



In the Dark of the Night

John Saul

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The rambling lakeside house called Pinecrest has lain empty since its last owner went missing seven years ago. But for the Brewster family it will be this year's holiday retreat, and for the kids Eric and Marci it's the perfect place to spend a lazy summer exploring.

Which is how Eric and his teenage friends discover a curious collection of discarded objects stowed in a hidden room in the carriage house. The bladeless hacksaws, shade-less lamps, tables with missing legs, a headless axe handle - these unremarkable items add up to a pile of junk. Yet someone once took the trouble to list each worthless relic in a cryptic ledger, thus provoking a great mystery that is now whispering, coaxing, demanding to be solved. The more the boys devote themselves to piecing together the puzzle, the more their fascination deepens into obsession. Soon their days are consumed with this weird collection, while their nights become plagued by ever more ghastly nightmares.

And finally when a horrifying discovery surfaces, so does the chilling truth about a twisted legacy with a malevolent life of its own.

In the Dark of the Night Details

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Author : John Saul

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From Reader Review In the Dark of the Night for online ebook

Alexandra says

Having read one of John Saul's novels when I was in high school, and thoroughly detesting it, I was hesitant to pick this one up. The synopsis seemed really interesting though & so I thought I'd give it a shot. Maybe my tastes had changed over the years, maybe I was a little too harsh in my judgements of his other book...

In the Dark of the Night was certainly not a bad book by any stretch of the imagination. It held my interest enough for me to want to keep reading and find out how it all turned out, but it didn't blow me away or make me think about it 24/7. It was more like, when I had time to read, I looked forward to picking it back up, but it wouldn't kill me if I had to wait awhile. In fact, during the course of reading this, I put it down for a day or two in favor of another book. But my curiosity got the better of me and I eagerly picked it up again.

What I didn't like about it was that it was kind of predictable. It wasn't it's own unique story with totally fictional characters but rather a tying together of real serial killers and events from the past, in a fictional way. It was a cool idea, but for me it just didn't work.

Also, Merill Brewster (the mom of one of the boys in the story) is always afraid that bad things are going to happen and she is constantly thinking of worst case scenarios. She reminded me a little (okay a lot) of myself. And it crushed me that as soon as she started to relax and enjoy herself, as soon as she *finally* believed that everything was alright, bad things started to happen. Isn't that always the way? :(

In general, this was a good book to kind of pass the time but nothing to really write home about. Just your average, run of the mill, mass market horror story.

Edward Lorn says

John Saul is one of those authors I grew up reading. My mother had a closet full of horror novels, and a great number of them were Saul's books. Though this is not my favorite book of his, it comes damn close.

The Lizzy Borden murders is one of those mysteries I've always been obsessed with. Something about a lady with a hatchet drives me crazy. I need, I need. As demented as that sounds, you should also know that I love her history for the same reason I dig Amelia Earhart's. It's the unanswered questions, the what ifs. IN THE DARK OF THE NIGHT is centered in the Lizzy Borden mythos. Saul does a good job of answering real life questions with fictitious happenings. Though the story takes place in modern day, we're thrust headlong into the murky waters surrounding the deaths of Borden's mother and father. Did Lizzy actually do it? Nobody but Lizzy knew, of course, but John Saul takes us a bit further, theorizing that Lizzy did it, but not of her own accord.

In this novel, the city and citizens of Pinecrest are well realized. So much so that the town kind of stole the spotlight for me. I looked forward to the families trips into town, and couldn't wait for the celebration that is the focal point of this novel's climactic ending. This book is, at times, seriously creepy. Especially where

inner thoughts are concerned. I wish I could say more, but I risk giving away a vital plot point and I refuse to do so, mainly because this book is one of those that is much better the least you know about it.

I highly recommend this outing for fans of psychological horror as well as fans of fiction that builds on life's true mysteries. I'm also a bit biased because I love just about anything John Saul writes, so take that into consideration before rushing into IN THE DARK OF THE NIGHT.

