

LoveReading Reader reviews of The Girl In The Red Coat by Kate Hamer

Below are the complete reviews, written by LoveReading members.

Edel Waugh

I had only intended to read a few pages of this to see what it was like, but as soon as I started I was not able to put it back down. The story is about the kidnapping of a young girl called Carmel who is out with her mum Beth browsing some stalls at a festival. It only takes moments for a child to go missing and that is exactly what happened all because of one creepy old man. The beginning of the story is tense and that builds quickly then eases slightly toward the middle picking up again toward the end. At no time does the story let you feel comfortable. The story is told in two ways, through the eyes of the mother and through the eyes of her missing daughter. It was a

*wonderful way to tell the story as it kept us up to date with what was happening with them both at the same time more or less. **Truly gripping and sad at times but so worth reading! I recommend this for anyone who enjoys thrillers.***

<http://www.edelwaugh.blogspot.com>



Jacki Moorcroft

Every parent's nightmare has just come true for Beth in this compelling, page turning book which will keep you enthralled

through to the last page.

When Beth's marriage ends she struggles to give her daughter Carmel the life she wants for her. Terrified she will lose her too, she tries too hard to keep her close and Carmel rebels. Carmel is a special child with a talent she is totally unaware of and regularly disappears into her own world. Resentful of her mother's oppressiveness at a local children's fair she hides away and when a man tells her her mother has had an accident and he is her Grandfather come to look after her, she goes with him willingly. Carmel is then taken to a different world far from where she knows and she struggles to maintain her true self. This story prays on every parent's nightmare and you are pulled into their lives. Beth's despair oozes from every page and Carmel's journey and fight to retain her identity will keep you turning the pages until finished.

You can follow Jacki on Twitter: @moorcoftj

Joan Hill

This is a moving and very enjoyable novel about a young girl separated from her birth family and integrated into a new family in a different continent.

Beth Wakeford lives in Norfolk with her eight-year-old daughter Carmel. One day when they are attending a storytelling festival, Carmel becomes separated from her mother and 'found' by her estranged Grandfather who tells her that her mother has been knocked down by a truck and that he will look after her at his home in Wales 'just for now'. Little Carmel is trusting and she does not know the plans her 'Grandfather' has for her and the search he has undertaken to find her. Soon she finds herself in another country with her new family. Her Grandfather is convinced that she has a very special gift, a gift he is determined to develop at all costs, but to do this he has to change her name.

This is a very good debut novel. I was quickly engrossed by the fine storytelling in the voices of Beth and Carmel. *Beth is desperate to find her daughter and this need certainly resonated deeply with me. I could feel her uncertainty and deep pain.*

I would like to thank Lovereading and the publishers Faber & Faber for my lovely copy of this moving and well-crafted novel.

You can follow Joan on Twitter: @JoanHillo7

Phyllippa Smithson

What a troubling, powerful and total emotional roller coaster of a story – brilliant!

As soon as I realised the plot of this book, I wanted to read the end to seek reassurance that 8-year old Carmel would be united with her Mum, Beth, after wandering off when the two of them visit a book festival together. That way, it would take away the anxious state I felt as I turned page after page, full of words which ebbed and flowed between the life of Carmel after going missing, and the same moment in time being spent by her overwhelmed Mum. However, I braved it out and read a totally plausible account of missing child and a parent overwhelmed with desperation to find her only daughter.

Carmel's parents are recently divorced and she lives a quiet life with her Mum who is struggling but managing to keep their world together as a single mum, despite the limited access to finance. Beth is also, in Carmel's eyes, a somewhat overly protective Mother.

Carmel is a sensitive child who loves the colour red. She is also prone to moments when her mind blanks out and she can quite simply disappear into herself. This can be problematic when it occurs wandering in a maze on her own for example.

Is Beth's obsession to find her daughter genuine or is it driven by some other reason? Who is the old man claiming to be Carmel's estranged grandfather? Will we be taken down a dark path before discovering the truth or will we see a missing child rightfully reunited with her Mum? Read 'The Girl in the Red Coat' and learn!

Melanie Rose

Gripping page-turner

The story is told from both the mother's and the girl's point of view (alternating chapters) so you get two perspectives of what is happening. It is very well written and easy to read and I just wanted to keep reading till I got to the end to find out the fate of the girl.

Judith Cooper

This is a book to be read in big chunks rather than a few pages at a time so would recommend it as one to save for when you have time on your hands.

The book centres on 8 year old Carmel and her mum Beth. Carmel gets

separated from her mum at a children's fair and the last thing her mum sees is a glimpse of the red coat Beth was wearing.

Carmel is whisked away by a man claiming to be her estranged grandfather who says he will take her to her mum. She quickly realises that this man believes she has a special gift which is why he wants her.

The story follows mother and child through the next 5 years as Carmel is taken across continents and her mum frantically searches for her.

An amazing debut novel and a recommended read.

Sarah Harper

Immediately gripping, intensely moving and totally unforgettable this is an astoundingly well written and compelling debut novel.

Immediately gripping, intensely moving and totally unforgettable. The Girl in the Red Coat is a fantastic read which drew me in from the start. Single mum Beth's love and protectiveness towards her 8 year old daughter, Carmel, is completely natural. The point where she loses her in the maze is very well written but the scene in which Carmel is taken at the storytelling festival is jaw-droppingly brilliant. I held my breath and my heart raced as Beth tried to find her. Her anxiety and rising panic were palpable and perfectly written. The pain of loss which Beth then had to endure, and the way in which it affected her as she tried to come to terms with it, was devastatingly sad but I was ever hopeful as I learnt of Carmel's new life with her 'Grandfather'. It's by no means easy or comfortable for the young girl but she's a strong character and the terrible situations which I was dreading reading about don't actually occur which is a relief. Although it's hard to believe, things could have been so much worse. I longed for a reconciliation and, despite my heart wanting things to move faster, my head knew that the actual pace of the book was more realistic. I was just desperate to find out what happened. With an evocative turn of phrase – I especially loved Carmel's 'cherry liquorish legs' in her red tights – Kate Hamer has produced an astoundingly well written and compelling debut novel.

Rebecca Whymark

Not too sure about this, intriguing to start with but a disappointing ending.

I thought when I started that this book would be like 'Room' by Emma Donaghue. I was drawn in by the perspectives of the mother and daughter that

*the book is written from. However as the book progressed I felt it jumped around a little. I felt there could have been a little more added in to create suspense. I wasn't keen on the reason why she was taken but it was different to the usual abduction type stories. I agree with other reviews I have seen of this that the ending was all tied up a little too neatly and quickly for my liking. **Not a bad book but not one I will probably re-read.***