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The Haunting Of Hill House



Synopsis

Past the rusted gates and untrimmed hedges, Hill House broods and waits.... Four seekers have come to the ugly, abandoned old mansion: Dr. Montague, an occult scholar looking for solid evidence of the psychic phenomenon called haunting; Theodora, his lovely and lighthearted assistant; Eleanor, a lonely, homeless girl well acquainted with poltergeists; and Luke, the adventurous future heir of Hill House. At first, their stay seems destined to be merely a spooky encounter with inexplicable noises and self-closing doors, but Hill House is gathering its powers and will soon choose one of them to make its own. Shirley Jackson (1916-1965), a celebrated writer of horror, wrote such classic novels as *We Have Always Lived in the Castle* and *The Bird's Nest*, as well as one of the most famous short stories in the English language, "The Lottery". She has influenced such writers as Neil Gaiman, Stephen King, and Richard Matheson.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A tale of psychological horror. Hill House has a reputation for not exactly being welcoming to those who want to learn its secrets. Have to admit that I thought this might be scarier than it turned out to be. Enjoyed the characters on offer here particularly the susceptible and vulnerable Eleanor Vance. Wonderful atmosphere, a sinister overtone throughout although it was the descriptions of Hill House which made the novel in my opinion.

Yep. I'm going to agree with the pros. The Haunting of Hill House is a defining piece of literature within it's genre. This is the first time I had read this book and thinking back almost every

supernatural horror novel that I've read before it contains some echo of this novel. It's creepy and horrible in the best way and immediately draws you in with Eleanor, who has been unable to create a life of her own because she's spent the past 11 years as the caretaker for her dreadful mother. I especially liked this passage: Eleanor Vance was thirty-two years old when she came to Hill House. The only person in the world she genuinely hated, now that her mother was dead, was her sister. She disliked her brother-in-law and her five-year-old niece, and she had no friends. This was owing largely to the eleven years she had spent caring for her invalid mother, which had left her with some proficiency as a nurse and an inability to face strong sunlight without blinking. She could not remember ever being truly happy in her adult life; her years with her mother had been built up devotedly around small guilts and small reproaches, constant weariness, and unending despair. Hill House, like Eleanor, waits, empty for someone to fill it up. The haunting may seem mundane by modern standards, but it's the atmosphere and the character of the house itself that really creates the atmosphere which makes this novel so effective. One note about the forward in this edition. IT CONTAINS SPOILERS! Luckily it's a relatively heavy piece of literary analysis and I was ready to go so I skipped it and read it afterwards. If you've already read this book then definitely read the forward as it is excellent, if you haven't, then definitely take the time to read it afterwards.

I feel in love with Shirley Jackson's style of writing way back in American Literature in high school when I first read her short story, "The Lottery." It is still one of the most perfect stories I have ever read. The Haunting of Hill House has been on my "to read" pile since I was in high school. Being a part of the Classics Club finally got me to pull this book off the "to read" pile and read it for this Halloween. Dr. Montague decides to investigate Hill House, a notorious haunted house, by going to stay there. He invites Eleanor Vance and Theodora as they have both had previous paranormal experiences. Luke Sanderson is a nephew of the current owner and goes along to represent the family. Each has their own reason for being at the house and what starts as a lark soon turns into a living nightmare. What possesses Hill House and will they be able to escape? I enjoyed my edition of The Haunting of Hill House which is part of the Penguin Horror collection and included an introduction by Guillermo Del Toro about the horror series as well as an introduction of this specific book by Laura Miller. I skipped both introductions to read the story on its own merit, but returned to them after I finished the book. They are both worth a read. I don't want to get too much into the plot as I don't want to ruin the story for others, but the writing was fabulous from the memorable start to thrilling conclusion. I loved both the first quote and

last quote and many in between as seen below. I also love how it is not bloody gross horror, but suspenseful horror. The horror of a house that doesn't seem quite right, but slowly takes over the minds of those who inhabit it. I love that it is a Victorian house that smothers the occupants with its clutter and unsymmetrical design. I thought Eleanor was a fascinating character and I liked her journey through the novel. My favorite quotes:

"Hill House, not sane, stood by itself against its hills, holding darkness within; it had stood so for eighty years and might stand for eighty more."

"The light changed; she turned onto the highway and was free of the city. No one, she thought, can catch me now; they don't even know which way I'm going."

"No human eye can isolate the unhappy coincidence of the line and place which suggest evil in the face of a house, and yet somehow a maniac juxtaposition, a badly turned angle, some chance meeting of roof and sky, turned Hill House into a place of despair, more frightening because the face of Hill House seemed awake, with a watchfulness from the blank windows, and a touch of glee in the eyebrow of a cornice."

"Naturally I hope that we will all know a good deal more about Hill House before we leave. No one knows, even, why some houses are called haunted."

"It watches. The house. It watches every move you make."

"She might have cried if she could have thought of any way of telling them why; instead, she smiled brokenly up at the house, looking at her own window, at the amused, certain face of the house, watching her quietly. The house was waiting now . . . and it was waiting for her; no one else could satisfy it."

"Within, its walls continued upright, bricks met neatly, floors were firm, and doors were sensibly shut; silence lay steadily against the wood and stone of Hill House, and whatever walked there, walked alone."

Overall, The Haunting of Hill House was a perfect Halloween read; suspenseful with great characters including an unforgettable house.

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