



## The House Swap: A Novel

*Rebecca Fleet*

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**A hypnotic domestic noir novel in which a house swap becomes the eerie backdrop to a crumbling marriage, a torrid affair, and the fatal consequences that unfold**

*Be careful who you let in . . .*

When Caroline and Francis receive an offer to house swap--from their city flat to a townhouse in a leafy, upscale London suburb--they jump at the chance for a week away from home, their son, and the tensions that have pushed their marriage to the brink.

As the couple settles in, the old problems that permeate their marriage--his unhealthy behaviors, her indiscretions--start bubbling to the surface. But while they attempt to mend their relationship, their neighbor, an intense young woman, is showing a little too much interest in their activities.

Meanwhile, Caroline slowly begins to uncover some signs of life in the stark house--signs of *her* life. The flowers in the bathroom or the music might seem innocent to anyone else--but to her they are clues. It seems the person they have swapped with is someone who knows her, someone who knows the secrets she's desperate to forget. . . .

## **The House Swap: A Novel Details**

Date : Published May 22nd 2018 by Pamela Dorman Books (first published 2018)

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Author : *Rebecca Fleet*

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Genre : Thriller, Fiction, Mystery, Suspense

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## From Reader Review The House Swap: A Novel for online ebook

### Ova Incekaraoglu says

I really like slow paced, psychological thrillers. This was such a good one. The tension between the married couple was perfectly crafted. The surprise effect was well built. Didn't see it coming at all! I would love to read from Rebecca Fleet again.

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### Mackenzie - Traveling Sister says

A slow-burning story of domestic suspense that delves into the secrets of a marriage!

*The House Swap* by Rebecca Fleet was my first Traveling Sister read with Brenda, Norma, Kaceey, and Susanne, and I had a great time sharing my thoughts with these lovely women! This book is well-written, but very slow in its pace. It moves back and forth to past and present as we learn more about this couple, their marriage, where it went wrong, and how they have tried to put it back together. It's a book that will make you think about how strong a marriage can be—how it's possible for two people to withstand so much pain and hurt, and still find something worth fighting for after it all.

### 2013

Caroline and Francis once were so in love, they couldn't imagine life without the other. But they are now going through the motions of a marriage—each struggling with their own demons that push them further apart. They are on parallel—but separate—self-destructive paths. And yet, neither has given up on their marriage entirely. They wonder how to reconnect. They wonder if they try, if there will be anything left to save.

### 2015

Caroline and Francis are reconnecting. They go on a week holiday, leaving their son home with his grandmother. This is an opportunity to continue to heal their marriage. Caroline signs them up for a house swap—a chance to step into someone else's life for a few days. At first, the idea is exciting! But at the same time, something seems off... The house is almost completely void of personal touches or possessions. Save for a few tokens that remind Caroline of something... Of someone, more accurately, that she thought was buried in her past. Is there more to this house swap than she originally realized? Is there a connection to *him*??

### Reflection

This book is SLOW at the beginning. It doesn't really pick up until about 2/3, but from that point on I found myself completely engaged in the story. I would categorize this book as domestic suspense, and firmly not a thriller or mystery. But the pain and secrets of this marriage—they slowly embed into your mind until you need to find out what happens.

One thing I enjoyed about Rebecca Fleet's writing is the way she uses texture and movement in her settings to accent what is happening to the characters. She uses incredibly descriptive language, and I found myself

noticing the movement and texture of some scenes, and the flat, stillness of others. This was really effective, and it complimented the slow, somewhat sparse dialogue between the characters quite well.

I found Amber to be an odd character. I don't want to spoil, but I thought she was going to serve a different purpose for the story than she did. I really enjoyed seeing her, Carl, and other characters through Caroline's eyes, though, because they were a reflection of how Caroline herself sees the dynamics. I actually wondered if we could see those characters from a different perspective, how much would be the same at all from what Caroline sees.

All in all, it seems like most of the Sisters enjoyed this by the end, though some were drawn in sooner than others. I recommend readers give it time. By the end, I really was engaged in the story, which I'd never have guessed would happen during the first third.

Many thanks to Penguin Group, Rebecca Fleet, and Edelweiss for an opportunity to read an advance copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

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### **Miriam Smith says**

I really enjoyed "The House Swap" by debut author Rebecca Fleet. I'm getting quite a lot of personal enjoyment from deliberately slow and character driven psychological thrillers at the moment and this one certainly entertained me.

