



Strongwood: A Crime Dossier

Larry Millett

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The place is Minneapolis, the year is 1903, and Michael Masterson has fallen in love, or so he claims, with Addie Strongwood, a beautiful working-class girl with an interesting past and a mind of her own. But their promising relationship quickly begins to disintegrate before reaching a violent conclusion. Amid allegations of seduction, rape, and blackmail, Michael is shot dead and Addie goes on trial for first-degree murder. As the case unfolds in a welter of conflicting evidence and surprise discoveries, a jury must decide whether Addie acted in self-defense or killed her one-time lover with the coldest of calculation.

Reconstructing the case through trial testimony, newspaper stories, the journal of Addie's flamboyant defense attorney, and her own first-person account as serialized in the *Minneapolis Tribune*, Larry Millett builds a suspenseful tale of love, money, betrayal, and death. Sherlock Holmes and Shadwell Rafferty, long known to readers from Millett's previous mysteries, play crucial roles in the unraveling of the case, which also offers a glimpse into the sharply divided worlds of the rich and the poor at the dawn of the twentieth century.

Strongwood: A Crime Dossier Details

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Author : Larry Millett

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From Reader Review Strongwood: A Crime Dossier for online ebook

Becky Loader says

I love a good mystery with a local connection, and Millett does it up in spades here. Addie Strongwood is a Minneapolis native who gets involved with "the most stunning man" she's ever seen. It doesn't turn out good. Addie kills him and ends up on trial for her life. The author alternates chapters with excerpts from newspaper stories, the defending attorney's journal, letters from various characters, and the trial transcript. All (of course) is not always what it seems.

Great book to read on a pleasant summer afternoon.

Anna Janelle says

Set at the turn of the twentieth century, Strongwood unravels the strange case of Miss Addie Strongwood, a working-class woman accused of murdering her wealthy lover, Michael Masterson. Consisting almost entirely of court transcripts, journal excerpts, newspaper articles and letters, the book attempts to determine whether Addie is a cold-blooded murderer or a woman wronged, a victim of circumstance merely guilty of self-defense. If not for the appearance of Sherlock Holmes, Arthur Conan Doyle's famous fictional detective who appears to weigh in on the Strongwood mystery, one could almost mistake the novel as historical non-fiction. Minneapolis, the city where this trial occurs, is described in careful detail through the use of footnotes, allowing the reader to envision the city as it was in the 1900s.

I appreciated the use of nontraditional narrative methods in this novel. I felt that it really ramped up the suspense and mystery in a story that might otherwise fall flat in a more traditional telling. The juxtaposition of witnesses' testimony allowed the inconsistencies of their accounts to carry more weight, encouraging the reader to choose sides and align themselves with either the prosecution or the defense. I was slightly disappointed with the somewhat minor role that Holmes had in solving the case; his contribution to the case was all but inconsequential and his involvement was so minimal that it has me questioning his inclusion in the story at all. His presence didn't really add anything of value to the narrative, and the clues that he discovered could have easily been found by other characters associated with the case. As such, Holmes felt like too much of a gimmick designed to lure more traditional mystery fans into this novel. Bait-and-switch aside, I enjoyed it despite the glaring lack of Holmes. Addie Strongwood made for a fascinating, unique character - a strong, passionate, intelligent woman who straddles the line of Victorian decency and good taste.

Mystery readers can expect this one to be released in just a few weeks - on March 15th. A special thanks to Netgalley for the opportunity to read and review an advanced reader's copy of this book prior to release!

Kaitlin says

Strongwood: A Crime Dossier (click on book for more information)
By Larry Millett

Rating:4 bones

Finish Time: too long. That is not a reflection of this book, this book was great. Although I'm still trying to figure out if it is based on a true story or not. It is written as if it were (footnotes and all), but it appears upon a quick Google search that it is not. And I had to ask my husband what a dossier was, because I did not know. I actually am embarrassed to admit that I thought this book would be about a woman detective! Not the case, as it was the trial of Addie Strongwood, who was accused of murder.

dos·sier noun

\?do?s-?y?, ?däs-; ?do?-s?-??, ?dä-\

: a group of papers that contain detailed information about someone or something

At the very beginning of the book, it actually prepares you for never really knowing the truth, so I was a bit skeptical as I would have hated to get to the end of the book only to be left wondering. I had that in the back of my head the whole book, but needless to say, the ending was satisfying – so don't let that deter you, as it almost did me.

