

stephen king a good marriage book

stephen king a good marriage book is a compelling novella that explores the dark complexities hidden beneath the surface of a seemingly ordinary marriage. Written by the master of horror and suspense, Stephen King, this story delves into themes of trust, betrayal, and the shocking revelations that can upend a lifetime of companionship. The narrative is both chilling and thought-provoking, offering readers an intense psychological thriller experience. This article provides an in-depth look at the plot, characters, themes, and critical reception of Stephen King's "A Good Marriage" book. Additionally, it explores the adaptation of the story into other media and its place within King's extensive bibliography. For readers and fans of suspenseful literature, understanding the nuances of this work is essential.

- Overview of Stephen King's "A Good Marriage"
- Plot Summary
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- Stephen King's Writing Style in the Book

Overview of Stephen King's "A Good Marriage"

Stephen King's "A Good Marriage" is a novella originally published in the 2010 collection titled *Full Dark, No Stars*. The story stands out within King's vast repertoire for its exploration of domestic horror rather than supernatural elements. It tackles the unsettling reality that beneath the facade of a stable marriage can lurk dark secrets. The novella has attracted attention for its psychological depth and the way it examines the dynamics of trust and deception in intimate relationships.

Publication Background

The novella was released as part of a short story collection, showcasing King's ability to craft intense narratives within a limited word count. Its publication sparked conversations about the boundaries of horror and the portrayal of real-life fears in fiction. "A Good Marriage" demonstrates King's versatility beyond his more famous supernatural horror works.

Genre and Style

While categorized under horror and thriller, the narrative leans heavily on psychological suspense. The writing style combines straightforward prose with intricate character development, making the story accessible yet deeply unsettling. The novella's tone is tense and foreboding, maintaining suspense throughout the plot progression.

Plot Summary

The plot of Stephen King's "A Good Marriage" book revolves around Darcy Anderson, a woman who discovers a horrifying secret about her husband after more than two decades of marriage. The story unfolds as Darcy uncovers evidence that her husband, Bob, may be a serial killer. This revelation forces her to confront the reality of her life and the true nature of her marriage.

Key Plot Points

- Darcy finds a hidden item that links Bob to a series of unsolved murders.
- She grapples with disbelief and fear as she processes the implications.
- Darcy must decide whether to protect her family or expose the truth.
- The story builds tension as Bob's true nature becomes increasingly apparent.
- The climax centers on Darcy's moral dilemma and the consequences of her choices.

Setting and Timeline

The story is set primarily in the Anderson family home, emphasizing the contrast between the domestic environment and the sinister secret it hides. The timeline spans the duration of Darcy's discovery and her responses, compressed into a tense and gripping narrative arc.

Main Characters

The characters in "A Good Marriage" are crafted with psychological complexity, driving the story's emotional impact.

Darcy Anderson

Darcy is the protagonist, portrayed as a devoted wife whose world is shattered by her husband's dark secret. Her internal conflict and evolving perception of her marriage form the emotional core of the novella.

Bob Anderson

Bob is Darcy's husband, whose facade of normalcy masks a disturbing double life. His characterization is chilling, illustrating the theme of hidden evil within ordinary people.

Supporting Characters

While the focus remains on Darcy and Bob, other minor characters contribute to the narrative by representing societal norms and providing context for the couple's life.

Themes and Analysis

Stephen King's "A Good Marriage" book explores several profound themes that resonate with readers beyond the horror genre.

Trust and Betrayal

The novella examines the fragile nature of trust in intimate relationships and the devastating impact of betrayal. Darcy's journey reveals how well one can truly know another person.

The Duality of Human Nature

The story highlights the dual aspects of human personality, where outward appearances can conceal sinister impulses. This theme challenges readers to consider the complexities beneath social facades.

Moral Ambiguity

Darcy's decisions raise questions about morality, justice, and self-preservation. The ambiguity of her choices invites readers to reflect on ethical dilemmas faced in extreme circumstances.

Fear and Survival

Fear drives the narrative tension, influencing Darcy's actions as she navigates the shocking discovery. The theme of survival manifests both physically and psychologically.

Critical Reception

The novella received varied critical responses, with many praising King's ability to create suspense without supernatural elements. It was lauded for its tight storytelling and psychological depth. Some critics noted its departure from traditional horror, appreciating the focus on real-world terror.

Positive Reviews

- Effective use of domestic setting to amplify horror.
- Strong character development, particularly of Darcy.
- Engaging moral questions and suspenseful pacing.

Criticisms

Some reviewers felt the story's resolution was abrupt or lacked complexity in its depiction of Bob's character. Despite this, the novella remains a notable work within King's oeuvre.

Adaptations and Cultural Impact

Stephen King's "A Good Marriage" was adapted into a feature film released in 2014. The adaptation brought the story to a wider audience, maintaining the core plot and themes. The film contributed to discussions about the nature of evil and the portrayal of domestic horror in cinema.

Film Adaptation

The movie adaptation received mixed reviews but was recognized for its faithful representation of the source material's tension and psychological complexity. It helped solidify the novella's status as a significant work in King's later career.

Influence on Genre

"A Good Marriage" has influenced contemporary thriller and horror narratives by emphasizing psychological realism over supernatural elements. It demonstrates the power of suspense rooted in everyday life and relationships.

