



Crawlspace

Herbert Lieberman

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In this novel of mounting suspense from award-winning author Herbert Lieberman, a terrifying surprise waits beneath a couple's New England home

Albert and Alice Graves live a normal, if monotonous, domestic life. They've never had children; they spend their days tending to their home and enjoying their time together. One day, when the oil man, Richard, is refilling their furnace, Alice invites him to dinner, never suspecting that a casual act of charity will lead to a horrifying, morbid discovery in the crawlspace underneath their beloved house.

The Graves take Richard into their lives, becoming attached to his presence as though to the son they never had. Their town, though, is not nearly so welcoming. When the locals lash out against the Graves and their strange houseguest, the contented household is irrevocably drawn into a darkness they could not have imagined.

Crawlspace Details

Date : Published July 2nd 1977 by Pocket Books (first published January 1st 1971)

ISBN : 9780671814557

Author : Herbert Lieberman

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From Reader Review Crawlspace for online ebook

Unigami says

I was cruising the fiction section of my library back in 1973 and found this book...it looked interesting so I checked it out and I really enjoyed it!

It has been a long time so I don't exactly remember the ending but I do remember that the book was fun to read, and more than a little spooky. Recommended.

PS: I have a strong recollection of Roberta Flack's "Killing Me Softly" being constantly played on the radio when I was reading this and I've always had a strong association between the book and that song...to this day I think of the book when I hear that song...strange how the mind works.

Wampus says

It's a relic of another time. It's a PG-rated (not even PG-13) horror novel that doesn't scare and doesn't disguise its Freudian psychology under much. I give it a good rating because of some great details and that it shows the lynch mob/conformist mentality isn't confined to the South. But still, when friggin' coffee grounds on a wall are some of the most graphic details in a scary book that means give it to your minister.

Guera25 says

A book that's hard to classify. Part thriller, part study of love and its sometimes terrible, twisted cost. The protagonists are occasionally conveniently dumb or implausibly passive, but it's a queerly gripping read all the same, possessed of a melancholy, elegiac heartbreak.

Melissa Vicente says

I found this book on an article of the scariest books to read. I read it, barely finishing it. When the book first started, I was curious and with that came the desire to know more but it quickly faded when I realized that there wasn't anything more that was going to happen.

The book dragged on, giving mundane details of a family's daily life with a curious visitor who after coming into the picture turned out to be just as boring but with a little bit of crazy.

There wasn't anything that kept me going and I'm not proud to say, I skipped to the end just to see what happened. It didn't surprise me, it didn't make me change my mind about skipping some chapters and it certainly did not scare me.

Dree says

Fabulous book - 4.5 stars. Creepy and suspenseful and unique, not at all the kind of book I thought I was getting - much more psychological than the cover would have one think. Couldn't put it down.

Carolyn says

I found this book after a search for mysteries, but I don't feel it fits that bill, and I didn't enjoy it. I liked the writing, but the plot and characters felt too unbelievable. All the back and forth "should we or shouldn't we" was just too much for my taste. This felt more like a human drama, and the writing worked to that effect, but I'd hoped for an atmospheric, spooky mystery with a title like Crawlspace, and I didn't get that with this story.

Gina Covarrubias says

I chose this book based on the title and the cover alone, fully expecting it to be one of the cheesy horror novels I am so fond of. Instead, it was anything but. The writing was quietly beautiful, and so filled with grace. This is more of an existential horror novel than anything. It turns out Herbert Lieberman is a recipient of the Guggenheim Fellowship, which explains why this is not the Ketchum-style gorefest I thought I was signing on for. I try to make myself feel better about my terrible taste in books by alternating each bad horror novel with one work of serious literature, and in choosing Crawlspace I accidentally messed up my order because I thought I was getting one and instead got the other. If you want to read a book that looks like it would have a cover like this one, this is not your book. If you want a beautifully written examination of what it means to be family, what it means to be Christian, and a bunch of other difficult issues surrounding aging, parenting, unfulfilled longings, adoption, mental illness, and failure, then this is the book for you.

Kyle Miller says

The scariest part, for me, came on page 2, when I momentarily misread "copse" as "corpse."

Dillon Christensen says

Didn't know much about it going in, based on the cover teaser it sounded like a pretty creepy story. It started awesome but I have to say the beginning was the most thrilling part for me. The rest just kinda dragged on for me. I did like Herber's style and that's what kept me gripped to pull through the book. So basically if you're expecting an exciting thriller, maybe try a different book after chapter two gets you amped up.

