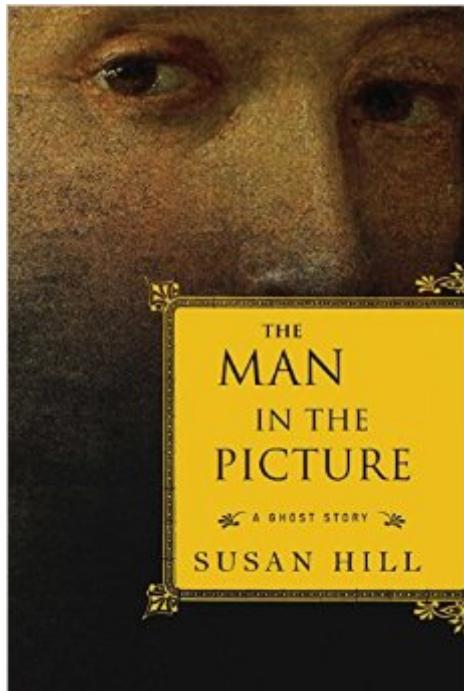


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The Man In The Picture



Synopsis

By the renowned storyteller Susan Hill--whose first ghost story, *The Woman in Black*, has run for eighteen years as a play in London's West End--here is a new take on a form that is fully classical and, in Hill's able hands, newly vital. *The Man in the Picture* is a haunting tale of loss, love, and the very basest fear of our beings. An extraordinary ghost story from a modern master. In the apartment of Oliver's old professor at Cambridge, there is a painting on the wall, a mysterious depiction of masked revelers at the Venice carnival. On this cold winter's night, the old professor has decided to reveal the painting's eerie secret. The dark art of the Venetian scene, instead of imitating life, has the power to entrap it. To stare into the painting is to play dangerously with the unseen demons it hides, and become the victim of its macabre beauty.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"I brought all of the new pictures with me. I was in my London rooms too infrequently to leave anything of much value or interest there. I placed the rest with ease but wherever I put the Venetian picture it looked wrong. I have never had such trouble hanging a painting. And about one thing I was adamant. I did not want it in the room where I slept. I did not even take it into the bedroom...in the end I left the painting propped up there, against the bookcase. And I could not stop looking at it. Every time I came back into these rooms, it drew me. I spent more time looking at it - no, into it - than I did with pictures of far greater beauty and merit. I seemed to need it, to spend far too much time looking into every corner, every single face." p. 20)The painting in question is one of a

Venetian carnival scene with gondolas bobbing in the oil-dark water, a lit up palazzi and a crowd of costumed revelers in black capes, tri-corn hats and those creepy, long beaked masks. Anyone who gazes at it for a length of time seems to come under its malevolent power. People appear and disappear on the canvas and bad things happen in real life to those under its spell. Or is it the other way around? I wanted to love this book. And there were many things I liked about it. It was short enough to read in an evening. The small size was perfect for slipping into a purse. The cover image, a detail from an Alessandro Longhi painting, appealed to the artist in me. It had the right settings; a professor's apartment at Cambridge, a widowed Countess's lavish estate, a London auction house and, of course, Venice. It had the right characters. But it also had a couple of plot holes and some loose threads that were never tied up in a satisfactory way.

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