

The background features a complex network of white nodes connected by thin white lines, set against a gradient background that transitions from dark purple at the top to a bright pink at the bottom. The nodes are scattered across the frame, with some forming distinct geometric shapes like triangles and polygons. The overall aesthetic is modern and digital.

The Guest Book

Written by Sarah Blake

Published by griefconvention

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The Guest Book

By Sarah Blake

The Guest Book Season 3

An unforgettable love story, a novel about past mistakes and betrayals that ripple throughout generations, *The Guest Book* examines not just a privileged American family, but a privileged America. It is a literary triumph.

The Guest Book

The Guest Book Novel

The Guest Book follows three generations of a powerful American family, a family that œused to run the world• .

The Guest Book Cast

And when the novel begins in 1935, they still do. Kitty and Ogden Milton appear to have everything—perfect children, good looks, a love everyone envies. But after a tragedy befalls them, Ogden tries to bring Kitty back to life by purchasing an island in Maine. That island, and its house, come to define and burnish the Milton family, year after year after year. And it is there that Kitty issues a refusal that will haunt her till the day she dies.

The Guest Book Season 2

In 1959 a young Jewish man, Len Levy, will get a job in Ogden's bank and earn the admiration of Ogden and one of his daughters, but the scorn of everyone else. Len's best friend Reg Pauling has always been the only black man in the room—at Harvard, at work, and finally at the Miltons' island in Maine.

The Guest Book Amazon

An island that, at the dawn of the 21st century, this last generation doesn't have the money to keep. When Kitty's granddaughter hears that she and her cousins might be forced to sell it, and when her husband brings back disturbing evidence about her grandfather's past, she realizes she is on the verge of finally understanding the silences that seemed to hover just below the surface of her family all her life.

The Guest Book Season 1

An ambitious novel that weaves the American past with its present, *The Guest Book* looks at the racism and power that has been systemically embedded in the US for generations. Brimming with gorgeous writing and bitterly accurate social criticism, it is a literary tour de force.

The Guest Book by Sarah Blake is a 2019 Flatiron Books publication.

An Epic multi-generational family saga exposing long buried secrets and truths- not only providing a mirrored reflection of the privileged Miltonâ€™s, but of the entire country as well!

â€œThere is the crime and there is silenceâ€•

In the mid-thirties, golden couple Ogden and Kitty Milton, recovering from a horrific tragedy, purchase Crockett Island, making it a point of renewal. They will â€˜summerâ€™ there every year of their lives, then

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â€œThere is the crime and there is silenceâ€•

In the mid-thirties, golden couple Ogden and Kitty Milton, recovering from a horrific tragedy, purchase Crockett Island, making it a point of renewal. They will â€˜summerâ€™ there every year of their lives, thereafter, as do their children, and their grandchildren. But now the money has run out and the house is in ill repair, leaving the painful decision about the islandâ€™s future to rest in the hands of the only surviving family members- a trio of cousins, who each have their own agenda.

â€œNothing will ever change. Sunlight. Starlight. Drinks on the dock. A single sail out in the bay. It will never change. It seems to promise. â€˜You will not dieâ€™ On and on. Like a painting. Here you are. As long as the Island stands, we stand. Time never mindsâ€•

Evie is fighting hard to keep the island, while her cousins are open to selling it, and her husband, Paul, constantly reminds her of their financial situation.

But is Evie holding on to the island, or to her motherâ€™s memory?

Evie can easily laugh at her family's 'WASP culture' history, yet she becomes irritated if anyone else passes judgements on them. And- Despite evidence to the contrary, Evie stubbornly turns a blind eye to the dark secrets hidden in her familyâ€™s past.

As Blake takes us back across time, a heart wrenching story unfolds, revealing an ugly, sad, guilt ridden underbelly to the affluent Milton family, one deeply rooted in entitlement, prejudice and racism. Yet, future generations attempt to provoke a new value system, one which requires a conscience, insists on a shift in attitude, and demands change. The contrasts between entitlement, power and control, against idealism, and then juxtaposed against certain harsh truths, stirs up a tragic fire storm, which left this reader with a fire in my belly, on the edge of my seat, and with an ache in my heart, not only for the characters, but for -Us

“History is sometimes made by heroes, but it is also always made by us. We, the people, who stumble around, who block or help the hero out of loyalty, stubbornness, faith, or fear. Those who wall up—and those who break through walls. The people at the edge of the photographs. The people watching—the crowd. You.”

Sarah Blake’s writing is beautiful. Her prose is elegant, powerful, poignant, and almost hypnotic. The characterizations and dialogue are so incredibly vivid and devastatingly realistic. The trappings of wealth, the narrow-mindedness of class distinctions, the half-lived lives, the progression and changes of the times unfolding through the years, stripping away decades of racism and prejudice is mesmerizing.

Yet, for Evie, as the blanks are finally filled in, there is a revealing defensiveness, a conspiratorial, protective silence, and a stubborn refusal to accept the reality of her family’s history, one which is too painful to acknowledge.

