



## **The Empty House**

*Rosamunde Pilcher*

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## **The Empty House** Rosamunde Pilcher

When you read a novel by Rosamunde Pilcher you enter a special world where emotions sing from the heart. A world that lovingly captures the ties that bind us to one another—the joys and sorrows, heartbreaks and misunderstandings, and glad, perfect moments when we are in true harmony. A world filled with evocative, engrossing, and above all, enjoyable portraits of people's lives and loves, tenderly laid open for us...

At twenty-seven, Virginia Keile had been through the most intense experiences life had to offer—a magical first love ending in heartbreak, a suitable marriage, motherhood, and widowhood. All she wanted now was to take her daughter and son to a seaside cottage and help them recover. But Virginia's true love was there, waiting, hoping, praying that this time she would be strong enough to seize happiness.

## **The Empty House Details**

Date : Published December 15th 1996 by St. Martin's Paperbacks (first published 1971)

ISBN : 9780312961275

Author : Rosamunde Pilcher

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Genre : Fiction, Romance, Womens Fiction, Chick Lit, European Literature, British Literature

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## From Reader Review The Empty House for online ebook

### Sue says

Twenty-seven yr old Virginia Keile has come to Porthkerris on vacation while her two children are in London with her mother in law and the Nanny. The last time Virginia was in Porthkerris was ten years before. During that visit, she met Eustace Phillips. Because her mother didn't approve, the relationship was never allowed to develop and she was whisked back to London for her coming out year. Rather than face the social scene, Virginia married Anthony Keile and moved to Scotland. Now Anthony is dead - drowned in a car accident - and Virginia doesn't know what to do next. After a chance meeting with Eustace, who challenges her to get the kids for a proper family holiday, she does. She asserts herself with her mother in law and the nanny and returns to Porthkerris to a small cottage rented for the month, which just happens to border Eustace's farm. This is just the start of her newfound independence and is a learning and growing time for them all.

I'd read this and most of Pilcher's other books a number of years ago, but not to remember when or anything about them. A light, feel good story exploring relationships and a realization that all was not as it had seemed.

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### Diana Hockley says

Rosamund Pilcher, in my less than humble opinion, is one of the very best writers of gentle fiction. Of course, I have read *The Shell Seekers* and loved it, but haven't read anything of hers for a few years. I came across this short novel - not a novella - in a hospital bookstall and of course pounced on it. I read it in around 3 hours while waiting around and travelling home on the train.

Written in 1973 and first published in 1990, Pilcher's style of writing will no doubt not be fast-paced enough for the modern younger reader, but those of us who are rather longer in the tooth will be able to appreciate the delicate development of the quite traditional story. True to it's time, "House" is rich in imagery, more so than modern books, but fortunately not so much that one would skip pages!

Virginia, widowed only three months, has been pressured to marry at eighteen by her intimidating mother, then to "turn a blind eye" by her husband. His nanny and her mother-in-law, Lady Keile, are continuing the trend in successfully intimidating her into doing exactly what they want. But of course, the worm turns - gently but implacably, after a showdown with an old friend, engendering this reader's admiration for Virginia. I am not sure I would be as brave in the face of those formidable women!

What I particularly liked about this book, was the gradual unfolding - without fanfare, but easily understood - of the background and future of Virginia. Rosamund Pilcher's genius creates characters with mundane lives, into people in whose future the reader cannot help but invest concern.

Highly recommended for those who appreciate the fine writing of past years and a traditional, but gentle story.

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## Claude says

Much too short for my taste. Just when I was really enjoying it, it was over.

