



El hombre del cuadro

Susan Hill

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Theo, un experto en arte, se siente extrañamente atraído por un óleo con una escena del carnaval veneciano que consigue comprar en una subasta; pronto se dará cuenta de que los personajes representados parecen tener vida propia...

Biografía:

Scarborough, North Yorkshire, 1942. Susan Hill es una de las maestras indiscutibles del género de terror. Fascinada desde niña por el arte de narrar y escribir historias. Gran admiradora del género gótico y de los clásicos de la literatura fantástica y de terror, sus novelas y cuentos han gozado de un gran éxito y le han valido el reconocimiento de la crítica, con premios como el Somerset Maugham, que recibió en 1971 por *I'm the King of the Castle*.

Tal vez su novela más conocida sea *La mujer de negro*.

En 2012, Susan Hill fue distinguida como Comendador del Imperio Británico en reconocimiento a su carrera como escritora.

El hombre del cuadro Details

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Author : Susan Hill

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Paul says

An ok ghost/gothic story read in one sitting. Not in the same class as *The Woman in Black* but easy to read with a few nice twists. The story basically involves an eighteenth century painting of Venice; a masque taking place by the Grand Canal with lots of figures in the picture, masked and unmasked. The basis of the story is that here in the twentieth century people end up in the picture and can be seen with a look of horror on their faces. It's all good spooky stuff. Oddly this is the second book this year I've read about a person ending up in a picture.

Wilson Harris's *The Ghost of Memory* is a reflection on the death of Jean Charles de Menezes, the Brazilian shot on the tube in the aftermath of 7/7. That is magic realism rather than gothic horror. A strange coincidence I think. Yes, this is a shameless plug for Wilson Harris who is (in my opinion) very much underrated.

This one pretty much does what it says on the tin and Hill writes in a way that draws you in; bit like the picture!

Melissa says

I enjoyed this little ghost story. **The Man in the Picture** is a quick read. You can complete it in one or two sessions. I think it is best read on a stormy winter night in front of the fireplace with a glass of merlot in your hand.

The first thing that came to mind when reading this story was "Twilight Zone". This is exactly the type of story that terrified me as a child while watching the famed TV show. As an adult, the story was not terrifying but the story definitely held my attention. The story centers around an oil painting. A Cambridge professor tells the story of the painting's history to his friend and former student. The painting has a dark history and tragedy follows its owner. Of course, the painting ends up in the hands of the friend.

I think the story would have been a bit more captivating if it wasn't so short. It was really too long for a short story but too short for a novel. I think the story ended rather abruptly.

All said, the story was fine for a quick read. I think an expanded version would be more satisfying.

Blair says

I bought this on a whim and read it in one sitting, thinking it would be just the thing for a Sunday night while tucked up in bed. I really enjoyed it, but am in two minds about how to rate it. On one hand, it was exactly the sort of thing I love - an atmospheric, compelling ghost story with plenty of deliciously chilling details. The chief narrator, known only as Oliver, recounts a strange tale told to him by a former university tutor. It concerns an oil painting in the tutor's possession - depicting a carnival scene in Venice - which appears to have a haunting, even hypnotic power. The titular man in the picture is a particularly noticeable figure, apparently an unwilling participant in the festivities, staring out from the scene with an expression of horror and despair. Via the tutor's memories of his meeting with an elderly countess, we learn who this man is (or

appears to be) and the truth of the picture's terrible secret. The tutor's story isn't told all in one go - which is a effective device, as it allows for a break in which Oliver, seriously spooked, returns to his own lodgings and finds himself in the grip of terror. This was my favourite scene in the story and really helped to create an atmosphere of mounting pressure and suspense.

But, on the other hand... I can understand this originally being released as a self-contained miniature book (apparently it was first published at Halloween) but I did nevertheless expect it to have more substance. I only paid a few pounds for it, but then, you can buy sizeable novels for Kindle at the same kind of price. As with *The Woman in Black*, I found myself wishing I could buy a compilation of Hill's ghost stories instead. The problem with reading what is essentially a short story in isolation is that after finishing, I began to feel unsatisfied and to question things about the plot, whereas had it been part of a collection, I don't think these thoughts would have occurred to me. There's no explanation of how the picture comes to acquire its power, what happens to those who are consumed by it or - crucially - how the mysterious Clarissa develops the ability to extract her revenge through it. I was hoping to be left unnerved by the tale but it didn't feel complete, and could have been fleshed out so much more.

Angela says

The Man In The Picture is another little gem in the collection of short novels by Susan Hill, written in the ghost/horror genre. This tells the story of Oliver, who, when visiting his old tutor, Theo Parmiter, hears the chilling tale behind the acquisition and possession of a painting. This painting depicts a carnival scene in Venice, but it is a very special painting, as Oliver learns, to his cost.

