

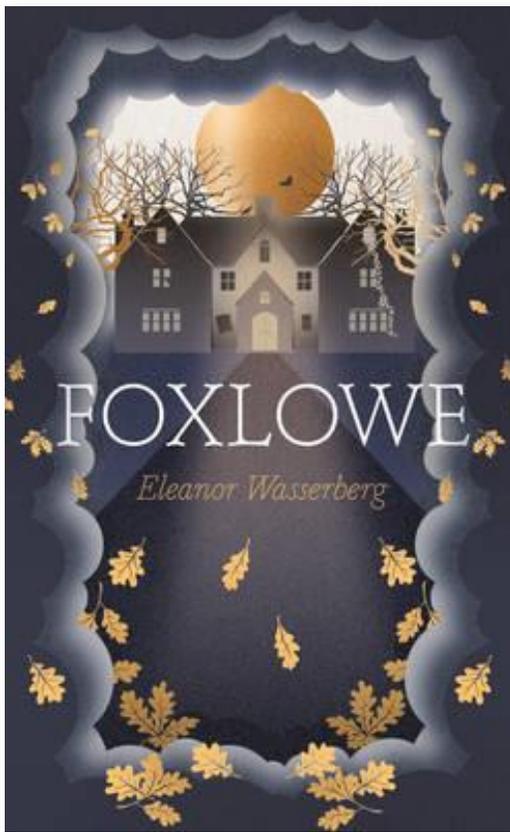


Helping you choose
your next book

Lovereading Reader reviews of **Foxlowe** by Eleanor Wasserberg

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Below are the complete reviews, written by Lovereading members.



Sarah Harper

Raised in a commune, what could have been a harmonious and idyllic childhood of freedom, play and exploration is far from the truth for the children, or ungrown, of Foxlowe. Green, Blue and October suffer both physical and mental punishment at the hands of Freya. Using her rituals, she seeks to drive out the Bad, an evil force which can creep in and take hold and to which the ungrown are especially susceptible. Cruel and vindictive, Freya holds a position of power in this skewed reality. Leavers are never spoken of and babies appear as if by magic. Her control over Foxlowe gains strength while the other members of the Family turn a blind eye, afraid of being outcast and having to face their lives again in

the outside world. Green is jealous of Blue, she resents her and wants to both hurt and protect her at the same time. And Green can pinpoint the exact moment when she takes Freya's voice. After a lifetime of seeking approval from such an evil mother figure, a lifetime of justifying the acutely painful 'lessons' this woman inflicted on her, she is compelled to play out her own pain on other, weaker people. However things can easily go too far and when Foxlowe crumbles Green is forced to survive on the outside. But the ties that bind us are the hardest to sever and Foxlowe has a powerful hold.

Insidious and sinister, I cannot get this book out of my head. I devoured it in a day and its undercurrents had a profound effect on me. Disturbing and yet compelling at the same time, 'Foxlowe' is completely and utterly compulsive.

Catherine Hogwood

A unique story of family, commitments and elements of control which will question how far people will go and why.

I have mixed emotions regarding this book that follows the story of a 'Family' living in a remote home called Foxlowe on the moors. These individuals believe in 'The Bad' and that it can consume and grow within a person and make them behave badly. The only way to beat it is to follow the family rituals from ancient times around the standing stones. Those people that leave are no longer discussed by name.

The story mainly follows Green, a young girl within the family. Without giving too much away regarding the nature of the book, Green travels a difficult path of naivety and confusion which has devastating circumstances that last a lifetime.

This book was very well written but I did find it somewhat disturbing in places. It shows how control can take many forms and how easily people can be led once they are removed from the wider world. This control cannot be easily undone.

I would only recommend this book to people who like a unique psychological (and somewhat disturbing) read.

Vikki Patis

When I receive a book for review, I tend to read the blurb and that's all. I don't want to know what the story is about; I want to discover it for myself, read it as if the narrator is speaking directly to me. And so, when I picked up 'Foxlowe', and started reading about the Bad and the Family and how the inhabitants had to protect themselves from outsiders, I wasn't sure if I was reading a dark dystopian novel, post-apocalyptic maybe, or something else.

It turned out to be something else. Foxlowe is the home of a cult, a group of women, men, and children living freely together. Nobody really belongs to anyone, but everyone belongs to each other.

The cult is centered around the Solstice, how the sun drives out the dark and the Bad, the evilness that lives inside us. Led mostly by Freya, the Family lives by basic rules and standards. They grow and kill their own food, running water is scarce, and the children run barefoot in the mud, unconcerned with schooling, hygiene, or typical routines.

The narrator, Green, seems to be Freya's daughter, who she worships like the goddess she's named after. But Freya isn't always kind; the children endure Spike Walks, scratching themselves on rusty nails to drive out the Bad. They get Edged, ignored by the Family and left on the outskirts. Violent punishments are commonplace, and hunger is not unheard of. But still, Green is happy.

Green, Toby and Blue grow up together at Foxlowe. As children, they band together, look out for one another, and share intimate moments. But when the pressure of the Family becomes too much, Green crumbles, and her story unleashes an awful tragedy.

