



The Caretakers

Shauna Nosler

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1972, one year before the Roe v. Wade decision ... IF ever there was a case for justifiable homicide, this most certainly would be one. Only a few months shy of earning his law degree, Jasper Jamieson was desperate to recall all he had learned about the legal justification for killing another human being so he could validate the killing of the son-of-a-bitch that did this to his sister. 1987, Jasper's eleven year old daughter Caroline, discovers a small cross hidden along the riverbank near the home where her father grew up; a cross that bears the date March 24, 1972, and carries with it a powerful silence. The opening pages of Shauna Nosler's dramatic debut novel, *The Caretakers*, will fully engross you with a storyline that will tug at your very soul and petition your sense of right and wrong. With descriptions so vivid and characters so endearing, you will find yourself craving their continuation.

The Caretakers Details

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Author : Shauna Nosler

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From Reader Review The Caretakers for online ebook

Mariah says

Until two seconds ago, I planned on giving this book three stars. I definitely liked *The Caretakers*, but it's what I think of as a domestic, family drama - definitely *not* my usual fair. But the whole point of taking recommendations from other bloggers, friends, etc is trying new things.

What changed my mind and bumped the book up to four stars is the fact that Shauna Nosler nearly made me cry. That, my friends, is a huge accomplishment and deserves kudos. Well done, Ms. Nosler.

The Caretakers uses the hotbutton topic of abortion and the landmark Roe vs. Wade case that made the practice legal in the US as its framework, but it's not about abortion. It's about loss, grief and acceptance and finding a way to not only survive ones choices, but truly *live* with them.

The back cover assures the reader that the book is not about right and wrong, and although I did get a pro-life vibe, it wasn't preachy.

The characters - Caroline, Mitch, Jasper and Mabel - are vibrant and distinct. Nosler allows us a glimpse inside each of their heads and succeeds in giving them a distinct voice. While Jasper's journey was extensively fleshed out, I would have liked more from Mabel. I'm glad that she was able to find peace with her decisions, I would have liked to know more, specifically how she feels about the choice she made. I did get the impression that she regretted her choice to get an abortion, but I never really learned why. I also never really learned why she chose to have one in the first place. I think Nosler's story would be richer if she delved into those details of Mabel's experience.

Quite a few truths are left unsaid by the time I arrived at the last page of *The Caretakers* and for the most part I'm kind of glad they stayed that way. There are some things, especially about long buried secrets, that are better left unsaid. One truth, however, I feel needed to be told. Jasper needed to know that Nathan Comber was not the father of Mabel's child. Jasper didn't need to know who was, but given that Nathan was his father's best friend, I think his reputation deserved to be cleared, even if only one person was maligning it.

The Caretakers is worth a read. It moves quickly and the world Nosler creates - specifically The Country House - is a place I enjoyed spending time.

ILoveBooks says

This novel begins with a dark, haunting prologue-partly why the reader will continue to read. The reader isn't introduced to the main characters yet, but the prologue plays a large part in the plot and theme of the novel.

The author writes in an unusually smooth and captivating way, adding quotes from notable persons and detailing scenes very well. The reader will understand the atmosphere and be able to infer the emotions and thoughts of the characters fairly quickly in the book. The characters, for the most part, are very easy to like and cheer for. Mitch is known as the "pale child"-mostly because his mother has him convinced he needs to stay away from the sun-and is a reader. Cecil is religious and "fearful of retaliation", a combination that is

almost comical in the book. Caroline aka "Rho" likes to pretend she is tough, but has quite a few fears of her own. Jasper does his best to be strong and protective, but not everything can always work out. These characters will endear themselves to the reader in the first part of the book.

The plot is very interesting, there are several sub-plots that connect back to the plot as well. Most readers know about the "Roe vs. Wade" case and can use background information to better understand the book. There is a strong theme of right vs. wrong and if there should be a "divide" at all in the book. There is also sadness, loss, family, death, destruction, etc... This book has a little bit of everything, but they all fit right into the story. The ending is perfect for this book, the author sums everything up and leaves the reader with quite a few lessons. This book is recommended for adults/young adults who enjoy realism.

Idris says

This book was quite different from what I'm used to read, but I'm glad to say that I really enjoyed it. The story can be cruel and sad sometimes, but it also talks about love, family, death and how decisions can affect not only our life but also the life of the people we love.

