



## Caught in the Light

*Robert Goddard*

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## **Caught in the Light** Robert Goddard

On assignment in Vienna, photographer Ian Jarrett falls desperately in love with a woman he meets by chance, Marian Esguard. Back in England, he breaks up with his wife and goes to meet Marian at an agreed rendezvous. Marian fails to show.

Searching desperately for her, he stumbles on a Dorset churchyard full of the gravestones of dead Esguards. He also meets a psychotherapist, Daphne Sanger. She too is looking for someone: a former patient who has come to believe she is the reincarnation of Marion Esguard, who lived in Regency times and, it emerges, may have invented photography ten years before Fox Talbot. But if so, why is she unknown to history? And where is the woman he met in Vienna?

Ian sets out to solve a mystery that may be 170 years old. At the end of his search a trap awaits him.

## **Caught in the Light Details**

Date : Published March 16th 1999 by Corgi (first published January 1st 1998)

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Author : Robert Goddard

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## From Reader Review Caught in the Light for online ebook

### Jessica says

My favorite Goddard by far - more intense than his others and the photography aspect is handled brilliantly. A great place to start if you haven't tried him.

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### Carol says

**Caught in the Light** by Robert Goddard

4★'s

From the Book:

On assignment in Vienna, photographer Ian Jarrett falls desperately in love with a woman he meets by chance, Marian Esguard. Back in England, he breaks up with his wife and goes to meet Marian at an agreed rendezvous. Marian fails to show.

Searching desperately for her, he stumbles on a Dorset churchyard full of the gravestones of dead Esguards. He also meets a psychotherapist, Daphne Sanger. She too is looking for someone: a former patient who has come to believe she is the reincarnation of Marion Esguard, who lived in Regency times and, it emerges, may have invented photography ten years before Fox Talbot. But if so, why is she unknown to history? And where is the woman he met in Vienna? Ian sets out to solve a mystery that may be 170 years old. At the end of his search a trap awaits him.

My Thoughts:

Robert Goodard is an author that can, and will, take a topic and construe the most complex story lines around it. This is what he has done in **Caught in the Light**. Ian Jarrett is a man processed by "true love"...so much so that he constantly throws good common sense into the wind. I became so frustrated with him at times that I wanted to scream at him to just call the police...or use the invention called the telephone instead of driving all over England searching for a "ghost".

One thing that he has done brilliantly here is blend the past and the present to create a plot that has the reader guessing from page 1 if our "hero" is coming or going. He has also shown how seemingly simple it is for a totally outside force to take control of your life and turn your world on it's ear. This is a novel of love, loss, deception and amateur detection. Part ghost story, part historical mystery. I will say that I was a little disappointed in the ending but there was so much more of the rest of the book to make up for that.

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### Victoria says

3,5/5

Ce thriller était à la fois ultra bien construit, haletant, intrigant, très efficace, plein de surprises et d'action, mais aussi un peu trop long et très tiré par les cheveux pour moi. J'y ai retrouvé beaucoup de similitudes avec le film Vertigo / Sueurs Froides de Hitchcock (l'un de mes films préférés) mais le côté beaucoup plus

sombre, ultra complexe et tarabiscoté ne m'a pas convaincue: entre les noms étranges, et toutes les intrigues entremêlées, il est arrivé un moment où je ne croyais plus vraiment à l'histoire (à partir des révélations dans la deuxième moitié), les explications me paraissant peu réalistes -- j'étais spectatrice mais pas impliquée. Dommage, même si j'ai quand même été assez addict pour dévorer le livre en 2 jours !

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### **FittenTrim says**

Diving into a Robert Goddard novel is like diving into a million knots. The thrill is watching how his intricate plots unravel all the knots. But in the end, the novel is judged by how well Goddard put the original knots together.

*Caught in the Light* is a great page-turner; a quick-as-lightning read... but when looking on the plot's construction, it's not as crisp and logical as his best works, which are *Past Caring* and *In Pale Battalions* . Those book's mystery knots are just as fantastical as this book's, yet still being believable and emotional.

This novel is a great summer beach read, but not the "gut-punch" that his better works are.

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### **Alison says**

Oh how fab - I was utterly caught up in the twists and turns of this book. I took it on holiday but ran out of time (and since discovered, after all my trials at finding a book set in Norfolk, that a significant part of this book is set there!). I've read nearly all of Robert's books - this is one of the best (and I've enjoyed the rest)

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### **CLM says**

I would really like to know who borrowed this book and did not return it! The dust jacket, forlorn and empty, stares at me reproachfully from time to time. I think it was someone in my book group, and I \*will\* find you...

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### **Eadie says**

I love Goddard's writing and found this book to be rather unique. I think this one was very different from his other books because it seemed like a supernatural/ghost-like plot and he doesn't usually tell that type of story. He also kept us guessing until the last page. I read this with a discussion group and I looked forward to reading each and every section as I was very curious what was really going on. I now look forward to my next Goddard book as I can't get enough of his storytelling. I highly recommend this book to those who love historical mystery thrillers.

