



The Guilty One

Sophie Littlefield

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A man stands on the Golden Gate Bridge, poised to jump...if a woman on the other end of the phone tells him to.

Maris's safe suburban world was shattered the day her daughter was found murdered, presumably at the hands of the young woman's boyfriend. Her marriage crumbling, her routine shattered, Maris walks away from her pampered life as a Bay Area mom the day she receives a call from Ron, father of her daughter's killer. Wracked with guilt over his son's actions (and his own possible contribution to them), he asks Maris a single question: should he jump?

With a man's life in her hands, Maris must decide, perhaps for the first time, what she truly wants. Retribution? Forgiveness? Or something more? Having lost everything, she's finally free to recreate herself without the confining labels of "wife," "mother," or "mourner." But will this shocking offer free her, or destroy her?

The Guilty One Details

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Author : Sophie Littlefield

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From Reader Review The Guilty One for online ebook

Elyse Walters says

Oh boy....

We still have a water shortage here in California,
And possibly a plot shortage in "The Guilty One".
The 'blurb's highlight's make this book sound very different than it is.

'To Jump' or 'Not' turns out to be a weak plot!! It's a minor 'teaser' scene at the start of the book which soon fizzles....like Tinkerbell's fairy dust.

The rest of the book is a variety of things: Maris's marriage- Ron's marriage- guilty memories as a father...more of Maris's struggles...(and finding her way), etc.

Honestly ... I just didn't care for the writing.... I'm not sure if simplistic is the right word ... or just my own lack of interest.

Here is a perfect example of writing that made me pause: ("why? How how interesting this dialogue is", was 'my' thinking):

"Pet picked up a stack of books from a TV tray table standing next to a worn red upholsterer wing chair. She moved them to the floor along the wall. The TV tray was decorated with a hunting scene: A buck standing on a hill about a lake, antlers wider than its shoulders."

"I really can't tell you how much I appreciate this, Pet." Maris Felt her voice catch in her throat. The girl was too trusting, by far"

I feel bad...when I rate a book low. I live in the Bay Area. I know the streets mentioned in the book well.... I 'should' have enjoyed this much more.

However,

It lacked authentic richness - purpose- and direction in the storytelling.

From my understanding - Sophie Littlefield has a terrific reputation as an author. - but this was my first book I've read by her.

Other readers may really enjoy this book... It just wasn't my most flavorful cup of tea

My appreciation to Gallery Threshold Books -Netgalley- -and Sophie Littlefield. ('always' my hats go off to the author... ... much respect for their craft... Regardless of how I feel about 'the book at hand')

1-Click Addict Support Group says

I really hate rating a book under 3 stars! It's rare that I feel the need to but this book was anything but what I expected. The blurb held promise of grief, heartache, suspense and healing. The book delivered some but all in all, it fell flat. *The Guilty One* was bleak and may I say, kind of boring.

Instead of feeling bad for the characters, I just felt annoyed. I really wanted to love this book--maybe if I re-read it down the road I'll be able to connect with the characters. This time I felt such a disconnect that it was

hard to finish the book. I know Sophie does some great work, this just wasn't one of them, in my opinion! ~ Kelly, 2.5 stars

Bookish says

In this story a teenage girl is murdered by her ex-boyfriend. He's found guilty and is serving a sentence in jail. The book delves into how the lives of the two sets of parents are changed by this event and the suffering that they all go through in different ways. It is a powerful testimonial to the human spirit to be able to survive such losses and start over. At the same time it examines how the parents' views of themselves are changed as they survive and adapt to the terrible losses they've suffered. This is the first book I have read by Sophie Littlefield. I found it a very interesting and easy summer read, and I plan to look at her other books.

—Kusum (excerpted from Bookish's Staff Reads)

***Avonna says**

First, I want to say that I understand how hard it is to write a book and how amazing it is when it is actually published. Congrats to the author for that accomplishment. That said, The book blurb is very misleading and I was expecting a very different book. I could not find a plot and I had no empathy for either of the main characters. This was just not a book that I found interesting or entertaining.

Chris C - A Midlife Wife says

It is amazing what the mind can do for you when you are faced with such damaging loss such as the death of a child. This book contains a difficult subject for certain, but the storyline is unique and fresh.