The story starts with a breathtaking prologue, really dark, mysterious, and more than realistic that made me think and believe for a moment that I was there and that I was part of the story... That is why I'm not surprised why this book caught my attention and it kept me motivated to continue reading; and one of the reasons was because the author only gives us a little piece of information and we need to continue reading to find out what happened and what is going to happen next. The way the story is told, with different characters and different times kept the intrigue all the time so it was hard for me to stop reading in several occasions.

Also the details and the descriptions were awesome. The author doesn't only tells us the story, but she tells us extra details about the life of the characters, so in that way we can know them better and we can understand why they behave in the way they do.

What I didn't enjoy too much was the ending, and I think that it was principally because the book was over and there were no more to read. I would have liked to read more about Caroline, specially after all what happened to Mitch and also to read more about her aunt Mabel and her dad Jasper... But I think the book is perfect in the way that it's written, and that it ended in the way it should have ended.

I don't want to spoil too much. Even though you know what the Roe vs Wade case was about, and that can give you a lot of information about the plot, I'm sure all readers will be interested in the story and how it develops. I really enjoyed this book, it's really easy to read and it will give the readers a few important things to think about.

Like me, that I didn't know too much about the case, so after finishing the book I decided to look more information about it. So I'm glad I read it, because this book talks about an important issue in our society without judging anyone.

Highly recommended to adults and older teens who like realistic stories about families and their dark secrets.

Karen J says

The Caretakers is packed with wisdom and insight. The rawness of grief is beautifully expressed.

Shauna grabs the reader immediately with a strong opening. At times, though I felt the story was a little disjointed as it jumped from one time period to another.

The Jamieson family struggles with loss and grief and each main character gracefully finds a way to survive and accept their pain. The characters grow, accept and forgive even though they don't have all of the answers or know all of the truth.

Robynmakobiscribe says

I was looking for the perfect summer read when I was found The Caretakers by Shauna Nosler. I have this thing about books, I need to be in the right frame of mind when I read them. I did the unthinkable and didn't read the back cover before I started, I just dove right in unaware. The book is set in the early 1970s right before the Roe v. Wade decision was handed down. It's a captivating story about a family who appears to be perfect from the outside looking in but that couldn't be further from the truth. With parents who are constantly traveling, one of the main characters Mae (a teenager at the time) makes a life-changing decision, a decision her older brother knows all about unbeknownst to Mae. Mae experiences more loss in a short period of time than most see in a lifetime and still perseveres and moves on with life. As an adult, she never marries or has children but is very close with her brother's children (Caroline, Mitch and Cecil), who come to visit every summer. She is the aunt everyone wishes they had, the children adore their aunt and their time together bonding as each summer passes. The children become very close, best friends you would say and even though they had the occasional spat, they confide in each other and support one another. At the end of the summer, their trip is cut short and a terrible accident happens one that will rock the foundation of the family and something I didn't see coming. I won't spoil it for anyone, it is a must read. Each page kept me longing for more, I love how the characters come full circle and find out things about themselves and their family they never would have known had circumstances been different.

The way the author leads you through this book is both entertaining and heartbreaking at the same time. I wasn't prepared for how it would affect me, I literally cried (sobbed) through several chapters and at one point had to put the book down and come back to it a few days later. Thinking back, even if I would have known it would be sad I would have read it anyways. The book was really well written and is the perfect summer read for sure. I was able to connect directly to the characters and I felt like I was experiencing the love and loss right along with them. I look forward to reading more from Shauna Nosler, she is very talented to say the least.

Christy LoveOfBooks says

The Caretakers was a touching story. My heart sank while reading the beginning. How does someone move on from such a traumatizing experience? The book follows Mabel, Caroline, and Jasper on their journey of getting past heartbreaking losses.

The descriptions in the book are beautiful. Also, I love how the story is told from different perspectives and

all come together at the end.

It's a pretty quick read, but it's also moving and lovely.

Wulfwyn says

This book was an emotional roller coaster for me. It had reminders of summers when I was a child that brought sweet memories of my own cousins up. There are a lot of secrets, guilty feelings, sadness, anger, and forgiveness, hope and love. I think the most important thing they learn from this, (and in turn we learn), is how important communication is among people who love each other. I thought this was a beautifully told book. The characters were well developed - I felt like I knew them. The story flowed very well, something I wasn't certain would work going from one year to another then back again. I am giving this 5 stars. It is a book I would recommend.

Gloria Bernal says

I thought going into this that it would be about abortion rights, but actually it isn't. It is more about accepting the choices that we make under stress and living with the consequences, or the aftermath of those choices. Not about what is right or wrong.