Blurb - When Caroline and Francis receive an offer to house swap, they jump at the chance for a week away from home. After the difficulties of the past few years, they've worked hard to rebuild their marriage for their son's sake; now they want to reconnect as a couple. On arrival, they find a house that is stark and sinister in its emptiness – it's hard to imagine what kind of person lives here. Then, gradually, Caroline begins to uncover some signs of life – signs of her life. It seems the person they have swapped with is someone she used to know; someone she's desperate to leave in her past.

"The House Swap" is an excellent example of domestic noir at its best and I truly connected with it. Dark and quite disturbing it was still a fun read and I didn't guess the ending at all.

Well written with a very interesting concept I found the whole story gripping and compelling and didn't want to put it down. It does take a while to get used to the different timelines, points of view etc but once you understand where the story is taking you, you've become so engrossed it's almost impossible to stop reading. I appreciate a lot of readers don't take to slow psychological thrillers, I didn't myself once but should you stick with it you'll find it's an excellent read and really quite enjoyable.

5 stars

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### **Katie B says**

Caroline and Francis are looking forward to an escape from their city apartment to a house in a London suburb after receiving an offer to house swap for a week. They are hoping that some alone time with each other will help their marriage. But a neighbor at the house they are staying at won't seem to leave Caroline alone and the house is full of eerie reminders of a past Caroline is trying to forget. It looks like someone knows Caroline's secrets and there might be a significant price to pay.

This book had so much potential but the final product almost feels like a wasted opportunity. As a suspense novel, it just didn't deliver as it dragged on in parts and it never felt like edge of your seat reading because so few characters were introduced as potential suspects. I also thought the character of Francis was never fully developed and would have liked a little more backstory for him. However, I did enjoy the depiction of the marital strain between Caroline and Francis. I think if you go into this book as more of a fiction read rather than suspense you won't be as disappointed.

Thank you to First to Read for an advance digital copy! All views expressed are my honest opinion.

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### **Jasmine from How Useful It Is says**

About: The House Swap is a thriller written by Rebecca Fleet. It will be published on 5/22/18 by Pamela Dorman Books, an imprint of Penguin Publishing Group, 304 pages. The genres are thriller, fiction, and suspense. This book is the author's US debut.

My Experience: I started reading The House Swap on 4/9/18 and finished it on 5/8/18. The title House Swap reminds me of a TV show I used to watch years ago called The Wife Swap. That is the main reason why I wanted to read this book. I like the title. I like how the secrets slowly seeping out letting readers know what's all going on; however that's also the downside because the mystery is achingly slow in revealing why Caroline seems to be so distracted. Francis' past & present isn't so interesting to read as Caroline's. The story is easy to read but it moves slowly. Caroline is not a good person to read about because she bitches at her husband for his entertainment while she's fine to continue with hers. Surprisingly Eddie is the easiest kid in the world while his mom and dad living the life, he happens to be sleeping like a rock.

This book is told in the first person point of view following Caroline and Francis as she and her husband move into another person's home to stay for a week through the House Swap registry. They needed a getaway to patch up their tense marriage without their son, Eddie as the buffer. House Swap provided the perfect opportunity for a budget friendly getaway. This book is told in two timelines, home in the past and away in the present day. There is a mysterious narrative in italicize who seems to be talking about Caroline. In the past, Caroline's marriage was irreparable. Caroline's heart and mind strays to another, younger someone and Francis has an addiction problem. Their son Eddie is young. In the present, the couple seems to be working on fixing their marriage. Francis is understanding and seems to be trying while Caroline has a hard time focusing on Francis when she started to notice little signs in the house that reminds her of her past. There's also that neighbor from their getaway house, Amber, that seems to remind Caroline of her past also.

This book is a good read if you enjoy slow burning mystery. I didn't read the synopsis so I didn't know what to expect when reading this book, and so when the first twist comes, it was so unexpected and comes out of nowhere. I like the subsequent twists that followed. I'm not sure I love the ending. It's bittersweet. Francis is a good guy to forgive & forget as well as the mystery person. I have a feeling that if Caroline walks away with someone other than Francis, she would be ecstatic. I do like the concept of House Swap. I hope you enjoy your read if you decide to read this book!

Pro: mystery, suspense, easy to read

Con: Francis' POV lacks entertainment

I rate it 4 stars!

