

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY



Rachel Hawkins is the New York Times bestselling author of *The Wife Upstairs*, as well as multiple books for young readers, and her work has been translated in over a dozen countries. She studied gender and sexuality in Victorian literature at Auburn University and currently lives in Alabama.

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Which character did you connect with most? How did your opinion of that character (and the others) change over the course of the book?
2. How did you experience the book? Were you engaged immediately, or did it take you a while to "get into it"? How did you feel reading it—amused, sad, disturbed, confused, bored...?
3. The characters were strongly affected by their childhood experiences. How did those experiences affect their adult choices, both negatively and positively?
4. The novel makes a strong case that you never really know a person. Do you believe that? Why or why not?
5. What do you think Eddie saw in Jane when he first met her? What were his motivations for advancing their relationship?
6. This book has been marketed as a re-telling of *Jane Eyre*. In the author's note at the end, she says this is for anyone who read the original and thought Jane could do better. What are your thoughts on this novel in comparison to *Jane Eyre*?

7. It was implied that maybe Eddie and Bea somehow survived the fire at the end of the novel. What do you think happened?
8. Why do you think Eddie changed his will to pass everything to Jane?
9. What are your feelings on ambiguous endings in books?
10. Compare this book to others your group has read, is it similar to any of them? Did you like it more or less than other books you've read?

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BOOK REVIEWS

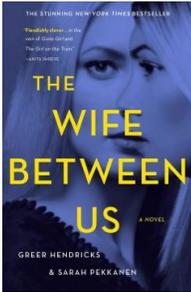
Booklist

In her adult debut, YA author Hawkins (Royals, 2018) twists together the suspense and storytelling of Jane Eyre with the atmosphere, tension, and odd characters of a Southern-gothic novel into a tale of a young woman trying to escape her past. Jane walks the dogs of the rich socialites of Birmingham's Thornfield Estates, understanding she's an outsider. That is, until she meets Eddie Rochester. Eddie can give her everything she ever wanted. But as they prepare to marry, the death of Eddie's first wife, Bea, and her best friend, Blanche, hangs over them, until Jane discovers that Bea may not be as much a part of Eddie's past as she'd thought. The bleak setting provides the appropriate mood to each of Jane's discoveries, leading to well-plotted surprises that may not be entirely shocking, especially for fans of Charlotte Brontë's work. First-person narration by Jane allows for a slow reveal of her past, and occasional perspectives from other characters provide clues to their motivations. An altogether sinister novel that will make readers of Jennifer McMahon, Ruth Ware, and Donna Tartt shudder. HIGH-DEMAND BACKSTORY: Expect a lot of media coverage of (and therefore a lot of demand for) this Southern-gothic Jane Eyre adaptation. -- Tracy Babiasz (Reviewed 12/1/2020) (Booklist, vol 117, number 7, p29)

Publisher's Weekly

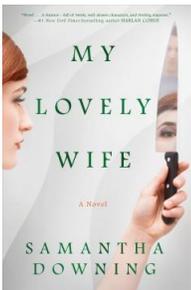
YA author Hawkins (Her Royal Highness) makes her adult debut with this spirited reboot of Jane Eyre. Shortly after starting to walk dogs in tony Thornfield Estates, a gated community in Birmingham, Ala., the penniless young woman calling herself Jane meets dashing recent widower Eddie Rochester—whose wealthy wife, Bea Mason, went missing and was presumed drowned in a boating mishap, along with her BFF Blanche Ingham, six months earlier. Sparks fly, but plain Jane has a tough time living up to the legend of the glamorous Bea, who created the Southern Manors lifestyle brand. Then Blanche's body is found, and it's clear from the massive skull fracture that her death was no accident. As the police reopen their probe, an increasingly concerned Jane starts investigating Bea's fate and what part, if any, Eddie played. Hawkins shows real wit in outsider Jane's sharp-eyed take on the entitled ladies of Thornfield Estates, but the mercenary motivated characters will put off some readers. Nonetheless, this suspenseful domestic thriller will keep readers turning the pages. Agent: Holly Root, Root Literary. (Jan.) --Staff (Reviewed 09/28/2020) (Publishers Weekly, vol 267, issue 39, p)

READALIKES



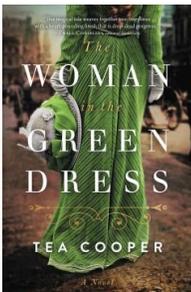
***The Wife Between Us* by Greer Hendricks**

A psychologically charged tale of suspense follows the unexpected twists that shape a divorce and second marriage that are anything but what they seem.



***My Lovely Wife* by Samantha Downing**

A seemingly typical suburban husband discloses the secret ways that his wife of 15 years and he keep their marriage alive and chase away domestic boredom by orchestrating creative ways to get away with murder.



***The Woman in the Green Dress* by Tea Cooper**

In 1919 Sydney, New South Wales, London tea-shop waitress Fleur Richards inherits an old curio shop, which draws her deep into the past to unravel a mystery surrounding an opal and a woman in a green dress -- a green that is the color of envy.