



Banquet For the Damned

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Few believed Professor Coldwell was in touch with an unseen world — that he could commune with spirits. But in Scotland's oldest university town something has passed from darkness into light. Now, the young are being haunted by night terrors and those who are visited disappear.

This is certainly not a place for outsiders, especially at night. So what chance do a rootless musician and burned out explorer have of surviving their entanglement with an ageless supernatural evil and the ruthless cult that worships it?

This chilling occult thriller is both an homage to the great age of British ghost stories and a pacy modern tale of diabolism and witchcraft.

Banquet For the Damned Details

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Author : Adam Nevill

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From Reader Review Banquet For the Damned for online ebook

Latasha says

This may be my 2nd favorite Adam Nevill book. Your pulled in from the start with Tom and Dante, along for the ride to St.Andrews. The scary, creepy bits are there from the start and it just gets darker and darker. I did not expect this book to be about what it turned out to be about. It was a very good surprise. If you like other books by this author, you'll love this one.

Melanie MacMillan says

This is the fourth book of Nevill's I've read. I love his writing, his characterization and his slow-burn style. Banquet was his first published book and his style has changed quite a bit since then. The only problems I have with Mr Nevill is his main characters often make *really fucking dumb decisions* . There was more than one time in this as well as other books of his, that I desperately wanted to slap the protagonist in the face with a wet fish. Hard. And with vigour. More than once.

The other problem I have with his books is the endings are almost always ambiguous. In this one, (view spoiler). Have you read House of Small Shadows ? If you have and you can explain what the fuck was going on for the last 2 chapters of that little tome, please, PM me and spell it out because my head's still doing a Linda Blair impersonation.

So why am I giving it 4 stars? Here's why.

It's well written.

It's scary.

There were times he made me literally squirm.

So I'll be reading his next one...and likely having a bit of whinge about the ending.

Sorry Adam.

J. M. Brister says

I did like this book much better than Apartment 16; however, I didn't really love it. My biggest complaint is that the book is incredibly repetitive. Since I'm not a big fan of this genre and don't read a lot of it or watch a lot of these movies, the only things I have to really compare this book to are video games. So, here's a gamer's perspective on this book:

Adam Nevill would have gotten five stars from me if he would have heeded the following:

1.) Cut the book in half. The whole thing dragged out. There's a reason why there aren't fifty hour plus horror video games (are there actually any?): people would get bored! Length only breeds dull repetition. There's a reason why horror movies aren't super long; it ruins the suspense. (Also, please don't tell me the length was for character development. The characters were all cliches.)

2.) Take a hint from the failure of Doom 3. Just like the aforementioned video game, Banquet for the Damned is JUST like Doom 3 in the following way: the first part of the book/game is scary, interesting and makes you want to keep going. However, after awhile, the SAME THINGS keep happening. I mean, after awhile, you just know what's going to happen and then it's just annoying. For example, in Doom 3, I know that if my character walks over a set of grated stairs or picks up a health pack, monsters are going to pop out. It never fails. In Banquet for the Damned, everyone's dreams are pretty much THE SAME. Why would I want to keep reading if I can anticipate what's going to happen? Maybe Adam Nevill should have played one of the games from the Dead Space franchise, instead. Now, THAT is a great example of the horror genre.

So, that was just a slight rant. If you have no idea what I'm talking about, then you should be happy because I am SUCH A NERD. :-)

Natasa says

This is my first Adam Nevill novel and I loved it. Loved simply because I respect authors who invest a lot of time in research. Just the amount of books he read in order to make this piece of work is astonishing. The pace was constant though it could have had a bit more action, but I'm not complaining as the story flowed nicely.

I'm really surprised to see a lot of bad reviews. I think this book deserves a bigger rating than 3,38.

But I guess everyone has a right to his own opinion.

This is a new gem of an author that I have discovered and I plan on reading more of his books very soon.

