



The Pillow Friend

Lisa Tuttle

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From the critically acclaimed author of *The Mysteries* comes a haunting, lyrical, and provocative novel of a young woman's coming-of-age betwixt dream and reality. Here there's only one thing more dangerous than desire—getting what you want....

As a child, Agnes Grey dreamed of the perfect friend to ease her loneliness: a doll that would talk to her, tell her stories, share her secrets. Only her aunt Marjorie seemed to really understand. Something of an outcast herself, she told Agnes she'd had just such a doll when she was a child. She called it her pillow friend. So when Agnes receives her very own pillow friend—an old-fashioned porcelain doll painted to look like an old-world gentleman—she's certain her dreams have come true. And so they have—but in ways that Agnes could never have imagined. For as the line between fantasy and reality blurs, Agnes discovers that every dream has its price and every desire must be paid for. Be very careful what you wish for...he'll surely give it to you.

The Pillow Friend Details

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Author : Lisa Tuttle

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From Reader Review The Pillow Friend for online ebook

Emily Crow says

I read this a few years ago, and I still remember the book vividly. That is definitely to its credit-- unfortunately, sometimes I read so many books in a row (I usually have stacks all over the house, 90% checked out from the library, or I'd go broke supporting my habit) that I forget which story went with which title. I was a little ashamed when I started putting my list on Good Reads, that I had to leave an awful lot of titles off because I knew I'd read them (my list said so!) but I honestly could remember nothing about them. (In my defense, this is decades worth of books, not stuff I've read recently!)

But I will never forget reading "The Pillow Friend." It is that weird, original and, in places, down-right disturbing. It is also on a topic that fascinates me: the intersection between imagination and reality.

Books about "imaginary friends" (using the term very widely) can be a challenge for an author to pull off in a way that's both satisfying and convincing. There are basically three ways to resolve it: the character is revealed to be crazy (which can feel like a let-down); the character really does have an (not so) "imaginary friend" (which can be too silly); or the matter is left ambiguous (which can be aggravating).

In this case, Agnes' "imaginary friend" is a doll who seems to grant wishes. On the surface of it, Agnes seems to wish for a rather boring life of domesticity and marriage to a poet. (Not to be a poet herself, mind you. Just to be the wife of one.) Actually, one of the reasons I only gave this book three stars was I simply could not warm up to Agnes at all. That character annoyed the crap out of me.

Even from the beginning, a queasy sexual tension underlies this novel. Not in an erotic or taboo way, either. Agnes' mental landscape is pretty sick, culminating in one particular scene (you will know which one if you read it) that is, for lack of a better word, completely icky. I am not criticizing this scene -- it is a brilliant depiction of Agnes' inner landscape, her "wish," if you will -- but icky. (No spoilers, but I will say the ick factor isn't due to violence.)

Unfortunately, I wasn't a big fan of the ending, but as I said, that is extremely hard to pull off to my satisfaction in a book like this. I would recommend this book to people who enjoy a study of psychological pathology with some fantasy elements. It's not a straight-forward fantasy like some of the author's other books.

Jail Flanagan says

A fascinating and off center work is quite brilliant in the subversive ways it explores desires and wish fulfillment. While technically a horror book, the horror of this book is incredibly subtle and psychological and does not necessarily require a supernatural explanation although one is certainly available. Some of tuttle's writing suffers from being a bit too genre fiction for my taste though, I have the same problem with many american horror writers but overall this was a small qualm

Addy says

A very ambiguous ending...I hate that. More later.

Ok. I have a feeling I'll be thinking about this one for a while. The writing was very good and even though I had no idea where this book was going, she had me hanging and wanting more. Several times she took me to a place that was bizarre and disturbing. The most disturbing part, however, was that these things happened in Agnes's mind (main character)...or did they? The line between reality and fantasy was very blurred. Did this pillow friend exist? Did Marjorie her aunt? Were these all made up; figments of her imagination? An internal defense? This girl is messed up and leaves me with so many questions. Brilliant journey into the mind of someone who is very unstable. This was my first Lisa Tuttle book and certainly not my last! I also want to add that the relationship between Agnes and Graham was very dysfunctional that it was just fascinating to read. It was way too much work, but again gives evidence to the very unbalanced mind of Agnes. Great job!

