



Suspicious River

Laura Kasischke

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Leila Murry is young, married, and working in a motel as a receptionist - and then as a prostitute. The seemingly random abuses and perils of her adult life parallel those Leila suffered as a child, and in reliving them she is uncertain whether she will survive them this time, or indeed, if she wishes to. This "extremely powerful debut" tells a story that is at once "profoundly disturbing but also resonant with hope and rebirth" - Los Angeles Times.

Suspicious River Details

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Author : Laura Kasischke

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From Reader Review Suspicious River for online ebook

courtney says

this book did the unthinkable: it wove past and present together using incredibly descriptive and efficient language, was a really compelling page-turner, and -- AND it was a deeply emotionally affecting novel.

there are friends of mine who read the reviews i write and say "how could you read something so dark?" and i have no real answer. i am amazed that a writer can so capably manipulate my moods as this one does. laura kasischke wields a great deal of power -- meting out information as needed and whenever it delivers the most punch.

what the back of the book says is that it is a compelling study of abuse and victimization or something like that -- and it is. we meet leila murray as she begins her career as a prostitute and no matter how desperately we want her to make other choices, kasischke has made leila's fate inevitable. seriously: inevitable. and that is really, really hard to do.

L'heure du thriller says

Ma chronique : <https://wereallmadaboutbooks.wordpress...>

Dans ce premier roman prometteur, Laura Kasischke ne se dépare pas de sa plume si poétique et de cette atmosphère pesante et angoissante qui lui est chère. Roman noir, sulfureux, où aucune violente n'est épargnée, on assiste dans Suspicious River impuissant à la lente descente aux enfers de Leila dans sa quête identitaire. Elle abandonne son petit couple ordinaire mais salutaire pour se jeter à corps perdu dans les bras d'un homme dangereux et violent, qui l'aimera à mort... La cause de ce martyre, un événement traumatisant qui a marqué son enfance et la certitude qu'une malédiction inéluctable pèse sur elle. Est-elle condamnée à reproduire les mêmes erreurs que sa mère et à connaître le même destin funeste?

Katie McDonough says

I may never get over this book. Luckily I can just read it over and over for the rest of my life. That said, it's not for everyone. The language is often more like poetry than prose. The story is heart-crushing with very few moments of levity. But the writing is magical. Some sentences made me stop dead and look around me, as if to make sure I was still on Earth. I called my best friend and read her paragraphs over the phone. I couldn't believe it when I learned that it's out of print. I want to buy up every used copy I can find and surround myself with them. If I could grab only five things to save in a fire, this book would be one of them.

Sandy Yablonski says

Even though the book was a little depressing, I understood why the girl was doing what she was doing. It made me wonder what happened to her after the end! Really enjoyed it.

Moushine Zahr says

This is the first novel I read from author Laura Kasischke, which I borrowed from a public library. I'm glad I didn't pay to read this book.

The author masters writing beautiful sentences, expressions, and metaphors with prose and poetry to describe the small rural city of "Suspicious River" located in Michigan state, its landscape, sceneries, people and life in general. Unfortunately, this is far from enough for me to find this book interesting.

The characters are very common and stereotypical with nothing unique or special about them. Some of the leading characters are well developed, but not other characters like "Gary". The plot is simple, read it and seen it before. You know what to expect before it comes. You enter immediately into the story, but then the story stalls for the rest of the novel.

After finishing reading this book, I still hesitate on what the author wanted to write about:

1. Did the author want to describe life and people of a small rural Michigan city like "Suspicious River"? The author did an extensive job in detailing and describing nicely the various sceneries of the city, but this is the only positive thing about the book.
2. Did the author want to make a symmetric story line between the life of a young woman and the life of her mother at the same age? I didn't get into the characters nor into the story, which I thought was simple and not interesting. There were redundancies of stories. There were too many motel sex scenes, which divert the attention of readers from a real story. There was lack of creativity and originality, covered by extensive descriptions and sex scenes.
3. Or was the author trying to support the idea of rights for women to freely use their body as they want, whether it's right of abortion, right of sexuality before, during, or after marriage, ...? I got this last previous idea by paying attention not to the sexual life of the young motel receptionist, but of what her husband said to her about himself "It's my body", an expression that stuck with her throughout the novel.

