



The Influence

Ramsey Campbell

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Sometimes evil refuses to die.

Rowan's great-aunt Queenie is dead. After all the misery she caused her family while she was alive, most of them are secretly relieved. But Queenie did not want to die, and she will do anything to live again...including possessing young Rowan. She haunts the child's nightmares, taking her over bit by chilling bit. As her soul is drawn inexorably into a cold darkness, can Rowan hope to reclaim her life from the evil dead?

The Influence Details

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Author : Ramsey Campbell

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From Reader Review The Influence for online ebook

Magda Tatiana says

Me considero una neófita en prácticamente todos los géneros de literatura, me hace falta muchísimo por conocer y explorar. Ramsey Campbell para mí es parte de la exploración, más concretamente del género de terror – horror. Siento que este libro fue una buena aproximación al género, y es que creo que, en estos tiempos modernos y post modernos, lo más difícil es asustar y hacer reír. El miedo que produce Ramsey Campbell no es del tipo que te va a catapultar el corazón del pecho, es un miedo construido lentamente desde la zozobra, pero al mismo tiempo se combina con la sobriedad y el sosiego en la narración.

Campbell recurre a los temores cotidianos, no al monstruo que espera en la oscuridad, y es por esto que su efecto es diferente sobre el lector. En influencia, se parte de dos opuestos, el final de la vida y el inicio de esta, los personajes principales son la tía - abuela Queenie y la niña Rowan, que ejemplifican el inicio y el fin del ciclo de la vida.

Ramsey crea una atmosfera de añoranza y abandono, en esta dinámica nos expone al olvido, porque Queenie encarna estos sentimientos y se vale de Rowan para hacerlos explícitos, Queenie no quiere morir, no quiere estar sola, pero más allá de la soledad no quiere ser olvidada, es egocéntrica y egoísta. Rowan por otro lado, es una niña dulce e inocente que apenas está empezando a vivir y que no comprende el mundo de los adultos, sus pesares o sus angustias.

Presentando el enlace de la anciana con la niña, Campbell nos lleva por los derroteros de la angustia a desaparecer, por la necesidad de preservar la identidad y no querer mirar al vacío. Campbell no suscita miedo, pero evoca la angustia de ese ser indefenso que fuimos de niños y la angustia ahora de adultos al pensar en nuestra futura vejez. Si bien, no hay una lucha evidente entre el bien y el mal, el autor si nos da esperanza, pues al menos la mezquindad puede ser derrotada.

Kevin Lucia says

EXCELLENT. One of the smartest things Samhain has done is re-release Ramsey Campbell's backlist. Easily one of Campbell's best - emotional, horrifying - quietly - and satisfying resolution at the end. The best thing about Campbell's work is this: subtract the supernatural element, and you still have moving, tense emotional dramas. Just very, very good.

Jonathan Oliver says

This is my third time round with *The Influence* and it remains one of my favourite horror novels. I first read this when I was doing my A-levels and it hadn't been long since I'd discovered Campbell's work. I also read it for my BA dissertation on modern horror.

The theme of possession is sensitively and intelligently handled. This, at its heart, is about the mistakes of adulthood being visited on the next generation and though it is overtly supernatural, this isn't a simple spook story. It is a story with heart, and all the more scary and effective for that. Classic Campbell.

Toni says

This is indeed a horror story, of a will making itself stronger than death. It also draws on that fear in all of us of losing our identities, of being swallowed up by some unknown terror which replaces us so we're no longer recognizable by friends and family, becoming a stranger to those we love. It can also be seen as a metaphor for the transitions experienced in childhood, when a child grows and becomes more aware of himself in relation to the outside world, and becomes an individual no longer relying on merely his parents, when he can be influenced by the wrong elements.

Whichever interpretation you choose, it's another highly entertaining, if slightly disturbing Ramsey Campbell novel.

This novel is owned by the reviewer and no remuneration was involved in the writing of this review.

Ignacio Senao f says

Todo los clichés aquí

Típica película de "terror-misterio" de después de comer en antena 3. Una narración ágil, pero con un tema muy machacado y sin nada de terror.

Everly says

Wow! I read this in one night. A spooky page-turner ghost story starring a creepy old lady & an 8 year old kid. Wait for the amazing chase sequence through the abandoned train.

