



The Shadow Palace

Jane Steen

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For unwed mother Nell Lillington, 1876 Chicago—and her new wealth—offer the promise of longed-for independence. She dreams of a place in society for her daughter Sarah and contentment for her friend Tess. Yet how can she settle in a town where she's far too likely to run into Martin Rutherford and his glittering, faithless wife, Lucetta? Can she resist her love for Martin for Sarah's sake?

Martin was doubtless joking when he told Nell that if she got herself mixed up with a murderer for the third time, he'd disown her. But when Martin himself is arrested for murder, Nell's dreams appear to be swallowed up in the new web of secrets she constructs to help him. Secrets that threaten to alienate Tess, Sarah, and even Martin . . .

The third book in the House of Closed Doors series will take you to a Chicago teeming with opportunistic new Americans, luxury-loving merchant princes and hard-hearted denizens of the underworld.

The Shadow Palace Details

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Author : Jane Steen

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From Reader Review The Shadow Palace for online ebook

Sarah says

This is the third book in a wonderful series.

Nell has moved her household to Chicago in hopes of starting a new life for everyone as a wealthy "widow". While she tries to figure out how she and Martin can be together. However just days after Nell arrives in Chicago Martin's wife is murdered and Martin is arrested for the killing. Nell decides she needs to help Martin so she goes undercover working in the store owned by his ex-wife's family. As Martin struggles to prove his innocence Nell works to create a life for herself and her family. Working under an assumed name Nell moves from selling hats for the competition to working as a seamstress at Rutherford's (Martin's store).

Nell is also stepping out into Chicago society, while hoping to keep Sarah's illegitimacy secret. One misstep can mark them all as social pariah's.

While having dinner one night Tess discovers the waiter is her brother and is able to reconnect with her long lost family, the same family who sent her to the poor farm as a child. Now Tess has to decide how much she wants her long lost relatives in her life.

Will Nell, Tess, Sarah and Martin have a happily ever after?

I received this book for free from the author/narrator/publisher in exchange for my honest review.

sharon murray says

This was the final book in a 3 book series that I hated to actually finish reading. Not because I didn't enjoy it but rather because I hated it to actually end! What a truly wonderful story! This author made the pages come alive for me. I walked into Nell's world just like a friend. Read this book. You won't be sorry.

Linda Lpp says

Once you open the first door...

...You can't stop until all have been opened and experienced. Loved the series, and especially the inclusion of terms no longer used in modern times.

Just when one obstacle was dealt with, there often several more thrown in to keep you on edge.

Without giving any spoilers, there was one loose thread at the end in my mind- and it wasn't dangling from a spool or a garment being sewn. Don't you wonder?

Meredith says

The plot was a bit far fetched and the ending contrived yet not as happy as I desired after 3 books! It was too much drama and then not enough of our favorite characters together.

I did enjoy the references to the historical period, things were getting interesting! My Grandmother was a Women's Christian Temperance Union member. Women were fed up but I'm confused and amazed that women chose to ask for the vote AND for prohibition of alcohol. How did they ever find support?

Betty Davidge says

A wonderful trilogy.....

I have waited until I had finished all three books. It's rather hard to Think the first two as stand alone novels, as they leave you hanging. Completing the third does fully satisfy and complete the story.. The story was very enjoyable, believable and never boring. Jane brought the people and places to life for me. Jane captured all the suspense perfectly and I found myself drawn in time after Time.. I thank her for writing so well. I recommend this "House Of Closed Doors" , I've found a new to me author to read.

Petra Beck says

After the first 2 books, I was curious what would happen next to Nell and Tess but must say I didn't enjoy this one as much, as there seemed way to many far-fetched and improbable things happening. I don't want to elaborate as it would mean too many spoilers... But it's all a bit too much, really. And curiously I still cannot warm up to Martin - I know he is meant to be the good guy, but somehow his character twists and turns from book to book, he seems to stay quite remote and aloof most of the time and I cannot "see" him half as clearly as Nell and Tess.

Rosanne Lortz says

In this third book in *The House of Closed Doors series*, Nell makes her way to Chicago with Sarah and Tess in tow. Thanks to the investments Martin has made in her behalf, she is an independent woman, with finances to maintain a comfortable establishment of her own. She longs to see the palatial Rutherford's department store and enjoy the success Martin has so admirably earned, but before she has that chance, 1870s Chicago is rocked with scandal. A grisly murder has taken place among the dresses and draperies of Rutherford's, and the proprietor Martin Rutherford is the chief suspect for the crime.

Determined to find evidence to exonerate Martin, Nell goes undercover as a shop girl, but the long hours take their toll on her family relationships as little Sarah becomes even more disobedient and demanding and Tess begins to doubt the friendship that Nell has for her. Not the least concerning is Martin's own aloofness-- for even if he is innocent of the crime, he still feels the weight of responsibility for it, and will that responsibility drive a wedge between him and Nell forever?

