



The Lost Stradivarius

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Chilling in the extreme, *The Lost Stradivarius* is a classic tale of the supernatural. While practicing in his rooms in Oxford, gifted violinist John Maltravers notices a strange phenomenon: whenever a certain air is played, a mysterious presence seems to enter. Unable to rationalize this away, Maltravers becomes increasingly unsettled, until he makes a startling discovery—tucked away in a hidden cupboard in his room is a priceless Stradivarius! Obsessed by his find, he becomes increasingly withdrawn from those around him, choosing instead to explore more sinister pursuits, little knowing the spell that this seemingly perfect violin is unleashing upon him. English poet and novelist J. Meade Falkner is best remembered for his novel, *Moonfleet*.

The Lost Stradivarius Details

Date : Published August 1972 by Tom Stacey (first published 1895)

ISBN :

Author : John Meade Falkner

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Genre : Fiction, Gothic, Music, European Literature, British Literature, Mystery, Historical, Victorian, Literature, English Literature

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From Reader Review The Lost Stradivarius for online ebook

Sandro Filipe says

This was a book that took me a long time to read but I actually enjoyed the story a lot.

trad.: Este foi um livro que me levou muito tempo para o ler mas na verdade até gostei muito da história.

Da says

This Review Contains Heavy Spoilers, So Be Warned.

The Lost Stradivarius is a very quaint story indeed. Written by some Falkner guy who thought it necessary to devote 296 pages on the curse of popular music; "That though since the day of Sir John's death I have never heard a note of it, the air is still fresh in my mind and has at times presented itself to me unexpectedly, and always with an unwholesome effect". Truly gruesome to have such a melody stuck in your head. It must thus be that "Areopagita" is an 18th century version of the song "Gangnam Style". A true horror indeed. Gothic style.

The story focuses on John who is basically like an obsessed fan of Graziani. Graziani is the composer of the Gagliarda in the Areopagita, which John likes so swell. The Gagliarda is like his favourite part or something. After his friend Mr. Gaskell introduced him to Graziani, he became too quickly too obsessed. This obsession became worse when he found a random Stradivarius in a random hidden desk in his room. How very coincidental indeed that the Stradivarius also seemingly used to be in the possession of an ancestor of the chick he'll marry.

The rest of the story can be summarized as an obsession in Italian culture, which his sis finds very pagan (even though the Pope sort of lives there), and a mental deterioration which is a direct result of listening to the same song for years on end. His sis basically blames everything on being unchristian and as him having been led astray. She is also a lil bit too emotional. The moral of the story can be summarised in the following quote; "There is no doubt in my mind that the music of the Gagliarda of Graziani helped materially in this process of mental degradation."

Also don't take this too serious :).

Larka Fenrir says

Secondo i filosofi e i teologi medievali il male è, nella sua essenza, talmente orrendo che, se la mente umana riuscisse ad averne piena coscienza, nel contemplarlo morirebbe.

Definire come una *ghost story* uno dei pochi racconti lunghi di John Meade Falkner è veramente riduttivo. L'ambientazione è gotica, la tematica quasi una dissertazione della lotta tra le forze del Bene del Male sull'uomo, ma il tono non è solo quello di una *ghost story*: è (soprattutto) un'indagine, un segreto che ha atteso secoli (e ancora ne attenderà) prima di essere completamente svelato.

Nonostante poi questa sia una traduzione dell'opera originale, lo stile mantiene un registro squisitamente ricercato del XIX secolo.

Unica nota negativa (parere soggettivo): le annotazioni finali di Mr Gaskell, come aggiunta e chiarimento dell'intera vicenda, anche se contribuiscono innegabilmente all'atmosfera del libro. Non da ultimo, è stato un personaggio che ha saputo conquistarmi fin dalle prime pagine, quindi è una "pecca" facilmente perdonabile.

[...] Una sera, mentre John riponeva il violino dopo una lunga serie di sonate senza aver eseguito l'"Areopagita", Mr Gaskell, che si era alzato dal pianoforte, come mosso da un impulso improvviso tornò a sedersi e disse: "Johnnie, non mettere ancora via il violino. Sono quasi le dodici e resterò chiuso fuori dai cancelli, ma questa sera non posso finire senza suonare la gagliarda. Poniamo che tutte le nostre teorie su vibrazioni e affinità siano errate, che veramente qui, una sera dopo l'altra, ci venga ad ascoltare qualche strano visitatore, qualche povera creatura il cui cuore è inestricabilmente legato a quell'aria; non sarebbe ingeneroso lasciarlo andar via senza sentire il pezzo che sembra piacergli più di tutti? Non siamo scortesì, passiamogli questo capriccio; suoniamo la gagliarda".

Poema says

This was the first book I read on my new e-reader, and the dictionary-at-my-fingertips feature was much used and appreciated. It is written in elegant Victorian -era English. The book is billed as a ghost story or a horror story, but I would categorize it more along the lines of a mystery. Victorian horror stories bear no resemblance to the modern horror genre !