"slow and dull like love", which is an expression used by the young motel receptionist to describe her husband Rick. Ironically, this is exactly how I want to describe this book "slow and dull".

Elisha says

Immediately sucked into the story of Leila on the first page. The story itself was intriguing, and I had a hard time putting the book down. A character study in a tragic life, with bits and details given out little by little as the reader puts the pieces together. Leila has a disturbing childhood, which morphs into her current young-adult life and I couldn't help but be drawn into the mystery of how she got to where she is now. At times, I felt sorry for Leila, but other times, I saw her strength and control.

A note about the text--It was clear to me that the author was a poet. I found myself occasionally annoyed with her exaggerated description where she uses 3-4 metaphors in a row to describe something. This happens

consistently and quite often throughout the text. She has some very particularly favorite words (ex. blond) which become boring from overuse. However, it wasn't enough to keep me from enjoying the underlying story.

Jaidee says

5 "disturbing, powerful, disembodied" stars !!

2017 Gold Award (tie)(Most Favorite Read)

Most people in my life will be grateful that I finally finished this novel by Ms. Kasischke. I started this on November 23 and not since 2666 by Mr. Bolano have I been as impacted, impressed and influenced by a novel. This was published in 1997 and is this author's first novel although she had a number of poetry books published. I spoke about this to my gal friends, my boi pals, my family, my niece, my writing group and mostly of course to my partner. I, who usually only highlight three or four passages in a book made 94 highlights in a 288 page book. I dreamt this novel and had day terrors as I read. I shook in awe , shivered in pleasure and was nauseated by beauty. It inspired me to write a poem entitled "Ugly Gorgeousness" for this is what this novel was. I am torn of whether this book is feminist or anti-feminist but either way it kept poking my heart with super sharp pins that made me gasp for air. I had to put it away several times for several days as I just could not read any more as I felt I would drown in sadness, become absorbed in hatred or choke on disgust.

This book is poetry, is noir, is psychological sabotage, is horrific, is beatific, is wondrous, is repulsive, is hopeless, is violet bliss. I want to sit with the author and talk about this book for hours but how would she remember this process of writing it over twenty years ago.

In a nutshell this book is about Leila. Leila is disembodied, traumatized, alone. She yearns for love but has no idea how to access it. She uses men who use her until.... We are taken back to the dysfunction of her childhood, the barrenness of her adolescence and the tragedy of her adulthood. Each step along the way we can barely keep our head above water. When I thought this book could not get darker a more vivid shade of black would appear.

The writing is what is most striking to me....jagged sharp poetry immersed frequently amongst prose. Images so disturbing and beautiful that I could not believe that I read what I just read and would go back and read sentences over and over again and chant them like satanic mantras.

There are way too many quotes so I decided I would just randomly pick three of my bookmarks for a flavor :

"I touched my throat. This was the different Rick again. Even his voice was lower, and I stood up a little straighter when he said it. A little surprised. A baby hand of fear and thrill with a few ragged fingernails tickled behind my ribs. The way a big storm announces itself with monotonous blue skies for day. "

"It was Indian summer again. After the day of rain, another dusty afternoon of sun in Suspicious River. A prism of it moved back and forth across my arms as I drove, and it clamped my wrist for a moment with light, then slipped up my elbow like a bangle."

"Afterwards, I curl into Rob's bony chest and fall asleep again, but dreamless this time, with wind and clouds parting their curtains around the bed in this strange dark, in the twenty-fourth October of my life. The one with the weather my mother never rose from, dank and velvet with death."

So many dark and beautiful sentences like these, dark garnets, semi precious and unforgettable.

Ms. Kasischke I bow down to your poetic genius. Thank you !!

Touloulou says

J'ai hésité pendant ma lecture entre ennui profond et attraction malsaine... Le style de l'auteur m'insupportait au début, finalement vers la fin j'ai un peu mieux apprécié.

Mais un mois plus tard, je ne sais toujours pas quoi penser de ce roman !