I enjoyed the style adopted by the author for the telling of this story. She seems to have stepped straight into the tradition of a previous generation of authors of ghost stories - nothing sensational, but slowly building the tension and sense of foreboding as the plot unfolded. The writing was deceptively simple - easy to read, but with few words, Susan Hill depicted scenes and emotions vividly, creating a chilling and atmospheric novel.

Mark says

Wonderful, scary, horrendously sinister and chilled me to the bone. After the supreme disappointment I had whilst reading 'The small hand' I think Susan Hill returns to, if not quite the top of her game that she reached in 'The woman in black', then certainly pootling around just below the summit.

This story is short and swift moving. Hints and nudges in the direction of something of horror lurking in the shadows is cleverly built up. A picture, which is I suppose a common device in ghost stories dominates as gradually character after character falls victim to its horrifying power. Indeed the whole reminded me of a number of the stories of MR James though this is not in anyway to take away from the brilliance of Hill's creation.

The picture brings a dreadful oppressive atmosphere to the whole story and its ability to some how imprison people within its very oil, to have the image change as each is taken, is horrible. And that horror lasts well after the denouement.

If you are looking for a ghost story to unnerve and unsettle and then build up to shivering and shaking, then this is definitely it. Though I would warn you, you might take to throwing out surreptitious and worried

glances at that oil painting which your granny left you and you are now not so sure about. Definitely a Goodread.

Lata says

This is a small book, and a quick read. The story is fairly enjoyable, though I did not find it scary.

I read the hardcover, which is physically small, while the cover's image conveys the sense of something dark and heavy.

This felt like a Victorian novel, from its language to the dark, broody imagery and to the evil portrait. I felt like much of the story took place at night, in dark rooms, gothic locations.

Maciek says

The Man in the Picture is a short story which was somehow published as a separate book. Even shorter than *The Woman in Black*, the story - although well written - is similarly unoriginal and largely forgettable.

The picture in question is described by the main narrator, Oliver, who himself retells a story told to him by his former university tutor. The tutor is fascinated and frightened by an oil painting from his collection: in its depiction of a Venetian carnival scene, he notices a barely noticeable man observing the festivities with horror and shock, apparently against his will. From Oliver's retelling we learn how the painting came into the tutor's possession, and how he afterwards met an elderly countess who wished to obtain it for her own collection; the tutor is unwilling to relinquish it, wishing to learn the identity of the man in the picture - and both he and Oliver will learn more than they both bargained for.

This is a story which could be told around a campfire, or in a cold winter common room at a English university decades ago, when there was no radio or television, and even books weren't as available as they are now. A seasoned teller could properly build up the atmosphere and sustain tension and dread all the way to the very end, when the listeners would depart and find themselves unable to sleep in their cold, creaking beds. This isn't the case here, as the story itself resembles more the bare bones of a greater effort than the effort itself. A foundation was laid, but the mansion remains unfinished - which is a shame. Susan Hill has all the potential and ability to write ghost stories in the classical way, but her writing needs more innovation and less inspiration to unnerve and chill this reader.

†Roxanne†(Death by Book Avalanche) ? says

I'll admit that this one confused me a little which made me zone in and out every so often, so that would have affected my enjoyment. This was a short creepy read, quite original and well written but I didn't enjoy it as much as I did 'The Woman in Black'. I like a good scare but this just didn't give me the scare I was hoping

for, no goosebumps and the story became too predictable towards the end. Perhaps due to it's short length it came across a little flat, however, considering how short it was it was an ok read.

Brenda says

As a long ago student of Professor Theo Parmiter, Oliver had taken to visiting his old friend in his apartment at Cambridge whenever he was in town. On this particular visit, Theo decided he wanted to tell Oliver the story of the old Venetian painting which was on his wall and had been in his possession for decades. The painting was an eerie and mysterious vision of revellers at a carnival, many of them wearing masks. The story Theo told and the events which had occurred caused profound unease in Oliver...but worse was to come.

Unease and a deep sense of foreboding travelled through each and every person who had a story to tell about the Venetian painting – there was a power attached to it; an evil presence...

I don't read horror as a rule, but needed one for a challenge I was doing. So when I discovered *The Man in the Picture* buried deep in the recesses of books forgotten, and knowing I'd read a Susan Hill before, I thought it would be perfect for the category needed. And it was! Creepy, eerie and sinister – author Susan Hill knows how to make her readers shudder. Recommended for fans of horror and the paranormal.

Deb says

this was mediocre at best. It was a good idea, that of a picture that trapped people in itself but the internal logic was feeble and none of the characters ever came to life. OK, so the story is that a spurned woman uses this picture to take revenge on the man who would have married her and the woman he preferred. There is absolutely no explanation of how she obtained this picture or managed to interact with it to strike at, not only the original couple, but a later couple who have absolutely no connection with the original situation. She is supposedly just another upper-class young English girl, albeit wealthy and very beautiful, and this kind of operation isn't generally covered at the usual ladies academy. There is not even an effort to explain her access by means of exotic background, mysterious relative, or even any personal interest in archane and occult matters. The picture just arrives and the new wife feels forboding. Not only that, we are supposed to believe that this same woman is so beautiful that she managed to seduce the son of the original couple twenty years later. not so much. The story tries very hard to be ominous, but just managed to just be bleak-ish.

