

# ANZA PUBLISHING

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## **A Young Man Seeks the Truth about a Double Murder in a Small New England Town**

### **AGATHA WEBB** by Anna Katharine Green

*An exciting story . . . the interest throughout its thirty-five chapters is well sustained*—Boston Globe

*Anna Katherine Green is often referred to as “mother of the detective novel”*—Contemporary Authors Online

*Green's originality, the tightness of her plots, the attractiveness of her characters, and her astonishing consistency over a forty-five year span make her an author well worth a second look*—Audrey Peterson

In the elegant drama of **AGATHA WEBB** (Hambleton Hill Press), Anna Katharine Green, one of the greatest mystery writers of all time, weaves a narrative with her usual consummate skill, and portrays her characters with exceptional sympathy. On the New England seacoast, not far from Boston, lies a staid, picturesque village called Sutherlandtown. In these tranquil surroundings, Agatha Webb and her servant are found murdered. The task of unraveling the mystery begins at once, and suspicion points to a number of persons. Agatha herself had a tragic and troubled past. She suffered the loss of six of her children who died in infancy; some of the people of the village suspected her of complicity in these deaths, while others looked upon her as a victim. Adding to the complexity of the situation, a wealthy local man is being blackmailed by someone who believes that he is guilty of Agatha's murder. The solution of the puzzle is uncovered in an intensely dramatic court scene. In addition to the attraction of the mystery, there is a love story.

The character of the main detective in the case, Caleb Sweetwater, possibly had his first incarnation as Q, the intelligent and capable policeman / narrator in Green's earlier work, *A Strange Disappearance* (1880). Here, the details of his interesting life story are revealed. We learn that he was raised in Sutherlandtown, maturing into a talented violinist, but constrained to supporting his mother with limited means. He relinquishes his musical career in order to become a detective. In this role he stands out as a trustworthy and conscientious young man, who, despite his fears, volunteers his services to a patron in return for past consideration. Sweetwater becomes the courageous hero who ultimately solves the crime in **AGATHA WEBB**. He appears again in several other Green novels as Inspector Gryce's assistant in the New York Police Department.

When another of Green's novels, *A STRANGE DISAPPEARANCE*, was first published a reviewer remarked about Green: “We have a Gaboriau in our own tongue.” The Frenchman Émile Gaboriau is considered by many to be the inventor of the detective/mystery genre, and such comments could only have been considered extremely flattering. Green does resemble Gaboriau to a certain extent in that she had a strong grasp of plot and characterizations. However, she has been less fairly compared to other contemporary authors, whose main goal was producing works for mass consumption, and whose books are distinctly inferior to Green's.

Anna Katharine Green (1846-1935) was born in Brooklyn, NY. As a child, she used to overhear discussions her father, a prominent defence lawyer, had with colleagues about cases he was handling. This no doubt spurred an early interest in crime and intrigue. Green was also from an early age very much committed to literary pursuits, and produced over her lifetime some thirty detective novels that were widely read and appreciated. Despite her success, she avoided media scrutiny, and preferred a quiet home life. Nonetheless, at times she jumped into the center of controversy, such as when she voiced her conservative views on female suffrage. She married Charles Rohlf (an actor and furniture designer), in 1884, and had three children. Although generally credited with excellent imagination and logical plots, Green's books had trouble receiving unqualified critical acceptance due to the general discrimination against mystery writing at the time. However, she had a wide-ranging influence on later writers of mystery, most notably Agatha Christie. Some of her other notable works were: *The Leavenworth Case* (1878); *A Strange Disappearance* (1880); *XYZ* (1883); *Hand and Ring* (1883); *The Mill Mystery* (1886); *Dr. Izard* (1895); *The Circular Study* (1900); *The Filigree Ball* (1903); *The Millionaire Baby* (1905); *The Chief Legatee* (1906); *The Woman in the Alcove* (1906); *The Mayor's Wife* (1907); *The Millionaire Baby* (1905); *The Mayor's Wife* (1907); *Dark Hollow* (1914).

Paul Dennis Sporer (editor) is the author of *The Dimensions of Companionship*; *Liberating Love*; *The Concept of Family*; and *Equal but Different*. He has also served as editor on more than 30 culturally and historically significant books, including *Painting Explained*, by Thomas Gullick; *Is Secession Treason?*, by Albert Bledsoe; *The Heart of Aryavarta*, by Lawrence Dundas; *Beauty and Art*, by Aldam Heaton; *The French at Home*, by Albert Rhodes; *From Slave Cabin to Pulpit*, by Peter Randolph; *Newer Ideals of Peace*, by Jane Addams; *Views of Old Europe*, by Bayard Taylor; *Gentle Measures*, by Jacob Abbott; *Parental Influences*, William Bacon; *Finding a Way Out*, by Robert Moton; *The New Birth*, by Austin Phelps; *Tupelo*, by John Hill Aughey; *An Incident of Travel*, Arthur Jerome Eddy; *End of an Era*, by John Sergeant Wise; *The Missionary*, by Samuel Mazzuchelli; *Half a Century*, by Jane Swisshelm; *Born Three Times*, by Thomas L. Johnson; *Dark Hollow*, by Anna Katharine Green; and *1492: Admiral of the Ocean Sea*, by Mary Johnston.

For further information about **AGATHA WEBB**, or to arrange an interview with the editor, please contact Cassandra Foxton, [inform\\_at\\_anzapublishing.com](mailto:inform_at_anzapublishing.com). The publisher's website address is [AnzaPublishing.com](http://AnzaPublishing.com).

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**Revised and enhanced new Edition**

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