



# The Linging

*S.J.I. Holliday*

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Married couple Jack and Ali Gardiner move to a self-sufficient spiritual commune in the English Fens, desperate for fresh start. The local village is known for the witches who once resided there and Rosalind House, where the commune has been established, is a former psychiatric home, with a disturbing history.

When Jack and Ali arrive, a chain of unexpected and unexplained events is set off, and it becomes clear that they are not all that they seem. As the residents become twitchy, and the villagers suspicious, events from the past come back to haunt them, and someone is seeking retribution...

At once an unnerving mystery, a chilling thriller and a dark and superbly wrought ghost story, *The Linging* is an exceptionally plotted, terrifying and tantalisingly twisted novel by one of the most exciting authors in the genre.

## **The Linging Details**

Date : Published September 15th 2018 by ORENDA BOOKS

ISBN :

Author : S.J.I. Holliday

Format : Kindle Edition 320 pages

Genre : Horror, Thriller, Mystery, Fiction, Fantasy, Paranormal, Supernatural

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## From Reader Review The Lingering for online ebook

### Chandra Claypool (wherethereadergrows) says

I don't even know where to begin with this book! I love that the synopsis is fairly vague so that you have no idea what to expect going in and I certainly wasn't expecting THAT.

Jack and Ali are having some marital issues.. so what's the best way to try and solve that? Why, pack up your bags and move to a commune. Seems legit. There's something interesting about this commune though - they're located on an abandoned psychiatric home, The Rosalind House. There's a history of abuse, ghosts and witches as a background. Again, seems legit! However, once they get there, things start happening and well... welcome to crazy town.

I was expecting this to read more like a cult book and that's not what I got. What I got was a semi-thriller/paranormal read and I'm not hating on it! Honestly, I wasn't all that hooked for the first 40% or so of the book. However, I was intrigued (albeit puzzled as to why the crazy cult phenomena I was expecting wasn't happening). Then BOOM, shit takes a left turn at Albuquerque and I was hooked.

Look - bring me an asylum with ghosts and I'm going to read it. This novel delivers on this with an underlying, ominous tone that keeps your mind at high alert to not miss anything. Ali and Jack are characters where you have no idea what's happening with them until quite a ways into the story line... and I appreciate the bait.

The Lingering title is suitable for many things that happen within the novel. The characters are fascinating, the eerie feel brings about an atmosphere of hesitance and paranoia and the unexpectedness of what the story brings is compelling and certainly unexpected.

Certainly a suitable read for those who love a psychological thriller mixed with some paranormal.

Thanks so much to Orenda Books for this copy.

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### Amalia Gavea says

No. Just no. DNF at 30% and I am so disappointed... I was really, really looking forward to reading this but what I found was a story dragging and dragging until Hell freezes over. Two characters that made me want to knock my head on the wall. A plot so predictable, a kind of dialogue that was more wooden than a log cabin and what was possibly the weakest approach to create a mix of Gothic Mystery, Haunted House Thriller in a Dystopian environment. I mean, give me a break here...

Not even the fenland and the witches with all their Sabbath company, their blacks cats and the broomsticks could save this one for me...

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### Mandy says

Commune - check

Asylum - check

Murder - check

Creepy - check, check, check

4.5 \* What is not to like lol. I really enjoyed this creepy and atmospheric story set in a commune based in an old asylum, which didn't end up going where I thought it was, I like surprises (in books). Definitely creepy with an interesting premise and characters. If you like ghost stories and fancy something a little different give it a go.

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### Amy says

If you're like many readers and like to try and match your reads to the season then have I got the perfect book for you to add to your fall/winter TBR! The Linging is ideal to dive into this time of year, it has a rich and vivid setting that will get under your skin, and the story itself is intriguing and also toes the line with hints at the supernatural without it totally taking over the plot. An added bonus for me is that it's set in a commune and that sort of lifestyle absolutely fascinates me and this one was very interesting.

This flips back and forth between Ali's POV and Angela's, a valued member of the commune. The entire idea behind this group is that they seek the light in all things. They live in Rosalind House, which was once an old asylum which is such a creepy setting. There are many old stories and legends about what happened on the grounds and Angela is determined to prove there is the presence of ghosts one way or another. Right away you feel like there is something a bit off about Ali and her husband Jack, but I couldn't quite pinpoint what made me feel uneasy about them. Was it their vague references to their elusive past? Or maybe it was just the claustrophobic setting and hint of the unknown, but whatever it was, it worked SO well for me. There was a constant sense of dread and a little bit of fear throughout that kept me on the edge of my seat.

