



# The Unquiet House

*Alison Littlewood*

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) ➔

# The Unquiet House

*Alison Littlewood*

## **The Unquiet House** Alison Littlewood

Mire House is dreary, dark, cold and infested with midges. But when Emma Dean inherits it from a distant relation, she immediately feels a sense of belonging.

It isn't long before Charlie Mitchell, grandson of the original owner, appears claiming that he wants to seek out his family. But Emma suspects he's more interested in the house than his long-lost relations.

And when she starts seeing ghostly figures, Emma begins to wonder: is Charlie trying to scare her away, or are there darker secrets lurking in the corners of Mire House?

## **The Unquiet House Details**

Date : Published April 10th 2014 by Jo Fletcher Books (first published January 1st 2014)

ISBN : 9781780876467

Author : Alison Littlewood

Format : Paperback 396 pages

Genre : Horror, Fiction, Paranormal, Ghosts, Ghost Stories, Fantasy, Supernatural, Mystery

 [Download The Unquiet House ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online The Unquiet House ...pdf](#)

**Download and Read Free Online The Unquiet House Alison Littlewood**

---

## From Reader Review The Unquiet House for online ebook

### Anthony says

Alison Littlewood has taken a risk in using a type of fractured tandem structure for her haunted house story. Supernatural tales are usually best left to a straightforward narrative that drives the reader along. But this isn't a normal ghost story. This is a story of how ghosts are created and more importantly how they change the living world around them. The author took a risk and it paid off in spades.

The novel starts in present day. Nothing too unfamiliar here. A large country place called Mire House left in a will to Emma, a protagonist battling her own internal ghosts, a mystery surround the house and Charlie an uninvited relative from her childhood. While this territory may be familiar what follows is anything but.

The present is used like a framing device for two strands set in the past. The writing in the first part is haunting and beautifully written. It's the kind of opening to a book that power companies love, as it'll keep bedroom lights on all night across the country. Spectral visions, mysterious relatives showing up unannounced and terrifying events build to a horrifying crescendo. Then we're swiftly transported back to the 1970s and meet a group of young boys daring each other to enter Mire House.

This is where we follow the path of the dark woman who haunts the house and the adjoining cemetery. We also follow Frank and his little brother Mossy. This Yorkshire childhood of the 1970s is so well observed it reminded me of Bill Naughton's tales of childhood. But Alison Littlewood never allows you enjoy the exploits of these young scamps for too long without reminding you of the ghosts that lurk and the dangers they pose.

Read the full review here- <http://thehorrificallyhorrifyinghorro...>

---

### H.E. Bulstrode says

#### **Does she own the house, or does the house own her?**

This is the second of Alison Littlewood's books that I've read, and whereas I wasn't as taken with it as with *The Hidden People*, I still found it a solid read. The novel opens with a theme of loss and acquisition, with its protagonist – Emma Dean – having lately lost both of her parents, as well as a distant elderly relative who has bequeathed her Mire House. However, it soon becomes apparent that the house as much owns Emma, as she owns it.

The story weaves in a little folklore here and there, and is firmly grounded in its rural Yorkshire setting with a good sprinkling of Yorkshire accent and dialect lending it an engaging warmth and authenticity. However, this is a ghost story, so the few moments of warmth that are encountered are greatly outnumbered by the reader's chills. Littlewood is particularly good at portraying childhood group dynamics and bravado, showing how a simple dare can descend into cruelty and lead to the direst of consequences. For me, this was the greatest horror in the book, and made me cringe, but in the manner that the author intended rather than in a bad way, for it was extremely well written.

The novel has an interesting non-linear narrative structure which works well, and the period aspects of the story are deftly handled. However, I did guess the twist some way in advance, and the ending seemed to stutter and fade, being somewhat drawn out. As for the protagonist, I felt less sympathy for her than for many of the other characters, but this may well have been the author's intention. For all that, this was an

enjoyable read that I'd recommend to those who possess a taste for ghost stories.

