



Sanctuary

Nora Roberts

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Photographer Jo Ellen Hathaway thought she'd escaped the house called Sanctuary long ago. She'd spent her lonliest years there, after the sudden, unexplained disappearance of her mother. Yet the sprawling resort off the Georgia coast continues to haunt her dreams. And now, even more haunting are the pictures someone is sending to her: strange close-ups and candids, culminating in the most shocking portrait of all--a photo of her mother...naked, beautiful, and dead. Now Jo must return to the island, and to her bitterly estranged family--and, with the help of one man, learn the truth about her tragic past. But Sanctuary may also be the most dangerous place of all...

Sanctuary Details

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From Reader Review Sanctuary for online ebook

Elena says

3.5*

Great beginning, lots of suspense , but somewhere midway it fell flat! Didn't really convince me of the killer's motive! Couple had a weird relationship, too.... Not a lot of chemistry...

Belinda says

4 stars - Dutch paperback - I have dyslexia -

I read this book while laying in hospital. I was having my first child, Yasmine, and because of high bloodpressure needed bedrest. This novel took me to another world without thinking of the problems every time. Beautiful family saga with some mystery by anonymous sent photos. ????

Allie says

Oh dear, I have enjoyed several Nora Roberts books in the past but this fell way short of a decent story.

Jo Hathaway, a successful photographer flees back to the Desire, the island she grew up on after being targeted by a cruel stalker. Someone is sending her disturbing pictures of her mother - and she disappeared twenty years ago.

One dimensional characters, an awful plot line and a murderer that I worked out REALLY early on. Not to mention a dodgy hero and a dysfunctional family. I'll still read her books but hopefully in future they are better than this one :(

Alex is The Romance Fox says

Summary

Photographer Jo Ellen Hathaway thought she'd escaped the house called Sanctuary long ago. She'd spent her loneliest years there, after the sudden, unexplained disappearance of her mother. Yet the sprawling inn off the Georgia coast continues to haunt her dreams. And now, even more haunting are the pictures someone is sending her: strange close-ups and candids, culminating in the most shocking portrait of all—a photo of her mother—naked, beautiful, and dead.

Now Jo must return to the island, and to her bitterly estranged family—and, with the help of one man, learn the truth about the tragic past. But Sanctuary may be the most dangerous place of all.

My thoughts

The disappearance of Annabelle Hathaway 20 years ago had a profound effect on her family. Her husband withdrew from the world and his children, who have never got over what they feel as being abandoned by

their mother. The family is torn apart and has become strangers to each other.

I liked the three stories of the Hathaway siblings and how they finally discover the truth about their mother's disappearance and each find their own HEA. Each story well developed and characters believable which had me rooting for the family.

The mystery and the sense of menace and evil could be felt throughout the story. I wasn't exactly sure who the baddie was but not exactly surprised when revealed....and am I the only one who thought there was something puzzling or missing or explained about Jo Ellen's assistant?????

My fav couple??? Griff & Alexa (Lexie) definitely. I found them so adorable and lovable and the bright light in this enjoyable story. They were so much fun to have around and so sweet..yes loved them totally. [image error]Lexi & Griff on the beach.....

Thakshila Jayasinghe says

*****SPOILERS*****

Kind of disappointed. The storyline itself was interesting enough, although, like others have said, the "perpetrator" is not difficult to guess after a while. What made this book go all the way down to 2 stars for me:

1) So Nate KNOWS full well his dad raped and killed Jo's, Brian's and Lexi's mom and yet, the way he acts around them is so breezy and comfortable and he even starts (casually, at first) flirting with Jo. It's so unnatural and unrealistic!! He only gets heart palpitations whenever someone specifically mentions Annabelle. I mean...if I had discovered that my parent killed someone else's parent, I'd be eaten up with guilt ALL the time. I may force myself into making conversation with them because I'd gone there to eventually come clean, but I sure as hell wouldn't act all breezy and make myself at home in their home because I'd feel so guilty. And I would go out of my way to avoid any sort of romantic entanglement. Not only did Nate not avoid it, HE pursued and pushed it. And there was so many weird statements about how he wanted to "make the trouble in Jo disappear"....how much more traumatised would she be when she later got to know that the man she was involved with KNEW his dad killed her mom? I found Nate's behaviour just baffling....And as for Jo, no matter HOW MUCH I had fallen in love with a guy, after I got to know that his dad killed my mom, I couldn't be with him. It's not making the son pay for the father's sins or whatever, just that I couldn't live with that daily reminder. And I don't think I'm unusual in feeling that way.

