



Candlenight

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Journalist Giles Freeman and his wife Claire are thrilled when they inherit a cottage far from the noise of the city. And though the locals are slow to welcome them, the Freemans believe that in time they will be accepted. But the Freemans have fallen under an ancient Celtic curse--and soon they will learn the truth about what it means to be outsiders. HC: Pan (UK).

Candlenight Details

Date : Published September 1st 1995 by Berkley Publishing Group (first published September 1st 1991)

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Author : Phil Rickman

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From Reader Review **Candlenight** for online ebook

David Callaghan says

I am sure from reading other reviews that this is a very popular author however, for me , this just did not work. I had previously read Crown of Lights and although not totally enamoured with it, I thought that I would try another of Mr Rickmans novels. Whether it was the language or the Welsh Nationalism but I gave up at page 300 with another 200 pages to go. I found it very difficult to read and by the time I gave up had no liking for any of the characters and had no interest how the book finished. Sorry but not for me

Matt Garcia says

Very good book, nice character development and story line. Doesn't really become a horror novel until the last 50 or so pages though. More of a dark fantasy/thriller/suspense novel but still an enjoyable read from an impressive author. The Welsh folklore and small town setting are interesting. Rickman definitely captured the essence of what its like to live in a small town. Worth the time

Holly says

This was a fast and fun read and not as predictable as I thought it would be.

There was one drawback which kept this from being a five star book. The modern pagans in this book were really dumb; they believed the old lie about human sacrifice and incorporated it into their worship. Very disappointing.

Patrice Hoffman says

There's always something about novels set in small towns in the countryside, that are inherently spooky. Candlenight was not the normal I have come to expect from most horror novels but it was still pretty interesting. By normal I mean it wasn't a blood fest or full of dead bodies. It reminded me of how superstitions and towns really give power to certain forces. I felt this when I read Rickman's book Curfew. The town warns people to stay away by not telling them to stay away. Instead of everyone talking about how to get rid of the supernatural thing that's hurting people, they pretend that it doesn't exist. I really enjoyed reading this. Rickman is descriptive and has a way for sucking me into the town with his use of imagery and character profiles. I can't wait to read more by him. He's quickly becoming one of my favorite authors.

Helen says

3.5 stars.

Enjoyed this for the underlying supernatural element and Welsh folklore, language and superstition, but I found it waaaaay too long. The writing is quality though, and that kept it going for me. I'm going to persist with Rickman's books because of this, even though so many of them seem to be a million pages long.

Michelle says

Phil Rickman has long been a favourite author of mine, I love his Merrily Watkins series, this however, is a darker more supernatural book... He takes a rural paradise and underlies it with a sinister and malevolent structure of locals who on the surface seem pleasant enough... He does his usual trick of making you believe that something otherworldly is happening, but with an undercurrent of making you doubt it at the same time... To quote a character from the book...' not possible is it really, see' ...

I like a good many more English people have always been aware of the Welsh race as being hostile to us as a nation, and with the way the English have treated them, you can understand the national loathing, but this takes all of that to another level... Hatred and a misguided sense of keeping the community pure taken to extremes...

A brilliant classic horror that is believable...

Marie Cope says

I was recommended this book by Ged, the manager of Waterstones in Wrexham, and I have to say I wasn't disappointed. A little confused in parts, but on the whole this was a great book.

To start with, the emphasis on the Welsh/English animosity got on my nerves, but it is true - there is still a lot of hatred towards the English and I don't think it has a place in today's society.

The story tells of a Welsh village, Y Groes, which seems to have something supernatural going on. It would appear that, based on historical activities (shall we say), the 'land' expects offerings on a regular basis; said offerings usually being English.

It also indicates that Owain Glyndwr is buried in the church there and that he is somehow linked to what is going on in the town, as he was said to have magical powers. How true this is (re the magic) I don't know. The book does meander along for pretty much three quarters of the way before anything really starts to heat up. It doesn't seem boring, though, as you become friends with the characters and really feel their plight at the climax of the book.

Well worth a read and I'll certainly be reading another of his books!

Damaskcat says

Clair and Giles decide to move to Wales when she inherits a house from her grandfather. Giles receives several warning that Wales is not a safe place from English people to move to but he ignores them all.

He has fallen in love with the village of Y Groes and wants to embrace the whole way of life there including learning Welsh. It is soon clear to the reader that life is not going to be easy for the incomers and that there is a lot more going on in the village than Giles is aware of.

