



## **The Piper**

*Lynn S. Hightower*

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## **The Piper** Lynn S. Hightower

In this bone-chilling tale of terror from Shamus Award-winning thriller writer Lynn Hightower, a devoted mother must confront the paranormal forces that have cursed her family.

When Olivia James receives a phone call just after midnight, she recognizes her brother's voice. But there's a problem: her brother has been dead for the past nine weeks. Moving back to her old childhood home in Tennessee--the place where her brother has just died--her young daughter Teddy seems troubled, telling her mother that she's being visited by a menacing ghost. When another tragic death occurs and her daughter disappears, Olivia must confront the demonic force that has cursed her family.

## **The Piper Details**

Date : Published April 1st 2013 by Severn House Publishers

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Author : Lynn S. Hightower

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Genre : Horror, Fantasy, Paranormal, Fiction, Mystery, Thriller, Mystery Thriller

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## From Reader Review The Piper for online ebook

### John P says

Begins with a phone call from her deceased brother, broken with static, that he "had to pay the piper." Then evolves in a story, in the authors words, of spirits - "the good things and the bad" that, if you "turned your head just right," you might "get a glimpse of."

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### Christopher says

I just finished "The Piper" by Lynn Hightower, which simply blew me away. I've known Hightower as a Shamus-Award-winning mystery writer, so I didn't look into what I was buying at all. I started the Audible book, and was quickly introduced to Olivia James, a pragmatic Southern woman living in Los Angeles. She receives a strange phone call from her brother who assures her everything is all right, that he "has paid the piper." The thing is, her brother has been dead for nine weeks.

I don't buy scary horror stories like this or those by Stephen King. Truth is, I get scared. When I was a kid, I saw a movie called "Thirteen Ghosts," and it haunted me for weeks. Best leave that stuff alone.

Still, I felt compelled to go on with "The Piper." Olivia has lost her job, gone through a divorce, and is about to move back to her childhood home in Tennessee with her eight-year-old daughter. Olivia has inherited the house from her brother.

For me, alarms immediately sounded. Don't go into that house where your brother died! Olivia, though, is a Southern steel magnolia, an agnostic of the paranormal. There has to be logical reasons behind the weird stuff that starts happening.

I listened in the car, as I walked the dogs, as I worked out, and even as I lay in the dark in bed just when I really shouldn't be listening. I had to find out what happened. The reader, Xe Sands, voices each character, male and female, masterfully. The experience is akin to a listening to a great story around a campfire. Things in the story get worse and worse, yet you have to know what happens next. There isn't a wasted sentence. Olivia James is a strong character in an overwhelming situation.

The story goes to amazing places—and it is truly frightening. I don't think I can read another like this for a while. Yet I'm deeply satisfied. Now my only worry is can I find another audio book as great as this one?

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### Shannon Holmes says

Absolutely terrifying! There were so many twist that I never knew what was coming next. I can not wait to read everything else the author has written.

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## **Michele says**

This novel scared the \*\*\*\* of out me. I loved it.

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## **Kimberly says**

2.5 Stars

This book was barely a horror novel. I never had a shiver down my spine. Nor did the dark creep me out after a reading session.

I HATED how Hightower began the book. In my personal opinion, a book of this nature (ie. some dark entity haunting and harming the protagonists) should not reveal the supernatural entity at the bloody beginning of the novel! It really took the creepy-mysterious-suspense factor out of the book (not that having it really would have helped make the book scarier). The beginning was very slow, and nothing really picked up until about half way through. In terms of characters, Olivia definitely did NOT keep me reading. As much as I dislike children, Teddy, despite her idiotic name, proved more likable and compelling. And speaking of idiotic names, really now. Don't use nicknames that are plain stupid. Amel for Amelia? Okay, like Amel rhymes with camel? 'Cause that's the only way my brain will naturally pronounce that. And Ack for Ackerman? Really?! Just Really?! Final comment: the ending was far too sappy for me.

Also, Hightower's prose seemed a bit juvenile to me. However, this is hard for me to explain. While her premise was interesting enough for me to pick out this novel, the "ghost/dark entity mechanics" were not as well thought out as they should be. For example, the Piper was set up to seem like he had a pattern of doing things. But then towards the end of the novel, he is inexplicably random in his "hauntings" and seem to pick and choose his victims, instead of people making themselves victims by making a deal. This is not to say that an entity always has to have a way or pattern of doing their hauntings/harm. No, my problem is with turning a character that acts with a certain predictability into a character that acts on a whim.

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## **Shan says**

I LOVED it!!! this def needs to be made into a movie.. it kept you in suspense the entire time. Thanks so much for the opportunity to read The Piper .

