



Strange Sight

Syd Moore

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The La Fleur restaurant has a slew of unusual phenomena. Bonnet-clad apparitions pass through walls, blood leaks from ceilings and rats besiege the dining room. Experts from the Great Essex Witch Museum are called in to quell these strange sights. But before Rosie Strange and Sam Stone can do their thing events turn darker. For La Fleur's chef has been strung up and slaughtered like a pig. More oddly, he only witness, the owner's daughter Mary, swears blind a ghost did it.

Rosie and Sam must find out what's happening before Mary takes the fall. But intuitions and tip-offs lead them stumbling into the dark waters of the past, exposing secrets of a wider conspiracy, as well as secrets all Rosie's own. With strange chills Rosie and Sam learn that seeing isn't always believing, while thoughts of truth may be just as illusory.

Strange Sight Details

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Author : Syd Moore

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From Reader Review Strange Sight for online ebook

Chazzi says

Looks like I will be adding Syd Moore to my list of authors to read.

Rosie Strange has inherited the Essex Witch Museum from her grandfather, Septimus Strange, who established it to preserve the history of the witches in Essex. Sam Stone, the curator, is also part of the deal and Rosie finds him to be a bit interesting...in a possible romantic way.

Rosie has a day job, and figures to maybe just sell the place, but there is something that keeps her drawn to it. She finds there is more than just a building and land...something more.

This is the second book of the set and in this one, Rosie and Sam are asked to investigate the ghost sightings and strange happenings that are going on at La Fleur restaurant. Ghostbusting turns into investigating a murder when La Fleur's chef is found strung up and brutally murdered in the basement of the building. The method of murder and the way it is found have eerie resemblances to events that happened in the Victorian era.

Are there spirits that are causing sightings and upset because of the evilness that was so prevalent in the past? Or is all this upheaval from human doings in an effort to cause La Fleur to fail? And why is any of it happening?

Even though Rosie and Sam are hired by the restaurant owner to solve the reasons behind the paranormal activity, the two find that the actual murder needs to be solved too. They feel that there is a connection between the two.

Along with the mystery there is some hesitant flirtation that goes on between the two. Neither will commit or acknowledge that there could be a relationship in the brewing. Rosie is a self-sufficient woman and Sam is a nice looking, bit nerdy academic. Not exactly the perfect match, but who knows.

The pace is steady and pulls you along. There seems to be a good amount of information to sort through to try and solve the mystery, yet not hand it to you on a silver platter.

Kathy Dolan says

Great fun, wonderful storytelling with an ability to turn from light to sending shivers down your spine (just a little). And three cheers for the Author's Note. (I've never written that in a review before.)

Vanessa Wild says

Another fun read from Syd Moore. This is the second in the Essex Witch Museum mystery series. A chef is found brutally murdered in a London restaurant where there have been some odd ghostly sightings. Rosie

Strange and Sam Stone have been asked to investigate by the owner.

Although this is mostly a light hearted and amusing story, it is also definitely quite dark in places, beginning with a particularly nasty killing. I thought the plot was an intriguing and nicely paced one. I liked that the ghost is actually based on a person who did exist. The ‘will they won’t they’ romance between Rosie and Sam continues. I have to say that Rosie comes across a little like a lovelorn teenager, she still grated on me, and I’m starting to feel sorry for Sam. It will be interesting to read how the relationship develops in future books. It’s a murder mystery with a difference, containing some spookiness and sinister goings on but told in a jaunty and lively way.

An entertaining and enjoyable tale to be read in the spirit in which it is written. No pun intended! Things are not always what they seem. ?

Leonie says

Well, it was definitely better than the first one - mainly because there was a little less driving across the country and a bit more real interaction between the main characters. I enjoyed the story more as well, though the determination of Rosie to be a nonbeliever pushed the bounds of my determination to read - as did her pathetic dislike of any woman she perceives as more attractive than herself. I will look out for the third in the series, particularly because I am now interested in her family history, and particularly in the background of Sam Stone.