When picking up a book like this, you expect the heavy hearts. The depressing subject matter. The emotional toll on the reader. But the author created a book that also brings healing, a fresh outlook, and even some forgiveness.

I have to admit, I was hesitant to review this title. After all the subject matter is tough. But I am so glad that I read this book. The author offers an amazing, gripping, emotional, story about a parents worst nightmare that is so worth the read. The characters are damaged for sure. How do you even move on from a tragedy like this – especially when it impacts several families? While you are expecting the crushing feelings, you also get some of the light at the end of the tunnel.

People are strong and resilient. The author's depth into a human emotional field and actions is amazing. This book is refreshing in so many ways. The beginning is crushing and very deep. It sucked me in completely. There are twists and turns and some surprises up until the end. While it is not a thriller or a suspense read, the author sprinkled in plenty of lighthearted moments, good feelings, and created an complex read on how these characters came back to life that I could not put down. I read this in one afternoon!

This quote keeps popping into my head when thinking about this book, as it fits so perfectly:

“We are all broken. That’s how the light gets in.” Ernest Hemingway

This is an impactful read for sure and one that you have to check out! Sophie Littlefield is a very talented writer and one to watch!

Read more at <http://twoclassychics.com/?p=106001#v...>

sue says

I had to read this book in one sitting.

It starts off in such a way that you just can't put it down and leave it.

A man standing on a bridge ready to jump makes a phone call to a woman. He can't live with his guilt. She asks where he is.

Its all so intense you just have to stay with it.

As more and more unfolds, you still can't put it down. I found myself carrying my Kindle to the Kitchen table whilst waiting for supper to cook. I couldn't miss a thing.

This book deals with guilt, raw emotions, forgiveness and burdens among a lot of things.

I have really come to love Sophie Littlefields books and only came across them because I am a member of Net Galley, so I am so pleased I joined back in 2013.

May I thank the author and Gallery, Threshold, Pocket Books via Net Galley for my copy

Tez says

CONTENT WARNING: Suicide threat, partner murder, child abuse.

This has been terribly mis-marketed. The UK edition has the word "thriller" TWICE on its back cover: one as a classification, and one in publisher's hype. This wouldn't be a problem, except...this book is not a thriller. I'd call it general/mainstream fiction. Anyway, the mislabelling could explain the middling reviews - people did not get what they expected.

Also? The novel's summary talks about an event as if it takes up the whole story, which was what I expected. Instead, that event is resolved within the first few chapters. That's it.

And entire chapters feature nothing but shopping, cleaning, and inventory. I'm not even exaggerating.

I'm no stranger to Sophie Littlefield's works, having previously read and enjoyed four of her other books. And I like The Guilty One to an extent. It's about life AFTER crime, for parents of the perp and the victim. Can people escape generations of violence, or are they - like their forefathers - doomed to hurt those they love?

Had The Guilty One been more honestly marketed, it would've been received better. Still, it's great to see a positive representation of women being friends.

Lesley says

First thanks to Oneida Public Library for sending this book to my local library to read! I have been waiting to read this book for 2 months! This was a very gripping powerful tale! Makes me wonder as a parent what I would do. (we all hope we would do right thing, but its our kid, who we want to protect)This is sad but a little uplifting that the new reality of life is liveable!

Patty says

The Guilty One
By
Sophie Littlefield

What it's all about...

Let's just call this book what it is...another book that I thought I would love but that was just not that interesting. A young girl is killed and it looks as though her boyfriend is the murderer. His father wants to jump off of a bridge but calls the girl's mother and the police stop him just in time. The murdered girl's mom sort of goes AWOL on the way to her sister's house...enjoys a plain and simple fried egg sandwich on the way...and then just stays away after meeting new people and buying tons of stuff she really didn't need.

Why I wanted to read it...

I thought this book would be intense and meaningful but it missed its audience with me. I just could not really get involved.

Why as a reader you should make up your own mind about this one...

I just checked Goodreads and readers seemed to love it or not love it...the reviews are all over the place. I just didn't love it...it wasn't that appealing to me.

