



Haunted: A Novel

By Chuck Palahniuk

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Haunted is a novel made up of twenty-three horrifying, hilarious, and stomach-churning stories. They're told by people who have answered an ad for a writer's retreat and unwittingly joined a "Survivor"-like scenario where the host withholds heat, power, and food. As the storytellers grow more desperate, their tales become more extreme, and they ruthlessly plot to make themselves the hero of the reality show that will surely be made from their plight. This is one of the most disturbing and outrageous books you'll ever read, one that could only come from the mind of Chuck Palahniuk.

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Haunted: A Novel By Chuck Palahniuk Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #35357 in Books
- Brand: Palahniuk, Chuck
- Published on: 2006-04-11
- Released on: 2006-04-11
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 7.99" h x .92" w x 5.15" l, .69 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 432 pages

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

What elevates Palahniuk's best novels (e.g., *Fight Club*) above their shocking premises is his ability to find humanity in deeply grotesque characters. But such generosity of spirit is not evident in his latest, which charts the trials of a group of aspiring writers brought together for a three-month writer's retreat in an abandoned theater. The novel intersperses the writers' poems and short stories with tales of the indignities they heap upon themselves after deciding to turn their lives into a "true-life horror story with a happy ending." They lock themselves in the theater, reasoning that once they're found, they'll all become rich and famous. They raise the stakes of their story by first depriving themselves of phones, and then of food and electricity; eventually they cut off their own fingers, toes and unmentionables before they start dying off and eating each other. Palahniuk tells his story with such blithe disregard for these characters that it's hard not to wish he had dispensed with the novel altogether and published, instead, the 23 short stories that pop up throughout the book. For instance, "Obsolete," about a young girl about to commit state-mandated suicide, and "Slumming," about rich couples who pretend to be homeless, play so deftly with expectations and have an emotional core so surprising that they consistently, powerfully transcend their macabre premises to showcase the heart beating beneath the horrors.

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From [Bookmarks Magazine](#)

It shouldn't surprise that Chuck Palahniuk's latest novel is a gross out. All of his books, including *Fight Club*, *Choke*, and *Lullaby*, have required various degrees of intestinal fortitude. Some critics note that he's turned the corner with *Haunted*, a book that has "plenty of guts, but little glory" (*Chicago Sun-Times*). Though the Portland-based proponent of Dangerous Writing continues to deliver his imaginative stories in an appealing, deadpan prose, the flat characters, questions about his intent, and the overall gross-out factor diminish this "ad-hoc diet book" as just another workshop failure (*New York Times*).

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From [Booklist](#)

In this over-the-top gore fest from Palahniuk (*Fight Club*, 1996; *Lullaby*, 2002), a group of aspiring writers move into a locked, windowless theater to write their masterpieces under the guidance of a (seemingly) old man. The story of their hellacious retreat-kidnapping is interspersed with poems about the various writers and stories by them. Convinced that they will one day sell the story of their dystopian nightmare for millions, the writers seek out suffering to make their lives saleable: they starve themselves, lop off body parts, cannibalize, and so on. The stories here vaguely resemble ghost stories, but rather than being scary, they're just disgusting. Sex dolls shaped like children, a fetus aborted by Marilyn Monroe, a pool intake sucking out a man's colon--you get the picture. There's a point to the madness--Palahniuk is exploring our yearning for suffering and our newfound desire to make our misery marketable. The allegory is sometimes very clever and pitch-black funny. But *Haunted* provokes a lot more nausea and eye rolls than deep thoughts. One hesitates to criticize a novel featuring a chef who murders people who review his dishes poorly, but we'll take our chances; this novel will please Palahniuk's hardcore fans and few others. But he certainly has his many and devoted fans. *John Green*

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Users Review

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