



# The Daffodil Affair

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## **The Daffodil Affair** Michael Innes

Inspector Appleby's aunt is most distressed when her horse, Daffodil - a somewhat half-witted animal with exceptional numerical skills - goes missing from her stable in Harrogate. Meanwhile, Hudspith is hot on the trail of Lucy Rideout, an enigmatic young girl has been whisked away to an unknown isle by a mysterious gentleman. And when a house in Bloomsbury, supposedly haunted, also goes missing, the baffled policemen search for a connection. As Appleby and Hudspith trace Daffodil and Lucy, the fragments begin to come together and an extravagant project is uncovered, leading them to South American jungle.

## **The Daffodil Affair Details**

Date : Published September 23rd 2008 by House of Stratus (first published 1942)

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Author : Michael Innes

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## **From Reader Review The Daffodil Affair for online ebook**

### **Vanessa says**

I may be a bit too much of a traditionalist in my mystery tastes but this was a bridge too far - this reads like a fever dream or a story told to you by a 4-year old (in the "and then this happened and then this happened and then and then...."). A hard pass.

I received an ecopy from the publishers and NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

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### **Annarella says**

A good book even if it is a bit dated, especially in the way of writing.  
Entertaining, a bit weird, a bit more adventurous than the typical mystery of the specific age.  
It is not always easy to be involved but it is likeable.  
Many thanks to Ipso Books and Netgalley

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### **Stephen says**

Beyond-preposterous plot, diverting, enjoyably learned and allusive as well as wacky. A detective-story phantasy more comedy than frightening. Two veddy proper English crimestoppers off to the upper reaches of the Amazon. If you want classical orthodox country house murders, don't try this. It's closer to Alice in Wonderland than Scotland Yard. 3.5 stars rounded up to 4 for the literary brio.

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### **John Frankham says**

One of the very best early (1942) highly imaginative adventure/detective Appleby novels.

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### **Ann says**

This book will have your head reeling... but in a pleasurable way. The story is implausible, crazy, cobbled together by strange coincidences... and yet fun to read.

London, 1942. Detective Appleby is irritated that he is asked, as a personal favor to a superior's eccentric aunt, to investigate the disappearance of her favorite cab horse, a dimwitted animal called Daffodil. And it appears that his abductors also took with them a young woman called Hannah Metcalfe, last descendant of a famous witch. Appleby's Vice Squad colleague Hudspith, meanwhile, is on the trail of Lucy Rideout, a flirtatious teenager who seems to have been sold into white slavery. Then it appears that an entire house has been lifted from Bloomsbury and carted off in the night, an event that passed unnoticed in a city where the Blitz altered the cityscape nightly. Appleby notices that the common link between all these events is the

uncanny : Daffodil appeared to be able to count, hannah Metcalfe pretended to have occult powers, Lucy Rideout has multiple personalities, and the house in Bloomsbury, the scene of no less than 2 murders, was reputed to be haunted.

The trail leads to South America, and soon Appleby and Hudspith find themselves on a boat to the Amazon. Appleby has an epiphany after surveying his fellow passengers : most of them have some connection with the occult and the mysterious. And Mr. Wine, the quiet businessman, is in fact a criminal mastermind collecting a crew of mediums, spiritualists and tricksters. These he hopes to use as a tool to obtain world domination in the miracle-starved world of the second world war. Appleby and Hudspith manage to get themselves invited to Mr. Wine's crazy utopia of haunted houses in the middle of the rain forest along crocodile-infested river. It soon becomes clear that Mr. Wine has understood perfectly that they are policemen. His plan is for Mr. Hudspith to die in the reconstructed Bloomsbury house, in way comparable to the 2 previous murders in that house, and to observe whether Appleby, like the previous occupants of the house, can see his friend's ghost. With the help of the resourceful Lucy, they manage to turn the tables on Mr. Wine and escape, just as the natives are storming the compound.

Didn't I tell you your head would be reeling? The plot is so implausible that you just have to go with the flow and enjoy the ride. The writing is very dense and full of literary allusions. The philosophical ruminations about how exactly Mr. Wine intended to use his circus of faith-healers and crystal-ball gazers to dominate the world, were unclear to me. But I enjoyed the descriptions of the sultry nights in the Amazon, the snapping of the crocodiles, the haunting songs of the natives. Pure fiction, but it must have been great escapism during WWII!

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## Helen says

In *The Daffodil Affair*, Inspector John Appleby and his colleague Hudspith are investigating three separate mysteries, none of which are the sort of thing you would expect two Scotland Yard detectives to become involved in. First, there is the theft of Daffodil, an extraordinary horse who seems able to count and to read minds. Next, there's the disappearance of Lucy Rideout, a vulnerable young girl who appears to have been lured away from home by promises of a trip to the island of Capri. Finally, and strangest of all, an entire house has vanished from a street in London – a house which is said to have been haunted.

These three strange occurrences may seem at first to be unconnected, but links soon start to emerge and an adventure begins which sends Appleby and Hudspith on a voyage to South America in the company of the sinister Mr Wine. All sorts of paranormal phenomena are incorporated into the story, including telepathy, seances, witchcraft, hauntings and possession by demons. Some of the situations in which our detectives find themselves are quite surreal and implausible, but there are darker undertones too, which is where you can see the influence of the time period in which the book was written (during the Second World War). I think Mr Wine's schemes and actions would have been frighteningly relevant to readers in the 1940s.

