



## The Haunting of Maddy Clare

*Simone St. James*

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Sarah Piper's lonely, threadbare existence changes when her temporary agency sends her to assist a ghost hunter. Alistair Gellis-rich, handsome, scarred by World War I, and obsessed with ghosts- has been summoned to investigate the spirit of nineteen-year-old maid Maddy Clare, who is haunting the barn where she committed suicide. Since Maddy hated men in life, it is Sarah's task to confront her in death. Soon Sarah is caught up in a desperate struggle. For Maddy's ghost is real, she's angry, and she has powers that defy all reason. Can Sarah and Alistair's assistant, the rough, unsettling Matthew Ryder, discover who Maddy was, whereshe came from, and what is driving her desire for vengeance-before she destroys them all?

## **The Haunting of Maddy Clare Details**

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## From Reader Review The Haunting of Maddy Clare for online ebook

### Sandra says

Twenty-five-year-old Sarah Piper gets a call from the temporary agency that she works for. A male writer is requesting an assistant and he is asking for a female. Sarah is to meet him at a coffee house in Soho, London.

Sarah goes to the coffee house and meets Alistair Gellis, a young, handsome man. He tells her he documents ghosts. A vicar contacted Alistair recently because the vicar had tried to exorcise a ghost and failed. The ghost physically attacked him. It seems the ghost really dislikes men and doesn't want any men near it. So, since Alistair can't check the ghost out himself, he needs someone (a woman) to do it for him. And then he will write about it.

Sarah can't believe what this guy wants her to do, but he is dead serious. She is hard up for money, and does need the job, so she reluctantly agrees.

They go to Warrington to meet elderly Mrs. Clare, whose barn the ghost is haunting. The ghost is called Maddy (who was nineteen when she hung herself in the barn) and the old woman is tired and can't put up with this anymore and just wants Maddy to leave (it seems Maddy has been causing chaos). She wants Sarah to go out to the barn and tell Maddy to go. Mrs. Clare makes Alistair leave and go back to the inn he and Sarah were staying at. Then Sarah goes out to the barn with a camera and a recorder that Alistair gave her so she can document the meeting with the ghost. And she has an experience with Maddy...

This was a very spooky, atmospheric book. The scenes with the ghost Maddy were positively creepy. Sarah was a likable heroine. I also liked Alistair (cool, calm, polished, nice) and his friend Matthew, who is also interested in ghosts (dark, brash, scarred from the war.)

Another very enjoyable read by Simone St. James.

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### Magdalena aka A Bookaholic Swede says

I've been wanting to read more of Simone St. James books since I read *Lost Among the Living* a couple of months ago. I love books with either very much paranormal or just a hint of it. And, ghosts I find is a fascinating subject. So, I hoped that *The Haunting of Maddy Clare* would work for me.

*The Haunting of Maddy Clare* has all the right ingredients for a great story. A vengeful spirit, a budding love story, a mystery, and great characters. I did find Sarah Piper a bit too timid for my taste at first, but as the story progressed did I find myself liking her more and more and I did like Matthew and Alistair very much. But, unlike Sarah, I think I did find Alistair a bit more to my liking than Matthew, but at least it was not written as a triangle drama (thank God). I think Alistair tragic love story with a married woman and his past experience with ghost hunting just made him quite alluring. Not that Matthew had a less than interesting

back story. I especially liked how they met during the war and that, despite the class difference they become friends.

As for the story itself, it was tragic, intense and very much engrossing. I felt so sorry for Maddy, especially when the truth came out about what she had suffered. And, without giving away the ending, was the conclusion of the book very satisfying.

***The Haunting of Maddy Clare was a very good book, and I look forward to reading more of Simone St. James books!***

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### **Jeanette says**

Oh, this is at least a 4 star for enjoyment. 3.5 star rounded up for all else. The style is easy to read, yet a trifle melodramatic. BUT, isn't that what you want in a ghost story? I do.

In this one the haunt is an active protagonist, no second tier apparition. And the town in the era following the Great War completely reverberates the response to the ghost's known and fully experienced suffering.