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## **Christie says**

I read this book in a week so a very fast read. The author spins a great ghost story that you are kept wondering what is real and what isn't.

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## **Laura says**

Author warning: this review uses a food-based analogy as its basis. IDK, I'm hungry and it seems like a good

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idea.

The chances are good that you've read this book before. I've got nothing against the basic recipe that the story is based on: a return to a hometown after years away, followed by the discovery that family tragedies past and present are the result of supernatural evil. It's why I picked the book up in the first place: I'm familiar with the recipe of the story and I know that I enjoy it. But a good recipe still depends on the quality of the ingredients and *The Piper* uses only the most generic ones.

Like generic ingredients, the characters aren't bad but they also aren't particularly interesting or memorable. The Former Lover Turned Hometown Cop never develops beyond his function as a shiny reward to the hero for surviving all the tragedy and the Enigmatic Psychic drops hints behind her like bread crumbs, but doesn't actually seem to provide anything to the plot beyond fluff. When you throw in the Asshole Detective Who Suspects the Hero, a Bitter Childhood Rival, and an ex-husband who is just enough of a jerk not to provide a true rival for the Former Lover, you end up with a book full of decent but un-exciting characters. Add an ending that feels rushed and incomplete and the final result is full of inconsistencies and dangling threads that won't bother you for long because you'll forget you ever read it in the first place.

None of this should necessarily stop you from reading it - I finished it, after all - but it's the fast food equivalent of the starting recipe: you've had it before and chances are you'll have it again but you'll forget it as soon you're done.

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### **Lisa says**

This book had me in at the first page but by the end of it i struggled Hightower is supposed to be horror but was not scary it kept me turning pages but hate descriptive sex scenes was supposed to be a paranormal horror but was more like a dreary read in the end

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### **Emily Cherry says**

Okay, first things first.

I HATE horror.

Not because I don't think it's any good, but because I'm an extremely suggestible person, and a single horror novel can have me on edge for months later. Horror about your family going missing and or getting killed? I'm OUT. PERIOD. Nope, not for me. EVER.

So, when I needed to read this for work, I was... not loving my job quite as much as usual. But by the end of the first day, when I had to stop, because work was over, I was very, very, veryveryvery tempted to just hole up in my house that night and finish the book ON MY OWN TIME, because I absolutely HAD to know what happened next. I had to. (I didn't get the chance, because we had other obligations. Sad face.) So, for the first time in my life, EVER, I was excited to come into work and finish a HORROR novel. Seriously. This never crossed my mind as a possible thing to happen in this lifetime.

The suspense is built so well, and the joy is in watching Olivia come to realize just how far she has been wrapped up in this, without her ever realizing. Highly recommended, even to people who don't like horror.

### **Sharon says**

I found this hard to rate. I would have selected 3.5 stars if it were an option. I found the writing mediocre in places yet the storyline kept me fully engaged! I just had to know just who the piper was!

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### **Shannon Moyers says**

I was hooked in the beginning it had great potential. It's like she gave up on the story about 3/4 through. Very disappointing end.

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### **Bandit says**

This was a random selection based in part on a great cover, in part on its availability at the library and in part on my constant quest to find good female horror authors. Hightower has a background in crime fiction and it shows, because the book kept slipping into a police procedural. Another thing constantly evident was the fact that it was written by a female author...in an extreme case of write what you know all the major characters were female and oddly abbreviated (seriously, Amel and Ack, seriously, while male characters go by Bennington and Jamison), occasionally tipping the book over into chick lit, which is horrific in itself but in a totally different way. Olivia, the main character, overweight due to a horrendous diet and abhorrence of any exercise (including avoiding stairs in favor of elevators despite claustrophobia, claustrophobia that conveniently vanishes later), a woman who is prone to unreasonability and being overemotional, a woman who finds logic annoying...is for all her shortcomings a fairly compelling lead, enough to make the readers take a journey with her as her whole world turns to a dark and pervasive nightmare. The book was well paced and pretty intense and had enough suspense and a sense of unease (without any overt gore or other genre trappings) to keep the pages turning all the way to a slightly unsatisfying ending. The title character should have been better explained, being the most interesting one. The writing was solid and capable. Adequate and fairly entertaining read that could have been much better. The quest for good female horror writers continues.

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### **Mauoijenn ~ \*Mouthy Jenn\* ~ says**

No!  
Nope!  
Didn't like it.  
I struggled to finish this.  
Oh well... On to the next one.

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### **Carrie says**

Couldn't stop turning the pages. Although the ending is a little lackluster, the overall suspense that the author

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builds throughout the story makes this a worthwhile read if you like books about the paranormal.

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