



Shadows of the Hidden

Anne Riley

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(Originally published under the title THE CLEARING)

Natalie Watson doesn't believe her parents are dead, even though they disappeared five years ago. Discovering the truth about their fate is one of the only things that gets her out of bed in the morning. But after moving from her home in Georgia to her aunt's boarding school in Maine, solving the mystery of her parents' whereabouts is just one of several challenges she must face. When she's not fending off attacks from the popular kids, she puzzles over the rumors about a strange boy in her math class--one with fiery red hair who rarely speaks.

Despite suspicions that he murdered his sister a year earlier, Natalie finds it impossible to stay away from Liam Abernathy--especially when he confesses to knowing something about her parents. Soon she's following him into the forest, where things happen she doesn't understand...things that shouldn't be possible.

Natalie soon realizes her connection to Liam is deeper than she ever imagined, and not everyone she counts as a friend can be trusted. When she finds herself at the center of a centuries-old quest for immortality, she must work with Liam to stay alive--even if it means facing a truth about herself and her family that will not only shake her perception of herself, but of the entire world around her.

Shadows of the Hidden Details

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Author : Anne Riley

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From Reader Review Shadows of the Hidden for online ebook

Kayla says

I loved this book, I couldn't put it down. :) It'll keep you in suspense the whole way through as you and Natalie (the main character) try to put pieces of the story together.

Jenn says

I'm so excited about this book! I can't wait to read it and now just because I know the writer! It sounds so interesting and fun! I can't wait to get my hands on it! c:

Sarahjane says

This book is interesting and a good read for young adults. It was really hard to put down! I love the mixture of genres in this novel. The characters are easy to relate to and the plot-line keeps you engaged.

Lauren Denton says

This book made me want to curl up under a warm blanket and drink a cup of tea! It's always so cold in the book--snow, bare branches, etc. Made me want warmth! Anne's book has great pacing--it doesn't lag or drag anywhere. And Natalie is a likeable MC.

Kara Rutledge says

I won this book in a first reads giveaway. The Clearing was very enjoyable and moved at a good pace. A definite must read.

Jamey says

"The Clearing" sneaks up on you...in a good way. When I began the book, I was dubious about a few of the characters, but about a third of the way into the book, they go from being two-dimensional to fully-realized three-dimensional characters. The payoff is definitely worth it--not just with the characters, but with the more fantastical elements of the book as well.

Anne's true strength is her dialogue and inner monologue. It feels incredibly real (and often funny), and it's a sign that any of Anne's future novels--even if they're quite different in content and plot from The Clearing--will be immensely readable. Consider me a fan.

K.L. Lantz says

Update: This is being republished by Compass Press and they have put a GORGEOUS cover on it! Please ignore my complaining about the lack of awesome cover below. It's been more than remedied by Compass Press. So excited to see this incredible book get a new cover and a new chance to reach the readers who will love it.

Just finished reading *The Clearing* by Anne Riley and it was a very satisfying read! The twists and emotional intensity really got me. It dealt with the reality of bereavement very well in the midst of a supernatural plot, and made me cry more than once.

Update: Full Review as posted on my blog

Happy sigh

Yeah, I liked this book that much.

After I read the author's blog--and liked her so much I snagged her for a guest post over at The Best Damn Creative Writing Blog--I started to worry about the inevitable moment of truth: What if I read her book and didn't like it? After all, there are no guarantees about any given book, even those published by the big houses and buzzed all over the place as the next HP or Twilight! So what would I do if I didn't like *THE CLEARING*? This anxiety kept me from reading it at first, even when I had the lovely paperback sitting on my night stand. It waited patiently for me to grow a spine, which I did, thankfully.

All my stress, it turns out, was for naught. In fact, Riley's debut novel is right up there with the best in the urban fantasy genre. *THE CLEARING* boasts a suspenseful, spooky plot and relatable, tortured characters. I thought about it for days afterward. I wished for a sequel or companion novel to continue in the unique world Anne Riley created. I cried multiple times as the protagonist Natalie dealt with such serious issues as bullying at school and her parents' deaths. The twists are sublimely surprising, and the magical escapism enchanted me. Doesn't every girl hope deep down that she's special? Especially those of us who were bullied relentlessly in school!

And that is as specific as I'll be with the spoilers. :)

My one complaint, which I repeated on goodreads, is that I really wish the publishers that courted Anne had completed the sale. She ended up self-publishing with the blessing of her agent after multiple near-successes (which I think is admirable), and her book has received very positive reviews on goodreads, amazon, and smashwords. However, after reading it, I felt a bit of righteous indignation on Riley's behalf. I wanted *THE CLEARING* to get the royal treatment of comparable books! I wished it had been covered in the beautiful art that made me pick up *Mistwood* or any of Cassandra Clare's books. It needed something spooky and Druidish, ancient and compelling. I don't mean to insult the author's current cover, but it doesn't dress for the occasion. One might very well believe he's picking up a literary novel rather than a YA urban fantasy with commercial, mainstream appeal.

