

Chapter 1 : All But Impossible | Talk Jesus

*Without you the job would have been all but impossible. We had all but given up hope.*

The Impossible Files of Dr. Sam Hawthorne by Edward D. Hoch Originally, I had planned to use this particular blog-post for either Christopher Bush , Bruce Campbell or Paul Doherty , but my previous read left me with a stronger-than-normal craving for impossible crime fiction and one serving was not going to satisfy it. Naturally, this brought to one of the most prolific locked room artisans of all-time, Edward D. During his long, storied career, Hoch wrote close to a thousand short stories and created a dozen, or so, series-characters such as Simon Ark , Ben Snow and Nick Velvet , but my personal favorite will always remain Dr. Sam Hawthorne – a small-town country physician often called upon to solve seemingly impossible crimes. Hawthorne practiced as a country doctor in the fictional New England town of Northmont, but this unassuming town has a higher murder-rate rivaling that of Cabot Cove and Midsomer County. And to complicate matters, all of the crimes are utterly bizarre and usually appear to be impossible nature! However, what makes this series amazing is not only the incredible volume of locked room and impossible crime scenarios, but also the sheer variety in original premises and solutions. Hoch was not just content with bodies found behind locked doors or in the middle of a field of unbroken snow or wet sand. He imagined such puzzling situations as a horse-and-buggy vanishing from within a covered bridge. Fresh corpses turning up in a long-buried coffins or metal time-capsules. A murderous tree with a penchant for strangling people or a cursed tepee that nobody emerges from alive. These are only a handful of examples of the miracle problems Dr. Hawthorne solved over the decades. Hawthorne stories and the most recent title in this series is All But Impossible: Further Problems of Dr. Sam Hawthorne , They recently had their first child, a boy, who they named after Dr. During the baptism service, the baby is inexplicably taken from its bassinet and replaced by "a curly-haired Shirley Temple doll" with a fifty thousand dollar ransom note stuck it. The trick used to switch the baby for the doll was not too bad, but almost immediately figured it out as it reminded me of another impossible situation, also set in a church, from a TV-series. So a fairly decent curtain-raiser for this fourth volume. So they used the anniversary as an opportunity to raise money. Lincoln Jones of Pilgrim Memorial went to high school with the trumpet player of the band, Bix Blake, but their reunion ends tragically when they fail to come out of a locked dressing room during the dance. The door is broken down and, upon entering, they find Dr. Jones kneeling next to the body of the trumpet player holding an empty, hypodermic needle in one hand – which had been "full of codeine. Jones claims Blake began to have trouble breathing and that there was no needle in the room when this happened. This is, admittedly, a fascinating impossible crime scenario with an uncommon murder weapon that makes the murder look even more impossible, but the experienced locked room mystery reader should have no problem piecing this puzzle together. And perhaps do so even quicker than Dr. James Phillimore – "who, stepping back into his own house to get his umbrella, was never more seen in this world. Hawthorne as the sole witness. Shortly thereafter, Philby reappears as if nothing has happened. However, Philby disappears a second time, on exactly the same spot, but this time its after shooting and killing a man. Hawthorne and Sheriff Lens watch him open the storm-door and vanish through a door that was locked and bolted from the inside! The explanation for this vanishing trick is a little bit workmanlike, but this fitted the character of the murderer like a glove and made for a fun take on the inverted detective story. The Leather Man is a remarkable character who really existed: Hoch used the lore of the man in tattered leather to pen one of the more memorable entries in this series. During the summer of , the ghost of the Leather Man returned to Northmont and appears to have been involved with a fatal automobile accident. Hawthorne becomes fascinated by the story and assumes "someone is retracing the old route" for "reasons of his own. Hawthorne begins to walk along with the man. Along the way, they come across several of Dr. On the following morning, Dr. All of the people, he had come across the previous day, swear they had not seen the Leather Man. Hawthorne had been walking by himself. An absolutely marvelous, first-class premise with not one, but three, separate explanations that form together one single solution. But, as you can see, that did not prevent me from enjoying this story. Hawthorne receives a twelve-year-old girl, Josephine

