



Shade

Neil Jordan

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The Oscar-winning filmmaker Neil Jordan returns to fiction with a haunting, highly praised novel, his first in ten years. Narrated by the ghost of Nina Hardy, an actress who is murdered in the opening scene of the book, *Shade* tells the story of two pairs of siblings growing up in Ireland in the first half of the century. Through a childhood that memory gives the luster of romance and the tragedy that strikes as the children reach adolescence and the two boys leave for the Great War, these unforgettable characters reach the 1950s to play their roles in a murder ultimately revealed as the opposite of the senseless crime it seems.

Shade Details

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Author : Neil Jordan

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From Reader Review Shade for online ebook

Jessica says

I really, really liked this book. It's dark, it kinda has a few moments that make you uncomfortable for variable reasons. It's engrossing. After I finished it, I thought, It's been a long time since I've read a book that is that good. I felt like it sat with me for a while after I finished it, like a shadow. Would give 5 stars, but I remember at some point towards the middle/end realizing that they kinda abandoned the narration from the ghost point of view for a while, and I noticed it was missing and felt like it was missing.

Donald says

The synopsis makes this sound like The Lovely Bones. It shares a ghost, and a murder, but that's about it. This is about growing up, the rural idyll, friendship, family secrets. A number of reviews stated this was confusing, and difficult to read. I found it neither, leading me to wonder if they'd ever read literary fiction before. Perhaps they should stick to Celeb memoirs and 50 Shades.

Marport says

Using the ghost of the main character was an interesting technique and, as bizaare as it sounds, actually worked well. I was engrossed from the start. The characters and their relationships are interesting and the impact of passion, obsession and betrayal upon them ultimately reveals all. I became an obsessive reader!

Sandra Reynolds says

it was a good book,a little hard to follow in parts,it was sad but Jordan paints a picture of childhood innocence and describes the era and the location so well you feel like youre there.Its my first novel by Jordan so i think i would probably read some more of his work.

Lynne says

This is one of those books that people love to say they've read and that they love it and it's all very clever. I read it for a book group and didn't love it at all! It was rambling in parts and I had to reread them to try and understand them which I ultimately didn't so skipped them. The story could've been so good but wasn't - I didn't enjoy the style of the writing, there were random sections that didn't really seem to tie in with the story and you find out what happens at the beginning of the books so after reading it I wondered why I'd bothered! The story is told by 2 narrators Nina and her brother but the voices switch constantly and at times you're not really sure who's telling the tale. It seems to be a bit of a marmite book but he's not a writer I'd ever read again - not for me at all.

Jesse Bullington says

The first novel I've read by director Jordan (*The Company of Wolves*, *The Butcher Boy*), a ghost story where the twist is beneficially detailed at the very beginning. This leads to the novel itself being more a tragic drama with some neat supernatural elements. The characters, events, and setting often serve as a microcosm of Ireland in the first half of 20th century, and I'd highly recommend the work to anyone interested in that age and locale. Quite beautiful, if a little rough around the metaphor at times.

Leif says

Does the idea of exquisite plotting, strong characters and apple-clear descriptive atmospheres in a novel entice you? What about a story of sidelives and quiet corners in the British empire around the turn of the twentieth century? Granted, some of the most obvious questions raised by the novel's events remain unanswered by narrative diegesis and, granted, Jordan has a filmmaker's sense of the spectacular; so too, however, does his filmmaker's eye see a world so rich and so full of fiction's power that the answers this novel provides are to the questions art asks of itself and not those we as readers ask of our novels. Nina's ghost is perhaps a partial truth at best but her voice is compelling and conjures up the quiet miracle of the most memorable stories of loss.

Kirsten says

From the description on the back of this book, it sounds like *The Lovely Bones*, but it's really not. Yes, there's a murder, yes, the spirit of the woman murdered has some awareness of what occurs after her death. But in reality it begins with a murder, then narrates the events leading up to it. It's more truly a literary novel about love, lust, and thwarted passions of all kinds.

