

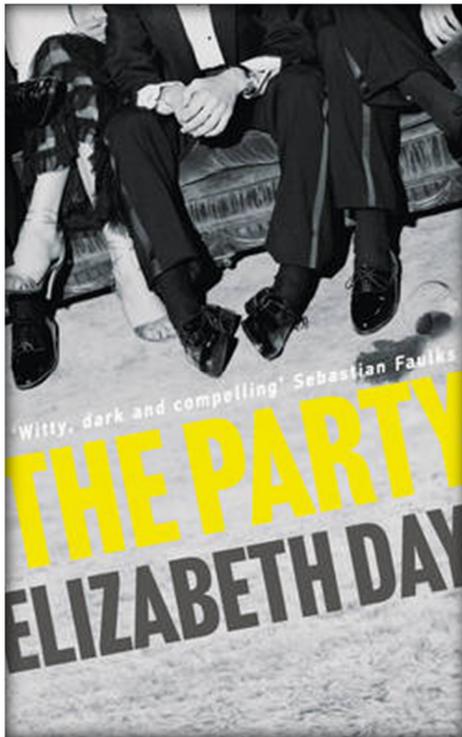


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your next book

4th

LoveReading Reader reviews of **The Party** by Elizabeth Day

Below are the complete reviews, written by LoveReading members.



Maureen Gourlay

Poor Martin doesn't fit in - always the outsider. But when he is befriended by Ben who seems to have it all Martin thinks he can too - but at what cost? Really good read and definitely recommended.

Martin doesn't fit it in - anywhere. Not at home, school, university or work or even his marriage. When he meets Ben at school he thinks he has found a true friend. Ben takes him under his wing and introduces him to a privileged life that Martin can only dream of. He becomes part of the family but through the years Martins devotion comes with a price and the secret that the two of them share. The opening is in a Police Interview room so we know that

""something"" has happened. Told by different narrators throughout we begin to discover what did happen but the revelations are not what we think they will be.

Really enjoyed it. Not read Elizabeth Day before but liked the writing style and will certainly read more of her books.

Emma Barton

This book gives an insight into the mind of a disturbed individual who will do whatever it takes to remain close to a childhood friend, and what happens when the relationship starts to breakdown.

This is an utterly captivating novel that draws you in on several

levels. *What exactly happened at The Party? Who was the victim? What is the real nature of the relationship between Martin and Ben? Why have they remained friends since childhood when they are obviously so different, and what binds them together?*

Martin Gilmour firsts meets Ben at private boarding school after gaining a scholarship to attend. Ben is popular, good looking and from a wealthy family. Throughout the novel, we discover how Martin sets out to become an invaluable friend to Ben and cements this one night at University when he takes the blame for Ben's reckless behaviour.

I found the characters to be well rounded and the story moved at a pace to keep me enthralled. The story was incredibly dark at times and the insight into the way the privileged few live, was intriguing.

Heather Byrne

Why is Martin helping police with their enquiries after The Party? A study of the relationships of two friends from school days to the present, exposing every skeleton in the closet.

A well written novel surrounding the events of The Party, and delving into the relationships of two friends and their wives.

We meet Martin and Ben from very different backgrounds, both dysfunctional, and follow their paths from school to the present day. I found it difficult to find empathy with any of the characters (which I think was the author's intention) but it made a more challenging read. Did I care what happened at the party and why they were in their current situations? Elizabeth Day is a proficient writer who sets scenes well and maintains the (quite slow) pace and as the novel unfolded I wondered why she had created these characters.

Celia Cohen

A well written thought provoking book.

Well I'm very glad I wasn't invited to The Party. The characters in the book are very well depicted. So much so that I didn't like any of them. The British upper class came across as people I wouldn't want to associate with either. A good book, very well written and you have to read right to the end to find out just what did happen at The Party.

Clare Wilkins

Gripping, disturbing and fantastically readable. I look forward to reading the rest of the Elizabeth Day canon!

Elizabeth Day's latest novel is a compelling, twisted tale of obsessive love and dark secrets in the upper echelons of society.

Martin Gilmour is an art critic with a reasonably successful professional life propelled by a best-selling book. Married to the opinionated but dogged and devoted Lucy he is nonetheless an outsider, an observer with an obsessive attachment to his childhood friend, Ben. Ben is everything Martin is not. Sociable, moneyed and destined to always be at the centre of things he glides through life with his dazzling wife, coterie of children and luxury homes. But Martin knows a secret. A secret that binds him to Ben's family and to an increasingly distant Ben. Desperate not to lose his 'best friend' Martin becomes Ben's 'Little Shadow' (LS) and a laughing stock to those around him. Events take a disturbing turn when Ben and Serena host an ostentatious birthday and fuelled by champagne, secrets are spilled and relationships severed.

I thought 'The Party' was fantastically readable. Despite a cast dominated by thoroughly dislikeable characters and some annoying nomenclature (the repetition of 'LS' drove me mad!) the writing is precise and sharp and there are some neat turns of phrase. I thought Martin was hideously convincing and I grew to like his intriguing and spirited wife. The conclusion is highly satisfying and a fitting conclusion to an unexpectedly engrossing read.

