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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 Gormanâ"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 thereâ"a psychic, a medium, and a witchâ"all seem to have some link to Father Gormanâ"™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 SiÃ'n 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--appear 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 an alternate Audio CD 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 Starkwelder'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 an alternate Audio CD edition.

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