An English gentleman finds a fine Stradivarius violin, along with the diary of its former owner, hidden in a secret cupboard. He becomes obsessed with duplicating the music and lifestyle of the past owner, even to the point of being snagged into the Neo-Platonistic and pagan philosophies that he practiced. Sadly, this constituted the demise of the new owner, from which he never recovered. There was no "happily ever after" but yet there was a satisfying conclusion that drew meaning from sordid events.

This is a short book, with well drawn characters and a moral point. The point is that music has power over the human spirit, and as such can be an instrument to lead one into temptation.

I had never heard of this book or its author; I downloaded it as a freebie because I liked the evocative title. It was a little gem of a find and I have now scouted out 2 other titles by this author that I plan to read.

Jennifer says

An interesting tale. I was a little unsatisfied with the ending, but overall a decent read.

Οδυσσεύας Μουζήλης says

?,τι και να πεις ε?ναι λ?γο

<https://pepperlines.blogspot.com/2018...>

LemontreeLime says

Here's the odd thing about this book: It's a rather anticlimactic ghost story-ish novelette written by a _really_ interesting guy. The introduction drops all these fascinating things about Falkner, and leaves it about as vague as the ghost story does in it's description of the aftermath of cursed debauched Adrian Temple and his ghostly influence on John Maltravers. This COULD be a creepy story, and it probably was back in 1895 when it was first published. Unfortunately time and changing tastes have made the horror of this one merely dull and damp. I personally would like to hear more about this Falkner chap, who was different enough to make the local Bishop comment in his diary about him 'He is a very strange man, and makes his conversation a shrouding veil for his thoughts more successfully than most men whom i know...'. I actually sat there for a moment and tried to imagine what that would sound like. MUCH creepier than the ghost story itself, which for all it's faults its still kind of a fun tale in a 19th century way.

Michael Sorbello says

What a shame. The first few chapters of this book promised a very convincing ghost story. The atmosphere was brilliant, a ghost appearing at the sound of its favorite song being played from its prized instrument, the ghost slowly possessing the body of the man that played the song so passionately.

And then it dissolved into a nonsensical, dragged out mess that was tedious, needlessly long and the tension became little more than a boring rant of moralism.

Ashleigh says

This epistolary novel and frame story tells the story of Sir John Maltreavers and his descent into sickness and death. IS he haunted, or is he mad? A long series of letters from his sister to his now adult son tries to explain how a man who started out at Oxford with such promise ends of maniacally playing one violin piece into the wee hours of the night to the exclusion of all else, including his wife and his child. OF course, he is haunted by the previous owner of the violin, an evil young Brit who also attended Oxford in the 1700s and spent time in Italy, becoming, to everyone's horror, a Jacobite. And apparently, also a practitioner of the occult and Neo-Platonism. WE then hear more details about sinister events around the murder of this historical man,

and how that was linked to Sir John's ultimate demise from his best friend at Oxford. A middling Gothic novel with great promise, this would have been much better written if most of it was told by his Oxford friend instead of the maiden aunt. Read this for a Goodreads challenge involving a frame story. (Frankenstein is a better choice!)

Derek Davis says

This is the first of the (alas) only three novels Falkner wrote, while devoting most of his life to working for and eventually running an armaments company during World War I. Odd, eh?

The thing with Falkner is watching the amazing progression he made from a fairly typical but much tighter 19th century approach (here, 1895) to his masterpiece, "The Nebuly Coat" (1903). "The Lost Stradivarius" uses the hoary mechanism of a long letter (or in other cases, a manuscript), from the aunt of the recipient, slowly unfolding a nebulous mystery, with supplemental letters and other snippets to fill in missing pieces.

We hear how John Maltravers (wonderful name), the writer's brother – and recipient's father – discovered perhaps the most perfect example of the violin-maker's art in a painted-over cabinet in his room at Oxford. Playing a certain disturbing tune on it awakens a possibly evil spirit that may haunt the room. From there, John descends into ruin. That's pretty much it. But, oh, he does it well. Besides the delivery of news from outside, the routine elements include a wholly rich, upper-class British setting; a long, debilitating illness arising from mental exhaustion and leading to death; much pointless travel around the Continent; hints slowly revealed as nasty truths; and an ending that explains much but not all.

Falkner's rebellion from form comes fairly subtly, mostly in comments that he will not talk at length about certain matters because they do not pertain to the central tale. Oh lord, would that others both before and after him had done as much. Most of the writing from the period would have been half as long and twice as interesting. As it is, despite the thinness of the underlying story, it moves along nicely and keeps you on your toes.

So on to the next one, "Moonfleet," where Falkner's rebellion begins to blossom.

Jayaprakash Satyamurthy says

This has the trappings of a truly classic supernatural tale - the obscure piece of music that seems to conjure an unseen presence, the mysterious musical instrument of fabulous value that seems to conjure additional voices when it is played, rumours of a Satanic hellraiser who met an untimely end in Italy and whose fate is somehow tied in with this music and this violin.

