



The Sitter

R.L. Stine

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Master of chilling suspense R. L. Stine proves that you never outgrow a good scare. If he frightened you then, he'll terrify you now. . . .

Ellie Saks is dying to escape the city. She's sick of dead-end jobs, her mother's disapproval, her loser ex-boyfriend, Clay, who won't take a hint, and the memories of a terrible incident that occurred years ago. When her best friend suggests a summer in the Hamptons, full of glitzy parties, cool cocktails, and hot dates, Ellie's on the first Jitney out. To fund all this glamour, Ellie takes a job as a nanny.

From the outside, the family's beachfront home is perfect. But then Ellie meets four-year-old Brandon, who hasn't spoken for months. The boy's icy stare and demonic laughter make clear to Ellie that he is troubled, haunted by something too horrible for words.

She begins to receive threatening messages and disturbing gifts. But it's not until she barely escapes a harrowing experience that she realizes her life may depend on figuring out who's behind it: Clay? Brandon? And why? And every once in a while, in a crowd, she sees a face she hasn't seen in seven years—the face of a boy who died long ago. It would seem that Ellie's summer of fun has turned into a summer of horror—one she'll never forget . . . if she survives it at all.

From the Trade Paperback edition.

The Sitter Details

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From Reader Review The Sitter for online ebook

Hazel says

This book ROCKS!!! It is really scary and the plot is great. This is one of the best books I read. Really scary.

Lacey says

Did not finish at 31%. I was curious if I would like an adult book by R.L. Stine because I loved his young adult writing when I was much younger.

Unfortunately it didn't seem to me worth the time to finish this book. The feel of the book was just like one of his fear street novels, but to be 'qualified' as adult it seems as if the author threw in random cursing, drinking, cigarettes and semi-sex scenes. Wasn't impressed with the writing or the story. Moving on...

Brittiney says

amazingggggg.

Ger Francus says

My review:

I finished it yesterday.... and it sucked. - I really didn't like it very much. I expected it to be GREAT, because, after all, the ratings were high, and they're (Sam Raimi's movie-company) are planning to adapt it for the Big Screen.... - But no, I was really disappointed.

Mainly it was just utterly boring, and full of clichés, like the same-old "crazy-psycho-stalking ex-boyfriend " of the protagonist what is suppose to "scare" you on every single fucking page of the book. The stupid 'hallucinations' of an old boyfriend who "died many years ago in a horrible accident which she caused", (she thinks she sees him everywhere; at the corner of every street, on the road in every car; no, at the end of every chapter :roll: - which of course every time seems to be someone who looks an awful lot like him).

And an over and over again done before story about a terrible secret that lies in the forgotten past, and no one ever talks about anymore because it's so awful, and of course the killer somehow 'comes back' to present day to get his revenge and finish his work (in which he eventually doesn't succeed, but R.L. Stine claims he did :?) - and tjees... I wonder in whom he hides... :roll:

And the gruesome little shocks and surprises that are the only "supposed-to-be-scaring-you" things in this book.

And of course, like in every R.L. Stine novel; tons of innocent animals get horribly and brutally murdered and killed, only with purpose to "torture" the protagonist (which lasts for 250 pages), and "scare" the reader, and then never mention it again in the rest of the story, like they don't matter.

So, we're now at the end, the last 20 pages, the plot tightening, and the well-known R.L. Stine-surprise-twist-ending is in sight. - But no, no surprise-twist this time. :(- Really too bad. - Everything developed, revealed and worked out just the "happy" and "no-questions-asked" (huh?) way I expected it from the beginning. Although there was one tiny twist I did not entirely see coming (though I did have a hunch) and that was the "mommy-/-nanny" twist.

At the end I think it'd give it a 2,5/5*.

