



## The Evil Guest

*J. Sheridan Le Fanu*

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## **The Evil Guest** J. Sheridan Le Fanu

The letter from the rich cousin came at a low point in the Marston family's finances. The man was as ill-bred and pushing as ever: utterly the model of a noxious relation -- but he was rich, and the Marstons were all but destitute. The family could hardly refuse him. But they would come to rue that letter, and the invitation that followed it; it was the beginning of the end for all of them. Of course it was! Common sense tells us not to take on . . . THE EVIL GUEST

(Jacketless library hardcover.)

## **The Evil Guest Details**

Date : Published December 4th 2003 by Online Distributed Proofreading Team (first published 1895)

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Author : J. Sheridan Le Fanu

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## From Reader Review The Evil Guest for online ebook

### Christina says

The ending of this book left me with more questions than the mystery through out the book. It wasn't worth the read. Stick to other gothic novels. Try The Scarlet Pimpernel. Much more entertaining and fewer questions left.

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### Cissy says

Oh, brother. Well, it was free on my Kindle.

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### Lotzastitches says

Somewhat difficult to follow at times but was an ok read. Short.

Best descriptive quote which takes you back to the title of the book....

"Had Ithuriel touched with his spear the beautiful young woman, thus for a moment, as it seemed, lost in a trance of gratitude and love, would that angelic form have stood the test unscathed? A spectator, marking the scene, might have observed a strange gleam in her eyes--a strange expression in her face--an influence for a moment not angelic, like a shadow of some passing spirit, cross her visibly, as she leaned over the gentle lady's neck, and murmured, "Dear madame, how happy--how very happy you make me." Such a spectator, as he looked at that gentle lady, might have seen, for one dreamy moment, a lithe and painted serpent, coiled round and round, and hissing in her ear." Location:151-59

So I had to google "Ithuriel". Turned up this..."By touching Satan with his spear, Ithuriel causes the Tempter to resume his proper likeness."

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### Susan says

This started off with a lot of promise of being a dark and deeply gothic murder mystery. Secrets were hinted at and there were tantalising glimpses at what had occurred in the Marston household. Disappointingly, the ending was neither mysterious nor particularly dark and far less exciting or satisfying than the possibilities I had entertained while reading.

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### DeAnna Knippling says

Le Fanu protests in the intro that this isn't a sensationalist novel--but it's hard to see where it isn't. A proto-murder mystery, very similar to Lady Audley's Secret. However, much more tightly written, and with a

minimum amount of "o woe is me."

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### **Crystal says**

Slow to start, but I expected that based on the author's era. The story does pick up eventually, but it never quite makes it to a racing finish. For my first exposure to Le Fanu, I was disappointed in the story, but I will try another of his works. Perhaps I simply chose poorly for my first book.

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### **Lara Galgani says**

I cannot see the point of this little story, there is no suspense, no horror, nothing. The title has no real meaning, lots of points are left unanswered and, even taking into account when it was written, the writing is dull.

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### **Estelle says**

A dark tale of murder, secrets, manipulation and tragic fate with some intriguing and mysterious characters. I randomly picked this audiobook on LibriVox thinking I'd play it in the background and listen with a distracted ear, but instead I quickly found myself completely captivated by the mystery. I ended up dropping what I was doing and listened to the whole thing in one sitting. :)

This was surprisingly good, it had tension and a few gruesome moments. I particularly enjoyed the elegant, gothic writing style and the foreboding atmosphere.

It was just what I was in the mood for!

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### **Laura says**

Another great gothic mystery written by Sheridan Le Fanu.

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### **Rachel says**

#### **A surprising read**

I have long been a fan of Le Fanu's Gothic tales of horror so was expecting this to be in the same vein.

It isn't at all. The only monsters within this story are people. Any fear is due to the characters feelings of inadequacy, a hope of love that is never fulfilled and the betrayal of one of the most loyal, yet burdened, players within the story.

At its heart it is a mystery, a whodunnit, and the circumstances around one particular event. Information that

is given to a character is kept from the reader, in one instance we never truly find out what was discovered. The biggest thread within the story seems to be - do we ever truly know who others are, deep down. Can we ever predict their actions, even if they are the closest people to us?

