



## **The Delphi Room**

*Melia McClure*

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Is it possible to find love after you've died and gone to Hell? For oddball misfits Velvet and Brinkley, the answer just might be yes. after Velvet hangs herself and winds up trapped in a bedroom she believes is Hell, she comes in contact with Brinkley, the man trapped next door.

## **The Delphi Room Details**

Date : Published September 15th 2013 by ChiZine Publications (first published September 1st 2013)

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Author : Melia McClure

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# From Reader Review The Delphi Room for online ebook

## **Kenneth Hoover says**

I enjoyed this book very much. McClure takes a lot of chances with this book and for the most part she brings them off. It's very experimental in nature, which I liked, and included Old Hollywood Movie references along with sections written as a screenplay.

I think McClure set the bar pretty high for herself, and met those goals. This isn't your ordinary paranormal romance, but something much deeper, much more visceral. Give it a peek.

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## **Orchid14 says**

From the first word to the last, this poetic, totally original novel captivates. Makes you think about life, death, love and reality in new ways. And it makes you laugh. Riveting.

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## **spiro says**

Unbelievable, page-turner to the very end. Fascinating and thought-provoking. Loved the ending, loved every word of this book! The letters the characters write to each other are highly entertaining, full of colour, wit and emotion. Would love to see this book made in to a movie.

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## **Karzy21 says**

Wow!!! I started reading it and couldn't put it down. It immediately captures you. I finished it one day! The imagination, and the character development is really something else. It's brilliant writing! It's dark and surreal but very quirky and humorous at the same time. I highly recommend it.

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## **Ally says**

Oh my God. Literally no words.

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## **Stephanie says**

First of all, what an interesting (and horrifying) vision of hell: a small room where you are trapped, alone, with nothing to do forever. Yikes.

Interesting story, if rather depressing. I kept reading, though, so it didn't get me down too much.

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### **Janette McMahon says**

Simply a wonderful beautifully written novel of finding love after you have given up and in an impossible place. McClure writes a story through letters passed through a wall and instead of being choppy for the reader it flows. The characters were enduring or even likable in my opinion, but the descriptions and the way the author wrote about feelings pulls you into the story despite the characters. Would recommend to those looking for something a bit different and enjoys true literary works.

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### **Taylormade13 says**

Darkly funny, hauntingly moving, startlingly original. This book is like no other. It grabs on and won't let go.

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### **Lene Estvad says**

This is a book I'd recommend to all of you who enjoy being carried away by beautiful prose, while exploring and learning more about the quirkiness of the human mind. An emotional roller coaster ride - scary, funny, disturbing - leaving you wanting for more. A story exquisitely composed by an author with a compassionate heart, and a desire to nudge us towards a deeper comprehension of how differently we perceive as well as cope with the challenges of life.

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### **Lauralee Kelly says**

I loved The Delphi Room so much, and can hardly wait for the next book by Ms. McClure. I won't spoil it for anyone, but I think this book has perhaps the best, most beautifully written ending to any book, ever. I found it deep, dark, and funny. One of my many favorite lines: "Reading a man's handwriting is like seeing him naked."

I have a hunch that Ms. McClure is channeling something larger, and I see her as an integral part of an understanding and interested in spiritual themes such as the afterlife, and what it really means to inhabit a body and die, which are currently emerging through more mainstream literature and film. This gives the book a wonderful timeliness, and is a welcome anecdote for those of us seeking something deeper than the current zombie post-apocalypse motif.

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### **Gary says**

*(This review also appears at the Court Street Literary Collective, LTD, at <http://courtstreetliterary.com/archiv...>)*

“My mother was on her way over the day I hung myself.”

With this startling, mysterious line, author Melia McClure begins *The Delphi Room*, a fascinating and engrossing novel that is at times beautiful, heartbreaking, terrifying, and perplexing. It’s even funny. Often, it’s all of these things simultaneously.

After taking her own life, a young woman, Velvet, lands in a kind of afterlife where she’s relegated to a room full of artifacts from her childhood. The room also contains other notable items: a mirror, a writing desk, and a pad of paper. Though she tries every way she can think to escape, Velvet is trapped in the room. She’s not alone, though—before long, she discovers that the room adjacent to hers is occupied by an also-dead man named Brinkley.

Through letters passed between their spaces, along with viewed episodes from each other’s lives—seen through the mirrors in their respective rooms—Velvet and Brinkley start to become intimately acquainted. For Velvet, these pivotal life scenes revolve around her relationship with her mother, her mother’s troubled love life, and Velvet’s often volatile connection with her own friend Davie. Brinkley’s scenes mostly focus on his interactions with his mother.

These viewed life episodes make up a significant portion of the novel and are presented in screenplay format, which is an interesting and effective authorial choice for a number of reasons. It not only reflects both characters’ professed love and appreciation for cinema, but it allows us to “see” the scenes from a distant, presumably objective point of view, creating the impression that we’re seeing what actually happened rather than relying on the character’s account. It’s also significant that both Velvet’s and Brinkley’s mothers are presented as dead ringers for Hollywood golden age stars, Mae West and Rita Hayworth, respectively.

