



The Asylum

By John Harwood

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“Harwood, master of creeping Victorian horror, does it again . . . Twisted in every sense of the word and wonderfully atmospheric.”—*Booklist*

Confused and disoriented, Georgina Ferrars awakens in a small room in Tregannon House, a remote asylum in England. She has no memory of the past few weeks. The doctor, Maynard Straker, tells her that she admitted herself under the name Lucy Ashton, then suffered a seizure. When she insists he has mistaken her for someone else, Dr. Straker sends a telegram to her uncle, who replies that Georgina Ferrars is at home with him in London: “Your patient must be an imposter.” Suddenly her voluntary confinement becomes involuntary. Who is the woman in her uncle’s house? Georgina’s perilous quest to free herself takes us from a cliffside cottage on the Isle of Wight to the secret passages of Tregannon House and into a web of hidden family ties on which her survival depends.

“Redolent with a sense of foreboding . . . This gothic tale will sweep you up into the very heart of Victorian England. A splendid read!”—Historical Novel Society, Editors’ Choice

“A richly textured . . . [and] masterfully constructed narrative . . . Readers are guaranteed a thoroughly diverting time in Harwood’s not-to-be-trusted hands.”—*The Independent* (UK)

“The crisp prose and twisty plot will encourage many to read this in one sitting.”—*Publishers Weekly*

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Rosalyn Landor proves a fine choice to narrate this Gothic tale of mystery, mistaken identity, and madness. Georgina Ferrars awakens to find herself in a private asylum called Tregannon House. With no memory of the past several days, Georgina learns that she checked herself into the facility under the name Lucy Ashton. What follows is a suspenseful story of dark intrigue, as Georgina struggles to convince her captors of her true identity, even as mounting evidence begins to shake her belief in her own sanity. Landor's clear, accented reading pulls the listener into the sinister halls of Tregannon, and her first-person narration perfectly conveys the heroine's sense of confusion and growing desperation. With her crisp, straightforward delivery, Landor keeps the listener enthralled as one clue after another is revealed, leading to a climax that is as satisfying as it is surprising. A Houghton Mifflin Harcourt hardcover. (May)

From [Booklist](#)

Author of *The Seance* (2009) and *The Ghost Writer* (2004), Harwood, master of creeping Victorian horror, does it again in his latest tale of pervasive evil and madness. Tregannon House in the Cornwall countryside was not always an asylum, but, having been in the hands of weak-minded, ailing owners over generations, it now houses insane and depressed mental patients under the care and control of Dr. Maynard Straker. Unfortunately, Miss Georgina Ferrars is neither mad nor voluntarily committed. She awakens in a locked cell lacking memory of how she arrived and not knowing where she is, though she is certain of her identity. But the staff is convinced she's Lucy Ashton and insist that she stay until she recovers her "correct" memory. The reader begins to question Georgina/Lucy's narrative reliability as the story progresses: Is she lying or is the kindly doctor serving some evil purpose? Twisted in every sense of the word and wonderfully atmospheric, this dark psychological tale shocks by degree until truth of a sort is revealed, in a style similar to that of Joanne Harris' *Sleep, Pale Sister* and D. J. Taylor's *Kept*. --Jen Baker

Review

"A deliciously spooky pastiche of the high and low Gothic traditions and the tender heroines who live and die by them."

—*New York Times Book Review*

"Harwood, master of creeping Victorian horror, does it again. . . Twisted in every sense of the word and wonderfully atmospheric, this dark psychological tale shocks by degree until truth of a sort is revealed in a style similar to that of Joanne Harris' *Sleep, Pale Sister* and D.J. Taylor's *Kept*."

—*Booklist*

"Harwood evokes Charles Palliser and Louis Bayard in his engrossing third stand-alone Victorian thriller. . . The crisp prose and twisty plot will encourage many to read this in one sitting."

—*Publishers Weekly*

"With Harwood's beguiling pastiche *The Asylum*, we're once again in a contemporary version of the Victorian Gothic mystery, with a lineage that stretches back to Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White* and beyond. Though it's not a comfortable place for the beleaguered heroine, readers are guaranteed a thoroughly diverting time in Harwood's not-to-be-trusted hands."

--*The Independent* (UK)

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Brian Nelson:

In this 21st century, people become competitive in every way. By being competitive at this point, people have to do something to make these people survive, being in the middle of the crowded place and notice through surrounding. One thing that sometimes many people have underestimated this for a while is reading. Yep, by reading a book your ability to survive increases then having a chance to endure than others is high. For you who want to start reading a book, we give you that *The Asylum* book as a basic and daily reading book. Why, because this book is usually more than just a book.

Alan Robert:

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Beth French:

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