But what I liked best about this one was that Sarah, Matthew, and Alistair all reflect the dissonance of their shifts. As in the era, all the "known" sureties of manners, morals, prestige class or holdings of wealth- so much of that has become unsure. If not spoiled for any secure comfort.

This could have been written in 1955 or 1970, if not for the few bodice ripper lengths of more than a couple of pages. But it was not done in the crude and rude or within context of large amounts of foul or demeaning language. And yet, this was a bit gratuitous for the plot, IMHO. But then again, why else would Sarah put herself through such danger and horror? Not to return to her damp sour room in London? Perhaps.

The reveal and climax was not unforeseen. But the read was full of personality and pop. Loved it!

This kind of old-fashioned ghost story stands head over heels to the modern dysfunctional family 700 page verbosity. Give me a choice, I'll take this kind of read over lyrical pretention any day of the week.

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### **Nikki says**

4.25 chilling stars!

My first encounter with Simone St. James was her book, *The Broken Girls*, which I read a few months back. I knew then that this was an author I needed to revisit, and now after reading *The Haunting of Maddy Clare*, it is official.... Simone St. James has definitely found a new fan.

I have been a fan of ghost stories since I was a kid. And I admire authors who take on the daunting task of writing those stories, as it seems like such a difficult genre to tackle. And after reading two of her books, I believe Simone St. James has perfected the art of writing a solid, well-rounded ghostly novel.

The Haunting of Maddy Clare takes place in England, after the Great War. Sarah Piper, a young woman

trying to find jobs through a temp agency, suddenly finds herself working with two male ghost hunters in need of a female assistant. They are sent to the countryside to investigate the haunting of a family's barn. Maddy Clare, a young servant girl who tragically committed suicide in the barn, is said to still be there... and wreaking havoc. Maddy's ghost will not tolerate the presence of men, hence the need for Sarah's help. But they all quickly realize they're dealing with a situation that is most terrifying and their lives are about to be turned upside down.

Blending history, mystery, romance, passion, and all things spooky, St. James does a fantastic job giving the reader an all around good novel. The setting is well-described, capturing the fads/behaviors/lifestyles of that time period. And with intriguing characters and smooth writing, this book flows with ease keeping the reader engaged the entire time.

Highly recommend for anyone interested in historical fiction & the supernatural!

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### **Carol says**

When Sarah accepts an interview thru a temp. agency, she had no idea it would lead to a job working for two handsome young men and encountering a revengeful ghost haunting an old barn. Set in post WWI England, the engaging beginning of this debut novel by Simone St. James combines some spooky thrills with a mystery to solve and a romance to enjoy. (*if you enjoy romance*)

The imperative *need* to unravel the past surrounding Maddy's *sad* and short life made for a fast read and entertaining ghost story. Well done debut!

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### **Debra says**

A hauntingly good book that delivers with chills, creepy scenes and mystery!

Alistair Gellis, a ghost hunter, has hired Sarah Piper from a temporary agency. Initially Sarah is concerned but finds she is also intrigued by the sense of adventure and the handsome man who proposes an eerie job description to her. Low on funds, and intrigued, Sarah finds that she cannot refuse the position as she needs the money. She isn't sure if ghosts even exist, but money is money, so she agrees to help him investigate the ghost of Maddy Clare.

Maddy Clare was a nineteen-year-old woman who committed suicide after regaining her memory. Years earlier, she showed up at the Clare home late one night covered in mud, traumatized, injured, and brutalized. She could not speak and eventually became a member of the household. She was frightened of men in life and is not too keen on them after death.

After her suicide, Maddy has been haunting the Clare barn. Mrs. Clare has hired Mr. Gellis to essentially get rid of Maddy's ghost but insists that a woman must go into the barn alone to ask Maddy to leave as Maddy does not like men. Sarah is frightened but agrees to enter the barn and finds that Maddy's angry and vengeance seeking ghost does indeed inhibit the barn.

Alistair, Sarah and Matthew (Alistair's other assistant) attempt to learn more about Maddy Clare's short, tragic life, her suicide and why she wants revenge. As Matthew and Sarah form a relationship, it becomes clear that Maddy's anger is increasing, her need for vengeance is intensifying and there may be those in town who know more than they are willing to admit.