---

### **Amy Durreson says**

I really enjoyed this one. I'm on a bit of a ghost story kick at the moment, and this is the best modern one I've read yet (Susan Hill excepted, obviously, but I've already read all of hers). There's a few shivery moments and a really sneaky plot: I didn't manage to predict the twists correctly. The structure is a little unusual: we start in the modern day with Emma, who has unexpectedly inherited an old house in the country from a distant relative, but then it jumps back to the 70s and then again to the 30s, each time revealing a little more of the history of both the house and the family and the legacy of grief and hatred that surrounds the house. By the time we come back to Emma's story in the final quarter of the book, the reader has a better understanding of the danger she's in than Emma herself does. It works really well here.

No excessive gore, no eldritch horrors, just sympathetic characters and solid storytelling. Good stuff.

---

### **Zoe says**

I'm in two minds about whether I should be reviewing a book I didn't even see through to the end. After giving this a good try, I gave up. I'm disappointed because this started off like a typical haunted house horror and I couldn't wait to dive in and be spooked - unfortunately it didn't deliver.

This book jumps from present day to past tense which ordinarily I don't mind. Having said that, I found the 'yorkshire slang' which was used constantly incredibly hard to read. Frustratingly hard. After plodding along in the 'past tense' chapters, I grew so bored and so utterly un-scared. STILL I persisted until the lack of story started to drive me insane.

I feel guilty 'giving up' on a book but my argument is, surely after 200 pages I should have some interest? Some desire to pick it up and start reading? I don't want to finish a book for the sake of finishing a book. To me this was a boring waste of my time - especially when I have a pile of tempting books just waiting for me to devour!!

---

### **Paul says**

Mire House is dreary, dark, cold and infested with midges. But when Emma Dean inherits it from a distant relation, she immediately feels a sense of belonging.

It isn't long before Charlie Mitchell, grandson of the original owner, appears claiming that he wants to seek out his family. But Emma suspects he's more interested in the house than his long-lost relations.

And when she starts seeing ghostly figures, Emma begins to wonder: is Charlie trying to scare her away, or are there darker secrets lurking in the corners of Mire House?

Who hasn't dreamed of inheriting a rambling old house hidden in the heart of the countryside? I know I certainly have, even if it has seen better days and is a bit worn round the edges. It sounds like the perfect

rural idyll. When the reader is first introduced to Emma, the sadness that permeates her character is quickly established. She has suffered recent loss and that trauma has left its mark. She is keen to escape the past, to find somewhere new where she can build a life and really belong. The opportunity to start again at Mire House seems almost too good to be true. As she starts to settle into her new life, she begins to experience phenomena that she can't explain. There is a presence and it has its sights set firmly on Emma.

The book is split into four distinct parts set during three different time periods; 2013, 1973, 1939 and then back to 2013 again. Each feels almost like a self-contained novella in their own right. As the years roll back the author reveals the layers of the history surrounding Mire House and all of its previous occupants. During the seventies, Frank and his younger brother Mossy discover how a game of dares can lead to tragedy. Meanwhile, on the cusp of the second World War, Aggie dreams of escaping the farm and going to work at the grand new house down the road. Littlewood does a terrific job of weaving these multiple plot strands together. They work well in isolation, but brought together as a whole they're just perfect.

Personally, I've always liked the idea that old places and buildings have the ability to retain echoes of events in their history, the suggestion that when you leave a place behind something can be left behind appeals. The deeper into its history the narrative goes, the more it feels like Mire House is almost a character in its own right. It's the spectre that connects everything, always there, sinister and brooding in the background. Throughout the years people can't help but continue to be drawn inexplicably to it.

It struck me as kind of ironic that in a book called *The Unquiet House*, silence plays such an important role in events. There are many key scenes that play out wordlessly. It feels as though any sound would be wrong, like some sort of horrible intrusion. This technique is most effective in the chapters set in 2013. Emma spends quite a lot of her time alone and this makes her a rather introspective sort. Her solitary existence means that, in these initial chapters at least, there is very little dialogue\*. Instead, the reader is treated to direct access to Emma's innermost thoughts and feelings. The author really knows her characters and takes time to ensure that the reader also knows exactly what makes them tick.