\*\*\*Disclaimer: Many thanks to the author Rebecca Fleet, publisher Pamela Dorman Books, and Edelweiss for the opportunity to read and review. Please be assured that my opinions are honest.

xoxo,

Jasmine at [www.howusefulitis.wordpress.com](http://www.howusefulitis.wordpress.com) for more details

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### **Kelly (and the Book Boar) says**

Find all of my reviews at: <http://52bookminimum.blogspot.com/>

Okay, this is one of those books that I'll probably forget all the details about in less than a month so I better get something written down pronto.

Caroline and Francis are attempting to rebuild their marriage after going through a *seriously* rough patch. They decide to take a week away all by themselves and do so via way of a . . . . .

Despite the house they end up with being more than a little cold and impersonal, the location is perfect and the couple have plans to experience some great meals and "touristy" types of daytrips. That is, until Caroline starts noticing little details from a time in the not-so-distant past she's been trying to leave behind.

This was decent. Y'all know I'm a stingy butthole when it comes to the Starzzzzzz so 3 is good. I liked the slow burn presentation, the fact that both the husband AND the wife were kind of horrible people rather than just one of them, and I didn't see the additional twist coming until it was right up on me (I actually was thinking a completely different direction so that was a pleasant change of things). Once again, if you prefer a little "Lifetime Mystery of the Week" for your beachy type of read, this one may be a winner.

*Oh and NetGalley? You can go ahead and decline my pending request already. The liburrrrry hooked me up.*

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### **Susanne Strong says**

3 Stars.

The idea of "The House Swap" sounds somewhat intriguing right? Instead of taking a regular vacation, you swap houses with a stranger for a week's time. Going to a different locale, living a different life. Caroline and Francis take the bait. Leaving their flat in England (and their young son Eddie) to go to a townhouse, right outside of London. It's not something I would do, but hey, let's give this one a chance, shall we?

2013: Caro and Francis' relationship is in shambles. Francis has a problem: he is addicted to little blue pills, and therefore has a hard time functioning, leaving Caro to care for their son Eddie, though she has other things on her mind – mainly her own life. Caro cannot control herself: her wants and needs take over. Needless to say, both characters self-destruct in different ways.

2015: As soon as Caroline and Francis arrive at the townhouse, things go awry for Caroline. She begins to find little tokens that remind her of her past. A past that she has never truly gotten over – one that haunts her. Caroline and her husband Francis have been trying to rekindle their romance and reconnect and “this” throws a wrench into everything.

Whose house are Caro and Francis staying in? Is it someone Caro knows? What happens thereafter, to Caro, Francis and everyone else involved? It makes your heart go thump, thump, thump, right?

Told in two different timelines, from a few different perspectives, this is a novel that starts out extremely slow and stays that way until about 60%. Once it picks up, it definitely grabs your interest and is at times hard to wrap your head around. I would perhaps describe it as domestic drama v. a mystery/suspense. While some parts of the book are a bit far-fetched, I did end up liking it. The character of Eddie was, by far, my favorite. The premise for “The House Swap,” is very cool and I think a lot of people will enjoy this intriguing read.

This was a Traveling Sister Read which included Brenda, Norma, Kaceey and Mackenzie. The discussion was fantastic and it made the read so fun. Thanks sisters! For full Traveling Sister Group reviews, please see Brenda and Norma’s Amazing Blog: <https://twosisterslostinacoulee.com/>

Thank you to First to Read, Penguin Random House and Rebecca Fleet for an ARC of this novel in exchange for an honest review.

Published on Goodreads and First to Read on 5.16.18.

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### **Norma \* Traveling Sister says**

3.5 Stars rounded up!

THE HOUSE SWAP by REBECCA FLEET is a slow-burning domestic psychological thriller novel that I found to be quite the enjoyable and entertaining read. I wouldn’t necessarily say that there is a lot of action happening here though as the scenes unravel quite slowly but the way that this story was written I found to be rather compelling and suspenseful. I really connected with Rebecca Fleet’s prose and I would say that is one of the main reasons why I found this book to be so enjoyable.

REBECCA FLEET delivers a well-written domestic suspense story here filled with marital indiscretions, addiction and healing that was a slower-paced read with some surprising twists near the end that I didn’t see coming. I was pretty much baffled the whole time trying to figure out who our unknown narrator was.

I really found the concept of house swapping with strangers to be quite intriguing but it isn’t something that I would find myself doing though but it was fun living vicariously through Caroline and Francis’s eyes though.

There were a few aspects within this novel that I wasn’t totally satisfied with but for the most part this novel worked for me! Would recommend!

This was a Traveling Sisters Read which I read along with Brenda, Susanne, Kaceey and Mackenzie. The

discussion was great and it made for another fun read!