It’s not quite that simple, though. Some of Velvet’s episodes also feature a dark entity called the Shadowman, a person she’s known for most of her life. Similarly, a number of Brinkley’s clips—which we see through Velvet’s mirror—feature his own “other,” the silent film actress Clara Bow. Both the Shadowman and Clara Bow appear from time to time, advising Velvet and Brinkley during trying situations. (Now that I think about it, “advising,” while technically a suitable word, has too benign a connotation, but you’ll have to read the novel to find out what I mean. And read it you should.)

*The Delphi Room*, as I mentioned earlier, is engrossing, and it’s a difficult thing to quit. Not only is McClure’s prose lush, beautiful, haunting, and, as I mentioned before, often funny. She also draws us through the story by tantalizing us with questions: How did Brinkley die? Is he lying to Velvet? Is she lying to us? Who is the Shadowman? How did Velvet and Brinkley become the way they are? What’s the purpose behind them being in this mysterious place? Is there a purpose at all? Is what’s happening to them real? Does that even matter?

Not surprisingly, the tension between subjective and objective reality is a theme McClure returns to again and again throughout the novel. “It’d always irked me how doctors outright dismissed the reality of people they couldn’t see,” Velvet muses. “What a limited and selfish perspective. Not to mention condescending. Reality is by its very nature subjective, to varying degrees.”

Here’s the bottom line: When I first finished reading *The Delphi Room*, I couldn’t think of what I wanted to say about it. I had to take some time to formulate my thoughts and assess what I’d read. Sometimes it’s easy to review a book, to tell readers the most important aspects of the story, the major points and themes, to pass judgment on whether it “works” or not. Not to say that those kinds of books are inferior, not at all, but with this one, there are so many rich elements and such complex personal histories woven throughout, that I

wanted to take care in writing about it, to make sure I did it justice. Because I believe it's such an imaginative, daring, and important work, I felt it was especially important that I get that across.

Generally, I'm hesitant to mention the length of time it takes me to finish a book, not wanting to create the impression it's an "easy read." With this novel, though, it's significant that I read it in one sitting and that I sacrificed valuable sleep time in doing so. It was well worth it.

So, read *The Delphi Room*. Me? I'm going to read again.

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### **Paula Moffat says**

This book grabbed me on the first page. I was trying to save it for my vacation, but simply couldn't wait to see what happened to Velvet & Brinkley. The format of the book is most unusual, but very readable. The characters, although dead are so alive and believable, and the subject matter dark, but laced with delicious humor. I found myself laughing out loud at times. This writer paints a perfect picture. You can see and feel the characters and their surroundings as if you are there, and the story is sensitive and unpredictable. Don't miss this one. Everyone will be talking about it

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### **Roesmarie Bock says**

This book captivated me from the very beginning and held my interest through the entire book. I don't tend to finish many books as I get tired of them, so this is a definite good sign. Melia's writing is awesome and she just makes you want to continue reading.

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### **Jeff Dick says**

Compelling Premise

Can two misfits find love after death?

This is the interesting question at the heart of *The Delphi Room*, although I might suggest that the book also explores the question of finding love for oneself after death.

In a beautiful opening chapter, Velvet commits suicide at the urging of her psychosis Shadowman. Afterward, she finds herself alone, locked in a room in what she believes is Hell. Her only companion is another recently deceased prisoner who is locked in a room of his own. He has a psychosis of his own in the form of Clara Bow.

As the two of them learn about each other (in a manner both novel and effective — see below), they also learn about themselves and we see each reflected in the life of the other.

Reflections and the shifting nature of perception are explored on a number of levels and wrapped in sumptuous prose. It's a literary mille feuille, if you'll excuse the metaphor. (I probably shouldn't write when I am hungry!)

## Lush Writing and Creative Design

The crown of this particular mille feuille is rich, velvety descriptives. We perceive the settings, both in the characters' purgatorial present, as well as their rebroadcast pasts, in a way that is sharper, yet softer, than we do the everyday physical world. For me, this conveyed a heightening of senses after death and gave a dream-like sheen to the experience.

Velvet and Brinkley learn about each other by turns via notes passed through a grate and vignettes played out in mirrors in their respective rooms. You might think that the narrative shifts would present transitioning and contextual problems for the reader, especially for a story told in the first person.

As it turns out, not so much.

Great writing style and creative book design (the vignettes are formatted as excerpts from a screenplay) keep the context clear and make the transitions effortless. A big tip of the chef's toque to the author as well as to ChiZine designer Danny Evarts for making it work so very well.

I have to confess that I didn't absolutely love either Velvet or Brinkley, but I was utterly captivated by the various layers of reflection and perception at play. I was constantly drawn forward through the story and felt the loss when it was over.

Note: Melia McClure will be reading from *The Delphi Room* on Wednesday, November 13th at 8:00pm as part of ChiSeries Toronto.

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### **Tamar16 says**

From the first page of this novel, I loved it, loved it, loved it. It is gripping and I couldn't put it down. Best book ever!

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