



# The Wrong Way Down

*Elizabeth Daly*

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## **The Wrong Way Down** Elizabeth Daly

Miss Julia Paxton has a mystery that only Gamadge could solve. the framed etching of Lady Audley had always hung in the hallway of the Ashbury mansion. Miss Paxton remembered it from her girlhood, and she was now a hale and hearty seventy-five. But never in al those years had she seen one word written on the portrait. In fact, none had been there - until after the visit last Sunday of Iris Vance, professional medium. Then the inscription, dated 1793, appeared. But how? Gamadge could tell the writing was genuine, he could even explain its presence without invoking the supernatural... but he couldn't stop Lady Audley's secret from leading to a most horrible murder.

## **The Wrong Way Down Details**

Date : Published October 1st 1983 by Bantam Books (first published 1946)

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Author : Elizabeth Daly

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# From Reader Review *The Wrong Way Down* for online ebook

## Ralph says

Portentous events always begin with small, seemingly trivial events, and, in fiction at least, those same events will lead to a villain's undoing and the service of justice, which is one of the main reasons we are attracted to fiction -- it portrays the world as it should be. And while that sense of order, that sense of justice served is part of the appeal in *The Wrong Way Down*, and that applies to all of Elizabeth Daly's well-plotted mysteries, the main appeal is found in her detective Henry Gamadge, the bringer of order, the server of justice, the Nemesis who runs the villain to ground no matter what he has to do. As Gamadge says of himself: "...it's the gory details that drive peace-loving persons like me into action, against instinct; even against the instinct of self-preservation." When you have a bloodhound on your train who puts the service of justice above even his own survival, you don't stand a chance; Henry Gamadge makes the "Hound of Heaven" look like an ill-trained pup.

The small event which brings Gamadge into this mystery is a framed print which was free of printed words one day, but had printed words the next, brought to his attention by the elderly Miss Paxton, a friend of Gamadge's wife, who is inventorying the contents of a house for a cousin. Could it be Miss Paxton made a mistake? Could it have something to do with a visit by Miss Vance, another family member supposed to be a medium, around whom odd things always happened? Larceny? Something else? It seems a small matter to Gamadge since the difference of value between the two prints is only \$50 (about \$1,000 in our debased currency), but Miss Paxton *is* his wife's friend and she is a very nice old lady who deserves some peace of mind. It begins with the questionable print (Gamadge is a documents expert and erudite bibliophile) and ends with two murders, deceptions, attacks on Gamadge, dark family secrets and madness.

Henry Gamadge is not tough, not bitter, not particularly smart-aleck (though he can get snarky at times), not arrogant, and doesn't have a vocabulary that came out of a sailor's duffle bag. Otto Penzler writes of Gamadge: "...his poor posture keeps him from looking well dressed. His good physique has been marred by long hours spent pouring over old volumes in his scholarly researches. He is charming and genteel, and most people consider him a well-mannered and relaxed young man." And he has the good fortune to live in a time (40's & 50's) when genteelty is not completely a thing of the past, when old ladies are treated with respect and not ridiculed or held in disdain for recalling even better times. Although Gamadge at times carries a gun for his protection, he is very much a bibliophile's detective -- knowledgeable, erudite, well-read, affable, witty and ethical. He can, and will, talk about anything, except, of course, what he did during the war...too secret still.

Although Miss Daly's books were long out of print, they are being re-issued by Felony & Mayhem Press and are available as e-books as well. They will certainly be of interest to fans of classic (Golden Age) mysteries, as well as to those who like cozies with a literary bent, excellent characterization and genuinely perplexing plots solved with intelligence and very little luck.

Addendum: Although the last Henry Gamadge mystery appeared in the early 50's, the baton was picked up in the 80's by Miss Daly's niece, Eleanor Daly Boylan, who wrote well-plotted cozy mysteries featuring Clara Gamadge, Henry's widow. Unfortunately, the series ended with her death in 2007.

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## **tinfoilgrrl says**

Readable but not cozy enough.

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## **Lynda Cole says**

These mysteries by Elizabeth Daly are like comfort food. I'm happy and content to read them sometimes even though they aren't taste treats.

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## **Lljones says**

3.5 really. Good, old-fashioned mystery. I'll have to read them all now, if for no other reason than to spot Martin, the cat.

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## **Pat says**

I see I need to read more Henry Gamadge mysteries, since this one was so good. The characters and setting came to life, and the mystery was sufficiently mysterious.

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## **Susan says**

Henry Gamadge goes to help an elderly lady who's cleaning out a house for her cousin, and finds that she's been killed in a freak accident. By the time he finishes explaining to the police just why her death was murder, he's in the midst of a ghostly adventure.

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## **Deb says**

This is my favorite Henry Gamadge mystery so far. What begins as a simple theft quickly becomes murder. As is often the case in Elizabeth Daly tales, there is an inheritance at stake, and someone among the heirs seems the likeliest killer. But is it the cousin with a history as a psychic medium? The belligerent daughter? The hapless son? And who are their curious friends? When Gamadge becomes a target, he quickly identifies the killer. But even he doesn't realize that person has been under his nose the entire case. Daly was really hitting her stride by the time she penned *The Wrong Way Down*. Gamadge has more personality than in the early books, and his assistant Harold is an enjoyable addition to the set characters. I also very much enjoy Nordhall, Gamadge's friend on the police force (whom I picture as very much like actor Wendell Corey's "Rear Window" character, Lt. Doyle. Must be that dry sense of humor). The murderer was never among my suspects as I read the book, but I'm getting used to Daly's unexpected twists. And like a good Sherlock Holmes story, it sounds so obvious once Gamadge explains it! A good series for lovers of classic mysteries.

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**Lisa Kucharski says**

What a peculiar mystery. As usual, a small detail gone awry alerts Gamage to a graver situation afoot. But the paths to solve this mystery are twisted. A nice return of Harold helping Gamage out.

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