Martin's department store is every bit as grand as a palace, but like Nell and Martin's relationship, it is a palace with a shadow on it. Can that shadow ever be erased, or must the whole building be leveled so that

something new and whole can be raised from the ashes?

Amidst the high stakes of a murder investigation, this novel still manages to explore the fascinating world of couture fashion as Nell continues to pursue her dressmaking ambitions in the new vistas that Chicago opens up to her. Also intriguing are the mercantile empires developed by enterprising store owners and the cutthroat competition to corner the best share of market.

One of the themes I particularly enjoyed in this novel was the connection between love and responsibility. As she enters Chicago, Nell befriends a young but naive suffragist named Elizabeth Parnell who espouses the Free Love movement. Elizabeth argues that marriage is imprisonment and that true love should be free of restriction. Nell, in a knowledge born of experience, argues that love (and sexual relations) of necessity create restrictions. True love produces responsibility, and at the end of the day, that's not a bad thing.

Nell, who has been seeking her independence from the beginning of the first book, has discovered at last that independence is not the end-all and be-all of life. The dependence that comes from relationship is not a yoke to be cast off but a responsibility to be shouldered, and she has found a man ready to shoulder it with her as an equal partner in the glittering new world of the American MidWest.

valinda brock says

Thoroughly enjoyable!

From the first book in the trilogy, Jane Steen draws the reader into the mind and circumstances of this unique character. It is a fascinating and compelling story of, not just one character, but her "supporting & indispensable" cast of characters, in narrow span of American history. I suggest you go ahead and buy all three books together... Three solid, yet delectable, "bites" of reading pleasure. Enjoy!

April says

The Shadow Palace

: Jane Steen

The 3rd book in the trilogy, I listened to the first book, but somehow missed book 2. This being said the story jumped ahead to Chicago with Nell trying to make a life for herself and her daughter and dear friend. There is a murder, suspense, and romance on the journey with plenty of twists and turns. I need to go back and listen to book 2.

The narration was well done. The characters were well portrayed. Elizabeth Klett gives a wonderful performance.

"I was voluntarily provided this review copy audiobook at no charge by the author, publisher and/or narrator."

WhatisAshreading says

I have truly enjoyed the box set of this series and look forward to reading more about Nell's story. I was sent the box set by the publisher and NetGalley and I probably wouldn't have read the series if it weren't for that fact. As I've mentioned, I'm not a fan of historical fiction. However, Steen does an amazing job of incorporating mystery and suspense into the genre. I also love how independent the female characters are. I look forward to reading Steen's newest release soon as well!

Abby Lewis says

Goodreads Giveaway Win!

I have got to be honest, I didn't read the first two books within the franchise... BUT that didn't even matter. The story still made sense, and was still an enjoyable read.

I thoroughly enjoyed this book, set in the older times too- something I loved. Each character brought their own zest to the novel, all different, but all enjoyable to read about, to get involved with them and also fall in love with them all. Especially with the main character Nell!

A must read :).

Beth McGee says

Interesting and entertaining. I couldn't wait to get to the next page. The dilemma that was presented in this book is a timeless problem that women have faced throughout the ages. How a woman maintains her own identity in marriage requires effort from both sides. This lady was apparently before her time.

Lis Seibel says

I loved this series so much. After the first book I was so excited to see it was a trilogy because I was NOT ready to part with the characters yet! Jane Steen's writing style is beautiful and it flows so nicely that you don't want to stop. She challenges my vocabulary and I'm grateful for kindle's dictionary! This time period is also one that I know very little about; so learning the dynamics between men and women, clothing, business, and religion of the time was extremely enlightening. I found a lot of myself in Nell which probably made it that much more interesting to me. Highly recommended!!

Pamela Pond says

Great Book!

The Shadow Palace is a wonderful book set in Chicago during the reconstruction after the big fire that destroyed most of that city. It has everything you want in a novel, mystery, intrigue and romance. It is full of surprising twists that make it hard to put down once you open the cover. It is a must read!

Lynelle Clark says

Book 3 in the series was a wonderful conclusion to the series, The house of closed doors.

With no hesitation, I can recommend this book to all readers that love a good historical mystery with a touch of romance. Ms Steen's writing simply leaves you wanting for more from her pen.

The characters of Martin, Nell, Sarah and Tess has become mature and easily related to. They became live like in your mind.

The plotline grew from curiosity to maturity over a good time frame that invites you into the lives of Nell, her daughter and their best friend, Tess. Adding more supporting characters it is a well-crafted book that takes you back to the younger years of America and the perceptions of different classes, women and business.

The Feminist movement was alive and well in this book, with Elizabeth doing her part to bring it to the forefront of the story. It was women like her that set the wheel in motion for us, years later to enjoy the life we now live. Free Love was a topic thoroughly explored by the characters thru the hand of the author.

Add murder, an investigation with Pinksters and Nell following heart while entering a new culture and you know you will have a wonderful time.

Thanks for such a wonderful story.