For me a truly effective ghost story needs to work on multiple levels, *The Unquiet House* manages to pull this feat off with aplomb; the air of subtle disquiet, an ever-growing sense of tension and just enough ambiguity to leave a reader with as many questions as answers. The plot certainly builds to a satisfyingly unexpected and shocking conclusion.

Littlewood's evocative writing does a splendid job of pressing all of a reader's emotional buttons. In particular, Emma and Aggie's respective journeys feature some truly breath-taking moments. At certain points in the plot, the sadness and anger in both women feels palpable. I defy anyone not to get caught up in such emotive writing.

Mixing elements of modern and traditional horror seamlessly, Alison Littlewood's latest novel proves she is a writer of undeniable talent that has the ability to engross and unsettle in equal measure. This is an excellent example of how well plotted psychological horror manages to be many things all at once, part ghost story, part thriller, part character study. I'll be honest and admit that, with the exception of a single chapbook, I've never read any of her other books. I will be remedying this horrific oversight immediately.

*The Unquiet House* is published by Jo Fletcher Books and is available now, and comes highly recommended.

\*Actually I checked (call me curious) there is not a single word of external dialogue in the first four chapters.

## **Liz Barnsley says**

Available Now from Jo Fletcher Books.

Thank you to the author and publisher for the review copy.

Mire House is dreary, dark, cold and infested with midges. But when Emma Dean inherits it from a distant relation, she immediately feels a sense of belonging.

It isn't long before Charlie Mitchell, grandson of the original owner, appears claiming that he wants to seek out his family. But Emma suspects he's more interested in the house than his long-lost relations.

And when she starts seeing ghostly figures, Emma begins to wonder: is Charlie trying to scare her away, or are there darker secrets lurking in the corners of Mire House?

This was a wonderfully creepy, atmospheric story, one that had me glancing at all the dark corners in my own house and wondering what might lurk there...

Emma is surprised to inherit the property, especially as there are other relatives much closer who should have been obvious choices. Intending to sell, she goes to visit Mire House and is immediately captivated by it. Upon moving in she meets Charlie and after some strange occurrences Emma realises there is something hidden beneath the tranquil surface.

An extremely cleverly constructed novel, as we move back in time to learn the secrets of Mire House, each separate part is a story in and of itself, all adding up to a complete and compelling tale. Emma is an extraordinarily perfect character to follow along with – solitary and emotional, her thoughts and feelings make up a large part of the slow building sense of menace, and give us a true insight into the ambience of the surroundings. As far as psychological horror goes this is spot on for creating a sense of space and time and putting the reader bang into the moment...and unnerving them utterly. The timeslips are perfect, telling us as they do about previous experiences within the house and giving the whole story a real resonance.

I don't want to give too much away – safe to say that this one is best read with the lights firmly on or outside in the glorious sunshine (should we ever get such a thing in the UK!) because if there are shadows around you as you read, those shadows will certainly menace you. Some beautiful prose to be had here and a fair few moments of magic...within the quiet..or the Unquiet House.

We all go silent in the end...

Terrific. Highly recommended.

---

## **James Everington says**

I love haunted houses, me. I love Hill House, I love Hell House, I love The House Next Door and the House Of Leaves.

And now I think I love Mire House, too.

For Alison Littlewood's new(ish) novel is a haunted house novel to rank with all the above; where the house is not just a home for spooky beings, but a corruption of all a house should actually be; an archetypal 'bad place'; a mirror of its inhabitant's hopes and fears; a trap.

The Unquiet House is told in four interlocking sections, starting in the present day and then working back to the 1973, then to 1939, before finally coming back to 2013 - it almost reads like three self-contained novellas about a different generation's experiences at Mire House. But the historical parts of the novel provide a rich and plausible justification for the terrors in the present, and at the end Mire House is left still standing, still unquiet (still "not sane" as Shirley Jackson would no doubt have it) and still occupied by... something. And there's a strong suggestion that all is not over, and that another generation is about to be trapped and consumed by the horrors of the past.

