



The Uninvited (Recovered Voices)

Dorothy Macardle , Luke Gibbons (Introduction)

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Brother and sister Roderick and Pamela Fitzgerald flee their busy London lives for the beautiful but stormy Devon coastline. They are drawn to the suspiciously inexpensive Cliff End, feared amongst locals as a place of disturbance and ill omen. Gradually, the Fitzgeralds learn of the mysterious deaths of Mary Meredith and another strange young woman. Together, they must unravel the mystery of Cliff End's uncanny past - and keep the troubled young Stella, who was raised in the house as a baby, from returning to the nursery where something waits to tuck her in at night... The second in Tramp's Recovered Voices series, this strange, bone-chilling story was first published in 1942, and was adapted for the screen as one of Hollywood's most successful ghost stories, *The Uninvited*, in 1944.

The Uninvited (Recovered Voices) Details

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Author : Dorothy Macardle , Luke Gibbons (Introduction)

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From Reader Review *The Uninvited* (Recovered Voices) for online ebook

Peggy says

Reread for Halloween!

Issicratea says

I can see why Dorothy Macardle's 1941 novel *The Uninvited* has been resuscitated as a "recovered voice" by the Irish independent publisher Tramp Press. It's an amusing, stylish book, reminiscent of Daphne du Maurier's novels or of Geoffrey Household's *Rogue Male*—plot-driven, period page-turners, with sufficient strength and subtlety in the writing to make the experience of reading them as satisfying as reading many more self-consciously literary novels.

I suspect that you would need to be more of a "ghosty" person than I am to enjoy this book to the full. I don't mind a haunted house as a motif, but I like my uncanny presences to be barely sketched, as in the short stories of Hoffmann or M. R. James (or possibly also Walter de la Mare, whom Macardle intriguingly name-checks here as an influence.) Once spirits are out in the open and the mechanics of haunting come under scrutiny, my interest rather wanes.

What I liked very much in this novel was the prolonged, pre-ghost set-up period, when Macardle's protagonists, a quietly charming, twenty-something Anglo-Irish brother and sister, Roderick and Pamela Fitzgerald, fall in love with a Devonian seaside house and find themselves inexorably drawn into its spell. Both characters are very well drawn, as are the sharply characterized minor figures Macardle adroitly arrays around them: their suave London friends Max and Judith; the wonderfully named—and appropriately fey—theatrical couple, Wendy and Peter; dour Dr Scott; dourer Commander Brooke; the Commander's vulnerable and passionate granddaughter Stella; heart-of-gold Irish housekeeper Lizzie, etc. There is apparently a famous 1944 movie of the novel, which I feel I am really going to have to seek out.

One thing I liked about reading this novel was making the acquaintance of the author herself, who sounds an interesting figure: an Irish republican, briefly imprisoned during the Irish Civil War in the 1920s; a journalist with the League of Nations in Czechoslovakia in the 1930s; and a feminist who strongly objected against the 1937 Irish Constitution's conservative interpretation of women's role. I read up about Macardle's life only after completing the novel, but it definitely adds a further dimension to the text in retrospect. Ideals of "good" and "bad" womanhood, and maternity in particular, float through the plot like wisps of ghostly ectoplasm, clustering balefully around the repressed, semi-rebellious figure of Stella, on whose choices the plot largely turns.

Jane says

A classic ghost story

Roddy and Pamela are brother and sister, and they are searching the Devon coast to find a new home. He is a

playwright who wants to escape the complications of London life, and she has just been released from years of caring for their sick father.

They find the house of their dreams. It stood alone not far from the edge of a cliff, it was uninhabited and it appeared to have been neglected for quite some time, but they saw its potential. And they saw a “for sale” sign.

They find the owner, an elderly man with a granddaughter just out of boarding school. He seems reluctant to sell the house, and reluctant to explain why, but Roddy is persuasive.

The house will be theirs.

