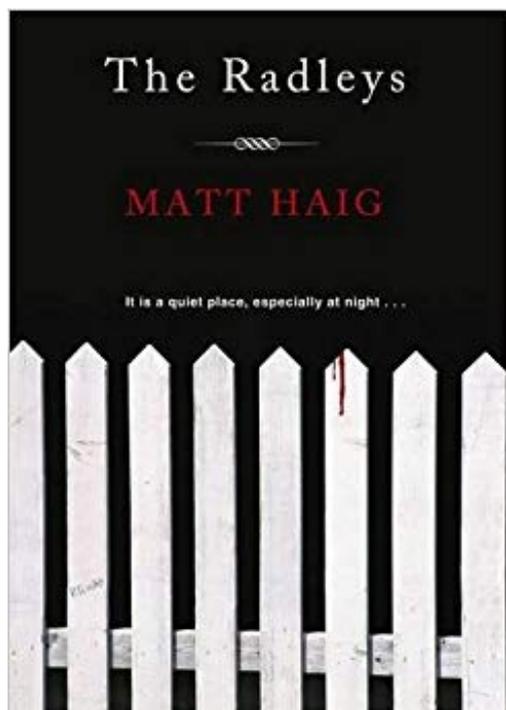


The Radleys *by* Matt Haig



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Meet the Radleys - Peter, Helen and their teenage children, Clara and Rowan, live in a typical suburban English town. They are an everyday family, averagely dysfunctional, averagely content. But, as their children have yet to find out, the Radleys have a devastating secret. In this moving, thrilling and extraordinary portrait of one unusual family, *The Radleys* asks what we grow into when we grow up, and explores what we gain - and lose - when we deny our appetites.



Reviews of the *The Radleys* *by* Matt Haig

KiddenDan

After finishing, I realized that this is probably the first vampire book I've ever read. Eons ago I tried reading Rice's *Interview with the Vampire*, but put that one away after a couple of chapters. Couldn't get into it, and didn't read any other vampire stories until this one. This one isn't gothic at all. Contemporary. The Radleys are an ordinary middle-class British family: mom and dad know the family secret, but their son and daughter do not. The parent vamps are abstaining, they don't kill or drink blood any longer. It isn't easy for them, but they've made it work for 17 years now. All is

typical, including adolescent misery, an average neighborhood and dad's dull medical practice, until the daughter is forced to commit a shocking act of violence.

I like Matt Haig's writing style. I read his Science Fiction novel, *The Humans*, earlier this year and loved it. So funny! *The Radleys* isn't humorous, but it is a fun and entertaining read. I'll read more of Haig's books, I'm sure. Very good stuff.

Malodor

I just don't get Matt Haig. I've read two of his books now, the other was "Humans", and contrary to the above Book Descriptions I don't find him "hilarious" nor most of the other things some cited authors have blurbed. This isn't a funny book, nor is it at all witty. I don't agree with any of the myriad mini-plot summaries proposed - I think "The Radleys" is all about the temptations that all of us confront every day of our lives, and our inability to just say "no" - and the consequences. From drugs, sex, alcohol, eating too much, spending too much, blah, blah, blah. We are weak, we are all vampires. We must satisfy our cravings. Doesn't sound "hilarious" to me. Cleverly told as a vampire tale. Points for that. But I didn't like his characters at all. Not one. Minus points for that, big negative. Hard to like a book, feel eager to pick it up again, if you don't care about the outcome for any of them.

Barit

This is the story of a family of vampires living in a Great Britain where there is a secret truce between vampires and the police. The set-up is interesting. And the author jumps from one character's viewpoint to another, to another, ... very impressively. But the characters are all miserable (not only the vampires but also their neighbors and the police) for the first 85% of the book. That a result of the set-up but made it a poor read for me. There's just no fun in it, even for the characters who enthusiastically use their superpowers.

And then there's a big battle and afterward the characters live much more happily. And it felt like their final solution was always available to them, and should have been known.

Not bad, just not great.

Androrim

Matt Haig tells us right up front that "vampire" is "a provocative word, wrapped in too many clichés and girly novels." But for the very middle-class British Radleys, with their two children, the cliché is their life in hiding, a colorless droning buzz of hunger repressed and desires denied.

Rowan Radley is an anemic teen with skin rashes, yearning for the courage to talk to his sister's friend Eva. Clara Radley's walls are covered with "Save the Whales" posters; she is a vegetarian whose only friend is the new girl at school, a beauty who she senses will probably not speak to her any more once she is fully accepted by the other students.

Helen and Dr. Peter Radley are helpless to assist their children to fit in, any more than they can assimilate themselves. They are too busy hiding their nature, not only from the neighbors, but also from their children. They are Abstainers: vampires who refuse to drink blood.

Despite years of residence in their quiet community, all four Radleys are simply existing day-to-day. Suffering, in a blunted, relentless way:

"Everyone represses everything. Do you think any of these "normal" human beings really do exactly

what they want to do all the time? 'Course not. It's just the same. We're middle-class and we're British. Repression is in our veins."

In a single brutal event at an overnight party, Clara will open the gates for all of the Radleys to revert to their true nature. And the advent of Uncle Will, a long-practising blood-drinker with the power to cloud men's minds, will at first seem a blessing. He can help them divert the attention of the police:

"It is another unsolved mystery in a world full of unsolved mysteries. Now stand up and walk out the way you came, and the moment that fresh air caresses your face, you will realize that that is what makes the world so beautiful. All those unsolved mysteries. And you won't ever want to interfere with that beauty again."

As always, though, when long-held feelings are repressed, they eventually burst forth with explosive power. The secrets the Radleys have been hiding go far beyond blood-drinking. And when they are no longer suppressed, the results will change the Radleys and everyone involved with them irrevocably.

It's an intense novel, about much more than the girly cliché of vampire romance. This story is about living the life you were born to live, rather than the one defined for you by society. It's worth the read.

"That is what the taste of blood does. It takes away the gap between thought and action. To think is to do. There is no un-lived life inside you as the air speeds past your body, as you look down at the dreary villages and market towns..."

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