Suzanne says

C'est comme une prise de drogue ou une bonne foulée d'alcool. Le début est prometteur, on se moque un petit peu de la situation, on s'avance directement sur les préjugés, on se dit que ça ne concorde vraiment pas avec les pensées de nos jours. Et puis, comme une prise de drogue ou une bonne goulée d'alcool, les choses se gâtent, s'enchaînent, se perdent, se retrouvent, s'entrechoquent, se mélangent, se dissolvent et... C'est la retombée. Violente, sans concession, il est impossible de juger, de simplement comparer. La fin ne pouvait pas être autrement. Du cru à la poésie. De la poésie à l'apothéose. C'est ce qu'est le premier roman de Laura Kasischke. Une bombe qui chauffe et qui n'explose que pour te surprendre, disséminer un peu les organes et te planter les neurones.

Erica says

I loved Laura Kasischke's *In a Perfect World*, and we're publishing her new book, *The Raising*, in March. Laura is a poet, and both of those books are beautifully written yet also fairly commercial. *Suspicious River* is different. It's about a young woman, Leila, who has started working as a prostitute at the motel where she handles the front desk. It is much more *htmlgiant*-esque than *target*-esque like her later books, and it makes me want to read the rest of them to see if this was a subtle shift or a sudden change. I liked reading it a lot.

Michel Gerebtzoff says

one of the worst books i've tried to read those last few years. carried on with it only because someone on goodreads mentioned it in the same sentence with 2666.

don't think i've ever seen such a high density of heavy, laborious metaphors. likes and as really crowded me out of this book. maybe because english is not my mother tongue .

The Reading Bibliophile says

Glauque, glauque, glauque. Le premier roman de Laura Kasischke, bien qu'on y retrouve les thèmes récurrents de ses romans, ne préfigure pas le reste de son œuvre.

Mariel says

I went to the library after work, on some saturday not long ago that already feels long ago, because I didn't want to go home. (I paid the price for what I wanted to avoid, as those things usually go. A day, not put off after all, wanted to end that has already ended. I never learn my lesson.) I knelt on the library floor, avoiding skinless knees, (from some clumsy accident that I felt way stupider about than I should've. Well, clumsiness has already been well documented in the Twilight saga so I won't go on) and my eyes found Laura Kasischke instead of Anna Kavan. Knig-o-lass of goodreads had recommended to me one of her influential favorites, Suspicious River, by Kasischke. The book fate gods had spoken, or something.

Oh yeah, and the plot description read that Leila is a hotel clerk in Michigan who moonlights (graveyard shift lights! Coming home later and later lights) as a prostitute. If anyone might, uh, want to make some extra money... Suspicious River also works as a how-to guide on hotel clerk prostitution in the state of Michigan (it is not hard nosed on the affair so much as it is hard headed. Something hard. Or headed). Google privacy being what it is you can't just search "How to be a prostitute" anymore without the pigs knocking down your door.

My three star rating is a conflicted one. I was in some place between love and frustration, at times. When Leila walks through the outlet malls and fantasizes about some other future and what it could be for her if forces in her control took hold of the part that kept her from taking control. Just working as a shop girl, maybe a little shop lifting. Money saved up towards something else. I can relate to that because I am a person who avoids things and looks forward to having something to look forward to, without even knowing what it is.

I sat in a library chair, curled up with skinless knees that stung with any of the "It's just my body" bullshit that Leila told herself in the really, really time to take control now moments. It was very The Neverending Story except I wasn't a pansy ass little boy who liked to sit in his daddy's lap. Leila is the anti mama's girl. It wouldn't have been appropriate, trust me. There were the creepy kind of guys milling around. The ones that never seem to be eyeing books. I couldn't tell what they were eyeing (eye contact, um, not a good idea). Something disturbingly unknown and very lurky. I started "casting" the men in Leila's life with these dark library men. The Texan pimp was tall and remained on the outerline of my eyeline whenever I happened to be reading about him. The men behind me were the men in Leila's past, like the preacher who used her like the toilet seat guys like that like to call girls they think Leila are like (I'm too sad to think about that now so moving on).

