



Behind the Door

Mary SanGiovanni

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Occult specialist Kathy Ryan returns in this thrilling novel of paranormal horror from Mary SanGiovanni, the author of *Chills*.

Some doors should never be opened . . .

In the rural town of Zarepath, deep in the woods on the border of New Jersey and Pennsylvania, stands the Door. No one knows where it came from, and no one knows where it leads. For generations, folks have come to the Door seeking solace or forgiveness. They deliver a handwritten letter asking for some emotional burden to be lifted, sealed with a mixture of wax and their own blood, and slide it beneath the Door. Three days later, their wish is answered for better or worse.

Kari is a single mother, grieving over the suicide of her teenage daughter. She made a terrible mistake, asking the powers beyond the Door to erase the memories of her lost child. And when she opened the Door to retrieve her letter, she unleashed every sin, secret, and spirit ever trapped on the other side.

Now, it falls to occultist Kathy Ryan to seal the door before Zarepath becomes hell on earth . . .

Praise for the novels of Mary SanGiovanni

A feast of both visceral and existential horror.F. Paul Wilson on *Thrall*

Filled to the brim with mounting terror.Gary A. Braunbeck on *The Hollower*

A fast-building, high-tension ride.James A. Moore on *The Hollower* "

Behind the Door Details

Date : Published August 28th 2018 by Lyrical Underground

ISBN :

Author : Mary SanGiovanni

Format : Kindle Edition 190 pages

Genre : Horror, Mystery

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From Reader Review Behind the Door for online ebook

Lilyn G. | Sci-Fi & Scary says

Mary SanGiovanni's *Behind the Door* has tentacles, mayhem, and mystery. If that line doesn't interest you, then you're not the right audience for the book.

Kathy Ryan first appears in the author's novel *Chills*. (I read it a few years ago and really liked it.) You don't need to have read that book to enjoy this one. With that said – I would recommend it. At just under 200 pages, *Behind the Door* feels like it's missing something. And that something, I fear, is a connection with Kathy Ryan.

The story is good. It was weird, creepy, and fun. The whole idea of the door, the way the creatures manifest later, all awesome. But I just couldn't ever really connect with the main character, and that was a problem. It left me a bit wanting in the end.

SanGiovanni doesn't hold back from giving us unlikable characters in *Behind the Door*. In fact, one of the two problems I have with the book centers around this. I can't go into details without spoiling anything, but I could see several people having an issue with it, especially if they have certain traumatic events in their past.

Let's just say there are some types of human monsters that don't need to be 'humanized'.

But, this is a horror book, and not a platform upon which to discuss morality, so we'll leave that there and move on.

(Read this spoiler if you've got any major triggers and you want to know what I'm talking about with the characters just in case)

(view spoiler)

The author addresses grief very well in *Behind the Door*. There was one passage in particular that resonated strongly with me, especially considering the anniversary that just passed.

(Please keep in mind that this quote is from an ARC and may not be present in the final copy.)

"She had been relegated to a kind of camp or colony for people who had undergone an Awful Tragedy, a thing they were thankfully unable to relate to in any meaningful way."

Overall, I enjoyed *Behind the Door* quite a lot. It had good pacing, atmosphere, and the small town felt like it could have been any small town in any state. I look forward to reading more about Kathy Ryan in the future!

Disclaimer: I received a copy of this book from Netgalley for review consideration.

Cats of Ulthar February Weird Fiction says

Review: *BEHIND THE DOOR* by Mary SanGiovanni

(Kathy Ryan Series)

Mary SanGiovanni is an estimable talent indeed. BEHIND THE DOOR takes my beloved Lovecraft Mythos and squeezes it till it squeaks--or in this case, hums. She does so while interweaving some of the worst instances humanity can fall prey to, both as prey and as predator. Portions of this novel made me want to weep, close my eyes, and rage--all simultaneously. I also screamed to see justice wrought. There is extreme horror here, frequently, and I don't recommend to read at night, alone (as did I). There is implacability, maximally. But guard your sensitivity, fire up your empathy, and jump in. Ms. SanGiovanni is about to carry you on an out-of-this-world ride.

Juli says

The small town of Zarepath has a strange secret. A door. Nobody knows where it came from or exactly how it works, but if you follow some simple rules, it can ease burdens. It doesn't always work as expected...but it always works. A note sealed with wax and blood slipped under the door...an outpouring of emotion and need....wait three days....and the door does the rest. There is just one Big Rule that cannot be broken -- NEVER EVER open the door. Unfortunately, sometimes broken people break rules.

