



Winterwood

Dorothy Eden

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A woman leaves Venice for a grand English manor in this gothic romance from a *New York Times*–bestselling author—perfect for fans of Mary Stewart and Victoria Holt.

Haunted by her scandalous past, Lavinia Hurst accepts a position as companion to young invalid Flora Meryon. But something is very wrong at Winterwood, the Meryons' isolated estate by the sea. And when Flora suddenly becomes heiress to a large fortune, Lavinia realizes that her charge is in mortal danger.

It becomes clear that someone is determined not to let Flora live to see her inheritance. Then letters begin arriving from a dead relative. Do ghosts haunt Winterwood? Or is this the specter of living greed? Determined to thwart the deadly plan, Lavinia risks her own life to protect Flora's, while fighting her powerful desire for Flora's father, Daniel, a man tormented by his own demons.

Rich in atmosphere and mystery, *Winterwood* is Dorothy Eden at her gothic best.

Winterwood Details

Date : Published July 9th 2013 by Open Road Media Romance (first published 1966)

ISBN :

Author : Dorothy Eden

Format : Kindle Edition 256 pages

Genre : Gothic, Romance, Mystery, Fiction, Historical, Historical Fiction, Gothic Romance, Romantic
Suspense

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From Reader Review Winterwood for online ebook

Kristina says

Winterwood by Dorothy Eden is one of those musty hardcovers that my mother owned and I read first when I was an impressionable twelve year old (or around there). The men are distant and square-jawed, but really kind and loving and usually they are saddled with crazy and/or bitchy wives. The romantic interest is always a well-bred, well-brought up young beautiful woman whose unfortunate family finances turned her into a governess or companion. The children are perhaps incorrigible, but that's just because mom is crazy/and or a bitch. Once the loving, beautiful and wise and kind governess is around, she tames their wildness and they become devoted to her. The husband, of course, falls in love with her. Unfortunately, the house is haunted or there's some weirdness going on or maybe the governess has a deep, dark secret that another bad man who improperly desires her is holding over her head: "Yield to me," exclaims the bad man, "or I'll tell Fred everything!" In the end, the bad man is foiled because Fred, the loving benefactor, always knew the governess's bad, bad secret. Oh, and the crazy and/or bitchy wife usually dies. In some sort of unfortunate accident. Or maybe suicide. That's always a good alternative.

Is this book formulaic? Oh, sure. But so are many of the books (romance genre or otherwise) published today. Quite frankly, I'll take a Dorothy Eden over almost any of the modern romance crap, paranormal romance crap, and all the other crap that is published now. Eden's prose, while not sparkling, is decent and enjoyable. Her story is interesting and the plot moves speedily along. Are the characters complex and well-formed? Not really, but that's why god created literary fiction.

If you're brewing a pot of tea and need a pleasant book to enjoy with it, *Winterwood* is the book for you. The dangers are just threatening enough, Lavinia the governess is likeable and smart, and the plot is entertaining. Everyone is happy and handsome in the end. Just how it should be.

Karalyn says

I have a very mixed review on this book – on one hand I hated the writing style, but on the other I really enjoyed the book. I decided to read this book because it was one I received from my grandma when she passed away.

As I started reading, the book was really slow to start - I kept thinking, get to the meat of the story. I also did not like the simplicity of the writing with complex wording woven throughout. But as I started to get into the book I realized that the writing is really a time stamp of the actual year - the book was written in 1967. Once I became aware of the evolution of writing I started to really enjoy the book. It was nice to go back in time when people were innocent and not corrupted by sexuality. It really was enjoyable to read about a pure love story without all the sex and cheating.

Anne says

Not quite as good as "Ravenscroft" but still an edge of your seat Gothic which keeps you wondering who the villain is. Recommended.

LJ says

WINTERWOOD (Gothic Romance-Lavinia Hurst-Venice/England-Victorian) – Okay
Eden, Dorothy – Standalone
St. Martin's Press, 1967, US Hardcover – ISBN: N/A

First Sentence: From the moment of leaving the hotel the enchantment of the night had grown.

Due to an event in her past, Lavinia Hurst is in Venice as companion to her jealous cousin. On a rare night at the Opera, Lavinia sees a family in the next box with an attractive man, Daniel Meryon, his wife, Charlotte, and their young daughter, Flora, who is crippled. They are there to take Charlotte's wealthy, elderly and infirm great-aunt, Lady Tameson, back Winterwood, their home in England. With Flora's developing attachment to Lavinia, and her attraction to Daniel, she travels, and stays with them as Flora's companion. Aunt Tameson dies, after changing her will, witnessed by Lavinia and a maid, leaving everything to Flora. Is someone now trying to kill Flora in order to gain the money?

In general, I enjoy gothic/romantic/suspense and this was the first book by Dorothy Eden I've read. The first problem I had was with the attraction between the protagonist and a married man. Fortunately, they did not act on that attraction in a significant way. My greater problem was I felt Daniel let Lavinia down in two significant ways; first, in not supporting her in a couple of instances and, even more importantly, by not letting her know he was aware of her past and it didn't matter to him. I also didn't feel the author did a very good job of explaining why Jonathan was in the story until the very end. Where the author did excel, in my opinion, was creating a sense of place. Her descriptions of Venice and Winterwood were wonderfully evocative. There was some suspense and a very good twist at the end but not enough to make me love the book.

Christine Honsinger says

Decent gothic fare...not as good as Ravenscroft...there are definitely varying degrees of 3 stars, 4 stars and 5 stars....Ravenscroft was absolutely on the higher end of the rating scale. I think Eden is a very good gothic suspense novelist and I will continue to read through her novels

Gail says

3.5 rounded to 4

It is a mystery romance and reminds me of gothic Victoria Holt books. This is an old fashioned romance; although, it might offend some as the employer is married and his daughter's caretaker and he fall in love but only a shared kiss occurs one time. There is a HEA. It was a teen favorite of mine and is still good.