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## Χρ?στος Αναστασ?πουλος says

Αν και θα ?θελα λ?γο περισσ?τερο -?πως σε ?λα τα βιβλ?α της ?λλωστε, γιατ? δεν τα χορτα?νω ποτ?- μου πρ?σφερε ακ?μα ?να σ?γουρο τ?ξ?δι! Δεν περ?μενα τ?ποτα λιγ?τερο απ? μια εξαιρετικ? συγγραφ?α!!! ?πιασα τον εαυτ? μου -μετ? την ολοκλ?ρωση του βιβλ?ου- να αναζητ? πτ?σεις και καταλ?ματα για Κορνου?λλη, με αποτ?λεσμα να βρω ?να υπ?ροχο διαμερισματ?κι με 32 ευρ? την ημ?ρα...

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## Jeanette says

Having read this decades ago, I remembered all of it. It's the perfect length for this story.

It's more than just the usual current modern "coming of age" woman's tale (as if having sex and being adult in work or school decisions even approaches true adulthood LOL!) but much more. It's a full coming into her own will and identity as a self-directed person. And its context is also perfection for the majority of women's lives during the first 3/4ths of the last century. And not just in England, either. Remember, it's not just class distinctions but the fact that women in large percentages never worked outside the home or were far from sphere of family influences, and the young mothers of Virginia's class- never. Readers posting here upon this novella really did make me laugh. Their reactions! Influences of norm and society- and behaviors to fit that were necessary. They really don't grasp it.

Some note it is not the best of her novellas. I rather disagree. Pilcher even broaches the conflict with the minimal of unkindness (the cutting with Nanny) in language and with prose and manners excellence. Her disagreements are HUGE but do not carry backward looking victim resentments. What a psychology! Deciding that a victim self-classification is perpetually self-defeating is just a cornerstone of her life message that continually feels like a pair of strong arms around the vulnerable. No one does conflict resolution better than Pilcher. The kind that accomplishes real change and yet without nasty acrimonious offensive or defensive postures. Nor lingering ire of aftermath.

Here the romance is entirely second. People "fit" is first. And the way to grow up to understand how important the mix of now is to both.

I'm glad I reread this. Last time I didn't have the window to realize the crux of this book. Eustace telling her the truth after re-meeting 10 years later. How the ones who love you the most (and have your real best future and not just your good will in mind) if they DO care for you- will then and often tell you the truth that you don't want to hear.

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## **Parva Chhantyal says**

A sweet story about love and life! This book is about getting a second chance.

It is known that every girl has to have one unhappy love affair before she finally meets the right man and settles down and gets married. Virginia, a 27-year-old widow and a single mother of two children goes to Cornwall to recover from flu but instead, encounters with a man she fell in love 10 years ago. At 17, she was too vulnerable to fight for her first love and in distress, chooses a wrong person to marry. It is already too late before she realises her mistake but God give her second chance. This time, she is strong and doesn't want to repeat that mistake.

The reason I am only giving 2 stars is because I thought an author spent too much time describing something, which is not relevant to the story. I found her writing style quite boring as well. Story is good but not memorable. Overall, it can be a good one for anyone who is looking for a quick read.

Published on: <http://pchhantyal.blogspot.de/2014/05...>

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## **Sarah says**

Why was this so short? It finished just as it was getting really interesting! Actually, although it is a gentle, quick and easy read, this novella is beautifully and skilfully written; this is the Rosamunde Pilcher I have grown to love.

The romantic thread, and the plot as a whole, were extremely simple, but what made it so endearing were the descriptions. Yes, I know, one doesn't usually like a book full of descriptions, a weak plot and a heroine who does everything she's told to do, but this one is different. You can see the landscapes in your mind's eye, feel the atmosphere changing, understand the heroine's inner turmoil. And the complicated relationship between Virginia Keile and her children is remarkably related.

It is certainly not as mature as her later novels, such as "Coming Home", "The Shell Seekers" and "Winter Solstice", which are much longer, but it is a distinctly accomplished work.

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## **Lori says**

Delightful! I really liked this! Rosamunde Pilcher gave her heroine a second chance at happiness which made me think of scripture, "Your sorrow shall be turned into joy." I do wish this had been a little longer, it's really a novella, but it's sheer romance. The next time I read this, I will bake a batch of scones on a rainy morning and dive right in!

