



Cuckoo

Sophie Draper

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There's a stranger in your house...

When her stepmother dies unexpectedly, Caro returns to her childhood home in Derbyshire. She hadn't seen Elizabeth in years, but the remote farmhouse offers refuge from a bad relationship, and a chance to start again.

But going through Elizabeth's belongings unearths memories Caro would rather stay buried. In particular, the story her stepmother would tell her, about two little girls and the terrible thing they do.

As heavy snow traps Caro in the village, where her neighbours stare and whisper, Caro is forced to question why Elizabeth hated her so much, and what she was hiding. But does she really want to uncover the truth?

A haunting and twisty story about the lies we tell those closest to us, perfect for fans of Ruth Ware and Cass Green.

Cuckoo Details

Date : Published November 29th 2018 by Avon

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Author : Sophie Draper

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Genre : Thriller, Mystery Thriller

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From Reader Review Cuckoo for online ebook

Judy says

How could I resist? When I requested this book it had no title, no author, no cover and no descriptive blurb - it just said Can You Keep a Secret? A secret book - how fun! Then once I received the galley I was instructed to go ahead and read it but not to talk about it anywhere until Halloween. I was even more intrigued and excited. Definitely a good piece of marketing!

Let me tell you I was not disappointed. This was a really good psychological thriller that drew you in, kept you hooked and kept you wondering what was going to happen next. It was tense, creepy, and well-written - what more could you want?

After reading it I looked up Sophie Draper and found she won several awards for this story. I also see the book has two different names - A Stranger in Our Home ; and Cuckoo. Interesting.

Many thanks to Sophie Draper and Avon Books UK through Netgalley for a great read!

Mandy White says

Shhh.... its a secret! Review to come

Pauline says

The Cuckoo by Sophie Draper is a creepy psychological thriller that had me hooked.

After the death of her stepmother Caro returns to her childhood home to work on her paintings and clear out the house to be sold. While she is there she has recurring nightmares of her childhood and there are creepy things happening at the house.

Could the place be haunted or is Caro losing her mind? This story was slow building and atmospheric, a perfect read for Halloween.

I would like to thank NetGalley and Avon Books UK for my e-copy in exchange for a honest review.

JuJu (Julie) says

An intense and haunting tale of family secrets and deception! Every time I thought I knew where this dark and creepy story was headed...BOOM...another twist blew me away!

I took a leap of faith and requested this book from NetGalley before they revealed the title, author or book cover...then I saw the book cover...WOW! What a chilling book cover! I know, I shouldn't judge a book by its cover. Still...it's pretty awesome...am I right?

Two sisters that have lost touch are reconnected after their stepmother dies unexpectedly. Neither of the girls has seen Elizabeth in years, and neither seems to be heart-broken over her death. Steph—the oldest sister—moved out of the house at 16 and landed in the States, while Caro stayed in the UK, living near

London to pursue a career as an illustrator.

With Elizabeth gone, they've inherited their childhood home—Larkstone Farm in Derbyshire—but Steph says she wants nothing to do with it. She offers the house to Caro, who gladly accepts and promptly moves in.

She begins the tedious task of cleaning out Elizabeth's personal belongings. As she's describing the house, I formed a picture of a large eerie and sinister looking house that has been neglected and rundown...very spooky and Halloweenish! It's in a remote location...cold and drafty...full of strange noises...and still has the blood-stains from Elizabeth's death. Caro is curious about the freak accident that led to Elizabeth's death—they were told she'd fallen over the banister onto the landing below—but doesn't question it.

At the beginning, we learn that Steph and Caro have been estranged for years; but we aren't given the backstory or reason behind it. Steph comes off as very confident and decisive, while Caro is timid and a little socially awkward. But the way Caro describes her painting and how she views the simplest things...I'm envious of her talent!

On trips into the village, Caro finds most people unfriendly...some downright rude. And she even hears some strange gossip. She tries to settle in and focus on the house. The winters are snowy and she's preparing for the probability of being snowed in. That leaves plenty of time for her painting, as she's been commissioned to illustrate some very grim and gruesome fairytales. But the longer she's in the house, the more she remembers...or are they hallucinations? Strange things are happening and unimaginable memories are being triggered as she sorts through items in the house...especially the Pear Drum.

Thank you to NetGalley / Avon Books UK / Sophie Draper for this digital ARC / in exchange for my honest review.

#Cuckoo #NetGalley

Jayme says

???