Barbara VA says

This was the first "grown-up" book I read, back in the late 60's when it was first published. I stole my

mother's library copy one night while she was out and sat under bed covers with a flashlight till I was done and spent years hooked on all the gothics, reading all the same authors she did, Whitney, Stewart, Eden and then on to Heyer. Loved it! Descriptions of Venice and the gardens of Winterwood were the best.

Lisa Greer says

Quite good. I finished it quickly because it kept me guessing and interested. I'll be reading more in this genre by Eden if I can find them.

Susan says

I enjoyed this, though I it was low on the gothic element - some woo-woo stuff near the ending - was mostly about the dynamics of a dysfunctional family. Still, the characters were interesting, though at times I couldn't stand the children when they acted like total brats. And there was the Jack Favell-like character (from Rebecca) also in the story, stirring up trouble which added interest.

The story took place in Venice and England. The author was sufficiently descriptive that I was able to really sense both places, though neither had that foreboding atmosphere famous in gothics.

I think this is one of Dorothy Eden's better stories as I have read a few which I couldn't get through previously. I have quite a few more so I hope the others stand up as well as this one has.

OLT says

This was written in 1967 by Dorothy Eden (1912-1982), who was born in New Zealand and moved to England in 1954. She was a popular writer of Gothic and romantic suspense, and, although somewhat dated, her novels hold up well for me as reads in 2015.

Eden wrote her books from 1940 to 1982 and was more or less a contemporary of Victoria Holt (1906-1993) and Mary Stewart (1916-2014). Of the three, Stewart was the superior romantic suspense writer, but I have a soft spot for the Victorian Gothics of Holt and Eden.

WINTERWOOD is a classic Gothic romance. Heroine pretty much adrift in life, penniless and homeless. In Venice, while companion to a rather unpleasant cousin, she meets a British family on vacation and is hired as companion to their young daughter, who is wheelchair-bound after a horse-riding accident.

Naturally, to follow Gothic guidelines, the hero is dark, somewhat brooding (not as much as is usual), and his beautiful (of course) wife is very emotionally unstable and erratic in behavior. There's an eccentric elderly aunt living in Venice who wishes to move back to Winterwood (the family's estate in England) with them to die there and her money is coveted by certain characters and her will, it is hoped, will favor them.

There are interesting dynamics between the elderly aunt and the disabled young girl, and between our heroine and the girl. There's also a mysterious cousin of the hero's wife who pops up in Venice and then again at Winterwood and the reader wonders at the relationship between him and the wife. Secrets seem to be abundant. Even our heroine has a past that she doesn't want revealed to anyone. There are possible

attempts on someone's life, romantic entanglements, maybe a ghost, and a bit of a twist at the end. All good Gothic fun.

As is the case with this genre, the story is fairly predictable, but the settings (Venice and the English estate Winterwood) are interesting and well described and the Victorian time period makes one forgiving of any outdated storylines.

Jessy245 says

Another great quick read from Dorothy Eden. I was at first disappointed by this one as compared to Ravenscroft but found it just as interesting and exciting, after just a few pages was hooked.

Dorcas says

A very forgettable Gothic. I finished it not one hour ago and I'm having to stop and think what it was about in order to write this review. That's not a good sign.

It has all the hallmarks of a gothic: large manor in a bleak setting, tormented man of the house, unhinged wife, crippled little girl, an eccentric dying old lady smelling strongly of violets, lecherous "cousin", and of course the inevitable little bottle of laudinum.

The heroine is ravishing beautiful with a dishonorable history, basically her brother kills a man to, ironically, save her honor. He ends up in prison and she goes abroad to hide from the shame, which of course is where she meets her new situation.

The author saves the grand finale for the very last and for me it was too late and too "meh" to be satisfying.

Dorothy Eden can do much better than this.

CONTENT:

PROFANITY : Very mild

SEX: None, but the heroine does fall in love with a married man

VIOLENCE : opium poisoning

Nikki says

Winterwood is a Gothic-ish mystery/romance, very much in the vein of Mary Stewart's work. I think it rather reminded me of her *Nine Coaches Waiting* — though of course, I don't actually read these books for originality. I wasn't sure if I could root for the pairing, given that the main male character is married at the beginning and certainly affectionate and respectful with his wife, but it worked out fairly well with both halves of the potential romance keeping in mind the barrier between them. The characters are reasonably likeable — Flora is spoilt and willful, but also generous and capable of great affection, which redeemed her somewhat for me. Charlotte, Daniel's wife, is obviously troubled and at times is rather transparently wicked, but there are also moments where Eden manages to get across some of the pathos of her character. Daniel is

a little bland, though.

If you don't expect too much of it, it's a nice distraction. Eden's writing isn't bad, though she can't quite evoke a sense of place the way Mary Stewart can — I didn't 'feel' Winterwood the estate very much.

Reviewed for The Bibliophibian.

LeahBethany says

My mother first introduced me to Gothic Romances when I was thirteen. Reading *Winterwood* brought back those memories of reading my first "adult" books. This novel didn't disappoint - a beautiful, maligned heroine; a handsome, layered man; and a dark mystery - a perfect guilty pleasure!

M. A. Florence says

It is nice to read a Gothic romance every now and then. The plot and settings are predictable, but the stories have strong female characters who overcome adversity. For 1967, the lead in the book, Lavinia, is not perfect but she is strong-willed. Two of the problems I had with the book:

1. frequent references about the "beauty" of the female characters,
 2. frequent references to how the eyes of a character "shone"--whether in love, anger, drug-induced, emotionally upset, etc. etc.
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