2)Second was the fact that, except for Cousin Kate, I found it very hard to like ANY of the characters. It's not like I'm looking for purely bubbly and perky characters. But every single character of some importance in this was so surly and rude and just downright bad tempered. Kirby was ok in that aspect. Another thing which I found annoying (not to mention unbelievable) everyone was in love with someone or hitting on someone. And EVERY person was in love with or hitting on someone who had clearly and many times, expressed complete disinterest. Are all these people commitment phobes who become obsessed only with emotionally unavailable people? Do they have zero self respect and self esteem? Now I get it that because of the traumatic events that have occurred, that IS exactly what they are- an emotionally unhealthy bunch. My

dislike is because this is portrayed, not as what it IS which is mentally unhealthy, but as "romantic" and "challenging". Sigh....

3) Nate takes pics of Jo just after having sex, naked. Not only does he do this without asking her first, he continues to do this after she has repeatedly told him to stop. And he does this KNOWING that she suffered a nervous breakdown as a result of someone stalking her and taking her pictures without her knowledge. Nate doesn't seem to really care about Jo at all. He just selfishly takes what he wants.

All in all, was a very dreary and colourless and VERY unrealistic book. Very different from Nora Roberts' usual warm books. Even with serial killers and rapists NR's books still have this warmth to them which I love, not this one I'm afraid.

Jonetta says

Jo Ellen Hathaway left her home on Desire Island, a private resort off the Georgia coast, two years ago. She's now living in Charlotte, North Carolina but travels the world as a successful photographer. Jo recently began receiving odd photographs of her, close-ups that point to someone having followed her to many locations. She becomes haunted by them and hits her wall when she receives one that appears to be of her mother Annabelle, dead, and who disappeared 20 years ago. Jo returns home to the house called Sanctuary, to restore herself and hopefully put her demons to rest.

When Jo's mother disappeared, her father shut down and left the care of her, her older brother Brian and younger sister Lexy, to her Aunt Kate. Calling this family dysfunctional is an understatement. When Nathan Delaney arrives at the island where he spent a memorable summer the year Annabelle disappeared, he is immediately drawn to Jo and is determined to tear down her emotional barriers and forge a relationship. It also becomes apparent that the person stalking Jo has followed her to the island.

I enjoyed this story but it took me about 100 pages to get interested. There was a bit too much descriptive detail about the setting of Sanctuary, bogging it down and detracting from the really interesting characters of the story. Maybe this was done because the main character was a photographer and it was important to create visual interest for her subjects but it bored me silly. Once I got past the initial staging, I fell for the characters...the distant brother, the dramatic younger sister, the lovely and well-meaning doctor, Kirby who is crushing on Brian and the childhood friend who has always had a crush on Lexy. There were three romances in play and that was a real treat. I guessed the answer to the mystery pretty early on, which took some of the zing out of the suspense but didn't lessen my enjoyment.

I'm rating the book 3.5 stars because the beginning was just too long and the impetus behind Annabelle's disappearance was a bit flawed in my opinion. Still, I enjoyed the book but would recommend some serious skimming of the beginning if you're not into reading about the topography of a southern resort.

Cyndi says

With some books you have to take some time to digest it before you can talk about them, but with others the

feelings come bursting out the second it's finished. That's how I feel about this book.

It is so amazing! There are strong characters, including the island, itself.

Sanctuary is an inn on a small island of the coast of the Carolinas. Twenty years ago a tragedy damaged the members of the Hathaway family in ways that have affected their whole lives.

Now the danger has returned. Will they survive?

The incomparable Nora has written an amazing stand alone novel! The sex scenes are ridiculously hot and the murders are written with the horror she gives the 'In Death' books. Excellent book!!

Tammy says

I haven't read a good mystery in a long time. This story is about a family that was torn apart by a tragedy that happened twenty years ago. Jo Ellen's family lives on a island off the coast of Georgia while she is a famous photographer in New York. Jo Ellen gets some pictures sent to her that turns her world upside down to the point where she is hospitalized with a breakdown. When she is released from the hospital she goes back home to the island to spend time with her family. While she is there she meets a childhood friend who she starts to fall in love with.

