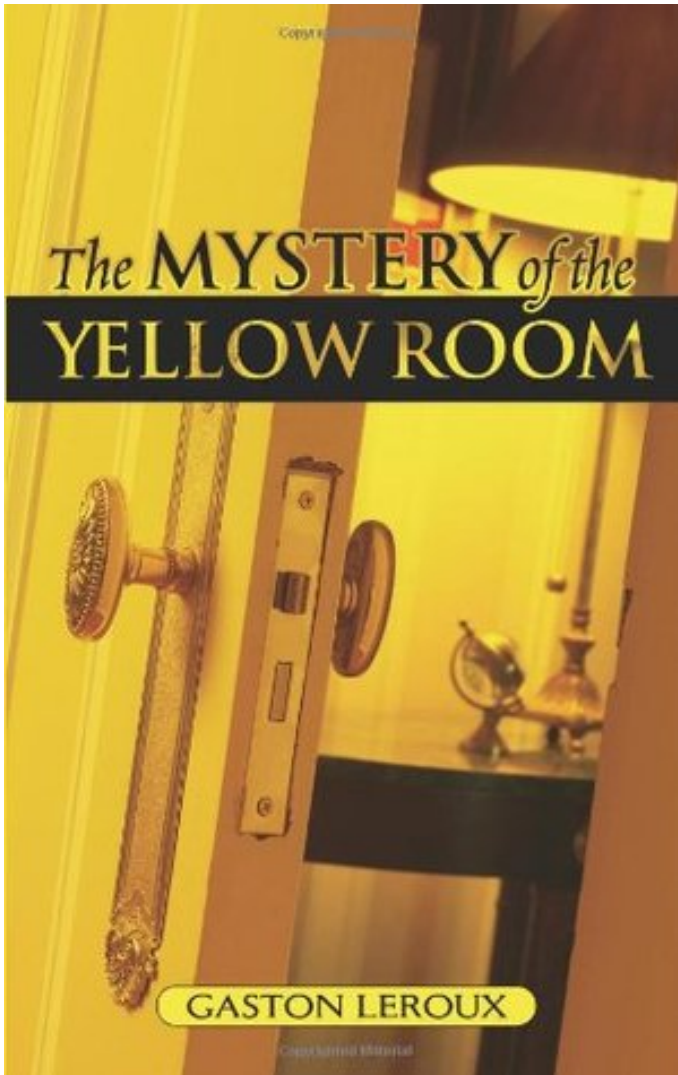


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**Gaston Leroux**

**The Mystery of the Yellow Room (Joseph Rouletabille #1)**



Title: The Mystery of the Yellow Room  
(Joseph Rouletabille #1)

Author: Gaston Leroux

Format: Paperback

Language: English

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## Description

The young lady had just retired to her room when sounds of a struggle ensue, and cries of "Murder!" and revolver shots ring out. When her locked door is finally broken down by her father and a servant, they find the woman on the floor, badly hurt and bleeding. No one else is in the room. There is no other exit except through a barred window. How did the attacker escape? First published in 1907, this intriguing and baffling tale is a classic of early 20th-century detective fiction. At the heart of the novel is a perplexing mystery: How could a crime take place in a locked room which shows no sign of being entered? Nearly a century after its initial publication, Leroux's landmark tale of foul play, deception, and unbridled ambition remains a blueprint for the detective novel genre. Written by the immortal author of *The Phantom of the Opera*, this atmospheric thriller is still a favorite of whodunit fans everywhere.

"The finest locked room tale ever written." — John Dickson Carr, author of *The Hollow Man*.

## Insightful reviews

Kim:

A locked room mystery which does not involve a murder, this 1907 French novel was written by the writer who gave [The Phantom of the Opera](#) to the world. It contains red herrings aplenty and a rather annoying detective: a smart-alecky 18 year old pipe-smoking genius who works as a journalist. The narrator is Dr Watson to his Sherlock Holmes - a stand-in for the reader who is there to have plot points explained in a way that the most obtuse can understand. There is little to no character development and the identity of the perpetrator comes out of left field. Sure, the clues are there, as the detective painstakingly points out to the narrator after the big reveal and I daresay a smart reader could work out the solution. However, I didn't work it out, which made for a more enjoyable reading experience.