I would recommend this story to anyone, regardless of their reading habits. I would, however, warn that in places it is a hard slog, Le Fanu's writing style is of his era so can be trying at times!

It is worth it, though, as what you take away from the story is as apt now as it was 100+ years ago

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### **Christian says**

Better to stick with Le Fanu's short stories, I think. This is beyond purple prose—D.H. Lawrence was over-the-top for my tastes, and this novel is even more labyrinthine. Grammatically, Le Fanu allows himself a brace of liberties that challenge even the diligent reader. Asides, parentheticals, supplementary insertions and incidentals all conspire to befuddle and occlude casual comprehension. It is not enough to describe an action: Le Fanu must also pack in the condition of the actor's hair, the cut of their topcoat, what dark imaginings emerge and writhe behind his furrowed brow, the placement of a chair, the weather, what happened this day 25 years ago in baseball history, etc. Even the final few paragraphs of the denouement lapse into meta-commentary, as though the author himself were describing his own work to someone about to read it by way of friendly warning.

I enjoy Le Fanu's shorter stories, without waiver. Absolutely, his work is a jewel in the world of supernatural fiction and horror. It's just that this novel feels like an unpolished work-in-progress, the first draft in which he'd lavishly enjoyed mugs of hot brandy and indulged in every last grammatical whimsy that came to mind, yet neglected to edit it all down in the next morning's sobering light.

This is a great specimen by which to learn new vocabulary words. It's a fun romp through antiquated grammatical structure. It is important for the dedicated student of Le Fanu. But this is not casual reading for the indifferent reader.

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### **Marts (Thinker) says**

Through labeled as a gothic read this definitely isn't, however it is a classic murder mystery which takes a bit long to get back to the plot's focus at times. All in all its a pretty ok classic read through...

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### **BJ Haun says**

This is the second book I have read that was written by this author, the other being the vampire-tale Carmilla, which I enjoyed. Sadly, this book much less interesting. What starts out looking like a somewhat interesting period-piece murder mystery turns into a slow, plodding story of a miserable man and his family. It just wasn't any fun to read, and I wouldn't really recommend it.

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## **Lindegard says**

A good Gothic tale that keeps the reader guessing, strong at the start but fading away as the book progresses. The literary style and Le Fanu's wizardry with the English language make this a must read for all fanciers of 19th century horror.

Consider elegantly spun sentences such as: "And how soon, my dear Richard, do you intend fixing his arrival?" she inquired, with the natural uneasiness of one upon whom, in an establishment whose pretensions considerably exceeded its resources, the perplexing cares of housekeeping devolved."

And in this scene, the young French governess is insinuating herself into the favors of her kind-hearted, care-worn mistress: "A spectator, marking the scene, might have observed a strange gleam in her eyes--a strange expression in her face--an influence for a moment not angelic, like a shadow of some passing spirit, cross her visibly, as she leaned over the gentle lady's neck, and murmured, 'Dear madame, how happy--how very happy you make me.' Such a spectator, as he looked at that gentle lady, might have seen, for one dreamy moment, a lithe and painted serpent, coiled round and round, and hissing in her ear."

The plot, however, is not entirely satisfying, with richly drawn characters in whom we have invested our interest and fascination, quickly dropped in the final pages.

Still, it is a short work, a novella, and overall, the reader's efforts are amply rewarded. I am moving on to Haunted Lives, which I hope to review here by the end of the year.

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## **Kacey says**

Following up on the heels of Carmilla, this was not nearly as good. It's still interesting and I'm always a fan of books that take on the more psychological side of horror, but I fear its weaknesses were enough to downgrade a star.

Honestly, I think the biggest problem is that this piece is presented as one long narrative. Carmilla was broken up into chapters, and even if the action in one chapter bled into the start of the next, it still had that break. Kind of like allowing the reader to breathe before moving on. This piece allowed no such break, which isn't always bad; it just didn't work in this case.

I was enjoying it too, especially the parts where certain characters seemed to be losing their minds. But then it went on a weird track by bringing in Satanic/evil forces. Which, again, isn't always a bad thing to have in a horror story. It just seemed to switch the tone of this particular one.

I don't know, maybe if I read this one before Carmilla I would have a different opinion on it. It has some good moments and that sense of unease I like. I just think it would've done better as a psychological horror/thriller and not bringing in the more supernatural elements.

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