Tasya Dita says

DNF at 14%

I know it's early, but the main character Rosie is just annoying. She constantly mentioning how gorgeous Sam is, what kind of clothes she's wearing, and shaming other women. It's also too descriptive that it become info dumpy. Not for me.

I received this book from Netgalley in exchange for honest review

Sue Ross says

3.5 stars.

This is certainly an interesting story. I hadn't read Book One in this series so the main characters, Sam and Rosie, were new to me. I found the book entertaining and quite funny at times. Sam is an enigma - a gentleman, a geek, shy but still an admirer of the female form. Rosie, well what can I say?! She obviously cares about her family. But she hides all other emotions behind a cloak of dry wit, sarcasm and scathing remarks. The exchanges between him and Rosie are usually awkward and sometimes amusing. The plot played along nicely as the two of them somehow managed to work together. I was just in the mood for this kind of read.

nikkia neil says

Thanks Edelweiss for this ARC.

Loved this second Witch Museum book. Can't wait to see what new adventure comes next. Great combination of history, mystery, and sass

Sarah says

Thank you to the publishers and net galley for the advanced copy in return for an honest review.

This book follows on from the events of the first book in the series, which I would recommend reading before starting this book.

The series focuses on Rosie Strange and Sam Stone. Rosie has inherited the Essex Witch Museum from her estranged Grandfather, and, as in the first book, it seems that there are secrets to uncover relating to her family and the museum.

The pair are employed by Ray Boundersby to investigate the reported haunting at his restaurant and the violent death of one of his employees that the police are pinning on his daughter Mary. Once again the author has researched a real life villain from the past and weaved her life into the story.

There are unexplained spooky happenings and some genuinely vile characters encountered as the story progresses. The frisson between Rosie and Sam is great and their relationship slowly develops. They work well together and Rosie's slightly annoying habits are tempered by Sam and vice versa.

A really enjoyable quick read, perfect for this time of year and I'll be waiting for the next book in the series.

Susan Angela Wallace says

Strange sight by syd moore.

The La Fleur restaurant has a slew of unusual phenomena. Bonnet-clad apparitions pass through walls, blood leaks from ceilings and rats besiege the dining room. Experts from the Great Essex Witch Museum are called in to quell these strange sights. But before Rosie Strange and Sam Stone can do their thing evk did it.

A absolutely fantastic read. Love rosie and Sam.. I was unsure on mary. I didn't trust her. I do hope there is more to come. 5*. Tbc on fb.

Joseph says

“Strange Sight” is the second instalment in Syd Moore’s projected “Essex Witch Museum” trilogy. I hadn’t read the first novel in the series (Strange Magic), but this did not detract from my enjoyment of this book,

not least because as we go along the author deftly fills us newbies in with the facts we need to know. The back story can be briefly summed up. Rosie Strange unexpectedly inherits a “witch museum” set up by her grandfather Septimus, whom she hardly knew. Rosie is a down-to-earth, thirty-something “Essex girl” and scepticism runs in her blood (she’s a benefits fraud inspector, so one would hardly expect otherwise). She is bent on a quick sale of the museum, but finds herself oddly attracted to it. And to its resident curator, Sam Stone. She soon also becomes embroiled in enquiries of an otherworldly bent. In the case of “Strange Sight”, Strange and Stone are called to investigate ghostly manifestations in a high-end London restaurant, only to discover that the chef has been killed in what seems to be a ritual murder. The ghostbusters turn sleuths as they try to crack the link between this terrible crime and the ongoing hauntings.

Of course, crime and supernatural genres have been combined before. One thinks of William Hope Hodgson’s Carnacki series or, closer to us, John Connolly’s Charlie Parker novels. What I liked about Moore is that the supernatural aspect does not drown out the “crime novel” elements. Indeed, the mystery is well-plotted, satisfactorily concluded and could stand its ground even without the otherworldly baggage. The ghostly sub-plots however add an element of frisson and there are hints that there is an overarching mystery directly involving Rosie Strange which will only be unravelled in the final book. What makes this novel a success is the endearing investigative duo, and especially the funny, charismatic Rosie, who doubles as narrator. Part Mulder and Scully, part Holmes and Watson, with some Bridget Jones thrown into the mix, it is the unlikely chemistry between the two which drives this book. That and the witty dialogue.

