



The Haunting of Toby Jugg

Dennis Wheatley

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Toby Jugg, a fighter pilot shot down in combat, is now confined to his bed with little hope of walking again. He is also the heir to a considerable fortune - a fortune that is being administered by a board of trustees until he comes of age.

At night, he is becoming increasingly disturbed by a strange presence - a mysterious shadow thrown by the moonlight through a gap in the blackout curtains. He is convinced the shadow is cast by a malevolent and unnatural entity trying to get into his room. Toby is unable to convince anyone of the reality of this entity, and slowly comes to believe that there is a ploy against him, a plot to send him mad, or to make it appear that he is already mad in order to usurp his fortune. Is this some form of hallucination? Is this unearthly creature real or a product of his imagination? Are the people caring for him actually plotting his destruction, or are they sincerely concerned for a young man whose grip on sanity is steadily weakening?

With themes of love, madness, Communism, Satanism and Freemasonry, Wheatley builds his trademark atmosphere of menace, suspicion and supernatural dread.

The Haunting of Toby Jugg Details

Date : Published March 1st 2007 by Wordsworth Editions Ltd (first published 1948)

ISBN : 9781840225457

Author : Dennis Wheatley

Format : Paperback

Genre : Horror, Fiction, Fantasy, Supernatural, Occult, Paranormal

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From Reader Review *The Haunting of Toby Jugg* for online ebook

Kathy Davie says

Third in the Black Magic series revolving around a paralyzed war hero, Toby Jugg, who is recuperating in Wales during the months of April, May, and June of 1942.

This ARC was sent to me by NetGalley for an honest review.

My Take

This third story was so annoying. "I" keeps going on and on about how crazy he thinks he might be, and I *know* that I'm going crazy reading as he drones on and on. Eventually, we're led to believe that Toby is intelligent, and he does take some practical measures via his journal to keep track of what's going on, but he falls down when he's planning his many escapes. He doesn't think past getting out of his room. Sure, he's paying lip service to the idea (and I can't blame him for feeling desperate), but in truth he's self-sabotaging like mad!

Wheatley does do a good job of ratcheting up the tension. But once Toby figures out the basics of what's going on, why does he still allow it to bother him so much? He speculates about who gains and how, what happens if he dies or is certified as insane, and as he speculates, he provides us with his background and how he got to where he is today.

It is quite the nefarious plot, and Toby's reasoning makes perfect sense, but I don't feel that Wheatley made this realistic, especially when Toby knows he only has to last until he reaches his majority on the 20th of June. That the fright only shows up around the time of the full moon. And then when he has the opportunity to get help, he backs down. WTF? Which AGAIN makes me question why Toby keeps terrifying himself!? He also does a really good job of helping prove Helmuth's point, the idiot. It's hard to feel any sympathy towards Toby with how stupid he's being.

I did enjoy Toby's comments about how different the mentality of modern man is from that of a man 100 years or more previously. Toby reckons it's the changes in what we value. Of being looked up to for money than for a person's real worth, and how the pursuit of money causes so much stress, the time-occupying distractions our grandfathers never knew, the games, cheap travel, the masses of radio programmes, crossword puzzles, books, magazines, [politics], and war.

I'm not sure how much I agree with Toby about the average person, these days, being more involved in war, as opposed to armies of the Napoleonic era (for instance) when it was more common to utilize professional armies and navies. I seem to recall those armies and navies conscripting anyone they could get their hands on. And I can't imagine the villages and towns through which war waged were all that uninvolved.

Anyway, the point Toby is making is that previously, people had more "time for ample reflection ... and thought more about the mystery of creation". Toby makes another point about perspective when he explores the different takes on a man of 45 making love to a woman of 22. I had to laugh as it was so true.

Until we learn more, I wasn't liking Helmuth at all. He's so judgmental and unfeeling. Once I get to know him better, I hated him and wanted to wring his neck. Slowly. Nor was I impressed with Helmuth's reasoning about what the government would do to Toby's millions. Why is it that those millions would still be around if Toby hands 'em all over to the Brotherhood, but they would be lost if Toby doesn't hand 'em over?

I like the concept of Weylands as a school, in allowing the students to pursue the topics in which they're interested while also requiring the basics. And as Toby (and the story) goes on, I began to see how awful it really was. Toby running away from school really was the best thing for him.

Wheatley is definitely NOT a socialist or communist, lol. And regrettably, his world of the 1940s sounds a lot like our world (and economy) of 2016. The government then was just as bad as our government today, taxing people up the yin-yang and gypping servicemen who are injured during war. Albert Jugg was a farsighted businessman who was lucky enough to be born before there was so much government interference. I'm not impressed with his idea of a library, though.

