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The Unexpected Guest & The Pale Horse (BBC Audio Crime)



Synopsis

The Unexpected Guest begins on a foggy night at a lonely country house, where a woman with a gun in her hand is quietly surveying the dead body of her husband. It looks like a straightforward case of murder. Or is it? As the ghosts of an old wrong begin to emerge from the past, the case begins to look anything but straightforward, and it is up to Sergeant Cadwallader and Inspector Thomas to discover the unexpected truth. . . In The Pale Horse, a dying woman gasps out her bizarre story to Catholic priest Father Gorman—but no sooner has he written it down than he is violently killed. The only clue he leaves is a twisted scrap of paper on which are written nine names. On the trail of these names Inspector Lejeune, together with academic Mark Easterbrooke and his crime writer friend Ariadne Oliver, are led inexorably to The Pale Horse Inn, in the village of Much Deeping. The three women who live there—a psychic, a medium, and a witch—all seem to have some link to Father Gorman's death. And each of them has their own secrets. . . These two Agatha Christie stories, each with a twist in the tale, are dramatized with full casts including Siân Probert and Stephanie Cole. 2 CDs. 2 hrs.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

As he did with *Black Coffee* (1998), Osborne has taken one of Christie's original play scripts and turned it into a (slight) novel. For those who can't see the play in production or who find a script dull or difficult reading, Osborne's adaptation may fill a need. But Osborne has added little flesh to the bones of the drama, which, with its single-room setting, absolutely retains the feel of a play merely

masquerading as a novel rather than transformed into one. That's not all bad, as this novelization preserves the lightning-quick pace of the original. Christie's play had its premiere in 1958, yet remains undated by the passing years. When a stranger having car trouble at night on a lonely road enters a house through the French windows of its study, he finds an invalid who has been shot dead and a woman (his wife) standing nearby and holding a gun. Apparently on impulse, the stranger decides to help the woman hide her crime. Those two plus a small cast--the victim's mother; the victim's teenage half-brother; his housekeeper/secretary; and his male nurse--A parade kaleidoscopically in and out of the study with two investigating police officers. Christie cleverly shifts suspicion and parcels out new facts and perspectives in marvelous fashion, proving ingeniously that the obvious isn't always obvious. (Oct.) Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Like a martini--crisp, dry, sophisticated, habit-forming, ever-so-slightly dated--Christie's smoothly polished mysteries go down easy. This one was written as a stage play, first performed in 1958, and is here adapted into novel form by Osborne, who last year published a novelization of Christie's *Black Coffee*. Like Christie's endlessly running *Mousetrap*, the plot here is full of twists around a single room, with people who are not what they seem. Michael Starkwedder's car runs into a ditch in Wales in the fog, and when he opens the French doors of the nearest house he finds an attractive woman with a gun in her hand, and the very dead corpse of her husband in a wheelchair in the same room. Mentally deficient relatives, loyal and twisted servants, patient inspectors, family secrets, and dramatic dialogue will satisfy all devotees of Christie's neat plotting, even without either Poirot or Marple. Ready for the beach or the fireside. GraceAnne A. DeCandido --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

While this is not literally true, this little gem somehow missed my trice rereading of all her other books, so I was pleased to discover it. Half way through I realized that I probably had read it once but enjoyed rediscovering it. Classic Christie in both mystery plot twists and in warmth in relationships with a bit of psychological truth thrown in, I recommend it!

It's hard to know how to rate this CD set (audio CDs of *The Unexpected Guest* and *The Pale Horse*). TUG is excellent, one of the best BBC Christie programs I've heard. Perhaps because it's adapted from a stage play rather than a novel, the pacing, suspense, and surprise twists are just about perfect. TPH, though... It's one of my favorite Christie novels, and I've listened to the CD

several times to make sure that the adaptation was just as bad as I thought. They've cut some material at the beginning for the sake of time that's just essential for knowing what's going on. As they've done it, people are going to wind up wondering -- WHAT priest? WHAT list? WHAT'S GOING ON!? I know they had time constraints, but I think they could have made the seance scene a bit shorter to give them time to slip in some necessary context at the beginning. So, two stories bundled together, one superlative and one bungled. I've ended up rating that 4 stars, since you can listen to the great one and skip the lousy one, but really it should be 5 stars for The Unexpected Guest and one or *maybe* two for The Pale Horse.

It seems to be a typical Hercule Poirot novel. Known characters like Poirot and Hastings are as they normally should be. I personally didn't like the book and it's plot and the murder; it seemed pretty obvious compared to other Agatha Christie novels that I have read. The book moved at a steady pace.

As in all of Agatha Christie's material, I couldn't put it down. I was surprised to realize that this was a book in play form, as I did not read anything about it except, the author name. After years of being entertained and enthralled by her books I was, again, highly entertained. It is a twisty and very well written play. If you enjoy Agatha you certainly will enjoy this book (play).

Another Agatha Christie triumph. She is a master and this book is another of her masterpieces. I figured it out just prior to the end of the book but that didn't diminish the story- full of surprises and a good read.

It is confusing to even find this book because the title is just The Unexpected Guest. The description when I ordered this book had the Travels in Afghanistan addition but by looking at the back on-line I could see it had nothing to do with Afghanistan. There was another description under just The Unexpected Guest which appeared as I searched. That description was not for The Unexpected Guest even though the front and back pictured was the one for the version the had Afghanistan. The book itself is interesting with the usual clues and plot twists that characterize Christie's books. I enjoyed it very much. I would have preferred to have an easier time ordering it and even called to report the the mix-up in descriptions and the confusion over "Travels in Afghanistan.

I love Agatha Christie this was a gem I had missed; but I'm so glad I found it. She's the best there is

at weaving a mystery

Just another great AC mystery

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