

The Disinvited Guest

William Morrow

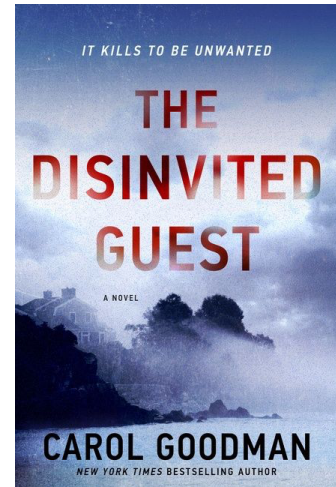
By Carol Goodman

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Introduction

“A tense, fever dream of a thriller in an extraordinary, atmospheric setting, gripping from first page to last. In a world under attack from a new virus, seven friends take refuge on a private, fog-drenched island where memories are both long and unreliable, illness lurks, the terrain is treacherous and even the island’s history has claws. Carol Goodman is a brilliant writer, and she shines here.”

—Gilly Macmillan, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Long Weekend*



From two-time Mary Higgins Clark Award–winning author Carol Goodman comes a new mystery, about a group of friends isolated on a remote island with a history of foul play.

Lucy Harper still has traumatic memories and lingering health problems from the 2020 pandemic. So, when a new virus surfaces years later, she and her husband, Reed, seek refuge on his family’s private island off the coast of Maine. Ostensibly safely sequestered with their five closest friends and family, Lucy should feel at ease. So why does she feel the weight of the island’s dark history pushing down on the group?

As Lucy uncovers Reed’s family secrets and the island’s history as a quarantine hospital for typhus patients, she becomes obsessed with the past and feels her own grip on reality slipping. Tempers flare, strange signs appear in the woods, and accidents turn deadly. Is the island haunted by the dead? Or is someone amongst the living taking their revenge?

Questions for Discussion

1. Reed decides to bring his friends and family to a remote island to shelter through a pandemic. If you had access to a remote island, would you retreat during a pandemic? If you had to quarantine in such isolation, who would you bring? In what ways do retreat and isolation present their own dangers?
2. Everyone on the island had suffered through a traumatic event during the 2020 pandemic. What are the long-term effects of this trauma and how is it represented throughout the novel? How have the characters been able to heal, or not heal?
3. Ada points out the inequities between how the rich and the non-rich weathered the 2020 pandemic. Do you agree that the pandemic impacted certain classes more than others? In what ways are these inequities demonstrated in the novel?

4. The island housed a quarantine hospital for fever ships fleeing Ireland in 1848. How much did you know about this history? What parallels can be drawn between the Irish potato famine and the 2020 pandemic?
5. Ada spends her nights in college scrolling through her phone observing her classmates' social media feeds. How does social media effect our psyches and emotional wellbeing? How do you think it influenced Ada? How do you feel this is heightened during a pandemic?
6. Ada says it's moving how people come together in bad times, while Liz maintains that people turn into monsters when challenged. Which point of view is proven true in the book?
7. Betrayal plays a large role in the novel. Do you think Ada is justified in her belief that she was betrayed by Lucy? By Reed? What would you do if you were in Ada's position? Lucy's?
8. There is a clear class divide between Reed's family and Mac's family, something that tested the men's relationship into their adulthood. How do you think this was addressed in the book? Speak to Mac's role as the outsider and how that influenced his relationships with the others on the island.
9. How did Nathaniel's story mirror Lucy's story? Ultimately, do you think Lucy reading Nathaniel's diary did more harm or good?