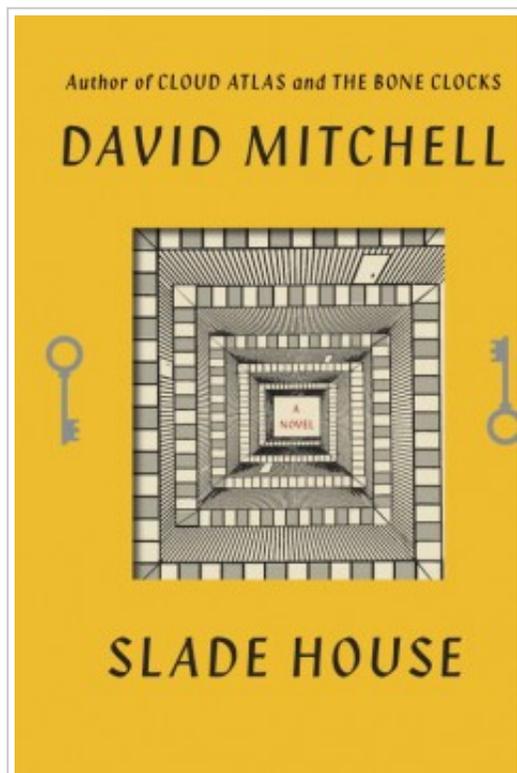


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Slade House

by David Mitchell

Price: \$26.00(Hardcover)

Published: October 27, 2015

Rating: 0.0/5 (0 votes cast)

From the Publisher: The New York Times bestseller by the author of The Bone Clocks and Cloud Atlas | A Publishers Weekly Literary Fiction Top 10 Pick for Fall 2015

Keep your eyes peeled for a small black iron door.

Down the road from a working-class British pub, along the brick wall of a narrow alley, if the conditions are exactly right, you'll find the entrance to Slade House. A stranger will greet you by name and invite you inside. At first, you won't want to leave. Later, you'll find that you can't. Every nine years, the house's residents—an odd brother and sister—extend a unique invitation to someone who's different or lonely: a precocious teenager, a recently divorced policeman, a shy college student. But what really goes on inside Slade House? For those who find out, it's already too late. . .

Spanning five decades,...

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What We Say

Expect the unexpected from David Mitchell. Fine, but what I didn't expect was a novel that is fairly conventional, right down to its pat, familiar finale. It's a haunted house sort of horror story that I imagine may fall through the cracks. It's probably not horrific enough for fans of that genre. And more literary types may be off-put by soul-sucking demons residing in a mysterious mansion that only materializes once every nine years in a cut-through found in a run-down neighborhood of London. Being written by Mitchell, it is of course more complex and well-written than most horror tales, so it will everyone's loss. It's not a home run like one has come to expect from Mitchell but it is an intriguing and solid effort nonetheless. The novel is split into five sections that slowly reveal the pattern of what is actually going on. It starts off with a bang, featuring a lonely boy (presumably on the autism spectrum) who is dragged to a tea party by his social-climbing mother in 1979. Our sympathies are entirely with the boy as he's befriended by another odd child at Slade House and they play and gambol until the horror slips in. Mitchell's envisioning of our souls is both simple and memorable, making it all the worse when they are gobbled up by the baddies. And so we march through the years: a detective, a group of X-Files type college students having a lark by investigating paranormal activity (whoops! they discover some), a journalist interviewing a nutter who claims said paranormal activity is part of an international conspiracy and so on. Mitchell brings these cardboard characters fully to life, which makes the fate we suspect awaits them all the more distressing. (And which may explain why most typical horror fare does not make their victims so believable: it's not as fun to watch real people die.) But he stumbles on the inevitable twist, both to the perspective of the villains and the vampire-hunters (for lack of a better word) that track them. I was a little confused by the "rules" of this world (specifically how victims could linger and help others fight back). I didn't want those rules spelled out but I wanted to believe the author knew them and abided by them, but I didn't. And the ending is just not satisfying. Still, he's too good a writer not to give this ghost story some genuine creeps and real pathos. The first few sections in particular are full engaging. And he maintains your allegiance by wondering what Mitchell will do next. -- Michael Giltz

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What Others Say

“Devilishly fun.”—**The Washington Post**

“Entertainingly eerie . . . Slade House boils down to [David] Mitchell’s take on the classic ghost story, complete with his version of a haunted house. . . . The last thing we expected from Mitchell is simplicity, but here it is, burnished to a hellish bronze.”—**Chicago Tribune**

“A ripping yarn . . . Like Shirley Jackson’s Hill House or the Overlook Hotel from Stephen King’s The Shining, [Slade House] is a thin sliver of hell designed to entrap the unwary. . . . As the Mitchellverse grows ever more expansive and connected, this short but powerful novel hints at still more marvels to come.”—**San Francisco Chronicle**

“Like Stephen King in a fever . . . manically ingenious.”—**The Guardian (U.K.)**

“Slade House, the tricky new confection by David Mitchell, is a haunted house story that savors of Dickens, Stephen