



Darkwater

Dorothy Eden

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Fanny Davenport has lived at Darkwater ever since she was brought there as a young orphan. She both loves and detests the forbidding English estate on the moors, haunted by the death of its long-ago mistress. When the scream of a bird caught in the chimney pierces the gloom one night, she knows it to be a harbinger of violent things to come.

It all begins when Fanny boards a ship to pick up two Chinese children who have been entrusted to her uncle's care. But Adam Marsh, the handsome stranger who hands over the sister and brother, may be an imposter. Then the children's elderly amah disappears. The reappearance of Adam Marsh only raises more questions. Can Fanny trust him? Is he her only ally against a cunning killer waiting to claim one more life?

Darkwater Details

Date : Published July 9th 2013 by Open Road Media (first published September 1963)

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Author : Dorothy Eden

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Genre : Gothic, Romance, Mystery, Fiction, Suspense, Gothic Romance, Historical, Historical Fiction

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From Reader Review Darkwater for online ebook

Cphe says

This should have been a 5 star read. All of the elements were present for a wonderfully, sinister gothic romance but they just didn't quite come together in this book.

Really there was everything a reader wants, a beautiful impoverished heroine, a mysterious male character who may or may not have nefarious designs on the heroine, an isolated English mansion, Darkwater where strange and menacing events occur. All of the above set amongst a backdrop of the dark, menacing and infamous Dartmoor.

The story did have a wonderfully gothic feel to it but the leading characters just didn't stand out and carry the tale. Also the mystery component was bland, it didn't take a lot of effort to know who the culprit was early on and the ending was a bit of a fizzer.

I've enjoyed other books by Dorothy Eden over the years but this one was disappointing. Not a keeper.

Falina says

This book was a well-written, complex web of intriguing characters. Unfortunately, the most interesting characters were the peripheral ones: Lady Arabella, the alternately vindictive and helpful great-aunt; and Amelia, the 17-year-old cousin who has an obsession with escaped prisoners (one in particular as the novel progresses). Fanny, the heroine, was somewhat bland. Adam Marsh as a hero was okay, but not sexy or sinister enough to suit me. It is a gothic novel, after all, so I give myself carte blanche to expect a Romantic, threatening hero.

One different thing about the novel was the issue of race raised through the narrative's connection to China. There is some cynical display on behalf of the author of the racism of the flightier people in the novel -- the refusal to accept a Chinese "nurse," worry about whether or not two orphaned children would turn out to be "yellow," etc. The perfection of racism in the Victorian period is something that is more taken for granted than critiqued in most romance novels, so it was refreshing to see it called to attention.

Overall, Darkwater was better than I expected. I only made a concentrated effort to read it because I wanted to finish just one more novel before New Year's Day and I had to finish my "Books Read, 2007" list, so I wasn't expecting much. However, it did turn out to be tolerable, even enjoyable, though I would have been much more interested in a book about Amelia and her passion for criminals. I should force myself to finish books more often.

Laina says

I can't give this five stars because I didn't think it was really that original, but I still absolutely loved it. Here's what I loved:

The gothic setting. It had a very Wuthering Heights (my favorite book) feel to it with the moors of England and the dark setting. It was intense, and I was a little jumpy when I finished it and looked out my window at the dark landscape.

The writing. It was superb. Dorothy Eden manages to write in a time era that she did not live in, and she does it without copying Jane Austen or the Bronte sisters, but she does it so you feel the setting and believe it. It was remarkable, and I was drawn in.

The Chinese twist. :) I liked the bringing in of the Chinese amah and the children from China.

However, as happens in most books, the main character bugged me a bit. She was too pretty... too perfect. Her only weakness was her vainness and her love for attention. I felt bad for poor Cousin Amelia through most of the book and related better to her than Fanny.

Overall, I would suggest this book to any mystery lover. I really enjoyed it. :)

Christine Honsinger says

I liked this one, as I liked the last Dorothy Eden book I read. I think I'd have been happier, though, if the lead character of the heroine had been developed a bit more. Ms Eden had done so well with characterizing the personalities of the other members of the family, I knew them all very well, much better than I knew the lead character Fanny herself...I did feel very sorry for her in her predicament...but that was about it...I didn't particularly like her as I didn't really know her well enough to feel one way or the other about her...pity for her situation was all she had going for her...but over all, another fun summer gothic read!