Grady, in his office who staying a week in Northmont with her aunt, Min Grady "who, according to the girl, is "sort of spooky" and her house has a ghost-room. A parlor that appears and disappears at random. Hawthorne and Sheriff Lens arrive, the body is lying in the hallway and the parlor, once more, is nowhere to be found. This is a truly excellent and original story with a cleverly constructed impossible crime trick. My only complaint is that the solution to this story has somewhat diminished my high opinion on another contemporary locked room novel, because the central idea from that novel obviously came from this short story. Not only the idea behind the locked room trick, but also the clue of the previous, long-dead resident of the house. Hoch originated the idea with this wonderful story. Hawthorne is invited to the clambake party of Ernest Holland, published of the Northmont Blade, who tells everyone to bring their bathing suits "because the pool is open. During the party, his brother, Philip Holland, miraculously emerges from an empty swimming pool and is challenged by Ernest to do the trick in reverse by diving into "the pool and disappear. Unfortunately, this is not a good story at all and pretty much cheats the reader, because the correct solution to the impossible appearance was suggested early on and rejected. Only to be brought back on stage as the correct solution with a minor addition used to explain the poisoning part. Hoch should have known better, because, if I remember correctly, Carr mocked a variation on this solution in *A Graveyard to Let* " which also involves an impossibility in a swimming-pool. After a night out, Jack and Becky Tober are driving home when they come across a roadhouse where they accidentally hit a man with their car. Or so it appears. At the hospital, they find that the dead man has a bullet wound in his head, but when they return to the scene of the crime, the roadhouse has disappeared. I think Aidan of *Mysteries Ahoy!* Vernon has an impossible problem for Dr. Hawthorne concerning one of his customers, Aaron DeVille. Three times, Vernon has left books DeVille had ordered in his mailbox and they simply disappeared. Sometimes, the books disappeared in less than a minute or two. Vernon placed a book in the mailbox and DeVille immediately stepped outside, to get it, only to discover an empty mailbox. Hawthorne decides to take this hungry mailbox to the test and personally delivers a copy of *War and Peace*, but when the package is opened, which contained a harmless book moments before, DeVille is blown to pieces by a bomb! A good premise and story-telling with an interesting solution. However, I have one tiny problem with the explanation: Still, all things considered, this was a good story. So I have a particular fondness for this story. Spring Glen Cemetery used to be more of a park than a graveyard, bisected by a creek, which sometimes overflowed and flooded the graveyard when the warmth of spring melted the winter snow on Cobble Mountain " slowly eroding the soil on the banks of the creek. This resulted in the lost of several acres of cemetery land. So many of the graves had to be cleared and reburied, but Dr. Hawthorne, who was to oversee the procedure, is soon confronted with another a baffling impossible crime. One of the recently unearthed coffins, buried for more than twenty years, turns out to contain the body of a recently murdered man. I liked it for more than one reason. More of an howdunit than an impossible crime. Only interesting aspect of the story is that Sheriff Lens is the one who solved the how-part of the crime. A role usually reserved for Dr. Hawthorne, but he gets to correctly identify the murderer. Proctor and Mildred Hall, two prominent citizens of Northmont, returned from a two month holiday in the Mediterranean region and brought back a stoneware jar from Cana where Jesus had performed the first miracle at the wedding feast " by turning water into wine. Shortly after the jar is given, Dr. Hawthorne is called by Perkins to tell him she drank from the jar and is feeling "terribly dizzy. Hawthorne breaks a window and, inside the home, finds the body of Perkins. An autopsy revealed she had been pregnant and died from cyanide poisoning, but the question is how the poison was introduced into the locked house. The answer to this question also reveals the identity of the murderer. So a pretty good, competently plotted locked room story and, had this story actually been written and published during the late s, the motive and murder method would probably have shocked some readers. Hawthorne is one a long overdue, well deserved holiday together with his nurse, Mary Best, and two friends, Winston and Ellen Vance. They make a stop at New Bedford to visit newly opened Herman Melville museum and there they learn of "a haunted terrace" that attracts lightening strikes during thunderstorms. Hawthorne experiences the paranormal quality of terrace first hand when he witnesses "a strange greenish light," which quickly vanishes, followed by the inexplicable disappearance of a man from the same terrace. The terrace was surrounded by walls or wet, unmarked brown soil. Somehow, a man had

