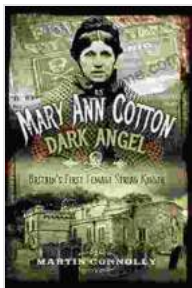
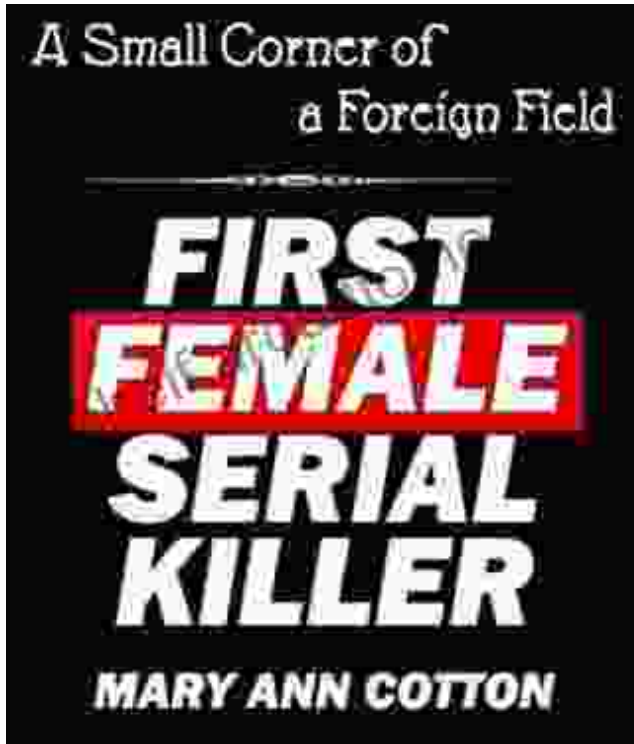


# Britain's First Female Serial Killer: The Story of Mary Ann Cotton



## Mary Ann Cotton: Dark Angel: Britain's First Female Serial Killer by Martin Connolly

★★★★☆ 4.3 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 8987 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 204 pages
Lending	: Enabled

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Mary Ann Cotton was born in 1832 in County Durham, England. She was the eldest of four children and her family was poor. Cotton's father was a miner and her mother was a dressmaker. Cotton's parents were both alcoholics and her childhood was marked by poverty and neglect.

Cotton left home at a young age and worked as a servant. She married her first husband, William Mowbray, in 1852. The couple had three children, but all three died in infancy. Mowbray died in 1855, and Cotton collected on his life insurance policy.

Cotton married her second husband, George Ward, in 1856. The couple had two children, but Ward died in 1860. Cotton collected on his life insurance policy and married her third husband, Frederick Cotton, in 1865. The couple had three children, but Frederick died in 1867 and Cotton collected on his life insurance policy.

By this time, Cotton's activities had aroused suspicion. She was arrested in 1871 and charged with the murder of her stepson, Charles Cotton. Cotton was convicted and sentenced to death. She was hanged at Durham Gaol on March 24, 1873.

Cotton's crimes shocked Victorian England. She was the first woman to be convicted of murder by poisoning in the country. Cotton's case is still studied today by criminologists and historians.

### **Cotton's Methods**

Cotton used arsenic to poison her victims. She would typically put the arsenic in their food or drink. Arsenic is a tasteless and odorless poison, so it was easy for Cotton to administer it without being detected.

Cotton's victims were often her husbands and children. She killed them so that she could collect on their life insurance policies. Cotton was able to collect on at least three life insurance policies, totaling over £1,000.

## **Cotton's Motives**

Cotton's motives for killing her victims are not fully understood. Some experts believe that she was motivated by greed, as she collected on at least three life insurance policies. Others believe that she was motivated by a desire for control, as she often killed her victims when they were sick or vulnerable.

## **Cotton's Legacy**

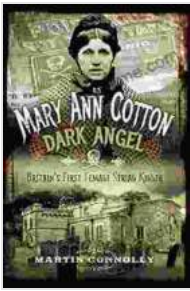
Cotton's crimes shocked Victorian England and made her one of the most notorious female criminals in history. Her case is still studied today by criminologists and historians.

Cotton's crimes have been the subject of several books, articles, and films. She has been portrayed as a monster, a victim, and a complex character who was both good and evil.

Cotton's legacy is a reminder of the dangers of greed and the importance of justice. Her crimes also show that even the most seemingly ordinary people can be capable of great evil.

## **Additional Resources**

\* Murderpedia: Mary Ann Cotton \* BBC News: The real story of Mary Ann Cotton, Britain's first female serial killer \* The Telegraph: Mary Ann Cotton: the Victorian serial killer who poisoned 21 people

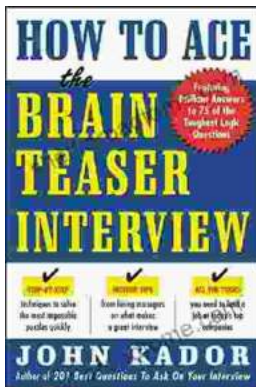


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