The Story

It was the 10th of July when Toby crashed, and it is now April with Toby at Llanferdrack in Wales to wait out the war, to recover, to hope he can walk again. Before he goes mad.

The Characters

Flight-Lieutenant Sir Albert Abel "**Toby**" **Jugg**, Bart., D.F.C., R.A.F.V.R. (Ret.), a.k.a., "the Viking", is the heir to his grandfather's millions, but is still under a Guardianship with a board of trustees. His grandfather, **Albert Jugg** (he started as an office boy), and father were killed in an accident in October 1929; his mother died when he was born. **Julia** is married to Toby's **Uncle Paul** (the black sheep of the family and weak in character), and they live at Queensclere in Kent.

Llanferdrack Castle is...

...the estate Grandfather bought for his sister, Toby's **Great-aunt Sarah**, when her fiancé, **Lord "Lancelot" Llanferdrack**, drowned the day before the wedding. **Miss Nettlefold** is her companion who does the housekeeping. Its estate manager, **Dr. Helmuth Lisický**, a Czech, worked at Weylands, a progressive school, as the German master. He later became Toby's private tutor when Toby was 13. **Konrad** is Helmuth's cruel Ruthenian manservant. The **Great Spider** is Helmuth's totem.

Sister Deborah Kain, a Russian Jewess born in Germany who fled to England in 1933, is the private nurse and skilled masseuse engaged to care for Toby. **Taffy Morgan** is the head gardener's son and engaged to serve as body-servant to Toby, helping to bathe and dress him. **David** is Taffy's brother. **Sally Cardew** is the new nurse. **Johnny** is her brother; he was shot down a year ago.

The trustees include...

...**Harry Iswick** had been Grandfather's confidential secretary; **Lord Embledon**; **Sir Stanley Wellard** (died in 1939, and Helmuth was elected to replace him); **Brigadier Guy Rootham** (he succeeded his father, **C.J.**); **Claud Bartorship** (replaced his uncle **Alec**) and **Charles Roberts**, two partners from **Bartorship, Brown, and Roberts** (accountants); **Angus Smith**, a partner from **Smith & Co.** (solicitors); and later, Uncle Paul.

Nanny Trotter was Toby's nurse; **Miss Stiggins** is a spinster who gave Toby lessons until he went away to school. **The Willows** was Uncle Paul and Aunt Julia's house in Kew. **Florrie Meddows** was the housemaid. **Juggernauts** is Jugg's biggest aircraft plant where **Flight-Lieutenant Roper** had worked as a test pilot.

Squadron Leader Cooper was the RAF doctor at Nether Wallop. **Dr. Bramwell** wrote a book on hypnotism. **Owen Gruffydd** is the village schoolmaster on whom Deb has her eye. Owen is Labour and wants to stand for Parliament. **Miss Smith** runs the nursing agency in London. **Dr. Arling** is the medical man Uncle Paul and Julia bring with them. On the grounds of Weylands Abbey was a **Lodge of the Grand Orient**, a Continental Masonry group.

The Title

The title is of the nefarious plots afoot in *The Haunting of Toby Jugg*.

Dfordoom says

Toby Jugg is a young fighter pilot in 1942, now confined to a wheelchair after being shot down. He is also the heir to a considerable fortune, a fortune that is being administered by a board of trustees until he comes of age. He is becoming increasingly disturbed by a strange presence, a mysterious shadow cast by the moonlight through a gap in the blackout curtains, a shadow that he is convinced is cast by a malevolent and unnatural entity trying to gain entrance to his room. Toby is unable to convince anyone of the reality of this entity, and he slowly comes to believe that there is a ploy against him, a plot to send him mad, or to make it appear that he is already mad. Is this some form of hallucination? Is this unearthly creature real or a product of his imagination? Do the people caring for him actually intend his destruction, or are they sincerely concerned for a young man whose grip on sanity is steadily weakening? It's really an elaborate and bizarre conspiracy theory story rather than a conventional horror story. It's also a severely paranoid right-wing conspiracy theory. It's impossible to take it seriously, and that's the very quality that makes it vastly entertaining and extremely amusing even for readers who don't share Wheatley's political beliefs. You have to admire someone who can weave together such a complex and eccentric paranoid fantasy involving Communists, Satanists, Freemasons and modern theories of education. As a horror thriller it's exciting and gripping – Wheatley demonstrates considerable skill in building up an atmosphere of menace, suspicion and supernatural dread. I don't think very many readers could approach this book the way its author presumably intended it to be approached, but if you read it with the right kind of camp sensibility it really is outrageous fun. Published in 1948.