OMG! This book was so suspenseful and fun to read! I love weird, spooky stories and this story about a magical strange door was wonderfully creepy and awesome! The town did great for awhile dealing with times that the door sort of got things wrong....or letting new people in town know the rules....but their luck certainly ran out when a woman freaked out and opened the door to get her letter back. MISTAKE! There are no take-backs when it comes to supernatural shit-shows.... Who you gonna call?? Kathy Ryan, Occult specialist.

The whole time I was reading this book I wanted to yell at the residents of Zarepath...warning them. If supernatural beings offer you favors, wishes, assistance....ANYTHING...you say NO THANK YOU and walk away. There is always a price. And wishes never ever get granted the way you think they will. All those ghostly tales....like the one where two old people wish for money to pay a debt and just as they utter the wish there is a knock at the door. It's news that their son was killed and there is a death payment due them of exactly the amount they wished for. Like the old saying says....when you sup with the devil, you use a long spoon. It is never never wise to play games with things you don't understand. And it's even dumber to do it right where you live. Plus....if there is one un-breakable rule, it is pretty much a given that some ninnnyhammer will come along and break that rule. There's one (or usually multiples) in every group/town/family. Always. The residents of Zarepath certainly learned their lesson. What were they thinking! Sure makes for an awesome story though!

Kathy Ryan is a great main character. She comes in to face the evil that has poured out of the open door, and shows amazing bravery and talents at facing the supernatural. It made for a great, eerie, entertaining story! Loved it!

Another book in this series, Inside the Asylum, is coming out in 2019! I will definitely be reading it!

I voluntarily read a review copy of this book from Kensington Books via NetGalley. All opinions expressed are entirely my own. No magical doors were opened or messed with during the reading of this book.

Bill says

Suggestion: If you haven't already, Do Not Read the synopsis. It gives away way too much information. I much prefer going in blind and am glad I did for this one. It's like that movie trailer you watch that pretty much gives away the whole fucking movie. I hate that. Anyhoo...

That being said, my review is spoilery too. Unless you read the synopsis ? So, beware...

There's a Door in the Zarephath woods. It has the power to "grant things". Unfortunately, as it can give, it can also take back. And if you open the Door...well, just don't open it. Take my word for it.

Fug. Somebody opened it didn't they? Fug.

Time to call Kathy. She'll know what to do. She kicked plenty of demon butt before.

This was a very good horror in a small town novel. An assortment of colorful and sometimes creepy characters with a very interesting backstory and no shortage of bloody action. Plus, Kathy Ryan is back. If you haven't checked out Mary's "Chills", then you definitely should.

Acanthea Grimscythe | The Ghastly Grimoire says

After seeing Behind the Door on NetGalley and noticing it was written by a female author I'd never read, I absolutely had to have it, and so I requested it. Horror is a largely male community, especially when it comes to those that write. A little background research showed me I've really been missing out with SanGiovanni so when my request was approved, I was joyous. Needless to say, Behind the Door is probably one of my favorite reads so far this year.

The characters in Behind the Door are dynamic, with varying flaws, backgrounds, and intricately interwoven stories--some of which are heartbreaking, others which are revolting. SanGiovanni has talent when it comes to fleshing out a wide array of individuals and even those I shouldn't have felt sympathy for, I did. Rarely do I connect emotionally with characters in a book, so this was a welcome surprise.

Additionally, the plot flies along at a breakneck pace, making for a quick and easy read. It only took me a few sessions (despite my reading slump) to finish this suspense-ridden book. I loved the Lovecraftian theme of old gods and locked away horrors.

I really have nothing negative to say about this book. Everything was wrapped up nicely and I thoroughly enjoyed reading it--in fact, I look forward to the opportunity to read more of SanGiovanni's work.

I'd like to thank NetGalley and the publisher for the opportunity to read this book for free in exchange for an honest review.

Char says

[
In my mind, this is a novel of cosmic horror. It doesn't feature Cthulhu or any Lovecraftian creatures, (though there are tentacles), but major aspects of it are there. What's behind the door is n

Marie says

I really liked this book as it was gripping and suspenseful with a touch of mystery, horror, and mythical creatures added in for flavor.

Just looking at the cover of the book is ominous which made me want to reach out and pull open the door to see what was behind it for curiosity sake, but then being too curious can get you killed.

With that being said, the story pulls you into the town of Zarepath near the town of New Jersey where there is The Door that is built in the woods. It has been there for centuries as it helps the people of the town with their problems and families of the town have been going there to have the The Door solve their problems for them.