A horrendous tale of child abuse and neglect, of the ways in which our families can skew our minds and make us believe things are fine, are right, when they're not. The struggle to detach from what we're told and what is true.

Wasserberg writes such horrors with a steady hand and beautiful prose. *This is yet another book that I imagine we'll be seeing on the big screen very soon.*

<https://dracarya.wordpress.com/2016/03/26/foxlowe-by-eleanor-wasserberg/>

Angie Rhodes

They are not an ordinary family, they are not your everyday normal family, they live in Foxlowe a big house near the Standing Stones and they know the moors like the backs of their hands. They also know you can NOT LET THE BAD IN!! Not ever!! Children live at Foxlowe and they celebrate the Solstice, Freya is the leader and you have to do what Freya says. Everything is going so well, until she comes home with a new "family "member, a baby girl who Green (she who tells the story) names Blue. Jealousy seeps into Green and she lets the BAD get into Blue and now nothing will be the same again.

This is a wonderful, dark, unnerving story and you know something is not quite right, and when you get nearer to the end,, Well let's just say, It will turn everything you thought it was upside down!

Glynis Elliott

A fascinating read and well told. But at times I found it very difficult especially the last half of this novel. I wanted to ride up on my white horse and rescue the children.

Very atmospheric and descriptive. However, I wouldn't say it was enjoyable due to the subject matter, but very readable.

Glenda Worth

An unusual tale of an alternative way of living based at a house called 'Foxlowe'. The main character 'Green' tells the story of the commune and how it evolves.

An unusual tale of life in a commune based at a property called Foxlowe which one of the commune has inherited. The main character 'Green' tells the story and brings to life the characters as the book evolves. The beginning of the book is a little confusing until you realise that the people live by different rules and lifestyle alien to the way we live today.

Children with no formal education, adults who believe in free love and who resent outsiders. The Solstice twice a year is the main healing force for the residents of Foxlowe getting rid of the 'Bad' and setting them up for the next 6 months.

Of course nothing lasts forever and gradually people drift away, social services intervene and the commune is closed down. Green who is now Jess goes back to Foxlowe when one of the flock dies and relives some of the times spent there.

Catherine Bryce

A brilliant, eerily, keep turning the pages story.

Once in a while a book comes along that just captivates your attention from the beginning to the end and 'Foxlowe' is just one of those stories.

This is a book that takes a little time to get into but once you are in it you are hooked.

Foxlowe is a commune set isolated from the everyday world, but has an everyday world within itself. It has its rules and regulations, various characters in competition with each other and have a New Age feel to them trying to live a past way of life in the present and Foxlowe is the house where it

is all happening. They avoid new things and outsiders and have live with a fear they name The Bad which they try to keep clear of.

At first I thought it was a supernatural novel but it is written in such a way that the author is describing her experiences as if she was living there in reality which gives the story a more personalised feel. Following the acts of each of the members at Foxlowe and their impact on the other members keeps the reader turning the pages to find out what happens next. A simple story with a hidden agenda.

An excellent worthwhile read.

Wendy Stubbs

This is a strange story which took me quite a while to get into.

The background of the story is good but it is strange to follow at times and felt disjointed in places.

An unusual story told in the book.

Foxlowe is a large house/mansion built far from civilisation (Outsiders as they are called in the novel) where a past lifestyle is trying to keep itself established in modern times by the inhabitants of the house. Each inhabitant is individualistic having their good points and bad points, just like a modern-day commune. They are frightened of the Bad, a sort of darkness which appears to take the form of their light as in their Summer Solstice celebrations, they know when it is with them but try to keep as far away from it as possible. This New Age commune tries to keep itself to itself, although the locals know of its existence they know very little of life at Foxlowe. The actual story is interesting to read but did not hold my full attention.

'Foxlowe' is written in an easy to read form and well written but this is a book that I just could not relax with. The story is interesting enough but I found it rather boring in places and I found that it is a book you either took to straight away or left it behind.

Carolyn Huckfield

A tragic and disturbing story with violence as well as joy in the Foxlowe commune. And what this life does to the children is the real tragedy of Foxlowe

Foxlowe is a large old house turned into a commune by Mike, the owner, for himself and other likeminded families. They live a self-sufficient life and sell produce and artistic works to subsidise themselves. There are children living there too and we hear most of the story from Blue, Mike's Daughter with Freya. It all seems idyllic at first but cracks and violence appear as one by one people become leavers and return to a normal life.

There is a very dark side to Freya and Green never sees it world has never lived away from Foxelowe and sees it as perfect.

Blue her younger sister does see it and knows it is not the perfection that Green thinks it is.

Fast forward to the end of the commune and Green, renamed Jess, just cannot function in the real world. She had never been there and does not want to stay there.

This is a tragic and disturbing story; there is violence as well as joy within

Vicky-Leigh Sayer

'Foxlowe' is an atmospheric novel. Creepy and claustrophobic with some deeply flawed characters. It will have you turning its pages frantically wanting to discover its ending which doesn't disappoint.

The 'Foxlowe' of this novel's title is an ancestral home, and a commune.

