



The Haunted

Bentley Little

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The Perry family's new house is perfect-except for the weird behavior of the neighbors, and that odd smell coming from a dark corner in the basement. Pity no one warned the family about the house. Now it's too late. Because the darkness at the bottom of the basement stairs is rising.

The Haunted Details

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From Reader Review The Haunted for online ebook

Kathy Jackson says

I know, I know...I probably should wait to do this post - let the story sink in more - but I'd rather do it when emotions run high.

The story started out well enough - scary, a bit perplexing, even a trifle bit of humor. The family is at the house and at first little things happen - a record player plays itself and a laundry basket seems to enjoy wandering around the house. There is an eeriness that keeps you on seat's edge but doesn't go so far as to seem horrifying. It is easy to like the children and even the parents though you can't help but roll your eyes at how all of them refuse to tell each other what they have experienced for fear of ridicule. I could see one or two of them being that way but all four? Doubtful.

I'm sure if I saw a monster in my room and I was a child, I would be screaming for my parents or, at the very least, running from the room. Each character played the typical ghost story roles - the husband is skeptic, the mother is sure it is her own forgetfulness, the daughter is sullen and the boy is terrified. It would have been nice if there had been some role reversal - let the wife, a lawyer, be the skeptic and the husband, who was the creative sort, be intimidated.

Sex scenes galore were a part of the story as well - it isn't that I oppose of them but they served no purpose other than to imply that the couple was acting different from they had when they lived elsewhere. I didn't need an anal sex scene to figure that one out.

Bentley didn't get around to explaining the history of the house until the middle of the book and then sprang things on us that was rather irritating. My writing teacher told me, and I'd have to agree, that no one likes things sprung on them when it is convenient for the character. Such as, don't make the wife a sudden crack shot with a rifle when the monster is coming at her without explaining earlier in the story that she was a sniper in the army when she was younger. I found this rather annoying.

Overall, the book was predictable and like dozens of other haunted stories I've read with the same ending as well. It was more than little disappointing. I give the book a C-.

Jen from Quebec :0) says

Well, this book had moments of brilliance and moments of cliched tropes as well. It was all over the place by the end, and left too many things unanswered for me to be satisfied completely. What happened to Roger? What happened to all the cases the mom (a lawyer) was working on? What happened to ALL the secondary characters, such as Robbie and Zoe and Cole? Also, the book was puttering along, with a few good scares here and there when - BAM - suddenly we are getting flashbacks of the town from 1538, 1820, 1921, and other random years, none of which were followed up on sufficiently. I DID enjoy the ending, but wish it had been longer, as this book was almost 400 pages and most of it was unanswered questions, leading to an ending that *could* have been made even better had more time been spent on it. This was my 1st Bentley Little book, and I DID enjoy it, but I think that he must have better books out there than this one. I read this for a Group Reading Challenge, and I am curious to try out another of his novels; so THAT'S a good thing, I

suppose. In the end, the good outweighed the bad, but if you hate loose ends, this novel WILL make you cringe a bit....--Jen from Quebec :0)

Dirk Grobbelaar says

The next morning, [he] found a bobcat skeleton in the dirt.

I've been meaning to start reading Bentley Little for some time now. I wasn't quite sure what to expect from *The Haunted*; not only is it one of Little's newest novels, it also received some fairly polarised reviews.

She stopped, stared, her heart pounding.

I'm fairly sure that this isn't the **best** place to begin reading Little, but it was the only one I had close at hand. Haunted house mysteries are nothing new, and taking the evolution of fiction into account, it's no real surprise if authors push the boundaries a bit. That said, this wasn't overly gory by any means.

Something that seems to be a point of discussion is the sexual behaviour depicted in, or psycho-sexual aspect of, the novel. Even though it makes for potentially uneasy reading, I completely understand the inclusion as part of the story progression and to show the affect that the house has on its occupants. Fortunately Little steers clear of too much graphic detail.

*So why did she feel as if she wasn't alone?
Because she wasn't.*

Something that I found quite enjoyable is the author's penchant to interrupt himself when something shocking happens. Sentences and character thoughts are often left incomplete to deal with danger; it gives the events an immediacy that can be lacking in some horror stories.

"I was in the room where things grow old."

Another common criticism seems to be the fact that not everything in this novel makes sense. But I'm not sure whether it's supposed to. *The Haunted* is from that surreal school of horror that spawned the likes of *A Nightmare on Elm Street*. The haunting depicted here is anything but subtle.

The irrational lethargic behaviour of both the house occupants and the neighbours (given the obvious nature of the threat) is explained to some extent, but will still strike most readers as odd.

This wasn't a situation where the choices were self-evident.