All they have to do is write a letter, with their problem they want solved, seal the letter with their blood and stick it under the door. In three days the request is either granted or denied. No sweat, right? Well everything would have been just fine if one of the town residents (Kari) hadn't decided that the letter she stuck under the door was not what she really wanted to do, so what would be the problem with opening The Door and retrieving the letter. Well for one thing no has ever attempted to actually "Open the Door" as that is just the law of the town. "Do Not Open The Door". Very simple.

Kari opens the door and tries to grab the letter, but she ends up releasing "the bowels of hell" as every mortal sin and ghostly spirit is released into the town.

The town hires an occult specialist, Kathy Ryan to come in and deal with all the supernatural beings that are plaguing the town. She is also assigned the task of sealing the door which proves to be a bigger task than she thought. Will she get the door closed in time before the entities destroy the town? No spoilers here. You will just have to read the book!

Also this was my first book by this author and I have now added her to my growing list of horror authors. Four stars for this one.

My thanks to Netgalley and Kensington Books for letting me read this book!

Jon Recluse says

In the first of a new series featuring occult specialist Kathy Ryan, Mary SanGiovanni spins the old tale of the Monkey's Paw into a nightmare inducing novel of small town terror, and a mythos that is purely her own.

What would you wish for, if the risk is getting what you asked for....literally?

And if trying to take back that wish will only make things worse beyond all comprehension?

Exploring not only the threat of supernatural horrors from unknown dimensions, this page-turner offers up all the darkest secrets of small town life, from the petty little selfish wants, to the unholy needs that lurk within the human heart.....balanced against the traumas that life passes out without rhyme or reason, and the lengths one would go to stop the pain that dwells in their hearts.

Highly recommended.

This was an eARC from Netgalley.

Carrie says

Behind the Door by Mary SanGiovanni is a supernatural horror read that is the beginning of the new Kathy Ryan series. Kathy Ryan is a specialist in all things supernatural that gets called into the rural town of Zarepath when things get out of control.

You see, Zarepath has had something special in their woods for years and years. A mysterious door exists that the locals know will grant a wish to anyone that passes a note with a drop of blood on the seal under the door. Of course those tempting fate to ask the door for a wish know that you must word your wish just so or you just might get more than you bargained for.

Kari is a newcomer around town that didn't know about the door but when a friend sees that Kari is just not getting over the heartbreak of losing her daughter she suggests the door may help take the pain away. Of course Kari is given the warnings that town folks have lived by for years, you can't bring back the dead and just don't open the door no matter what but when things don't go as Kari imagined she's determined to take back her wish.

Behind the Door is a solid horror tale that I'm sure many will love as Mary SanGiovanni is certainly a good writer. However, for myself having read and watched tons of horror over the years I was slightly disappointed there wasn't more to the door than what there was leaving me to feel that this was just an OK read. We all know in horror someone will break that rule that they are told not to so it's what the author does with that afterward that will make something truly unique and to me this one didn't have anything truly spectacular happen. Since I'm tough to please in the horror genre I'd still say give this a shot though if horror appeals to you.

I received an advance copy from the publisher via NetGalley.

For more reviews please visit <https://carriesbookreviews.com/>

Irene says

This is a series I will most definitely want to stick with. I had previously read "Chills" by the same author which is where I first met the character Kathy Ryan. I loved her then and I love her now. In fact I think she was my favorite part of Chills.

The people in the small town of Zarepath have more than their share of secrets. The deepest and darkest secret of them all is one they have shared amongst the townspeople for generations. Hidden in the woods is a door that can rid you of your misery or it can rain misery upon you if you don't follow the rules. Your request must be in writing and you are in for a world of suffering if it isn't worded exactly the way you intend.

The characters are perfectly imperfect and managed to evoke my sympathy for them even as I raged against the pain that some of them had caused and things they had done. The fright factor is deliciously high and the writing style is imaginative and flows beautifully.

I received an advance copy for review

Kimberly says

****AVAILABLE NOW!****

BEHIND THE DOOR (A Kathy Ryan Novel), by Mary SanGiovanni, is a supernatural horror novel that really makes the readers think, and begs the question: If you could have anything you want--without knowing the possible repercussions--would you take that chance? In the rural town of Zarephath, PA, there is a "freestanding Door" in the woods that the residents both fear and revere.

"Some doors should never be opened . . . "

When new people move to Zarephath, they are inevitably told--in whispered reverence--about the town's mysterious Door. Rumors say that you can ask for something from it--but there are as many "bad" results as there may be desirable ones.