I love haunted houses, me.

---

## Mark says

Mire House is dreary, dark, cold and infested with midges. But when Emma Dean inherits it from a distant relation, she immediately feels a sense of belonging. It isn't long before Charlie Mitchell, grandson of the original owner, appears claiming that he wants to seek out his family. But Emma suspects he's more interested in the house than his long-lost relations. And when she starts seeing ghostly figures, Emma begins to wonder: is Charlie trying to scare her away, or are there darker secrets lurking in the corners of Mire House?

The book opens with Emma, who has just lost both of her parents and inherited Mire House from an uncle - Clarence Mitchell - she never knew. Bereft and alone, she embraces the challenge of setting up a new house, seeing it as a way to escape the past and start again. Occasionally prone to light flights of fantasy - she remembers her Mum saying "You're being fanciful, Emma" - she is disturbed to find an old suit and pipe in a cupboard in her bedroom, which always seem to be there, even after she's thrown them away. Mire House is next door to a rundown church and when she explores it, she meets Frank before going out to investigate the graveyard. Under an old Yew tree, she finds a bench with an inscription - "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me? Matthew 27:46" Then she hears voices and sees things in Mire House that she can't explain and it seems as though something from the past might be reaching out to take her hand.

The book is told in four parts, with the bookends being the Emma sequences which are both set in 2013. Part 2 - 1973 focusses on Frank Watts (the man from the church), who is 11. Investigating Mire House, Frank meets Mr Owens, who lives there alone, sitting in the drawing room all day in his old suit, smoking a pipe as he mourns his lost wife. Striking up an odd friendship, this is shattered when Frank's friend Sam - who's 12 and manipulative and sly - persuades him to steal something from the house, threatening Frank's younger brother Mossy. What happens after this is genuinely heartbreaking on several levels and I felt like I had a bit of dust in my eye.

"Part 3 - 1939 The Last Stook" is the story of Aggie, Frank's Mum, who is 16 years old and living in the farm just up the road from Mire House. There's a tangible air of sadness to this section, for the doomed Mrs Hollingworth who is having Mire House built and also for Aggie's brother and friends who are called up to the war that is just starting. With the 'second' Mrs Hollingworth taking in evacuees - amongst them a very young Clarence Mitchell - Aggie begins to see a dark woman in the cemetery, under the Yew tree and this vision leads to another terrible, gut-wrenching conclusion.

The separate sections are vivid and full of life, easily standing as independent novellas and while this style works wonderfully for the book - and immerses the reader completely in the well-realised times - it's also my one area to quibble, that we spend so long away from Emma (almost 300 pages) it takes a while to get back into her rhythm. Having said that, part four works beautifully, setting up a painfully poignant note before moving swiftly and with complete assurance to an unexpected - and frightening - conclusion.

"The Unquiet House" is filled with writing that is assured and stylish, with barely a word wasted and long sequences take place without any dialogue, adding to the sense of unease and melancholy that the novel seems to exude. With some nice touches - most of the dialogue is written as dialect, which is interesting - a keen sense of location and atmosphere - the house, the mire and the church are characters unto themselves - and a nicely deliberate pace that keeps you on the edge, this is told with verve by a writer spreading her wings and surely taking off for ever greater success. Dark and spooky, with touches of humour and a knowing sense of family life and dynamics, this is an excellent novel and I highly recommend it.

---

## **Kimberly says**

**THE UNQUIET HOUSE**, by Alison Littlewood is the first book I have read by this author. The novel starts out like many other haunted house stories--someone (in this case, a lonely woman named Emma Dean), suddenly inherits a house from a relative she didn't know she had. Having no friends (that I could tell), and just recently losing both of her parents, Emma goes to see the property with a plan to sell it immediately. Once she gets there, however, she feels "*needed/wanted*" by the house.

