



Shelter

Jayne Anne Phillips

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In a West Virginia forest in 1963, a group of children at summer camp enter a foreboding Eden and experience an unexpected rite of passage. **Shelter** is an astonishing portrayal of an American loss of innocence as witnessed by a mysterious drifter named Parson, two young sisters, Lenny and Alma, and a feral boy called Buddy. Together they come to understand bravery and the importance of compassion. Phillips unearths a dangerous beauty in this primeval terrain and in the hearts of her characters. Lies, secrets, erotic initiations, and the bonds of love between friends, families, and generations are transformed in a leafy wilderness undiminished by societal rules and dilemmas. Cast in Phillips' stunning prose, with an unpredictable cast of characters and a shadowy, suspenseful narrative, *Shelter* is a an enduring achievement from one of the finest writers of our time.

Shelter Details

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Author : Jayne Anne Phillips

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Estibaliz79 says

Cuestión de gustos, pero para mí este es uno de esos casos de buen argumento desperdiciado por la forma de contar la historia, con un exceso de lenguaje poético y un ritmo demasiado moroso. No esta mal, pero lo dicho: se toma mucho tiempo para llegar a la parte verdaderamente interesante... y es que aunque las digresiones tengan por objeto crear personajes y trasfondos psicológicos, estos tampoco resultan tan redondos como para que compense.

Mai Laakso says

Lenny on 15-vuotias nuori tyttö ja päähenkilö amerikkalaisen kirjailijan Jayne Anne Phillipsin jännitystä tiukassa teoksessa Suojelus. Lenny toimii Suojeluksen yhtenä kertojana ja hänen pikkusiskonsa Alma, joka myös on leirillä Shelterissä, on toinen kertoja. Kolmas kirjan kertoja on Buddy, leirin keittäjän pieni poika. Heidän perheensä asuu lähistöllä pienessä talossa. Kirjan neljäntenä äänenä toimii Pastori, joka on saapunut paikkakunnalle vankilasta pääsyänsä jälkeen tai ehkä karkaamisensa jälkeen, tarina ei kerro koko totuutta. Shelteriin Pastorin veti Buddyn isäpuoli, joka oli Pastorin sellikaveri vankilassa.

Shelterissä on siis tyttöjen kesäpartioleiri menossa ja eletään vuotta 1963. Kirjan tapahtumat kuvaavat henkilöiden omaa elämää, mutta myös muutaman päivän tapahtumia leirillä ja yllättäviä juonenkäänteitä, lapsuuden viattomuuden menetyksiä, ja jopa ikäviä ja traagisia väkivallantekoja, joihin kirjan henkilöt joutuvat ottamaan osaa tavalla tai toisella.

Fantasian ja runollisuuden avulla kirjailija on luonut omalaatuisen maailman henkilöiden ajatuksista ja kokemuksista sekä leirin tapahtumista. Kaikista näistä lasten ikävistä kokemuksista huolimatta, uskon, että nämä lapset selviäisivät oikeassakin elämässä. Pahuudesta selviäminen voittajana voi olla henkisesti raskasta, mutta hyvien ystävien apu ja yhteinen ponnistus pahuutta vastaan kannatti tässä tarinassa. Kiihkeitä tunteita, ystävyyttä ja heräävää intohimoa, mutta myös psykologista jännitystä, pelkoa ja jopa paniikkia.

grundoon says

2.5 I wanted to like this - that which fancies itself a Southern Gothic set in WV - I really tried. I wouldn't doubt that this is absolutely lovely prose, for somebody wired completely differently than me, and will even allow that its proper shelving is in the literature section. But I hated starting each and every paragraph in this book, knowing that to reach its end I would have to wade through bogs of random loose associations wanting to be lush atmosphere, yet neither flowing comfortably nor essential to the telling. Or rather, each paragraph whose end wasn't clearly a only few lines away, which means most of 'em. At times charming, and a reasonable story at heart, painfully off-key,

Diana Tilson says

I was giving this a chance, but about three chapters in, it occurred to me that she's flagrantly imitating Faulkner, and then I lost all desire to keep reading. If anyone loves this book and disagrees, I'm willing to consider that I should give it another go, but otherwise, I abandon it.

Faye Johnson says

I was somewhat disappointed in this book. I stayed with it expecting it to get better as the relationships and story line evolved, but that didn't happen. The characters could have been interesting if the story had used less wordiness to describe them and the setting, but it seemed as if way too many words were used to describe every little detail and as a substitute for substance. At the end, however, you were left with almost nothing to tell you how the events of that summer had affected the various characters.