Pilcher always includes such lovely descriptions of the Cornish coast, gardens and delicious sensory details. Hot steaming cups of cocoa or tea, biscuits and thundering waves crashing in the distance. I just seem to go off in a trance every time I pick up one of her books. I'm off now to complete my collection of her work!

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### **?λσα says**

3.5/5

Ενα μικρο βιβλιαρακι με μια γρηγορη ιστορια. Δε θεωρω πως ειναι το καλυτερο της Πιλτσερ αλλα ενταξει κυλισε ευχαριστα. Ειναι μια ιστορια χιλιογραμμενη σε πολλα βιβλια. Δε μου εδωσε αυτο το κατι παραπανω.

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### **Sue says**

Not exactly a memorable plotline, unlike some of Pilcher's other novels, but still very enjoyable. The story revolves around Virginia, recently widowed, who is taking a break with an old friend in Cornwall. All she wants is a quiet, simple existence with her children in a relaxed environment.

This book is a sort of growing-up for Virginia as she starts to take control of her life. There's also - perhaps inevitably - a very low-key romance, with flashbacks to the past, both in her late teens and during her marriage.

Nothing special, nothing to stand out, and if Rosamund Pilcher wasn't such a well-known author, this book probably wouldn't still be in print. Yet it's a delightfully told story, with the people totally believable, right down to Virginia's two small children. Recommended to anyone who wants a couple of hours of gentle escapism without anything challenging.

Re-read in 2014 and it felt like a new book all over again. It's not a bad thing to be unmemorable!

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### **Margarida says**

Gostei, embora depois de ter lido "Os Apanhadores de Conchas" não possa dizer que seja Rosamund Pilcher no seu melhor...

No entanto é um bonito romance de amor, mudança, segundas oportunidades... suave, ternurento... com belas descrições da Cornualha!

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### **Dora says**

οχι απο τα καλυτερα της ....παρολα αυτα με ηρεμησε και ξαναγυρισε η ορεξη για διαβασμα

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### **Mela says**

There are beginnings of the books when I know that I found another favorite author. I felt such in love with e.g. Georgette Heyer and Elizabeth Taylor. I am pretty sure that Rosamunde Pilcher will be my next precious writer (I must read another one book to be sure).

*She stared at him, accepting for the first time the fact that personal tragedy is just that. Personal. Your own existence could fall to pieces but that did not mean that the rest of the world necessarily knew about it, or even bothered.*

**Pilcher made me feel Cornwall.** I saw sunshine through the pages, I smelt the flowers and heard the sea. What is very important, she used so many description to made me feel that I am there but not too many, that I would have been overwhelmed or bored.

And the story. **It was beautiful, charming, heartwarming, in some way simple but so true.** For me, there was not enough place to evolve so strong love between Virginia and Eustace but it was a rather short story so I can forgive it.

I see that in reviews one word is often repeated: **cozy**, and it is a very accurate word for this novel. Because, **although there were hard questions here (e.g. about a self-reliance, a motherhood) the narration made me feel whole** (not like with some other books - broken into pieces).

*It was disturbing, this awareness of the past, but somehow elemental, and so not really frightening.*

I give it 4 instead 5 stars because as I wrote there wasn't enough time for evolving of love and the whole idea for the story could have made a longer book, e.g. we could have seen also more interaction between Virginia and her children, more of children at all, more of her becoming herself.

By the by, Eustace Phillips became one of my favorite heroes from romances. Hardworking, honest, understanding. This kind of a man one can easy fell in love with and what is even more important, this kind which is a good husband.

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## Claire says

Rosamunde Pilcher always makes me want to crawl into the pages of her books and live there. She is just the best. No one writes books like this anymore.