Donna Davis says

Sophie Littlefield, author of the Bad Day series (A Bad Day for Sorry, etc) has hit a new level of excellence with The Guilty One. Many thanks to Net Galley and Gallery Books for the DRC! This book goes up for sale on August 11, and if you love a good novel, this one is for you.

Our chief protagonists are Maris and Ron. Maris is Calla's mother...or she was. Calla is dead now. The court has convicted Karl of her murder, a heartbroken, enraged loss of control over a bad teenage breakup. Ron is Karl's father, and as we open our first setting, he is considering jumping off the Golden Gate Bridge. At the last minute he decides to phone Maris, and ask her whether to jump or not.

It shows a good deal about Ron's character, weak and lacking in integrity, that he not only phones Karl's victim's mother to dump the responsibility on her, but also wears a windbreaker to the bridge because his travel guide mentions that it is cool and windy there, even in warm weather.

The last time I read Littlefield's work, it was the Bad Day series. The first book won multiple awards and was deeply satisfying, a savvy, witty dig at domestic abuse. The same topic enters this discussion in a more oblique fashion. In her earlier series, she seemed to lose momentum as the series unfolded, and it appeared to me that she couldn't decide whether she wanted to write a series that was mostly of the detective fiction genre, or mostly romance. Here, she has taken a giant step away from mystery and detective fiction, and this straight-up fictional story is told with grace, maturity, and authority. It's obvious right there in the first few pages. I was reading a handful of galleys at the time, and my first note to myself was "See now, this is good writing."

Maris has lost her marriage, and at first it appears to be a consequence of Calla's death—so few couples can experience the death of a child and stay together—but as the story progresses, it becomes clear that a split was in the works long before this. And Maris makes a decision that resonates with me. She drops everything and everyone, more or less, and without thinking, going purely on instinct, starts over in a new place, with a greatly reduced standard of living. At first I wonder whether Maris is merely slumming, seeing how the other half lives, but deep down, I have to trust Littlefield not to do anything so shabby, and she doesn't. Maris is the one we root for, the one that drives the plot forward and pulls us in.

Ron and Deb have stayed together as Karl has gone through the trial and been found guilty, but the strain is there. Ron starts out entirely believable and not very likeable. He never becomes the stand-up individual that Maris is, but he is a dynamic character, complicated and interesting. He undergoes a lot of change as the story progresses.

Throughout this riveting novel, there was never a moment when the veil lifted and I remembered that these characters weren't real. I raced toward the end with a sense that I had to see how it came out, and then when it was over, I felt a sense of loss, wanting to turn another page and find Maris still there so I could check in with her, like a good friend. And that is ultimately the hallmark of great writing.

Get online. Take a bus. Get in the car. Hijack a plane—okay, maybe not—but do what you need to do in order to get a copy of this accessible, compelling new fiction. Littlefield rocks it. You can pre-order it now, so you will be able to read it right away. If you do, you too will want to stand up and cheer!

Eden says

When I rate a book, I do it based on the blurb on the back cover and what the book claims to be and then I rate it based on how it meets the expectations of what was promised. This is not the fault of Sophie Littlefield the author; it is the fault of the publishers and promoters.

Based off the back cover, the reader expects it to be a thriller of some sorts, or for it to be more action-filled. In reality it was more of a Jodi Picoult read. There is nothing wrong with that but it should be advertised as such. I actually liked the book overall, but it was far from what I was expecting.

slight spoiler it was no surprise to me that Karl actually killed Calla, but I'm glad he was portrayed realistically and not just as the "evil jealous possessive boyfriend". He was a teenager who was really hurt and upset and vented his feelings in a way that took someone's life and altered many others including his own. (Not justifying murder here!) Littlefield did a great job of having Karl explain how he did it and how he felt separated from himself in the time afterwards. He had a good lawyer, but I didn't think five years with good behavior was enough of a prison sentence.

Spoiler one plot element that felt contrived to me and I really wish hadn't been included was that Jeff, Maris husband turned out to be gay. It was revealed in the end almost for shock factor and I don't think it did anything to develop the characters of Maris and Ron whose minds we were inside. While Jeff being gay explained why he was always so distant, I felt the grief of losing his only child and not being the most expressive person in the first place were enough reasons to justify his behavior in the novel.

