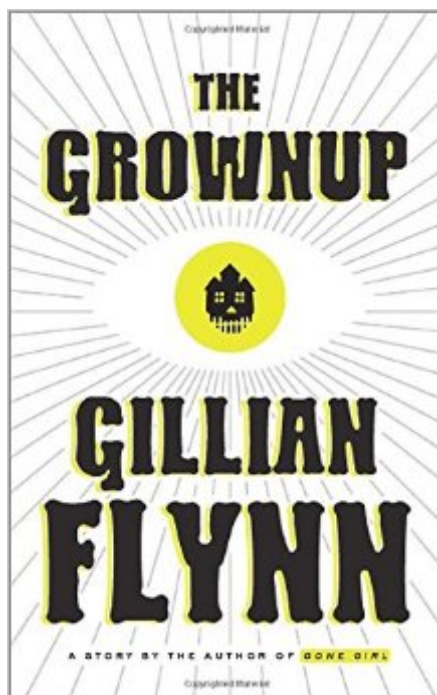


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The Grownup: A Story By The Author Of Gone Girl



Synopsis

Gillian Flynn's Edgar Award-winning homage to the classic ghost story, published for the first time as a standalone. A canny young woman is struggling to survive by perpetrating various levels of mostly harmless fraud. On a rainy April morning, she is reading auras at Spiritual Palms when Susan Burke walks in. A keen observer of human behavior, our unnamed narrator immediately diagnoses beautiful, rich Susan as an unhappy woman eager to give her lovely life a drama injection. However, when the "psychic" visits the eerie Victorian home that has been the source of Susan's terror and grief, she realizes she may not have to pretend to believe in ghosts anymore. Miles, Susan's teenage stepson, doesn't help matters with his disturbing manner and grisly imagination. The three are soon locked in a chilling battle to discover where the evil truly lurks and what, if anything, can be done to escape it. • *The Grownup*, which originally appeared as "What Do You Do?" in George R. R. Martin's *Rogues* anthology, proves once again that Gillian Flynn is one of the world's most original and skilled voices in fiction.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

After the love-it-or-hate-it hit *Gone Girl*, I can imagine the pressure was on for Gillian Flynn to produce another addictive book. I have no doubt she's busy writing her next dark novel, but in the meantime she needed to throw her ravenous fans some fresh meat. Here comes *The Grownup*, a short story first published in an anthology collection edited by *GoT* author George R R Martin. It's a short story packaged as a book (what?) and that's probably what's so exasperating

about it because you just want more. The Grownup is boilerplate storytelling for Flynn. She's known for giving a healthy middle finger to propriety and morals. The first line in this book made me sit up: "I didn't stop giving hand jobs because I wasn't good at it. I stopped giving hand jobs because I was the best at it." • Our narrator here like Gone Girl's Amy isn't going to win any Miss Congeniality awards. But she is inexplicably relatable, and I rooted for her. The voice and tone here all pay homage to that remarkably sardonic nasty business we saw in Gone Girl. Not everybody's cup of tea, yes, but if you enjoy Flynn's style you'll find this short teaser a nice little nose-tingling hit. Our steely-eyed heroine works at Spiritual Palms, a divey place that fronts as a respectable fortune-telling establishment preying on well-off gullible women. It also offers hand jobs (but no sex) in the back room to guys. When she moves to front-desk work, our narrator gets to use her grifter skills (learned and perfected in her hardscrabble childhood) in new ways. She does it with glee. When distraught Susan walks in claiming her house is haunted and fearing for her life, our narrator jumps at the chance to score big. She offers to go and do a house cleansing "for a big fee. It's an easy scam. So she thinks.

I'm not usually one who loves paranormal or ghost stories, but I do love Gillian Flynn's work so I wasn't about to shy away because it's a genre I don't usually gravitate toward. Hence why I picked up The Grownup and was suddenly immersed in a world that is, well....let's just say "kooky." The Grownup is a short story that I read in about an hour. Set in a small town, the main character is an "aura reader" who is roped into conducting a sort of makeshift spiritual cleansing of a client's house. Fair enough, I suppose except it's not just this house that's seemingly crazy - the client's stepson apparently wants them all dead as well. As the story goes on, we, the readers, are faced with the question of whether it's the house or the stepson that's really the problem....which in itself sounds like a pretty fair premise. EXCEPT THIS ENDING SLAPS YOU IN THE FACE AND LEAVES YOU WONDERING WHAT THE SPARKLING HECK YOU JUST READ. I know short stories are often notorious for having shock endings so that you aren't left feeling robbed of a full book, but I didn't know quite to make of this one. If Flynn was going for unexpected, then this one was spot on. However, the more I thought about the story, the more I have come to appreciate her choice. I won't give it away, but I think it's definitely worth your time to read. This short story has been touted as Flynn's homage to the traditional ghost story. Originally it was included in a collection of short stories compiled by none other than George R.R. Martin, so this is its first time being published as a stand-alone work. Do I recommend it? Sure, I think if you aren't expecting it to be the scariest, or most mind-bending story you've ever read, you'll probably get a lot of joy out of it.

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