

# Sight Unseen

Mary Roberts  
Rinehart



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## **Sight Unseen** Mary Roberts Rinehart

It was sinister, mysterious, dark. Its immediate effect on my imagination was apprehension - almost terror. Murder or suicide, here among the shadows a soul, an indestructible thing, had been recently violently wrenched from its body. The body lay in the room overhead. But what of the spirit?

## **Sight Unseen Details**

Date : Published February 1st 2007 by Echo Library (first published 1921)

ISBN : 9781406839234

Author : Mary Roberts Rinehart

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Genre : Mystery, Classics, Fiction, Romance, Thriller, Mystery Thriller

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## From Reader Review Sight Unseen for online ebook

### Whistlers Mom says

Can a woman get inside a man's head?

As a reader, I'm fascinated with the difference that point of view makes. Some authors always write in either first person or third person. Some use different narrative styles in different books and I've read a few books that mixed the two styles. Generally, I think that mysteries are more immediate and compelling written in first person, although some of my favorites are written in third person.

Rinehart used both styles. When her books do have a narrator, it's usually a woman. The novella SIGHT UNSEEN has a male narrator, as does THE RED LAMP. Interestingly, both center around mediums and psychic phenomenon. Did Rinehart think that men would be more likely to be interested in "spiritualism" (as it was then known) or was she hinting that they are more credulous and easier to fool than women?

In the early 1900's psychology and "psycho-analysis" had become popular subjects and psychic phenomenon was widely believed to be part of the new, scientific view of the human brain and how it works. Seances were popular and mainstream. The six middle-aged, middle-class people in the Neighborhood Club aren't doing anything particularly unusual by hiring a young medium to entertain them at one of their meetings. What she tells them seems intriguing, but little more. But when events prove that she's described a death that occurred as she spoke, matters take a more serious tone.

The dead man appears to have committed suicide, but the neighbors aren't satisfied. Is it because they disapprove of his young wife and her incessant partying and her obvious boyfriends? Or are they correct that a popular, easy-going, healthy man would be unlikely to kill himself? It makes a difference to them and not just because a murderer may escape justice. As it stands, Arthur Wells will be forever branded by "the stigma of moral cowardice, of suicide." There was little sympathy then for people guilty of self-destruction and even less for their families.

I found the characters fascinating, as I always do in Rinehart's books. The narrator (a pompous lawyer) and his devoted-but-suspicious wife. The skeptical doctor who has a vested interest in the medium's safety. And Mrs Dane - elderly, disabled, but brimming with life and energy. "Never have I known a woman, confined to a wheelchair, live so hard" says the narrator admiringly. Her zest for life (and gossip) drives the plot.

Rinehart was a wife and the mother of three sons. I suspect she knew as much about men as any woman can know. So did she do a good job of getting inside the head of her male narrator or did she use this particular literary device to poke gentle fun at men in general? Every reader must decide for himself.

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### Kelly says

A fun and simple whodunnit with a good sense of humour and an endearingly less than macho "detective".

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### **Kettle Macaulay says**

Anyone who is researching spiritualism (as I am) would appreciate this little spooky novella. It does have a great sense of humor employed throughout and I liked it, though again, the ending seemed to unravel quickly to it's conclusion with a 'poof' more than a 'bang'.

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### **Linda Fox says**

Probably not the best of the old romance writers, but I like her books.

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### **Judy says**

far-fetched and totally dissatisfying -- compared with her other books, a disappointment! Don't waste your time!

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### **Jenn Estep says**

Part mystery, part ghost story. Or is it? Maniacal laugh, maniacal laugh. (Yes, I did watch the Muppets yesterday.) Genuinely spooky bits and I finished it in one sitting without intending to. So, there's that.

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### **Judy says**

Not worth searching for. Time that I could have spent reading something that I enjoyed.

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### **Marci says**

I had such a good time with this book! It is not at all what I expected after reading some of the reviews, but it does fit extremely well with her books of that same decade. It is billed as a ghost story or horror story, but what I think it really is, is a farce with a murder mystery, a seance and a bit of the supernatural thrown in, and some very funny social drama to envelop everything. I know it sounds as if I should be calling it a social comedy, but it is not comedy--it just has some people with utterly no sense of humor who end up doing hilarious things in the course of the investigation of the murder and the horror. I just loved this book. It was published in 1920, and it tells the tale of something that happened six or seven years before, just before WWI. The narrator is a lawyer in his early 50s. I highly recommend it.

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## **Ronald says**

read some time in 1988

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## **Amber says**

Looks to be a yummy mystery with a paranormal twist. MRR is a real fave.

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## **Monika Hranj says**

- Od tada znam da postoji ludilo hrabrosti rođene iz užasa. Ništa nije moglo biti nepodnošljivije nego tamo sjediti i čekati. To je isto ludilo koje je ljude izvlačilo iz rovova mina i gotovo sigurne smrti, radije nego da sjede i čekaju što bi moglo doći.

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## **Neal B Kilbane says**

### **Table tapping.**

An interesting book that Pursues the supernatural. A mysterious death and a séance to discover who committed the deadly deed.

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## **Sarah says**

Interesting and odd mystery. More of a short story format.

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## **Christine Cody says**

Each of Mary Roberts Rinehart's books differ in many ways. In this one, she relates the tale as a first-person narrative of a 50-year-old man, Horace Johnson. He and his wife, with six friends, form what they call the Neighborhood Club and get together regularly at each of their homes to hold discussions, sometimes heated, about a wide variety of topics. At the beginning of this eerie novel, the hostess that night surprises them by introducing a young medium who will conduct a seance. The friends are in the main very skeptical, although they can't help be at least a little edgy after they realize the medium seems to have witnessed a murder, calling out various clues during the seance and not remembering any of it afterwards.

Later that night, another member of the Club, Horace's friend Dr. Sperry, calls and asks Horace to accompany him to a neighbors' home, in which the husband has apparently committed suicide. The two are

shocked when they realize that the scene seems to have all of the clues the medium had provided just hours earlier.

The book details the unofficial, clandestine investigation the two, then three, and eventually all members of the Neighborhood Club conduct after realizing the medium may have foreseen a murder. As with all Rinehart's work, spare but beautiful language carries the reader through an intriguing, believable, and often spine-tingling tale.

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### **Cindy says**

second read of this author.....not overly thrilled.

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