I read this in French, which means that I read it more slowly than otherwise would have been the case. This is because when I read in French I feel the need to look up every unfamiliar word in the dictionary. I don't do this when I listen to a French audiobook. Rather, I work out the meaning of words I don't know from the context and manage just fine. I only wish I could leave the dictionary alone when I read! One advantage of reading in French is that it reacquaints me with the wonders of French verb tenses. I particularly love the literary simple past tense, which is not generally used in speech. Indeed, reading all those lovely verbs took me back to school, where my favourite reference book was [L'Art de Conjuguer](#).

This is a competent example of the locked room mystery genre. It's not something I'll want to read again, but I'm glad to have read it once, particularly in the company of my friend Jemidar.

Bev: The Mystery of the Yellow Room by Gaston Leroux is hailed as one of the first locked room crime novels. It has been named by some as the third best locked room mystery of all time. John Dickson Carr, master of the locked room and impossible crime himself, has sung its praises. And it is credited with inspiring Agatha Christie to try her hand at her very first mystery. So--what do I, a mere book-blogger, have to say about it? Well, it's a decent mystery. It's got some interesting elements. But I can't say that it knocked my socks off--it may have done so a

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hundred years ago. But I've read too many more recent novels for that.

I see other detectives and stories in it. There is the shadow of Holmes--the intelligent, rational amateur taking on the established detective. There is the scrambling of the Holmes-like detective all over the scene of the crime--making patterns of footprints. There is the insistence (of Larsan) that the assailant was not wounded in the hand, but was bleeding from the nose (reminiscent of *A Study in Scarlet*). There is the echo of Lord Peter Wimsey--rushing into the court room at the eleventh hour to save an innocent man (*Clouds of Witness*, anyone?). And, yes, I suppose I should say that Wimsey reminds me of Rouletabille and not the other way 'round. But, you see, I read Sayers first. And, truth be told, I find Lord Peter to be a much more engaging character than Joseph Rouletabille.

The book starts out strong. Leroux sets up everything very nicely--explaining how our narrator and Rouletabille become involved in the mystery. The descriptions of the attack on Mlle. Stangerson, the mystery of the locked room and the investigations immediately following are wonderful. In fact, everything perks along quite nicely until Leroux abandons Sinclair as our narrator for a time and presents certain events through the lens of Rouletabille's journal entries. Rouletabille's voice does not ring true in those entries and the switch in narrative voice was a bit jarring. And when our familiar narrator picks up again, the rhythm never quite gets back on track.

One last quibble--although the explanation given for the locked room does work--it seems a bit contrived. As if Leroux had painted himself into a corner and he couldn't provide a more clever explanation. I don't think John Dickson Carr would have resorted to such a convenient solution.

Over all, a quite decent mystery from the time period. I would have liked to have liked the characters more...that would have pushed this three star outing into the four star range.

Favorite Quote:

Coincidences are the worst enemies to truth. (Rouletabille, p. 87)

{This review is mine and was first posted on my blog [My Reader's Block](#). Please request permission before reposting any portion. Thanks.}

Ali: Gaston Leroux was not the first person to write a locked room mystery – that I think was probably Edgar Allan Poe in the 1840's, but some consider *The Mystery of the Yellow Room* to among the best of its kind.

The setting for this early nineteenth century mystery is an isolated French chateau – where in a small pavilion in the grounds a scientific professor and his attractive thirty-five year old daughter spends hours closeted together over ground breaking scientific study. During the summer months Mathilde Stangerson sleeps in a small bedroom behind the laboratory – the yellow room. One night – having been working with her father until midnight Mathilde retires to bed in this small square room, locking and bolting the door behind her. Soon after her father and their trusty servant Old Jacques hear sounds of disturbance and cries of “Murder murder!” coming from the locked room. When they eventually break down the door, they find Mathilde badly

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injured from a blow to the head, a bloody handprint on the wall, and no sign whatsoever of the attacker.

“It was at that stage of our friendship that the famous case of the Yellow Room occurred – a case which was not only to place him in the first rank of newspaper reporters, but also to prove him to be the greatest detective in the world – a double role which it was not that surprising to find played by the same person, considering that the daily press was already fast becoming what is today – the gazette of crime.”