This is a character-driven novel which opens with a raw, disturbing scene revolving around an abortion in 1972. Then it goes on to summers end, 1989, describing the adult life of Jasper Jamieson, attorney at law, a widower, with an 11 yr. old daughter, and his sister Mabel, single and living at the family's "Country House" where they grew up and lived before their parents deaths. Every summer, Jasper and his brothers take their kids to The Country House (which the author describes in such a way you just want to pull up a chair and sit a spell). Mabel has no children, but her culinary skills has everyone anticipating their summer around her kitchen table. The kids look forward to spending this time together, especially Caroline, known as "Rho" who is Jasper's only daughter, and Mitch, her cousin of a similar age. Rho & Mitch are best friends, write during the year, and spend summers together, close as brother and sister. Jasper and his sister are close as adults but both have regrets about not being closer than they were in their late teens, after their parents were killed. He went off to law school, and Mabel to Paris for culinary school, then she came back to live in the family "Country House." The other brothers were not developed much at all for this novel. I don't even remember if their names are mentioned, but they don't have key roles in this family structure, the wives are in control. We all know families like these.

Dealing with tragedies, grieving and learning that one can survive them is a challenge to all the characters in this novel, and well done. It was emotional, but not dark or morose by any means. One message that is clear here is that "old skeletons in the closet" might best stay there, let them turn to dust, and move on. Accept what you cannot change, and that you can love a person, and hate their choices.

My only complaint is the jumping around in the time frames. You can be reading a page on the past as on page 255, then in the very next paragraph you are in the present, with no preamble to changing over. Some time frames are separated by chapters, but not pages 255/256. I, however was reading the ARC, uncorrected, so hopefully, this was addressed for the final copy.

I grew to care about the characters in this debut novel, and for me, that makes the author successful in the endeavor. I want to thank Shauna Nosler for gifting me two copies, one for my Mom and one for me. I

certainly enjoyed the read and will recommend it :)

Macey says

I absolutely loved this book. Not only does it take place in my neck of the woods, so has totally endeared itself to me in that way, it is also a very engaging read.

There are so many interesting characters! It's all about the Jamieson family, who of course, represent their own different kind of dysfunction. Because, don't all families have a degree of dysfunction?

The 11 year old Caroline is the main character, who, in passing her summer with her aunt at The Country House, and her cousin and best friend, Mitch, discover some peculiar things: a serious and concerned conversation between her father and aunt, a cross made of willow branches and it's mysterious placement near the river.

The novel seamlessly goes between the early 1970's, where you learn about Caroline's father and aunt and their familial history, and the late 1980's where Caroline is 11 and learning things about her family.

Of course with all families, there is a measure of tragedy and tragic circumstances. It also goes into the issue of abortion. Don't worry, it's not taking a stand for or against. You see from the eyes of Caroline's dad the reason why he, himself, is against the procedure. However, that is not the lesson to be taken from this book.

What resonated the most for me throughout the book, is that sometimes when tragedy befalls someone...ie, a brother, a sister, a child...it is not always THAT person in particular that is hurt most by the void that is left from the circumstances. Sometimes it's the ones closest to them that are hurt or affected most.

And then how do you come together after these tragedies...with your family, with your sibling or child who has made a decision that has brought horrible circumstances to your life, how do you come back together and move forward?

I, myself, am thinking that a sequel is necessary so I can see what happens to these people who I became so attached to!

It seemed like so many of them were just coming to after a long period of "sleepiness" and are ready to begin anew and I want to know what happens to them. I want to cheer them on!

Theresa says

Story about a girl who had an illegal abortion in the year prior to Roe v. Wade, and the repercussions for herself and her older brother (who comes to her aid). Intertwined is the story of her 11 yo niece dealing with a tragedy of her own. Good story, but confusing in that the storyline jumps around in time (to a ludicrous degree) AND is told from the perspective of three different characters. Makes it a bit hard to keep up.

Perhaps sticking to one narrative "device" at a time would be nice? Also, annoying editing mistakes are distracting, at least in my Kindle edition("to" and "too" mixed up many times, and calling a wooden cross a "secular symbol" ??? Seriously???)

Other than these issues, a fairly good story.

Terry Cohoe says

I found that this novel took too long to get going, probably about chapter 4. Once it did, the narrator bounced from person to person which I found disjointed. The timeline was also erratic, alternating between past and present in a jarring manner. The characters were distinctive and well-developed, and parts of the plot were

heart-wrenching and poignant eliciting a very emotional response. Overall I struggled to finish this, bogged down by the heaviness of the writing errors.