This was the book that we had to keep a secret till Halloween...unfortunately for me, the marketing ploy was better than the book...which is called Cuckoo (on Netgalley)

Caro returns to her childhood home after the death of her stepmother, Elizabeth. Recently separated from a boyfriend, she decides to take on the task of clearing out the house as she waits for the estate to clear probate, as it will give her a place to stay, and a fresh start. After all, as an illustrator, she can work from anywhere, and she has just been commissioned to provide pictures for a new book of fairytales, "The Pear Drum and Other Dark Tales from the Nursery."

But the neighbors do not welcome her back.

In fact, their hostile behavior forces her to ask the question...why did Elizabeth hate her so much?

As she begins to sort through her stepmother's possessions, strange things begin to happen. Could the house be haunted? Or is she being haunted by bad memories of things that occurred there while she was a young girl?

A noise draws her up to the attic where she finds Elizabeth's "Pear Drum". Why does the musical instrument terrify her? Why is there so much of her childhood that she cannot remember? And can it really be coincidental that the book of fairytales she is illustrating contains the same story of a Pear Drum that her stepmother used to scare her with when she was misbehaving?

"HAVE YOU BEEN BAD ENOUGH, CARO?"

The beginning of this unique story drew me in immediately, but I FIGURED out the ANTAGONIST, pretty quickly and was so frustrated by the decisions our PROTAGONIST made and by the end, her gullibility, as well.....that I was left exasperated with Caro and a bit disappointed.

This was just too predictable for a reader who reads many thrillers.

But, the author won the Bath Novel award 2017, for this novel, so chances are I might find myself in the minority on this one, and other readers just might love the ending, especially those who just read a thriller occasionally.

I would like to thank Netgalley, Avon books, UK, and Sophie Draper for the ARC provided in exchange for my candid review. This book will be available on Nov. 29th, 2018.

Gary says

I read this novel with no knowledge of either the book or the author but what a great surprise. Loved the book and I found it completely absorbing. This psychological thriller was given to me to read with the condition that I don't review until Halloween, so I will post a full review then.

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

Carrie says

Cuckoo by Sophie Draper is the thriller that started off as Can You Keep a Secret? for early reviewers with a bit of a twist to the marketing campaign. It also seems to now be listed under Cuckoo and The Stranger in Our Home so I'm not totally sure what the final title for this one will be, perhaps the differences are for different locations.

Anyway, the story centers around Caro who was raised by her stepmother, Elizabeth, in Derbyshire but left home as soon as she could. Caro hadn't really kept in touch with her stepmother and her relationship with her sister had also grown apart so when their stepmother passes the girls are left the inheritance and the decision of what to do.

When Caro's sister claims to not want anything to do with their stepmother's things or any part of the inheritance Caro chooses to move back home to sort things out while fleeing a bad relationship. After arriving back in town however Caro begins to find things aren't as she remembered and the secrets of the past begin to surface.

As one might be able to guess from my rating I didn't exactly go cuckoo for Cuckoo and found this one really not to be my cup of tea. The story is another incredibly slow paced read which I can sum up pretty

easily with spend a bunch of time making sure the reader knows it's a unreliable narrative then wrap up with a twist that I saw coming. It does have that creepy, atmospheric vibe to it that some will love but I personally just felt it had all been done before.

I received an advance copy from the publisher via NetGalley.

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

Danielle (The Blonde Likes Books) says

I loved the book for the first quarter or so - I felt like the author did a great job setting the stage, and making the book atmospheric. I was intrigued about the odd occurrences that were happening at the house Caro was staying at, and was looking forward to getting some answers.

That said, after the first 25%, I felt like things got really slow. There were pages spent describing a small detail of the house or town, and I found myself struggling to pay attention to those sections - I wanted the story to progress, and I felt like at times it was at a complete standstill.

I had a hunch about how the book would end from pretty early on, but was hopeful that it wouldn't be that obvious, and that I'd be wrong, however I ended up being right about almost everything. Without giving any spoilers, I will say that I really enjoyed the final pages of the book though. Does Caro *really* get her happily ever after?

All in all, this one was a 2.5 star read for me. The premise was intriguing, and the atmosphere of a creepy old house in a small town in the middle of winter was a perfect setting for the story, however the story moved a little too slowly for me, and was pretty predictable. This might work better for fans of slow moving mysteries who aren't avid readers of the mystery/thriller genre because it will likely be less predictable for someone who doesn't read hundreds of thrillers a year.

I'd like to thank Netgalley and Avon Books UK for my copy of the book. It was a pleasure to provide an honest review. Cuckoo will be published on November 29, 2018.

??? Shelley ??? says

Can you keep a secret? We're asking you to request this psychological thriller without knowing anything at all. If you're approved to read, please keep everything a secret until Halloween when we will reveal all.

