

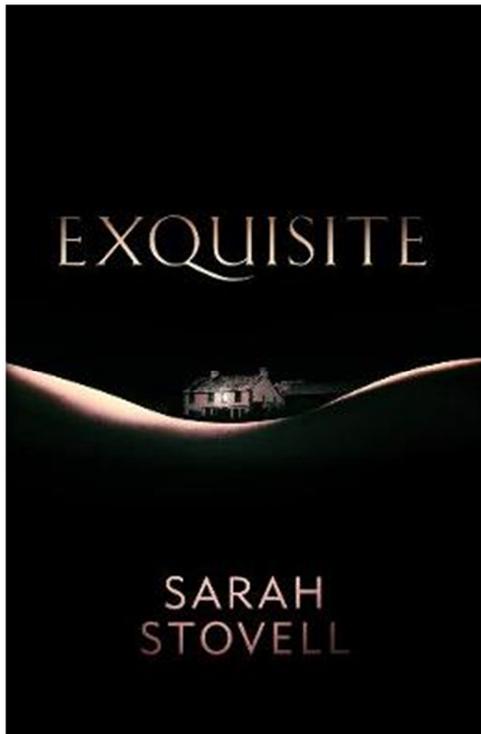


Helping you choose  
your next book



## LoveReading Reader reviews of **Exquisite** by Sarah Stovell

**Below are the complete reviews, written by LoveReading members.**



**Catherine Bryce**

*A terrific psychological relationship between two people which allows the reader to feel they are part of the story and keep the reader on the edge of their seat from the very start.*

*This is one of the best books I have read in a long time. The innocence at the start of the book which transforms into a thrilling story and by the end of the book is in a dark place and is a must-read for all thriller readers.*

*The book starts off normal with no hint of what has to come and the reader gradually begins to understand as they read that something is not quite right between Alice and Bo. This continues to intensify as the storyline moves on and the ending is*

*absolutely brilliant and surprising ending.*

*The author has written the book in such a way that the reader gets to know both main characters and this is one of the best aspects of the book, the writing style.*

*A great thriller by a great writer.*

**Sandra Bishop**

*The established writer. The aspiring novelist. A writers' retreat in the Lake District. But whose world is about to be changed forever? It's obvious...isn't it?*

*She loves me. She loves me not.*

*We first meet aspiring author Alice Dark crashed out in a bedsit with her "free*

*spirit” boyfriend Jake. She desperately wants to get her writing career on track along with the rest of her life and decides to sign up to a writers’ retreat in the Lake District run by successful author Bo Luxton. Here the two ladies meet and feel an instant affinity for one another. Their relationship blossoms in the weeks following the course, the story being related from each of the two ladies’ point of view. Very quickly we get the feeling that one of them is not quite telling the whole truth. But which one? You decide...*

*Sarah Stovell leads us cleverly through a web of truths, half-truths and outright lies which lead the reader first one way then the other. Just when you think you have the story figured out, we are fed another piece of the jigsaw which makes you doubt your decision.*

***A fabulous, brilliantly woven tale with a stunning climax which keeps you thinking about all you have read long after the final page has turned.***

*A five star review from me.*

You can follow Sandra on Twitter: @Bozziesgirl

## **Cheryl Kinney**

***A gripping and unique debut.***

*This is a great debut.*

*Beautifully written, the way the Lake District is described is so picturesque made me feel like I was there.*

*The book is split between the two main characters and it is really interesting to see how two people who experience the same can have different thoughts and perceptions of the same event.*

*There are some brief chapters written from prison and it isn't till the end of the book till it is revealed who they are about. I swung between the two characters and couldn't work out who ended up in prison.*

*It is so clever and well written, I really enjoyed it and wanted to keep reading all day! Will definitely look out for more from this author.*

You can follow Cheryl in Twitter: @cheryl\_bookworm

## **Nicola Kingswell**

***An Exquisite psychological page turner of a thriller.***

*Bo Luxton is an established writer. Alice Dark wants to be a writer. They meet at a writers retreat where Bo is tutoring. They are instantly drawn together. Bo lives a comfortable life in the Lake District with her much older husband and two daughters. Alice lives in a squat in Brighton with her unemployed artist boyfriend. When Bo's husband goes away on a business trip, she invites Alice to stay. The two begin a torrid affair. Alice is clearly in awe of Bo's success as a writer. Bo is entranced by Alice's youth, beauty and talent. However, as quickly as Bo starts the affair she ends it, leaving Alice heartbroken and confused. As the story unfolds, it is clear that both women have had difficult childhoods and unloving relationships with their mothers. Each part of the books is prefaced by one of the women writing from prison, so it is clear that this doesn't end well. What unravels is a tale of disillusionment, fantastism, manipulation and psychological disturbance.*

*'Exquisite' is a real page turner of a thriller. Sarah Stovell has created remarkable characters in Bo and Alice. The writing is pacy, elegant and draws you in. **An absolutely brilliant read.***

**Robin Little**

*'Exquisite' is the story of an experienced writer and her troubled relationship with Alice an aspiring novelist struggling with life. Bo is an established author with a seemingly idyllic life but a dreadful past. The relationship between the women develops before falling apart in spectacular fashion. The book gives both perspectives. The story starts to take some ever darker twists and turns. **'Exquisite' is a real page turner with short punchy chapters taking the story forward quickly as the relationship lurches forward.***

**Kerry Bridges**

***A well written novel with some interesting (and very worrying) ideas.***

*Bo and Alice are writers who meet at a writer's retreat Bo is running and become fast friends. Bo invites Alice to stay with her and then, on Bo's suggestion, Alice decides to move closer to continue the relationship. All of a sudden things take a much more serious turn. As both writers tell us the story of what happened, who is closer to the truth?*

