



The Legacy

Completed: 01-03-2020

John Douglas Straight is an up-and-coming solicitor from a prestigious London law firm who is sent to Gatewell Castle – a magnificent neo-Gothic mansion, situated in the distant mountain region - to settle the affairs of the recently deceased Lord Clareborn, the last descendant of the ancient and distinguished House of Usher. The eccentric late lord has left

an enormous legacy, but no heirs and so far, no testament has even been found. The amount of legal work involved to sort out matters turns out to be far larger than expected, so John is forced to stay longer than intended. What started as a regular business case, turns into a sensual adventure and a journey of self-discovery.





Jonathan Harker's journey to Transylvania (*Dracula*)

Like several previous series, this adventure begins with a journey. It is the perfect way to introduce a new character and slowly guide the viewer to the main stage of the story. In this case, we meet a young solicitor on his way to settle the affairs of a recently deceased client. From the start, the parallels with Jonathan Harker's journey to Transylvania (*Dracula*), and the fateful visit of Arthur Kipps to Eel Marsh House (*The Woman in Black*) are of course more than obvious.



Arthur Kipps to Eel Marsh House (*The Woman in Black*)



Like its Gothic predecessor "*The Man in White*", this series is placed during the winter months, in a distant and isolated region, somewhere in the late 1920s. We follow John's slow progress by train and coach to the magnificent castle in the snowy mountains. On his arrival, he is received with great formality and grandeur by the majordomo, a large retinue of footmen, and a lovely dog. A lavish dinner is served, and exquisite dishes, whines, and cigars are offered to the newly arrived guest. Intoxicated by all this wealth and luxury, John is carried upstairs to his room for a good night's rest. But the servants have very different plans for him. What started as a *Downton Abbey* soap turns out to be a bit more erotic and eventually far more Gothic.

On each subsequent night during his stay, after long hours of work at the library, John is guided by the dog to another wing of the castle. Each time he ascends to a higher level and when the clock strikes twelve, he once again is seduced by a group of muses into the realm of carnal delights. But while John enjoys all these intimate pleasures, the mysterious head of the household carefully observes every movement he makes, taking meticulous notes of his wild encounters during the night. The old man seems to be very pleased by what he sees, and on the day of the guest's departure, at a gathering in the chapel, he is ready to give a decisive verdict on his candidate. Was there more to John's summoning than to sort out a messy legal matter?...

The story can be divided into three parts, following the main character during his stay at the castle. Each chapter is a cycle of 24 hours, connected by returning themes like the dog, the climbing of stairs, a clock striking twelve, falling snow during the night, the picture of



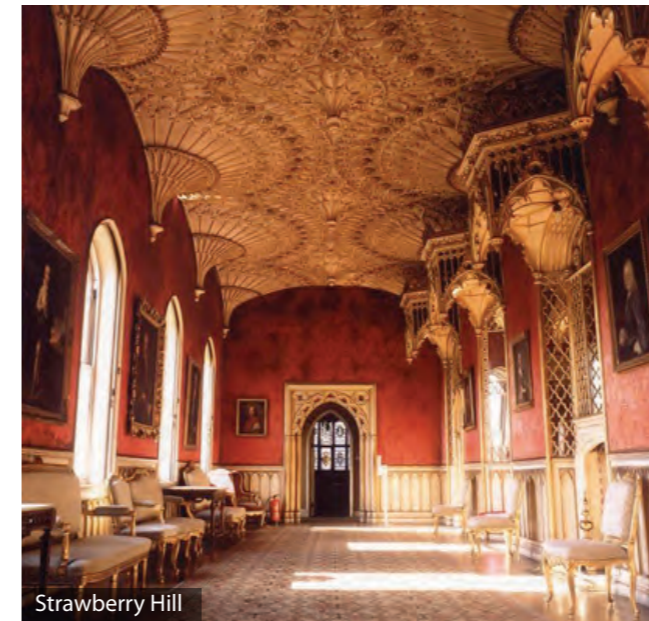
a lady (fiancée or deceased wife?), and many gazing portraits on the walls, etc. Like "*The Man in White*", the series starts and ends with a journey, revisiting the same place in a postscript many years later to conclude the story.



Cruquius Steam Pumping Station



Westminster



Strawberry Hill



Holy Grail tapestry (William Morris)



Strawberry Hill Library

Old stile in a new world

The castle and the interior are inspired by the neo-Gothic architecture of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This period saw the construction of very large numbers of structures worldwide, drawing features from the original Gothic style, including decorative patterns, finials, lancet windows, hood molds, and label stops. It's a very interesting anachronistic fashion that started in late 1740 in England and gained momentum when the country began to modernize with the Industrial Revolution. Therefore, you can find the awkward combination of a factory or train station housed in something that looks like a castle, and a government seated in a parliament that resembles a medieval abbey.

I've always been fascinated by this style, especially the grand houses, palaces, follies, and summer residences of the rich and famous. For the interior of this series, I used many examples of the beautiful places I visited during my travels in Europe. Many fabric patterns, furniture, and paintings in my project came from the *Arts and Crafts* movement and from artist of the so-called *Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*. The settings for this project were created with a very large array of models, so I'll only mention the main objects. For the Castle, I used a model called *Chateau Blanche*, a set inspired by the Chateau de Puymartin in the Dordogne (Fr). It was of course hugely increased, looking more like Hohenzollern or Neuschwanstein Castle in Germany.



Pierrefonds Castle



The Swallow's Nest (Yalta)



Lichtenstein Castle



Neuschwanstein Castle



Hohenzollern Castle



Many models

The station and village were created by using *The Old Railway Station*, *Old London*, and *Le Village Bundle*. Most of the interior of the Castle was created with *Medieval Interior Construction Kit* and *MICK2 Gothic Pack*. Additions were made with *Ash Tree Hall*, *Winterblack Hall and Tower*, *Castle Turret*, and *Winter Black Halls* for the large corridors and chapel.

The tomb was based on the *Immortal Crypt*, and most of the furniture came from the *Rosemill Moor Bundle* and *Medieval Rooms Parts 1 & 2*. If you look closely enough, you'll find many objects also used in *"The Man in White"*. In one of the first scenes for example we can see the main character of that story traveling by car to his destination as well.







Epitaph

Here lies
Lord William George Fitzroy of Clareborn

Earl of Ruthven,
last descendant of the House of Usher.
Knight of the Garter,
Holder of the Grand Cross
and the Cross of St. George,
Grand Master of the Order of the Dragon etc.

- The Earl of Ruthven refers to a fictional character in John William Polidori's "The Vampyre" (1819), he was one of the first vampires in English literature.
- The House of Usher is derived from Edgar Allan Poe's short story "The Fall of the House of Usher", recognized as a masterpiece of American Gothic literature.
- Dracula's father was called "Dracul" (meaning "dragon" or "devil" in Romanian) because he belonged to the Order of the Dragon, a chivalric order which fought the Muslim Ottoman Empire. Hence Count Vlad was called "Son of Dracul", of "Dracula" in Romanian.