Lauren says

Ellie Saks is at the end of her lease, the end of her temp job, and the end of her patience with her mother and her ex-boyfriend turned stalker Clay. So, she jumps at the opportunity to leave the city behind for a trip to the Hamptons for a summer of fun away from it all. A stroke of luck even lands her a babysitting job and place to stay. That luck turns sour though when someone starts sending her threatening notes and disturbing gifts. With a disturbed child to care for, a stalker on the loose, and a ghost story unfolding with her in the middle of it can Ellie figure out what's going on or even survive her summer as the sitter?

Not going to lie, I didn't enjoy *The Sitter*. This is one of those books that feels so, so like a lot of the books I have tremendous nostalgia for but with all the nostalgia stripped away and a painful attempt at retargeting its readership. See, R. L. Stine does a great job with teen horror, particularly cheesy teen horror. His books can be very formula and very like a B horror movie, but they tend to be fun and quick and you know what you're getting in to when you pick one up. That's sort of the case here and with a few changes this could have been a pretty standard Fear Street book. That's part of the problem though, with *The Sitter* Stine tries too hard to make his book "adult" and it feels very forced. There's a fair amount of profanity, some drinking, a really gross sex scene, drug use is mentioned, but it all feels like someone reminded Stine that he was writing for grownups after the book was already finished, so he just threw that all in.

So, that said, what made me dislike this book other than the audience related weirdness? There are a lot of things that get a pass in teen novels that shouldn't and don't in adult novels, this book for example had terrible foreshadowing. Early on, we find out about Ellie's cat, he's sweet and trusting and she misses him so because she couldn't have him in her apartment. Yeah, he didn't make it to the end of the book. The problem with that is twofold. Stine's used killing the beloved family pet to gain a quick cheap hit to the feels before, several times actually, so as soon as the cat gets mentioned you know what's going to happen. It's a similar thing with the big twist at the end. It also ties into my next big issue.

A ton of terrible stuff happens between Lucky's introduction and Lucky's plot appointed death, but Ellie doesn't seem to take that into account. The book's plot was almost entirely reliant on the protagonist making stupid choices. Again, a lot of those choices would have made more sense in a book with a teenaged protagonist rather than one in her twenties both because relative youth and because a teen protagonist could be stuck being the sitter rather than it being a summer job. This bit is really hard to go into without spoilers, but our protagonist gets death threats and vile stuff mailed to her. She stays, doesn't even talk to the police after like the second thing. Not for the threats, or her cat getting killed, or her stalker ex showing up and

threatening her. Most of the tension in the book relies on the reader having never read R. L. Stine before and Ellie being an idiot.

Add to that, *The Sitter* has a ton of stuff going on that doesn't seem to go anywhere until the end. There are chapters from the antagonist's view point. They could have been cut entirely. There was a side plot about some curse on the guest house. That could have been cut. Clay probably should have been cut, he doesn't really add much to the story and is basically made of cringe. The cat could have been cut, he was a completely pointless inclusion. Any of that could have been removed to tighten up the main plot and work the twist in better.

Those are my big issues with the book, everything else kind of spins off of those. It had a twist ending, but that was completely unsupported by the rest of the book. The only reason I didn't see it coming was that it was so completely out of left field it came from another game entirely. It's silly in the grand scheme of things, but this book made me angry. There were so many places where Stine could have done better, could have not done the blatantly obvious thing, could have shored up the writing instead of going into another side plot. This book gets a one, as much for what it could have been as for what it is.

Jaime says

I was a huge R.L. Stine fan in my early teens! I loved all the fear street books! They are what got me into reading again! :)

Rosa-maria says

Great Mystery book!!! lots of suspense it keep me reading all night.

Dee Arr says

I can't say I was ever a big fan of R. L. Stine, but I always respected his work as a writer of scary fiction for children. Until a few days ago, I never realized he had written horror/thriller fiction intended for adults. After reading "*The Sitter*," I think about Michael Jordan, arguably the best professional basketball player of all time, leaving the hardwood court for the baseball diamond. Thankfully, after a few years of uneven play, Jordan returned to win three more NBA titles. If this book is indicative of Mr. Stine's future efforts in adult horror, he may wish to take a page out of Jordan's playbook. Here's what is right and not-so-right, without spoilers:

The basic plot is good, even scary at times. Woman in jeopardy (Ellie Saks) is threatened, yet she doesn't know who is behind the notes and items intended to scare her. Some of the chapters allow the reader access to the killer's mind, giving insight without telling who the killer might be. The fear and terror are what kept me reading.