Rachel says

This was a fun horror thriller.

Elida says

This book makes you wonder about what happens to the weapons of past murderers and if their spirits remain in their weapons when they pass away.... Things that make you go hmmmmmm. This was a good book, but a bit sick. Where did John Saul get his imagination for this book, hmmmmmm. The reason I gave it 3 stars is because the ending could have been better, needed to be more explanatory of the prior events that happened in the book. It left the reader (myself) wanting to know more. Though a good read, this book was not detailed enough for me. It left me with questions that I looked forward to getting answered at the ending of the book, but was disappointed not to get them :(

Charli says

I'm a huge John Saul fan, so I pretty much like any book he's written. Of course, I find it strange that he always manages to go after children in his books, but that's beside the point. This was a great read, I found myself sucked into the story on more than one occasion, losing track of everything until one of my pets brought me back to reality. Awesome book and I can't wait to read the next novel of his in my list!

Jeff McIntosh says

John Saul is not a terribly sophisticated writer..more the equivalent of Cliff's Notes....

I could see where the story would end during the first 1/4 of the book.

Plot concerns the opening of Pinecrest, and the dark secrets it contains, and the pull of evil over time.

Not a bad read, a nice way to spend a few hours.

Jeff McIntosh

Carol says

In the Dark of the Night by John Saul

4.5★'s

From The Book:

Summer vacation becomes a season in hell for an ordinary family who unwittingly stir something invisible, insidious, and insatiable from its secret slumber—unleashing a wave of horror only the darkest evil could create, that only a master of spine-tingling terror like John Saul could orchestrate. For deep in the shadows in the dark of the night lurks something as big as life . . . and as real as death.

It has waited seven years for someone to come back to the rambling lakeside house called Pinecrest, which has stood empty since its last owner went missing. For upscale Chicago couple Dan and Merrill Brewster, the old midwestern manse is an ideal retreat, and for their kids, Eric and Marci, it's the perfect place to spend a lazy summer exploring. Which is how Eric and his teenage friends discover the curious cache of discarded objects stowed in a hidden room of Pinecrest's carriage house. The bladeless hacksaws, shadeless lamps, tables with missing legs, headless axe handle, and other unremarkable items add up to a pile of junk. Yet someone took the trouble to inventory each worthless relic in a cryptic ledger. It has all the makings of a great mystery—whispering, coaxing, demanding to be solved.

But the more the boys devote themselves to restoring the forgotten possessions and piecing together the puzzle behind them, the more their fascination deepens into obsession. Soon their days are consumed with tending the strange, secret collection—while their nights become plagued by ever more ghastly dreams, nightmares that soon seep into reality. And when a horrifying discovery surfaces, so does the chilling truth—about the terrifying events that rocked the town seven years before, the mysterious disappearance of Pinecrest's last resident, and a twisted legacy with a malevolent life of its own . . . and a bottomless hunger for new victims.

My Thoughts:

This is a reread for me but several years have past since I read it the first time. I discovered John Saul's books almost forty years ago and eagerly read every book he wrote from that time on. It's more than just a horror story. It's seemingly impossible things happening to real families that could be your next door neighbors...your friends... or Heaven forbid...even your own family.

The plot is not especially unique...at least not to ghost story and horror story regulars but there are plenty of twists and turns. Overall just good creepy fun along the way as John Saul is famous for his creepy things happening to ordinary people type of writing. If you like that type of book then this authors writings will never disappoint.

Teno Q. says

This book is called *In the Dark Of the Night*, but really what it should be called is *The Cursed Axe*.

John Saul's *The Cursed Axe*—*In the Dark of the Night* is a very specific type of thriller. It's what some people

call an "a-dime-a-dozen thriller." Why? Because there's so many of them, all similar, none employing any special or unique technique. John Saul certainly didn't.