Peter says

Dante had been writing Eliot Coldwell, the author of Banquet for the Damned for a couple of years. Banquet had a big influence on their band and their hit album. Eliot invites Dante to come to Scotland to help him do some research for his new book. Dante jumps at the chance to work with Coldwell. Dante bring along another band member and his best friend Tom. Dante believes that the research that he is doing for Eliot, will help the band produce another classic rock album. Dante meets Coldwell in his office, which is located in the cellar of the University. Coldwell has a drinking problem and is on thin ice with the University. Eliot tells Dante, that he will be meeting with Beth from now on. Beth is a student, who is helping out Eliot with his research for the new book.. Things don't turn out the way Dante had planned and he finds out that he is merely a pawn in Coldwell's game. Hart Miller, is an American, who is studying night terrors. Some of the students who are in Eliot's study group, end up seeing Miller about their night terror. Those students who saw Miller, never keep their next appointment and it was like they vanished right off the face of the earth. Is Eliot Coldwell, the Devil himself or a follower of Satan? Banquet started off really strong but somewhere in the middle, the story began to drag. The plot was good and the characters were interesting. I feel that the novel could have been cut by 75 to 100 pages and still kept the interest of the reader. I have heard good things about this author and plan to checkout other works by him. I recommend this book, to readers who enjoy Horror.

A.R. says

Adam has done it again! What a brilliant story of witchcraft and the long-hairs that must fight it! Not really crazy about hair-band guys, but I love the Metal Church reference. This is the second book I've read by Neville, and the genius can do no wrong!

Kimberly says

2.5 stars.

This was the first novel that I read from Adam Nevill (forgot to post a review), and I wasn't overly impressed. While the idea was okay, I--personally--found it a bit too unnecessarily wordy.

I would recommend, instead, starting with his novel, HOUSE OF SMALL SHADOWS. I found this one much more "creepy", myself.

Nancy Oakes says

I liked it...While I happen to sit on the side of the fence of readers who claim that horror is much more potent in short-story format, once in a while I run into a full-length novel that can throw a continually sustained chill down my spine. Banquet for the Damned did just that. Although it didn't give me nightmares or produce the sort of night terrors that some of the characters suffered in this book, the creep factor was intense enough to where I read it in one sitting -- alone, at night, wind howling outside, the perfect horror-read atmosphere. If the object of writing horror is taking the reader briefly into the zone of the worst that might possibly happen and letting him or her experience the fear, panic and hopelessness that abides in that space, well, Nevill's done a great job.

I'll just leave impressions here, I have a longer review elsewhere.

On the whole, I found Banquet of the Damned to be a disturbingly good occult horror read. There are no gimmicky creatures, the terror is manifested at times but for the most part cerebral, and the tension is sustained throughout the story, keeping you alert and ready for what might happen next. Nevill writes without going overboard in the telling, and The setting is inexorably linked to its already-charged historical atmosphere -- St. Andrews was once a place of religious martyrs, witchcraft and the cleansing of heresy ; Nevill has just added a new dimension to the already-existing history of darkness there. It works perfectly, from the dunes on the beaches to the dark Tentsmuir forests.

I'm not a reader who cares about instant gratification -- I'm very much willing to wait, especially in horror and in crime novels. Other readers have complained about the repetition of the night-terror scenes, but I thought they were necessary for raising the tension level right off the bat. Some have noted that Dante makes some really stupid decisions, and that is true, but my take is that in his growing state of disillusionment, he's kind of slow or maybe unwilling to grasp what's really going on. My issues with this book are in some of the characters: first Tom -- while you could argue that he had to be included as the first link in a chain of cause and effect as to Dante's current predicament, we really only see him through Dante's eyes without any real fleshing out, and I was totally unsympathetic and apathetic toward this guy. And when he and Dante have a

fight and Dante begins to think about their relationship, the book gets a bit draggy while we have to go through the sordid backstory that I really didn't think added to the tension of the main story. Second is Hart and the way he speaks -- it is so stupid, having him refer to the women as "honey" -- sort of unrealistic for most modern American men.

But truth be told, I really liked this book despite the stuff that niggled at me, and I definitely recommend it when you want an old-fashioned story that will give you the willies for a few hours.

Maria Hill AKA MH Books says

This is so recommended to anyone who has ever been a Student or Staff member in The University of St Andrews but those of a nervous disposition who are living there at the moment maybe should give it a miss :)

nicoll lu says

Probably the worst book I had the pleasure of giving up on. after well over 250 page my reading buddy and I decided it was not worthy. Believe me you do not want to read this. It's badly written, it has no plot direction, the characters are awful. most of the book appears like a scene-description in a movie script - short, and exhaustive. just don't. this book is NOT about a scholar investigating mysterious deaths. this book is about killing your will to read and live. be smart, walk away.

