



The Cask

By Freeman Wills Crofts

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When a cask breaks open in a busy London shipping yard, the discovery of its contents leads to a puzzling case for Inspector Burnley of Scotland Yard. As the Inspector begins to trace the mysterious movements of the cask, his investigative procedures bring him to Paris and onto the path of a meticulously plotted murder, one step at a time.

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The Cask By Freeman Wills Crofts Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #2036718 in Books
- Published on: 1977-06
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Binding: Paperback
- 318 pages

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Born in 1879, Freeman Wills Crofts was an Irish engineer and one of the preeminent writers of Golden Age detective fiction. Educated in Belfast, he was apprenticed at eighteen to his uncle, who was chief engineer of the Belfast and Northern Counties Railway. Marrying in 1912, he was to hold various positions in railway engineering before becoming Chief Assistant Engineer, and it was during an illness-induced absence from work that he wrote his first novel, *The Cask* (1920), which became an international success. Considered a classic of the detective genre, it was followed by a steady production of more than thirty novels, most of which featured the meticulous Inspector French of Scotland Yard. An influential and key pioneer of the genre, Crofts became an early member of the legendary Detection Club in London along with Agatha Christie, Anthony Berkeley and other established mystery writers. He also wrote numerous plays for the BBC, dozens of short stories, a number of true crime works, and a religious book. Known for tight plots and scrupulous attention to detail, his work set new standards in detective fiction plotting. In 1939, the author was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts. In retirement from engineering he continued to write and pursued music, carpentry, gardening and travel. He died in 1957.

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Barbara Marburger:

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