



The Crying Child

Barbara Michaels

Download now

Read Online →

The Crying Child

Barbara Michaels

The Crying Child Barbara Michaels

From the moment she arrived on King's Island, Joanne McMullen knew that her sister's grief over losing her child had driven her dangerously close to madness. But when Joanne heard the same child's voice that her sister had heard wailing in the woods, she knew something terrible was happening!

The Crying Child Details

Date : Published April 1st 1989 by Berkley (first published 1971)

ISBN : 9780425115848

Author : Barbara Michaels

Format : Paperback 289 pages

Genre : Mystery, Gothic, Fiction, Romance, Fantasy, Supernatural, Romantic Suspense, Suspense, Thriller, Mystery Thriller

 [Download The Crying Child ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online The Crying Child ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online The Crying Child Barbara Michaels

From Reader Review The Crying Child for online ebook

Rachel Larow says

As a quick disclaimer this book was written in the early 70's so the writing style is likely a bit different from what I'm used to reading. That said, the beginning felt rather slow to me and didn't really grab my attention; the hauntings were intriguing but not very scary; and in the end one ghost effectually exorcised the other, making the humans' involvement in the plot moot.

On the positive side the book did KEEP my attention once it got going. There was a little "love story" which was rather minor, (and when the guy finally kissed the girl it seemed to come from nowhere - totally unexpected! still I liked to watch them sort of come together.

It's a decent read for a lazy weekend, but not one you need to go out and get right now.

Rebecca says

Disappointed with the ending. The book started out so well too.

Erin *Proud Book Hoarder* says

Come on, just the title alone is worth a second glance, right?

As usual Michaels indulges in cozy storytelling with a different twist on her characters. Here the heroine of the story is suffering from desiring forbidden fruit, so to speak, but is highly moral and won't follow Eve's path. Between her urge for independence and witty humor - and thankfully less of a bitchy nature than many other Michaels characters - she's another likable act to follow. The sister Mary is an intriguing one, not a usual for Michaels, a little reminiscent of an early, watered down V.C. Andrews character. She's frail and fragile, being protected from all sides, yet with a cunning glint in her eye when it suits her. Her husband was just in between, a character to feel for but no one who overly stands out. Overall, as always, the blend is a gripping one that only serves the stories purpose.

Plot wise, it's another good one. You never know with her books whether there really is something supernatural, or whether it's something that ends up being disproven. I won't spoil that part for you, but will say the emphasis the supernatural is handled a little less than usual. It's the main theme of the story, but doesn't involve the same sort of endless debates, research, and multiple signs and symptoms other novels share. While not as detailed, it's still as mystifying, and I in no way could imagine the ending. In fact, the revelation was a smidge creepy, which is also abnormal for Michaels.

Pace wise, it's lightning as she hops on the plane in chapter one and conjures up important facts in her mind, then plunges right into the heart of the matter. A reader and fan of mysteries won't grow bored. The trademark love story is of course present as always, without much steam or surprise. Suspense is high when it's meant to be in scarce parts, and Michaels typical language use is appealing.

On the downside, while the story didn't drag its feet and remained interesting, I didn't stay 100% glued in all parts. More action would have spruced up a few scenes. This is one of Michael's earlier works and it

wouldn't have hurt to flesh out a few characters more, particularly the good old doctor. His enthusiasm for his patients seemed a little overdone and stereotypical as well. It was never explained about his avid treatment of the psychiatrist, but the end result leaves the reader assuming it was all in the heroine's head. From reading the story, to me it wasn't, and them having a sort of conversation about it would have been preferred. Overall a sweet ending (after the chilling part, of course)

If you're in the mood for a delightful little mystery with a tinge of morbidity, *The Crying Child*'s your midnight companion.

C. says

Oh, a rare mystery for adults: solving the reason for a haunting! Penned in a modern-feeling 1971, "**The Crying Child**" is compelling immediately. Jo quickly observes that what seems like her sister, Mary, breaking-down is something else. I loved there being no "*no one will believe me*" nonsense. There are vigorous, intelligent debates about why the disturbers could be ghosts. I savour **Barbara's** composition: wholly natural characters thinking as we would - not always so in fiction. Personalities strike approving chords, calling it as we would see it!