Twenty years ago their mother just up and left them. No explanation, no nothing. Just one day there next day gone. This left a huge impact on the family. Jo Ellen - afraid to love anyone so she buries herself in her work and keeps her distance from her family. She doesn't want to love and then have them leave her like her mom.... Her sister Lexie- wants to be an actress or model on the mainland, but hasn't caught a break yet. So she is a waitress at the family diner on the island. She is promiscuous and full of anger and makes bad choices... Brian- the brother.. Is full of anger and hate and has walls up around his heart. Also afraid to love.... Sam the father- so hurt, full of anger, and just wants to know why she left them..

After all this time they find out that their mother didn't leave that she was in fact murdered all them years ago. The killer is on the island, and has killed two young women and now has sights on Jo Ellen. Will the family come together or will they fall completely apart?

I'm not good at figuring out who done it, I'm usually wrong. I was thus time as well, but there were some twists and turns that made it unpredictable. I enjoyed this story immensely..

Eve says

This was slow and boring in comparison to some other Nora Roberts' novels. I also didn't feel any "bond" with the characters, and I didn't like how the story switched between different storylines and characters. I also didn't quite understand why the Hathaway family could so easily believe that the disappearance of a loving wife and mother of three didn't have anything to do with some crime. They believed that she just walked out on them and resented her memory. That really didn't play right for me.

I recommend *Virtue Falls* by Christina Dodd instead!

Miki says

On a scale of one to ten, it's better than a kick in the pants. Marginally.

Dee says

Here's another longer NR book that tries to develop three different romances in the same book, and again, I'd rather she stuck to one per book. I feel like she didn't do the main romance justice.

And there was just a little too much nastiness in this one, rapes and murders, and...

spoiler here

stop reading if you don't want to know whodunit.

... the really evil sociopaths were the father and brother of our hero. Didn't like that much.

Anita says

There were parts of this book that were great, but overall, it just wasn't up to what you expect a Nora Roberts' book to be, even an older one. We have another of her threefers, three romances in one book. I really like this approach and the three romances in this book are just great. They are not the problem. The biggest problem is the dismal, lackluster, *predictable* plot. You could spot the baddie about 30% into the book.

Jo Ellen Hathaway is a world famous photographer who has had a complete melt down. Some bozo had been sending her weird pictures, basically, stalking her. When she pulls herself together she heads home to the family inn, Sanctuary, on the island of Desire off the Georgia coast. This place is definitely not a Sanctuary for any of the people living there. Jo's family was rocked by the disappearance of her mother 20 years ago and has never recovered. In addition to Jo there is older brother Brian, younger sister Lexie, father Sam and second cousin Kate, who has basically held the family together since the disappearance of Annabelle.

Also returned to the island is Nathan, who was a pal of Brian's the summer Annabelle went missing. He is back for some mysterious reason and is instantly taken with Jo, who couldn't care less. Jo has her own problems and the family is such that heartfelt sharing and caring, well, is just doesn't happen. Nathan chips away at Jo's stonewall defenses while stoic Brian falls for the island doctor, Kirby and wanna be actress sister Lexie gets busy with childhood friend, Giff. Ahhh, love. Until two women disappear and Nathan can no longer hold onto his secret.

Jilly says

First things first: **I'm sorry, Cyndi!!**

Cyndi is my friend who loves Nora Roberts. Actually, I might have 1-starred this baby if not for my guilt

over not liking this book.

Okay, now that that's done, let's dish about why I hated it!

First, we have Jo. She's a professional photographer who has a stalker, and goes back to her childhood home after the stalker drives her crazy in a literal sense. Here are some of our descriptions of what Jo looks like:

Tall & thin

Short, red, curly hair

Blue eyes

Pale skin

Long feet (they made a point of this)

Also, she smokes and wears baggy clothes.

So, here's what I have in my head:

Seriously, could we not make her sound even remotely attractive?

Jo goes home to an island where her family runs a bed and breakfast inn. They are all screwed up because the mother ran off when they were young and they never heard from her again. The brother is an ass, the sister is a slut that talks like the slutty woman in the Golden Girls, the father lives in his own world, and their cousin is the care-taker of everyone who has a major martyr thing going on. (Although the cousin was the most bearable character in the book.)

