



Little Girls

Ronald Malfi

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From Bram Stoker Award nominee Ronald Malfi comes a chilling novel of childhood revisited, memories resurrected, and fears reborn . . .

After years away, Laurie returns to the home where she was raised by a cold, distant father who recently exorcised his demons. But no amount of cleaning can wipe away the troubled past. She feels it lurking in the broken moldings, sees it staring from an empty picture frame, hears it laughing in the moldy greenhouse deep in the woods . . .

At first, Laurie thinks she's imagining things. But when she meets her daughter's new playmate, she notices her uncanny resemblance to another little girl who used to live next door. Who *died* next door. With each passing day, Laurie's uneasiness grows stronger, her thoughts more disturbing. Like her father, is she slowly losing her mind? Or is something truly unspeakable happening?

"Much more than a haunted house story." —*Cemetery Dance Magazine*

"Takes well-known tropes and completely turns them around." —IHeartReading

"Slowly but surely creeps under your skin." —The Horror Bookshelf

"The perfect ghost story." —HorrorBuzz

Little Girls Details

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From Reader Review Little Girls for online ebook

Shelby *trains flying monkeys* says

I keep saying that little girls scare the crap outta me. Once they become teenagers there is no return.

Laurie's dad has died. Well, he committed suicide after suffering from dementia for years. So Laurie, her daughter Susan and husband go to his house to get rid of his stuff and put the house up for sale. Then stuff starts to go a bit wonky. Laurie is hearing noises in the house. There is a room that she wasn't allowed into when she was a little girl that is still locked. Come to find out that's where her dad died at....So is the house haunted?

I think I know this house as well as I know my own after reading this book. The author did like going all descriptive.

"The woodwork is handmade. Do you see the detailing in the balustrade?" They were in the foyer now, with Ms. Canton pointing at the stairwell banister. This was their second lap around the house and the woman had yet to make any notes in her little black binder. "The spindles look hand-carved. Do you see the variants in each spindle? Do you?"

Once I woke up from that boring shit the book actually wasn't too bad.

You do have a well on the property that gets things threw down and "wishes" made.

Then there is little Abigail from next door that look so much like a little girl that died when Laurie was a young girl.

Ms. Nikki says

Kensington was generous enough to send me a copy for review

Laurie doesn't seem to remember much about her childhood and the home she once lived in. But with the death of her estranged father who had been suffering from dementia, Laurie is forced to go to the one place that holds memories that are best forgotten.

As days pass by Laurie questions her sanity and her past as she begins to think her daughter's playmate is a little girl she used to know. A girl who wasn't so nice to Laurie, a girl who has a secret that she's no longer content to keep to herself. But first, she needs Laurie to remember.

A slow and steady read that is sure to raise a few hairs.

Ivonne Rovira says

Laurie Gennaro née Brashear feels frankly uneasy returning to her childhood home. After the divorce, Laurie drew apart from her emotionally distant dad, Myles Brashear, and she hadn't even spoken to her now dementia-addled father in six months. Now that he has committed suicide, Laurie leaves her home in Hartford, Connecticut, to Greater Annapolis to settle her father's affairs, tidy up, and sell the rambling house.

Accompanied by her husband Ted and 10-year-old daughter Susan, Laurie returns to the house to find that the girl next door bears an uncanny resemblance to a frighteningly cruel girl she knew who died nearly 30 years ago.

To tell any more would be to spoil a story that starts out at a stroll but gradually turns into a heart-thumping race toward a completely unexpected conclusion. I read the second half of the novel in just a few hours; I just couldn't put it down, as cliché as that sounds. And the horror of Ronald Malfi's *Little Girls* will stay with me for a long, long time. Don't miss it.

In the interest of full disclosure, I received this book from NetGalley and Kensington Books in exchange for an honest review.

Evans Light says

Other reviewers have already summarized the plot, so I am focusing strictly on the pros and cons of this book as a reading experience.

This is the first novel I've read by Ronald Malfi, and I find myself torn.

On one hand, the prose was excellent and highly readable. The book sets the mood perfectly, and the pages fly by, even when not much at all is happening. Malfi excels at description, and the settings he constructs are vivid and real as are the characters, for the most part.

On the other, the first two-thirds of the book was essentially filler. Pleasant to read, but fluff nonetheless. Plotting was the primary problem I had with this book, and unexpected revelations by several characters during the latter portion severely undermined the care taken to make them real during the placid first two-thirds of the story. Deus ex machina to the extreme.