Dreadlocksmile says

First published back in 1988, Campbell's psychological horror 'The Influence' delves into the world of the spirit and the afterlife. He quickly sets the situation of the book down, with the introduction of the very close-knit Faraday family, then slowly builds the tension as the story unfolds. Campbell's characterization of the family is superb, making the characters believable and their personalities involved. The character of Rowan in particular is easily liked and draws upon your emotions as she discovers the true secret to her new friend Vicky.

The novel is written with a changing perspective from chapter to chapter. Campbell shifts back and forth in time between the characters, allowing a situation to happen with one character, then the next chapter would

shift backwards and replay the events of the previous chapter through the eyes of someone else. This well-established technique can work well if done in the right manner with the right novel, but often (as in this case), can become tedious and frustrating.

The book is slow-paced and never really grips you with the plot. Campbell does manage to build up some tension and an underlying suspense after a while, but this somehow doesn't seem to get the reader any more involved with the book. The novel's principal idea that the last dream you have will last an eternity, as this is all there is left once death takes you, is an interesting and thought-provoking notion.

I wouldn't say that the novel is a particularly bad one, but compared with other such novels of a similar theme available, this one seems to fall short a little. A Campbell fan will enjoy this book, but I wouldn't suggest it as an introduction to his work.

The book was originally meant to be fully illustrated with J.K. Potter's dark and twisted use of photography creating the illustrations. Back in 1987, Potter even came to England to live with the Campbells and shoot photos of Ramsey's then ten-year-old daughter. The photos were shot in all the locations where the novel takes place, and are available in Potter's photographic retrospective 'Horripilations'.

Nate D says

This is great. Remember all those horrible/wonderful 80s horror paperbacks? The ones with the puffy text and the die-cut covers that open to reveal a flyleaf scene like this:

Savvy friends have been telling me to read Ramsey Campbell, as one of the best examples of of this sort of thing, for years and they were entirely correct. This is pretty faultless vacation reading (literally picked up on vacation from the wonderful Green Hand Books in Portland Maine, in this edition, to the sound of the clerk sucking in her breath and saying "oooh, he's so creepy", and then read entirely on the car/train trip home. My annoyances with horror writing (enumerated in greater depth elsewhere against the lure of dread-inducing atmosphere and the freedoms of non-realist plotting) are that so much falls into predictable tropes, isn't scary, and overplays its hand into self-defeating ridiculousness. Despite the obviously ridiculous plot (malevolent dead aunt has designs on her grand-niece), and general lack of actual scariness, this does just ooze atmosphere all across the western-middle coast of England and Wales with a fantastic sense of eerie place, and one long unerringly dreamlike travel sequence that accomplishes exactly what I might ever hope it would. In the lead-up, a familiar (dangerously predictable) pattern is established, but by halfway the book has secretly jumped tracks from anything I could anticipate to its great enhancement. Campbell also moves between his family of cast members quite fluidly and manages to write a convincing enough mother-daughter story at the heart of this, while fleshing out the subtext with a study of toxic classism. The overriding goal here is clearly to entertain above all else, so Campbell never digs too deep, but it's not an empty exercise either. So I'm very pleasantly surprised and will definitely be seeking more dazzlingly die-cut Campbell artifacts whenever such should fall into my hands (which may not be often enough -- other readers have clearly caught on well before me, because I never see his novels second hand.)

Andy says

When it comes to Ramsey Campbell, I don't read many reviews of his novels anymore, I just pick one based on whether I think the plot sounds interesting and read it.

I've read enough of his books to know I always enjoy them, even when I don't think they're masterpieces. And I've read enough reviews to know some people like him and some never will. I do, and it seems every six months or so I get an itch to read another of his books.

Unfortunately out of the seven novels I've read by him I'd have to put this one in the bottom two or three. I didn't feel it delivered all the creepy glimpses of suggestive horror Campbell is known for in his best work. There were certainly moments where it came through, but they were a bit scarce and often felt milder and less memorable. Also the end felt a bit "tacked on." This isn't a first novel I would suggest to a newcomer, mostly because I didn't think it represented his style at it's best.

In brief, the novel follows the story of Alison, her husband Derek and their daughter Rowan who move into the house of Alison's dead aunt Queenie who starts to take possession of Rowan.