vanished from this place in the blink of an eye! As said above, the solution to this miracle problem is as novel as it original. You can almost say it was cartoon-like, but really appreciated the originality of the trick. Only weakness is the unconvincing motive. Granted, motives have always been a particular weakness of this series. A spirited attempt that has to be appreciated.

Chapter 2 : All But Impossible: The Impossible Files of Dr. Sam Hawthorne by Edward D Hoch – Mystery

*Enforcement was all but impossible under these conditions. Aside from these few changes, the act reflected its predecessor and was the model on which all succeeding versions were erected. Giga-fren.*

The son was charged with felony possession of firearms and had planned to use a bomb. He had a long history of mental illness. So the father acted. They pose, so choreographed, like powdered and bewigged sophists playing at word games at Versailles. President Barack Obama talked about this phenomenon even as he engaged in it, saying that more federal gun control is needed. It is relevant to our common life together, to the body politic. But in Chicago, the killings are marginalized, as barbarians mow people down, with thousands shot in a town with strict gun laws, and the politicians do little if anything. There is no national conversation from Chicago. The national political stars stay away. And that leaves less money to pay for longer incarcerations for gun crimes, let alone any space to institutionalize the dangerously mentally ill. Oddly, the political left, which demands more federal gun control in the hope of protecting life, adamantly supports abortion. Over the past four decades or so, some 53 million abortions have taken place in the U. Whatever your position on abortion, whether you believe that which is taken is life or just tissue, there is a collective psychic cost to it all. Our most popular sport, football, is about ritualized, gladiatorial violence. Our most popular movies are called "action movies," but truly they should be called "kill movies" for all the corpses they produce, piles of them. Our humor is rhetorically violent. Our popular music just as violent. And we give our children phones at young ages so they may play, too. Is there a cost to all of this? Sometimes a tragedy like what happened in Oregon makes denial all but impossible. Comment by clicking [here](#).

**Chapter 3 : All But Impossible Â• Tour Dates and Concert Tickets | Thrillcall**

*ALL BUT IMPOSSIBLE is a hard rock band based out of Long Island, NY. Their high energy and captivating performances stand apart with huge four part vocal harmonies and a groove that gets every head moving.*