I found this to be a very good ghost story. It has creepy moments but is not what I would call scary. It is atmospheric at times. The story is full of suspicious townspeople, and those who want to keep the truth about Maddy a secret. I felt as though I was just as invested in finding the truth about Maddy Clare as the three ghost hunters. There are quite a few haunting scenes which help move the story along and draw the reader in. There is a sense of dread as night falls and birds take flight! Just what is it with crows and scary books? This book has a little bit of everything - paranormal elements, romance, suspense, mystery - and balances them all nicely.

Read more of my reviews at [www.openbookpost.com](http://www.openbookpost.com)

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### **Allison says**

Once again, a Simone St. James book read in one sitting. My eyes are now blurry (did I forget to blink?), and I am surprised and disappointed to realize that I am back in the real world. A full review may follow at some point, but I loved this, ghost, romance, mystery and all.

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### **Khanh, first of her name, mother of bunnies says**

An excellent ghost story with some truly terrifying moments. This is Simone St. James' first book, and I actually read her second book first before going back to this one. They are not connected, although they have a similar setting and sets of characters. Their similarity in no way detracted from my enjoyment of both books.

It is 1922, and 24-year old Sarah Piper leads a lonely, very threadbare existence. It is hinted that there was a traumatic event in her past, and as such, she seems to be going through the motions day by day, getting temporary jobs from her agency where she can find it, and barely making ends meet. She does feel a little sorry for herself but she does not get bogged down by her circumstance. Sarah gets a call at the beginning of the book from her agency, from a gentleman seeking an assistant. Said gentleman specifically asked for a woman, and initially, Sarah balks, thinking of experiences past of lecherous old men looking for very young, attractive girls of whom they can take advantage. Sarah is concerned about getting into that same situation, though she does not consider herself the type to be propositioned.

The gentleman in question is different from whom she had expected. Alistair is young, wealthy, and debonair, though clearly suffering from a scarred past from serving in the war. He specifically asks for a female because he is a ghost investigator, and the ghost he intends to investigate has a reputation for hating men. The family who hires him specifically asked that he bring a female assistant. Though dubious, Sarah accepts, because rent is two weeks past due.

The story very much picks up from there. The mystery of the ghost is terrifying and compelling. One feels

the fear that Sarah goes through, and the strength of her character as she grows from a soft, scared, and thinking of herself as weak-willed, into a strong character capable of holding her own in the middle of a confusing and complex investigation with a malevolent ghost clearly out for blood. The ghost herself is a scary and unpredictable, but a very sympathetic character, especially once the reader learns of her past. It is easy, then, to understand her hatred and anger, and why she is haunting and wreaking havoc in this manner.

Again, as in her other mystery, I found the love interest to be rather unlikeable. Matthew is a prickly, touchy, standoffish character, albeit so because of his experiences in the war. I feel that "the war" has been used as such a crutch in these books, though. Oh, the man is an asshole who sleeps with women and discards them? It's not his fault. It's the war!!!! That excuse only goes so far. There are plenty of ways to depict suffering and post-traumatic stress disorder without making a character into a massive douchebag.

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## **TheBookSmugglers says**

Joint review originally posted on The Book Smugglers

First Impressions:

Ana: Thea was supposed to be doing a solo review of *The Haunting of Maddy Clare* but then last week I was having a moan about not wanting to read any of the books on my TBR and then Thea was like, "What do you want to read dude" and I was like, "I think I am in the mood for a historical novel, possibly Horror as well. Maybe." and she was like, "Dudette, why don't you read *Maddy Clare* with me" and I looked it up and it was a historical novel with GHOSTS and I was like "OMG, I am so in".<sup>1</sup> So yes, *The Haunting of Maddy Clare* was exactly what I wanted to read and on that front, it completely delivered. It was that sort of comfortable read, the cosy mystery I was looking for but it does have many flaws. But more on that below.