Dark-Draco says

This is the first book by this author that I have read and I must admit to having mixed feelings about it.

The premise is good. If you're paralysed from the waist down, confined to a bed, how scary would it be to be terrorised by a evil, ghastly shadow on the nights of bright moonlight? A shadow that looks like a giant, tentacled octopus (what it actually is kind of given away by the cover of the book!), that is determined to break into your room. You can't get away or get help, as your mail is being intercepted and your carers seem determined to believe you are mad.

There were some issues with pacing, with some rather slow chapters, but also some filled with some exciting action. I largely liked the ending, although the 'miraculous' bit of the intervention was a bit hard to swallow.

On the negative side, I really don't think you can create a true sense of menace when the book is written in diary entries - you kind of know that Toby must survive otherwise the diary couldn't continue. So some of the action in the earlier parts of the book ends up being a bit tame. So for me the story becomes more of a thriller as he puzzles his way out of the situation, rather than a really true horror story. In fact, there was only one scene that really made me shiver ... but I'll leave that to you to discover.

A couple of the surprise twists I did guess early on, but some scenes I anticipated happened in completely different ways, which I thought was great! I also liked the characterisations, although here it did start to show

it's age, with communism and devil-worship all muddled up, and a few anti-non-British views. However, the author also bucked trend, with his stiff-upper-lipped hero breaking down on more than one occasion and the women saving the day rather than being there to be saved!

So overall, I did enjoy it and will read more by this author - but I still prefer my horror to be horrific!

Irene says

I wanted to like this one since some of his stuff is really well written but I guess it's a real hit or miss thing with this author. Plus some of the voices (audible.com) especially for the main evil character were just so annoying I could hardly even listen to those parts and he featured a lot. I still want to see one of the movies made out of one of his books I did actually like though. I kept falling asleep with this one and now that I've finally finished with it I am wide awake and ready for something else.

Stephen McQuiggan says

Love the old school feel of this - the black and white paradigm of the characters - although it's so right wing in places as to be laughable: all the satanists are foreigners, and communism itself is an invention of Lucifer to drive the world into Hades - Helmuth predicts a Socialist government after the war like he's foretelling the apocalypse - yet for some reason this makes it all the more enjoyable. Comfortable as an old slipper, and entertaining as hell.

Sandy says

Although English author Dennis Wheatley wrote a total of 55 novels before his death in 1977, his reputation today, I have a feeling, rests largely on the nine novels that he wrote dealing with the supernatural and the "black arts." And if Wheatley's name is not a familiar one to you, it is really no great wonder, as not too many of those 55 titles--mainly in the adventure/thriller genre--are in print today, and it would surprise me if you could walk into your local Barnes & Noble and purchase one. And yet, here's a cautionary notice to all hugely popular modern-day authors, who may think their fame is of a permanent nature (are you listening, Stephen King?): For many decades, Wheatley was one of Britain's biggest-selling authors (second only to Agatha Christie), who dependably sold 50 million books a year, even into his final decade. Many of those 55 titles comprised series featuring repeating characters; hence, a Duc de Richleau series (11 titles), a Gregory Sallust series (11 titles), a Roger Brook series (12 titles) and a Molly Fountain series (two titles). All but two of his supernatural outings can be found somewhere in those series. De Richleau featured in "The Devil Rides Out" (1934), "Strange Conflict" (1941) and "Gateway to Hell" (1970); Sallust in "They Used Dark Forces" (1964); Brook (a French Revolutionary character) in "The Irish Witch" (1973); and Fountain in "To the Devil--A Daughter" (1953) and "The Satanist" (1960). And then there are the two supernatural outings not related to any of the series, "The Haunting of Toby Jugg" (1948) and "The Ka of Gifford Hillary" (1956). This reader had previously read and loved "The Devil Rides Out," and on a whim, decided to give "Toby" a chance. Originally released as an Anchor Press hardcover in December '48, this was Wheatley's third black magic title, and one that Wheatley mentioned in an interview many years later: "Many people say that although there is little action in this tale, it has more suspense than any other occult story I have ever written...[it is] perhaps not as exciting as some of my other occult stories, but a pretty good study of the

psychology of fear." Well spoken, Dennis! I could not agree more!