Review written and posted on our themed book blog:  
Two Sisters Lost In A Coulee Reading  
<https://twosisterslostinacoulee.com>

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### **Liz Barnsley says**

The House Swap was well written, but not really for me this one. I kept up to the end simply to see the resolution which I wasn't even terribly bothered about to be honest but sometimes the end justifies the means. Ultimately though that was a bit flat too so...

Anyway the premise is sound - a house swap, a couple trying to save their marriage after one suffers with addiction and the other has an affair. Mysterious things in the house start sparking memory in the wife and she realises that there is a tie to her past there and what happened to end said affair and start a reconciliation with hubby.

This, in my opinion obviously, isn't a thriller at all, not even the psychological kind. It's more a family drama and it's a little slow to move. My main issue with it was lack of character depth - Caroline is self absorbed and her treatment of her pill addicted husband in the flashback sequences was not endearing and I didn't feel the author explored her motivations enough to allow us to know her. Francis, said Husband, was probably the most sympathetic character, but his addiction and the reasons for it were not fleshed out at all, leaving him sat there as a kind of wishy washy "Plot device for everything else" - even when we got his POV which wasn't much it was just well, as a plot device to let us know he knew something Caroline didn't think he knew.

The "Lover" was completely unbelievable to me. There's a lot of stuff about how "hot" he is and a lot of descriptive prose and inserts about their sexual activity which didn't really add to the plot - it would have been ok if this has been trailed as an "Erotic Drama" but honestly I could have done without it. It was SO cliche. Younger man, hot and heavy, older woman whose husband doesn't understand her. Yawn.

Plus that poor child. One parent with an addiction, the other who can't wait to get bath and storytime over so she can rush out the door and have very bad sex with her lover.

The resolution is a bit pulled out of nowhere. It does have a theme that, had it really been explored, could have given this a lot of depth and perception but as we see the "villain" only in portions and those portions are mostly rather randomly connected to the rest it didn't really make me feel anything other than pleased I'd gotten to the end.

So, The House Swap will probably please a lot of people - there's nothing wrong with the writing and if you happen to engage with one or more of the characters, or you like some erotic undertones to your reading, then this one might be for you. It wasn't for me.

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### **Carrie says**

The House Swap by Rebecca Fleet is an extremely slow building domestic drama with an edge of suspense to the story. The book is mostly told from the main character Caroline's point of view with the occasional switch to an unknown voice and a few flashes to her Caroline's husband's POV. The story also switches back and forth between Caroline's present and two years before.

Caroline and Francis are a married couple with a young son that are trying to revive their marriage after mistakes on both of their parts were made in the past. With not enough funds to cover a conventional vacation Caroline had begun to look into the idea of house swapping to try to fund a getaway for her and Francis for some alone time.

When an offer was made on their home the couple happily set out for a much needed vacation but after they arrived little details begin to point Caroline to her own past. Before long Caroline is questioning just who set up this house swap and just who is staying in their home while they are away.

I have to say again, this one was an extremely slow build which of course is a big factor of my rating on this book. A good 2/3-3/4 of the book focuses on Caroline's affair in the past and her obsession with that relationship which really only had me wondering why she is even still with her husband and rather losing interest.

However with an ending that really stood out this one easily could have been a 3 or above but when finished with the wrap up I still felt a bit underwhelmed with the whole story leaving me to rate this book at 2.5 stars. There was certainly potential to the writing so I wouldn't be opposed to trying another story by the author that perhaps wasn't so focused on an affair.

I received an advance copy from the publisher via Edelweiss.

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

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### **Brenda - Traveling Sister says**

3.5 Stars

Norma and I started off in the comfort of our favorite, familiar lush coulee reading The House Swap with three of our Traveling Sisters and we were swapping coulees while we read this one. Not too far into this story, we were looking to swap coulees and we patiently waited for things to pick up and were rewarded around 2/3 into the story.

The House Swap started off a little slow and a bit confusing for some us as we tried to piece together the mystery here and some of us were looking to swap coulees a few times. Once things started to pick up it took us by surprise and things started to move quite fast for us right up until the end.

Rebecca Fleet does a good job here with the house swapping concept and creating an unsettling setting here with the houses that were swapped. We all thought it was an interesting concept for a domestic thriller. We kept swapping ideas as to who is who and what is what as we read this story.

In the end, we did end up swapping coulees and were left in the barren coulee with mixed feelings towards this story. It lead to a very interesting and enjoyable discussion amongst us but I won't go into it as we think

this one is definitely one to go into not knowing too much about it. We recommend giving it a go and see if it has you wanting to swap houses anytime soon.