This is an entertaining novel, a perfect read for summer (or make that a spooky autumn afternoon), and one which I wouldn’t mind seeing adapted for the screen.

An electronic copy of this novel was provided through NetGalley in return for an honest review

Sheila Howes says

I received this copy from the publishers in exchange for an honest review

I found this book rather hard to get into, but was glad I kept going - for me it took too long to start. I enjoyed the murder mystery aspect, and that while the paranormal seemed to be involved most was explained.

I didn't particularly like the main character, Rosie. I found her a bit much - however all the other characters were well written.

Whilst this is Book 2 in the Essex Witches, it can definitely be read as a standalone.

Eve K says

I'm sorry but I hated this book.

Characters -- The protagonist, Rosie, is completely insufferable. She's disrespectful, ungrateful, overly familiar, not funny and with low intelligence, which seemed intentional so she'd be more relatable to the readers. Her opinions were so disagreeable to me that I hated reading from her point of view and found it a shame the book was written in first person.

Rosie several times called police and wrongly informed them of a bomb, just to get them to turn up quicker and barely got reprimanded over it, let alone fired from her job or arrested. She gets deliberately offended by things that aren't offensive, picks fights for no reason, hates females just because her love interest shows them attention and at the same time entertains the idea of a relationship with someone else. And I'm supposed to take this woman-child seriously. I out loud said to the narrator '*Shut up,*' at least once every single page. That's how much she got on my nerves.

The secondary male character, Sam, was described to be in his early-mid 30's, physically appeared as a Jonas brother and spoke like an eighteenth century English professor. So it's pretty obvious how little I was invested in him. Here's a quote from Sam who is talking casually to his friend:

"It still flourishes where it can. A strange dirty nick in the human character, unchanged by either evolution or prosperity. One can only wonder why that is. But such questions we may put aside for now. We have a case to hand, to which this is of great and pressing relevance." – Again, this is a man in his early-mid 30's, in 2017, who is talking casually to his friend.

I forgot the names of most of the minor characters and couldn't be bothered to keep going back to remind myself but none of them had any personality or distinguishing features so I wasn't missing much. Half of the characters could have been removed from the book without impact to the plot, they were clearly only there to pad it out. The only characters who stood out, did so because they were caricatures.

Plot -- The plot was slow, very basic, simplistic and yet not at all believable. I can't go into spoiler territory and explain why but I can say that it included a half-assed love triangle, a main plot that was resolved in a ridiculous and convenient manner and 2 sub-plots that were started, not developed since they started and then left wide open at the end of the book. The one tiny plot twist was glaringly obvious when it was being set up.

The filler was the most infuriating part about the book. If the filler was removed, there would have been more than enough room for both sub-plots to be developed and concluded but instead I was forced to read endless pointless rubbish like:

'I heard him tut and imagined him shaking his head.'

"You were snoring," said a voice opposite. It was Charlie, my junior; who was a few years older than me. He wanted my job. "Loudly," he sniggered and smoothed his tie down over his shirt. It was navy with little anchors on it. His wife had bought it for him. She thought it was jaunty. It wasn't jaunty. It was stupid.' – Needless to say, Charlie and his wife are completely irrelevant to the story and neither are mentioned ever again. Why was I subjected to reading about his tie and his wife's opinion on said tie? Why?

'I'd met Doctor Roberts several times before and she had always come across as a very erudite and helpful ophthalmic consultant. She was a bit older than me and had what I thought of as a very self-possessed chin.' – Again, this woman bears almost no relevance to the plot and is never heard from again. Why therefore, do I need to know she's a bit older than the protagonist and has a self-possessed chin, whatever the Hell that means?

'I should check what I'd written down as Mary's description. "Can you pass over my notebook please, Sam? I want to have a look at something." It was on the coffee table next to my dirty plate. I flipped through the pages.' – Should have been edited to: **'I flipped through the pages of my notebook to check what I'd written as Mary's description.'** The notebook being on the coffee table isn't relevant. Neither is the dirty plate. Neither is the fact Sam handed Rosie the notebook. I'm not being picky, this is one passage out of

MANY that are just as pointless.