Wit and dialogue capture real life, without adverbs or any descriptions in superfluity. What **Barbara** does describe, like Jo's refusal of a séance: you never heard anything so astute and yet worded like no one has ever thought to arrange words before. "*I'm not afraid of a fake medium, or a séance that flops. I'm afraid of one that might succeed*". *Ran looked disturbed but I knew he couldn't possibly be as revolted by the idea as I was. He hadn't seen the thing that would come in answer to such a summoning*".

The only bump is awareness at the end, that one or two ideas aren't followed-up. The cast suggests that Mary might have spoken with an apparition but don't try to interview either of them. The crying seems to be pointless, along with occult symbols and possible involvement. These might be guesses that fell away but the summary could have tightened all the threads more thoroughly. Lastly, an informative keepsake inside the vast house would be exciting enough. Detouring it to an antique store stretched luck. Mild observations about pages I flew through: five stars! If all novels were so engrossing to me, if I read only my favourite kind; I would whoosh through the annual number my contemporaries do.

Sistermaggie says

Another fun Barbara Michaels ghost story, this one set in a creepy house in Maine full of towers that look out on the sea. Somewhere a baby's crying, calling Mary, who recently had a miscarriage, out to care for it. Her husband, Ran (talk about a romance hero name!) calls her sister, Jo, back to help her and the family sets out to solve the mystery along with the oh-so-New England couple who helps out at the house, Ran's best friend Will and a pantsuit-wearing glamorpuss psychiatrist.

As with the other Barbara Michaels I read, the book's almost more notable for the late 60s/early 70s atmosphere than the spooky one. Jo is young and hip, arguing with her older sister about listening to the Beatles (who her sister insists on calling "The Insects"). Will has to get over his sexism to get together with Jo, though frankly he never seems to get over it as far as I can see. Early on he diagnoses Mary as suffering simply from being spoiled and petulant, having never had to deal with stress, despite the fact that Mary was orphaned young, raised a younger sister and has had several miscarriages. I was a little disappointed at the way none of the characters ever brought Mary into the mystery solving. As sexist as Will's dismissals are, I

couldn't see why everyone else agreed that Mary ought to be treated like an invalid just because she was most vulnerable to the ghosts.

Jo herself has to get over her crush on older sister's handsome, sexy husband that she's been coveting since puberty--which I suspect was pretty daring at the time the book was written! In fact, the roles of women are obviously a central subject for the author, as one of the ghosts that haunt the house was also the victim of a misogynist society.

Kristina says

Some of her books hold up over the years, some don't. The mystery/creepiness in this one is still good, but it is dated by its references musical groups such as the Who and The Beatles (they are "far out"--outdated lingo)and women don't wear jeans and everyone smokes.

Book says

When one is reading Ms Barbara Michaels's work, one cannot deny her ability of perception (as to from which angle she views a scene) and her craft of mingling her thoughts with the gravity of words. The moment when I came across this book, I was hardly aware who Miss Michaels was. Having picked it from a second sale lot, I loved the yellow texture of the pages and the sweet pungent smell radiated by the age of the copy which I found to be 22 years old.

Now it is the kind of a book which might seem tedious if you do not pay much attention to the writing style and which occurs when one is merely habitual of picking up the plot as they read on and not interested in the play of characters and scenes. But if you are one of those readers who vigilantly swim across each line of every page, this one is a treat.

When Joe receives an imploring call from her millionaire brother-in-law Ran Fraser (whom she always considered undeniably handsome) asking her to come and stay with him and Mary (Joe's sister) in his lavish property located on a secluded island where the couple had headed for the summer, Joe couldn't deny the offer even though she was far from feeling enthusiastic about taking a vacation (she had just started on her road to an independent life). Her elder sister Mary Fraser having suffered a miscarriage recently has fallen into the arms of grief and a possible mental breakdown. Ran feeling helpless towards his wife's condition looks out for Joe's help knowing that she is the only person who can penetrate the walls of Mary's solitude and help her recuperate.