Earlier in the review I mentioned that this book reminded me of Jodi Picoult. Her books are longer and usually have more than two characters points of view. Littlefield could've benefited from a longer page length, so the reveal of Jeff being gay wouldn't have felt so out of place.

For the emotional renewal Maris goes through by the end, I feel readers weren't with her long enough to believe the changes she had made internally. We were with her during the couple of weeks and while a couple of weeks can certainly have an impact on one's life, I was put off by how she had distanced herself from Calla almost entirely. It almost read like "hey my daughter is dead and my douche of an ex husband is gay and gone and I have a new life".

The ending felt too happy for the events and emotional journey the characters went on. I was satisfied with how Ron handled his situation. His character was handled well.

Lisa D - Sassy Cat Chat says

After reading The Missing Place by Sophie Littlefield, I was looking forward to reading her new novel The Guilty One. Sadly, I was disappointed.

I wanted to like this book but I just never connected with the story line. Honestly, I would love to be an editor and take my big red pen to most of it. The synopsis of the novel is completely misleading and that was where the disappointment started. The characters were stagnant, the story line was sluggish and most of the novel was extraneous.

What I thought was going to be a novel about the mother of a murdered child wrestling with the opportunity to take revenge on the family of her daughter's killer was really chapter upon chapter of the main characters whining about their lives and their own childhoods.

The actual murder, the deceased child and the killer were third string plot points. The event that the jacket copy exploits as the sum of the entire novel is a passing moment in the story.

Maris, the mother of the murdered daughter is a flat character who is uppity housewife turned pile of pitiful grief. Ron, the father of the murderer is a whining, self-loathing man who's part of the story was difficult to get through at all. We barely meet Kyle "the murderer" or Calla, our victim, which seems such a waste of good story potential.

The writing itself was simplistic and did not spark any imagination or feeling toward the story or characters. The text was full of misplaced and unnecessary three dollar words that make the book choppy to read.

All in all, I can't say I liked this book at all. The story was so disconnected from what the jacket copy touts as the story line and I feel the reader is just never given a quality storyline.

Renita D'Silva says

Beautiful, moving and profound. A story of love, loss and moving on despite the odds.

Elisa says

I received a free copy from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review. Thank you, Gallery Books! This book was listed as a mystery and a thriller, which is very misleading even if it's the reason I read it. Had I known it is about the feelings of those left behind, I wouldn't have been interested - and I would have missed out. The murder is just the back-story. The Guilty One is about two of the people most affected by the crime: the victim's mom and the presumed guilty one's dad. It is about starting over when the worst has happened - Maris is at rock bottom after her daughter is murdered. Ron is trying, and failing, to support his son, in prison for the crime. Maris accidentally starts a new life far away from the suburbs, and the people she meets, so different from her wealthy friends, help her get a new outlook in life. I would normally groan at this because it sounds like a cliché, but the book is so well-written and the characters so real, that I was dying to know what was going to happen next, honestly rooting for them. There was also a twist I didn't see coming, and the evolution of Maris, Ron and their loved ones, is truly heartwarming. This may not be a crime novel, but it would be a crime to miss it.

Clare O'Beara says

I just didn't enjoy this book.

A marriage is breaking up and the wife is just agreeing to the sale of the home when she gets a phone call from a man standing on the Golden Gate Bridge ready to jump. The rest of the tale is a string of minutiae

about broken glass, packing, the price of wings and fries, courtroom issues, who gets the barbecue stuff, someone being glad he didn't do anything really stupid when he was younger. There are descriptions of setting, hearing the horns on the freeway, but I don't love being there. And in the background there is an ongoing issue of whether someone killed someone and dumped the body.

This isn't a standard crime story. The woman tries to vanish and go under another name rather than turn amateur sleuth. I am not even sure I could call this women's fiction so I'll just leave it at contemporary fiction; there is some strong language, drinking and references to sex and violence. There's an interesting tweak at the end. Some readers might enjoy the story more than I did, maybe if they know the area of the setting.

I was sent an ARC and this is an unbiased review.
