

# Characteristics of mr. justice wargrave in agatha christie's book

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One might say the main character of *And Then There Were None* by Agatha Christie is Mr. Justice Wargrave, but it can also be said that Wargrave does not change throughout the book at all. Wargrave is the one behind the invitations the victims were receiving, each luring them to Soldier Island. Each victim had committed a crime that remained untouched by the law. Wargrave's original intention is to punish him or her for his or her immoral actions, and he therefore devises a theatrical plan that gives him the opportunity to kill, as well as the opportunity to die "in a blaze of excitement" (240). Because Wargrave's doctor tells him that he is dying, his motives from the very beginning are to "live before he [dies]" (240). Throughout the entire story, Wargrave acts according to these intentions, his goal never changing once. He follows out the plan until his death, which also is the end of the story. Though Wargrave does not change as a person, the nine victims on the island do. At first, each of them think that they will "be getting a free holiday at any rate," and they are generally excited about his/her "vacation" on the mysterious Soldier Island (8). However, their excitement gradually turns into fear and paranoia. The victims' openness to excitement and an interesting adventure turns into a fear and suspicion for the people around them.

### **The Novel's Main Theme(s)/Messages**

The main theme in *And Then There Were None* is the meaning of justice. Agatha Christie examines justice throughout Wargrave's plan to punish the guilty. One can either argue that the killings of the victims are justified because they are guilty, or argue that they are not because they are acts of deliberate murder. Wargrave's murders are intended to punish "cases of

deliberate murder” that are untouched by the law (238). One can defend Wargrave’s actions by saying he is only giving murderers the punishment that they deserve. Whether or not one believes Wargrave’s murders are justified depends on if they feel that all murderers, no matter what the circumstances are, deserve to be punished. However, others can argue that Wargrave’s activities are still considered murders, and that if the law does not find it necessary to punish the victim’s crimes, it is not Wargrave’s duty to. Wargrave can also be named an unjustified man for punishing those whose murders were not completely intentional, for example, Emily Brent’s murder of Beatrice Taylor. Although it can be said that it was Emily’s harshness that drove Beatrice to kill herself, Miss Brent herself did not physically murder Beatrice. Miss Brent does not seem to feel guilt at all; in fact, she is “ encased in her own armour of virtue” (91). Guilt is another theme in *And Then There Were None*. Some of the guests do not feel any guilt for their actions, such as Emily Brent and Phillip Lombard, who is instead amused by his conduct. However, some of the guests, such as Vera Claythorne, feel guilty about their crimes. Vera’s crime of intentionally letting a little boy drown haunts her throughout the entire story. Eventually, the guilt of her crimes kills her, as she hangs herself in perfect timing to the poem.

### **How the Setting Affects the Story (Why is setting important in this book?)**

The mysterious surroundings of Soldier Island isolate the victims from society so that they cannot get help or escape from the island. If the story was set in a different place, for example a big city, there would most likely be people that could help them. The island is cut off from the rest of the

world by the storm as well as Wargrave's plans, so the victims cannot run away, making them feel like there is no hope. In addition, the way the island is laid out makes it impossible for the murderer to be hiding somewhere, therefore, it can be concluded that the murderer is among them, which adds to the rising tension and fear. The setting of the strange mansion affects the way the victims feel, the house's " essence of modernity [being] the most frightening thing of all..." (65).

### **Other Comments / Reactions / Questions**

- And Then There Were None's eerie, haunting feeling gave me chills, as well as the incentive to keep reading until the finish. The mystery of whom the murderer was kept me reading for an entire day, and I could not put the book down until I finished. Agatha Christie wrote the mystery brilliantly, its ghostly feeling so realistic it made me jump at any slight sound I heard. Wargrave succeeded in creating an impossible mystery, for I was baffled throughout the entire story, with no clue at all about who the murderer was. A cleverly written book and idea, And Then There Were None is a novel that will be hard to forget.