The filler gets even worse with nonsensical purple prose like this thrown in:

'A kaleidoscope of feelings seemed to flicker across his face but I couldn't tell what they were. The base note of it all was a sadness that radiated out of his body. I had felt it before, but couldn't discern detail or understand where it came from. The texture was singular and unique.' – Oh. I thought this wasn't pretentious literary fiction but a mystery thriller.

From roughly halfway through the book, I skimmed everything that wasn't dialogue just to stop my eyes rolling out of my head.

To replace the plot, there are regular massive info-dumps, some told as introspect by the narrator, but most told in dialogue by Sam who orates essays of intricately detailed exposition like he's reading it straight from a book or newspaper, not as if he's remembering it off the top of his head, as the reader is supposed to believe. This kind of unrealistic dialogue took me out of the story and made me laugh quite often.

Conflict -- I could not discern any real conflict.

Pacing -- The book started with a prologue and then a long and boring description of the interior décor of a building in the first chapter, which has no impact on the story at all. The book takes a long time to pick up pace and barely ever does, after the interesting prologue. There's no suspense built because of the stupid, sarcastic asides by the increasingly irritating narrator which ruins any tension that might have been built otherwise. By the time anything potentially interesting starts to happen, it feels like it just came out of nowhere with no build up, so I can't invest any concern for the outcome and the scene is wasted.

Writing -- There were quite a few words missing or repeated in sentences. There are many overly long sentences packed with filler, useless information and annoying and pointless introspect. I don't know if the book was professionally edited but there were a lot of spelling and grammatical errors. Aside from the spelling and grammatical errors, the writing was just bad:

'I darted a glance at the bar and noted that MT was watching us. But then Agatha came in with a bunch of clean glasses and said something and she turned round to speak to her.'

'As he got closer I was unable to contain myself and the words "Oh my god oh my god oh my god" tumbled out of my mouth.'

'He told me to take a chair, braying like a donkey.'

"He won't be long now, Ms Strange, I'm sure," she bleated apologetically.'

And this complete nonsense: *"Hello?" It was Sam. "Rosie, can you meet me at La Fleur in 30 minutes, I've got some important news."* ...Then, 30 minutes later at La Fleur, Sam's first words are... *"I don't want to talk here, it's not safe. Let's go to the pub down the road."*

Narration -- The introspective language was overly simplistic, almost 'oo-er, matron' which turned the book from a thriller into bad chick-lit. The narration was incredibly condescending and spoke down to me to an insulting degree. An example of this is the quote directed at the reader:

'Though I'm sure this is all a bit much to take on board. It was for me. So I'll go back to the part where we were walking through the museum.'

On the same subject, the narrator broke the fourth wall multiple times to talk to the reader which took me out of the story and slowed down the already slow plot.

I wanted to **DNF** this book so many times and I would have, had I not been sent it for free on netgalley in exchange for an honest review. Thank you to netgalley and the publisher.

Sarah Hodge says

I loved the first book "Strange Magic" and this one did not disappoint! From the opening pages the book pulls you in and keeps you gripped until the end, an amalgamation of Murder, Mystery and Magic, what more could you want. The relationship between Rose and Sam is one that you want to see develop and Syd Moore gives enough to keep you hoping in the "will they, won't they" conundrum. I love the back-story of Rose's relations that is also slowly developing and can't wait to find out more about this. An enthralling, fascinating and compelling read.

Emma says

I had oodles of fun reading this, 'Strange Sight' is entertaining and for the most part, light hearted. Rosie Strange and Sam Stone are hired to look into some mysterious activity which has turned into murder at a London restaurant, La Fleur. These two don't really know what their doing, if they are honest with themselves. Most of their paranormal investigations are based on guess work and luck, but that's what makes this book so endearing. This is book two in the Essex Witch Museum series, I haven't read book one, but this book can happily be read on its own. Although I will be reading book one, if only to see the beginnings of Rosie and Sam's partnership.