Roddy and Pamela are full of ideas for refurbishing the house and making it into a home; and they dismiss local gossip that says that the house is haunted, and that terrified tenants had fled. They saw nothing amiss. They invite an old family retainer, Lizzie, to become their housekeeper; they enjoy the simple pleasures of life in the country; and they make plans to invite friends to stay.

All of this is wonderfully readable, and utterly of its time.

I liked Roddy and Pamela; I found it easy to understand who they were, where they were in life. The sibling relationship was particularly well drawn; they were a team.

They had thought things through; they knew that their circumstances were likely to change, that they wouldn't always want to share a home, and they had made provision for that.

In between the house talk and the ghost talk there were allusions to their Irish home and it was clear that their roots and their history were important to them.

It was interesting to follow sensible, practical people into a ghost story.

It was obvious there was going to be a ghost story. Roddy was telling the story and the substance of the book was a manuscript, introduced by a letter explaining that it was an account of what had happened in Devon.

That meant that a degree of suspense was lost - I knew from the start that something had happened and I knew, from the tone, that the Fitzgerald's had been able to put whatever had happened behind them.

During a housewarming party, a friend of Roddy and Pamela's is profoundly disturbed by something she sees in the mirror of the spare bedroom. Roddy spends the next night in that spare bedroom, and finds himself overcome by fear and foreboding. And then, when Roddy and Pamela away from the house, Lizzie is terrified by something that she sees emerging from that room, something that she can not find the words to explain.

That is the turning point.

They know that something happened in that house. They suspect that it involves Stella, the granddaughter of the man who reluctantly sold them the house, because she is drawn to them and to that room.

The story unwinds slowly as Roderick and Pamela set about uncovering the history of their home, in the hope that when they know what has happened there they can somehow put things right. The mystery, the

ghost story and the story of country life are beautifully wrapped together.

A romance grows between Roddy and Stella and that complicates the story; because the house had been Stella's childhood home, because the haunting of the house had its roots in a tragedy that happened then, and because whenever the Fitzgerald's saw the possibility of a resolution they also saw the possibility of harm to Stella.

I had an idea of how the mystery would pay out at an early stage, but that didn't spoil the story. It was an utterly believable human tragedy, and I could understand how and why it had happened. And I was caught up with Roddy and Pamela as they struggled to work out what had happened and what they could, what they should, do.

The plot was well thought out, it drew in a lovely range of people and incidents, and it had things to say. This story of ordinary people in extraordinary circumstance speaks of the importance of home, of the roles that mothers can play, and of the consequences of their absence.

I'd call this a very good - almost great - ghost story.

And a lovely period piece

Kate says

I could not put this down. A very 40's play-esque horror novel with plenty of creepiness and a drawn-out conclusion. There's plenty to critique but the light bright story of a brother and sister who find a dream home which turns out to be haunted is just about perfect for a rainy day.

Peggy says

Re-reading an old favorite because I just saw the play and re-watched the movie (another old favorite).

Jack Tripper says

Here's the cover of the 1946 Bantam mass-market paperback (341 pages).

Cphe says

Atmospheric story of a haunted house known as Cliff End off the coast of Devon. A solidly plotted ghost story with a couple of twists and turns to keep the reader guessing. Enjoyed the tone of the novel and the complex history of "the haunting."

A tad dated but it just added to the overall style of the novel.

Melanie Ford says

I had been meaning to read this book for a very long time. The movie version from the 40s was one of my favorites. My mother and I would watch it every time it was on television. I hoped it would live up to the movie--and it really did. One of those things where I wished I didn't know the story already.

I love a good ghost story, and this really is one of the best. Quintessential English ghost story--creepy mouldering abandoned house by the sea, unsuspecting likeable protagonists, family tragedies and mysteries, malevolent spirits...Wonderful. The story moves along a fast clip. I felt like starting it over again as soon as I was finished.

Luckily, I have the new Sarah Waters book, *The Little Stranger*, another ghost story, to move to next.

Robin says

Both book and movie get 5 stars.