OLT says

Maybe five stars is too many for this but it's probably my favorite of Eden's Gothics. For whatever reason, this one gave me the desired feeling of dread and impending doom that a lot of Gothics don't manage to supply.

Everyone except the heroine Fanny (orphaned young and raised by her aunt and uncle at Darkwater) seems appropriately suspicious. There's superficially genial Uncle Edgar, whose rather unpleasant personality is too close to the surface not to show itself frequently when he's crossed. His too ambitious wife, Aunt Louisa, who wants only the best for herself and her daughter Amelia. Amelia, spoiled and jealous of Fanny's beauty and wanting to be the girl everyone notices and admires. Lady Arabella, Louisa's mother, who loves to tell children scary stories and wants only the best for grandson George (Amelia's brother). George, a veteran of the Crimean War, who comes back broken emotionally, fixated on Fanny and with a very short fuse.

We also have two young orphans, recently integrated into the household after the death of their father (brother to Uncle Edgar) and mother in China. And then there's Adam Marsh, man of mystery, who meets Fanny when she goes to pick up the orphans in London upon their arrival from China, and then, unexpectedly, moves to an estate near Darkwater on the moors. Will he be the love interest for Fanny? Or is he not to be trusted either? And why is he paying so much attention to Amelia?

There's the death of one character, the disappearance of another, the escape of a convict, lots of questionable behavior by several of the characters, the mystery of the "white bird" enhanced to a scary level by Lady Arabella in her retelling of the tale to the new orphans, intrigue about jewels, money and inheritances. And some low-key romance. What more could a Gothic romance have?

This is relatively old, having been written in 1963, so you'll have to put up with some outdated prejudices and ideas, but it's a Victorian Gothic and all that fits the times of the setting.

Maggi Andersen says

I love Eden's Gothic novels. Even though there's a sameness about some of them, they satisfy what a reader of the genre comes to expect in a Gothic romance. A great mansion. A handsome mysterious stranger who is obviously not what he seems, an intelligent feisty heroine, a murder mystery, a dangerous foe, and in this one, two vulnerable children who need protecting. A great read.

Ayesha says

<3 ;)

Swathi says

I read this book years ago and now am currently reading it again. This is one of eden's best work. Her description of Dark Water is vivid and i can almost see that place and even more interesting are the characters in the book especially the uncle and aunt. The heroine is very good and i really loved the story.

Nenia ? Queen of Literary Trash, Protector of Out-of-Print Gems, Khaleesi of Bodice Rippers, Mother of Smut, the Unrepentant, Breaker of Convention ? Campbell says

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? Read for the Unapologetic Romance Readers **Halloween 2017 Reading Challenge** for the category of: *gothic romance* ?

As of 10/04/17, this book is currently only \$1.99 for Kindle.

I really enjoyed this little book. Granted, my hopes were low. I'd looked through the reviews of DARKWATER and many of them were saying that DARKWATER was dull and flat, with a raging Mary Sue of a heroine who wouldn't STFU.

To my surprise, I found myself with a rather delightful Gothic romance written in the vein of such popular favorites as Victoria Holt or Patricia Maxwell (AKA, Jennifer Blake). Better yet, I got to buddy read it with one of my new Goodreads friends, Elena.

Fanny is the ward of some awful relations. Her uncle, Edgar, is an enabler to his cold and greedy wife, Louisa, and air-headed, vain daughter, Amelia. Much to the rage and annoyance of Louisa and Amelia, Fanny is far prettier than Amelia, the heiress, and is constantly turning heads despite being poor. When Edgar finds out he has *two new wards* to take care of, he's the only one who seems indifferent, even pleased. Louisa is annoyed and Amelia, disenchanted. Fanny is the only member of the family who truly harbors a soft spot for the young children, and despite having planned to use their pick-up as a chance to escape, voluntarily stays on in order to care for and nanny them.