In the heat of a by-election in the area things gradually come to a head as the story moves between Bethan, head teacher at the local school and a recent widow, and Berry Morelli – an Italian American journalist who

is staying in the area. I found this book compelling reading.

The tension mounts slowly throughout the book until it comes to the shattering finale. The story is steeped in Welsh legends and customs and the claustrophic and frightening atmosphere of the small village is vividly evoked.

If you like mysteries with more than a hint of the supernatural then this should fill the bill. The writing is of excellent quality and the characters really come to life on the page.

Rachel says

Why are there no English people living in the Welsh village of Y Groes? Everywhere else has the English buying houses as holiday homes and pushing the prices up for locals. And why do English people have a habit of dying there?

A spooky, engaging read.

Hayley says

I finished reading this book at the weekend and I was completely enthralled with. I love anything to do with mythology and this book has plenty of Welsh mythology and legend and Phil Rickman sets a brilliant atmosphere and a subtle horror surrounds the village and the people that inhabit the place. I decided to look up the legends that are mentioned within the book and found loads of sites and bits of information on the internet. A great book.

Melanie says

Good and creepy with some really lovely descriptive writing and witty dialogue, though at times I felt like the political stuff went on too long and didn't really add anything to the main story line or my understanding of the characters or of the historical background.

Kerry Hennigan says

Candlenight is probably the spookiest book Phil Rickman has ever written.

If you come to this one belatedly, after enjoying his Merrily Watkins mysteries, in which there are usually logical explanations for all manner of unearthly happenings, then you are in for a bit of a shock.

Something truly sinister seems to hovering around the idyllic Welsh village of Y Groes. What appears a perfect place to live has a decidedly dark side.

In Y Groes the weather is inexplicably milder, the people more traditionally Welsh, secrets are zealously

guarded, and a mythic Welsh hero is even rumoured to be buried there – though nobody knows where.

Despite its Christian chapel, Y Groes has a tradition that goes back to the age of the Celtic Druids. But this isn't a tradition of benevolent white-garbed bards passing on oral histories. This is the alternative to all that – the kind of tradition that requires sacrifice to maintain power.

As American journalist Berry Morelli and Welsh language teacher Bethan McQueen discover, it's not their own that these agents of the darkness sacrifice, but their enemies. And that's anyone from outside – but especially anyone who has the misfortune to be English.

Candlenight is a riveting read in the same style we have come to enjoy in Rickman's Merrily books. This one pre-dates the first in that series, but his skill at developing characters and creating atmosphere is obvious right back here at the beginning.

Review by Kerry Hennigan

February 4, 2014

Eric Hines says

Not as good as either Curfew or December. Welsh nationalism is more than a little distracting from the supposed supernatural element here (actually Welsh nationalism is the all-too-prosaic inspiration for the supernatural agents, as well).
As always, Rickman creates interesting and likable characters, but there is a feel that maybe Rickman rushed this one a bit. One opportunity he missed is the main English character, who he unwisely kills off. Rickman's lead characters are often bumbling, lovable loser types. Giles is driven and a bit of a bastard, though fundamentally decent. A whole book with him in the lead would have been an interesting change for Rickman.

Sheila says

4 stars--I really liked it.

This is a story of a mysterious Welsh town, sleepy and old-fashioned and more special than anyplace else. Strangely enough, English visitors to the village keep dying. Very mysterious...

I really enjoyed this story of ancient magics and Welsh superstitions (no surprise there--I love stories about cults and old rituals). I didn't connect very much with Rickman's writing style (which is a shame, since I plan to read his other books too--I love his subject matter), but was so caught up in the story that it didn't matter much.

Evan says

My second time through this book. I enjoyed reading this. It had a firm hold on me toward the end. It makes me want to read more of Rickman's work.

I can't help but feel there are bits missing. Like we're not getting a complete picture. It's like the characters

haven't been fully fleshed out. Take, for example, Miranda. I'm not sure what her purpose is. If it's to deliver a message, fantastic. But the message seems more like embellishment to the icing that's already on the cake. Don't get me wrong, redheads with a bit of fire to their personality are right up my alley. I just think that she wasn't as fully constructed as she could have been. The message she had wasn't enough justification for her being there. I hope that makes sense to someone.