Phyllippa Smithson

Unnerving is the word I would use for this engrossing reflection of friendship, betrayal and cruelty.

I was captivated from the start. Martin Gilmour is being interviewed by police in the opening chapter and it quickly becomes obvious he is a strong minded and likes to generate controversy.

Why he is being interviewed is unravelled over the following pages as the story switches from his childhood (never knew his Dad and brought up by a somewhat erratic and verbally abusive Mum), his schooling (did not fit in at nursery and won a scholarship to a private school where his humble background is at disconnect to that of the privileged and obscenely wealthy worlds of his fellow students), his career (a best seller author) and his marriage (to Lucy a down-to-earth and an individual who adores her husband

unconditionally).

Switching between Martin's perspective and Lucy's notes (she was advised to create a diary by her therapist – why?) and the past and the current, the focal point is a 40th birthday party held in honour of Martin's very best friend, Ben. Ben who was the golden boy at the private school (looks, wealth, academic and sporting elite), is evidently Martin's obsession. And this is what is used so very cleverly by the author to stimulate a sense of foreboding. What happened at the party? To who? By who? Is the obsession admiration or something more sinister?

Fantastic writing, gripping story and keen observation of the disconcerting behaviour that can be a symptom of extreme wealth.

Dana Captainino

'The Party' is an uncomfortable yet fascinating read.

Using Sun Tzu's 'The Art of War' as a textbook the central character Martin begins to plan and act out his life and his relationships." "The Party is an uncomfortable yet fascinating read. The central character Martin has always been on the outside of the 'norm'. From childhood there is a mystery about the bizarre circumstances of his father's death and his mother's strange 'normalising' of this. His sense of exclusion and lack of belonging carry through his time at school and college.

Desperate to fit in and be liked and fighting his inner and most real feelings he meets Ben, a rich kid who belongs to the beautiful set. Using Sun Tzu's 'The Art of War' as a textbook he begins to plan and act out his life and his relationships.

However, his relationship with Ben becomes an obsession - unconditional love with a twist as the lives of the rich and famous become his 'norm'.

Martin's wife Lucy has had a happy upbringing but an incident sends her into a similar desperation and obsession to belong and be loved.

Although the novel drags a little in the middle the reader is taken backwards and forwards examining the circumstances and events leading up to a disturbing and ultimately sad climax.

A good read.

Carolyn Huckfield

A fantastic read telling the story of Martin a damaged loner with a very spiteful streak. He never quite fits in but has an obsession with his old school friend Ben that never leaves him

This is a fantastic read that tells the story of Martin who is a damaged loner with a very spiteful streak. He never quite fits in but he has an obsession with his old school friend Ben that never leaves him. As they get older their paths diverge. Martin becomes a writer and Ben is one of the elite class that is still governing the country. Their wives couldn't be more different either. Martin's wife Lucy is quiet but direct in her opinions. Serena is a typical upper class woman who does not work and lunches a lot. Martin desperately keeps in touch with Ben as much as he can. He even uses the same tailor although it is ridiculously expensive for his life style. The party for Ben's 40th birthday is the catalyst for truths to come out as Ben ditches Martin forever. However Martin has done a favour for Ben that could be end of Ben's political ambitions.

We begin with Ben's police interview and then read Lucy's journal her psychiatrist tells her to write. We have to make our minds up about Ben and Serena through the words of Lucy and Martin. Lucy is the only character that comes out of the events at the party with any kindness and dignity even though she is the one who finally cracks over the way Ben ends his friendship with Martin

This is an accomplished physiological story that is taut and tightly wound.

Jayne Burton

Wasn't sure I was going to like this when I chose it, but very quickly changed my mind.

I was swept up in the life of Martin, and carried along every step of the way. A very exciting and well-written book, it had me on the edge of my seat at times. It would make a great film.

Sharon Butler

I love a book that starts at the end and unravels as you read through it and 'The Party' does just that! It holds your attention to keep reading on...

It holds you in suspense to find out what exactly happened for one of the main characters - Martin to be at the Police Station talking about events at the 40th birthday party of his lifelong best friend - Ben and his wife.

The story is written in sections from different character's perspective and it engages the reader to want to find out more about each of their pasts.

The obvious privileges that money can buy are clearly evident when it comes to the relationship Martin and Ben have had for some 25 years

The author's constant detailed descriptions did put me off a bit, but I thoroughly enjoyed the book and would indeed recommend it.

Sharon Wood

Read, be outraged, then read again. A book that irritates and intrigues in equal measure.

This is a difficult book to read if only because it's one that frustrates, annoys, irritates, beguiles, confuses and entertains, in a masochistic sense. The writing is clever, almost too clever as you get the impression that the author is showing off her superior knowledge of the English language, using rare words which, whilst cleverly describing the situation/emotion, could be replaced with more 'reader friendly' terms.