This book gets the dreaded ok. I didn't like the main character very much - she seemed to make every mistake and bad choice possible, and she wasn't very likeable, which is a problem with a first-person narrative. While her actions, decisions and unpleasantness may make her a more realistic character, it makes for a frustrating reading experience as we watch her make one bad choice after another - sometimes even the same bad choices multiple times. We should have seen Caro grow and become smarter toward the end. That didn't happen. She was just strung along by chance happenings. She didn't learn or overcome her problems. Or even try. Things just happened to her and she kept her bad choices throughout the story. The book had many great reviews so I wanted to love it but it was just really unbelievable and boring. Kind of like those scary movies where you go really? The girl's gonna go into the house all alone? That was this book.

Thank you NetGalley, Avon Books UK and Sophie Draper for the opportunity to read this book in exchange for an impartial review; all opinions are my own.

#CanYouKeepaSecret #Cuckoo #TheStrangerinOurHome #NetGalley

All my reviews can be read here: <https://shelleyann01.blogspot.com>

Jess?? says

Cuckoo by Sophie Draper is that book you've looked forward to reading and when you do it just doesn't hit the spot, it took me a long time to actually get into it, I stayed with it hoping it would get there but it never did. I think my problem with this book is I've already read this kind of same plot in another book and it felt a little repetitive but that's my problem for reading the same kind of books ?.

I would recommend this book it has a great twist and it is a great psychological thriller with an edge of spookiness to it .

Juli says

When her stepmother unexpectedly dies, Caro comes "home" to the farmhouse she grew up in. Flooded with bad memories and strange blank spaces in her recollections, Caro hates the house but longs for a chance to have a fresh start. She's both excited and scared when her sister tells her that she's going to turn the house and the rest of the inheritance over to her. Stephanie says she wants nothing to do with any of it. The minute Caro moves in strange things start to happen and Caro wonders if she's losing her mind. Memories start to return. Family secrets are exposed. What happened in that house? And who was to blame?

What a suspenseful and twisty story! I was completely sucked in from the start. From Caro's first actions after returning to her childhood home (pulling out the carpeting soaked in her stepmother's blood) to the completely twisted ending to this tale, I was mesmerized. I couldn't stop reading! I had to know what was going on.... Every time I thought I had things figured out....the story had another twist in store.

I can't imagine going through what Caro did. Coming home....having to clean up your hated stepmother's blood out of your newly inherited house. Enduring unfriendly glances and mean whispers from villagers. Slowly remembering that your horrible, abusive childhood was even worse than you remember. Yikes! This is one suspenseful and totally messed up story! I enjoyed every page of it!

Cuckoo is Sophie Draper's debut novel. I will definitely be eagerly awaiting more from this author!

****I voluntarily read an advanced readers copy of this book from Avon Books via NetGalley. All opinions expressed are entirely my own.****

Louise Wilson says

When her stepmother Elizabeth dies, Caro returns to her childhood home. The farmhouse offers refuge from a bad relationship. But going through Elizabeth's belongings stirs up bad memories that Caro would prefer that they had stayed buried. Especially the story about two little girls and the terrible things they did. But

since her arrival at the family home, strange things have happening. When she goes to the town everyone seems to snub her. There are several things that Caro has erased from her childhood memories. But why did Elizabeth treat Caro so horribly but not her sister Steph?

When I requested this book I had no idea what the book was called or who the author was. I was also asked not to leave a review until Halloween. There was no descriptive blurb either. Well all of this caught my attention straight away. But this story is a bit of a slow burner. Caro has been abused, mocked and neglected all her life. Back in the family home to clear out her stepmothers possessions, the ghosts of her past come back to haunt her. We are taken on a journey of Caro's creepy past. Family secrets that bring several twists. I would describe this book as a gothic mystery.

I would like to thank NetGalley, Avon Books UK and the author Sophie Draper for my ARC in exchange for an honest review.

Carole (Carole's Random Life in Books) says

This review can also be found at Carole's Random Life in Books.

I didn't love this one. My feelings about this book are actually pretty mixed. I didn't hate it but I am not really sure that I liked it either. I requested this book on NetGalley when it was listed as Can You Keep a Secret? without any details. I am a curious person by nature and I just had to know about this book that was so exciting it had to be kept secret. I don't think I would have asked for this book if I had known what the actual description was.

The story opens at the funeral for Caro and Stephanie's stepmother. After the funeral, the estate needs to be settled and Caro needs a place to live so she goes to the house to sort through things. It becomes obvious almost immediately that the people in the small town her stepmother lived in do not think much of Caro. The only person that shows any kindness to Caro is the man living in the cottage on the land her stepmother's home is on, Craig.