Ginger says

This is the second book that I've read of *Adam Nevill* and there's a few things that I've noticed from both books. This guy is super detailed in his writing and he puts in a ton of time in research! So if those two things don't work for you in books, you might want to skip *Nevill*.

I seem to not have a problem with both and I really liked **Banquet for the Damned!**

The book starts off with Dante and Tom traveling from Birmingham to St. Andrews for a new start. Dante has been in contact with Professor Eliot Coldwell who's a philosopher, a radical and someone who's always pushing the boundaries between this realm and dark spiritual religions.

Professor Coldwell wrote a book years ago called "Banquet for the Damned" and it's one of Dante's favorite books. Coldwell sends Dante an invite to come stay at St. Andrews and help him with his second book.

But when Dante and Tom get to St. Andrews, they realize that things happening in this college town go against explanation and students may be more in danger then they realize!

This book bogged down a bit in the middle but damn, that ending paid off!
After reading the last line of the book, I sat there and said,
"Really?!! Damn you *Nevill*!!!" That's a compliment by the way. hahaha

Recommended to horror book lovers and book lovers that enjoy things that go bump in the night!

Richard Wright says

Ack. I can't do it. I can't finish the thing. Picking it up for another chapter felt like a punishment. I've had so many people recommend this book that I feel almost guilty for having so many problems with it, but I do. Characters spend brief sojourns speaking like actual people do before collapsing into the narrative voice. They introspect tirelessly, and tiresomely, sucking life out of the plot (which I kept zoning out of). The prose is a bloated, turgid mess, working too hard to impress and forgetting to progress. I can accept that, very occasionally, a sky or a room might be illumined instead of just being 'lit'. When both are illumined within pages of each other, I want to commit hate crimes against thesauri. The intent to indulge language to evoke some earlier phase of gothic literature feels misguided, and so gallingly pretentious at my expense that it actually started to anger me.

I did not enjoy this. Not one whit.

Kaora says

This isn't my favorite Adam Nevill by far.

I found *Last Days* to be far creepier than this book but it had its moments. I was just hoping for I think MORE. The kind of must-read-only-in-the-light creepiness that came from *Last Days*. The creepy moments in this were so far between that it just didn't have the same impact.

I feel like his protagonist is one that I've met before and is so overdone in horror novels. So I'll stick to my Goodreads ratings of 2. I liked it. But I didn't love it.

John says

It is a truth universally acknowledged, that the hazards of writing supernatural horror fiction at novel-length are many and legendary. The received wisdom is that it cannot be done with any real success. But the received wisdom is that there are also a few honourable exceptions. So whilst good novel-length supernatural horror fiction (meaning here what can be conveniently be called “Jamesian” or “dark fantasy”, and thus not simply horror fiction) is as rare as *Weird Tales* keeping to its advertised publication schedule, nevertheless it does exist.

Fritz Leiber's *Conjure Wife* and *Our Lady of Darkness* come to mind, as does *Ghost Story* by Peter Straub, as well as several novels by Charles L Grant and the late and considerably under-rated Michael McDowell. In his Introduction to *Banquet for the Damned* Ramsey Campbell invokes the Leiber novels, and also mentions Kingsley Amis' *The Green Man* and Daniel Rhodes' *Next, After Lucifer*. (And modestly omits to say anything about any of his own valuable contributions to the list.) But, as Campbell correctly points out, it is still clear that novel-length “Jamesian” fiction is a rare commodity

And now there is Adam L G Nevill's new novel *Banquet for the Damned*. It is Jamesian to the core, and not just in the aspects that are apparently the easiest to do, and which in the past have so often caught out the

writer of mere pastiche. The novel has a genuinely gothic and scholarly setting: the Scottish city of St Andrews, with its ancient university and long-established academic tradition. The atmospheric background is established from the opening line: "It is a night empty of cloud and as still as space." But you can't construct a novel on atmosphere only, and we aren't only looking backwards into the more leisurely period of stained glass, illuminated manuscripts, and candlelight. We are also clearly in the contemporary world, with computers, CDs, guitars, a battered Land Rover, considerable amounts of drinking, and much academic intrigue and back-biting (although that last is perhaps simply timeless).

M R James always set his stories in thoroughly recognizable (if sometimes unusual) settings, and used the trappings of the time. Thus the supernatural is a part of the scene, although a thoroughly unwelcome intrusion, and all the more able to terrify through its distortion of what was previously thought to be simple reality. That is where Nevill starts from.