The characters are annoying, arrogant, supercilious etc so you look forward to a denouement that destroys all of the protagonists. Apart from Lucy who reminds you that there is hope and good in human life. So, in summing up, surprisingly, I strongly feel that it's one of those books you have to read twice, the first time to be irritated/annoyed the second to appreciate/understand more. Maybe the author is more clever than I have given her credit for, the first time round.

Rachael Anderson

An intriguing, complex novel about friendship, obsession and privilege.

'The Party' deals with a complex relationship and friendship between socially inept outsider, Martin Gilmour, his dotting wife, Lucy and Martin's wealthy, charming 'best friend', Ben Fitzmaurice. There is not just one narrator to this story. The reliability of one narrator, in particular, is questionable and the reader is left unravelling lies and hypocrisy. Moreover, the novel jumps in time

backwards and forwards between a party celebrating Ben's fortieth birthday (and also a house warming party), an interview at the police station and his secret, dark past that he shares with Martin.

It is a dark and somewhat disturbing novel. I cannot say that I liked any of the characters. They are all flawed in one way or another. However, it is a well written novel, and it is gripping, keeping the reader on his/her toes until the end.

Judith Waring

This was a really easy read which I hadn't initially expected for some reason but I've rocketed through it in a matter of days!

The story unfolds from several timeframes, both past and present, and little nuggets of intriguing clues are scattered throughout the chapters hinting at an incident so the reader is fully aware from the start that 'something' must have happened at the party in question, but what? And by whom? The question lurks at the back of your mind the whole way through and the swing from past to present and back again is seamlessly done and doesn't lose your attention and keeps you riveted.

Elizabeth Day has written a reserved and concise novel, it doesn't shout or scream or draw attention to itself but it quietly sweeps you along as you easily identify with the situation being played out on the pages. She knows that we will all have felt like an outsider at some point in our lives, we will all have been faced by that person with the unbounded self confidence we secretly admire and would like to have ourselves, that elusive school clique which we'd really, deep down, like to be a part of.

Martin is a deeply flawed, dysfunctional and dark character which is uncovered as the book progresses. The friendship that is engineered by Martin between himself and Ben is always somewhat fraught and never comfortable regardless of the years spent as friends; Martin is too insecure to ever relax and Ben feels claustrophobic with the continual earnestness which eventually comes to a head at the party in question.

This is a really good story which sensitively describes a life spent being on the outside looking in, the need to belong and the resulting consequences that desperate need creates.

I hadn't heard of Elizabeth Day before this but I will definitely look out for more of her novels now; thank you for giving me the chance to meet a new author, I

really enjoyed her book.

Sally Doel

This is an intriguing and gripping story which keeps you firmly interested all the way through.

Martin is an 'unusual' character and the book starts with him being interviewed by the police after attending a party at his (supposed) best friend's house. Gradually, we see the characters unfold and the story is told from different viewpoints at different times. We get to know the history of the relationships of the main characters and what led to the events at the party. All the characters are very interesting and you really want to know what has happened and why.

There are a lot of different and dark bits of history between the characters and I found myself unsure who were the 'goodies' and who were the 'baddies' until later on in the story. It was a very good read and I would recommend it to anybody who likes a bit of a dark book with great characters.

Doreen McKeown

I really enjoyed this book, which is all about love, betrayal and revenge.

The main character, Martin Gilmour, is a complex, insecure character who spends his whole life worshipping his friend Ben. Although they are from very different backgrounds, they are bound together by a secret, until Ben seeks to extricate himself from the situation, when Martin's love becomes a burning desire for revenge. The main action takes place at a sumptuous party, thrown by Ben, with the events leading up to it told in snapshots in the preceding chapters. The author really brings the characters to life and it is a really gripping story, related in a very readable, sometimes humorous style. This is a book I will certainly remember and recommend to others.

Sue Packer

'The Party' is one of those books which part of me wants to read really quickly to find out what happened, but which I also want to read slowly and enjoy such a well written and intelligent book!

Elizabeth Day's characters are so well rounded and believable and we are teased and tantalised throughout the story, as we try to work out who did what

to whom!

The tale begins in a police interview room with the main character, Martin, being interviewed about 'something' that has happened at a party held by his best friend, Ben and Ben's wife Serena. Told in flashbacks, and also via Martin's wife Lucy's diary, Ben's life of privilege, and Martin's obsession with obtaining the same social status and more, sees Martin risking everything to get his desires. Martin's flawed character is beautifully written and the author's deft and subtle prose, slowly reveal his truly unlikeable and ruthless persona.

Ben and Serena appear to have it all, wealth, status, privilege, good looks and a beautiful family. But a secret that Martin knows about Ben's past gives Martin access to everything he desires, almost! But the 'golden couple' can be just as ruthless too and when Martin no longer fits in to Ben's lifestyle, he becomes surplus to requirements and not welcome anymore. Even Martin's wife Lucy becomes involved and things slowly, but dramatically unravel for everyone.

The Party is a cleverly crafted book and a great read – thoroughly recommended!