I found the bulk of the book to be really slow. There is a whole lot of action crammed into the last part of the book but for most of the book, it didn't feel like a whole lot happened. We spend a lot of time in Caro's head thinking about all the things she doesn't know and I hate to that it got old pretty fast. I did wonder if Caro would prove to be an unreliable narrator simply because she seemed so clueless about so many things.

There were things that I did like about the book. Once all of the pieces came together near the end, I did find the book to be much more exciting. There were quite a few surprises that were revealed during the book's finale. I also liked the parts of the fairy tales that were worked into the story. I was really pretty interested in the story of the pear drum specifically.

I think that a lot of readers might like this book more than I did. I didn't hate this book but it failed to completely grab me. While I found this book easy to set aside at times, I was curious enough about how everything would work out to keep me reading until the very end and I was satisfied with its conclusion.

I received a digital review copy of this book from Avon Books UK via NetGalley.

Initial Thoughts

I didn't love this one. When I requested this book from NetGalley, I had no idea what exactly I was asking for. It was listed as *Can You Keep a Secret?* without any details. I am curious by nature so I asked for the book. I have to say that I probably wouldn't have requested this one if it had been a straightforward request. I never could get into this book completely. Caro was really hard to connect with and not all that likable. It seemed like the majority of the book was focused on Caro thinking about what she couldn't remember and it was really slow going. I think that all of the actual action and answers to everything was crammed into the last 10% or so of the book. I was curious enough about how everything would work out to keep me reading until the end.

Lou says

Cuckoo, predominantly a work of psychological suspense that also has a fairytale vibe to add intrigue, is a work I admire as any author who attempts to pen a unique novel rather than using the same tired templates is on the path to a possible bestseller. An atmospheric, gothic mystery with plenty of surprises to entertain readers, Draper does a fantastic job of making the story chilling and provides many heart-stopping moments. Haunting with mesmerising description of the rural Derbyshire area, I thoroughly enjoyed it.

Main character Caro is someone you can empathise with in terms of her feeling of being an outsider and she is naturally very damaged due to incidents from her past. However, she appears to make some ridiculous decisions throughout which annoyed and frustrated me quite a bit. There are many gripping and intense moments and the plot is taut and multilayered. The characters are well drawn and not to be trusted and the conclusion shocking but satisfying.

Many thanks to Avon for an ARC.

Michelle says

There's a stranger in your home...

A haunting and twisty story about the lies we tell those closest to us, perfect for fans of Ruth Ware and Cass Green.

Would you like to hear a story about two little girls who did something bad?

We're asking you to be brave and request this book without knowing the title or the plot. If you're approved, you'll get to read a brand new psychological thriller and we ask that you keep everything secret until Halloween 2018 when we'll reveal all...

Now that is clever marketing!!! If you want to get my attention then this is how you do it.

Happy Halloween to all you ghouls and goblins out there! It's review time!

To start, NetGalley has this book titled as Cuckoo while Amazon has it titled as The Stranger in Our Home. I assume they'll decide by publication day.

Caro returns to Derbyshire after her step mother, Elizabeth, passes away. Since her father passed away when she was a child she is told that the family estate is to be willed to her. Her sister Steph doesn't want any part of it. Steph has a successful career in New York City and is in no need of financial help whereas Caro is as she is a struggling artist. Not to mention that Caro's lease is about to come to an end. As much as returning home sickens her, the truth is, she has nowhere else to go. Caro's relationship with her stepmother was always turbulent, in fact, Elizabeth always seemed to hate her. Still, Caro does reluctantly agree to return and to finalize all the affairs that need to be tended to. So she makes the move from the hustle and bustle of London to the rolling misty hills of Derbyshire.

Upon arrival strange occurrences start to happen within the home and when she does venture out all the villagers in town seem to turn their nose up in disgust at her very being.

The problem is that Caro is missing large chunks of memory from her childhood. She remembers her stepmother's wicked punishments but very little before her father passed away. What happened in this home? Why did Elizabeth detest her so much? And why now is every one seemingly against her?

This book is definitely a slow burn but it managed to hold my interest throughout. I needed to know what happened in the past and what was happening in the present time and how the two things connected.

While it did meander a bit slowly it was worth it once you get to the last 25%. I will say that I was very impressed with the final conclusion of this book and its somewhat ambiguous ending which made me bump this from 3.5 to all 4 stars!

Thank you to NetGalley and Avon Books UK for providing me with a digital ARC in exchange for my honest review.