*I like the premise of the book and the blurb describes it as ""sinister"" and ""terrifying"". Unfortunately, it never reaches those dizzying heights for me and, in fact, I am not sure that either of those things are really true.*

*Alice and Bo are interesting characters and the way that the book is written (alternating their POV) works well and is clever. The trouble is (and without trying to give too much away) as the writers have so much to hide, it means we aren't really getting to know them as well as we might and even the ""reveal"" at the end is confusing because it just means, for me, that the rest of the book makes even less sense than it did before.*

*I think this is an extremely cleverly plotted story and it is very well written. I just wonder if it's a bit too clever for its own good!*

<http://iamalwaysreading.wordpress.com/>

### **Julie Bertschin**

*Alice Dark is an aspiring writer who is taken under the wing of Bo Luxton a famous author whom she meets on a writer's retreat. One is willing to stop at nothing to get what she wants, but which one?*

*When Alice finds a mentor who she believes holds the key to the life she has always wanted as an author, all her trust is put in Bo Luxton, an established successful author. However Bo has a history of bad relationships with her fans and a past full of neglect, pain and anguish. Alice is beguiled by Bo, who appears to be genuinely interested in helping her, yet the relationship quickly begins to unravel when Bo's husband begins to learn of this obsession. **This story is cleverly written from both perspectives of Bo and Alice and we as readers are left on tenterhooks to find out who is telling the truth. An intriguing read!***

### **Phyllippa Smithson**

***Only in the final chapters does Exquisite truly command the title of thriller – prior to then it was just a mediocre story of love and life.***

*In her late 40s, Bo Luxton is a highly successful writer living with her retired husband and beloved young children in the Lake District having escaped the demands of London life. For Bo, the opportunity to spend time outdoors is life giving.*

*She meets Alice Dark when running a training course for budding new writers*

*and finds an attraction to the youth, vitality and freedom of the twenty year old.*

*Alice herself is living with a 'bum' in Brighton who dreams of being an artists but gets pulled into a life of partying, drugs and late nights. Despite her evident writing ability, she has no real drive or finances to escape and focus on what she is good at. Until she meets Bo.*

*Bo motivates her to get focused on her writing and in so doing their early friendship blossoms into something more.*

*Exquisite is clever in how it moves between the first person of Bo and then Alice. It's good by throwing in short chapters reflecting the prison life of an unnamed woman – which we know is either Bo or Alice. What I struggled with - it did not really build a haunting sense of impending threat to the well-being of one by the other character. The culmination therefore was a little dry and lacking in any real tension.*

*A shame but disappointing.*

### **Fiona Rothery**

***'Exquisite' is an outstanding debut psychological thriller, I couldn't put it down!***

*I feel this novel is certainly equal to 'Girl on a train' and 'Gone Girl' and I would definitely recommend it to fans of those novels. It is very **original and very cleverly written with a plot that keeps you wondering what is true and what is fantasy.***

*Bo Luxton is a celebrated author who lives an idyllic life in the Lake District with her husband and two children but things are not as perfect as they appear. At a writers retreat Bo meets Alice Dark a young woman with an aspiration to write and to change the dead- end life she has in Brighton with her unmotivated boyfriend. There is an instant rapport between the two women which ignites into a strong passion as Bo makes Alice her prodigy. As you follow the relationship that develops at an alarming pace and you discover the secrets that unfold from the childhood of both women, which makes them emotionally vulnerable, it is hard to know who is telling the truth. Which one is the victim and which one the stalker?*

*This cat and mouse game kept me changing my opinion as I frantically turned the pages to the dramatic conclusion, and beyond!*

*I loved this compulsive and unusual thriller and can't wait to read her next one!*

## **Angie Rhodes**

*Meet Bo Luxton is happily married with two children, a loving husband, house in the Lake District, and is a bestselling writer*

*When Bo meets Alice Dark, at a writers retreat their friendship is instant but while Bo has best sellers, Alice doesn't. In fact they are complete opposites. Alice wants to be as good as Bo but has a boyfriend who is a waste of space, she drifts from one dead-end job to the next and needs not only to believe in herself but have someone to believe in her!*

*After the retreat the two women keep in touch but just how deep is the friendship and how dark can it get?*

***A thriller that will have you looking at your friends in a new light, have you wondering just how far some friendships will test your loyalty, and how much you really know about someone...***

*Great Debut, looking forward to the next one...*

## **Jennifer Vince**

***I love thrillers and mystery novels however I am sorry to say that I could not connect with 'Exquisite'. There is nothing especially wrong with the novel, it was just not for me. I found that I did not find the characters of Bo and Alice convincing - this made it hard for me to care about them and persevere with their story. However I am grateful to have been given the opportunity to review this book.***

## **Janet Gilliard**

*This is a debut thriller by Sarah Stovell. The relationship between Bo and Alice is at the heart of this novel. They meet at a writer's retreat and a relationship is formed. **This is a well written psychological thriller which I enjoyed.** Well worth a try.*

## **Edel Waugh**

*This was an amazing story set in England about two women writers called Alice and Bo. Bo is a very famous published writer and is there at the retreat to teach and Alice is a writer in the making with real talent who is hoping to gain more knowledge of the whole process. What starts off as an innocent trip to a writers*

*retreat quickly leads to a very dark, twisted, psychological tale full of danger and manipulation. The story was deeply disturbing (in a good way), the more I read the more apparent the mental health problems were with one of the ladies. The extent to which they were willing to go to for their own gain was eye opening and deeply unnerving. **I started this book and did not put it down until the breath-taking end. I am really hoping this book will have a sequel as this was amazing and very cleverly written. Absolutely awesome!***