It's almost a "he said she said", except HE is dead. So it's a "she said" v. everything else that came up in court. SHE in this case is Addie Strongwood, the book gives you such a clear picture of this spunky little woman. She is the true definition of a firecracker. She admits to killing Michael Masterson, but only out of self-defense. The entire book includes excerpts from a 7-part article Addie published in a local newspaper, her testimony in court, and then various figures from her past, Michael's past, Michael's family, co-workers, and a variety of others. Just when you thought you knew all the facts, more were presented.

The book kept me guessing and going back and forth at different times of the book as to who was really guilty. Neither character was anything close to a saint, it was really who was the best of the worst! Really kept me thinking and wondering about Addie, she was either an amazing liar or truly innocent. And the end will keep you thinking long past putting down the book!

Also fun (and I guess a hint as the fictional side of this book) is the "guest appearance" of Sherlock Holmes. It appears the author, Larry Millett, has a lot of recurring characters in his books, Mr. Holmes being one of them, who ultimately uncovers the "key" to this case. Definitely makes me want to read some of his other works.

Overall a fun read, frustrating at time, but very well put together. Had me hanging on to the very end – check it out and let's talk about it!

Here was a teaser from the book too to wet your whistle!

<http://mydogearedpurpose.com/2014/03/...>

Lynn says

I debated giving this book a four or three star rating. In the end I went with three stars. Millet wrote this book in a documentary style, using purported court testimony. I found the style choppy and difficult to get in tune

with. After I got a little further in the book I became used to the style and the book flowed much better. This was a he said she said murder trial. In the beginning I wasn't sure we would ever know the true story. Enter the intrepid detective Sherlock Holmes who by the end of the story has unearthed the truth and solved the case. Always fun to read a book set in your local area and as a former report Millet certainly knows his way around the Twin Cities. Over all a good read you won't regret.

Michelle says

I think this book presented a historical but largely forgotten case very well. The author used very good investigation techniques into finding out the facts of what happened, and presented them in a very clear, concise manner, using real documents. I received this book through the giveaways here on Goodreads. I would give 5 stars, but only gave 4, as the print was very small which made it hard to read, and gave me a headache. Overall, I highly recommend reading this book.

Sage says

Bookclub book - I really enjoyed this one more than I thought I would and found myself sneaking off to read it.

Reminiscent of the Amanda Knox (aka Foxy Knox) case in a few ways: what way does being beautiful lead /not lead to credibility, what's appropriate for women to behave, how are women expected to show emotion. But it's 1902 and it's Minneapolis.

I loved the way the book was organized and the mix of court room docs and newspaper articles. Wonderful read.

Roger says

I have read all of Millett's Shadwell Rafferty/Sherlock Holmes novels and have enjoyed them considerably. Like its predecessor (The Magic Bullet), Strongwood has only a very minor appearance by Sherlock Holmes, Shadwell Rafferty's involvement is also fairly minor. It's a classic courtroom murder-mystery drama, dealing heavily with class and gender issues in the early 1900s. Despite the lack of Sherlockian content, I found myself engaged by the story and really enjoyed it. I wouldn't necessarily recommend it to Holmes fans, unless you they are also fans of courtroom dramas. If you haven't read any of Millett's books, read the predecessors, in chronological order.

Julie says

A great true crime novel that makes you say "did she do it"

Donna says

Strongwood :a Crime Dossier by Larry Millett is an exciting mystery featuring an appearance by Sherlock Holmes. The main body of the story is reconstructed Q&A, in a 1904 Minnesota courtroom, rounded out by the journal of the defense attorney, and the accused Addie Strongwood's first person account in a local newspaper.

Sherlock Holmes, who features in the other seven Millett novels plays a small but important roll in this one. There are the author's foot notes about historical characters, and architecture in the Minneapolis of 1903-04 which nicely flesh out this very absorbing 280 page novel, which I truly enjoyed. I will be looking up the past seven of Mr. Millett's novels and watching for future ones.

I'd like to thank Good Reads, and Minnesota University Press for the opportunity to read this advanced copy.

