

## Directors Note

The Croft is a brand-new play but its themes are as old as drama itself – the joy and pain of love and the impact of the past on the present. Can we ever really start afresh, it asks, can the power of love break the old cycles of pain, violence and destruction?

The play is a thriller in the tradition of Daphne du Maurier, with echoes of more modern work such as Connor MacPherson's *The Weir*.

Steeped in the mysterious atmosphere of the Scottish highlands in the same way that "Rebecca" uses the wild Cornish landscape to mirror its characters' passions.

The Croft itself is a rundown building, miles from anywhere, now a holiday home, albeit quite a Spartan one, in which Laura stayed from her childhood and which hides not only family secrets but the echoes of a violent past from much longer ago.

Laura has brought her new lover, Suzanne, to the Croft, apparently for an idyllic getaway, but it soon proves far more complicated than that. Not only is Suzanne deeply conflicted about leaving her husband and children for another woman, but Laura has unfinished business of her own. Her mother died here and Laura needs to come to terms with how and why.

The building also has an older darker life. "Blood on the turf" says one of the characters, hinting at a buried tragedy.

In the aftermath of the terrible highland clearances of the late 19th century, two other women lived here, or tried to. Facing scandal, persecution, eviction and possibly death, Enid and Eileen are forced into awful decisions. The path that they take leaves an echo that reverberates into the present day and into the lives of Laura and Suzanne and the two men who try to understand them. We also meet Laura's mother, desperately fighting her own demons, and the two men who love her.

Perhaps that's what ghosts are – echoes of the vivid past, to be heard or seen when the time is right.

The play is by turns witty, tender, romantic, frightening and thrilling. It is also a showcase for some virtuoso acting. Roles are doubled as the past swirls into the present and these people fight for their lives. Visually atmospheric and darkly beautiful, the Croft introduces a bold new voice.