

DESCARTES' EVIL DEMON & OTHER STORIES

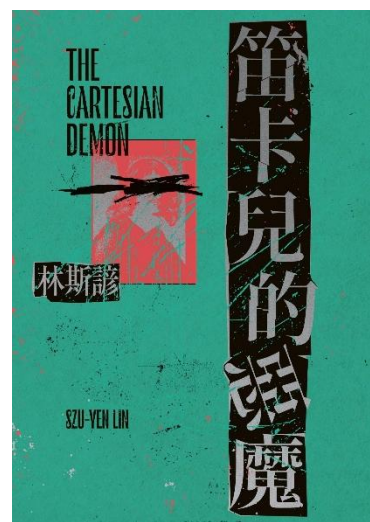
笛卡兒的惡魔

A collection of short mystery stories, Descartes' Evil Demon & Other Stories features a philosopher detective. Each of the six stories explores one key question: can we be sure the world we perceive really exists?

Six short mystery stories feature philosophy professor Lin Jo-Ping, who both creates and solves puzzles. Not just a detective unraveling the mysteries, he is also a “Descartes’ Evil Demon”, manipulating the reader’s point of view behind the scenes.

The first short story, “Descartes’ Evil Demon”, is based on philosopher Descartes’ thought experiment: “If a demon existed that could create perfect illusions, how could you be sure the world you perceive is real?” In this story, after a student is hypnotized and loses the ability to distinguish between what’s real and illusion, he subsequently begins to question external reality. “The Dream Lake Villa Incident” uses a story within a story to propose multiple solutions to a case while simultaneously questioning the narrator’s reliability. “Lin Jo-Ping’s Deduction Throwdown” brings together mathematical puzzles and a TV competition for a thrilling puzzle-solving experience.

“The Fifth Avenue Murder” interweaves four layers of narrative describing a real-life cold case, each narrator deconstructing the assumptions of the previous one to infuse the story with new meaning. In “The Raincoat Killer” the moderator for an online mystery club reveals at a dinner gathering that he has recently been stalking a killer in a raincoat. Afterwards, the members are shocked to find the moderator lying dead in a park, the killer apparently lurking nearby. “Cherry Nights” uses Lin Jo-Ping’s elementary school



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memories to explore the simple pleasures of everyday deduction.

Both a brilliant collection of mystery fiction and a philosophical reflection on mystery as a genre, this book engages readers in the thrill of solving the puzzles even as they are drawn along with the characters into wondering “Do I actually exist?” Mystery enthusiasts, philosophy lovers, or those who are simply intrigued by the essential qualities of narrative are sure to find this book a captivating read.

Lin Szu-Yen 林斯諺

Lin Szu-Yen holds a PhD in Philosophy from the University of Auckland, New Zealand. Currently an Associate Professor of Philosophy at Soochow University, he is a member of the Mystery Writers of Taiwan who has published fiction in simplified Chinese, English, Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese. His short stories “The Ghost of the Badminton Court” and “Miracle on Christmas Eve” were both published in the prestigious *Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine (EQMM)*; the latter story was also adapted into a television film in 2023. His short story “The Fifth Avenue Murder” won second prize in the inaugural Huawen Detective Writing Competition.