The book takes the form of a journal being written by Sir Albert Abel "Toby" Jugg, a 20-year-old RAF pilot who was shot down during the Battle of Britain and is now confined to a wheelchair, paralyzed from the waist down. Toby is soon to become, on his 21st birthday, one of the wealthiest men in England, and heir to the Jugg conglomerate of businesses. But when we first encounter him, Toby is a very distraught man. Now convalescing in one of the family estates--Llanferdrack Castle, in a lonely section of central Wales--to escape the German air raids, Toby has been seeing the shadow of what appears to be an octopus, dancing outside his courtyard window in the moonlight. He senses a hellish intent emanating from the infernal whatzit, and pleads with his Czech mentor/tutor/guardian, Helmuth Lisicky, to have him moved to another room, but without avail. Eventually, Toby comes to suspect that a plot might be afoot to drive him mad, and before all is said and done, he uncovers a vast conspiracy involving Satanism, Communism, a giant spider from another dimension, a sinister prep school and an evil fraternal order, all arrayed against him. But paralyzed as he is and marooned in the lonely countryside, what can Toby do to protect himself from these diabolical forces, other than scribble daily entries into his journal?

As touched on earlier, "Toby Jugg" does not feature as many thrilling sequences as had "The Devil Rides Out" (probably Wheatley's best-known book, and one that was turned into a fine Hammer film in 1968, starring Christopher Lee), but yet manages to dish out several exceptionally well-done scenes. In one, Toby is attacked in his room by every spider in Llanferdrack Castle; in another, Toby confronts that monstrous spider from another dimension; and finally, in a thrilling windup that admittedly makes for a literal *deus ex machina* ending, Toby battles a gathering of some 80 Satanists who are performing a ritual in the ruined castle chapel. The novel even gets a bit Gothic at one point, with Toby's mad Aunt Sarah wandering the castle corridors, and it is Sarah's initial appearance that might comprise the book's single most chilling moment. As Wheatley mentioned, the novel does grow almost unbearably suspenseful as it proceeds, and each one of Toby's escape attempts is fraught with tension. Toby turns out to be a terrific writer, giving us beautiful detail regarding the book's many characters, and his short-chapter entries make the reader want to take in another, and then another. Jugg is a very likable character himself, a decent lad trying very hard to hold on to his sanity, and the reader is with him all the way. The book contains any number of genuine surprises (to my amazement, I anticipated early on the one about Toby's beautiful Aunt Julia), and while I probably should not reveal too much about Helmuth Lisicky's precise nature, I will say that the emphasis should most certainly be placed on the first syllable of his first name and the second part of his last!

During the course of his book, author Wheatley gets to reveal many of his feelings and opinions regarding such matters as Communism (which he literally equates with the Devil), sexual mores, taxes, unions, and British election policies. Though he was very much a Christian, the author's Hindu leanings are given an airing here, as are his thoughts on extreme wealth. The book contains many British cultural references and many instances of British slang ("She was still a bit shirty..."), but nothing that some simple Interwebs research will fail to clear up. The novel is also largely free of the anti-Semitic and racist references that Wheatley has often been charged with, although Deb--Toby's scheming, Communist first nurse--is shown to be a Jewess, and Lisicky himself, quite unnecessarily, is said to have a "dash of Jewish blood." Other charges that might be fairly leveled against the book are the ease with which Toby masters the art of hypnosis after studying a book on the subject, as well as that "God out of the machine" conclusion. Still, once a reader has bought into the existence of the Devil, then why not God himself? All told, "The Haunting of Toby Jugg" is a hugely entertaining affair. It was, apparently, made into a BBC TV movie called "The Haunted Airman" in 2006, starring a pre-"Twilight" Robert Pattinson as Toby. I have not seen this film, which supposedly bears little resemblance to its source novel, and urge readers to stick with the Wheatley original. I have a feeling that most of them will strongly agree with Toby's nurse Sally, who utters these words after reading Toby's journal: "It is an extraordinary document...I was tremendously impressed...."

By the way, this review originally appeared on the Fantasy Literature website (<http://www.fantasyliterature.com/>), an excellent destination for all fans of Dennis Wheatley....

David says

This is the first Dennis Wheatley book I have read, and I am very much impressed!

This book is one of the 'Satanist' series of books that share a common theme but not really a mythos. The story is that of a wealthy paralysed pilot in WW2 who is being haunted at night an entity that is not of this world. As is the case with these sorts of stories, a bucket load of plot twists make sure that nothing is ever quite what it seems.

It is incredibly easy to read without and fluff or pretentious description. It's narrative form is that of a diary, which also makes it relatively easy to read in small chunks. It also flows well and every time you fear the story is creeping towards the anti climactic, a new twist is thrown in that keeps it as a bona fide page turner.

