

LoveReading Reader reviews of The Misbegotten by Katherine Webb

Below are the complete reviews, written by LoveReading members.

Edel Waugh

The first thing you should know about this book is that it does not give up its secrets easily. The second thing you should know about it is that those secrets are well worth the wait.

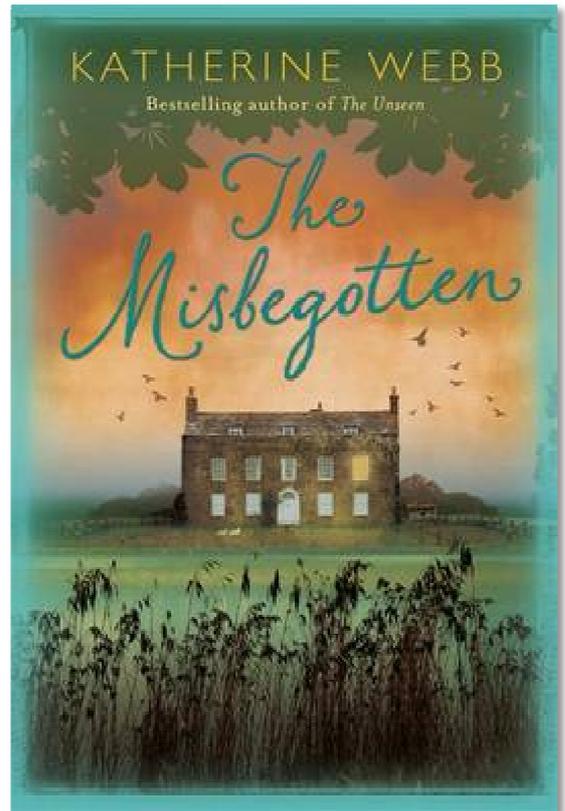
The mystery girl within the entire story is called Alice and although it has been a long time since anybody has seen her she has a very strong presence even though she is believed to be dead.

The characters are very strong in this book, some more likeable than others, but none are easily forgotten. Three characters from the book appealed to me the most and they were Jonathon, Rachel and Starling. These three all have their own troubles and it is wonderful seeing their characters develop throughout the story, the more the story went on the more I liked them.

The entire book is jam packed with mystery and that is what really carries you through the story. It was definitely a gripping, and at times intense read that is well worth every minute you spend reading it. The ending was perfect, I loved it!!!

You can read this review on my blog:

<http://edelwaugh.blogspot.ie/2013/06/the-misbegotten-by-katherine-webb-review.html>



Vanessa Wild

A compelling, absorbing and intriguing story about how secrets can come back to haunt us! Set in Bath in the 1800s, Rachel Crofton, a governess, marries a wine merchant and through him comes into contact with Jonathan Allen, a man who has suffered the horrors of war. He is also tormented by memories of his childhood sweetheart, Alice, who mysteriously disappeared whilst he was away fighting. With the help of Starling, Jonathan's servant and also Alice's close companion, they try to discover the truth - what really did happen to Alice?

I thought this was a fabulous read and I thoroughly enjoyed it! I loved the style of writing. It had me eagerly turning the pages to find out what happened and I was quite sad when I closed the book for the final time. The characters are well drawn and defined - Starling was my favourite for her sheer determination.

There's a gripping plot at its heart which was well thought out and doesn't lose its pace. 'The Misbegotten' is an enjoyable and fascinating tale which contains a little bit of everything - murder, mystery and a hint of romance.

This is the first book which I have read by Katherine Webb and it certainly won't be my last! Indeed, I have the rest of her books on my bookshelves and I look forward to reading each one.

Many thanks to www.lovereading.co.uk for sending this book to me to read and review; I wasn't disappointed.

Linda Hill

It's difficult to review Katherine Webb's 'The Misbegotten' without revealing too much of the plot and spoiling the experience for those who have yet to read this fabulous book. ***Webb drops clues into the lies and truths so skillfully that each twist of narrative makes the book impossible to put down.***

Set in the first part of the nineteenth century, the story unfolds with spellbinding effect. Descriptions of Bath, of both rich and impoverished lifestyles and the horrors of the Napoleonic wars give a vivid sense of period to the narrative. The characters are extremely well developed, both in their physical descriptions, but also in their vibrant and humane personalities, so that reading about them makes you care about them; particularly Starling, Alice and Rachel.

Part romance, part history and part mystery, ***'The Misbegotten' is a wonderful read and I can't recommend it highly enough.***

Lisa Redmond

*Although *The Misbegotten* is Katherine Webb's fourth novel it is the first I've read and it certainly won't be the last because her storytelling skills are enchanting.*

*The *Misbegotten* is the story of four people: Starling an abandoned child who grows up as neither servant nor lady, Alice the determined young woman who takes her in, Jonathan the grandson of Alice's benefactor and Rachel who meets Starling and Jonathan twelve years after Alice's mysterious disappearance which has left both of them devastated.*

Rachel has married to escape the drudgery of her life as a governess. Through her husband she meets the Alleyn family and is employed as a companion to Jonathan to read to him and encourage his return to health and society. Through Starling and Jonathan she learns Alice's story and the part they have played in her strange disappearance.