The 1944 movie starring Ray Milland is excellent, a truly scary ghost story that doesn't fall into a hokey ending.

The book, slightly different, delves deeper into the aspects of a haunted house without relying on gimmicks or tricks to scare you. It takes both the haunting and the characters' motives seriously, allowing them to solve the mystery accurately and humanly.

This is one of a very few times (IMO) that Hollywood made the movie as good as the book!

Susan says

This is one of the BEST ghost stories I've ever read. It's right up there with Shirley Jackson's, *The Haunting of Hill House* (BTW, Jackson's work was made into a fantastic film in 1963). *The Uninvited* contains all the requisite elements of a good, old-fashioned ghost story: an atmosphere of comforting banality made freakish by the subtle application of creepiness; a goodly number of sophisticated characters who, of course, don't believe in the supernatural; confusion between the paranormal and the unreliability of the five senses; and a mean-spirited spirit who torments people when they are (gasp!) ALONE. This novel also exploits the closed (at times claustrophobic) setting of a cozy-mystery; it is an isolated house that is haunted and, as such, the building almost incubates the scary beast.

The cozy setting is apropos because there is a mystery for the protagonists to solve. Deep, dark secrets contaminate the lives of the characters much like the ghost does the house. And the ghost! Oh the ghost! No tawdry blood, guts or chainsaws here. The ghost is a diaphanous milk-cloud of floating evil that wafts its way along hallways and scares the bejesus out of the smug and unsuspecting. Like a smoky, white jellyfish, its nasty tendrils twirl along poorly lit rooms and makes me want to shout, "For Christ's sake! Look behind

you!” This delicious horror would probably be enough to salve the inner corners of my Celtic soul, but the story has a bonus for me and, I think, most readers: The mystery, once solved, reveals a story that is reminiscent of a Greek tragedy. Good and evil are represented, as are basic archetypes of womanhood. This story is just plain entertaining for morons like me who get bored easily and lack the necessary focus to stick with less sensational stuff. (Okay, intelligent people enjoy it too.)

Like the Jackson novel cited above, *The Uninvited* was made into a pretty darn good flick in 1944 (with Ray Milland and Ruth Hussey). I often watch it when it’s on TCM, as I do Jackson’s, *The Haunting*. What could be more satisfying than a classic ghost story to make you forget about the genuine horror in the world? As scary as these novels/films are, they are much less disturbing to me than the evening news.

classic reverie says

I saw the movie version with Ray Milland years ago but remember it fairly well, I knew how it would end but that did not make this a dull read, not in the least, actually I enjoyed it immensely! The movie had some variations but I found the book more straight forth and also more paranormal occurrences that made it more a ghost story. Even though Ray Milland and Ruth Hussey played their parts well, I saw Roderick and Pamela younger. I had just finished Betty Smith's *A Tree that Grows in Brooklyn* and had a similar feeling as I read that story. I wished the ending had a resolution for Pamela but since it did not I take privilege to enlist my own thoughts that satisfies my desires. I love reading books that I have already seen the movie and especially classic movies to classic books.

Jeanine says

I had been trying to find a copy of this book for years with no success. A nice lady on Goodreads sent me a link. (Thank you!)

This book was even better than I had hoped. Beautifully written, flowing story that builds and builds to a terrific climax. I loved it. This is a really wonderful, psychological-type ghost story.

Written in 1942, it's still one of the best ghost stories ever written.

Bobby Underwood says

This is a wonderful timeless story by Dorothy Macardle. Published as "Uneasy Freehold" in the early 1940's, it was renamed for the classic film it spawned in 1943 starring Ray Milland and the ethereal Gail Russell. I've owned a hardback copy of this fabulous book for decades and try to read it at least once every couple of years. There is a light and breezy feel to this narrative which makes it the perfect summer read if you are tired of the run-of-the-mill.