But Falkner's prolix style, flair for tedious melodrama and his Victorian morality - we are somehow meant to find the 2nd century CE philosopher Porphyry a deeply sinister figure because he was an opponent of Christianity - and to take the activities of the Hell-Fire Club seriously - make it all a bit of a slog. Too much exposition, too much explanation and too much pedestrian agonising and the bits of weird atmosphere and surmise are almost suffocated.

Sebaloo says

3.5

Portia S says

I liked this quite a bit. Sometimes it felt as though the pace was a bit lagging, and I wanted something to happen, but boy, when the ending came, the whole story was wrapped up so beautifully, I was quite satiated with it.

This book is written in the form of two memoirs of a particular event directed towards the young Edward Maltravers. The memoirs are from his aunt Sophia and his father's close friend Mr. G (please forgive me if I spell these unfamiliar names incorrectly) and they tell Edward of the sorrowful demise of his father Sir John, and the supernatural occurrences which surrounded his death. It all started with the discovery of the most perfect Stradivarius violin ever known in a secret cupboard in a dorm in Oxford, and after discovering the journals of the owner, Sir John bounced between England and Italy, retracing the travels of Adrian Temple.

What I loved about this book, was the way in which it was told. The sister didn't know the whole truth, so at the end of her piece, you felt distinctly that something was missing. When you come across G's narration you get the thread that tied the pouch tightly up and wound up most mysteries.

A good read ^^

Murnau says

La editorial Valdemar es de mis editoriales favoritas; nunca falla, libro que editan, libro que compro. Y si es un Gótica se que mi compra va a estar amortizada. Aunque trato de hacerme con todo el catalogo, de los ciento y pico libros que ya llevan publicados solo tengo unos 20, por lo que la mayor parte de los títulos ahí recogidos siguen siendo un misterio para mi.

Cuando pille este libro de titulo tan sugerente y de autor tan, para entonces, desconocido -luego supe que es el señor que escribió Moonfleet- me sentí como un niño pequeño: novela gótica, música clásica, fantasmas, misterios... ¿Como no me iba a gustar? Veamos.

La historia es muy sencilla. Narrada en forma de carta, se nos relata la historia de un jovencísimo, guapísimo, excelentísimo lord inglés muy aficionado a la música que descubre que, al tocar una pieza con su violín en su habitación, una presencia misteriosa se sienta a escucharle. Todo se enrarece aun mas cuando, investigando por su habitación, descubre en un compartimento secreto un Stradivarius de calidad superlativa y dueño desconocido. Dejemos estas dos frases como resumen grosso modo, porque lo que pasa despues os lo podeis imaginar: se va de madre.

Problemas del libro: es una novela gotica de cuando el romanticismo estaba ya dando sus ultimos coletazos, con todos los defectos y virtudes. En cuanto a sus cualidades, es muy sugerente, sabe crear atmósferas inquietantes, las descripciones de los paisajes mutan y reflejan las emociones exaltadas de los protagonistas, el misterio resulta interesante, pero poco mas se puede decir. Entre sus defectos destacar que el tipo de narración utilizada es horrible, el formato carta larga a estas alturas no hay quien se lo crea, mas cuando el narrador no deja de explayarse atosigándonos con detalles; es inconcebible que alguien escribiera una carta así, aparte de que es poco creíble le quita muchísima fluidez al relato. Los diálogos, al estar transcritos por

un narrador testigo, se hacen artificiales y pesados -¿vosotros de verdad creéis que alguien se tomaría la molestia de IMAGINAR lo que habría dicho alguien literalmente en una situación?-, y para colmo muchos de ellos abundan en las exclamaciones sonrojantes y rozan peligrosamente el monologo. Y por ultimo, y con esto termino ya, la mojigatería y dramatismo, tan deliciosos en algunas novelas góticas, aquí queda muy anticuado y cursi, sobre todo porque las cosas que ocurren no tienen el impacto de obras como El Monje, donde verdaderamente entiendes porque a los personajes se les termina yendo mucho la pinza. En resumen, es una novela bastante mediocre, anticuada para su época, y para nuestros días ya ni os digo; de un puritanismo vergonzoso por lo falso e impostado. Una obra, además, con su tufillo xenofobo-fantastico, como todas las escritas por romanticos anglosajones, que veían en los habitantes del mediterráneo gentes semi-barbaras, paganas casi, admirables por su exotismo, pero inferiores. De esto no me quejo, total, menudo retrato hace el puto Lewis en El Monje de la España barroca. Pero como es un novelón a él se lo perdono, a Falkner, no.

Elsa says

John encuentra una partitura para violín y cuando la toca oye que alguien se sienta en una silla, sin embargo decide ignorar esto hasta que un día ve un hombre que le provoca terror.

La historia se enreda mas cuando encuentra un stradivarius.