I fear discussing the plot further would only spoil things, but I'll close by saying that this would appeal to a wide variety of readers as it's mysterious, highly atmospheric and also has a historical vibe due to Rosalind Houses background, and it also went in a few directions I wasn't expecting and that my friends, is what it's all about!

The Linging in three words: Atmospheric, Gripping and Creepy.

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### Karen Mace says

Blimey that was rather brilliant!! And creepy AF!! I think the moral of this story is 'trust nobody'. Oh, and don't ever take a bath.....ever, ever again!!!

The Linging is a (very!) twisted supernatural crime story. We are introduced to Jack and Ali Gardner who decide to leave their old life behind to begin again at a self sufficient commune. The village they move to has link to witchcraft and the locals are well aware of the stories and history. Even Rosalind House where the commune has set up used to be a psychiatric home - so the level of creepiness around the area is bound to be high!

The move is equally liberating and terrifying for them both. But it's Jack who seems to settle into the routine of life there quicker than Ali. She seems permanently on edge around the others and reluctant to fully embrace the commune life to begin with. She seems quite an insecure personality and doesn't like to be left alone, whereas Jack is happy to throw himself into various projects. It becomes clear they have moved here to escape things that have happened in the past - never an easy thing to do.

Angela is one of the commune residents and their resident 'ghostbuster'! She's determined to capture spooky activity on camera and she is equally wary of the new residents but goes out of her way to be friendly. Something that isn't always reciprocated.

There's also flashbacks throughout to a journal from 1955 from a Doctor who worked at the hospital and witnessed some very strange things and these really added another element of interest to the storyline.

There are a number of weird goings on at the commune, strange sightings and your interest is continually raised trying to work out why these things are happening and if any of the rumours are true! I found myself constantly on edge as the darkness of the story increased and with an extremely chilling ending it just rounded off a wonderful but disturbing read!!

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### **Bill Kupersmith says**

An abandoned lunatic asylum is the perfect setting for a ghost story and Rosalind House, built in 1845, is now the home of a "synergistic loving" community presided over by Smeaton Dunsmore, one of the narrators. The community rule is a volume called The Book of Light. Mostly they seem keen on gardening and carpentry. Another resident and narrator is Angela Fairley, who humorously refers herself as Fairy Angela, and is a psychic investigator searching the house for evidence of paranormal activity. Their community is joined by a couple, Ali and Jack, who ostensibly are in quest of a quiet retreat. She used to be a nurse and he a police officer, but the inquisitive Angela discovers evidence that there is something fishy in their past.

"I was fascinated by the paranormal, folklore, the seventeen-century witch trials.... I trained myself to read tarot, dabbled with Ouija boards ... but it was pretty obvious that I didn't possess a channel. So I ... decided to make it my life's work to prove the existence of ghosts" is Angela's statement of her calling. She doesn't experience the appearance of ghosts herself, but she tells Ali, "I think you can only see ghosts if you're responsible for taking a life." Ali herself has an experience of being attacked by something in the bath. Later she experiences sighting a wet child, a boy no one else can see.

The Linging was a superb Halloween read for me and I am delighted to welcome SJI Holliday to my list of favourites that includes Susan Hill, Andrew Taylor, and F. G. Cottam. It is difficult to develop the classic ghost story to full-scale novel length. To make The Linging work, Holliday has to introduce some themes from other genres. So besides the ghost of an old victim we have a serial killer on the loose and another traditional standby, pharmaceutical experiments. But though I found my credulity a trifle strained, The Linging was a non-stop read. If you like plausible horror fiction, you should enjoy this story.

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### **Ova - Excuse My Reading says**

3.5 stars

This was a good read, however it's not as scary as I thought it should be. A well written, slow paced thriller with some surprises and reveals.

The main story line follows an apparently troubled young couple moving in with a commune in a once-

asylum building called Rosalind house. On sideline we also follow the journal of the doctor who worked in the asylum and the events in the past are revealed.

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## Dennis says

### 3.5 stars

It's getting harder and harder to capture my attention when it comes to horror novels. *The Linging* is thoroughly original, but it takes awhile for the build up to actually capture you. I battled between 3 and 4 stars for this title, so my opinion may change as I write this review. Ali and Jack Gardiner have decided to give up their livelihoods and move to the Rosalind House. The Rosalind House is a spiritual commune, run by a group of parishioners who have decided that today's society is too hectic for them, and they want a more simple future. The local villagers have commented that the Rosalind House has a dark past—it was owned by those practicing magic, and then became an insane asylum during the 1950s.