***" . . . It crossed her mind that perhaps it was only that the house echoed her own emptiness, her aloneness . . ."***

Fundamentally, Emma is an emotionally empty vessel. Despite having a job, she doesn't seem to have any friendly connections with other people, and nothing to really warrant going back to her apartment for.

***" . . . the warmth--had gone and instead there was an empty space, waiting. It was always waiting; it was just that sometimes she managed to forget it was there."***

Charlie Mitchell--the grandson of the deceased owner of the house--known as "MIRE HOUSE", pays her a visit. They suddenly "connect" and begin making plans to renovate the place.

If the story had continued from there, I think I would have enjoyed it more. As it was, the author went into the history of the place using characters in reverse-chronological order. While not "confusing" so to speak, it did manage to throw me off for a bit, and I feel a more lineal approach would have been better to the flow of the narrative.

The REAL history takes place in 1939, when the original Mrs. Hollingworth is brought into the picture, and the "birth" of the house begun.

***" . . . I built that house for love . . . But love will never come to fill it."***

We have a new cast of characters for each of the timelines, which comes full circle by the time the story is finished.

Overall, I thought the idea behind the story was good, but I feel that taking the scenes in order would have made more sense in this particular case. The backstories really "overshadowed" Emma's own current state, and reduced her plight to that of almost an "*afterthought*", in my mind.

***" . . . You will never be content. You shall never be happy."***

---

## Jason says

2.5 Stars

A fast haunted house read that was just ok by me. The book is split up by giving us looks into the past of Mire House by telling the story of past owners. Everything is tied together in the end. I liked the present day story and the ending was ok. This one is just ok.

---

## Joanne Sheppard says

I love a good haunted house story, and I downloaded the audiobook of Alison Littlewood's *The Unquiet House* hoping it would provide some creepy chills during the dark autumn days. While it did keep me entertained, though, ultimately I felt it didn't quite deliver.

The book opens with Emma, a single woman whose parents have recently died, inheriting a large old house from a distant relative. Although her early intention is to sell it, she is immediately captivated by the mysterious property, moves in, and sets about carrying out renovations. However, a musty old suit hanging in a wardrobe, the arrival of Charlie - who, as the grandson of the house's owner, has effectively been disinherited - and a series of strange incidents soon make Emma realise that the house is not the dream home she imagined.

At this point, however, the story shifts back to the 1970s and a different set of characters altogether: this time, a group of boys full of childhood bravado dare each other to enter the house, infuriating its current owner. And when this lengthy section concludes, we step back once again, this time to the 1940s, where we see a series of tragedies unfold through the eyes of a local farmer's daughter seeking a position as a maid. Only after another long digression do we return to Emma and the present.

This sort of structure isn't new to the ghost story genre - think of the portmanteau horror films of the 60s and 70s, for example, or books of short stories with a framing narrative of friends telling ghost stories round a fire, or a mysterious stranger relating sinister tales to strangers in a railway carriage. Neither is there anything particularly problematic about the flashback parts of the story in themselves: the writing is otherwise strong, particularly in the 1940s section, which has the added poignancy of documenting a rural community disintegrating at the outbreak of war. However, the problem for me is that these sections continue for so long that by the time we returned to Emma and the present, I'd lost any sense of a bond with her, and found it much harder to care about her fate. I found it even harder to have any interest in Charlie, who is a posh, floppy-haired type who probably wears a rugby shirt and who generally just seems altogether too insipid for the role he's required to play in the story.

My other issue with *The Unquiet House* is that it's notably derivative - and unsubtly so. I have little problem with well-used ghost story tropes and motifs - they're well used for a reason, after all, which is because they're highly effective - but the 'twist' at the end of this one has been done to death (no pun intended) in horror cinema over the last decade or two and there are major elements of this story that are so similar to another, extremely famous, ghost story that I almost snorted a couple of times. If you've ever read *The Woman In Black*, there's an awful lot that you'll recognise here, and *The Woman In Black* (while brilliant) wasn't startlingly original in the first place, just exceptionally well-executed in a way that *The Unquiet House* sadly can't match.

