder

By Death Bredon

Years after his death salon painter John Lafcadio continues to haunt the art world with the yearly public unveiling - and subsequent auction - of one of a dozen stored masterpieces. At the revelation of the seventh painting the lights suddenly go out - when they come back on, there is a knife sticking out of the back of young watercolorist Dacre, fiance of the great artist's grand-daughter. Albert Campion, the universal uncle, is there, and doubts the police's initial guess of the culprit. He takes upon himself Mrs Lafcadio's charge to put a stop to the crimes - for soon there is a second murder within the artist's enchanted circle.

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