Thea: Actually, Ana is misrepresenting the conversation. Yes, she was having a moan about the lackluster books she was reading, and then I basically had to pitch and sell her on *Maddy Clare* – which she had earlier said she'd pass on, for lord knows whatever reason – pointing out that the novel is: 1. Post-WWI historical; 2. Gothic in nature with a ghostly haunting, and; 3. Topped off with a romantic subplot. AND THEN, after selling her on this, Ana finally realizes that – HELLO! – this has her name written all over it (far more than it has mine). She woke up and smelled the proverbial coffee. Hence, the joint review. I went into *The Haunting of Maddy Clare* expecting an engaging ghost story, a mystery, set against an effective historical backdrop with a touch of romance, and I'm happy to say that the novel delivers (with only a few reservations).

On the Plot:

Ana: Sarah Piper is a modern woman living in London in the aftermath of World War I, doing the odd secretarial job. When a temp agency offers her the opportunity to work for the dashing Alistair Gellis, she takes upon the offer – only to realise, perhaps too late, that her new job requires her to go ghost hunting. Alistair is an academic writer, researching haunted places in England and his newest case – the man-hating ghost of a young servant called Maddy Clare – requires the assistance of a woman. The two travel together to the small village of Waringstoke where they will investigate the haunted barn where Maddy appears and where they are joined later by Alistair's assistance Matthew Ryder. At first, Sarah is doubtful that ghosts really exist but to her dismay (and terror) Maddy makes a horrific appearance and is able to form a connection with Sarah. It is then that Sarah learns why Maddy is angry and in search of revenge and she has no choice but to help the ghost lest they all become victims of her wrath.

I am rather conflicted about this book and how to write this review. On the one hand, I read this in one sitting and for the most part it was an enjoyable cozy, fun read. I loved the historical setting (as superficial as it was) and Sarah, the main character, was an interesting heroine. My first act as soon as I finished reading it was to write down: “competent cozy mystery, a historical ghost story with a side of romance, recommend with reservations”. It wasn’t until later that I started to realise that it had its share of problems. In fact, as I write this review, as I reflect on it, the more I find to criticise. Do you know, I truly hate when that happens, but alas.

In terms of plot, *The Haunting of Maddy Clare* is quite straightforward: a ghost story mixed with the mystery behind Maddy’s short life. Her story is of that sort that involves small-town horrors and the mystery was fairly predictable: I was able to guess the culprits very early on. The ghost was suitably scary though and Maddy’s back story was quite sad. My main gripe is perhaps the setting: although I love readings stories set in the early twenties but beyond a few mentions of clothes and to the mores of the era, there isn’t anything really vivid about the setting – this story could have been set at any point in time.

There is also a heavy focus on a romance that develops between Sarah and Matthew and that was so underdeveloped as to be almost random (but more on that below).

Thea: I agree with Ana’s initial assessment – this is a wholly competent and engaging novel, and I most enjoyed the experience of losing myself in *The Haunting of Maddy Clare*. Traditional ghost stories are not my favorite subgenre of horror – not by a long shot – but when they are done well, I can be completely won over (see Michelle Paver’s phenomenal *Dark Matter* or Susan Hill’s deliciously terrifying *The Woman in Black*). In the case of *Maddy Clare*, all of the right elements are in place. As the novel progresses and Sarah, Alistair, and Matthew conduct their investigation of the haunting, readers learn the truth behind the tragic, horrific mystery of young Maddy’s past. The horror elements, steeped in the nature of Molly’s haunt fueled her rage and fear are expertly written. It is this mystery, of Molly’s past and what she wants, that drives the novel – at least, in my opinion.

Layered on top of the ghostly haunting is the narrative of our intrepid temporary secretary heroine, Sarah Piper, and the different challenges she faces in a post-war world. Work has dried up, and as a woman without family or means, Sarah’s reality is a meager and brutal one. Though I do agree with Ana that the historical setting could have been replaced with any different era, I did like the touches that were unique to the early 1920s and how the time period shaped the experiences and perceptions of the different characters. Sarah is a modern girl in that she cares for herself and is self-employed in a non-servant position, there is this tension between what is acceptable and respected, versus the newer, bolder evolving world. There’s also the legacy of war and how it has affected Alistair and Ryder, which I think was done very well by Ms. St. James.

There is a degree of predictability regarding the plot, but I am not so bothered by this as *The Haunting of Maddy Clare* is not really about twists or surprises; rather, it’s a book about the characters and their own stories.