It isn't perfect however. Wheatley was a product of his era where socialists are the enemy (when everyone know that they are the heroes!) and that the upper classes are the rulers of society. There is also the odd dabble with sexism and racism. That being said, if the reader can look past this then it need not get in the way of enjoying this novel.

A genuinely unique horror read that I highly recommend.

Frank Carroccino says

A Young British flyer is shot down and left with his legs paralyzed. He is now being housed in one of his family's estates. He comes from a very rich family and they are all dead but his drunken uncle. He is set to inherit all his family's millions on his next birthday. He was mostly raised by his aunt and uncle, since his father died when he was quite young and his mother died giving birth to him. He thinks he is being haunted by devils or ghosts at night. No one believes him. He has an overseer who is telling him he's going mad. Are there really devils or ghosts? Is his overseer trying to drive him crazy. His aunt and uncle? Is it all a trick to get his money. This book is told through first person. Toby is writing down everything in a diary. Things start slow but they really pick up and the end is a roller coaster. Very good story with some very creepy things going on and very good protagonists to cheer for in Toby and his nurse. Great fun well worth a read. Another solid effort by Dennis Wheatley.

Jim Dooley says

Some years ago, I read an interview with famed actor, Christopher Lee. In it, he stated that he very much regretted that Hammer Films had not made a film of Dennis Wheatley's, THE HAUNTING OF TOBY JUGG. Hammer did purchase the rights, but never proceeded with a production of it.

Since that time, I've been very curious to read the horror novel that had so impressed Christopher Lee. Now, having completed the reading, I believe Hammer made a wise decision. This is primarily because the title

character is bedridden, so the majority of time is spent learning of his plots to escape his villainous keepers.

Among Wheatley's books, *THE HAUNTING OF TOBY JUGG* gained great notoriety for the embodiment of the Satanic demon creature that is unleashed on Toby Jugg. I agree that those moments are genuinely creepy and well-written. The book is also one of Wheatley's "Black Magic" series, so its fans will be attracted to yet another Satanic manifestation.

The novel did trouble me in a number of ways:

- * The journal style which is written by Toby Jugg sets up numerous "Will he survive?" moments. However, HE is writing the journal entries. That really undercut a lot of the excitement for me.

- * Some highly unusual skills and occurrences take surprisingly little effort to acquire and implement.

- * About two-thirds of the way through, there is an inexplicable change of attitude on the part of our hero towards his antagonist.

- * A great deal of journal space is devoted to biographic backstory. This just stopped the narrative dead for me. Then it moves on to the backstories of other characters!

- * A huge surprise turnaround wasn't a surprise to me at all. In fact, there was evidence supporting it much earlier in the book.

- * The ending would be cinematically pleasing. As a Reader, though, I thought it cheated.

THE HAUNTING OF TOBY JUGG is definitely readable and has a number of chilling moments. I believe that the general horror fan will likely find it a bit unsatisfying. My recommendation of it would be primarily for Dennis Wheatley's "Black Magic" fans.

Kim says

youtube

Mymymble says

Actually this wasn't too bad. A supernatural Rear Window.

Having wasted most of my pocket money on this author during my early teens I've no intention of re-reading his stuff though.

Tiffany says

I almost gave this 4 stars, but somewhere toward the end, satanism, communism, socialism, and Hinduism were stars of the show, declaring that God didn't exist and as a Christian I find that sad. However, it all ended up good in the end. An interesting story all in all and I wasn't scared at all, like I thought I would be. The

very beginning almost lost me, but I pushed on and I am glad that I did.

Michael Madden says

I was probably in my early twenties or maybe late teens when I read this book, and it scared me to death. Its probably the reason I don't like going to bed with all of the lights off, and the sound of a tree tapping against a window fills me with dread. Dennis Wheatley is probably seen as old fashioned these days, but he is a truly gifted writer with attention to detail second to none. Toby Jugg has the trademark supernatural occurrences, but it also has a masterful pace that increases the suspense as it reaches a climax.

~*~Princess Nhya~*~ says

Book was excellent!! Much Much better than the film.

Neil says

I first read this 30 years ago, and in a fit of nostalgia I thought I'd re-read it. The scene in, which a master of the black arts, summons hundreds of spider into the main characters bedroom, had remained with me ever since. On my return,I was not disappointed, and Dennis Wheatley definitely had the gift of story telling. The guff about communist infiltration and trendy left-wing schooling needs to be taken with a pinch of salt. Just enjoy.