Stephen King's Writing Style in the Book

In "A Good Marriage," Stephen King employs a straightforward yet evocative writing style. His prose balances clarity with atmospheric tension, allowing readers to immerse themselves in the psychological drama. King's use of pacing and detail effectively builds suspense and emotional resonance throughout the novella.

Narrative Techniques

- First-person perspective to deepen reader connection with Darcy.
- Gradual revelation of key plot points to sustain suspense.
- Use of domestic imagery to contrast horror elements.
- Concise language that maintains a brisk narrative flow.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the plot of Stephen King's 'A Good Marriage'?

Stephen King's 'A Good Marriage' is a novella that tells the story of Darcy Anderson, who discovers her seemingly perfect husband harbors a dark and terrifying secret.

Is 'A Good Marriage' part of a book or a standalone story?

'A Good Marriage' is a standalone novella originally published in Stephen King's collection titled 'Full Dark, No Stars.'

What genre does 'A Good Marriage' belong to?

'A Good Marriage' is a psychological thriller and horror story, typical of Stephen King's style.

Has 'A Good Marriage' been adapted into a movie?

Yes, 'A Good Marriage' was adapted into a film released in 2014, directed by Peter Askin and starring Joan Allen and Anthony LaPaglia.

What themes are explored in 'A Good Marriage'?

The novella explores themes such as trust, deception, the nature of evil, and the dark secrets that can lurk within seemingly normal relationships.

When was 'A Good Marriage' published?

'A Good Marriage' was first published in 2010 as part of Stephen King's novella collection 'Full Dark, No Stars.'

Is 'A Good Marriage' based on a true story?

While 'A Good Marriage' is a work of fiction, Stephen King has mentioned that the story was inspired by real cases of serial killers living undetected among their families.

How long is the novella 'A Good Marriage'?

'A Good Marriage' is a relatively short novella, approximately 100 pages long depending on the edition.

What is the critical reception of 'A Good Marriage'?

'A Good Marriage' received generally positive reviews for its suspenseful narrative and psychological depth, though some critics noted it was less intense than some of King's longer works.

Where can I read or buy 'A Good Marriage'?

'A Good Marriage' can be found in the anthology 'Full Dark, No Stars,' available in bookstores, online retailers, and digital platforms like Kindle and Audible.

Additional Resources

1. *A Good Marriage* by Stephen King

This novella, part of the collection "Full Dark, No Stars," explores the unsettling discovery a woman makes about her husband after many years of marriage. When Darcy finds a hidden secret in Bob's closet, her world unravels, forcing her to confront terrifying truths. The story delves into themes of trust, deception, and the dark undercurrents that can exist beneath a seemingly perfect relationship.

2. *Misery* by Stephen King

In this psychological thriller, novelist Paul Sheldon is held captive by his "number one fan," Annie Wilkes, after a car accident. The intense and disturbing relationship between captor and captive explores obsession, control, and survival. Though not about marriage per se, the novel deeply examines toxic dependency and power dynamics within intimate relationships.

3. *Gerald's Game* by Stephen King

Jessie and her husband Gerald go to a secluded cabin to rekindle their marriage, but a game gone wrong leaves Jessie handcuffed to a bed with Gerald dead nearby. Alone and trapped, Jessie must confront her past traumas and inner demons to survive. The novel is a harrowing psychological exploration of marriage, abuse, and resilience.

4. *Dolores Claiborne* by Stephen King

This novel tells the story of Dolores, a housekeeper accused of murder, and her complicated relationship with her daughter and her late husband. Through Dolores's confession, the narrative reveals the dark and oppressive marriage she endured. It is a gripping tale of female strength, survival, and the cost of freedom.

5. *Secret Window, Secret Garden* by Stephen King (from "Four Past Midnight")

Writer Mort Rainey's peaceful life is shattered when a stranger accuses him of plagiarism. The story uncovers themes of trust, betrayal, and fractured relationships, highlighting the fragile nature of personal bonds and identity crises that can affect marriages. It's a psychological thriller with a focus on personal unraveling rather than traditional marriage.

6. *The Girl Who Loved Tom Gordon* by Stephen King

While primarily a survival story, this novel subtly explores the bond between a young girl and her

family, particularly the longing for connection and safety. The relationship dynamics and emotional undercurrents reflect on parental love and the impact of familial ties, which are foundational to understanding adult relationships and marriages.

7. *Elevation* by Stephen King

This novella centers on Scott Carey, who experiences a strange physical transformation while dealing with societal prejudices in his small town. Amidst these challenges, the story touches on themes of acceptance, empathy, and human connection, which are vital to healthy relationships and marriages. It's a gentle yet profound meditation on love and understanding.

8. *The Shining* by Stephen King

Jack Torrance takes a job as a winter caretaker at the isolated Overlook Hotel, hoping to rebuild his family and his life. However, supernatural forces and Jack's own personal demons strain his marriage and endanger his family. The novel examines the pressures and breakdowns within a marriage under extreme stress and isolation.

9. *Thinner* by Richard Bachman (Stephen King's pseudonym)

This story follows an overweight lawyer cursed by a gypsy to lose weight uncontrollably. As his life spirals out of control, the strain on his marriage and personal relationships becomes evident. It is a dark exploration of guilt, punishment, and the consequences of one's actions on loved ones.

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