Connieb says

I read *The Caretakers* in ebook format from B&N (I now notice that it's not offered) and my issue has 178 pages. I think I have the entire book, although at one point the story jumped so drastically I wondered if I might be missing a few brief chapters... I did grimace at a couple blatant spelling errors (hear and here, too and to), perhaps those have been corrected in the ebook formats.

This is a coming-of-age story, of children learning some of life's more unfortunate lessons, experiencing loss earlier than might be hoped or prepared for. The plot is sincere and the characters are delightful and genuine. The writing style is somewhat simplistic for my taste, but the simplicity does make for a quick enjoyable read.

Carrie says

The Caretakers opens with a horrific scene that turns your stomach. I would not wish what happens to the young girl in the opening Prologue on anyone. The fact she was forced to make the decision she does is heartbreaking. This emotional opening is what held my attention to read this book.

The majority of the book is told from the point of view of Caroline, a 10 year old girl who has lost her mother at a young age but doesn't feel the lack. Her father focuses his life on making sure she is happy and well cared for. She spends her summers at The Country House with her young cousins under the care of her Aunt Mabel. The story is a reminiscing of one summer at The Country House.

I found the first few chapters that establish the characters of Caroline and her cousins, Mitch and Cecil, to be a little slow. The narration didn't quite fit into the rest of the story and Caroline's relationship with Mitch, shown to be extremely close by the end of the book, did not come through at all.

The story picks up once the narration begins taking trips back to the same time as when the scene in the prologue occurs. Through flashbacks, the reader is given clues to help solve the mystery of the cross seen on the banks of the river by Caroline and Mitch one summer day. This cross symbolizes the way Jasper and Mabel have dealt with their own particular anguish.

The main characters in this novel: Caroline, Mitch, Jasper (Caroline's father) and Mabel are all caretakers in their own way. They must deal with various levels of loss and find ways to deal with tragedy. I would have liked to have seen the reasons for Mabel's decisions to be elaborated on more. Her story is only shown through time glimpses, not nearly enough to truly understand why she made the choices she did. I think getting into her mind would have made the story stronger.

The only thing I did not like about this novel was how the POV switched between characters from one paragraph to another. I have no problem with stories being told from various viewpoints but I prefer to see it separated by chapters or at the very least obvious scene breaks. There were spots in this book where I became lost as to who was speaking and it pulled me out of the story.

Overall this is a lovely story about the innocence of childhood and how it can be so quickly ripped away by events. I quite enjoyed it.

Cindy Gargano says

I had high hopes for this story but unfortunately the book did not live up to them. It was a fast read and held my interest- mainly because I liked the main character and kept waiting for something else to happen. Also, I usually enjoy stories told from different view points and places in time, but I feel the author had a few problems with this technique. For example (without giving too much away) at one point of the story 2 children come across something unexpected during a daily adventure. Later that day they discuss what they saw and one of the children mentions an important conversation he overheard the night before that is connected to their discovery. They then have an argument and he ends up leaving the next morning. However later in the story this sequence is described by another character and the timeline just does not match up. In the newer version the boy heard the important conversation and then leaves the very next day, not allowing for time for the children to make their important discovery.... Which couldn't have been made earlier given the circumstances around it.

Tammy says

****I was given a copy of this book for my honest review****

This book is a bit surreal. I was not sure if I would like the book or not, since it does deal a bit with abortion. I am not here to argue which side is right or wrong. Sometimes when you read a story that has such a touchy subject to it, it's hard to not bring in your own thoughts about it. I feel that Shauna did a great job of writing about such a touchy subject.

The way Shauna writes about the female and her family member(s) that knew she had this procedure done and how they handle it within their own life. She gives us a very slim look on what happened that year during the Roe vs. Wade and how the attorney handled it. This book has a ton of tragedy that happens with this family and how they all handle their grieving process.

Shauna has a great writing style to keep you interested till the very end of the book. You are cheering for everyone to have a happily ever after within the book. It is so hard to give a great review without spilling what is within the book. I highly recommend this book to anyone.

The last paragraph in the synopsis really states how the book is. It is not about who is right or wrong, who is evil and who is not. It is a book about do I protect what is mine or do I abandon everything I know to be true. What does it really mean: to tell the whole truth, nothing but the truth?