When Joe joins them, does she finally realize how severe the state of her sister is. A woman who had been not only a sister but a mother and a friend to Joe her whole life, has now turned into a lost creature engulfed by her unfortunate circumstances. Mary whose behavior could not be stated as undeniably crazy but clearly resigned. Randomly mumbling words in private conversations, unexpected alterations in Mary's mannerisms and uncalled blows of lethargy are other noticeable symptoms. During a conversation with Joe, Mary claims to have heard voices of a crying child reaching her from somewhere inside of the woods and which in her opinion are the cries of the spirit of her unborn child. A development, which to everyone around at first, seems to be the effect of her grief is proved legit when one night Joe also hears the cry that sounds innocent but ghastly alluring.

Again what I have revealed so far is available in the synopsis. The book carries many more elements to keep

you connected. As the book progresses, many more characters pour in, days pass by and the situation only deepens bringing every person at the disposal of the house come into the play of understanding the mystery of the Fraser house and deciphering it. The book is mainly about unveiling the shadow that is hovering over the Frasers. Interesting characters, mocking tone of the narrator (Joe) is entertaining. Ingenious scenes and conversations embedded in various backdrops help readers to visualize the geography of the house and surroundings and also in building the Gothic character of the tale. I wouldn't say it's a typical horror book that freaks out your mind, but it has an intense (if not very dark) and engrossing personality to it. Worth your time.

Michael says

This is typical Barbara Michaels "cozy gothic" fare. There's a beautiful old mansion, some mildly spooky occurrences (with a mystery to unravel), and a side-story romance (which in most cases is very sparsely sketched). If you like her other gothic novels, you'll probably like this, too. It seems about on par with the several others I've already read.

I found it rather blandly enjoyable, but there were also some of the same irritations I almost always find in this author's works. The overtly old-school feminist angle gets old, for instance. (More on the annoyances below, in the spoiler section.)

So... It was okay. Neither bad nor great. I'll probably keep reading these books, every so often, because some of them *are* better than others (and maybe my mood and other factors come into play, too). If you want something to (more or less) pleasantly pass a little time without requiring much concentration or emotional investment, this will do. <

Specifics (with SPOILERS):

--At least in this book there wasn't a heavy reliance on the word "chauvinist", but there were still things like this: (view spoiler) Not to say that there's *no* truth to any of that, but it's so heavy-handed! I came here looking for an escape, not a lecture on the bad old days...

--These books so often have such an odd attitude toward religion. It annoys me when the same character who has witnessed and acknowledged and *accepted* paranormal phenomena still acts like Christianity (or any religion, probably) is suspect and not to be taken too seriously. Um, so ghosts/spiritual manifestations are *completely real*, but the Bible just isn't plausible? ...Okay, then. Silly of me to have expected a little more open-mindedness from characters who've just gone through a series of events that challenged so many *other* preconceived notions.

--One of the two openly religious characters says things like this: "I'm not saying our kind of faith was a purely good thing. It can be awfully narrow and cruel." *eyeroll* No obnoxious stereotyping here, no siree.

--"I don't know what you think about the soul, or survival after death, or anything like that; the important thing is what Mary believes. I know how she feels because I have the same weaknesses."

...Weaknesses? Is she saying it's a weakness to believe in any sort of afterlife? Why is that "weak", exactly? Seems like an odd choice of words, no matter what you believe.

--(view spoiler)

--(view spoiler) Ugh! Just shut up, Jo.

--This was strange: (view spoiler)

--Maybe the most obvious sign that this is an older book is all the cigarettes.

Liz says

Elizabeth Peters who writes under the name of Barbara Michaels is a master at writing suspenseful gothic novels, which are even better when there's a ghostly source. This novel is not an exception.

Originally published in 1971, the worldviews and conversations are a bit antiquated, though I'm sure at the time they were very hip and modern. A woman who can change a tire? How shocking!

Joanne receives a call from her rich brother-in-law Ran that her sister Mary who has recently suffered her third miscarriage is having problems. He's moved his grief-stricken wife to one of his family's old homes on a tiny island off the coast of Maine.