"Rule number one is that you absolutely, under no circumstances ever, open that Door . . . "

Kari, a newly divorced woman who tragically lost her only child, has recently moved here to try and get away from her haunting memories.

"You don't always get it how you want it . . . "

She is one of the many remarkable characters that the author does an incredible job of bringing to life in this book. The emotional intensity, pain, faults, strengths, fears, and desires are so *real* that they make you feel as though you were in this town, WITH these individuals. They became more than a name and a problem they had--they became . . . *human*. Even those with monstrous secrets were three dimensional.

". . . It was human nature that in times of fear or sorrow, people leaned toward wanting to believe in something over nothing . . . even faceless, nameless gods behind a freestanding door in the woods . . . "

I could practically feel the opposing pull of emotions in many of the townspeople. Creating individuals that your readers will be thinking about long after the book is finished is a challenging feat, but Mary SanGiovanni pulls it off so smoothly that she makes it seem nearly effortless.

"... When you ask for things that defy the laws of God and nature, it never, never works out... I said you can ask for anything and you can... but we learned quick 'round here that you don't..."

This is the second standalone book I've read with Kathy Ryan as a character, and while her background and occult "training" are still very much in the shadows, I found that she fit perfectly into this novel--her arrival more of a gentle "ripple" than a "wave". In **BEHIND THE DOOR**, her persona seemed very certain, and developed when she is called in to help the townspeople with the sudden problem with: *"... them behind the Door."* Even without knowing her personal history, I didn't feel that anything crucial was left out here. Rather, I felt that we were given the perfect amount of information to go on, without overshadowing the theme of the novel with excess content.

"... Maybe sometimes it was just as bad to get what you asked the Door for as it was not to..."

I think this is one of those rare novels that will stay with me for quite a while. I was certainly drawn to the well developed, complex characters, and the tense, frightening atmosphere brought about by the sudden, inexplicable changes besieging the town. However, the question of the very nature of "what" the town was up against, and the moral implications of what they had been doing--in secret--for centuries, are thoughts that I still find myself contemplating.

"... Behind some doors are rooms hidden for good cause in places human beings were probably never meant to know about--rooms meant never to be entered--..."

"... It ain't natural to keep Karma from coming around and making things right..."

As for Kathy Ryan, she is an enigma all on her own. I am very pleased to hear that Mary SanGiovanni will be planning other novels that will incorporate this most fascinating character, as I can see that there is much potential to be explored here.

"... as a species, humans were survivors..."

Overall, I felt this novel had an incredible blend of all of the elements I look for in a horror story. Added to this, we have a mystery that remains shadowed just enough so that our minds can have free reign over what we "think" or "imagine" it could be behind all of the turmoil. Part of the ingenuity here, I believe, is that we are NOT spoon-fed all the answers, but rather *invited to participate* in the speculation with the townspeople.

"There were some things worth surviving rather than changing..."

Highest recommendation!

Debra says

3.5 Stars

Some doors should never be opened . . .

In the rural town of Zarepath, Pennsylvania there is a door. To the town, it feels as if the door has been there forever. No one knows where it came from, no one knows what lies behind the door, and yet generation after generation people have come to the door. They slide their carefully worded handwritten notes under the door, asking for forgiveness, asking for change, asking for an emotional burden to be lifted, looking for absolution, to be free of judgement, or free of their tormentors. Three days later, their wishes are granted. But as always one must be careful about what he/she wishes for, for better or worse, you will get what you ask for. There are no do-overs. There are no second chances. You can only submit one note and above all else you are to NEVER open the door.

Kari, like so many others in the town, has learned about the door and the wishes being granted. She hopes the door and what lies beyond on can help her. She writes her note, seals it with her blood mixed with wax, and leaves it under the door as instructed. But then she begins to regret leaving the note and decides to take it back. All she wants to do is retrieve her letter and in doing so, she does the thing she has been instructed never to do - she opens the door. In the process she has released every secret, every wish, every sin that others have left with the door.

"Be careful what you wish for, you might just get it."

Soon people in town have their letters come back to haunt them and occult specialist Kathy Ryan is brought in to investigate and figure out how to close the door once and for all. But how? Will her experience be enough? Just what is her experience? I would have liked to have known more about her character. I am guessing that perhaps her story will be fleshed out more in future books. I hope so as she is the expert and I felt I knew more about the townspeople than I did her.

This book gets props for being both entertaining and original. There are a lot of characters in this book and the Author did a great job at giving them distinct personalities, sins, wishes, etc. Not only did that help with my enjoyment of this book but it also made keeping track of the characters easy. Not once did I have to stop reading to try and figure out which character was being talked about.