Hey, they already have the clown position covered!

Now, it just so happens that every single sibling is single and has a love-interest right there when we start the book. So, we have three love-stories going on simultaneously along with our stalker/murderer person after Jo-Jo the Clown. (Yes, I named her. It seemed like the right thing to do.) The problem is that none of these characters are all that likable except for the guy who loves the slutty sister. He's nice. An idiot, but a nice idiot.

Only the patsy takes that piece.

Jojo's love interest is Nathan. He kisses the slutty sister, and considers sleeping with her, but he'd rather have Jojo because she's "interesting".

Nathan to Jojo:

"Hmm. You've got very attractive feet. Long, narrow, an elegantly high instep."

Okay, he just confirmed my theory. Who the hell says something like this to a woman they are trying to woo? Also, are her feet really that long? They are apparently long enough to have the book mention it in her description, and then again have the love-interest point it out. Those must be some long-ass feet!

I see this in their future...

Now, Nathan seems a likable guy (at first), but he is on the island to tell Jo and her family about something horrifying that will change everything. And yet, he keeps putting it off and acting like they are old friends at a high school reunion. I don't want to spoil it, but it is the equivalent of a doctor who just realized you have terminal cancer and instead of telling you, he decides to spend the weekend with you water-skiing. He's eating your food, making jokes and having a jolly time, and flirting with your sister who will be devastated when she learns about your diagnosis. He acts like everything is perfectly fine and doesn't want to ruin his own fun by talking about that nasty cancer-thing. That would ruin the party! He might not get lucky if he does that! In other words, he's a selfish douche.

So, when you find out why Nathan is on the island in the first place, and then you remember how he has been acting the whole time, you have to wonder about this guy.

As for the stalker/killer? Well, it's kind of weird, but I had an idea go through my head very early in the book that ended up being true. I thought my idea was a little too soap-opera-ish, but I guess not.

Aside from all of that, I got bored a lot in the story. The whole book started with a dream sequence, which is basically a trigger for me. Don't tell me your fucking dream!! And, then it got into descriptiveness that was just too long. Followed by family angst that basically boiled down to a bunch of jerks being jerky to each other, and romances that were terrible for various reasons. It just didn't do it for me. I will still read Nora Roberts, but this one wasn't my cuppa.

Delisa says

Ok. Fair enough- you don't expect a romance novel to change your life but this was just...bad.

Your loving mother disappears in the night? Don't worry about her- hate her! She must have run off. True, she never showed any signs of unhappiness or unfaithfulness, but you know women...

Your best friend disappears from a bonfire? When you check her house, nothing is missing and it's clear she never came back from said party?

Pshaw! No worries! She's probably not dead- she must have met a man and run off with him. Just like your mean mother.

Oh! They were actually murdered and didn't desert you after all?!? Who would have ever thought it? Well. How could you have known?

I'm glad I don't have to rely on these people for my well being.

And don't get me started on the male "hero".

I cringed though this for god knows what reason but I wouldn't recommend any one else does.

Amber Beasley says

Didn't care for this book all that much. I liked the plot and the main idea for the story. And I really like the mystery of it. But for one thing, it was a little too easy to figure out. A little too much Criminal Minds, I guess, but I picked up on who the stalker/murderer was pretty easily. Also, the characters were really annoying. They can't decide what they want, who they want, and they're constantly yelling or telling each other off. I understand that that is kind of what the story is about, but it got old after so much of their bad attitudes.

There was way too much language. I don't like hearing a curse word every other word in a movie, why would I want to read it in a book either? There's no reason for it, and I don't want to pointlessly have these words going into my brain every other line of the page. Also, WAY too much sex. Sorry, but you can totally tell a woman wrote this book. Yeah, when a male writer writes a love story, there is sex. But it is not explained in detail. In Nicholas Sparks' novels, I've yet to find much more than "and they made love". That's it. No further explanation, I think we get it. And I love that. Men don't go into detail. Apparently female writers do, and feel the need to because of some fantasy or whatever. I can handle maybe one detailed love scene in a book, but please, I'd rather not read it every other chapter.

I really liked the end of this book, which is probably the only plus I can really say about it. It was alright overall, but I'd only give it two stars. It just isn't my kind of story.