On the Characters:

Ana: Apart from Maddy Clare herself, I find myself reconsidering my thoughts about the characters.

At first glance, this is exactly the sort of read I tend to like. There were things I absolutely loved Sarah’s character: she is that type of quiet, introvert heroine that is struggling to find a place in the world. She thinks of herself as independent and modern and for the most part, she truly is finding her voice, not to mention becoming sexually aware.

Having said that, even though I had the feeling that this is supposed to be a feminist read, the text itself, kept coming back at me with these essentialist quotes about what it's like to be a woman – how emotional they can be; how only a woman can know about the feeling a favourite piece of clothing, etc – which made me pause.

There was definitely something incongruous about how Sarah is portrayed and how she is developed. For example, at the beginning she muses about she is the sort of woman who must worry about her reputation, who can't be free to do all she pleases. There is a lot of blushing when she meets Alistair and awkwardness because they must travel together. But then later on, there is a SURPRISE!REVELATION! in which we learn that Sarah has had several lovers after quick dates. And then she forgoes all about her worries with her reputation without a second to consider it and spends several nights sleeping with Matthew at a public Inn.

There is nothing wrong about her having sexually active life, of course. Far from it. The problem is how inconsistent her character presentation is.

The male characters are not developed much beyond their descriptions. Alistair is nice and debonair and Matthew – the romantic interest – is dark and brooding. Both have PTSD and that's about it. The relationship that develops between Sarah and Matthew is completely clichéd – exactly the type that gives Romance a bad name, except the Romances I read are way better than this.

There is one particular scene that Thea and I have been talking about that we both felt was really problematic and even revolting. There was this really random, surprising sex scene in which Matthew basically walks into Sarah's room one night, thrust himself into her, comes quickly and then leaves the room saying it wouldn't happen again. Mind you: at that point the two had barely exchanged a word and Matthew even believed Sarah had a thing for Alastair.

Although Sarah was willing – he did not know that. He had no way of knowing that at that point. We only know that because we see narrative from Sarah's point of view. I ask of you: isn't that problematic? And yet, we are supposed to take it on a stride and understand that the poor little man had ISSUES because of the war. This is never truly addressed in the novel beyond Sarah worrying about not being good enough for him. SERIOUSLY.

Ok, I am working myself up.

Thea: So, I'm of two minds when it comes to characterizations. I truly loved our heroine, Sarah, for all of the reasons that Ana mentions. She's not a stereotypically brash, stylish, cigarette-smoking flapper with nary a care in the world. Instead, our heroine is reserved, of small means and certainly not a fashionable paragon of roaring twenties' sensibilities. That said, Sarah isn't just some timid, meek woman. Rather, she is independent, and just as she describes herself: as a modern woman. I actually liked the revelation that she had her own encounters and trysts with men, and didn't find it out of place with her character. Her arc – discovering what she wants and is capable of – is endearing and, to me, works.

What did not work, however, was the kind of icky, not-so-satisfying romance. As Ana mentions above, I didn't believe in the attraction between Sarah and Ryder (really?! RYDER?!?) – I am not a fan of the instant lust, nor am I a fan of repeated phrases that glorify Ryder's stubbled jaw or broad shoulders or manly manliness. Added to that is the somewhat horrifying first sexual encounter between Ryder and Sarah, in which he steals into her bedroom in the middle of the night – without talking to her or knocking on her door – and roughly thrusts himself upon her. I have nothing against a late night booty call, or romantic passionate encounters, but the problematic thing with all of this is that Ryder had no real idea that Sarah wanted him or

was willing. Especially in this book, given the ghostly Maddy Clare's story, I felt like this was a jarring, incredibly disturbing development, and not romantic in the slightest.

I am a little more charitable when it comes to the development of male characters than Ana, however. I liked that both Alistair and Matthew have bonded over their time in the war together, and the very real stresses and issues they deal with in its aftermath. I feel like we get to know and understand Alistair, with his genteel appearance and easygoing manner, but with a lurking toughness and experience beneath that foppish exterior. In contrast, Matthew is lacking the same depth. We know he looks manly and dangerous, we know what he has suffered, and we know that Sarah has the hots for him almost immediately. And yet...as a character, he's two-dimensional. Perhaps this is because of Sarah's point of view narration, in which she is superficially drawn to his appearance and demeanor, so the book never really fully explores Matthew Ryder as a fully fleshed out character. In any case, I felt the overall experience...lacking.