Review written and posted on our themed book blog Two Sisters Lost In A Coulee Reading.

<https://twosisterslostinacoulee.com>

Coulee: a term applied rather loosely to different landforms, all of which refer to a kind of valley.

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## **Marialyce says**

“Once upon a time I was falling in love. Now I'm only falling apart.”

All marriages have secrets, all partners have things they would rather keep to themselves. Some marriages fall apart, while others seem to go forward no matter what obstacles have been placed in their path.

In this novel we follow Caroline and Francis, a couple whose marriage has been on the brink of ending. Caroline had been carrying on a torrid affair with a coworker while Francis seemed to be always strung out on drugs.

However, they are trying to mend their marriage. They have a son and for him and themselves they have decided to patch up their relationship and what better way to do so then by going away together. Caroline arranges a house swap, a cheap way to find other surroundings and work on a marriage that seemed to be ill fated.

When a young woman living across the way from the house they wind up in becomes too interested in Caroline, things bubble to the surface and the secrets and lies begin to unfold in an alarming rate. Will all the deceptions, the lies, and most of all the relationship that draws Caroline like an obsession be solved or will Caroline's love for another and a deep terrible secret be the ending of her marriage?

While the whole story seemed fairly well written, it seemed to take quite some time to get into the meat of the tale. Truly it was not until almost two thirds into the story, that the book became a compulsive read.

Thank you to Rebecca Fleet, Penguin Random House Publishing, and Edelweiss for a copy of this book.

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## **Sarah Joint says**

A nice slow-burning debut. If you're looking for a lot of action, this isn't it. **This book doesn't seem very concerned with shocking the reader, just meandering along and letting the secrets come out tantalizingly slowly. It's a look inside a marriage that has been on the verge of failing for some time. Addiction and indiscretions from both sides.** Caroline and Francis have both wronged each other, but they're trying to make things work out... joined by the love of their son and the memories of the fierce love they once shared. Looks into their past show the reader exactly how they got here.

Feeling that some time away might help them heal and reconnect, Caroline jumps on an opportunity to house

swap with a stranger. **It's an inexpensive way to get a little vacation, even if the idea of allowing someone into your personal space while you invade theirs miles and miles away is a little odd.** It isn't long before Caroline starts noticing strange little touches in the weirdly barren house that will be their home for a week... a photo here, some particular flowers here... they just keep coming. They send her mind straight back to her past, to things she's been trying to move on from. Almost like they've been carefully planned and placed by the only other person who knows the meaning they hold... her old lover.

I wish Chris hadn't been portrayed as so entirely perfect in the past with so much focus on their love life, and the child Caroline and Francis share seemed almost like a footnote. It felt like he was just there to give a solid reason for the characters to want to work things out. Neither is portrayed as a very attentive parent in the past, but then again they both have some sort of addiction that keeps them from their son. There is definitely some suspense, and the book managed to surprise me more than once. I would recommend it to fans of slow-burning domestic suspense and give it a 3.5 out of 5. I'm interested to see what else the author comes up with!

*I received a copy of this book from Penguin's First to Read program, thank you! My opinion is honest and unbiased.*

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### **Dianne says**

This is a hard book to review or recommend because it's so....odd. It's marketed as a thriller but it's equally a domestic drama about a troubled marriage. I liked it, but it wasn't at all what I was expecting.

A sexual affair is a BIG part of the plot, so if infidelity or sexual content (it's not over the top) is a trigger, best to steer clear. Personally, I empathized with all of the characters in the story. It's a bit of a sad story, actually - not weepy sad, but nobody comes out unscathed here. Lots of bad decisions with painful, life-changing consequences.

The thriller aspect is pretty good; it's a tense read. You won't be able to imagine at the beginning of the book what the ending will be - I appreciated not knowing ahead of time where Fleet was going with the story.

A nicely assured American debut by Fleet but this won't be everyone's cuppa. I have a feeling this one will stick with me longer than most thrillers.

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### **Gary says**

Caroline and Francis receive an offer to house swap and take advantage of the chance to spend a week away from home. They have had a few troubled years where they have both worked hard to save their marriage and now look to build on it. The house they go to is mysterious though and Caroline discovers signs of her life before her husband. The person they have swapped with is a person Caroline would rather remains in her past but they have different ideas.

A story full of suspense and a very promising debut novel.

I would like to thank Net Galley and Random House for supplying a copy of this novel in exchange for an honest review.