For all its (apparent) shortcomings, *The Haunted* is still an engaging read. There are moments of genuine creepiness and even though it wasn't as flat out **scary** as I'd hoped it still has more than enough to offer. There are some layers here that rate a second look. I'm certainly keen to check out some Little classics like *The Store* and *The Mailman*.

[He] reached under the coffee table for the flashlight he kept on the shelf there in case of blackouts. His searching fingers couldn't find it, but seconds later, a lamp atop the end table opposite the couch switched

*on, bathing the area in a weak yellowish glow.
He was not alone in the living room.*

Rachel (TheShadesofOrange) says

3.5 Stars

At times, this book felt more like a contemporary, focusing on the mundane details of family life, real estate and politics. However, this book also contained some very explicit sex scenes, which were quite unexpected in this seemingly quiet haunted house story. The psychological sexual effects were easily the most disturbing aspects of this novel. Although I enjoyed this psychosomatic effect, these scenes could be too graphic for more sensitive readers. Also, trigger warnings for cutting. Despite the family drama, this is a fairly enjoyable haunted house story with a few surprisingly creepy moments.

Jason says

Despite its bleakness, Bentley Little's newest, *The Haunted*, was a lot of fun to read. Although Little is known for his sense of humor, I warn you to not look for that here. This is a book that is dark, bleak, and full of despair as the Perry family loses control of their average, every day lives.

The story is about an innocent family haunted by their new house, but it reminded me of self-abuse spinning out of control, the unknown anger and angst of adolescence, the fear and desperation of a child stuck in a family haunted by its past and current abuses. And this is without any of those subjects taking center stage.

We start off with the Perry family looking to move out of what they feel is becoming a bad neighborhood. Had they known what they were in for, perhaps they would have stayed and put up with the bully kids, the ones who use the Perry family's driveway for skate board practice without permission. Now that they have moved, however, they're trapped in debt and stuck with a ghost, or maybe it's some other entity, that's physically abusive and life threatening.

This book is about the love and hate of a family (that innocent family with the average lives I mentioned earlier), invaded by unknown forces. It's a book about what's not in your control, and how what's good and average can turn to bad and abnormal at any time.

As this is a haunted house book, there's nothing really new here. Yet, the haunted house book has been written regularly for close to two hundred years now, so what are you looking for? Something groundbreaking?

I don't think so.

Give *The Haunted* a try. Its got some real creepy moments that's excluded from a lot of other horror novels. I highly recommend it.

Adam Light says

This is the most release of Little's books that I have read. As is typical with his work, there is the unmistakable imprint of the author's voice on every page, and the writing is easy to digest, the pages turn almost with a will of their own. *The Haunted* really flew by, though. I finished it in three sittings, over one weekend, which is a rare feat for me these days.

Everything was here, for fans of the author, all the trademark characteristics he fuses into his narratives that keep us coming back for more. Hell, the town of Jardine, the book's setting, even has *The Store* for all your shopping needs.

The weirdness factor was maybe toned down a bit, and there was nothing overtly original going on, so it doesn't occupy a space among others like *The Ignored*, *The Mailman*, or *The Association* on the best of Bently Little shelf. Still, this was a dark, creepy, relentless ride through a haunting by one of the masters. Fully worth the read.

Nick Cato says

Julian and Claire Perry, along with their young son and teenage daughter, move to a better neighborhood in New Mexico. They love the new house, although each one begins to have issues with it, stemming from similar nightmares they share as well as sightings of a creepy old man in the basement.

Each family members then becomes haunted in different ways: daughter Megan begins receiving perverted (and then deadly) messages on her cell phone with no return number; son James partakes in a game of Old Maid where the Maid becomes all to real...and threatening, and for some reason finds himself craving dirt as a snack (!). Julian begins having unusual sexual desires for Claire, and starts seeing the man in the basement outside of the house (it's later learned he's a homeless man who had died in their basement). And Claire--haunted by the death of a child--begins to research their house and community at a local library. Of course what she finds is anything but positive.

The first half of *THE HAUNTED* ranks within the top five of Little's scariest novels: he gets the goosebumps going, and despite the familiarity of a haunted house tale, manages to get under the reader's skin and pull out a few surprises (especially when we learn what this thing is that's driving the Perry family crazy). But it seems as if Little has held back here: readers expecting things to get as demented as in past novels may be a bit disappointed. His macabre edge has taken a holiday this time out and left me wanting more. Things DO begin to head in that direction, but not to the extent of novels such as *THE MAILMAN* or *THE RESORT*.

Little's 22nd novel blends the classic story line of his older novels with the emotion of his more recent experiments, resulting in a horror tale that--while satisfying--may leave some of the author's fans wanting more.

A slightly above average outing, worth it for the aforementioned first-half's chill factor.