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## Sara says

A sweet, short, but very satisfying Pilcher novella. Her gorgeous descriptive powers at their best, she takes us once more to Cornwall and the sea. She makes me want a small cottage and a large country kitchen and a garden full of wildflowers. And, of course, a rugged handsome fellow to sweep me off my feet.

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## Lorrie says

I bought this book at the used paperback bookstore. It's been sitting on my desk for a month or so. Today I have a sore throat and am a little under the weather so I thought I'd take it easy and read a new book. This book was excellent!! It was way too short! It was really good but there was not enough detail--it was way too short! That's why I just gave it a 4. I really enjoyed the love story, Porthkerris, Virginia, her children, and Eustice.

Pilcher mentions Porthkerris so often in her books that I can feel a European trip coming on! There's something about the way Pilcher describes an English kitchen. The big hearth with hooks for pots, the windows with geraniums sitting in them, the well scrubbed wooden table, the low ceiling with beams, the smell of peat.....

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### **Aubrey says**

This was a good, quick, clean romance. The reason I gave it four stars instead of five is I felt that Pilcher didn't spend enough time establishing why the main characters connected in the first place. In order to have a good romance, an author has to establish the sparks between the characters. In addition, this book was really more of a journey of self-actualization than a romance. It was nice to read a story about a woman coming into her own, so to speak, but unfortunately it made the romance feel rushed and skimped. It almost seemed like Pilcher needed to get this one done quick and didn't have time to really fill out the wonderful plot she set up. Just like the last Harry Potter book, this book would have been much better if it had had about 50 more pages to fill in the gaps. Overall, this is a good book to read on a sick day if you want to start and end a romance in one day.

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### **Lorraine says**

A widow returns to Cornwall to recover from the 'flu. She feels that her mother-in-law and her children's Nanny are running her life, and decides to rent a rundown house and bring the children there for the month of August. She also meets a farmer that she had fallen in love with at 17, he lives close to her rented house and has still not married ten years later.

An early Rosamunde Pilcher, it is not as good as the later ones, but is still a good read.

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### **MomToKippy says**

One of Pilcher's best novellas! There is so much atmosphere and a wonderful magical feeling in this story. It really sweeps you away to a wondrous place (unless you happen to live by the sea in Cornwall already) and her descriptive style really shines here. The story was sweet and charming and the characters endearing.

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### **Chris Gager says**

I wonder how many times G'reads will say I've read this book already - I keep screwing that up! At any rate, this will be my first Rosamunde Pilcher novel. I was determined to read something from a different perspective than "Dog Soldiers"(very male) and this is what I wound up with. Seems like it will be some kind of a love story, but that's ok and it seems to be pretty smoothly written. My book is a hardcover large print edition from 1973.

I almost finished last night, but had to hit the sack. Right in the middle of the big emotional/relationship/communication crisis ... I ASSUME it's all going to turn out at least OK-ish but youneverknow. It would be very disappointing if these folks weren't happy. It all hinges on whether semi-

ding-a-ling Virginia can get her act together. She's been doing pretty well so far, but love messes with one's head. This book is small beer but it's very well written, particularly in its physical descriptions = Cornwall never looked so good. There might be a bit too much of THAT, but the book's pretty short so I can't complain. This is pretty much a romantic fantasy, but quite engaging, and, after all, it IS fiction and meant to be entertaining and diverting. Manly-man of the soil and spoiled, rich twinkie fall in love but life interferes. Now they have another chance - how's going to turn out?

- Reminds me a bit of my sister's post-divorce struggles.

- The kids are written very well. You definitely root for them.

Finished a couple of nights ago. Not much more to be said. A very enjoyable short read. I think I have "The Shell Seekers" and will read that at some point.

- The Title has a double meaning.

- The "lost letter" = "Tess of the D'Urbervilles"(along with a number of others - it's a familiar device).

= The ending smacks of the ending of Keira Knightley's version of "Pride and Prejudice."

- 3.5\* rounds down to 3\*.

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