*Gradually she begins to piece together the puzzle and she discovers that her husband also has secrets. **This is engrossing storytelling reminiscent of Kate Morton or Daphne du Maurier.** The plot is full of twists and surprises and the characters intensely interesting if not always likeable.*

*The story takes place in and around Bath in the same era as many of Jane Austen's classic works though it features a great deal more murk and grime, **a fantastic gothic thriller. I highly recommend it.** Thanks so much to lovereading.co.uk for the opportunity to read this book before it is released in hardback, trade paperback and e-book in August.*

Susan Walsh

Period drama at its best, '*The Misbegotten*' is a great read.

Follow the lives and loves of these colourfully portrayed individuals. Feel the love, the passion, the cruelty. This book will please its reader no end, as you link the characters as they drift together through circumstance.

Each tantalizing chapter will have you enthralled as you piece together what happens next. A must read for those of us who enjoy historical fiction.

Who will capture your imagination the most....will it be young Starling or the kindly Alice? Caring Rachel or her husband Richard Weekes? Or will it be the wounded Jonathan Alleyn? A mixture of classes brought together in a spellbinding way.

Ruth Paterson

I demolished this novel from start to finish in two sittings. Interesting and strong characters, lovable and detestable, intriguing and annoying all made for an excellent read. I was able to escape to the 19th century and lose myself.

The novel is essentially about the main character Rachel and her new life as a married woman. It explores the sentiments of the time, that a woman never truly belongs to herself only her father, then employer and / or husband.

In the opening chapter a small child is found wondering in the cold with no shoes and a bedraggled appearance. The young lady that finds her names her Starling, after the feathers in her hair and the birds that seem to have brought her to that place. Starling's story initially unfolds in each chapter under the date stamp, events occur 18 years earlier than Rachel's story. Slowly the stories begin to merge and they eventually meet.

Initially I read on to find out why the little foundling was being referred to and what her significance to Rachel was. Once this became clear, I read on as secrets and lies that have affected both women unfold. One a Lady in diminished circumstances who feels compelled to marry "beneath her" and another a foundling brought up by a Lady, as her sister, but now working in service.

*The novel includes mystery and romance, **it is not a straight forward storyline and dark twists arise.** It also details more serious details of the Siege of Badajoz and being in the Cavalry during the Napoleonic Wars. Not all of the descriptions in the novel are cosy and comfortable to read, but they are in context and add to the intrigue, drawing you closer, to emphasise with the characters. **I can thoroughly recommend this novel; escapism at its best.***

Lynn Curtis

Eighteenth-century Bath...murky secrets...a hero tormented by what he has seen and done in the Peninsular campaign, and a heroine who bears an extraordinary likeness to a girl who vanished in mysterious circumstances twelve years before. Add to this a scheming and implacable housemaid who is determined to uncover the truth about the disappearance and make sure the guilty person pays, and the scene appears to be set for a Regency hybrid of Georgette Heyer and Sarah Waters.

*In fact, **I found the book didn't quite live up to its initially intriguing set-up.** It was plain to me from the start who the guilty party had to be, and the shoals of red herrings that were thrown into the mix in the hope of disguising this felt somewhat laboured. **I enjoyed the setting and the period details, which were well researched, but felt that the suspense element didn't quite hit the mark.***

Suzanne Marsh

Such a joy to read! *The touching, sad part for me was reading when a tiny child walks towards the farmhouse entering through the gate. The tiny child is wearing a dress stitched of mixed scraps of fabric woven together. Her undergarments are baggy, filthy and stinking. Upon her feet she wears leather slippers tied on with string. The poor child's ribs are hollow; her back has diagonal slashes where she has been beaten. The child will not speak when asked her name. Alice decides to name the girl Starling who will now become a member of the family.*

www.ireadnovels.wordpress.com

Gill Wilmott

An appropriate title for an absorbing, “can’t put it down” book. The story flits between 1803 and 1821 but through it all runs the shadow of the mysterious Alice, illuminated both by those who loved her and those that hated and despised her.

In the background is a fascinating portrayal of 19th century life, not just of the “above and below stair” variety but also the emerging middle classes, with enough money from their businesses and occupations now not just to exist but to have leisure time and form a social strata of their own.

Also interesting are the glimpses of life for the junior officers during the wars with the French; the names and formats of the battles already familiar to those of us who have enjoyed Bernard Cornwell’s Sharpe novels.

Striking also is the power of men over women in all strata of life. If you were female your choices in anything were frustratingly limited.

This story is woven in such a way that not only do you want to know the conclusion, but you really care about the characters and what becomes of them.

All in all a thoroughly enjoyable read, highly recommended.

Nailah Afghan

A real treat for people who love a good book to curl up on the sofa with. 'The Misbegotten' is a wonderful mix of historic novel, romance and mystery, with intriguing characters that grab you from the very first chapter.

*Set in the 19th century but written for the 21st century reader, **this is an enthralling tale of two very different women caught in a world of dark secrets, trying to make sense of their past and present.** The women are sometimes endearing and fascinating, brave and conforming, base and complex, just like real women, which is perhaps why it is easy for the reader to connect with them and feel for their plights and their fights. A fabulous summer read for the beach or a winter read with your cocoa and slippers!*