Upon even slight reflection it is readily apparent that the plot (when it finally emerges) hinges on a series of highly unlikely, severely unrealistic events that neatly unfold one after the other with precision timing, dominoes set to topple.

These distracting plotting devices would likely pass by unnoticed if the story was being presented on film, but in a book you have the luxury of stopping and considering the words just read. At one point the coincidental timing of occurrences became so ludicrous that I almost abandoned the book, but the prose was so pleasant I decided to continue on to the end. Despite the contortions of logic required to arrive at the final page, Malfi succeeds in wrapping the tale in perfectly satisfying fashion.

Ronald Malfi is clearly a writer of considerable skill, and I will for certain give his work another look in the future (Floating Staircase is up next).

3.5 Stars for a beautifully written but flawed ghost story.

Gary says

I have discovered one of my favorite authors. Malfi creates his characters brilliantly. He maintains a consistent voice for each throughout, making it seem as if they are real people. This is an integral part of immersion for me. When I become invested in the characters and begin to care about them, the suspense, tension and ratcheting up of the action draws me in more completely. For me, reading is an escape- a release into an alternate world regardless of who or what is around me. The more skilled the author, the more complete the escape.

This author transported me time and time again to the family of three- the mother with a dementia ridden father, a suicide, and childhood memories haunting her in the background like a shadow.

The child's voice, Susan, is consistent and endearing. The imagery is ominous, foreboding and effective. For example, the flowers aptly named after the child in the wave in silent recognition of some of the plot elements that are revealed later in the novel.

The characters are well rounded, flawed and all too human which makes them even more likeable. It's hard to imagine a creepier setting than this old house with all of it's memories.

The author isolates characters well which creates a shrewd tightening of the plot and suspense, putting specific characters in interactions with others that allows their personalities to emerge more clearly. For example, Susan is juxtaposed with the little girl next door, Abigail, as well as Laura's childhood self and perhaps even Sadie, the little girl who died in a horrible manner many years ago. The plot has the feel of a noose gradually tightening as the characters work the spiraling way around one another to the end of the story.

I felt the pace pick up as the novel progressed. One of the marks of a great writer, in my opinion, is the ability to end well. This author used pacing techniques and dramatic irony to accelerate the story as it neared the end. I couldn't put it down. I know I have a book I really enjoy when I find myself wanting to read it right away in the morning and it was the last thing I read when I went to sleep.

Great book, excellent author, and I hope his other books are this solid. 5 stars.

Dana **Reads Alot**** says**

Thank you Kennsington for allowing me the opportunity and Ronald Malfi to read this fabulous book. I read it all in one sitting. The house had a very creepy vibe the reminded me of in the movie "The Others" with Nicole Kidman. The story however is nothing like it.

Laurie's father recently died by apparent suicide by his illness of dementia. So she has to take her family back to her family home to square away matters with the house and assets. She is not looking forward to this. She has no pleasant memories of her childhood home. Her father was cold and distant.

as they stay in the home unsettling things start to happen. Laurie starts to question how her father really died...the help does not want to really say all that much. Her daughter becomes friends with a girl named Abigail and its an uncanny resemblance to her own childhood friend that was awful to her and she wonders could that be a ghost of her childhood friend.

Laurie starts to hear things in the house. Little girls talking, doors slamming...the ending was petrifying but I

loved this book. because I love a good ghost story and this is surely it. Highly recommend it. There is some 9 a few) strong violent incidents that happen in the book but not many to throw this book to the curb.

Elaine says

This creepy ghosty story is a slow burner of a read that draws you in and intrigues you as to what is going on. Laurie and her husband Ted, together with their 10 year old daughter Susan are on a trip to the town Laurie grew up in. Her father has recently died in mysterious circumstances, assumed to have committed suicide, and she has to settle his affairs. We have a very sinister unwelcoming sounding house, complete with a belvedere that is locked up with no key provided and an extremely creepy little girl, Abigail, who lives next door and who befriends Susan. There are things buried away in Laurie's past that her memory has squashed down and which her husband certainly doesn't know about, but these memories are about to be triggered in a read that will certainly have you checking the locks on your doors and windows before you go to sleep. There were times when the book was really gripping and every so often a little twist would come along which meant that on the whole the book was a lot less predictable than I was expecting. Having said that I just KNEW what was going to happen on the last page of the book. Not a bad read at all. Thanks to the publishers for the review copy.

