



The Unexpected Guest

By Agatha Christie

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

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—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.)

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From [Booklist](#)

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*

From Kirkus Reviews

Christie biographer Osborne's second novelization of a Christie play (*Black Coffee*, 1998) opens with a wonderfully arresting scene: engineer Michael Starkwedder, having run his car into a ditch while poking around the Welsh countryside looking at houses, enters Richard Warwick's house looking for help, only to find the man himself, a big-game hunter now confined to a wheelchair, shot to death. When Richard's wife Laura confesses to the killing, Starkwedder, struck by sympathy for her sufferings at the hands of this brute, encourages her to fake evidence against a fictitious intruder for Inspector Thomas and his quotation-spouting sergeant to find. Veteran readers of the author's work will watch in fascination, secure in the knowledge that Starkwedder and Laura aren't the only ones in the household playing fast and loose, and untroubled by the certainty that the other intimates—Richard's mother, his retarded half-brother, his housekeeper and valet, a neighbor standing for Parliament—have no more moving parts than necessary to keep the twists coming. It's not clear what Christie, who got into playwriting in mid-career because she thought other writers' stage adaptations of her novels too slavish and unsimplified, would have thought of Osborne's close, stingy reworking of her 1958 play. Here, though, Osborne, working with much less creaky material than *Black Coffee*, manages a few surprises worthy of his master. -- Copyright ©1999, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

George Marsh:

Why don't make it to become your habit? Right now, try to ready your time to do the important take action, like looking for your favorite guide and reading a e-book. Beside you can solve your long lasting problem; you can add your knowledge by the book entitled The Unexpected Guest. Try to the actual book The Unexpected Guest as your friend. It means that it can to be your friend when you truly feel alone and beside that course make you smarter than in the past. Yeah, it is very fortunated to suit your needs. The book makes you much more confidence because you can know every little thing by the book. So , we should make new experience and also knowledge with this book.

Stephanie Wilkes:

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Avery Thomas:

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Brittany Schafer:

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