Roderick and his sister Pamela leave the hustle and bustle of modern London looking for that perfect house on the English coast. What they find is the beautiful Cliff End overlooking the sea. From their first meeting with the sweet and lovely young Stella Meredith, whose grandfather owns the house, we know there is a larger mystery here. This is a good novel that slowly unfolds as we learn of Stella's mother Mary, and the

beautiful Spanish girl, Carmel, who was seduced by Stella's father.

There are more questions than answers for the brother and sister the longer they remain at Cliff End. Who is the apparition at the top of the stairway and why does a sickening cold always precede its appearance? Why are there moans of anguish coming from the room that used to be the nursery? What is the real mystery surrounding Mary's death? What about that Mimosa scent that coincides with the moaning? And why do things get more stirred up every time young Stella is there? Roderick has fallen for the sweet Stella just as the reader has and both must discover the answers.

What makes this such an excellent read is that it treats this as a straightforward story of ordinary people thrown into extraordinary circumstances. It unfolds slowly as Roderick and Pamela attempt to solve this maddening riddle to an otherwise wonderful house they don't want to leave. Both the mystery and ghost story are presented in an entertaining day-to-day chronicle of life in the English countryside. Ever so gradually, the growing romance between Roderick and Stella inches its way to the center at the same time the danger to young Stella heightens.

It's fantastic that this long-out-of-print classic is now available on Kindle. The forward in the Kindle version contains a wealth of information about Macardle, her work and life. It's several pages in the Kindle and is well worth reading. The Uninvited inspired the finest film of its kind ever made, starring Ray Milland and the lovely Gail Russell. You don't want to miss either the book or the film, and now that Macardle's fine novel is back in print, you don't have to.

Barbara says

Through the first two-thirds of the book this was a 3 star read for me. But towards the end, action picked up, and led to an exciting ending. The personalities and dialogue are old-fashioned as this was written in the 1940's. It is, however, a classic of Irish literature, and was recently republished by Tramp Press. the author, Macardle's own story as a feminist and revolutionary is interesting. These days many would disagree with her ardent support of Eamonn De Valera, a leader in the 1916 uprising, Anglo Irish war, and the Irish Civil War. Despite his "revolutionary" beginnings, De Valera came to embody the conservative values that made the lives of so many Irish citizens miserable for decades, especially for women.

A brother and sister leave London after buying a house in Cornwall. He is a playwright and his sister appears to be neurotic. They are half Irish, and still have ties to Ireland. The house is haunted, and although they are warned, they move in. As the story builds, the haunting takes hold of many of the characters. The ghost story is well done, and the story builds to a satisfying resolution.

Nancy Oakes says

Oh my gosh, did I ever have fun with this book and then with the film.

The story, in a very brief nutshell, revolves around the perfect house on the Devon Coast, Cliff End. It is supposed to be the setting for a pair of siblings' idyllic country life as they decide to leave London behind,

but things don't turn out as planned. Although warned by the seller that the house was said to have been the site of some "disturbances" that had driven away former tenants, the house is perfect for Roddy and Pamela Fitzgerald. However, it doesn't take long before they start noticing a few strange occurrences, which only intensify as time goes on. When their first houseguests arrive, things get even stranger; the horror becomes gradually worse to the point where the Fitzgeralds realize that the only smart thing would be to leave Cliff End. Ultimately, though, they realize that everything they're experiencing seems to center directly on the daughter of one of the now-dead inhabitants, a young woman named Stella. Neither of them really want to leave, so the only thing left is to find some sort of solution to be able to face down whatever it is that is currently in control of their lives, and while doing so, hopefully preventing Stella from coming to any sort of harm.

I was so into this book that the least little disruption gave me fits. I really enjoyed this one and can't recommend it highly enough. If like me, you're into older supernatural works (this one is from 1942), then do not miss the novel. While it may seem tame in today's world, there is a LOT going on here and quite frankly, it's downright spooky.

Book #1 in this year's Halloween reading; more about it and about the film at my <http://www.oddlyweirdfiction.com/2016...>
