

The Little Stranger (Thorndike Press Large Print Historical Fiction) by Sarah Waters



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Author: Sarah Waters

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Dr. Faraday, the son of a maid, has built a life of quiet respectability as a doctor. One dusty postwar summer in his home of rural Warwickshire, he is called to a patient at Hundreds Hall. Home to the Ayres family for more than two centuries, the Georgian house, once grand and handsome, is now in decline. But are the Ayreses haunted by something more ominous than a dying way of life? (Bestseller)



Reviews of the The Little Stranger (Thorndike Press Large Print Historical Fiction) by Sarah Waters

blac wolf

Well written novel about a working man stiff who is a doctor to the local countryside and gentry. Through a home visit he becomes involved with the Ayer's Family the local scions who have fallen on

hard times.

Analysts and readers will debate whether this is a Ghost, Poltergeist or Psychological novel. The atmosphere is adequately Gothic and yet despite the fine writing the story spirals to shoulder shrugging conclusion.

In the end heartbreak and death seem the destiny of all involved. Ms. Waters offers a keen observation on England's Working Class and declining Gentry in post World War II.

Reviewers will want to know - did I enjoy the book? And my answer is yes but I found it to be frustrating read as I wanted to slap silly all the main characters for their obtuseness. Worth a read, hard to put down but don't expect to be satisfied in the end. Not your typical ghost story - so leave your paranormal baggage at home

Zymbi

Blurbed by the likes of Stephen King for its exceptional creepiness, "The Little Stranger" will disappoint those who are looking for a page turner in the mold of the American master of Gothic horror. Yes, the novel has all the trappings of a standard haunted house thriller: a once-grand, remotely situated mansion; owners reduced to shabby gentility; things that inexplicably go bump in the night; violent disfigurements and mysterious deaths. But all this is only scaffolding for a meticulously thoughtful examination of a society emerging from a devastating war into economic and social upheaval - Britain in 1947. Add the indelible poison of the English class system and an apparently trustworthy narrator who turns out to be anything but, and you have a richly satisfying novel of substantial depth and genuine, open-ended mystery. I've not read Sarah Waters' other books, but on the evidence of this one she's an uncommonly gifted storyteller who's not afraid to take her time or to challenge the reader to figure out what she's really up to. "The Little Stranger" is too smart to be merely "chilling." It doesn't leave you with the satisfaction of "understanding," of seeing all the loose ends tidied up. If it has a fault, it's the fault of mercilessness. It's a haunted house story in the best sense - one that doesn't just rattle a crumbling mansion, but one you won't get out of your mind.

Pruster

This book started out well and the descriptions of places, people and events are finely drawn and drew me in at the beginning. This sense of involvement with the characters continued for the first half of the book, and with it great writing in regard to foreshadowing of possible occurrences to come. After that it seemed, for me, a bit strenuously- long in the narrative with lengthy conversations between the characters, long descriptions of events, and a sense that something important was going to happen, but it took such a long time to get there. Usually I love immersing myself in lengthy novels and feeling connected to a different time and place, but this time I found myself annoyed and impatient with the people involved.

romrom

I loved this novel--first one I've read by Sarah Waters, and I plan to read everything else she's written. Though reviewers suggest that The Little Stranger is atypical, I trust that I'll love her other work as well. She's a gifted novelist, and I look forward to being taken on whatever imaginative, historical, sexual, psychological, or sociological trips she cares to explore. This novel, for me, never drags (as some reviewers complained--what was their problem?). The world it creates is solid, built of revelatory, convincing detail. Its conflicts unfold with subtle horror--and just as I thought there was no more to reveal, the book ended with yet another "turn of the screw" that made me want to go back and reread the beginning. I began seeing the fine thread that had been there throughout, clear all the way to the last few ghastly sentences! The following may need a spoiler alert, so beware: One of the things Waters does so brilliantly in The Little Stranger is to let the reader's suspicions of the narrator's unreliability grow so gradually. His steadfast rationalism, even after a colleague offers a plausible way to read the presence of a ghost that differs from the narrator's

pathologizing of any who disagree with him, begins to coincide with our creeping sense that he's so desperate to claim the family and house and to assert his control that he can't see or hear the truths spoken to him by the woman he wants to possess. I couldn't tear myself away from this book--intelligent, pleasurable, and compelling!

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