

*A House with Good Bones* by T. Kingfisher

“Southern hospitality to die for.”

Sam Montgomery is on an extended break from work (she is an archaeologist/entomologist) and decides to visit her Mom in North Carolina. Her brother had warned her that Mom was acting odd, so this was a good time to check it out and see for herself. Mom lives in the house formerly occupied by her mother – a “nice and normal” house in a “nice and normal” subdivision. Sam’s grandmother was a rose gardener, and although she’s been dead a long time, the roses are pristine and almost form a wall around the house. Then there are the vultures – yes, vultures. One in particular likes to perch on the mailbox. They all seem to be watching the house.

Sam quickly discovers her brother is right – Mom is off. She is anxious, has re-decorated the house in the style of her mother, and has lost her inhibitive style of talking and living. Sam tries to figure out what is going on (is it early Alzheimer’s?), but gets a bit stonewalled at first – both by Mom and a neighbor (who has a pet vulture). Then odd things start to happen, which Sam is quick to find rationalizations for (word of warning – if you have a strong aversion to ladybugs, DO NOT READ THIS BOOK). Sam and her mother eventually come face-to-face with what’s going on – and it isn’t pretty.

I don’t know if there is a sub-genre titled “Horror-Lite,” but if there is – this book is there! So, if you love a creepy tale, but not to the horror level of Stephen King, this book may be a good selection for you.

I categorize it as horror-lite because the author has such a whimsical, tongue-in-cheek writing style that is really disarming and amusing. She uses a lot of parenthesis to set apart somewhat snarky – always amusing – comments the main character is thinking to herself. This style actually makes the creeping, approaching horror subtle. It’s easy to brush off the odd, disturbing occurrences. When the real horror hits – it’s a bit of surprise, but even then the author continues her horror-lite style and it tempers the horror a bit. I thoroughly enjoyed the book – even though some images are still sticking with me and probably will for some time!