

When Francis Courdroy is found dead of arsenic poisoning , his political rival Will Ladislaw is immediately the prime suspect. Courdroy had tried to blackmail him, and incriminating papers were found at the scene of the crime. Even if Will is innocent, he seems to be the key to the mystery. Will himself is convinced that someone is trying to harm him. The problem is that the only person he can think of who had any reason to wish him ill died years ago.

*The Ladislaw Case* is a whodunnit as well as a gripping psychological drama involving the key characters of George Eliot's *Middlemarch*. Ghosts are raised and laid to rest as Will tries to clear his name with the aid of his old friend Dr Lydgate while both men struggle to escape the 'dead hand' of the past. In the end, they need the help of an expert on criminal and personal tangles: the now-retired Inspector Bucket, formerly of the Metropolitan Police Force (and Charles Dickens' *Bleak House*).

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