Strange and Stone make a good team – thrown together in unusual circumstances when Rosie's grandfather leaves her the Essex Witch Museum. Alongside the museum, she also 'inherits' Sam a 'PhD student-cum-curator/manager'. These two could not be more different from each other. Sam is bookish, full of weird and wonderful knowledge on the history of witches and Rosie is outgoing, trendy and confident. However, like all bizarre pairings this one works and it was my favourite element of the story.

Syd Moore has blended crime, history and ghost story perfectly. I love a book that melds genres together and 'Strange Sight' certainly ticks that box. There are some moments that really gave me a shiver and there are some moments that are criminally dark. The addition of all the historical tales and facts made this book a winner for me. I particularly enjoyed the séance denouement – it reminded me of something from Murder, She Wrote or Agatha Christie. An elaborate way of getting the guilty party to admit to his or her crimes – fantastic.

Entertaining, witty and full of great characters.

David Harris says

'm grateful to the publisher for an advance copy of this book.

This is the second in Syd's new series about "witches, magic and Essex Girls".

Another adventure for museum owner and Benefit Fraud investigator Rosie Strange and her curator and sidekick, Sam Stone. Barely having drawn breath from the events of Strange Magic, they're contacted by erstwhile hardman Ray Boundersby who's having a spot of bother at his restaurant.

Psychic bother.

Ray's not a man you say no to - at least, not if you're fond of your kneecaps - so Rosie and Sam pack up their (well, his) spookhunting equipment, leave the Essex Witch Museum, and begin to ask questions. Of course, by the time they do this we know - from the rather gripping prologue - that there is rather more than a few ghostly knockings in play here. Murder has been committed, murder of a specially gruesome kind, and Ray's daughter Mary is in the frame...

Moore's pair of investigators - not, please, "ghostbusters" as they keep telling everyone - are well placed here, in pursuing their own enquiries, to also unravel the murder mystery - a perennial difficulty for modern-day amateur and private investigators in crime stories. And make no mistake, this is a crime story - whether or not the perpetrator turns out to be living flesh and blood. But it has other aspects too, of course and indeed one of the things I enjoyed about this book was the sharp way that the investigation bobs to and fro between criminal and psychical investigations, with information often relevant to both sides.

Another was the personalities of Moore's two main characters. I have to be honest and say they might not appeal to everyone - neither is exactly likeable: Strange is, well, a strange combination: excellent good at reading others (except for Stone) and ultra confident, but often almost clunkingly un self-aware. As a result her narration is very funny at times, but you might well not warm to her (I did!)

Stone is more enigmatic, but then we don't get his viewpoint, only Strange's perception and this is - I think - distorted by the fact that she fancies him but doesn't ever quite come out and admit to herself. Yes, I think I see where this going but I hope Moore keeps them apart for a few more books because it's more fun that way.

The story takes Strange and Stone out of Essex into London, where the restaurant "La Fleur" stands, just off Fetter lane, north of Fleet Street. (Weirdly I was walking past that corner only yesterday). The spooky goings on require them to delve into the nastier side of London's past and, indeed, present. While that was very interesting I felt the book slightly lost its distinctiveness there - a LOT of UF has been written in the vein of "London's past comes back to haunt us" and one of the things I liked about Strange Magic was that it wasn't drawing on London.

Nevertheless, Moore does an excellent job here of highlighting a real historical scandal with echoes in the present day and this also means the story is a bit more grounded than Strange Magic was so I think the visit to London pays off - I just hope our heroes are back in Essex soon. I think they will be, because alongside the main plot, Rosie's been learning more about her family background and that, also, screams MYSTERY in 36pt flashing neon gothic. So while there was perhaps less in this book concerning the Museum, and Essex, we have some pointers that more is to be learned about both.

Overall, then, a good followup to the earlier book, keeping things moving nicely, baffling the reader as to just how much of what's going is supernatural, and setting up an intriguing mystery for the future. Not all the loose ends from the crime were tied up (why the flour?) but I can live with that as long as I've got plenty of Rosie and Sam to distract me.