So I advise my readers not to believe what the cover is telling you. Imagine ancient symbols and a Druid cross encrusted with jewels or a girl and a boy embracing in a forest clearing with a spooky light glowing around them. Imagine Anne Riley's name in a script-and-scroll font, disappearing into the darkness on the bottom.

And once you've done all that, crack open this pleasure read and enjoy! It gets FIVE STARS from me. Well done, Anne! I hope to enjoy many more books with your name on them.

A Book Vacation says

4.5 stars

This review based on the cover and novel The Clearing prior to its editing and republishing as 'Shadow of the Hidden.'

This is one of those novels that I just happened to stumble upon, thanks to Amazon. I really love the recommendation feature on sites like Amazon and Barnes and Nobel, but I'm going to be honest, I am the reader that looks at the covers of books and, if it is appealing, will pick it up and read the synopsis. Then, if the synopsis is interesting, I'll read the book. I know, I know, we aren't supposed to judge books by their covers, but let's be honest here: we are an aesthetic people. We like things that are pleasing to the eye, or things that peak our interest, grab our attention. That doesn't mean there has to be a hot girl or guy on the cover; there doesn't even have to be color on the cover! But it does need to be alluring enough that I'll pick it up, and though many readers won't admit this, it's true for a lot of us, and especially true for younger adults (at least, it's true for the ones I teach). A bland cover never cuts it for me, and I'll walk right by the book because it didn't strike my fancy. I'm not saying that always happens, but it certainly does if I haven't ever heard of the book before... Now, looking at the cover of The Clearing, my interest was sparked, and by sparked I mean I looked at it and clicked the book right away. That's it, a split second decision. I like the cover. I like the woods, weird things happen in woods, so my interest has been peaked. Of course, upon reading the synopsis, which you've now read above, I was sold. It's the second paragraph that really did it for me, a boy who might have killed his sister... a girl running off into the forest to see what he's doing... wow! This is right up my alley. And so, I read it, and I loved it.

Riley has done a phenomenal job creating an intense piece that keeps the reader's interest from start to finish. Natalie is a wonderful character. She's caring, concerned, smart, yet struggling with the death of her parents. She's not a push over, and though her roommate and school peers taunt her for being the new girl, she takes it with stride and doesn't let it ruin her life. I really liked that about her. It was refreshing to see a character so sure of herself that bullying didn't cause her to crumple to nothing. I also really enjoyed the strong adult presence throughout the novel—Natalie doesn't suffer alone, and she has a wonderful relationship with her aunt, confiding in her and letting her aunt know about the bullying. Yet, the novel's main focus isn't as much dealing with bullying as it is with Liam and the secrets he holds. Yes, Liam is the mysterious redhead suspected of murdering his own sister, though no evidence has even been found. He's a very cryptic character, and though we don't get to know him right away, as the novel progresses, we learn a lot of interesting information about him as a character and, through him, we learn the connection between the alternating stories within the novel.

Okay, let me back up. This novel really drew me in because there are alternating stories. The novel actually begins 317 years in the past, and the scene we first witness is quite chilling. Yet, Riley doesn't give the reader all the facts just yet, and the next chapter jumps into present day, where we first meet Liam and Natalie. I was intrigued by both stories, but didn't make the connection until halfway through the book. When I finally did make the connection, I'll admit I was flabbergasted. I can't divulge any secrets, but I can say that it threw me for a loop and actually made the story even more powerful, in my opinion, as Riley made some awesome connections between the past and present.

Honestly, this is a phenomenal story, and I really enjoyed it. The main characters are fleshed out and real,

and while I would have liked to know a little more about some of the other characters, like Ethan, as they're not the core characters, I feel Riley did a great job...

To read my full review (11/13):

<http://bookvacations.wordpress.com/20...>

Miss T says

Book donation to my school which turned out to be fabulous. Plot carries you at a brisk pace leaving you breathlessly waiting to see where it will end.

Farmers Wife says

This was a good YA book. The story is unique. There is energy that plays out well through the scenes. The MC who has considered herself as one who doesn't fit in anywhere is actually gifted, unbeknownst to her. Separated from her parents due to their unexpected demise, Natalie (MC) can't seem to get the pieces of information leading to their death to add up. Liam might hold the answer to this.

