



## The Uncanny

*Andrew Klavan*

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## **The Uncanny** Andrew Klavan

Richard Storm is passionate, hot-blooded, and running out of time. Sophia Endering is cool, beautiful, and haunted by a centuries-old mystery. Now the Hollywood filmmaker and the troubled young woman have come together in a race against the unbelievable, the unthinkable, and. . . *The Uncanny*.

Richard Storm reached the top of his profession producing horror films based on classic English ghost stories. Now, with his life beginning to unravel, Richard is searching for something to believe in. Fleeing Hollywood for London, he embarks on a desperate quest: to find evidence that the great old stories bear some truth, that the human spirit lives on after death.

What he finds is Sophia, a woman caught in a nightmare more chilling than any of his film horrors. Propelled by a furious love, haunted by a terror he can barely confess to himself, Storm pursues Sophia through the labyrinth of her family's madness and their involvement in Nazi art thefts, down a trail formed by the classic ghost stories themselves--into the very heart of the uncanny. . . .

## **The Uncanny Details**

Date : Published September 8th 1998 by Island Books (first published January 1st 1998)

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Author : Andrew Klavan

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## From Reader Review The Uncanny for online ebook

### Victoria says

After loving Klavan's most recent release, *A Killer in the Wind*, I dug through my to-read-pile and pulled out this older title of his that I had bought and not yet read, some time ago. With my hopes held high (and the night growing late), I began. And at about 100 pages in, my disappointment became well settled in. Though I did finish the book, it was with no where near as much pleasure as I had devoured his 2013 release.

The slow pacing and the surprisingly flat and unrealistic characters made this book at times more of a chore than a pleasure to read. Coincidence played a role thematically, and shaped the actual storyline, which added to my overall dissatisfaction. The plot became a bit more interesting towards the climax, but even one of Klavan's own characters (Bernard) remarked upon the quality of the ending. And he was right... the book ended with an unfinished, and rather unsatisfying quality. The great lack of an ending suggested a set-up for a conclusion, but from the descriptions, none appear to have emerged since this 1998 release. Other than a few moments of humour in the dialogue, this did not even feel like it was written by the same author... Which was such a shame considering how much I loved reading *A Killer in the Wind*. I guess I will be proceeding with caution into the remainder of Klavan's canon.

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### Stephen Gallup says

I got to *The Uncanny* about a month too early, as it's a great story for Halloween season. It's also one that cries out to be made into a movie--so much so that I'm tempted to try and write a screenplay for it, just as an exercise. The main character is a retired filmmaker, so perhaps he has something to do with the fact that that task feels already half-done (not that it's told exclusively from his point of view).

This is the fourth Klavan title I've read, and it helps clarify his focus. Previously I'd thought Klavan was motivated mainly by politics. His *Empire of Lies* has a celebrity figure, coddled by the media and academe, who spews cultural poison. *The Identity Man* has a despicable demagogue en route to high office. And having seen a few of Klavan's short written and video efforts, I knew that he attacks the same phenomena in real life. But, fairly early in *The Uncanny*, one of the characters comments that the problem goes way beyond politics. The real adversary is naked evil, recognizable by what it does to us (i.e., never mind good intentions, if something causes genuine harm then it's evil). Klavan's other novels provide glimpses of the kind of evil that makes you recoil in horror or disgust, but here it takes center stage.

Life is very much an imperfect proposition, which we see in the conclusion of this one: The heroine's father has just died, and the man she now realizes she loves is dying. But there is a danger in attempting to improve on or overcome basic realities.

I really don't know how this book could have been better.

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### Frederic Pierce says

I really, really, really liked this book. The characters are unique and engaging (well, most of them anyway), and the premise hooked me early on. It didn't take long for this offbeat ghost story centered around the eccentric publisher of a barely-alive paranormal magazine to turn into an addictive page turner. Everyone has

a secret, and enough of those secrets caught me by surprise to keep it interesting.

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### **Eric says**

I had a little bit of a hard time getting into this book, but once I did, I enjoyed it and had trouble putting it down. It's an interesting blend of horror and thriller. The characters are memorable and the writing is spot-on.