The character of Ellie Saks is fleshed out. She is like a teenager who, after experiencing a traumatic event, finds it difficult (and really seems unaware) to outgrow her past. I found her character realistic, although the rest of the characters are fairly one-dimensional.

The overall writing is pure Stine, always excellent at what he does. Unfortunately, except for the sex and the vulgarities and other adult themes, the feel of the book matches the Goosebumps series. The chapter cliffhangers which aren't really a danger and the one-liner at the end straining for a humorous moment to contrast with the horror of the final scenes are both techniques Stine has used effectively over the years. Sadly, those techniques do not transfer well to adult books, and I found myself wishing the author would have chosen to stick with one age level (children or adult) and not bounce back and forth between the two.

Even so, Stine has talent, even if it doesn't fit well in adult fiction. Worth a read if you were a hardcore Stine fan, but there is no guarantee you will feel the same magic as when you were younger. Three stars.

Karina says

A very suspensful book. unpredictable.

Stacy says

To much

To many subplots. While an attempt was made to tie them up all it once it did not work for me. Had to skip parts. Eye rolling cringe worthy.

Kristina says

This was a more adult book from RL Stine and I really ended up liking it! I'd say more like 3.5 stars though because there were parts in the end I was like "eh" about. I think I liked it so much because it was written similar to the silver beach series that I love so much. Also because its a thriller that takes place in the hamptons with a wealthy family, my favorite thing!

Sarah says

A very good read for anyone seeking a horror read. This book is good to keep you on your toes and reading for hours. Not a very hard read and very easy to understand. You fall in love with he characters and feel very sympathetic towards them. All in all a very good read.

Jack Dixon says

Great read, Mr. Stine! I loved the suspense and creepiness of this story. Never a dull moment. I definitely found it difficult to put down every night. I really liked the main character and didn't want her story to end. All I can say is "More more more, Mr. Stine!"

Elusive says

In 'The Sitter', twenty-five-year-old Ellie longs to get away from her mother's constant reminders of what a failure she is as well as her obsessed ex-boyfriend Clay. During her vacation to the Hamptons with her best friend, she unexpectedly gets a job as a nanny. Her joy is short-lived when she realizes little Brandon doesn't behave like a normal child..

This story started off promising with so much to look forward to - a luxurious home with a sinister history, a strange kid who never talks and a series of creepy events. However, the execution left me reeling in disappointment. The entire premise relied heavily on Ellie being the typical dumb protagonist who doesn't behave or react realistically. For instance, she never once went to the police even when she received death threats and knew for a fact that Clay was stalking her.

Besides that, she couldn't stand the kids' father frequently harassing her yet she never bothered to consider other options such as finding another job or living with her best friend while trying to figure out the next step to take. She also laughed off a stranger's warning about the weird kid though she could clearly see there was something off about him. She made many terrible decisions not out of lack of knowledge but sheer stupidity hence it was impossible to care about her.

The only thing that spurred me to continue this book was the mystery behind who was threatening Ellie. Unfortunately, the revelation required suspension of disbelief. It was like the author was attempting to throw in as many surprises as possible so it all felt contrived. The reliance on coincidence wasn't lost on me either. (view spoiler)

Overall, 'The Sitter' was mildly entertaining in spite of its flaws. It would have been better if it had been darker, more realistic and less ridiculous though.

Melissa Helwig says

I think this is supposed to be one of Stine's "adult" novels, but the only difference I could tell between this and a Fear Street book was the occasional curse word and sex scene. Disappointingly, there was the same amount of gore and deaths as in one of his YA books (and mostly animal deaths, in typical R.L. Stine fashion).