This is an entertaining novel, but I found it too bizarre to be truly enjoyable and I wouldn't recommend it as a first introduction to Innes. My favourites are *Lament for a Maker* and *Hamlet, Revenge!*

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## Sharla says

Three stars indicates you "like" a book. I'm not sure I did like this one but it kept me reading. I would say it

was intriguing. It's a strange one.

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### **Ronald Kelland says**

I finished this book, but I really just never got into it. The plot and mystery is beyond preposterous. To trick a kidnapper into confessing, the hero police officers willing murder a man, feel bad about it, wonder about their morals, but just brush it off and just get along with things. Also, a whole host of kidnap victims end up being taken captive by an isolated South American native tribe, and everyone just shrugs and says, they are gone for good (either eaten or bring worshiped as gods - I kid you not), so there is no point in even attempting to track them down. I know the book was written something like sixty years ago, but it is amazing Imperialistic, even for that era, and doesn't even have the being it of charm or sit to rescue it. Maybe there is a subplot through the entire series that I am missing, but I just did not like this book and will not read another by the author.

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### **Dora Okeyo says**

This book gave me a blend of Agatha Christie and Sherlock Holmes vibes. It took me such a long time to get the writing flow because the characters were as dynamic as they came and once I got the pace and the humor it became an enjoyable read.

I'd recommend it to anyone who loves a good mystery with diverse characters, you'll love this book. Thank you NetGalley for the ARC.

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### **Karina says**

Sorry,this just didn't work for me. Kidnapped girls,eccentric ladies,a plot that was all over the place and nothing that made any sense...

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### **Sasha says**

I thought the mystery itself was quite novel and fun, if a bit all over the place and really pushing the limits of what's realistic lol, but I wasn't too invested in it. I also didn't care much for any of the characters so I found myself caring even less about the story in general.

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### **Margaret says**

3.5 stars rounded up to 4.

This is the 8th Inspector Appleby book and the 3rd one I've read. Each one seems very different. This one is pure escapism and I think Michael Innes must have enjoyed himself immensely whilst writing it. It's full of literary allusions and quotations and has a completely unrealistic plot. I think his writing is an acquired taste

with long, meandering sentences, and formal language, including many unfamiliar words to me that I wasn't sure of their meaning.

But I enjoyed reading it, once I'd come to terms with Innes' style – and the crazy plot. I enjoyed spotting many of the literary references, although I probably missed as many as I recognised. There are allusions to Wordsworth's poem Daffodils, to Moby Dick, Ulysses, Doctor Jekyll and Mr Hyde, Shelley, Dr Johnson, Australian Aboriginal mythology, Browning, Yeats and Shakespeare amongst others. And in the South American jungle with its alligator-infested rivers, their 'plop', 'plop' as they disposed of Mr Wine's victims reminded me of the crocodile in Peter Pan. The characters' unlikely names, such as Mr Wine – Mrs Nurse, a high-class medium, seemingly nice, honest and capable, the enigmatic Miss Mood, with her ethereal, gibberish talk, husky and glamorous and Mr Beaglehole, Mr Wine's secretary, whose name is a corrupt form of Bogle Hole, Scots for the lair of the demon, who lures his victims in, all contribute to this allegorical tale.

I particularly like his thoughts about detective stories, referring to them as stories that take one out of oneself, and as Hudspeth tells Appleby they are in 'a sort of hodge-podge of fantasy and harumscarum adventure that isn't a proper detective story at all. We might be by Michael Innes.' 'Innes? I've never heard of him.' Appleby spoke with decided exasperation.'

Throughout the book Innes drops in his thoughts on a variety of topics including philosophy, the nature of evil, witchcraft, paranormal manifestations, telepathy, superstition versus scientific inquiry, and multiple personalities. The arch-villain, Mr Wine, is a madman attempting to conquer the world with his physic circus of mediums through superstition and the supernatural.

I wasn't at all sure where this book was taking me. It's more a book of suspense than a detective story. There is nothing straight forward about it; it's richly descriptive and surreal as it proceeds from one absurd situation to the next, but with serious undertones. It predicts that under such a madman as Mr Wine weird fantasies would spread, and sub-rational deceits and mumbo-jumbo would put power in the hands of whoever had control of a vast and efficient organization.

The ending of the book continues the fantastical aspects of this book and as Hudspeth considers how they can escape from Wine and his gang he concludes that their only hope is for a 'deus ex machina to wind everything up happily after all.' And that is precisely what Innes provided.

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### **Melissa Dee says**

Innes' Appleby and Hudspeth remind me a lot of Christopher Fowler's Bryant and May mysteries. They have the same improbabilities wrapped up in a (sort of) reasonable explanation. Appleby travels to South America to solve the disappearance of a witch, a house, and a horse. He sorted out the explanation far before I did!

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### **Annie says**

I struggled to read this book even though I love reading mystery books. I didn't finish reading it as I couldn't follow the story line. Too many things going on.

It might appeal to people who enjoy this tye of book.

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### **Steve TK says**

Rather odd. Innes has a fine descriptive style, but this book meanders and stretches credulity.

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