It's a bit slow for the first half, but once it gets going about half through we start to get a lot of cliff-hanger chapter endings. A chapter will end with one character and the next picks up with another. The various storylines separate and intersect again, building tension skillfully. One thing I thought was effectively handled was how the rules we expect the evil force in the book to be bound by are at one point thrown out the window. It's at this point that we get a very well-handled, disorientating chapter where anything seems possible, and that introduces the possession which fully takes hold in the following chapters.

This novel feels different for Campbell. For one thing it has a more traditional ghost story/haunted house feel, and less of a weird fiction vibe. This novel also eschews the urban grit Campbell's early work is known for and has an almost semi-rural, seaside flavor.

Oddly, this book was written between what are probably my two favorite novels of his "Ancient Images" and "The Hungry Moon," books I enjoyed so much I'd like to re-read them. Unfortunately this one didn't impress me nearly as much.

Charles Dee Mitchell says

I'm done. I have now abandoned the second of the five Ramsey Campbell novels I read -- or didn't read as the case may be.

Lured in by the fact that the Oxford Companion to English Literature refers to him as "the most respected living horror writer," I gave him my best shot. Perhaps the stories neither age nor travel well.

This time out, the scary great aunt dies and attempts to take over the soul of her young grandniece. If this had been a made-for-tv movie now making the rounds of Chiller Network, I would have watched it assuming I had it on saved on the DVR and could fast forward the commercials. But as I book, I quit half way through.

Perhaps purchasing and reading this 1989 Tor paperback was a form or ritual humiliation. It sports exactly

the kind of packaging I snorted at in derision for years in the used book trade. The black cover has an embossed silver mansion and embossed silver title outlined in gold and uses a font that once advertised all night horror films at the drive-in. The cover is die-cut, and a spooky little girl looks out the attic window. Open the front flap and the that same spooky girl stands in in a big spooky hand with long fingernails. I'll go ahead and make those "long, spooky fingernails." This clearly comes from a period in publishing when looking as much like a V.C. Andrews' novel as possible was a wise commercial choice. A year or so ago, a fairly convincing article in *The Believer* suggested it is was time to re-evaluate V.C. Andrews. I am going to let some one else take the bullet on that one.

Shawn Leslie Dixon says

Sometimes I am impatient and think ahead to how such a small book could get up to slow little for so long and then BAM! In typical Ramsey Campbell style, the action kicks in and becomes an unrelenting force all they through to the last few pages.

A real thriller and page-turner after the book sufficiently lulls you into a curious reading half-stupor. The final forty pages come with a crash to awake your senses and reveal the purpose to the earlier pacing. A good time.

andy?? says

Loved it! The Centipede edition - nominated by the publisher in one interview as perhaps their most beautiful book - is really lovely. J.K. Potter is a genius :-)

Coos Burton says

Me pasó con Chuck Palahniuk, y me pasó ahora con Ramsey Campbell: en el primer intento capturaron mi corazón por completo. Pero con Ramsey fue aún más fuerte el asunto, simplemente quería saber qué pasaba en cada capítulo que finalizaba. A pesar de haberme tomado mi tiempo para leerlo, lo disfruté al máximo y sin duda es de los mejores libros de terror que he leído, al menos en este 2015. La prosa del autor es directa y no va con vueltas, lo que me lleva a recomendarles a todos los ansiosos del horror que no lo piensen dos veces y lean éste libro. Es una trama truculenta y cargada de un ambiente sombrío como ninguno. Puede que resulte algo "predecible" en ocasiones, puesto que ya estamos acostumbrados a escuchar y leer miles de historias de fantasmas, pero no deja de ser una potente narración que dejará a más de uno con los pelos erizados.

Rebecca McNutt says

I loved this book, it was so vividly detailed and incredibly creepy! It played out much like an old 1970's TV movie and has everything from possessed kids to witch-like old ladies to beautiful descriptions of the English seaside. If you like mystery and horror books, *The Influence* is definitely one you've got to check out!

Dorothy Weigand says

I rated this 3/5 because the huge plot point was glossed over in a way that I found incredibly aggravating. He went through all that work to lead up to it, and then basically skipped over it as though it weren't important at all to the story. Seriously?

My other grievance is the fact that Rowan's father doesn't seem to notice that there's something off with his daughter. He thinks she's just in shock when it should have worn off. Her mother and grandmother realize something is wrong, but he can't see it? It makes me wonder about what sort of other things he would have missed entirely in the growth of his daughter.

I'm very "meh" about this book. I'm not likely to read it again, but I'm also not likely to get rid of it. I do like the cover art.