Serenity says

I must have read a different book than anyone who gave this book anything more than two stars (Even that rating is being extremely generous) because this book was shit. I wish I could give it zero stars. It wasn't scary or have any kind of suspense. *Haunted* was an awful attempt at a novel.

After about 200 pages I started skimming and even skipping some passages. Trust me, you won't miss anything important. The writing was so bleak and uninteresting. The author added flashbacks of the town, but even that didn't add anything to the story.

Every sex scene made me physically cringe-- they were so lame, awkward, and horribly written. I don't understand why the author chose to write so many of them or why they were even necessary. "*Oh, I heard the basement door slam. No wait, let me suck my sleeping husband's dick and masturbate until I fall asleep instead of checking on my children.*"

I hate this book. I hate that I wasted my time on it. I want to yell at whoever gave it to me. Fuck this book.

Vicki Willis says

This was a great haunted house story. It was filled with tension and literally gave me goosebumps at times. The last part of the book was a little bit scattered and didn't hold up to the rest of the book. I had never read this author before, but would definitely check out some of his other works. A recommended read for anyone who loves a scary haunted house.

11811 (Eleven) says

Legitimate scares in this beast. I had given up on BL after a few books that were too formulaic for my tastes but he earned his Stoker nomination with this one.

Just when I thought the haunted house story was no longer a formidable venue for the horror genre...

Marie says

This book started out a little slow, then picked up speed to where it became a little spooky. It slowed down a little part way through the book but only because it gave past history about why the house was haunted. The speed picked back up the last part of the book, but things started happening more with the house. One of the characters disappears completely but to me that is not a cliff hanger as with any horror story sometimes it could be that the house "ate" them.

Basically in this story the house manipulates its surroundings which reminded me of the house in the movie "Rose Red" by Stephen King. The house does things to the characters in the book almost driving them to madness. Giving it five stars for taking me on a roller coaster ride of horror.

Erica says

[There were even three kids and the two parents only, in this case, instead

Kimberly says

THE HAUNTED, by Bentley Little, really started out well for me. After the initial introduction to the main characters, we quickly find our way to *"the house"*. The Perry family are moving due to the corruption of their original neighborhood, and of course, the house they find seems almost "too good to be true" at the time. (In horror, always the giveaway that something is horribly wrong).

The tension in this one is really done masterfully. Several "isolated" incidents among the individual family members were genuinely scary! Not only did these serve to show the reader what was "wrong", but it had the additional leverage of dividing the people--of course, they were all either in disbelief, or too scared to tell anyone else about what they had encountered.

Approximately half way through, we get a series of flashbacks to the town hundreds of years ago. These were done--again--in such a way that they added to the story, as opposed to taking us out of it completely. There were enough little twists that changed the course of the book to where I wasn't able to predict the ending, which is also an added bonus.

My only complaint here was that the ending DID seem overly simplistic in comparison to the fantastic build-up of the book. It ended in more of a "whimper" instead of a "bang". With a heavier-edged conclusion, this book had the potential to be a five star read for me.

Still, an overall great read.

Recommended!

Joe says

My first encounter with Bentley Little was in reading *The Association*. It was good, quirky but decent. When I came across *The Haunted* on Audible, I thought I may as well give it a try, and as an avid reader of all things horror I mostly came away satisfied.

The neighborhood has taken a turn for the worse with the economy. Eventually the Perry family decides to pick up and move to a house closer to downtown, and while it may have seemed like the perfect property, there are secrets about the house that are manifesting themselves in peculiar ways for each member of the family. A typical haunted house? Not so fast. You see, the thing living in the Perry's cellar is not content to remain locked behind four walls, and the only way to harness the evil is through an ending unlike anything

you may have guessed.

I'm taking one star off for creative license abuse. Horror is meant to push the boundaries of reality, but it does not mean you pull rabbits out of the air to make the situation flow better. I'm generally opposed to tumbling into alternate realities unless that parallel universe has been presented early in the story. Finding out about the history of the area through a lawsuit that just so happened to fall into Claire's lap is cheesy if not outright cliché.

I'm taking another star off for excessive sexual content. I'm no prude, but the graphic detail is awkward for the characters. It could be argued that the author is aiming for possession, but either the possession exists, or it doesn't. I think Little had it in him to do more creative things with possession than haphazard scenes that do nothing to advance the plot.

The trouble with *The Haunted* is that it featured some really good horror components. I was pleasantly spooked early in the story, but perhaps too early. The best punches were thrown so prematurely that the balance of the story felt stiff. The shadow materializing in the corner of the room and the face taking shape in the steamy mirror is startling once, but after that, I'm looking for some escalation in the fear factor.

With two books down, I think Bentley Little is an author worth following. *The Haunted* will keep you up at night, initially from fear but gradually more for the entertainment.

Quirkyreader says

Not one of Little's creepier stories, but it is still a good read.