Malcolm says

Jayne Anne Phillips is one of the finer practitioners of Southern Gothic (think Faulkner, Kate Chopin & Carson McCullers), and this is an excellent example of the sub-genre. Events take place over about three days, but she spends so much time inside the heads of her four narrative centres – Lenny, about 15, her little sister Alma, Buddy a wild boy about 8 or 9, and Parson, of indeterminate age, but probably in his late 20s – that the story covers many years. That she spends so much time inside their heads means that there is an almost surreal quality to much of the novel, and that when the violent, intense, corporeal, climax arrives the minute it lasts (if that long) comes from several perspectives, slightly out of time and lasts 15 or so pages. What is more, it works: it is a rich, emotional, sophisticated novel that does childhood and teenagerness (as in most of Phillips' work) fabulously, as it does loss, marginality, and fractured-but-not-broken people. In the end it is almost conservative – things return to their balance, almost, and it is the almost, the little shift, that is monumental, life changing, and secret. It centres on Lenny, Alma, their two best friends Cap & Delia, and Buddy, and is the real point of the story. Simply marvellous, but slow – stick with it, it is worth it.

Marsha says

What a piece of self indulgent, look at me, I'm a writer, junk! Tries way too hard to be deep and Faulkneresque. This novel was assigned as summer reading for students entering the 11th grade which I feel is very inappropriate. A huge waste of time!

Losses of heavy sexual overtones in a poorly done coming of age novel.

Eric says

Phillips has not only read her Faulkner and Freud, but has thought about them deeply. She manages here to mix rich prose, a superb sense of place and suspense. Oddly perhaps, the male characters, especially Buddy and Parson, seem more defined/developed/carefully pitched, than the women, finely rendered as well. Good stuff.

Teresa says

3 and 1/2 stars

While this had its wonderful, brilliant moments, I much prefer her *Machine Dreams* and *Lark and Termite*. Once again, though, Phillips is amazing in her observation and description of the memories, dreams (or dreamlike states) and interiority of her characters, including (especially?) a character who has to be schizophrenic, though that's never stated. One image related to him immediately brought me back to my repeated adolescent reading of *I Never Promised You A Rose Garden*. A description of a memory-state of the 15-year-old female protagonist brought to mind a similar, vivid dream I'd had at around the same age.

I can't help but wonder that if I'd read this before her other novels, I might've rated it a bit higher.

Dragana says

lyrical, dense, though only in language, not action

Stacy Lewis says

Maybe it was the time of the year (bball playoffs) and all the other things on my plate, but I couldn't really get into this book. There was a great sense of foreboding but it seemed to take forever for the inevitable to happen. Again, this may not be fair. I read this over 3 weeks. Maybe if I had read it ore quickly, it wouldn't have seemed so plodding.

Jessica says

A surprising and surprisingly poignant portrait of the friendship among young girls at a summer camp in the hills of West Virginia. The book captures the quick, aching devotion that develops among these young girls. Together, and with others, they explore one another and their sexuality as well as the dappled terrain of West Virginia. As has been remarked elsewhere, Phillips's descriptions of the natural world are rich, evocative, and somehow simultaneously dark and sparkling. I think she did a truly wonderful job capturing the various ways in which these children processed -- or didn't -- various traumas: neglectful parents, abusive parents, dead parents. I nearly quit reading the book about halfway through; I couldn't find the plot. But by the last hundred pages, I couldn't set it down. It took more time to develop and draw me in than I liked, but by the end I was completely in its grips, wanting more.

Jeweleye says

A friend brought this book to me and said it was beautifully written. But I had a heard time following the stream-of-consciousness imagery. Sometimes I wasn't sure if something had happened or if it was in a character's mind. Ultimately it was a good story; I just didn't want to work that hard.

gaudeo says

Maybe I'll give this one 1 1/2 stars. The difficulty with this book is twofold. First, the language, which I think is intended to be evocative and dreamy, is instead florid and confusing. It interferes with getting to know the characters and the plot, and it hits the reader over the head with the message that the setting is all-important. And, second (but partly because of the first point), not much really happens in the first half or more of the book. The most exciting part is very near the end, but I nearly didn't get there, because I seriously considered giving up halfway through. I think this author deserves attention (her book *Quiet Dell* is very good), but this does not represent her best work, in my view.

Leah says

I really didn't enjoy this book. The premise seemed right up my alley, but I had a really hard time getting into it. The book is written from the view point of characters who are connected in different ways to a Girl Guide summer camp. The author did a good job of presenting atypical representations of the inner-life of a couple of the campers, but beyond that I just wasn't interested.
