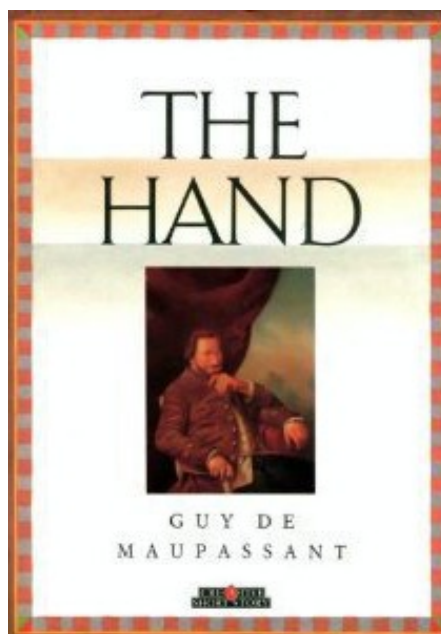




The Hand

Guy de Maupassant

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Do your students enjoy a good laugh? Do they like to be scared? Or do they just like a book with a happy ending? No matter what their taste, our Creative Short Stories series has the answer. We've taken some of the world's best stories from dark, musty anthologies and brought them into the light, giving them the individual attention they deserve. Each book in the series has been designed with today's young reader in mind. As the words come to life, students will develop a lasting appreciation for great literature.

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The Hand Details

Date : Published April 1st 1997 by Creative Education (first published 1875)

ISBN : 9780886825027

Author : Guy de Maupassant

Format : Hardcover 32 pages

Genre : Short Stories, Classics, Horror, Cultural, France, Fantasy, Supernatural, European Literature, French Literature, Fiction, Audiobook

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From Reader Review The Hand for online ebook

Julia says

Basically I am still trying to figure out the end of this story and it has agitated me on the point that it makes sense yet it doesn't make sense, that we are most definitely dealing with a lack of information. The vagueness of the story's conclusion is what normally drives me away from some of the older works since I like them to be direct and to the point but so many seem to lollygag all over the place.

Guy de Maupassant does have a great way with words and the story is a true memorial to the times when the author had to be the one to make the background otherwise the reader was left without much to stand on. The adjectives he uses truly weave together a wonderful romp in the dark that may capture the imagination of horror readers no matter the age.

All in all it is an okay read but one that pleads for more exploration or imagination from the reader to reach the desired conclusion.

Tim Pendry says

A nice little 'grand guignol' tale of horror from a nineteenth century French master of the short story which is all the better for being a naturalist rendering of a supernatural theme.

The story starts with a respectable judge, representative of all that is rational in French society, telling a story from his younger days at the margins of France (Corsica, then as often since bandit country) which is clearly designed to unnerve a group of ladies in his presence.

Can we believe him? Would he lie to such ladies, albeit in the cause of art? This uncertainty sets up the story itself - the revenge of a satanic hand with its own uncertain back story owned by an Englishman, an outsider, living on an island only just within France. Nicely done!

Cassie ? says

¡Me gustó! Desearía que fuera un poco más largo y más aterrador pero aún así buenísimo.

David Meditationseed says

A horror tale that blends fantastic reality.

Probably today is no longer a scary story, and maybe if we take away the death, it could be a children's story.

But the idea is original and a "hand" being a character has been adapted into other works and films.

Conrad Kinch says

A classic chiller. Not as involved as "The Horla". The author really shines in the short form.

Carol says

3+ Stars

Okaaay! Just love my itty-bitty horror oldies and here's a good one....first published 1875.

Did you know that man is the most dangerous animal? It is in this story.

This version of **THE FLAYED HAND** is a short 16 minute audible and **creepy** little tale of murder that mystifies and excites a crowd of listeners who demand to know the true facts of a strange case....listeners with an insatiable desire to hear about the inexplicable....gruesome....and bizarre.

And get this....a great big, dried out and chained blackened hand with ugly yellow nails that surely must have belonged to a giant being is at the heart of the story....a hand that **always** must get away.

Super fast and dark.

Thank you Goodread's friend Diane S. for your review that led me to this one!

Quirkyreader says

This was a good little creeper.

Florencia says

Then I turned the conversation on hunting, and he gave me the most curious details on hunting the hippopotamus, the tiger, the elephant and even the gorilla.

I said:

'Are all these animals dangerous?'

He smiled:

'Oh, no! Man is the worst.'

Nov 23, 15

Raul Bimenyimana says

This is a strange but fascinating short story of a murder committed by a literal hand (as in the part of the arm that holds the five fingers and the palm!)

I loved Guy de Maupassant's style of narration. Though it is a story of mystery that provides unsatisfactory answers, the story is so well written that the reader is satisfied by this.

Diane S ? says

Thanks to my friend Bette, who writes a literary column for a group of which I am part. Her article reminded me of how much I enjoy the clarity of this authors prose, and his stories. I went to Amazon and bought a book for my Kindle that includes his novels and short stories. I started at the beginning and will be dipping in and out of these, now and again. This was the first, and was very short.

Can an unattached hand retain evil, and want revenge? That is the Crux of the story, enjoyable, strange and as I said short.

Steven Godin says

de Maupassant is the sort of writer who could have written about anything, and written about it well. From Parisian Society, to love and heartbreak, to...er, a hand. Yes, that's right, a hand takes center stage in this ever so short story from a master of the short story. But this hand isn't attached to an arm, thus no longer in the land of the living, it has been severed and keep as a trophy. Only now it wants revenge...or is it the owner of the hand?

The story is told to a gathering of woman by M. Bermutier, a judge, who was giving his opinion about the Saint-Cloud mystery. For a month this in explicable crime had been the talk of Paris.

Nobody could make head or tail of it.