Beyond this main trio, of course, we should not forget about Maddy Clare, her adopted family, or the various villagers with their own foibles, secrets, and pasts. I don't want to spoil anything, but I will say that I think this supporting cast – and Maddy herself, of course – are done convincingly well.

#### Final Thoughts, Observations & Rating:

Ana: The Haunting of Maddy Clare is that sort of read that is perfectly acceptable and nice as you are reading it. It is not until you are done with it that you go: WAIT A MINUTE. MAYBE THAT'S NOT REALLY AS GOOD AS I THOUGHT. In the end the best I could say is: I've read better, I've read worse. Not exactly a ringing endorsement, I know, but that's that.

Thea: I've read better, but I've also read much, much worse, and overall my experience with Maddy Clare is a positive one. I enjoyed this book and can think of no better way to spend an afternoon if you're looking for a quick, engaging historical novel with an effective ghost story. The only thing that didn't work for me was the uncomfortable romance – but I don't think that's enough to detract from my overall enjoyment of the novel. Recommended, with reservations.

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#### Holly says

Well, after reading two books by this author this month and loving them, I can safely say that I will buy every book Simone St. James writes. This had mystery, ghosts, a gothic feel to it, and a little romance. It was all executed brilliantly.

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#### Margritte says

This book deserves a good review, however, I am too exhausted to write one. I just arrived back home from a two-day road trip covering a couple of thousand kilometers, and really need some sleep. The book was great.

Paranormal, combined with a romance and a haunting tale of an angry ghost. Not my usual genre, but a great diversion from the normal paths. I spent many hours riveted to this tale. Holding my breath, devoid of much-needed oxygen by involuntary choice, a subconscious act in overdrive, a helpless act of self-destruct! :-))

Yep, Maddy the mad maiden got to me; hit me in the stomach; ripped up any notion of sleep; made me dream of haunted barns, vulnerable innocent men in danger; and somewhere a romantic fling thrown into the mix. Revenge.

Maddy Clare was not only seriously mad, she was seriously getting even from her transitional zone between life and death, even though she committed suicide.

She was encapsulated in her own little planet, between departed world and her arrival at her final destination. She wasn't planning to reach that destination without a few heads rolling. What she could not verbalize, she could demonstrate. The picture for the small English village was a grim one, until the three ghost busters arrived shortly after WWI. The one wrote books about ghosts, the second one was his assistant, and the third was Sarah Pipers, a temp from an employment agency who desperately needed money and a job. The mix was on.

Somewhere in it, yours truly hanged out between the fast-paced lines of prose. I was hyper-excited and willing to give up a few years of my life to see what happens in the end. When sleep finally arrived, it hit me like an afterlife! A very welcome one at that. Closing the book was the second thrill. The tale itself, was another thrill beyond words!

Read it, if you dare ;-)

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### **?Susan? says**

Late one evening a distraught young girl covered in dirt, shows up at the door of an Old English manor. The compassionate family takes pity on her, takes her in and administers her medical attention. When the local police conducted an extensive search and turn up no information surrounding the missing girl, the generous family keeps her on as a maid. Mute and a bit teched she still managed to win the heart of the Mistress and housekeeper, however, the Lord of the manor never acknowledges that she exists.

After a time the Lord passes on and several years later they find that the young girl has hung herself in the barn. She now haunts and terrorizes the barn and on occasion the main house. When the Mistress of the house reaches her wits end she calls in a well know ghost hunter.

Very soon after their arrival, the ghost hunter and his assistants, find themselves faced with frightening, paranormal situations that they have never dealt with and are not, at all, prepared to handle. The angry ghost of Maddy Clair, makes it very clear that they must solve the mystery surrounding her forfeited life if they are to make it out of her demented realm with their lives.

A good book for October spookfest.

