



The Paper House

Anna Spargo-Ryan

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Longlisted for the Matt Richell Award

"There's something magical about *The Paper House*." *The Sydney Morning Herald*

And then I was pregnant, and we realised we had no space for a baby.

We looked at all kinds of houses: big, new ones with columns and render; little cottages with beaten weatherboard; a yellow brick monstrosity with a paved yard where there should have been grass. But we were drawn to the rolling water. And our heart stayed behind when we left.

Heather and Dave have found the perfect place to raise their first child. The house has character, but it's the garden that really makes it: red-faced impatiens, pockmarked gums, six upright pittosporums to keep the neighbours out. It's a jungle. A hiding place. A refuge.

And then, without warning, that life is over.

Heartbreaking, fearless, and ablaze with a coruscating beauty all its own, ***The Paper House*** tells the story of a woman sinking into the depths of grief, and the desperate efforts of her loved ones to bring her up for air. A sharp-eyed, bittersweet depiction of the love between parents and children, and the havoc that love can wreak.

The Paper House Details

Date : Published May 31st 2016 by Picador Australia

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Author : Anna Spargo-Ryan

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From Reader Review The Paper House for online ebook

Andrea says

Heather and Dave are young, married and in love. After moving around a bit with Dave's job as a relief teacher, they are ready to start a family and escape to the country. It's all going well for them - until it isn't.

This is the debut novel for Anna Spargo-Ryan, who writes beautifully and powerfully about mental illness. It's a subject I wish I understood better, because if I did, it might have occurred to me a lot sooner to start questioning what in the story was real and what wasn't. Don't get me wrong, the obvious things - like what was happening at the bottom of the garden - were obvious, but towards the end it dawned on me that there was probably a lot more that I should have picked up on.

Spargo-Ryan is a clever writer and I will make a point of looking out for her next book.

Nathan Woolford says

Occasionally I read a book that reaches deep inside and turns me inside out. A truly wonderful, wondrous, real, unreal, touching and thoughtful story. I can't recommended it any more highly.

Gyan Yankovich says

The Paper House is written with the same beauty as The Bell Jar. This book took me longer to read than expected because every single sentence deserves a pause of appreciation.

Jodi says

Every now and then, a very special book comes along. A book that stands out from the crowd with a unique voice, heart-filled story and stunningly beautiful prose. The Paper House is one of those books.

Anna tells a story that is both heartwarming and heartbreaking, with a gentle tenderness that is evident in every word on the page. Dealing with issues such as mental illness, childloss and the intricacies of family isn't an easy task, yet Anna does so with a delicate, empathetic hand allowing the reader to feel along with the characters every step of the way. What could well have been a tragic, depressing tale, is told so poetically, so touchingly that you will be compelled to turn the page and imagine yourself sitting, breathing with Heather and Dave. And by book's end, you will be left with a lingering memory of the characters and a hope for their future.

A stand out novel, and one that will stay with me for a long, long time.

Sunili says

Heather has suffered an unspeakable and utterly devastating loss, and the cadence and rhythm of Anna's words makes you FEEL everything that is happening in her heart and her soul. It honestly hurt to read this book. My chest is tightening up even as I think about it to write this.... And I know am incredibly privileged to have experienced that. Highly recommended but would note it is not suitable if you just want a light little casual read.

Dee Madigan says

Anna's writing makes my heart hurt.
Do not read while wearing mascara.

Shawn Mooney says

An astonishing debut out of Australia. When a young woman's first pregnancy ends in miscarriage, it triggers childhood memories of the figurative and then all-too-literal absence of her mentally ill mother. Despite the imperfect support of loved ones, the protagonist goes to some very dark places. Moving, with both light-hearted and heavy moments, it's ultimately a hopeful tale. The occasionally uneven prose is liberally dotted with, to paraphrase Bohumil Hrabal, sentences so luscious I wanted to pop them in my mouth and suck on them.

D.M. Cameron says

Wow this woman can write! Her prose is gobsmackingly beautiful. I wanted to fall into her writing forever. The only thing I craved was more of a plot line. Can't wait to see what she writes next. I am a definite fan.

Kylie Maslen says

One of the most intensely beautiful books I've ever read. Honest, tender, moving. Just stunning. Full review up now on book-plate here: <http://book-plate.com/chapters/95-the...>

Kirsty Dummin says

I think that mental health is often quite a taboo subject, particularly to fictionalise. Anna Spargo-Ryan does it so well in *The Paper House*. The story is sensitive without being overtly emotional and the plot is clever, yet

realistic. There are many subtleties entwined throughout the book that allow even deeper thought, which I particularly enjoyed. However, my favourite thing about this book is the pace in which the prose is presented. If this book were a house it would be clean and crisp and minimalist, with accents of exquisite beauty.

Cassie Robinson says

I think this is a beautifully written book and a wonderful debut, but it didn't really have an affect on me as much as it seems to have had with others. I felt removed from the characters the whole time, perhaps because Heather herself is in such an isolated state of mind. I could imagine how painful it would be to be in their situation, but I was never made to really feel anything until the end. To me, that was the realest moment in the book and I think if there were more real moments mixed into the magical parts of the story, the overall effect would have grabbed me more.

Kirsten says

A beautiful, poetic novel of grief and family.

The writing is spirited and evocative. I was in that garden with Heather, her pain was palpable. There was so much insight and understanding here, it was heartbreaking yet hopeful.

I adored this, an incredible debut. I can't wait to read whatever Anna writes next.

Helen King says

I started reading this novel with some trepidation, because I've read Anna's short stories and articles before. I'd built some expectations and what if they weren't met? So I tried staying a bit detached but couldn't for long - this story drew me in. From the early stages, where life for Heather and Dave was rolling out as it should, to the devastation of a life lost, and the way everyone tried to make sense, to work out how to be within this new world - the afterwards - the storyline was gripping. Then the way Anna structured her story, the way she coloured it with the beauty of the everyday things, the way she captured the interactions between the main characters (both verbally and in their actions - the things they did and didn't do), and the way she let it all unfold naturally, was just so - right. All the characters were whole beings, with flaws and with oddities, and with lovely attributes. Real people. It really is one of those rare books which is true to life, except expressed in a way most of us would struggle to capture in words. The way that Anna moved between Heather's childhood and the current day, to show how the past is relevant, was very sensitively done, and not overworked. Sometimes you need to read a book like this to help you make sense of what you have experienced - whether the same circumstance, or something similar. And this is one of those wonderful books which manages to do this so very well. Plus - it is set in one of my most favourite places in the world, around the Mornington Peninsula and surrounds. Just to top it off.

Normally I include extracts in my summaries (which are mostly for me, to embed books in my mind), but I don't know where to start here, because there are just too many beautiful, painful, insightful and funny

elements to quote (sometimes more than one aspect at once). I wouldn't know where to start. I guess anyone reading this review will just have to read it for themselves, and pick out their own favourites. Because there are just so many.

Tonile {My Cup and Chaucer} says

One of the most touching, heartfelt novels I've had the joy of reading in quite some time.

Giselle A Nguyen says

I wish I could wrap myself in the poetry of this book. It is exquisitely written - so many sentences I could live in - and the story is desperately sad, but also somehow hopeful. A really beautiful read.