Though a feather light 'love triangle' seems to develop, this is not a YA romance novel but a paranormal novel. This story would benefit teen boys just as well as teen girls because of the type of paranormalcy and the dynamics of the story. Also Liam is a strong, supportive male character with a large roll. ;-) As the story develops Natalie and Liam are plagued with the typical high school bickery.

I will say there was a scene toward the last 10% of the book that seem to interrupt the flow for me. I understand the purpose of the second half of that scene but I feel the first half wasn't necessary. I found myself skimming through it until they go to the second part which held pertinent activity to the story's ending.

All in all it was a fun and intriguing book!

Anne says

I wrote it, so...I give it five stars!

Fiona Titchenell says

Oops, this was meant to be a review but was a comment for a while:

I feel very lucky to have stumbled on Shadows of the Hidden exactly when I did, because it's a real treat of a Christmas read, the kind that makes me want a mug of hot cider and a house with a fireplace.

The basics: In the weeks leading up to Christmas, Natalie Watson discovers that suspected murderer and fellow social outcast, Liam Abernathy, may have information on the disappearance of her parents five years prior. Liam turns out to be a time traveling Druid, and Natalie gets dragged into a bitter, centuries-spanning power struggle.

The downsides: The sadistic expository dialogue of the 18th century druidic main villains sometimes approaches old school James Bond levels of camp, especially contrasted with the realism of the modern day characters' portrayals. The chain of misunderstandings keeping Natalie and Liam apart for the first act of the story feels a little forced, though to be fair, this standard trope stands out in this case mainly due to how wonderfully reasonable a character Natalie is the rest of the time. Natalie's general awesomeness doesn't get to shine enough in the story's conclusion either, and even Liam in full white knight mode finds a very passive (if nicely disturbing) way of ultimately saving the day.

The upside: As serious as all those complaints might sound, I can't give less than an A- to a book that had me glued to it for four days, from beginning to end, and not in the can't-stop-watching-this-train-wreck sort of way. The plot is that fast paced, and Natalie's narration is that smart and lifelike, alternately laugh-out-loud and rip-your-heart-out with its sharpness. The relationship between Natalie and Ethan, her 21st century squeeze, is vividly realistic, and the resulting love triangle is beautifully balanced among three very lovable people. There is no epic clash here between sudden, unconditional, unfounded loves, just deep, naturally growing feelings between charismatic people who could easily have a future together, or not.

I'll definitely be looking out for Anne Riley's future work, and I heartily recommend *Shadows of the Hidden* to anyone looking for some holiday (or post holiday) reading.

(This review and others originally posted on www.facebook.com/FJRTitchenell)

Medeia Sharif says

Mousy and meek Natalie Watson is bullied and humiliated by the popular kids at her boarding school. But if only they knew the tragedy that led her there, and the secrets simmering around her. When Natalie notices that her classmate Liam sneaks out at night, she's intrigued and then shocked by what he has to tell her. His nightly excursions are linked to the death of her parents, who allegedly committed suicide. He knows things about their demise, and he's willing to share his knowledge as long as she comes to the clearing with him. The clearing is an open space in the woods next to their school, a circle that holds mysteries dating back three hundred years ago. In the mix of living with a bitchy roommate, wondering about the popular boy's interest in her and staying afloat in a school where she's ridiculed constantly, Natalie faces the truth about her parents. They had enemies, dangerous magical people who are now after her.

This novel kept me on the edge of my seat. It was quite suspenseful, and there's a historical twist to this paranormal. I was also sympathetic towards Natalie. I felt for her during the trying times with her classmates and the unrelenting grief over her parents' recent deaths. The character development, along with the nonstop action, kept me engaged throughout.

Elle Strauss says

There is something strange going on in the clearing. Natalie Watson is new to town, a loner and an outcast, not unlike the strange and quiet Liam Abernathy. She's afraid of him and if they could just get their stupid

English assignment done, she'd stay away from him forever.

Like that's gonna happen...

Alicia says

Grabbed this at the emerging writers table at the Decatur Book Fest, and finished it one day. Young adult fiction has been a weakness of mine for a while, and I was surprised by this book. It's a well written story about a 16-year-old girl who moves from Athens, Georgia to a boarding school in Maine after the tragic and untimely death of her parents. The novel doesn't fail to capture your attention, and you can hardly suppress yourself from flipping through the pages to find out what happens next. You should attempt to hold back your temptation because skipping pages leads you to miss out on events (a mistake I discovered firsthand), which is a testament to the writing. The only gripe I had was the lack of initiative the main character possessed, and I found myself comparing Natalie Watson to Twilight's Bella (and not in a positive light). The damsel in distress mantra felt a bit repetitive, and I found myself wanting Natalie to do something on her own on more than one occasion. That said, I'm excited to see what Anne Riley will produce in the future and hope to see her more often in the teen paranormal romance circuit.