Kimberly says

4.5 stars!

LITTLE GIRLS is an atmospheric, supernatural, gothic-style read that flowed perfectly for me from beginning to end. From the very start, when Laurie Genarro, with her husband. Ted. and daughter, Susan, travel to Laurie's father's estate after his apparent suicide, you can feel that nothing is what it seems on the surface. Laurie's unease continues to build--whether from the memory of a childhood friend's death, or her own mental issues--the tension relentlessly ratchets up. There were quite a few twists to the story; some of which I suspected, and others that came as a complete surprise.

Malfi keeps on adding to the suspense with small occurrences that hint at a much deeper significance, and his incredibly descriptive prose. In one scene, Laurie comes upon a small greenhouse that her father used to tend: *"The smell coming from the structure was rank enough to transcend olfaction; it was as if all of her five senses were capable of being brutalized by the horrific odor of rotting vegetation."*

If you're looking for a quick blood-drenched massacre, you won't find that here. What you will find is a quiet, stealthy horror that will have you holding your breath until the final page. In terms of atmospheric dread and fear, Malfi is one of the best authors around today that consistently delivers.

Highly recommended!

I received an advance e-copy of this book through NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

Autumn Is Azathoth The Haunted Reading Room says

REVIEW: LITTLE GIRLS by Ronald Malfi

Ronald Malfi has been a "must read" author since I first encountered his novel FLOATING STAIRCASE, followed by THE MOURNING HOUSE (shivers!), truly outstanding writing. In LITTLE GIRLS, he gets "down and dirty" with serious topics, resulting in serious horror. This is one of those stories of which I am hard pressed to decide which contains the greater horror and evil: the supernatural element or the human element. Both are suffused. I recommend you set aside a block of time to read LITTLE GIRLS; you will not want to stop. Do try to read in daylight, and definitely not during any severe storms.

Yzabel Ginsberg says

[I received a copy through NetGalley, in exchange for an honest review.]

An idea that seemed creepy and interesting, but that just fell flat for me.

The beginning was rather slow, with descriptions that quickly became too tedious to go through, and often the dialogues felt useless and too on the "daily conversation" side. It worked at first, to establish the normalcy of the situation (as normal as it could be considering the circumstances); however, after a while, breakfast banter and the likes didn't bring anything to the story, and were tiring to go through. I skimmed some of those parts, hoping to get to the next creepy bit, since creepy is what I wanted.

Too many of the characters' actions and thoughts were told, rather than shown. Although it's never easy when dealing with psychological aspects, as obviously a lot is internalised and cannot necessarily be "shown", here I never felt close to the characters, as if I was meant to stand remote, and watch them without "feeling" anything for them—especially when flashbacks were concerned. At times, they would come out of nowhere, at length, and then mentioned again later to other characters, almost in passing: maybe it would've worked better for me if I could have read them at those moments, when they were more relevant, and not at some random point in the first chapters. When Laurie's secrets started surfacing (what Sadie did to her, for instance), I couldn't bother caring anymore. I could muster neither much interest nor compassion for Laurie or Ted—who had a knack also for coming up with his own crap when it wasn't needed. (Seriously? You really had to tell ease your guilt by telling your wife, when clearly she was going through her father's death and potentially getting crazy?)

The ending was frustrating. It hinted at a specific event, but without spelling it, and echoed in this way the fact that no answer was given as to whether Laurie was actually crazy or not. I still don't know now if she imagined everything, was just stressed out, was haunted by an actual ghost, was plain crazy... In this regard, a more definite ending would have been more satisfying for me. It seemed to me that there wasn't that much of a plot, and that the "ghost" didn't do much for most of the story except just be there. Not to mention the twist about Laurie's father, coming when I didn't care anymore. I admit I finished reading because I expected an answer... and I never really got one.

I liked the setting, though: the creepy house with its old furniture, the well and the dilapidated glass house that were clearly a catastrophe in the making, the photographs of little girls kept in an album, what Laurie discovered in the garage. Still, it wasn't enough to sell me on this novel. 1.5 stars.

Kelly (and the Book Boar) says

Find all of my reviews at: <http://52bookminimum.blogspot.com/>

Dear Magic 8 Ball, What are the chances of me *really* writing a rave review of a book that I read over a month ago . . .

That's what I figured.

When I saw "Bram Stoker Award Nominee" combined with the premise of a woman returning to her potentially haunted childhood home I was all over getting my hands on a copy of *Little Girls*. Unfortunately, when a book tells me it's going to be about creepy maybe dead girls, my mind wants the story to go right for the gusto . . .