Jeanette says

This was excellent, much more than the 3 star would imply. It's 3.5 stars. The reason I didn't go for 4, was because of the ending. Up until that portion of the last 3 pages, it was fully 4 stars.

Why? Because of the mood it set and the depth of the creepiness. The descriptive language and sinuous twisting grasp of malice that just entwined. Not only you, the reader, either.

For some reason the length of this novella heightened the effect, did not lessen it. It's a one sitting goose

bumps and hair rising on your neck interlude. In fact, much later I had it pop into my head and that heaviness of dread returned immediately. Exactly as if you were being watched, knew it- and still have full cognition that it could not be true at the same time.

Slight spoiler ahead- but it certainly changes little of the plot.

What failed for me was that it became beyond macabre and into ridiculous when the final wife, Anne, wanted a Venetian honeymoon (after the new husband's hearing of the former long history and what he has witnessed). Come on! Pulls of the super normal or spell of the painting, those non-withstanding! Her husband would have opted for Paris and ditched the painting back to the old lady as soon as his old college prof.'s corpse was cold. The damn thing was laying on the floor anyway- who would have known? He would not have caved into a Venice for the gift of three separate country estates.

That kind of malice, depicted in this tale, does exist. Anger turned both inward and outward like a toddler who will hold its breath and pass out, when not getting his /her way in tantrum, as long as the agony of noise and chaos of continued curse spreads. Revenge and that angry outrage of "dissatisfaction" is poison, both to self and to others. When the poison is spread so widely, as in this story? Horror. Susan Hill could write -truly fixate that mood and malicious intent. Sublimely.

Cheryl says

A man visits his old professor at Cambridge, who tells him the strange story of a painting he owns. The book's narration becomes a story within a story within a story. The pace slowly builds, adding a feeling of dread throughout the plot. Fans of M. R. James and Algernon Blackwood will enjoy this weird tale. The writing style really makes me think of those two authors. An enjoyable old-fashioned horror story.

Delee says

[image error]

Melora says

3 1/2 stars.

A fine little ghost story! Just the right thing to read on a dark, snowed-in afternoon.

Bionic Jean says

The Man in the Picture, by Susan Hill, is a very enjoyable read on a dark winter's evening. It has echoes of earlier English ghost stories, some of which can't quite be grasped. The setting and feel created is reminiscent of M.R. James and Daphne du Maurier. The story is set in College rooms (although the university here is Cambridge, rather than M.R. James's Oxford) as well as London, and also an old country house in a remote part of the North. We have one of M.R. James's favourite devices - a story narrated by one character to another; a story within a story. We have events which are reported to have taken place in the

distant past. We have rumour and suspicion. We have suspense created by breaks in the story as "real life" interferes. But most of all we have atmosphere. As the author herself says,

"What makes a good ghost story? Atmosphere. How do you create atmosphere? By working yourself into it imaginatively until you are there - you can see, hear, sense and even smell your atmosphere."

Have you read *"The Picture of Dorian Gray"*? Have you ever been in a room where you feel the eyes of a person in a portrait follow you round the room? Well those sinister sorts of feelings are conjured up by this novel, and one of the characters is straight out of a gothic romance. It is a chilling and horrific story of revenge.

As the title suggests, this is a tale of a painting, and one of the people it is. The painting is a complex and detailed view of Venice at Carnival time, when the people wear masks. The masks are intended to disguise people's identity, but this story develops into a haunting spine-chiller. The reader learns of the painting's history, and its future, its transmogrification, and why it becomes the most important thing in the life of anyone who owns it.

There are few new ideas in this story, but the whole is very satisfactorily woven together. Susan Hill is an English author of fiction, short stories and some factual books. She achieved literary success at an early age, publishing her first novel at 19, whilst in her first year at university. Her books cover a wide range of themes, and four have won major literary awards. She also writes the very popular *"Simon Serrailler"* series of crime novels. She has always had a leaning towards the gothic, and in 1983 wrote *"The Woman in Black"*. Latterly she has also taken to writing an annual Christmas ghost story; this one is from 2007. These very accomplished novellas are also more geared toward the popular market, as she says,

"I love writing ghost stories, though I confess I don't take them too seriously, and I love reading them, too. I have learnt that there's no room for padding, for no superfluous words. Less is always more."

"I like to work my way gradually to the frightening heart of a ghost story, lull the reader into a sense of security before letting them become aware of the screw and, a little later, beginning to turn it."