The home is slightly isolated, built near cliffs, and has a lovely attic full of family papers. Just perfect for a spooky gothic mystery.

A spooky it is when Mary tells Joanne she's been hearing a child crying and his name is Kevin. Add to that a mysterious cloaked figure who wanders near a family graveyard and Mary's increasingly erratic behaviour, Joanne and Will, the island doctor have their hands full as they try to determine if Mary is insane, or if ghosts can be real.

For all my sarcasm, I really did enjoy this book. Michaels descriptions aren't overblown, but I easily imagine myself wandering through a dense fog and coming across the graveyard. In the past couple of years her books have been re-issued with new covers, hopefully her works will attract attention from a newer generation.

Sunni says

I found this to be a very chilling tale. I couldn't put this book down and I look forward to reading other titles by Mrs. Michaels. This is a page-turning, well paced, mystery complete with researched historical events that fit perfectly. The suspense is amazing as you find there are more than plenty of suspects, but that you never suspected the actual evil doer.

C.L. Bevill says

I found a Barbara Michaels (Elizabeth Peters) I haven't read! This one is a reissue that was first published in

1971. Basically girl comes to help older sister with melancholy problem based on a miscarriage. Locale: a spooky island with lots of atmosphere. Background: the older sister hears a crying child. Problem: The protag hears the crying child too! Then the protag sees a creepy woman in black, too. Horrors abounding!

Love Barbara Michaels aka Elizabeth Peters, but the plot is one she's repeated more than once. Good writing. Liked the character. There's a hint of love interest that doesn't really get developed and the plot is about the mysterious haunting situation.

Good for a plane trip in order to ignore the woman in the seat in front of you who is barfing her guts out from Huntsville to Denver.

Danada says

As someone who spent a great deal of her childhood on an island in Casco Bay I'm quite looking forward to this one :)

What is causing the eerie sound if a child crying? Is Mary having a nervous breakdown? ... Is someone torturing her with this noise? Or is the real explanation more terrifying?

Kathy Jackson says

Another entertaining mystery/supernatural story from Ms Peters/Michaels. The cover is deceiving - the house isn't that close to the cliffs but whatever. It is a great tale of what lengths a person would do for a child - any child.

Michaels weaves through the mystery with ease that keeps the reader guessing about what is really happening. She always does such a wonderful job with cemeteries - makes me wonder if she spends an exorbitant amount of time hanging out with the dead. I enjoy cemeteries too - old stones often sum up the person buried there with blunt truths that we would never think of putting on a headstone these days.

Anyway, Michaels does a great job with the eeriness of the family plot and the intrigue into why the grave for "Miss Smith" is located outside the fence. Who is the crying child?

With a few surprises, Michaels sends the reader on many leads that end up in being false - then delivers the falseness with relish before taking us on another wild ride. Her writing is simple, romance is implied but never gaudy, and she adds just enough supernatural to make for an interesting piece of fiction.

My one complaint...I have had it before with her work...is the ending happens too quickly and is a little less than climatic. She uses an old bible quote "and the truth shall set you free" which I think is a bit out of context but I guess the bible has many interpretations. Her ending came too fast - it was too pat. I still enjoyed the book quite a bit - her writing style is so easy going that it pulls you in.

All in all, I give the book a B+ only because the above. She could have done so much more since she had such great build up all through the story. :-)

Deb says

I REALLY ENJOYED THIS BOOK. KEPT ME ON THE EDGE OF MY SEAT THE WHOLE TIME. FIRST TIME READING THIS AUTHOR. BOUGHT THIS BOOK AT A SALE AND SO GLAD I DID!

Samantha says

This one of Michaels's really managed to creep me out. I think it was mostly due to the spooky imagery of the child crying in the middle of the night and rocking horses rocking all by themselves that had me keeping the light on for most of the night. The mystery aspect of the story wasn't the best of Michaels as I had a part of what was doing the crying figured out early on, the suspense side of the plot though was excellent. As was the bits featuring the paranormal. I only wish that the story didn't feel so rushed towards the end.