The Impossible Files of Dr. All But Impossible first came onto my radar when I read a very positive review of the collection from Puzzle Doctor who is a fan of these short stories which first appeared in Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine between and I was excited and immediately went ahead and added all four volumes onto my wish list but, being an idiot, I wrote them down in reverse order and only realized my mistake when I was two stories into this collection. I am happy to report though that I thoroughly enjoyed working my way through these stories. The various premises of the stories are varied and genuinely puzzling, almost all of them being impossible crimes or puzzles with an impossible element. There is no repetition between the stories here and many of the solutions are ingenious in their neatness and simplicity. What particularly impressed me though are the handful of stories that are not only cleverly plotted but which pack an additional punch with a final paragraph revelation that may stick with you. I would also add that the Kindle edition I read suffers from some issues with the formatting putting unexpected breaks in the middle of paragraphs which were initially quite distracting. Fortunately the quality of the stories here soon had me absorbed enough to overlook it but some may find this frustrating. If anyone has any recommendations beyond the Dr. Sam Hawthorne stories I would be glad to hear them! The Problem of the Country Church Dr. Hawthorne is invited to the christening of a child named in his honor. The party arrives at the church with the baby in a bassinet but when it comes time to carry out the service the baby is gone and in its place is a doll with a ransom note attached. I felt that this was a simple but clever story. The colleague is found knelt over the body with a hypodermic syringe in his hand containing the poison. An interesting little locked room puzzle where all the physical evidence seems to firmly point in one direction. Hawthorne follows a couple of minutes later there is no sign of him in the house and the owner says she did not see him come in. He turns up a while later but denies he ever went missing. Then he appears to do the same thing again while being chased by the Police. This is howdunit territory with a puzzle for the reader to consider. I appreciated the Holmesian reference within the story and appreciated the simplicity though I am not sure I ever visualized the space well enough to stand a chance of getting the solution here. The Problem of the Leather Man Dr. Hawthorne is called to the scene of an accident where a man is found dead in a ditch having apparently swerved to avoid hitting a pedestrian. The curious thing is that the pedestrian bears some similarity to a long-dead local figure called The Leather Man who continuously walked a circuitous route in the area towards the end of the nineteenth century. Hawthorne decides to try to track the man down but after spending a day with him he is shocked when everyone who saw them together swears he was alone. I thought that this was an entertaining and intriguing story and I appreciated the simple explanations for what had taken place, even if that leads to a slightly more convoluted set of circumstances. I also felt that one aspect of the solution incorporated a little more information than the reader actually is given though I would still say it plays fair. The Problem of the Phantom Parlor In this very solid story, a twelve-year-old girl who is staying with her aunt tells Dr. Hawthorne that the house she is staying in is haunted. He goes to investigate but soon finds himself asking other questions. I do think that the concept of the story is quite clever and the piece holds together pretty well. The Problem of the Poisoned Pool Dr. Later he is challenged to repeat the trick in reverse but a few minutes after jumping into the pool he is found dead in the water. There are two mysteries for the reader to solve â€” the question of how the brother managed his trick and who killed him and why. Both are interesting though I was particularly curious how the swimming pool trick was worked and appreciated the simple but clever solutions. The Problem of the Missing Roadhouse A couple are driving home from a night out a little the worse for wear when they stop at a Roadhouse. After talking with a man in the parking lot the driver begins backing up only to be told he has hit someone. They put the injured man in the back of the car but find he has died and drive to the hospital to report it. The problem is that the Police can find no evidence of the Roadhouse having ever existed. I found this story to feel awkward and unconvincing. The first miss in this collection for me. Hawthorne about how books he is placing in a

