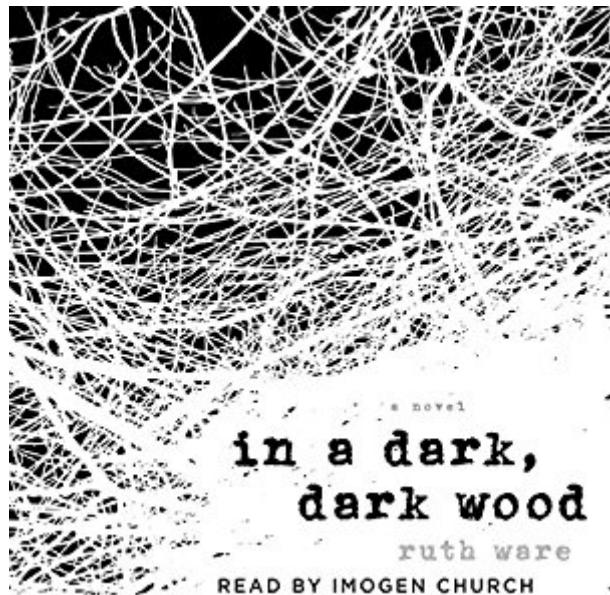


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In A Dark, Dark Wood



Synopsis

What should be a cozy and fun-filled weekend deep in the English countryside takes a sinister turn in Ruth Ware's suspenseful, compulsive, and darkly twisted psychological thriller. Leonora, known to some as Lee and others as Nora, is a reclusive crime writer, unwilling to leave her nest of an apartment unless it is absolutely necessary. When a friend she hasn't seen or spoken to in years unexpectedly invites Nora (Lee) to a weekend away in an eerie glass house deep in the English countryside, she reluctantly agrees to make the trip. Forty-eight hours later, she wakes up in a hospital bed injured but alive, with the knowledge that someone is dead. Wondering not "what happened?" but "what have I done?", Nora (Lee) tries to piece together the events of the past weekend. Working to uncover secrets, reveal motives, and find answers, Nora (Lee) must revisit parts of herself that she would much rather leave buried where they belong: in the past. In the tradition of Paula Hawkins' instant New York Times best seller *The Girl on the Train* and S. J. Watson's riveting national sensation *Before I Go to Sleep*, this gripping literary debut from UK novelist Ruth Ware will leave you on the edge of your seat through the very last tick.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I have to admit up front that I was very disappointed in *In a Dark, Dark Wood*. The story centers on Nora, a 26 year old crime fiction writer who is sometimes referred to by other characters as Lee, Leonora, or Leo. Nora is invited to a bachelorette weekend party to celebrate the marriage of Clare, a person she hasn't seen in a decade. The reunion is awkward (Clare is marrying Nora's old boyfriend) and the guests include various stereotypes: the mentally unhinged Flo, catty Tom,

stressed out new mom Melanie, and sassy best friend Nina. Toss in lots of alcohol, a little cocaine, and plenty of bad feelings and you have the makings of a really unpleasant party. And then there's a murder which leaves Nora battered with amnesia trying to put her memories back together. Touted as a mystery in the Agatha Christie mold the story plays out more like a Scooby-doo tale. The author drops conspicuous clues repetitively. Two characters who are of similar build wear identical clothing (Jinkies!) and there's a shotgun hanging on the wall loaded with blanks (Ruh-roh). There are other warning signs as well -- no phone service, mysterious footprints and a missing cell phone. The author lays out the clues in an heavy handed, overt manner. The characters come across as fairly shallow and juvenile. There didn't seem to be anyone to root for -- not even the murder victim. The ending is quite obvious -- although not to Nora which reinforces her characterization as incredibly dim (especially for a crime fiction writer). I don't want to give out any spoilers, but the tea drinking conversation near the end of the book is ludicrous. I can not recommend this book.

This is a very quick read. Leonora, or Nora, as she goes by now, hasn't spoken with her childhood best friend in a decade and is taken aback to be included in her hen weekend. Scheduled for November, in a secluded second home in the titular dark, dark wood, Nora is hesitant, but curious. Another school friend, with whom she hasn't lost touch, joins her - though they both soon regret it as they are thrust into an intimate setting with virtual strangers. The atmosphere of the novel isn't quite as eerie as the cover suggests, but the purposeful references to Agatha Christie novels do lend this a familiar sort of feel - a sort of modernized locked room mystery. The isolation of the setting does work well to amplify the tension - limited cell service, a downed landline and mysterious tracks in the snow all add up to a downright pageturner. The brief chapters help keep the pages flipping on, too. There is plenty of relationship drama here and a shifting chronology for the first half of the novel especially makes this a fast-paced read. The latter half of the novel moves to a more streamlined timeline, but this doesn't bog down that pacing at all. The plot does follow some expected paths, but Ware still manages to toss in a few genuine surprises. It's an exciting read and definitely a solid debut! I look forward to reading more from her in the future!

I saw the reviews and kept thinking I must be reading a different book. The characters are one dimensional and their actions are telegraphed - as is much of the plot. She hits a stride - builds a sense of foreboding with the description of the trees and the house - but there is so much introduced that takes you in a different direction and goes nowhere. It's very disjointed - and the actions just aren't credible (in fact without spoiling anything, there's a section at the end with

characters having tea that is laughable.) And the main character leaving the hospital! A patient in that condition - police surrounding her, nurses in and out but magically she eludes all and sneaks out. No clothing - it's middle of winter. She walks half dead one presumes at this point, to her destination. The main character dwells at length about herself and repeatedly asks herself the same questions. We get it. She's supposed to have lost her memory. And the writer builds her story around a premise that just doesn't make sense. She doesn't mention the secret the main character has been dealing with until the end - and you figure it must be a doozy since she dropped out of her life at the time. You learn of it and go "Huh?" And it took her ten years to figure something out that the reader almost instantly suspects is what happened. I mean - it's just silly. Actions are telegraphed. And she makes much of the result of a game - but we are never told how that result came about. The writer has the main character surmise that "perhaps" Clare's subconscious thinking did it. I mean. Come on. Clues are dropped like anvils. It's sophomoric. You can flip countless pages and not miss a thing. Don't recommend.

Time to party, so let's all take jogs in the snow, shoot clay pigeons and mess around with a Ouija board. For some reason, our narrator decides to go to the "hen" party of a girl she hasn't spoken to in ten years, whose wedding she hasn't been invited to, and doesn't even know who the girl is marrying. The identity of the groom is one of the surprises, like the fact that outside of the maid of honor, none of the other bridesmaids get invited to the party (???) No one really seems to know anyone else, in fact, which is apparently supposed to heighten the suspense. But halfway through the book when the incredibly contrived murder takes place, it's undercut by the fact that the victim is someone we haven't even been introduced to yet except by vague narrator exposition, and don't care about at all. The local cops are inept enough to let two people escape from a hospital while investigating a murder they're both linked to, and the murderer seems to miss the point of framing someone. Too many head-scratchers in this one for me.

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