Jack and Ali slowly get acclimated to the Rosalind House and their inhabitants, but start witnessing strange and disturbing instances during their stay that they can't check off as mere coincidences. As Jack and Ali start investigating the occurrences at the Rosalind House, the basis for their decision to move there starts unraveling. Sometimes the most scary thing to find out, is the past that someone's left behind.

At 250 pages, *The Linging* is a quick read that will deliver you an original paranormal tale. If you can take the slower pacing, then I highly recommend picking it up. There were moments that I felt frustrated, but as the story progressed, I started noticing that my interest in the plot was growing again. While I felt that the author could've dived in deeper with the paranormal, I still enjoyed how the novel was progressing in it's own rite. Once we get to the final conflict, my interest was at an all time high—I needed to know what was going to happen!

*The Linging* is the type of book that you should go in knowing nothing about it. The mysterious cover should give you **all** the information that you need to get started. Did you enjoy this story? Let's talk about it!

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## Sarah says

There is always something about a story set in a commune that instantly appeals to me. Especially when the building they are living in is a former psychiatric home. Alarm bells started to go off in my head and I knew no matter what, I had to read this book.

The story alternates mainly between Ali, who has just arrived at the commune and Angela who is a long standing resident there. Angela is quite a quirky character. She believes in the super natural and is determined to find proof that the building houses ghosts. It just adds to the whole atmosphere of the story.

Ali and Jack have obviously come to the commune under a cloud. They seem to be running away from something but we just don't quite know what. My interest was certainly piqued as to why they would give up their everyday lives to hide away in a commune.

The Linging really is an atmospheric read. The setting, the building, the nice back story by way of a

doctors journal into life when the building was a psychiatric home, it really does have it all. The story does very much focus on present day but I did love the added suspense of what had happened in the past. It really does hold plenty of surprises in store and I thoroughly enjoyed this chilling reading experience that certainly delivers chills and thrills a plenty.

My thanks to Anne Cater and Orenda Books for an advanced readers copy of this book. All opinions are my own and not biased in anyway.

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### **Linda Strong says**

What really caught my interest in this book is that it's set in a former asylum and psychiatric hospital. This book has all kinds of things going on ... psychological horror, mystery, supernatural, and quirky, disturbing residents.

Jack and Ali move to a commune in a small village. noted for its history of witches. Once they arrive, all manner of strange things occur and the residents become extremely jumpy ... so what do they know that Jack and Ali don't?

This is a disturbing read, making the hair on my arms stand up, and I wound up sleeping with the light on. Horror is not my preferred genre, but once I started reading, I couldn't stop.

This is well-written, with characters that stand out. Jack and Ali drop everything to leave their past and show up at this commune. Why? What are they hiding?

The suspense builds chapter by chapter to a very surprising ending. If you like horror ... this is the book for you!

Many thanks to the author / TBC Reviewer Request Group (FB) for the digital copy of this dark and disturbing book. Opinions expressed here are unbiased and entirely my own.

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### **The Book Review Café says**

When I pick up a novel I'm always looking for a read that will captivate my imagination, a novel that leaves me breathless, one that will unnerve me and one where I reach the last page I immediately want to read it again, novels that make me feel like this are a rare breed indeed, well up until now that is. I'm not going to beat about the bush I loved *The Lingering* by SJI Holliday, it was the perfect read for me, I found it to be creepy, and very, very dark. Part ghost story, part domestic thriller, the author tantalises the reader with the mystery surrounding Rosalind House and its occupants, when you add to the mix odd occurrences and strange sightings well let's just say "this novel made for a disquieting, but oh so thrilling read".

Married couple Jack and Ali Gardner are seeking a fresh start and decide to move to Rosalind House a self-sufficient commune in the English Fens, but what dark secrets are the couple hiding? Once they arrive it's not long before the couple experience ghostly happenings, and that's when this novel gets bone chillingly creepy. Rosalind House, an abandoned asylum is the perfect setting for this novel, it hides a tragic past, where secrets and passed misdoings are hidden in the very fabric of the building. It's a building steeped in

myths and legends where bad things happened, and as the author slowly reveals its dark and deadly secrets I found myself becoming more fearful at each turn of the page.

The characters in *The Lingering* are fabulously depicted, rich in personality, and complex. Jack and Ali Gardner what a couple, their relationship is one based on coercion and control, a relationship that's shrouded in lies and deceit. You know from the beginning the couple are hiding something BIG, and that alone adds an over whelming sense of uneasiness that intensifies as the Gardner's dark secrets are slowly revealed.