In this book, a family head out to a big, ~~obviously haunted~~ summer home. The hormonal teenage boy, Jack or something, discovers a classic secret-room-with-questionable-contents on the property. He and his friends, John and Bob, find the place mysterious and irresistible, but also start to fear it as strange things occur around town that seem to be connected with their musings in the room.

I've been looking at the other reviews on this book and apparently other people found said contents to be shocking and/or horrifying and/or incredible. Me, I was three-quarters of the way through the book, wondering, Where's that surprise those guys on Goodreads were talking about?

It wasn't to be found. As people start to die in freak murders around town, Jack, Bob and John work to get to the bottom of it. Unfortunately they never get the chance; an old guy with the titular Cursed Axe makes an appearance and ~~ties the book up with a pretty bow in their place~~ goes on a killing spree.

I think I'm done with thrillers. Permanently. I'm going to go read *Wuthering Heights*; at least Catherine Earnshaw didn't dream of making lampshades out of a dead boy's flesh. (And if she did, she had the grace not to describe her dreams to the reader.)

Nikoya says

I was pretty disappointed in this book and at first I wasn't sure why but now I think I know.

First off, he spent so much time building up the characters and their relationships with others to only drop it off at the speedy ending of the book. High Body Count does not = Scary. There were so many holes in the story and bouncing around that I had a hard time really putting the pieces together. I am still not sure if I have it all worked out. I do not expect stories to be neatly wrapped up for me but do not spend so much time with side stories and half ass explanations to only drop it in the end.

I hope John Saul's other books are better than this one since I am willing to give another one a chance.

Bryan Wilson says

One of the things that John Saul does so well is make the supernatural seem real by inserting fantastic elements into an utterly believable story and makes it a thrilling ride. In this book, Saul explores teenage angst, summertime romance, class warfare, anxiety, small-town gossip and big-city politics, family dynamics and, oh yeah, the psychology of serial killers and the legacies they leave behind.

In the Dark of the Night is not for the squeamish. The body count ultimately rivals that of *Carrie* while the creepiness surpasses *It*. Thomas Harris would see a little of his Lecter in this chilling tale.

After getting a taste of the idyllic summer life at the Pines in previous years with his friends Kent Newell and Tad Sparks, Eric Brewster and his family finally has the opportunity to rent a house on Phantom Lake for the season. But their home is no ordinary cottage--it's a mansion whose previous owner, Dr. Hector Darby mysteriously disappeared ten years ago after the town's only other unspeakable tragedy. Eric begins to explore the unusual property before he and his buddies make some unreal discoveries. Macabre nightmares follow.

What makes *In the Dark of the Night* work so well is the way how effectively Saul captures each character through dialogue and actions. Other books I have recently read have been bereft of such details, but Saul scatters the seeds of suspense inside a seemingly ordinary adolescent struggle between Eric and local boy Adam Mosler over the affections of Cherie Stevens.

I highly recommend this book for those who like dark thrillers about serial killers.

Juanita says

Review: **In The Dark of The Night** by John Saul.

This was a great book. I have read a few books from John Saul and he hasn't let me down yet. They may be oldies but captivating. The writing was well written and the characters were well-developed. It didn't take long for the horror and action to begin. The story could have had a more intriguing and creative ending.

School is out and summer has just started. Three families had become close friends over the years and have spent their vacations together at "The Pines" at Phantom Lake, a small resort town with a beach. Two of the families already had vacation places at the lake and the third family only stayed in the company of their friends off and on during the summer. Yet, this year they were looking to rent a place at the lake if they could find something within their range of financing. Well, this year they got lucky and found a place they could afford. The place they were going to rent was right next do to the other two families. It took some coaxing to get Merrill Brewster to agree because she was agoraphobic among other fears but they all new her condition and they all pampered her when needed.

The name of the small old Victorian house was Pinecrest. The place has been empty for seven years since the owner Dr. Darby mysteriously disappeared. Time had been long enough that the realtor could now sell the old home and the proceeds would go to the Dr. Darby's extended family members. Everyone gets things packed with items they might need for the summer. All three families' children were ecstatic but the three teenage boys were on cloud nine thinking of meeting some teenage girls. This was their year to explore the next step in coming of age stage....