What can I say? I'm a fan of the stabby stabby. If that's what you're looking for too, then save *Little Girls* for another day. Now, if you're interested in more of a paranormal *mystery* than edge of your seat terror, this might be the book for you. This is a story that really moseys along at a leisurely pace investing lots of page space on details. It is very clear the **house** is a main character. If you're a fan of the ol' "Antiques Roadshow" and love to hear about the beauty of Chippendale dressers (mind out of the gutter, Jeff) and whatnot, you'll probably eat this right up . . .

However, if you are like me and sometimes find your attention span waning while you're getting bogged down in description, again this one might not be for you. Of course, you could always turn it into a drinking game a la "Frasier" . . .

A final note is that although I knew *some* of what was happening right away, it took me quite a while to figure out exactly where the story would wrap up. I will also say the twist isn't something not all readers will be comfortable with . . .

All in all I found *Little Girls* to be a solid 3 Star selection.

ARC provided by NetGalley in exchange for an honest review. Thank you, NetGalley!

sue says

OMG Omg OMG, this for me is a 'hide behind the sofa' 'bite your nails' kind of read.

Its **GREAT** makes your heart pound, makes your put your hands over your eyes and peep through the crack of your fingers, well, it did **me**

I don't read much horror, I'm a scaredy cat. I don't much like things that go "bump in the night" I end up with nightmares, but to some, this book may be mild, but for me, I jump at Jaws [the film] when I first watched it years ago.

Laurie has to return home to reclaim her estate left by her parents. Except, although her father had exorcised his demons, I don't think he did it right, because things start to happen.

Laurie has a little girl of her own.

Its like the house is **alive** the walls have ears and as for that attic upstairs.....

Is she loosing her mind like her father before her?

Just what sinister happenings are going on, is there a logic to them or are there really ghosts? Are there evil spirits, are there people from the past that can come back to haunt you?

I never had long nails in the first place, and I certainly don't have them now!

No wonder this author was nominated for an award.

Thoroughly breath taking.

**** Thank you to Kensington Books via Net Galley for my copy****

Sandy *The world could end while I was reading and I would never notice* says

This is one of those wonderfully creepy books that draws you in as it goes along, captivating and enthralling you, making the hairs prickle on the back of your neck.

Laurie returns to her family home after years of estrangement from her demented father to dispose of the estate following his suicide.

Bringing her husband and daughter with her, Laurie feels unsettled: a feeling that only intensifies when she meets Abigail, the little girl next door. The little girl who is a dead ringer for the little girl who lived next

door when she was a child; who bullied and manipulated her; and who died a violent death. A little girl who taunts her and whispers things to her that she should not know.

With each passing day, Laurie's uneasiness grows stronger, her thoughts more disturbing. Like her father, is she slowly losing her mind? Or is something truly unspeakable happening?

Thank you to NetGalley, Kensington Books and author Ronald Malfi for the opportunity to read this book in exchange for an honest review.

Jaidee says

2.5 "I saw it coming ...I saw all of it coming" stars !!!

This was my 2016 Halloween read and all I kept thinking were two things:

" When is this going to get scary ?" It did get scary after 47 percent of the book !

"Gawd I am guessing this so perfectly. I know every single twist and surprise !"

I appreciate the tone and theme that Mr. Malfi was trying to get across and with some major editing and reworking this could have been a very good horror/mystery combination but instead it came out very predictable and only half-decent. I did not regret reading it but felt a pretty good plot could have been executed and written in a much more scary and horrific manner.

I will leave you with a quote :

"Children were the problem, little girls were what terrified her. They constantly stared wit the slack, insensate faces of dullards. Dried food on their cheeks and mouths, mealy crust in their eyes, rogue bulbs of snot yo-yoing in and out of narrow little nostrils, bright orange vegetation sprouting sporelike from ear canals... It was children she feared, with their thin, probing paws, fingernails ground to nubby scales tinged in dried blood...."

Hmmm is your kid that cute ??

Jon Recluse says

When a man in the grips of dementia apparently commits suicide, his estranged daughter returns home to pick up the pieces, only to discover that the shadows of the past have unfinished business with her and her family.

This creepy tale of family secrets and their repercussions leaves readers with more questions than

answers.....questions that will keep them up long into the night, leading to answers that will fuel more than a few nightmares.

This was an eARC from Netgalley.