That said, the time I spent listening to this book was certainly not even close to being time wasted, and while the 'twist' is a relatively well-worn one, it does give the book a gripping final section. The start of the novel is

suitably unsettling, and the characters, at least in the flashback chapters, are strong and vivid, each possessing a plausible voice.

---

### **Any Length says**

I couldn't bear this book. It was boring from the start and the writing didn't make sense.

The protagonist inherits a house and although she has already made up her mind that she will sell it she drives to it and walks around in it thinking of the bedroom she would choose. All along she says "my house", and "I own property" then it turns out it's not the first house she inherited and not the first property she owns.

The words "I own property" only make sense for her to say to herself if it's the first one.

I gave up on the book after that. The sickly sweet tone it had been written in did not endear the book to me. It felt like straight out of the middle ages where women were stupid little play-things who could never achieve anything of their own accord. And there she is, fitting right in because the two properties she owns she inherited. Not of her own achieving.

Sorry, I couldn't relate at all.

---

### **Emily Crow says**

[And will people please

---

### **Karl says**

This is copy 47 of 200 signed numbered copies.

---

### **Majanka says**

Book Review originally published here: [http://www.iheartreading.net/reviews/...](http://www.iheartreading.net/reviews/)

The Unquiet House is the best horror book I've read so far this year. That could be, in part, because it's a ghost story, and I'm a huge fan of ghost stories. But still, it highly outranks the other ghost stories I read this year, like "The Woman in Black: Angel of Death" and "The Everlasting".

But back to The Unquiet House. Emma has inherited the house from a long-lost relative she never even heard of. The strange thing? He had a grandson, who he could've given the house to just as easily, but instead, he chose to give it to Emma. Either way, after her parents' death a few years ago, Emma is looking for something new, a fresh start. She went to Mire House – the house she inherited – first with the intention of taking a look at it before she'd put it on the market. But the moment she steps inside the house, it feels like coming home. She knows exactly what she wants the house to look like. And she knows she wants to live in it.

It doesn't take long before Charlie Mitchell, the grandson who we spoke about earlier, ends up on Emma's doorstep. Charlie wants to get to know her, and Emma welcomes the company. But in the middle of the night

she wakes up to see a strange man in her bedroom – a hunched-over figure of an old man wearing the suit she found in the closet. Charlie is convinced it's a ghost, but Emma isn't sure whether it's a ghost, or simply her imagination.

The longer Emma stays in Mire House, the more she grows convinced it's haunted. And why does Charlie stay for so long? Is he somehow involved, maybe trying to get her to leave the house, so he could have it instead? But when the evidence of something supernatural becomes more and more apparent, Charlie is the only one Emma can turn to for help. And when a century-old ghost who wishes to destroy the happiness of anyone who inhabits the house, comes out to play, things get truly dangerous.

In a way, the story reminded me of "The Woman in Black". The host here is somewhat similar to the ghost in "The Woman in Black", and equally sinister. However, whereas "The Woman in Black" offers a straightforward story, and it's quite apparent who is who, and who is connected to whom in what way, we see none of those things here. The story is complicated, and involves many generations, all of which get discussed here as we take a trip back to the past in the second part of the book. While we may despise the evil spirit, we also feel sorry for her. Mire House is delightfully creepy, and the suit appearing and disappearing from the closet managed to terrify me. It's something so simple, yet so terrifying.

The writing is excellent. The prose is quite poetic at times, but never causes the narrative to derail, or to slow down. The plot, while familiar, offered enough fresh and original elements to keep me entertained. The ghost story itself may be reminiscent of a dozen other ghost stories (the haunted house trope has been used so many times it's hard to put anything original in it) but the history of the house offered enough originality to make up for that. And then there's also the surprise toward the ending, which I hadn't seen coming until a few pages before, so great work on that.

If you love ghost stories, then check out *The Unquiet House*. I read as many ghost stories as I can, and I found this one of the best ghost stories I've ever read, so I'm sure you'll enjoy it as well.

---