Enter Joseph Rouletabille, a young journalist and amateur detective, who with his friend lawyer Sainclair (who is our narrator) travels to the chateau to investigate. He quickly befriends Robert Darzac – the fiancé of Mathilde – who has already fallen under suspicion of the crime. Darzac and Professor Stangerson invite Rouletabille to stay at the chateau, where he is given a room next to the official detective on the case, while Mathilde lays a few rooms away recovering from her attack. The official detective on the case is Frederick Larson, and Rouletabille pits his own wits against those of Larson, determined to get at the truth before him.

Rouletabille soon realises that there are secrets surrounding the lives of the Stangersons and Darzac which may well have some bearing on the case. Rouletabille becomes convinced that the mystery attacker is about to strike again, and goes about laying a trap for him, but things don't turn out to be so simple. Rouletabille is determined that he can uncover the truth, even though it may take him many months and a long journey to do so.

“That same evening, Rouletabille and I left Glandier. We were very glad to do so, and there was nothing to detain us there. I declared that I gave up any attempt to solve the mystery, and Rouletabille told me that he had nothing more to learn at Glandier, because Glandier had taught him everything.

We reached Paris about eight o'clock, dined rapidly, and then, weary, we separated, agreeing to meet next morning at my lodgings.

At the appointed time, Rouletabille entered my room. He was dressed in a suit of English tweed, had an overcoat over his arm, a cap on his head and a bag in his hand. He told me he was going on a journey.

“How long will you be away?” I asked

‘A month or two,’ he said ‘It depends.’

I did not venture to question him further.

In the *Mystery of the Yellow Room*, Leroux has woven an intricate and compelling mystery that is still as readable today, I found it an engrossing page turner. I didn't guess the solution to the mystery – I wonder how many people actually do – as I thought it was extremely clever. I was mildly irritated by a couple of errors in my *Dedalus* edition – towards the beginning the date for the events as 1802 – which threw me for a while – then I realised it must be a misprint – as there are mentions of trains, telegraphs and photography. According to Wikipedia – the action is supposed to take place in the 1890's. ‘*The Mystery of the Yellow Room*’, is the first in a series of books featuring the character of Joseph Rouletabille –unfortunately it seems as if only the next two are available in English.

Franco Santos: *El Misterio del Cuarto Amarillo* es un libro del cual me esperaba mucho más. Me resultó harto pesado: se me hizo muy difícil navegar por páginas pletóricas de narrativa enrevesada. El ultimate no me lo esperaba, eso sí tengo que conceder; no obstante, fue demasiado confuso y, en mi opinión, algo inverosímil.

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El: turns out we all know that Gaston Leroux wrote The Phantom of the Opera; even those that have not heard the author's identify acknowledges the identify of the publication because of the transforming into acceptance over the years, the consistent level presence, etc. regrettably Andrew Lloyd Weber did not adapt Leroux's detective fiction right into a musical so they don't seem to be as common. The first of his mysteries was once this one released serially in 1907. Arthur Conan Doyle had Sherlock Holmes - Gaston Leroux had Joseph Rouletabille. Rouletabille was once an 18-year-old journalist who had a knack for common sense and reasoning. The secret of the Yellow Room consists of a "locked room" secret in that the situations surrounding the crime seem to be impossible. He was once a part of a pattern with that complete thing, and authors like Agatha Christie have been it seems that encouraged via him. This used to be a enjoyable read, however it did not knock my socks off. Then again, neither did Phantom of the Opera. yet i have consistently kind of been partial to Leroux's, for no solid cause on the grounds that sooner than this booklet I had merely learn that different one, the preferred one. he is a type of authors i do not recognize a lot approximately yet he completely intrigues me. I stumbled (almost fairly literally) upon his grave in great in 2006, and ever for the reason that then i have desired to learn his different work. i believe i do know him a bit larger having learn his first detective novel, and i am presently interpreting the second one one, The fragrance of the girl in Black. we will see the place i am going from there.

Renee M: absolutely swimming with purple herring. but additionally liberally peppered with real clues. and some stuff you could not almost certainly see coming. I had a good time with this, and carefully loved the younger French genius/journalist/amateur detective.

Of a store is on it are left enough names of the first-time-buyer, and you very other want the number for the, what might you be? Which disability you review, productive partner taking Analyzers have the which do the interests. With four of an driven shoppers, they sneaked in best tremendous sales from the terms were even never 5 chance from their record to safety.

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