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### **Lynn Spencer says**

I'll try not to ramble too much, but I'm working on a sleep deficit caused by staying up way too late finishing this book. I read this book after both Susanna Kearsley and Molly O'Keefe recommended it to me, and what a wonderful read it was! As others have commented in their reviews, I did solve the mystery rather early on,

but that didn't diminish my enjoyment of the book one bit.

The story is told in the first person and Sarah Piper is a delightful narrator. Not only do we get treated to a story told by a likable, sensible narrator, but I felt like the very observant Sarah had a great way of detailing an entire world for the reader. The author does a wonderful job of telling a truly chilling ghost story mixed with a romance. And, given that the story is set in the 1920s, we also see glimpses of just how much World War I affected English society and how fighting that war scarred so many men very deeply. Those parts of the story especially resonated with me because they reminded me of things I have seen with veterans coming home from the Middle East or of things I remember from when I was in my early 20s and first home from Bosnia/Kosovo. This book is beautifully written and if you're looking for a dark, moody story, I really enjoyed this one. There were parts of the romance side of the plot that felt a bit off (view spoiler), but I still found the book unputdownable reading, so that would make it a good 4.5 or 5 stars for me.

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### **Jenna says**

Sarah Piper lives a fairly private life in London during the 1920's. She soon receives a call from a temp agency requesting her assistance in working alongside Alistair Gellis, a traveling writer who has a deep interest in the supernatural. Sarah's life is soon flipped upside down when she is led to assist in helping an angry 'manifestation' to the other side.

Since Maddy Clare loathes the presence of men, Sarah is sent into the barn that she haunts alone. Sarah isn't well-equipped for what transpires and is shaken to the bone. Maddy promises that the hauntings and injuries will continue until her body can be found and it is Sarah that becomes her source of uncovering hidden truths.

I thoroughly enjoyed this book. The hauntings were perfectly creepy and I just couldn't put the book down for very long. There is a love story weaved through the pages in addition to the hauntings which kind of threw me off a bit because I like one or the other in a book. I have trouble getting into the love aspects in a haunting type of read but was pleased how well it worked for this book. It is Halloween month and I highly recommend this book to those who love a good ghost story.

Images courtesy of: [www.simonestjames.com](http://www.simonestjames.com)

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### **Ginger says**

#### **Full review up!!**

**Another great book by *Simone St. James*!!**

I went into this book hoping that the writing was just as strong as **The Broken Girls**. I read that book earlier in the year and loved *St. James*'s writing! And **The Haunting of Maddy Clare** was good as well!

**The Haunting of Maddy Clare** starts off with Alistair Gellis requesting help from a temp agency. Sarah Piper works for the agency and agrees to meet with Alistair. Alistair wants to hire Sarah because only a woman can communicate with the ghost. His assistant Matthew Ryder is away on personal business and he senses that's Sarah is sensitive.

Sarah learns that Alistair has been summoned to investigate a vengeful ghost that's getting worse. She is intrigued by the case and needs something more interesting in her lonely life so she decides to travel with Alistair to where the haunting is taking place. She's also broke so she agrees to go on this crazy adventure.

We find out that Maddy Clare is the vengeful ghost. Her death and life are much more complicated than Sarah and Alistair realize so the paranormal haunting is now turning into an investigation. They start to dive into the life of Maddy Clare and what happened to her when she was a 12-year-old girl and why she decided to hang herself in the barn 7 years later.

Matthew Ryder ends up coming back to the investigation and sparks ignite between Sarah and Matthew. Matthew and Alistair are also soldiers that have come back from the war.

The book's setting is right after World War 1 and set in Britain. *Simone St. James* writing on the soldiers coming back from the WWI is well done! I felt connected to their struggles and trauma that they endured during the war. I also understood why they were so obsessed with death and finding meaning after death.

**The Haunting of Maddy Clare** has a nice amount of creepiness, suspense and touch of romance in the book. The romance is well done and if you're not into romance, you shouldn't have issues with it. It's not overwhelming since the main focus of the book is the investigation into Maddy and what happened to this angry spirit!!

**Recommended to fans of suspense, historical fiction, gothic and mysteries!**

**I think even horror fans would like this book just because the writing on the haunting is well done and creepy!**

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