

Harmony House

By Nic Sheff

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Carrie meets *American Horror Story* meets *The Shining* in this terrifying YA horror novel from the author of *Tweak* and *Schizo*.

Something's not right in Beach Haven.

Jen Noonan's father thinks a move to Harmony House is the key to salvation, but to everyone who has lived there before, it is a portal to pure horror.

After her alcoholic mother's death, Jen's father cracked. He dragged Jen to a dilapidated old manor on the shore of New Jersey to start their new lives—but Jen can tell that the place has an unhappy history. She can feel it the same way she can feel her anger flowing out of her, affecting the world in strange ways she can't explain.

But Harmony House is more than just a creepy old estate. It's got a chilling past—and the more Jen discovers its secrets, the more the house awakens. Visions of a strange boy who lived in the house long ago follow Jen wherever she goes, and her father's already-fragile sanity disintegrates before her eyes. As the forces in the house join together to terrorize Jen, she must find a way to escape the past she didn't know was haunting her—and the mysterious and terrible power she didn't realize she had.

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal
Gr 8 Up—After Jen Noonan and her father, Anselm, are emotionally destroyed by the death of Jen's mother, her father relocates them to a dark, abandoned mansion called Harmony House. Formerly a home for unwed mothers run by the Catholic church, Harmony House, with its sinister presence, drives Jen's father deeper into religious fanaticism and causes Jen to have terrifying nightmares and visions. The book begins with a prologue, set at Harmony House in 1867, describing the unexplained pregnancy of a teenager named Cornelia (the unborn child was possibly fathered by the devil) and her subsequent dramatic suicide. Disappointingly, Cornelia is absent from the remaining narrative, though Jen (in the present) has a terrifying vision of Cornelia, and a new friend is haunted by the vision as well. Creepy cadence and Jen's increasing paranoia propel the narrative forward, along with strange plot points like an earthquake and another unexplained pregnancy. Very strong language and adult themes of sex and religion keep the story entertaining and creepy but can sometimes feel gratuitous. An underwhelming and decidedly weak resolution feels less like a sigh of relief and more like a sigh of disappointment. Horror buffs will recognize the various nods to classic films, such as The Exorcist, The Shining, Rosemary's Baby, The Haunting, and Psycho, but may feel left in the dark by the overstuffed tale and some of the dead-end plot points. VERDICT Give this book to teens who have read all the horror they can get their hands on and are looking for something more.—Amy M. Laughlin, Darien Library, CT

Review
“The haunting hells [Sheff] has brought to this debut are chillingly realistic, evoking the classic Kingsian horror of both Carrie and The Shining.” (Booklist)

“Sheff writes solid suspense that recalls the classics: both Stephen King’s The Shining and Shirley Jackson’s The Haunting of Hill House, among others. A solid and quite frightening tale of the supernatural.” (Kirkus)

“The interspersed narratives about the dreadful incidents that have happened in the house are gripping and disturbing… horror fans seeking a good scare may find some enjoyable dread here.” (Bulletin of the Center for Children’s Books)

About the Author

Nic Sheff is a recovering drug addict and alcoholic. Still in his twenties, he continues to fight daily battles with his addictions. His writing has been published in *Newsweek*, *Nerve*, and the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

Caitlin Davies is a New York City-based actor and audiobook narrator. She has performed in New York and regional theaters and has studied acting at the Eugene O'Neill National Institute, the British American Drama Academy, and the Barrow Group. Always a lover of books, she decided to combine her English degree and her acting experience and took director Paul Ruben's audiobook narration class. She immediately fell in love with the medium and one week after completing the course was hired for her first audiobook. Just a few weeks later she was hired for her second. She specializes in audiobooks for teens and young adults.

Original bio sent from Cassandra:

Cassandra Campbell began doing voice overs as the voice for Calvin Klein's Italian commercials. This was followed by commercial and documentary recording in both English and Italian. She has recorded many audiobooks and has received several AudioFile Earphones Awards as well as an Audie(R) Award nomination. As an actress and director, she has worked at the Public, the Mint, the Berkshire Theatre Festival, Stagewest, Theatreworks, the Baltimore Shakespeare Festival, Millmountain Theatre, the National Shakespeare Company, and the New York Fringe Festival.

Noah Galvin has performed in numerous regional and off-Broadway plays, including performances in *Yosemite*, *Treasure Island*, *Our Town*, and *Broadway Kids*. Also a narrator, he has read books by Stephen Chbosky and Matthew Quick, among others.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Evelyn Garcia:

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Pablo McNamara:

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Diana Gum:

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