mailbox are inexplicably going missing, sometimes within minutes. He asks him to keep a watch on the mailbox the next time to see if he can come up with an explanation. This is a really powerful story that not only interests in terms of its impossibility but also in terms of some elements of the ending. A rich, rewarding and really impressive short story that only goes to show that any opinions I may once have expressed about short form crime fiction were totally wrong. The Problem of the Crowded Cemetery A meeting is called to discuss the problem of a cemetery lot that is getting flooded and a decision is taken to dig up and relocate some graves. The next day when the work commences Dr. Hawthorne notices that one of the coffins that is dug up has blood seeping out of the side. The coffin is opened and a member of that board who had been at the meeting the previous day is inside, even though the coffin was buried twenty years earlier. This is a solid story that does feature an intriguing impossibility to resolve. The explanation is quite simple and logical though it perhaps lacks the imagination that we see in some of the other stories but overall I found it to be quite satisfying. The Problem of the Enormous Owl A writer is found with his chest crushed and several owl feathers are located on his body. There is no obvious implement to hand to explain the injuries and Dr. Hawthorne notes that an owl would have to be enormous to be able to do that, seeming to rule out that explanation too. Unlike that story, here the explanation does not have a surprise factor but I think the execution of those final few paragraphs is superb and elevates one of the less remarkable crimes in the collection. The Problem of the Miraculous Jar Dr. Hawthorne attends a gathering where the host is gifted a jar from Cana by a couple who have just returned from a Mediterranean trip. She is persuaded to fill it with water to see if it will turn into wine and Sam is among those who taste its contents. After everyone leaves he receives a phone call from the host in which she begins to tell him there is something wrong. Finding her body, he detects a scent of poison lingering in the jar. Snow had fallen and was undisturbed around the house eliminating the possibility of a return visitor so how was the murder done? I thought that this was an interesting problem and appreciated how well the clues are laid to its resolution. If I were looking for a complaint I would say that there is a little material here that neither advances character or plot but otherwise this is very solid. While there they meet a man who lives in a house with a striking terrace designed by a stonemason who seems to resemble the doctor. They are talking with the man when he suddenly dashes onto the terrace and when the small party follows him moments later he has vanished without a trace. There are some interesting ideas here but I think there are some weaknesses too such as the motivation for what happens. I also think that the method is a little too complex to be workable though it is certainly a striking idea, if hinted at a little too directly at one point. The Problem of the Unfound Door A very slight story in which a group of Anglican nuns have petitioned the town council to allow them to provide housing for English schoolchildren who need to be evacuated. When things do not look favorable for their proposal, the nuns invite the council to inspect the facility for themselves. During the inspection however the mayor disappears without explanation. The way this problem was worked unfortunately struck me as very obvious and there is no unique point of interest in the story. Hawthorne short story in which a horse and buggy vanished while riding across a covered bridge. This adventure sees the town looking to commemorate that event with a recreation in which the mayor steers the buggy but the townspeople are shocked when he is shot while riding across the bridge at short-range with no one around him. Once again I liked some of the ideas here but feel that it is a little uneven. One of the clues in particular struck me as too weak to build a case around. Still, it is quite readable and engaging. The Problem of the Scarecrow Congress The new town mayor decides that it would be a neat idea if a contest were held in which thirteen scarecrows were decorated and displayed on lampposts throughout the town. Things take a nasty turn however when Sam notices one of the scarecrows is bleeding and, on removing the sacking that makes up the head exposes the corpse of one of the townspeople. The collection is closed out with an inventive story that certainly appeals to the imagination.

Chapter 4 : a curiosity question. is "all but impossible" correct? shouldnt it be "all but p | Hacker News

*The stories in "All but Impossible" are very good impossible crime puzzles, and readers who enjoy this type of mystery will probably love this book in particular as well as Hoch's writing in general.*

## Chapter 5 : All But | Definition of All But by Merriam-Webster

*Twenty short stories of "all but impossible" situations by some of the best writers of this genre. Along with masters like John Dickson Carr, Clayton Rawson, and Edward Hoch, are other authors writing from the golden age of detective fiction into the early s.*

## Chapter 6 : All But Impossible - New York Hard Rock

*All But Impossible has 27 ratings and 5 reviews. Silver Screen Videos said: If John Dickson Carr was the master of the locked room novel, then Edward D.*

## Chapter 7 : All But Impossible

*It was more than 35 years ago that A. W. Tozer said, "Modern civilization is so complex as to make the devotional life all but impossible." He penned that line long before e-mail, the Internet, channel TV, and the addition of other "time-saving" technologies began to rob us of so much of.*

## Chapter 8 : All But Impossible: The Impossible Files of Dr. Sam Hawthorne by Edward D. Hoch

*All But Impossible first came onto my radar when I read a very positive review of the collection from Puzzle Doctor who is a fan of these short stories which first appeared in Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine between and I was excited and immediately went ahead and added all four volumes onto my wish list but, being an idiot, I wrote.*

## Chapter 9 : all but impossible | WordReference Forums

*The original is "the miracles made it all but impossible for them to believe," which could be reworded as "it was almost impossible for them to believe, because of the miracles." That would translate to "era casi imposible que (lo) creyeran, a causa de los milagros."*