I just want to pause here, and say that I often hate seeing children in fiction because they're either way too precocious and cutesy, or else used as plot points without much in the way of characterization. These children, Nolly (Olivia) and Marcus were incredibly well-written and actually acted like children (i.e. at times sweet, at other times, bratty). They added a lot of comic relief but they also stood on their own as characters. I also thought that Fanny's family was well done. Amelia was far from being the b*tchy, jealous rival... she had moments of thoughtless kindness, and even Louisa had some humanizing emotions. I felt like that made their dynamic so much more interesting.

Oh, and then there's George. Fanny's creepy, "no maybe means yes" cousin. Ew, George. Ew.

The love interest, Adam Marsh, appears mysteriously (such is the way of the gothic romance) and leaves just as mysteriously. When he returns, he seems more interested in Amelia than Fanny (much to Fanny's devastating) and he strings Fanny along while cavorting with Amelia, which I really disliked him for. *Obviously* there is an explanation towards the end, but I so did not buy that.

Call me slow, but I didn't guess the perpetrator(s) until the very end. I wasn't trying to figure it out, though. I was reading DARKWATER in between reading Stephen King's IT, and this cozy mystery was the perfect balm for sleepless nights inspired by psychotic, murder-happy clowns. I just sat back and let the story carry me away, and found myself pleasantly surprised by the journey.

If you enjoy Gothic novels, this is a great addition to the collection. I want to read more Eden now!

3.5 to 4 stars

Donna Weaver says

WHAT IT'S ABOUT:

A tale of love and peril in a haunted old English mansion. Fanny knew then that Adam felt as she did about the strange events at Darkwater. Even before the sudden death of the old Chinese amah, she had sensed a chill of menace in the atmosphere. Now there was real peril in the mists and fogs that beshrouded the ancient English estate. There was danger...especially for Fanny -- ravishing, lovely young Fanny -- who was too curious and headstrong for her own good.

MY TAKE

This is personally one of my favorite Dorothy Eden books. I read it the first time when I was a young teen. I loved it! The description, the tension, the creepy elements, the mystery, and Adam. He was one of my first literary crushes. Since it's out of print now, I had to search far to find a copy.

Sarah Mac says

DNF. In the words of *Pearls Before Swine*, "I am spared cuz I don't care."

Yet again we have an Eden heroine who yammers on about correct behavior & proper social interaction, because apparently this is supposed to provide Historical Backdrop. Of course, dear reader -- let's not forget that 19th-c peeps NEVER EVER EVER said or did anything without examining the social propriety of their actions & then acted entirely by those rules -- only villains & scurvy on-the-fringe creepsters dared to ignore the judgment of society, right?!

Spare me.

The heroine's flip-flopping inconsistencies irked me like crazy. Example: she's dead set on fleeing her poor relation status & taking up with Florence Nightingale's crew -- NOTHING will deter her from her purpose, dammit! -- until she catches sight of two sprogs on the railway playform & her heart melts & she goes BACK to the house she so carefully planned to escape, because clearly her new purpose is to love & guard these two soppy, mopey brats.

Spare me. Again.

I gave it 2 stars because this one had a better gothic atmosphere than other Edens, but it wasn't enough to entice completion.

Hannah says

Decent gothic fare from the 1960's, but the ending was a bit weak.

Ardith says

This story is worth anyone's time,if you like historical romances.

I remember reading these novels by Mary Stewart when I was young. My mother-in-law belonged to the book of the month Club and she bought everyone of her stories. I borrowed them all. That was over 60 years ago.

Eric Henderson says

Some interesting characters, including a shell-shocked, over-amorous "brother" who promises to kill anyone who gets between our girl & himself, and an affable uncle who may be the actual villain. No big action/suspense scene at the end, which is fine, just a sign that there was a lot to wrap up, lots of secrets to reveal, in the last few pages. I like the way Dorothy Eden deals with issues of race and class in her books - the attitudes of the time she's writing about are taken in stride, but the main character is always the most progressive one.

Margaret Wheeler says

A Good Read

Ms Eden's books are a wonderful combination of romance, the supernatural and mystery. A rousing good read with a cup of tea on a rainy day or in the dark of the night.