I especially liked the literary ties Klavan concocted, on which the entire plot is based. It speaks to the power of the written word, in this case classic Victorian ghost stories.

This was my first Klavan novel, and I'll probably start reading more of his.

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### **Cathi95 says**

(Fantasy 1998) The book begins with the reading of an old ghost story, "Black Annie," at a party by the hero of the current story. As he finishes it, he notices a woman who is shaken and leaves the party, sparking his interest in her. That makes probably the most sense of the rest of the book, which wanders in and out of other ghost stories, mysteries, creatures, frightening situations and often confusion as I tried to keep track which was "real" and which was another "story" coming in. Still, it was fun to get to the end and a bit of an explanation, although the tale is not a pleasant one much of the time.

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### **Joshua says**

This is really a 2.5 star story. I enjoyed the ghost story side of things, but the ending didn't fit the build-up.

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### **Carmille Marie says**

It was better than what I've expected. I like the fact that even if it was a mystery novel, it didn't go down the typical hole wherein it treated its readers as dumb creatures who needs everything spelled out to them. The characters were good, if not a little bit cliché. Harper was very funny and likable while Storm was very relatable. I liked the way that it ended though I have a minor peeve regarding the addition of the supernatural aspect. It could have gone on with its mystery angle but the addition of that one seemingly impossible aspect sort of tripped the whole experience for me. However, as I've said earlier, I liked the way it ended and I guess it wouldn't have gone that way if it weren't for the supernatural take.

All in all it was an enjoyable read and I am glad that I have accidentally picked this book.

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### **Andrea says**

Not my cup of tea at all, I couldn't get into it during any of the book. The only reason it's getting stars is

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because I liked the ghost ties in it. I would not reread this book if I was paid money to do so sorry for those of you who liked it I say what ever floats your boat cause this book did nothing for me.

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## Jennifer says

This book has so much potential . . . which remains un-achieved. I think the short stories that begin each chapter are actually more confusing than helpful. Having read the book jacket, I thought the first short story was supposed to be one of Storm's (the main character) movies. Eventually I realized those were meant to fill us in on the stories that Harper and Storm and Iago were familiar with. It could be that this story was too modern in tone for me. It was apparently supposed to be a twist (by using the uncanny) on the usual ill-fated romance with some action-adventure.

I wish I could have liked Harper, a female paranormal/occult investigator, but I couldn't connect with her. Maybe because she wasn't the main character? Or maybe because to me she felt like the stock "weird character" without anything meaningful behind that. I think she was supposed to be unique and cool, smoking her pipe, checking out paranormal leads, but I felt nothing while reading about her.

I had pages tabbed for commenting on when I wrote this review, but upon re-reading them, I cannot figure out what was supposed to be interesting, relevant or even a good quote.

(although I did like the cannibal joke in the beginning)

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## Wendi says

*Then before you can say "conspiracy theory," Andrew Klavan has whipped all of them into a **humorous confection with elements of German romantic art, English Gothic architecture, 19th-century ghost stories, Norse mythology, South American cult leaders, Nazi witchcraft, and the Holy Grail.***

OOooohh! I had no idea it was supposed to be funny!

From his website: A modern re-invention of the classic English ghost story. Horror movie producer Richard Storm comes to England on a mission: to find evidence that the human spirit lives on after death. Linking up with Harper Albright, an eccentric pipe-smoking old woman who runs a magazine devoted to the paranormal, he begins an attempt to uncover the truth behind a series of classic ghost stories.

But Storm's nightmares are about to step down off the screen into real life. He's about to begin a journey through his deepest passions and his darkest fears, through a love stronger than death to a mystery older than time, down a path formed by the classic tales themselves into the very heart of the uncanny.

"Klavan pulls out all the stops . . . The suspense is high, the fun factor higher." --Publishers Weekly

Yeah...it's amazing to me that two of his books have been turned into movies (Don't Say a Word with Michael Douglas and True Crime with Clint Eastwood - I've seen the first but not the latter, and now probably won't!)