This book is in the horror genre, but it is not what I would call scary or overly gory. There are some creepy and menacing scenes but nothing that was too gruesome or terrifying. With many books, readers need to suspend disbelief and I found it easy to do so with this book. A mysterious door in the middle of the woods with powers that opens to.....(read and find out). I would have liked to have known a little more about the door and what lies beyond but again, I am wondering if this will be explored in future books in the series. Not this door perhaps, but other portals?

Overall an enjoyable book. This book is the first in the series and I will be looking forward to reading the next one.

Thank you to Kensington Books - Lyrical Underground and NetGalley who provided me with a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review. The thoughts and opinions expressed in this review are my own.

Read more of my reviews at www.openbookpost.com

Schizanthus says

There is a Door in the middle of the woods. It's been there as long as anyone can remember but no one knows who or what "them behind the Door" are. You can use the Door one time and one time only. You need to word your letter carefully, seal it with wax and your blood, and slip it under the door alone at night. You can ask it to do anything at all and three days later you get what you want, "more or less".

"You don't always get it how you want it. And there's no way to take it back, sugar, because rule number one is that you absolutely, under no circumstances ever, open that Door. Once you deliver your letter, it is out of your hands."

Would you use it? Would you ask it to remove a burden or give you something you've always wanted? I asked myself these questions and decided that although there are definitely experiences I wish I'd never had or things that are out of my reach that I've always wanted, the risk of using the Door would outweigh any potential benefits for me. In weighing this up though, I know I'm only doing so hypothetically. Who knows what I would do if the Door was right in front of me.

Due to the power of the Door and the amount of people who have used it there were a lot of potential *triggers* in the content, including suicide, family violence, sexual assault and paedophilia. What probably shouldn't have surprised me but did was my reaction to certain characters. Once the Door was opened (it had to happen) and all hell started breaking loose I found the way I felt about the characters depended upon the details of the burden they had described in their letter.

I was concerned for the safety of some characters. I was anticipating with unbridled glee the potential comeuppance of others. I hoped for the redemption of some and the extended torture of others. I worked out the connection between a couple of characters early on and had looked forward to being a spectator as the dots were joined; although this wasn't resolved the way I had hoped I'm not disappointed.

My favourite character was Cicely, Kari's friend, who I found to be compassionate, wise and down to earth. She was the only character I ended up with a mental picture of and for some still unknown reason she wound up looking and sounding like author Toni Morrison in my head.

Kathy Ryan, a consultant to law enforcement agencies who specialises in the occult and supernatural, is called in to try to contain what was unleashed on this town when the Door was opened. The marketing for *Behind the Door* told me this was the first in a new series but once I started reading I discovered it's actually the second, so Kathy's character joins the story without a great deal of background information.

In *Behind the Door* you learn more about each of the townsfolk than you do about Kathy and I expect that the scar that's mentioned several times and her less than perfect family that's alluded to are explained in the preceding book, *Chilled*. Yes, I bought that book immediately after finishing this one and am already looking forward to reading it as well as the forthcoming *Inside the Asylum*.

I really had fun reading this book. There was enough information given about the characters (with the exception of Kathy) for me to become invested in their lives. The consequences of the Door being opened were interesting, with some gore and creepiness, but nothing that turned my stomach or made me want to look away. I enjoyed watching the chaos unfold and loved that I was able to suspend my disbelief as I got swept along for the ride.

There were a few question marks that remained for me after finishing this book, such as why Cecily never

appeared to tell Kathy the words her husband had spoken to her, which seemed vitally important at the time. I also wondered about what seemed to me to be an inconsistency; whether the Door could be photographed or not. Kathy uses photos of the Door to help her solve the case yet makes a point of noting that it wasn't odd that there are no photos of the Door in the Heritage Centre as "Often, such interdimensional oddities negatively affected digital and film media."

My main niggles with this book were the ending and the limited information provided about "them behind the door". While there were assumptions made and theories shared about their motivation I really wanted to know more. I also wanted information in the epilogue about how the events affected the individual townsfolk long term rather than how long Kathy stayed in the town after the events. I wanted to know how the resolution affected Cecily in particular as the ramifications for her could have been catastrophic. I'm crossing my fingers that I'll find out what happens to Cecily later in the series.

Thank you very much to NetGalley and Lyrical Underground, an imprint of Kensington Books, for the opportunity to read this book.

Niki says

[Oh no, we're surrounded! We need to