I enjoyed it, but I've only given it 3/5 because it's one of those novels that constantly reminds the reader that it's a novel, and I found that bothersome in this case. The point of view changes frequently, and often switches from first to third person. The way the characters speak adds to the artificiality as well; there are whole huge sections of dialogue that seem utterly improbable. One that particularly struck me was supposed to be an early morning conversation in the kitchen while the teakettle boiled, but the first sentence goes like this:

"I remember his letters, in your handwriting with his syntax, an oddly comforting juxtaposition of elements if I may say so, you two had become the one creature at last, elegant yet unlettered, the occasional erudite word sitting like an awkward jewel among the plain and pithy sentences."

Lovely, yes, but not particularly realistic, coming as it does from an uncolleged, hungover Irish woman before breakfast. So, if you feel like you might enjoy it nonetheless (as I did, to some degree) or if you really LIKE highly wordy, somewhat self-important novels, check it out. If you're looking for *The Lovely Bones*, pass.

Diane says

A woman, murdered by a childhood friend, returns from the grave to haunt herself. She narrates her own life and brings a bittersweet knowledge to that which she observes. Excellent novel including visions of Ireland in the early days of the 20th century, WWI, the theatre scene, and how childhood relationships stand the test of time.

Dark-Draco says

This is the story of Nina, killed by a childhood friend and trapped as a ghost in the house where she grew up. As the police come and go, and her body rots in its unfound hiding place, she begins to relive her own life, becoming the mysterious figure that haunted her as a child. From her lonely childhood, to the meeting with George and Janie, the arrival of her step-brother, to the lofty heights of stardom and eventually back to her own death.

A brilliantly written novel, although not a great deal actually happens. You end up drifting from one scene to another, seeing both through Nina's ghostly eyes and her real ones. George and Gregory's battlefield scenes are quite harrowing and contrast really well with the images from her life, although the quick changes between the two did annoy me a bit. Still, I really enjoyed this and may well track down some more books by this author.

Christina says

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Padraic says

In Ireland, just because you're dead doesn't mean you don't get a say. Lovely.

Audrey Montague says

Though it got off to a slow start, I ended up engrossed in this story. Having grown up in the country a bit isolated and with a limited selection of playmates, I could relate to the characters. each person's story evolves in unexpected twists and turns that always bring them back together. surprises await....and the historical aspect that Gregory provides when recounting his memories of war are haunting. all in all, a very good book.

Laura says

WHEEE, my 4 and 5 star book streak continues. I'm usually lucky if I read even two books in a row that I would rate more than a 3, so this is awesome.

This is a strange, eerie, gorgeous book. It's a coming of age tale, a story of World War I era Ireland (and beyond), a dark love story(stories?), a ghost story. It's also very atmospheric, beautifully written and...did I mention strange? But I love weird books (as long as they meet my other basic literary "requirements") so that's just fine with me.

The story is narrated by the ghost of a woman who grew up to be murdered by a childhood friend. Her spirit (this is SUCH an Irish story, *God*) is trapped not only in the sprawling old river-side home of her childhood, but also in her own past. Together Nina and the reader watch her childhood (and that of her murderer, as well as his sister and her half-brother) unfold, and search for answers as to how it all went so wrong. An element that I loved (and no this is not a spoiler, her death and the details of her haunting are revealed right away) is that her sadly watchful adult ghost was often seen by her childhood self, and as a girl Nina imagined all sorts of histories for the silent observer, never guessing it was actually *her*. That still gives me shivers just thinking about it, so deeply ironic and sad.

Kate says

I bought this book as a first edition paperback, read a few chapters and abandoned it as too difficult to get into.

So, almost a decade later, I found it on my shelf and tried it again. It is ridiculously hard to follow part I, because of the dual narration from the same character at two points in time. The book isn't plot driven, it's a study in four characters (although Janie, of the foursome, is left to founder somewhat).

I'm a fast reader, but the density and complexity of the narration meant I read this fairly short book very slowly, and often had to re-read sections to understand what was going on. I think this would have played a lot better as a theatre or film piece--which makes sense, as Jordan is also a screenplay writer.

Ultimately, I think this one will sit for a while and I'll read it again in several years, and hopefully it will make more sense then.