"Oh! Ladies, I shall certainly spoil your terrible dreams. I simply believe that the legitimate owner of the hand was not dead, that he came to get it with his remaining one. But I don't know how. It was a kind of vendetta."

Too short to score any higher, it was all over in a flash, but at least it's eerie feeling made it worth reading.

Julia Leporace says

"Are all these animals dangerous?"

"He smiled:

"Oh, no! Man is the worst."

Laura says

From BBC Radio 4 Extra:

1880s' Corsica: Reminded by a gruesome trophy reminder of his days in Africa, Sir John Rowell awaits the return of his nemesis...

Guy de Maupassant's story dramatised by Michael Robson.

Stars Denis Quilley as Sir John Rowell, Cyril Shaps as Bermutier, Edward Seckerson as Olivier, David Strong as Audas and Hector Ross as Chavanne.

Devised and directed by Derek Hodinott.

First broadcast on the BBC World Service in 1976.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/radio/play/b007...>

Glenn Russell says

"I like to tell people I have the heart of a small boy, then I tell them it's in a jar on my desk." The ghastliness and horror of this quote from Robert Bloch, author of *Psycho* isn't that far removed, in spirit, from *The Hand*, a four-page literary jewel written by nineteenth century French author Guy de Maupassant. A heart in a jar, a hand on a wall, a haunted house at night - what is it that makes horror stories so incredibly compelling, stories once heard make such a deep impression and we can vividly recall scenes and images years later? Perhaps H.P. Lovecraft understood the crux of our predilection for the horrific when he wrote, "The oldest and strongest emotion of mankind is fear, and the oldest and strongest kind of fear is fear of the unknown."

And this very short de Maupassant story is all about the unknown; but beyond mere theme, it's the way the author constructs and crafts his tale of terror - attention and precision and nuance given to every single detail. For example, the setting: a gathering in front of a fireplace where a judge expounds on a much discussed inexplicable, "unnatural" Paris crime. He is surrounded by a group of mostly women, which is appropriate since in the nineteenth century world of de Maupassant women were viewed as more susceptible to hysteria, madness and the callings of the occult.

The conversation prompts the judge to cite another case involving what he terms "the uncanny." Immediately, anticipating something horrible, the women implore the judge to relate the story of the case. The judge obliges and thus we as readers hear this story within a story.

And what a story! First, it's noteworthy this tale of horror and the supernatural is told by a man who states directly he only believes in rational, natural causes, a man occupying that quintessentially logical and eminently establishmentarian of positions – a judge. Then, among other particulars, the judge conveys how events transpired in Ajaccio, a city of small white buildings and houses by the sea, a city bounded by mountains. Such natural beauty but, as the judge explains, the city suffers from many generations of violent murders and massacres, all in the name of vengeance.

A mysterious Englishman, Sir John Rowell by name, a tall, broad-shouldered man with red hair and red beard takes up residence out at the end of the bay. Many legends circulate about the Englishman's adventurous and perhaps criminal past and the judge thinks it wise to get to know this larger-than-life stranger. Events occur in a manner to bring the judge to Rowell's house. When asked, the Englishman tells the judge about hunting hippopotamus, tigers, elephants, gorillas, and even doing some man-hunting.

Then the tale takes a eerie turn when the Englishman invites the judge into his house. The judge sees something shocking. We read: "A black object stood out against a square of red velvet. I went up to it; it was a hand, a human hand. Not the clean white hand of a skeleton, but a dried black hand, with yellow nails, the muscles exposed and traces of old blood on the bones, which were cut off as clean as though it had been chopped off with an axe, near the middle of the forearm. Around the wrist, an enormous iron chain, riveted and soldered to this unclean member, fastened it to the wall by a ring, strong enough to hold an elephant in leash. The uncommonly long fingers were attached by enormous tendons which still had pieces of skin hanging to them in places. This hand was terrible to see; it made one think of some savage vengeance."

Let's pause here to reflect on the various levels and meanings associated with such a black hand with yellow nails reminding the judge of "some savage vengeance". Of course the image of the hand has power simply seen as a hand. Additionally the gruesome black hand could represent such psychological regions as the Freudian unconscious or the Jungian shadow or the dark, untamed forces described in Plato's *Phaedrus*.

The contrasting symbolism of the red-haired white Englishman and the dreadful black hand is rich indeed, especially in the twenty-first century when we can look back in retrospect at what is truly ghastly: a wealthy European killing endangered species and other human beings for sport.

The tale then takes a supernatural turn when the Englishman tells the judge the chain is needed since the hand always wants to get away. To find out what happens next you will have to read the story. Once read, this story will live with you for many nights when your imagination can run wild. Such striking images, such graphic happenings, all flowing from the pen of a master storyteller.

Let me conclude by quoting an experience recounted by our rationally-minded judge: "One night, about three months after the crime, I had a terrible nightmare. I seemed to see the horrible hand running over my curtains and walls like an immense scorpion or spider. Three times I awoke, three times I went to sleep again; three times I saw the hideous object galloping round my room and moving its fingers like legs." The heart of darkness, anyone?

French master of the short story, Guy de Maupassant (1850-1893)

Donna says

Just finished listening to the audible version of "THE HAND" by GUY DE MAUPASSANT and narrated by B.J. HARRISON. The narrator, a Corsican police magistrate quite familiar with cases of vendetta, revenge, murder, massacre, and hatred, tells of an Englishman living in Corsica who has a dried human hand mounted and chained on his wall. When the Englishman is found murdered, the hand is gone—but a finger is found between his teeth. Later, when the hand itself is found on the Englishman's grave, as is usual with such supernatural stories, one of the fingers is missing. Although the narrator explains that perhaps the owner of the hand has come to exact revenge on the Englishman, his listeners are not satisfied with such a rational answer, preferring instead the more grisly supernatural one.?