This book was so lame and yet, like a trainwreck, I kept on watching/reading, whatever. The whole time I kept thinking that I was missing something, as if I had come into the middle of a series of books about one character - Harper. She keeps talking about this thing called The Uncanny, but we're never really told what

the Uncanny is. (and yes, Uncanny is spelled with a capital U.) The St. Pete Times hailed this book as a sort of upscale X-Files. Sort of being the operative word, 'cuz it ain't nothing like the X-Files, unless you count the latest X-Files movie in which most of us X-Files fans were like, "WTF?"

Maybe if I had realized the book was all tongue in cheek I would have enjoyed it more, but I got it because I wanted a good ghost story. I got neither: good or a ghost story, just some lame folks running around after a bad guy named Iago. There was even some brief intro into some cult and grail stories, which got me excited only to be let down again.

This book was bad. I should say Bad, not Uncanny at all.

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### **Kathy says**

It was almost a 3 rating, but I did keep checking how many pages were left before it would end. Every once in a while it would spark so I kept on, finally to the end.

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### **Mary says**

When American horror film director Richard Storm first arrives in London, he has his own secret mission. Part vacation, part research, he finds renewed purpose in working at a magazine which features weird phenomena - Bizarre. The owner and editor is herself a curiosity and opens up a whole new world to Richard - a world of strange but true hauntings, ghost hunts and spirit worship. When Richard is first introduced to beautiful heiress Sophia Endering, he finds himself helplessly in love with her.

But Sophia is as dangerous to herself as she is for those who love her - for she has an almost unstoppable death wish. The smitten Richard follows Sophia through the labyrinth of her family's madness and their involvement in Nazi art thefts, down a trail formed by ghost stories more chilling than any that Richard could create for his movies.

This book was very good in parts, but I have to say that it was not one of my favorite books. I had some trouble following the plot and must say honestly that I'm still not entirely sure about certain parts of the story. Mareena got this book for me because she knew how much I had enjoyed True Crime, which is also by Andrew Klavan. I give this book an A!

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### **Debra Dufrene says**

Well, it's still on my phone but the only time I even attempt is when I'm waiting on an appointment and don't have my tablet and don't feel like playing a small game. Story seems so interesting but moves "uncannily" slow. I just got tired of waiting for something to happen. There is tons of atmosphere in the book though.

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### **Matt Schiariti says**

I picked this book up on a whim while looking for a book by another author who, by the laws of alphabetical

order was right next to The Uncanny. The title seemed interesting as did the cover.

NEver judge a book by its cover, isn't that what they say?

Whoever the mysterious 'they' are who uttered that phrase, they're completely correct.

I don't always write reviews, more often than not I do, but I felt compelled to say just how bad this book was.

It DID have potential. A mystery wrapped around famous old paintings and ghost stories, secret societies performing black masses, people killed in horrible ways, an american in England...totally the fish out of water. But as time goes on it just spirals more and more out of control.

I don't want to give away too much, but this almost seems like a tongue in cheek homage to bad and very cliched horror movies. Even the protagonist goes so far as to say that the situations he's finding himself in are so cliched, even movie studios wouldn't commit them to film.

I don't mind suspending disbelief, but with some very annoying characters, a villain who summons a mental image of a bad guy in a black hat, twirling his moustache in an evil way while standing over a damsel in distress and some very campy dialogue..well, you get the picture...

actually, the best parts of the book are the old ghost stories that they find on the course of their investigation...those were actually pretty good little reads...

the rest of the book however? Disappointing...

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## **Sheila says**

4 stars--I really liked it.

What a fun little horror novel. I thought it was going to be a ghost story--and it was--but it was also about horror movies and cults and family and love and loss as well.

I really enjoyed the "vintage" ghost stories interspersed in this novel, and also enjoyed the hunt for and descriptions of magical artifacts (adding an element of DaVinci-Code type thriller to this book).

Though some of the dialogue is dated in parts and you have to suspend a lot of disbelief, overall I had a good time reading this book.

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