Alex (Hey Little Thrifter) says

From the premise I thought this was about a girl who has imaginary friends and over time she becomes more insular and cut off from the real world. That's not really what this book is about so it was quite different to what I was expecting. It is more of a coming of age/character study about Agnes, following her from childhood as she grows older and has different relationships. I would class this as literary fiction with some fantasy and horror elements. There is an unsettling undertone to the story and the horror elements are mostly psychological. I found the story quite slow at times but I thought Tuttle's writing was excellent so I will definitely be reading more of her work.

Nutella4zuzanna says

The Pillow Friend, By Lisa Tuttle

This book in my opinion is a little confusing but yet fascinating. I do not like spoilers therefore I shall not reveal much nor any of the content. Lisa Tuttle did a very great job in dragging a reader to read more as to thoughts like "Wait what?!" or "oh my gosh". I loved the way Agnes Gray (Main character) aged through out the chapters, it did not just randomly appear that she's seventeen, but like wise it slivered into her years. Definitely loved the book, even though of the "wait what just happened?!" moments that had just made it. Quite frankly I do not read much "disturbing novels" but this one, oh this one did it for me (in a good way).

If you like weird, odd but interesting books, I highly recommend this one! Even though it may seem a little flat or boring at the start it develops very well. Lisa Tuttle did a great job writing this book and a great imagination. The ending blew me with my eyes open just thinking "wtf" and "OMGGGG!"

Review by : Zuzy.

Scott says

This is the story of a woman and the various fetishes that accompany her from youth to adulthood, from an antique doll given her by an aunt, to a boy at school, to an English poet whose photo she finds at her aunt's forest home, and even stranger things.

I really enjoyed reading about her as a child and teenager, but once she hits her twenties the novel becomes a full-on romance story for about 100 pages (though it feels much longer). The weirdness does finally return, and there is an intense if ambiguous conclusion. An interesting work of magical realism, or maybe surrealism, if you can get through the middle section.

Chere says

My first taste of Lisa Tuttle has left me wanting for more. Wonderfully dark and surreal, it is written the language of dreams, and more than a story, it's an atmosphere and a landscape of madness. It is an uncanny reflection of real life and it's sometimes difficult to draw the line between reality and dream. Fantastic!

Maureen says

There were some parts that were good but I just can't get past some of the more outlandish themes of this book.

Chris says

Da fuck did I just read?

This book should come with a warning label. It's for females only. Wow it's really disgusting. It's well-written..and graphic. It wasn't at all about what I thought it would be about.

This book comes complete with a nice episode of Maury, thank god.

Cindee says

Creepy creepier creepiest!! This was a great read for my horror group.

Dion says

Really, really confusing and creepy, but good.

Jerry says

Creepy book. I loved huge chunks of it, but I was frustrated by the main character's lack of imagination.

Mary-Beth says

I liked this book and didn't like it all at once. I think the most compelling parts for me were the parts where Agnes' pillow friend was a creepy sentient doll or a creepy sentient horse.

I didn't really care for him as a human. He lost all subtlety as a human. How great was it when the doll started to prompt Agnes to become an extremely precocious juvenile delinquent, sneaking into people's houses and creeping into their beds like Goldilocks? But all of the scenes with the lovers just seemed so excessive to me. I found it weird she had so much difficulty interpreting the fake lovers as her pillow friend and I found the main revelation of the full horror of the pillow friend just gross and silly. It's a matter of taste, that's all.

It also bugged me when that short story got wedged right into the plot and then right afterwards there was that 'ha ha, tricked you!' moment.

The revelation about Agnes' Mom was a good one though. I didn't see it coming. I guess I just wish the horror was more psychological. Maybe people will rub their heads when they read this and wonder how it could be. The ending was pretty intense.

Brandy Sharpe says

I did not anticipate this book being such a good read, I really didn't. But it was absolutely phenomenal! I loved it!

Izzy says

This is my idea of a dark, very disturbing chick lit.
