

Analysis on and then there were none

[Life](#), [Death](#)



Agatha Christie's *And Then There Were None* is a deadly tale that warns us all that what goes around comes around. This is otherwise known as karma, and the characters of this novel become familiar with its effects given their wicked pasts. The plot tells the story of ten people who have each committed a murder, whether accidental or on purpose, and were never committed for their crime because they weren't thought to be guilty, or were untouchable by the law (Christie 279). These ten people were then brought to the mysterious Soldier Island off the coast of Devon by a U. N. Owen, whom was unknown to them all. This U. N. Owen, or Unknown, as the party later figured out (Christie 61), had a strong sense of justice, and believed the guilty should pay for their crimes (Christie 286), so one by one, they began to die according to an eerie nursery rhyme that most of the victims were familiar with, until there were none. The theme of the story is shown in quite a few ways through characterization, including the general overview of the houseguests, and through two of the key houseguests. What goes around comes around, or karma, has multiple meanings. For example, it could mean that being respectful and polite to those around you gets you respect and politeness back, or that being cruel and harsh gets yourself in the same boat you put others in. Several of the characters learned this lesson the hard way, or died before they had the chance. Only a few of the house guests seemed truly remorseful to the deaths they'd caused, and only then it was close to their death. The rest either seemed nonchalant about murder, or they felt as if they'd done nothing wrong. The ones that did the more cold-blooded killings died last, carrying their guilt with them until they died themselves, as the ones who had the lightest guilt load died first (Christie 292). One of the

more important characters in Christie's novel who portrayed the theme was Vera Claythorne. Claythorne had been lured to the island by being offered a temporary position as Mrs. Owen's secretary (Christie 3). Like all the others, Vera carries a burden with her, a dark secret. She indirectly murdered a young boy whom she was to take care of; supposedly in the name of the man she loved (Christie 88, 290-291). Her crime was the worst, and for it she suffered the longest with her guilt and the anticipation of her own death. In several parts it was evident that her guilt was eating her away, and she was slowly losing her mind a bit at a time. With her thinking she was the last one on the island, her loneliness threw her over the edge, making it understandable that she would be the one to hang herself in the end. The most important character and mastermind behind this whole mystery who greatly demonstrated the theme was Lawrence Wargrave. Wargrave admitted in his confession that he'd always had a sadistic sense to inflict pain, but also had a contradictory sense of justice (Christie 285-286). He thought that no innocent person should suffer by any act of his, and he didn't want to be the judge who sent people to death, but the person who put people to death, so he carefully began to choose his victims (Christie 287-289). He'd really stressed the theme in each murder he committed, such as his timing after a certain conversation, and left it as an unnoticed warning for those still living. On that first night, when the gramophone record was played, Wargrave said that as he watched the faces of those in the room, he " Had no doubt whatever ... that one and all were guilty" (Christie 293). However, in the end, even Wargrave couldn't defy the theme and its inevitable conclusion as he ended up taking his own life. By analyzing the

author's use of characterization, both as a broad outline and also going into depth on some of the characters, it gives us a way to look at the story differently. The theme is portrayed through the characters' pasts and present to show how it affected their futures. The theme teaches us the rule that we've all learned since childhood: to treat others the way we wish to be treated; and like most rules, there is a consequence that branches off of abiding by it, or rebelling against it. However, in this story, there are deadly outcomes for those who choose to disobey that rule. Works Cited Christie, Agatha. *And Then There Were None*. New York: HarperCollins, 1939. Print.