'The Family' living there are cultish in their actions and living arrangements, centered around the Solstice, and how the sun drives out the dark and 'the Bad'; the (perceived) evilness that lives inside us all.

'The Family' is led by Freya and they live simple, idealistic lives. It consists of 'Grows' (Grown-ups) and the 'Ungrown' (children).

The 'ungrown' are not schooled and free to wander Foxlowe's grounds as long as they never venture outside the perimeter of the family home.

Green, Toby and Blue are the 'ungrown' of the novel, they look out for one another, and all answer to Freya, who can be cruel and violent towards the children.

Green the novel's protagonist, worships Freya, who could be her Mother – though this is never mentioned.

There is a cruelty and brutality about Foxlowe and 'the Family' that is palpable throughout the novel. At first you are not certain why, but then it becomes clear

that the adults have made their own decision to live there whilst the children have not.

After a dramatic turn of events that splits Foxlowe we meet Green outside of Foxlowe, as Jess, where she is struggling to cope with the outside world. Will anything ever be the same again?

<http://thewelshlibrarian.blogspot.co.uk>

Humaira Kauser

An extraordinary read and impossible to put down.

'Foxlowe' isn't the type of book that I would have picked up if I was to go out to a book store. But I am glad I have read it. It was great read and I thoroughly loved it.

Follow Humaira on Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/cookie_bookie/

Hannah Smith

Once I was fully immersed in the world of 'Foxlowe' I found that I never wanted to leave. A thought-provoking read with beautifully descriptive writing throughout, it really was quite extraordinary!

'Foxlowe' was a book that I completely fell for thanks to a brilliant synopsis. With a unique premise, the book quite literally opened my eyes to a whole new world and was extremely thought-provoking. Throughout 'Foxlowe' we meet a number of different characters and each of these contribute a great deal to the novel and turn it into something that is quite special, a book that I feel could very easily work as a successful film. With every page I turned I fell more and more in love with Eleanor's writing style which made the book something that was full of tension and incredibly dramatic. The writing was also beautifully descriptive and this really allowed me to build a picture for myself and visualise everything that was going on. After finishing 'Foxlowe', I'm left feeling very hopeful that we will see more written by Eleanor in the future and really think she's an author to look out for!

<http://hannahreviewingbooks.blogspot.co.uk>

Follow Hannah on Twitter: @hansbookreviews

Katie Hoare

'Fowlowe' is set in a house with a group of people who made up an unusual family. This story is told in three parts through the eyes of Green and Jess, where they received a rather unconventional schooling, and where they thought that nobody would leave. Those who did were called Leavers by those who left behind, and in part the education was associated to the seasons, along with what is associated with plants that surround us.

The ending is quite reflective told by Green as an adult and how she sees the house as the grown up and how others may perceive it. This story tells how Green and Jess saw their childhoods, and those who shared this period this with them. Along with how happy they were with an unconventional upbringing.

Julie Bertschin

*Being brought up in a commune is all that Green knows and to her that is normal life, even when punishment and torture are common features in that life. **A strange and unsettling story.***

*Green is a child born into life in a commune; Foxlowe. It is seen as both a refuge and almost a prison by the inhabitants. Set up by her mother Freya, her father Richard and Libby, the founders Foxlowe is a community all of its own. Green's story is over-shadowed by the threat of punishment which Freya holds over the children in the commune, yet Green accepts that whatever her mother does is done for the greater good. The commune's beliefs in observing the old pagan customs and traditions, following their own rules and shunning all outside influences makes their world very insular. The dynamics of the relationships within the house are very important and the struggle for the affection of Richard by the two female founders creates tension within the commune. Slowly we learn of the history of how the inhabitants came to the commune and their personal frailties. When Libby leaves and Richard follows her, Freya's power over everyone is unchallenged which is a dire consequence for Blue, the youngest child, who endures Freya's wrath for repeated trespass onto the heath to talk to passers by. Freya's distrust of the outside world feeds her anxiety, which translates into pain and suffering for Blue. **An intoxicating and disturbing read!***

Laura Delve

A great concept exploring the inner workings of a cult, but felt like an effort to read and hard to get into.

I was so so intrigued when I saw the cover of this book and read the synopsis. I was very keen to start and discover what was hiding between the pages of this slightly eery looking book.

I desperately wanted to like this book as I had such high hopes for it, but I just found that I could never 100% get into it.

Foxlowe tells the story in the perspective of group cult culture and how they live by different rules and thinkings. They are a mixture of the grown (adults) and ungrown (children). They are led by the founders Richard and Freya and the ungrown are not allowed to leave the grounds of Foxlowe. The children don't go to school and are led to believe that the outside world is not a good place and they must keep the 'bad' out at all times. The bad is usually dispelled from the ungrown by cruel punishments and at times shunned from the group.

I am not denying that this book was clever and well written, I just felt completely detached from this whole story. *I don't know if this was the purpose, but it meant that I could never fully engage with what I was reading and would find my mind wondering. This story is clearly very dark and the ending more so, I just never got that sense from it. I couldn't get into it enough to feel that chilling atmosphere that it should have had.*

A brilliant concept, but sadly just could not get into this one.

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