I guess the spooky supernatural element might not suit all crime fiction fans, but if like me you read *The Lingering* with an open mind I'm sure you will end up loving it as much as I did. *The Lingering* explores the nature of true evil, the psychological aspect of this novel is dark in tone as the author delves into the minds of a very disturbed couple. This novel is exceptionally well plotted, original, creepy and very disturbing and yet it is one of the most compelling novels I've had the pleasure to read in a long time, and definitely a contender for my "book of the year". Highly, highly recommended.

All my reviews can be found at <http://thebookreviewcafe.com>

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## **Eva says**

I don't normally read scary stories because I'm a big fat wuss and I was slightly worried, that just like with scary movies, I'd be hiding behind my sofa or have my face buried in a pillow which would make reading rather difficult. Luckily though, I wouldn't quite label this one as a scary read. Creepy? Absolutely! Chilling? Right to the bone!

*The Lingering* oozes atmosphere from the very first page, almost like a movie scene. Driving a car down a driveway, seeing a house loom up in front of you for the first time. Not just any house though for this place used to be a mental asylum and if there's any setting more exciting than that one, I haven't discovered it yet. Who knows what secrets are hidden in the walls and the shadows?

Married couple Jack and Ali leave behind everything they've ever known to move into Rosalind House and be part of a commune. It's relatively obvious from the start that all is not well with these two. Their arrival at Rosalind House sets in motion a series of unexplained events. But who or what is responsible? Obviously I can't tell you that but I will say this is one tense, suspenseful and thrilling ride. I wasn't at all sure of the outcome, couldn't see how things would end up but found the conclusion absolutely satisfying.

Part domestic thriller, part ghost story *The Lingering* had me absolutely hooked. Talk about a gripping read, hoo boy! I couldn't get a feel for any of the characters at all which just added to this sense of unease that I found quite hard to let go of, even hours after finishing the book. On top of that, we are treated to diary chapters written by a doctor who used to work at the psychiatric institution and in an odd sort of way, those frightened me more than anything because they felt incredibly realistic and believable in showing what human beings are capable of.

*The Lingering* is one dark and disturbing read. With a brilliantly executed plot and complex characters, this haunting tale will linger (see what I did there?) in your mind for days. I have no doubt you'll see this one pop up near the end of the year on my list of books of 2018.

PS : Do not read in the bathtub. You'll thank me later.

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## **Kelly McCord says**

The Linging was a great spooky October read. This books has a bit of everything; domestic thriller, strange commune in a former psychiatric institution, and ghosts. What more could you want? It is super fast-paced with non-stop twists and turns. Loved it!

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## **Emily says**

"It's the house they need to worry about. What it was built on. The memories that live here, hidden deep in the foundations."

I saw The Linging pop up around bookstagram & I had to get a copy! First off, this cover is gorgeous. It's so haunting & I could tell this was going to be a good one.

The Linging is definitely a slow burn, so don't expect a fast-paced thriller here. It's a gothic blend of horror and suspense. While I think there could have been a bit more focus on the ghostiness in the first half of the book, everything still flowed nicely.

I thought that the weaving of past and present was done really well - Holliday did not rely too heavily on journal entries, files, etc., and used them just the right amount to maintain interest. I loved unraveling the stories within this book, and was actually surprised by how things turned out.

There were so many great pieces to this story, and I do wish we would have been snowing to hear more about the cult. It's a pretty short book, some some areas don't have as in-depth of an exploration as I would have liked, but I didn't felt that it took anything away from the story as a whole.

There's a lot of drama playing out in The Linging, and I enjoyed trying to sort everything out. There were some unexpected twists, and some storylines were pretty over-the-top, but this was a fun read for me. I loved that it was set in a huge gothic building, yet the story still felt claustrophobic because it was a small cult grouped in the same areas of the building. Everything else was empty and ominous. I would absolutely love to read more books set at the Rosalind House if they ever exist. I hope to read more from SJI Holliday!

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## **The Tattooed Book Geek (Drew). says**

As always this review can also be found on my blog The Tattooed Book Geek:  
<https://thetattooedbookgeek.wordpress...>

I think that the tagline for The Linging should be as follows:

The Linging: giving you a reason not to bath since 2018! ????