4-1/2 stars

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## LG says

Reading a Goddard novel, you feel suspended between fact and tantalizingly true fiction. He describes scenes from Sussex to Snaefellsnes (in Iceland) with photographic clarity and creates compelling stories out of slices of obscure history. Take the woman at the focal point of this mystery: Who is Marian Esguard? Where is she? Does she – did she ever – exist? Goddard's women are much like Hitchcock's, and no *femme* is more *fatale* than this one; none will leave you more suspended between question and answer, mystery and solution. This is true even in a story full of women, from the narrator's wife Faith and his ex-mistress Nicole to psychotherapist Daphne and flame-haired vulcanologist Asga.

Ian, the narrator, develops into the classic Hitchcockian (anti-)hero: double-dealt, haunted and hunted, paranoid and pursued by demons of his own making. The book's third section, titled "Development" (following "Composition" and "Exposure" and preceding "Exhibition"), is the weakest, but by that time you will be in too deep in Ian's story to part ways with him. He is so far the most hapless, by far, of the author's protagonists. This sends him from one distinctive minor character to another in search of answer after answer in the thickening plot. Montagu Quisden-Neve probably stands out from the chorus, not least due to his name, but I quite enjoyed the scenes with Bernard, the ginger-haired camera obscura restorer on Guernsey. Such is Goddard's narrative prowess that I feel inspired to put the island on my travel list just so I can take in the view of St. Peter Port from the Fauconnerie Camera. Does the camera exist? Um ... I think so ...

Like a photograph, a good story captures a slice of life and suspends it between past and present. For me, no author does that more skillfully than Goddard. Unlike his early stories, such as *Past Caring* and *In Pale Battalions*, this one doesn't end neatly, but that's exactly what makes it photo-realistic.

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## Sandie says

CAUGHT IN A BLINDING LIGHT OF INTRIGUE, May 15, 2007

This is a novel of love, loss, deception and amateur detection. Part ghost story, part historical mystery with a visit to the magical beginnings of early photography thrown in for good measure.

Goddard has outdone himself in executing this intricate suspense filled plot loaded with double-crosses, theft and murder as well as the deeper themes of love and loss.

Goddard's talent is such that this acrostic like "puzzle" engages the reader completely....and each time you think you have the solution you are given yet another piece of the puzzle that takes you in another direction.

Although I sometimes became infuriated with our "hero", Ian Jarrett, wanting to shout out, "Why don't you just use the phone and call rather than going there", the resolution of the story came as quite a heartbreaking surprise.

I do not like to give long, in-depth descriptions of the story (why buy the book and read it if every plot point has been disclosed in a review). Suffice to say, readers will not be disappointed and will find themselves caught in the light of Goddard's storytelling genius.

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### **Brenda H says**

This is my first time reading a book by Robert Goddard. Other members of my reading group, who are familiar with his writing, were better prepared for some of the twists and deviations we took in this book. :)

Ian, a photographer on assignment in Vienna meets a mysterious woman, Marian. After they begin a whirlwind affair, the decision is made to leave their respective spouses. Ian returns to England, breaks up with his wife and heads to the proposed rendezvous. Marian fails to show and, worse, appears to have never been real. Ian begins his search for Marian and along the way learns more about Marian as well as himself.

Overall, the book was well-written with an interesting story and fascinating historical detail and I look forward to reading more by Mr. Goddard.

Rating: 4.0

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### **Barry Bridges says**

This has to be his best book to date. Apart from the Barnett stories I'm reading his books in chronological order and this one grabs from the word go (with sex!) and layers tension over intrigue in equal measure. So good it has consumed my waking hours!

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### **Linda Schwartz says**

I think Robert Goddard is incapable of writing a bad book. I first discovered him years ago when I ran out of books on vacation and picked up one of his titles at a bookstore at Heathrow Airport. Sadly, his books are not nearly as popular in the US as in his native England -- a real shame in my opinion! Whether the story is contemporary or takes place decades or centuries ago, his characters are well drawn and the narrative superb. It's hard to put one of his books down, but most are too long to read at one sitting! Although I've seen his books classified as mysteries, I wouldn't necessarily put them there. However, they are more than just "fiction" -- kind of a combination of adventure/mystery/fiction. The plotting is very complex, yet easy to follow. And just when you think you have something figured out, Goddard throws you a curve. Any and all of his novels are pure delight to read.

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### **Anne says**

I like Robert Goddard a lot but this was not one of his better books. It starts off with a bang and holds your interest but when the story within a story takes over, while exciting for a while and a bit of a page-turner for a bit, it loses a lot of interest, especially the more you learn.

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## **Andrea says**

During the first half of the book, I was intrigued. I was willing to suspend my disbelief because I really wanted to enjoy this mystery. It had all the hallmarks of a good thrilling read, and the author managed to keep me hooked for a while. But then the plot became more and more convoluted and along the way, I was no longer able to suspend that disbelief. Creating a complicated but somehow logical plot is a skill not many writers possess, just adding twists and turns upon red herrings and explaining the whole concoction with one sociopath's wish for revenge is not enough to convince this reader. This book left me deeply frustrated – to put it mildly.

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## **David says**

I normally love Goddard's books and cannot put them down. In fact he would be my go-to author if I want a guaranteed good read. Sadly *Caught in the Light* singularly failed to capture me and I gave up just before the half way mark. Like many of his readers I often identify in some way with his everyman lead roles and when this is not the case I at least warm to the principal. But that never happened this time around and I also failed to warm to the convoluted telling of the story that generally has me enthralled. This is the only book of his that I could not finish.

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