

# The Ghost Writer by Ian Siragher - REVIEW

Some book titles whisper; others announce themselves with a kind of eerie authority. The Ghost Writer sits somewhere in between: quiet, unsettling, and suggestive of hidden hands shaping both the page and the lives upon it. From the outset, I knew this was not going to be an ordinary read.

Having already devoured *The Three Wives of Charlie Mellon*, this is the second novel I've read from Ian Siragher, and I was curious to see where his imagination would lead this time. This novel is sharper, more enigmatic, and comparatively a deeper shade of grey — a story that lingers like a shadow you can't quite shake.

It is a book about ghosts, yes, but not necessarily the chain-rattling-in-the-attic sort. These ghosts are of memory, of betrayal, of lives half-lived and stories unfinished. From the very first pages, there is a sense that truth is a slippery thing — and that we, as readers, are being invited into a hall of mirrors where every reflection might conceal more than it reveals.

The strength of this novel lies not only in its premise, but in the author's expert control of atmosphere. The writing is taut, deliberate, and suffused with a quiet menace that makes even the most ordinary moments shimmer with unease. Where *The Three Wives of Charlie Mellon* was full of domestic intrigue and a sly undercurrent of wit, *The Ghost Writer* ventures further into psychological thriller territory. A brilliant sense of humour is still present, but it is darker, more ironic, sharpened into a tool that cuts rather than cushions.

The pacing is admirable. The novel moves with a rhythm that is both steady and unpredictable. At first you think you know where the story is going — a mystery to be solved, a secret to be uncovered — but then the ground shifts beneath you. Scenes that seem straightforward take on new meaning in hindsight; characters who appear reliable suddenly seem suspect. This constant re-framing keeps the reader — and my inner detective — leaning forward in suspense, always questioning, always second-guessing and recalculating. It is the mark of a skilled storyteller to make us complicit in our own disorientation, and here it is done with remarkable finesse.

The central conceit — a writer grappling with unfinished stories, both his own and those of others — gives the book a metafictional edge that I found deeply compelling. There are moments when you can't tell if you are reading about the characters or about the act of writing itself — the blurring of those lines being part of the thrill. After all, what is a ghost story if not an attempt to give voice to the silent, to bring back what has been lost? And what is a novel if not a haunting of its own?

Characterisation is another strength of Ian's, once again. The people in this book are not simply vehicles for plot; they are layered, flawed, and often infuriatingly opaque. There is always the sense that each one carries secrets — some that may never be spoken aloud. It's rare to encounter a cast of characters that feel so simultaneously real and elusive, as if they might slip out of your grasp the moment you think you understand them. That slipperiness is part of what gives the novel its charge.

Of course, no thriller would be complete without its twists, and *The Ghost Writer* delivers them with restraint. This is not a book that relies on cheap shocks or overblown reveals. Instead, the surprises come like whispers from the dark — subtle, unsettling, and perfectly timed. You find yourself replaying earlier chapters in your mind, wondering how you missed the clues that were hiding in plain sight. That is one of the quiet pleasures of the book: the sense that you are always just a step behind, being outwitted not only by the characters but by the author himself.

As I read, I kept thinking about how stories themselves are haunted — by the voices of those who came before, by the half-remembered tales passed down, by the lingering resonance of what is unsaid. This novel captures that quality brilliantly. It is a book about absence as much as presence, about the spaces between words, about the echoes left behind when the telling is over. It asks you to listen carefully, not just to what is on the page, but to what seems to slip between the lines.

Where *The Three Wives of Charlie Mellon* sparkled with its mix of dark comedy and domestic secrets, *The Ghost Writer* feels like a deliberate step into murkier waters. Introspective, atmospheric, and far more unsettling, it showcases another facet of this remarkable writing talent. If the first novel introduced us to the author's flair for tangled relationships and sly humour, this second one proves his versatility — his ability to inhabit the shadowed corners of the mind and still keep us utterly captivated.

Reaching the final chapters, I was both desperate for answers and reluctant to leave the world the author had constructed. That tension — between wanting resolution and savouring the uncertainty — is perhaps the greatest achievement of the novel. It mirrors life itself, where neat endings are rare and the past has a way of continuing to whisper, whether we want it to or not.

The ending — don't worry, no spoilers here — is haunting in the truest sense: it lingers, it unsettles, it follows you out of the book and into your own thoughts. Long after closing the book I found myself replaying scenes, reconsidering motives, wondering whether the ghosts in this story were confined to the characters — or whether they had somehow seeped into the act of storytelling itself.

The Ghost Writer is compelling not just because of the mystery at its core, but because of the way it makes you feel as though you, too, are haunted. Haunted by questions of truth and illusion, by the weight of stories left untold, by the nagging suspicion that every life is filled with unfinished chapters. That resonance is what separates a good thriller from a great one — and this, without question, belongs in the latter category.

If you like a book that keeps you turning pages deep into the night, that will unsettle even as it delights, that will make you question not only the characters but the very nature of storytelling, The Ghost Writer is a must-read. It is a novel that slips beneath your skin, takes up residence, and refuses to leave quietly.

For me, it confirmed what I had already suspected after *The Three Wives of Charlie Mellon*: this is a writer who knows exactly what he is doing. He can make us laugh, he can make us gasp, and now, with *The Ghost Writer*, he can make us shiver. Honestly, isn't that exactly what we want from a story that dares to call itself haunted?

*The Ghost Writer* is due for publication at the end of October. Advance copies can be ordered at a discount via the author's website: [www.iansiragher.com/the-ghostwriter](http://www.iansiragher.com/the-ghostwriter)