Once the Brewster family got there and seen the house they were renting was spooky looking. Merrill, the mother and their young daughter, Marci wanted to go home but her son Eric thought it was cool. Eric couldn't wait to get unpacked and join up with his other two friends, Tad and Kent and have a look around. Both mother and daughter were crying now but Dan the husband got them calmed down to the point of giving the vacation a try. What was going through Merrill's mind was the fact that the husbands were going back home during the week to work....Plus, their friends never mentioned the rumors they heard about Dr. Darby and that house....

The story goes on with the three teenage friends exploring the old carriage house most of their time at Pinecrest sorting through a collection of discarded objects stowed away in a hidden room behind a doorway of cemented bricks to keep someone out or in.... Some of the objects were a mystery, like a shade-less lamp, tables with missing legs, bladeless hacksaws, a headless axe handle along with a cryptic ledger that was whispering to them to put the puzzle pieces back together. As they stayed in that room things were starting to happen. All three boys were having the same deadly nightmares at night when they had spent time in that room.....There's still plenty of scenarios, some creepy and some mischief for them and they haven't even been to town yet.....or seen the fireworks on the 4th of July....

Sarah says

In the Dark of the Night. John Saul. 2006. Ballantine Books. 390 pages. ISBN 9780345487025.

Now holding a title shared with many others of mass-market king, John Saul was one of my favorite authors as a pre-teen and throughout my young adult years. I first devoured *Suffer the Children* (1977) which is still wildly original and read everything written by Saul up through 1994, when I began to notice a tiring and homogeneous plot trend in his novels. I did revisit John Saul in 2006 to read his *Blackstone Chronicles*, which were super fun and renewed my confidence in Saul! Now, several years later, I have decided to read *In the Dark of the Night*.

In the Dark of the Night features a trio of upper-class close-knit families who vacation in a lakeside community that thrives with tourism in the summer. Three teenage sons -- one from each family (who coincidentally just happen to be best friends) discover a hidden room in an old abandoned boathouse on one of the properties and begin poking around where they shouldn't. Alas, evil soon unleashes, people start to die, and the peaceful community is in an uproar. Throw into the mix some hateful, local teenage rivals that hate rich kids, and the evil intensifies.

The novel sloooooowly builds suspense until after about halfway through, when we learn about why dark evil surrounds the mysterious "tools" the boys have found in the boathouse. After a long build-up by Saul (or his ghostwriter these days?), you'll be highly pleased and intrigued about the history of these "tools"! As you read on, your eyes will grow to the size of silver dollars and you'll say, "WOW! That's so original!"

But then, just as quickly as the excitement arrives, it fades away just as fast when you realize not much more is going to happen with these "magic tools" (I'm not giving away spoilers!) aside from people just dying. With such a unique horror concept, you'll expect more creativity from the plot but it just doesn't happen, and doesn't satisfy.

John Saul will always be a staple and harbor a solid place in my childhood library memories, but I'm just not sold on buying any more of his future novels. Regardless, although I'm still going to skim the synopsis of each new book, I can't promise that I'll be a devoted fan forever and ever.

John Saul's most recent horror novel is *House of Reckoning* (2009).

Read more reviews at <http://dreamworldbooks.com>.

Neal says

Kind of schlocky, had to roll my eyes at several obvious twists or stereotypical characters.

Chuck says

3.25-stars

IN THE DARK OF THE NIGHT is neither the best nor worst John Saul book I've read, though it's closer to the latter than the former. It just wasn't a story that grabbed me. It strikes me as being pretty representative of the lower quality horror books that populated the best seller lists several years ago. This story is just for fans of that genre, in my opinion.

Becky says

Such a disappointment. Probably the book that proves I've outgrown this author.