Jennifer says

This book was a surprising find. Published in 1971, it tells a story that's often popped into my own imagination; what would happen if you discovered that someone was living on your property? Sounds implausible, right? It's not, actually. In the house I grew up in, the basement was huge, and had direct access to the outside. Someone could have easily come and gone from our house and busy family life without us

noticing. As a kid my imagination would run away with me, and I was convinced that murderers lived down there; apparently I'm not the only one who thinks that way.

Arthur and Alice are living a quiet life of retirement in the country. They have a lovely house, gardens, and are content with their marriage and circumstances. And then Richard enters the picture. It starts slowly, and as they get to know this strange young man they realize that he's homeless...or at least partially so. He's taken up residence in their crawlspace. Since he wasn't doing any harm, they allowed it to continue. And as it continues, the relationship grows, until eventually Richard moves into the house itself and the dynamics of the relationship begin to evolve. I won't spoil the ending, but this was a suspenseful, fun read. Highly recommend.

Rebecca McNutt says

I loved this book, it was so different and well-written! At first I thought it was a horror book, but it has more of an underlying mystery element than most books in the genre.

Jeanine says

I simply could not put this book down.. It was not what I was expecting but was much better than expected.. This book builds the tension page by page, you know something is going to happen but what? Well done.

Spencer says

This is a strange little book more interesting in concept than execution. An strange young man with no past moves into the crawlspace of an elderly couple's rural home uninvited and refuses to leave. They are too nice to make him leave, and the story unfolds as a series of awkward encounters between the couple, who are too polite to say much of anything, and the man in the crawlspace, who rarely says more than one or two words. The story ends with astral projection in a bizarre non-sequitur. In many ways the story is a modern retelling of *The Lodger*, widely accepted as one of the first serial killer novels, and its greatest moments of horror are in the believable moments of empathy that come to exist when lonely people meet each other.

William Malmborg says

Have you ever had a houseguest that overstayed their welcome? It happens from time to time and often grows awkward; especially if you're the type of person who doesn't want to seem mean yet also really wants the person to go. In *Crawlspace* by Herbert Lieberman a situation like this occurs, though in a way that one wouldn't expect. The 'houseguest' in question is a young man whom originally showed up to deliver oil to Graves' house, one who Albert and Alice invited to stay for dinner. They also loaned him a book to read given his interest in the one selected from their library. Not long after that, the young man returns to bring more oil, only this time it seems as if he is doing more in the cellar than simply restocking things. An investigation by Albert after he leaves that day shows evidence of this, evidence that seems to suggest that the young man has prepared the crawlspace in their house as a sort of living quarters.

Time passes and eventually the young man does move into the crawlspace, at which point Albert and Alice have the locks changed so he can't come back. However, the reaction to this from the young man one night overwhelms them with pity, and soon they leave a key so that he can have unrestricted access to the crawlspace. After this an odd relationship between the Graves and the young man named Richard develops, one that fills a need for the two adults who have failed to have children on their own. In time Richard even moves out of the crawlspace and takes one of the bedrooms, his closeness and trust toward the Graves developed in much the same way one would lure a stray animal in. Eventually Richard begins to accompany the Graves to church, which is when the rest of the community begins to wonder about the new houseguest. Richard also provides services to the Graves in the form of choirs and cooking. At first, these services are welcomed, but then eventually start to weigh heavy on Alice who feels as if he has made her useless. Equally unwelcomed is the reaction from the townspeople who do not want Richard to be a part of the community. In time, their scorn of him is also leveled upon Albert and Alice, which is when things take a horrible turn. Even worse, Richard won't leave when asked and will do whatever it takes to stay in the house he has come to see as his own.

Crawlspace by Herbert Lieberman was an interesting read. I really enjoyed the writing and continued question of what would happen next in the bizarre situation that was unfolding, yet at the same time could never apply a full reality to the situation. Who in the world would actually allow someone to live with them like this? Reasons for the decision were given, but never really convinced me, which dampened things a bit. This isn't to say I didn't like it. It was good and kept me entertained, I just couldn't get the unrealistic aspect from my mind. I will read more from Herbert Lieberman, however, and would love it if people could give me suggestions on what I should pick out next from his body of work.

Lisa Greer says

This was a good book. I was totally hooked because I had no idea where the author was going with it. It's also pretty "deep" I think. Lots of insights about what it is to be human. I highly recommend it. This book is one of the reasons I keep buying books from the used book place. Every once in a while I hit on a real gem.