Jack and Ali Gardiner (a policeman and a psychiatric nurse) have sold most of their worldly possessions, trading in the city life and their stressful jobs for a fresh start. Starting over away from it all in the Fens at Rosalind House. Taking their places in The Rosalind House Community Project which is a self-sufficient commune (formed in 1995 by Smeaton Dunsmore) where the goal is to 'bring in the light' embracing peace and living in freedom.

Within the commune, there is limited interaction with the outside world. Things like mobile phones, the Internet, TV and radio, excessive drinking, driving, swearing (the absolute horror) and visiting the local village aren't outright banned but they are frowned upon and members are urged to renounce their usage and let go of all outside influences.

The commune itself is only small in number with eleven current members including the founder, Smeaton and 'Fairy' Angela. Angela is a ghost hunter, a quirky and odd sort who just wants a place to belong. After spending time in the nearby village before moving to the commune she is also knowledgeable on the area and the history of Rosalind House and sees it as the ideal place to prove the existence of ghosts.

From the start, it is obvious that Ali and Jack are hiding something and that they aren't simply escaping the daily grind and the rat race for a more measured and natural way of life. Out of the couple, Ali seems to be the one that is in charge and it was her idea to move to Rosalind House with Jack following her lead.

At first, the pair seems to have trouble settling in but it is put down to the remote and quiet country location that is far removed from the hustle and bustle of the city where they came from and the changes to their everyday lives. Even though he was initially sceptical Jack adapts to life in the commune seeming to find his place, helping out with various jobs and coming into himself. Ali, on the other hand, struggles to find her own place, remaining abrupt and unsociable with the other members. Shunning Angela's attempts at friendship, constantly seeming on edge and fraying at the seams after experiencing strange disturbances from her first day at Rosalind House.

The other members are unsure about Jack and Ali. The pair managed to bypass the usual process for joining by offering cash to Smeaton who accepted to pay for work to help fix parts of the dilapidated old building. The commune isn't for everyone but it's more than that. There's something off about the couple and their arrival seems to have shifted the balance, awakening something that had laid dormant in the house.

With *The Linging* Holliday has created the type of book that has a gnawing sense of foreboding throughout its length. A simmering tension that lingers alongside as you read and that creeps under your skin. With more and more ghostly and strange occurrences happening things finally come to a head when Jack and Ali's secret is discovered and the truth about them slowly becomes apparent.

*The Linging* is told mainly from the perspectives of Ali and Angela with the sporadic chapter included by Smeaton. Both Ali and Smeaton's chapters are written in the third person perspective whilst Angela's is written in the first person perspective. As the story progresses Holliday allows us the chance to get to know her characters and regardless of whether it's in first person or third person her characters are fully-fleshed and feel real.

Rosalind House is steeped in a disturbing history (if only walls could talk) and *The Linging* is a story where the setting is just as important as the characters. In the capable and evocative hands of Holliday Rosalind House and its grounds come alive and feel like a living and breathing atmospheric entity. A grand family house with ties to witchcraft and witches that was burnt to the ground in the seventeenth century and that up until the mid-nineteenth century when an asylum was built on the grounds had been abandoned. The asylum was then turned into a psychiatric hospital in the 1940's and remained empty from its closure until Smeaton purchased the property for his commune in 1995.

Along with the present day story, there are excerpts that are interspersed from the journal of Dr Henry Baldock who worked at Rosalind House back when it was a psychiatric hospital in 1955 focusing on his investigating allegations of abuse, the use of outdated and barbaric practices and mistreatment towards the patients. These journal entries (which I loved) are used to add additional insight and history to Rosalind House and as the bridge between the present storyline and the events from the past, helping to tie it all together and they are absolutely fascinating to read.

To go along with the haunted house and thriller elements in *The Linging* there is an additional focus on coercion and control within the story too. Looking at how a person can be controlled and how easily they can be influenced into doing something another person wants through manipulation and mind games. And, how far can that person push the other before they break (or will they eventually say no) when what they are asking of them is wrong and goes against their nature. Evil has many faces and it can manifest in many different guises appearing in seemingly the most innocuous, normal and ordinary type of person. *The Linging* features one such person and allows you a glimpse into their clever, controlling and depraved mind.

Clocking in at just over 250 pages *The Linging* is only a short book and it left me torn! I was torn between either devouring the book and flying through the pages or reading it slowly over a number of days and savouring it. In the end, gripped by the story, wanting to know what happens next, lacking in willpower and thanks to a couple of holy shit shocks and twists I said fuck it and flew through the pages of what is a delectably dark tale.

Part haunted house ghost story, part psychological thriller and all dark with an air of mystery that pervades the pages *The Linging* is a scintillating read that will chill you.

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