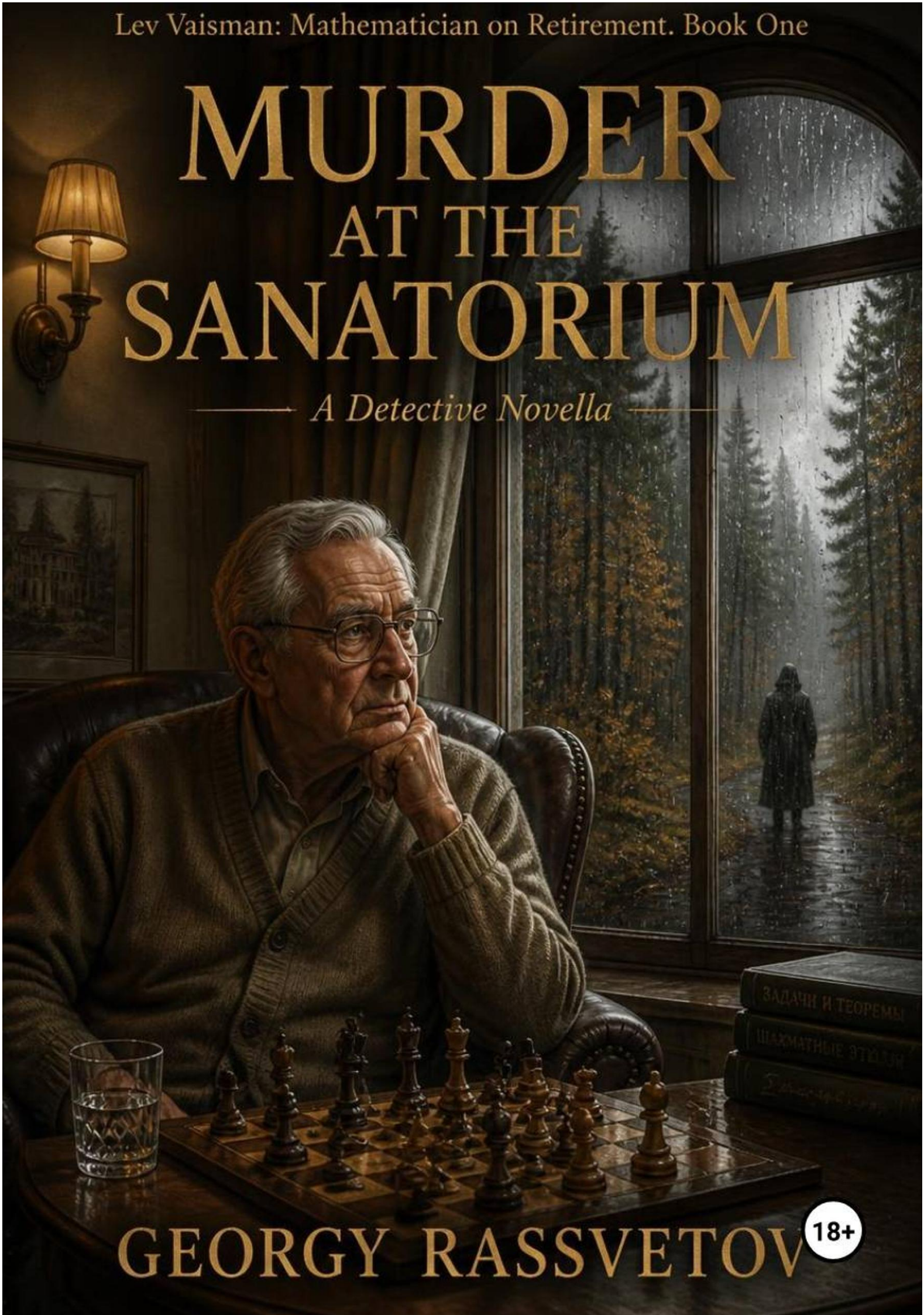
Lev Vaisman: Mathematician on Retirement. Book One

MURDER AT THE SANATORIUM

A Detective Novella



GEORGY RASSVETOV

18+

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Murder at the Sanatorium

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Lev Vaisman is a mathematician on retirement. He is used to solving problems with precision and logic, but when a famous detective novelist dies under strange circumstances at a sanatorium near Moscow, Lev Borisovich realizes: this is not a heart attack. The sanatorium is cut off from the world, there is no connection, and the murderer is among the vacationers. The mathematician has at his disposal only his sharp mind, his habit of noticing trifles, and a few days before the police arrive. He begins his own investigation. Why is the glass of water standing on the right if the deceased was left-handed? Where did twenty tablets disappear to from the bottle of heart medication? Who benefits from the death of the scandalous writer? Each of the guests has a motive, but only one is the exact solution to this puzzle. A classic detective story, where clues, characters, and logic intertwine into a gripping story about how even in retirement, intellect remains the most formidable weapon.

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Murder at the Sanatorium

Prologue

Autumn came early this year. Already in mid-September the wind was tearing yellowed leaves from the trees and throwing them onto the wet asphalt of the city streets. Lev Borisovich Vaisman stood by the window of his Moscow apartment on the seventh floor and watched as the janitor swept the leaves into piles. Rain drummed against the glass, blurring the outlines of the buildings on the opposite side. Lev Borisovich sighed and returned to the table, where a chess problem was laid out.

He was sixty-eight years old. For forty of them he had worked at the Department of Applied Mathematics at the university, given lectures, written articles, supervised graduate students. Two years ago he had retired. His wife had died five years ago, his daughter had married and lived in St. Petersburg, visiting once a month. Lev Borisovich did not complain about loneliness—he had always loved silence and order. In his apartment every thing was in its place, books on the shelves stood in alphabetical order, and in his notebooks, in neat handwriting, were recorded the solutions to all the puzzles that came his way in magazines.

But lately he had begun to notice that he was short of air. Literally: the doctor had said he needed a change of climate, to air out his lungs, and best of all—to go to a sanatorium and breathe the pine air. Lev Borisovich winced at the word "sanatorium": he did not like group vacations, noisy company, or mandatory treatments. However, his daughter had insisted, bought a voucher to a sanatorium near Moscow, and even helped him pack his suitcase.

"Papa, it's only for two weeks. You'll rest, breathe, meet people," she said on the phone.

"I don't want to meet people," grumbled Lev Borisovich. "I have books and chess."

"That's perfect, you'll play chess with other pensioners."

He did not argue. After all, his daughter wished him well, and it was useless to contradict her. And so tomorrow morning he was to board a commuter train and go to this sanatorium. Lev Borisovich looked at the suitcase standing in the hallway and sighed again. To distract himself, he opened his notebook and began to solve a new problem: white to move and mate in three. It calmed him.

Outside the window the rain was noisy. Lev Borisovich poured himself some tea, sat down in the armchair, and immersed himself in the world of chess pieces. He did not know that very soon he would have to solve a problem far more complex than any chess study, and that his mathematical mind would confront a mystery where the stakes were human life.

Chapter 1. The Sanatorium

The commuter train rocked steadily over the joints of the rails. Lev Borisovich sat by the window and watched as dacha settlements, small forests, and fields floated past the glass. The sky was gray, but the rain had stopped for a while. The carriage was sparsely populated: a few dacha dwellers with baskets, a young mother with a child, two men in tracksuits. Lev Borisovich took a book out of his briefcase—an old Agatha Christie detective novel in English, which he had taken to reread. He had loved English since university and believed that reading in the original kept the brain in tone.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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