I felt Leila's out of body it's just my body that's not her body in the present. The past... Well, if you know that there's no such thing as that traumatic childhood story that blots out the whole rest of you like an eclipse that just won't leave... I could feel it like something in your throat that you can't swallow away when she couldn't stop herself from doing it. The bravado that even she didn't believe. The husband who wasted away his body

for control over his life. I would have said it wasn't about control but more like not letting go of an idea once you had it. Or, you know, narcissism. Yeah, you can say "I do this because I am this" and I'm still going to think where it is going is more important. So Leila's mom fucked her uncle and wasn't much of anything besides that (that depressing toilet thing, again). It didn't end well. Valentine's day, venarial disease day, visitor's day in prison. Because of doesn't beat the walking in place feeling that I had had when Leila is in her shopping mall, or missing when she reaches for the missing fat on her husband in bed. There could have been a way to reach for the past but as written it was too explanation (I keep saying that! I'm doing it now. Explain schemain). It was almost women who write letters to men in prison reaching. I wished it was more like that. Like the potential of those men walking around and knowing there's a part of you that doesn't trust anyone, not even yourself.

Of course, this could just be me. I know that I have my own ways and things that touch those dawning places in me that make me feel like I know where it could be going or make connections to other things. I wish Suspicious River had been one of those and it wasn't except in moments (good moments, though). A whole review just to say that.

Leila is described as a palely pretty (or is it prettily pale?) redhead who could still pass for young. She dresses to be vulnerable. That's Leila. Dressing to be vulnerable and the stolen underwear isn't as tough or getting away with as much as she might want to say it is. I casted her too. Adrienne Shelley is one of my heroines dead or alive (r.i.p). (Especially as a writer. She could make me feel good about seeing things.) She would have had the shouldn't really be breaking and willing itself the rest of the way thing that Leila should have had. And I know that Paul Bryant said it was a bad movie (I love it) but I still could live forever on Samantha Morton's performance in Under the Skin. Everything I could realize and much better because the heart pulls, beats, bleeds and wheels (turning, clockwork and predictable like) and all on her face and body. Mama reasons and reasons don't matter 'cause that's just a trap anyway. I could have every meal ever on The Executioner's Song by Norman Mailer on the self destruction alone. You have to understand it's not a secret handshake world of abuse to get the what comes next part. Why did Kasischke have to go and tell me what was happening! She's supposed to be a poet. And that's mine.

Oh, and I was disappointed. Kasischke is a poet. Her river analogies didn't do anything for me. They should have done something for me. I live for that shit! (Maybe not as much in Hopscotch or The River Ki. Okay, maybe not rivers. I was born by a river myself. And I hope I never start weaving my life history around the singing river and murdered indians).

Sorry, Knig! I don't mean to complain this much. I'm glad I read it. My knees healed (but not before I had to reach on my tippy toes for the Sorrentino).

P.s. Amazon tells me that this is a movie, after all. Molly Parker is in it. I have a somewhat irrational that is actually pretty irrational dislike of Molly Parker (rational 'cause she's no good). It's a bit like Ethan Hawke showing up in good movies to make them less good (only, unlike Hawke, she doesn't have the only good as an egotistical Tom Cruise part). So, Molly Parker means no Suspicious River movie for me. I've been avoiding The Life Before her Eyes adaptation of another of her novels even though my favorite Sarah Polley is in it (Uma Thurman is often very good, too). I heard bad things. Parker, what makes you think I'll watch you when I haven't watched one of my favorite actresses (since I was eleven, no less)? Are you insane? Stop stalking me!

Marnie Zorn says

I guess I'm just not a fan of this author, this is the third book of hers I've tried to read and left unfinished...

Lynette Eklund says

Very lyrical, but there were times when the words were lost to me. (The walls throbbed around me like kindness, like kidneys..." Huh? ("She handed me a tissue, and it smelled like wet white roses...") I've smelled a lot of roses, but I've never smelled any rose that smelled of damp tissue. Nor does white emote a specific scent to me.

In spite of the sometimes overly strong poetic tone, I couldn't make myself stop reading this book. I can't really say it was a pleasure to read, but it brought forth so many thoughts that I couldn't leave unanswered. I just HAD to finish the book!

Overall, definitely a piece literary art.