Two young men from Birmingham, Dante and Tom, arrive in St Andrews. Both have spent years drifting in and out of jobs, and getting absolutely nowhere at all with their band and would-be musical career. Now Dante is following up the chance of a life-time: becoming the research assistant to philosopher Eliot Coldwell, cult author of Dante's favourite book, the occult study *Banquet for the Damned*. Tom tags along in the hope of also being able to make a new start in a new city.

Straightaway, the setting of the old city and university of St Andrews starts to make itself felt. But the placid city is taking on a life of its own. Dante and Tom have arrived just as a number of students are reporting suffering from terrifying sleep disturbances, and some have disappeared. And with the American anthropologist Hart Miller also newly arrived on the scene, and starting to investigate, St Andrews is certainly not the quiet and somewhat remote academic backwater that it might have seemed to be on the surface. The past has become like something cold, dark, and tainted rising up slowly through mud into the bright daylight of the present.

Nevill starts building up the suspense early on. *Banquet for the Damned* is as much a thriller as it is a novel of supernatural horror. Intriguing and ambiguous hints are liberally strewn around. Eliot Coldwell turns out to be as utterly dodgy as it is possible to be. He crudely tries to get his assistant, Beth, together with Dante – something which she is certainly enthusiastic about. Coldwell's university employers finally start to wonder who they have taken on and start to put the pressure on him. And when Hart Miller's work with the disturbed students starts him to making connections with Eliot's non-academic activities that seem to have resonances with aspects of St Andrews' dark past, then the stage is set.

The tension gradually mounts. Scuttling things are glimpsed; dreams are disturbing and life-like. There is plenty of arresting imagery, with often little sense of the city really being quite of this world, despite the mundane setting. There are many Jamesianesque hints scattered throughout. For example: "That was the last straw, to turn around and see your own overcoat upon the table, where it had been upset from the window sill, lying as if face down with the shape of a body still inside it, on the desk where his books and folders were open."

Not all is deadly serious, either. One character is called Rhodes Hodgson! (The character Eliot Coldwell of course recalls Mr Karswell from "Casting the Runes". The resemblances between them are not limited to their names, and are surely not coincidental.) And there is much that is distinctly non-Jamesian as well. *Banquet for the Damned* has a strong erotic element. Beth is presented to Dante as a sort of senior research assistant to Eliot Coldwell -- someone who will show Dante everything. That turns out to potentially be the least of it. Beth puts the fatale firmly back into femme fatale. And does it with much femme as well...

Past occurrences have consequences in the present. Dante collides with that most clichéd and Jamesian -- and correct -- of notions with a vengeance. Coldwell has apparently made contact with some sort of coven from St Andrews' violent past, and Beth is also intimately involved as the corrupting channel for the mediaeval terrors newly breaking into the city. Friends and acquaintances are becoming deadly enemies. Dante, Tom, and Hart Miller have to put a stop to it all. Nevill winds up Banquet for the Damned in a very vivid and satisfying way, with plenty of violence and the always present possibility that they might still yet fail.

The breathless pace is maintained right up until the end: a considerable achievement for a long novel of 494 pages. (For comparison, Fritz Leiber's *Our Lady of Darkness* weighs in at 189 pages of quite large print). The dustjacket by Edward Miller is a bonus, capturing as it does much of the eerie essence of Adam L G Nevill's novel. *Banquet for the Damned* is a first-rate read, and one which contains a great deal to savour for the enthusiast of the Jamesian manner, and which also offers as much to those who prefer a more obviously contemporary approach to supernatural horror.

Hudson says

****actual rating 3.5****

This was a tough book to rate. On the one hand, I thought some of the writing was truly exceptional and even more so because this is the authors first book. Haunting, horrifying, heartbreaking....there was a lot of ground covered and some of the descriptions in the book were just awesome.

That said.....I think it was a tad too long and seemed to move a little slowly at times (544 total pages). This was the reason for my 3.5 rating instead of a 4.

The setting of the book is a university town in Scotland where two heavy metal band members have traveled from England in order to assist a reclusive professor with his research. This research will assist them with their new album and hopefully reinvent a sagging career. However bad dreams and sickness ensues, students start disappearing and it quickly becomes apparent that something has been summoned and does not want to leave.

Shades of occult, witchcraft, history and some pretty decent horror scenes made this book a good read. Even though it's a bit long I would recommend it to horror fans and I am excited to read more of Neville's books.