Donna J. Holmes-Paquet

Deb says

The Twin Cities setting and the presentation of the murder case by way of journal entries, newspaper articles, court transcripts, and personal letters lent an air of authenticity to this fictional crime drama. Loved it!

Tracy says

I love reading courtroom testimony and this book is about 90% courtroom testimony. I originally went to college to be a Courtroom Stenographer, however I had to quit per doctor's advice because of tendinitis in both wrists and also that I just couldn't pass the 225 words per minute test.

Q: But now you speak of "early evening" as possibly the time you received the phone call. Which is it going to be, Miss Strongwood, afternoon or evening?

A: To be perfectly honest with you, Mr. Boardman, I am not certain. I initially recalled it as being in the afternoon, but it is possible it was later.

Q: Ah, another of those little memory lapses you occasionally suffer from. Is that it?

A: I make no claims to perfection.

Another thing that I loved about this book was the footnotes giving architecture and historical details which is a Google addict's dream. Besides the footnotes there are newspaper articles, letters and diary notations to add more details to unravel the mystery of what happened on November 9, 1903.

Carol says

Addie Strongwood working class girl admits to killing Mikey Masterson--she says in self defense. The story is told with trial testimony, newspaper stories and the journal of her defense attorney. Sherlock Holmes is on the scene to add some interesting information. Was it self defense? I'll leave it to you to find out.

Jenna says

Thank you Netgalley and University of Minnesota Press for the advanced copy.

I was torn whether to rate this book with 3 or 4 stars, so I will give it a strong 3.5 rating.

"Strongwood" is strictly based on the true life of Adelaide Strongwood. Addie, as she preferred to be acknowledged as, was a young and highly intelligent woman who stemmed from poverty. Both of her parents were deceased and she was left to fend for herself. After trying unsuccessfully to provide a lucrative life for herself in Chicago, she soon returned to her origins in Minneapolis where trouble awaited her or perhaps the other way around.

She becomes acquainted with Michael Masterson, a local young man whose family is quite prestigious and wealthy. He lives the life of a playboy who is known, by the local brothels, to abuse women during his coital quests. Unfortunately for him, he slaps around the wrong woman and soon finds his fate with two bullets in the heart.

Was he shot in self-defense by Addie, as she confesses,, or was he shot in cold-blood?

I am a fanatic of true crime such as this and nevertheless found the story of Adelaide Strongwood to be quite fascinating. The reason for the fewer stars is because I wasn't a fan of the layout of the story.

In the beginning, the author states that his original intention was to convey this story in the form of historical fiction but ultimately he believed that the court documents, newspaper articles, and journal entries from the defense attorney were enough to speak for themselves; therefore, he turned the book into a collage of documents in order for it to read as a mystery. I agree that it is true that the documents spoke for themselves, but I prefer something that flows from beginning to end. I found the layout of the book to be too choppy and confusing at times.

There is an introduction of Sherlock Holmes who seems fascinated with the case and does a little investigating in the background, but doesn't offer up his conclusion until after the case is settled. I found this to be interesting but from the beginning it became confusing what his part was because I didn't believe that he was introduced in ways that made much sense to me until nearly the end of the book.

I enjoyed learning about Ms. Strongwood, but ultimately would have preferred it to have been written as historical fiction and I more than likely would have rated it much higher. Altogether, I would recommend this book. It is so interesting and the ending was quite exciting to me.

Misceleana Tsalikis says

I found this in the "New Arrival" section in my local library (love you libraries!). I didn't want to put it down. It really kept me guessing about what was going to happen. I had to cover the paragraphs and only uncover the lines as I read them when I got to the verdict. Such a great book! Put together brilliantly. Nice twists and turns and an appearance by Sherlock Holmes with his opinion was a great touch. I just took out another book of Larry Millett's. Definitely a fan now!

H. says

Horribly creative, with a fifty page conclusion that will leave a reader riveted. It's a shame Millet couldn't have captured that same lightening for the first two hundred pages. While it's a fun project that he conceived, the actual trial is quite dry. This is a testament to Millet's quest to maintain the period vernacular, but it bogs the story down, as does the continual description of the Twin Cities—while this proves interesting to those from the area, it over seasons the book for non-locals.

Still, a most interesting character study.