(view spoiler)[The progression, throughout the generations, though startling and inspiring, is still very fragile. Though Len and Reg regarded Moss’s optimism and idealism as naïve and ineffectual, that vision may have been the catalyst for change. However, the two men weren’t wrong in their assessment, and not just about the times they lived in. Their admonishments serve as a reminder that paying lip service, no matter how well-intentioned, is not helpful, and most people offering it, do so without fully understanding what it is truly like to walk in another’s shoes. (hide spoiler)]

Although the story leaves us with a hint of hope, it is a shy, tentative first step. Mirrors don’t lie—looking into one, seeing the dark corners of our nation’s past, and our own personal histories exposed, is neither easy, nor kind.

However, it is an opportunity to break the chain, learn from the past, work diligently to prevent history from repeating itself. It is a lesson we can all learn from. Stay on the forward path, ever alert, never silent, or willfully ignorant. That is the key to releasing the past, where healing begins, where forgiveness takes root, and hope’s seed is planted.

This is an outstanding family saga, so well-written and packed with tautness and poignancy. I was absolutely riveted to the pages of this rich, compelling novel from start to finish. If you can only fit in one book in this summer- make it this one!

The Guest Book

5 stars [...more](#)

The Guest Book Tbs

• She knew silence often flew in between families and roosted. Slow, inexplicable angers grew without roots. Nothing special, no story. What the study of history had taught her, clearly, after years and years, was that she might pull up the single moments from the darkness where they lay centuries old, she might point to a spot in time, a line in a diary, the particular shredding of a blue ribbon used to tie a shoe, she might string these together and say--here is what happened.

And history would • She knew silence often flew in between families and roosted. Slow, inexplicable angers grew without roots. Nothing special, no story. What the study of history had taught her, clearly, after years and years, was that she might pull up the single moments from the darkness where they lay centuries old, she might point to a spot in time, a line in a diary, the particular shredding of a blue ribbon used to tie a shoe, she might string these together and say--here is what happened.

And history would sit back on her heels and laugh and laugh. •

Most families have secrets tucked away in every nook and cranny of their family history. The Miltons are no different, maybe just more so because they are a rarefied breed of the American success story that most dream about, but few obtain. • They expected the moon, and they got it. And they got it all, all the while impeccably dressed. • The rich have more immunity from the hiccups and bumps in the road than the rest of us do, but as I always say, Life doesn't let any of us escape scot-free. Tragedy has a way of finding every one, sooner or later, and those with money have not figured out a way to bribe death...yet.

After one such tragedy, Ogden and Kitty Milton decide to buy an island off the coast of Maine. A mystical place where fairy tales can be written. • We were talking about this place, and she said, very sweetly, almost reverently--Nothing will ever change. Sunlight. Starlight. Drinks on the dock. A single sail out in the bay. It will never change. It seems to promise, • You will not die. • On and on like a painting, she said. • Here you are. As long as the Island stands, we stand. Time never minds. • The Island remains the constant affirmation of the family's success through three generations of Miltons. When the grandchildren struggle to afford to keep the Island, the potential loss feels like failure, but also something more than that... a loss of identity.

The influence of Ogden and Kitty on the family is perfectly illustrated in this moment where they are defended by one of their grandchildren. Long after they have passed away, their creed is still being believed. • We're different, she answered simply. • We don't believe in taking advantage of a situation. In grabbing for money. • How does Ogden strengthen the family fortune during World War Two? Few family fortunes can survive scrutiny. They are built on the backs of the poor. They are made by flagrantly breaking the rules of fair play. They are compromised by the corrupted hand shakes offered to the unscrupulous. Are the Miltons different? Is Ogden just a good shifter of wealth, without ever getting his fingers smudged with dishonesty?

To shake things up, Moss, Ogden and Kitty's son, invites his black friend, Reg Pauling, to the Island. He will be the first black man to ever set foot on the Milton sacred soil. Moss means well. It is 1959. He feels the times are changing, but really they are just changing in him. The soul of America does not feel the guilt of their ancestors, and racism is still a virus running rampant through their blood. "The bill is due," Reg pushed, echoing Jimmy Baldwin, "It is not coming due. It is due. And it must be paid--or this shit will go on and on and on."

And so it goes on and on and on.

The Island, the sanctuary, proves fallible, and when tragedy finds the family there, it is quickly bundled and tucked away in one of those nooks I alluded to earlier. It isn't spoken of. "Our family? You think we ever heard the truth about anything?" Bad behavior, bad breaks, uncomfortable conversations, and indiscretions are all neatly tucked into boxes wrapped in chains and clasped with a strong padlock. The keys are thrown into the Atlantic. How else can the family portray their flawless perfection?

It is a lot to live up to. When the missteps are never discussed, every descendent is completely unprepared for things to go wrong. The shield of their grandfather is buried with him. Bad things are simply not supposed to happen to a Milton.

Sarah Blake writes with lyrical ease. I kept waiting for a jarring sentence, a dialogue debacle, or a plotting problem, but they never happened. You would almost think she was a Milton. I did struggle with the book, though. I fully recognize Blake's writing gifts, and maybe it has to do with my own disinterest in rich people worrying about first world problems, but I wanted some jazz, and this book is decidedly easy listening. I will predict that many of you will love it, and I will be happy that you do.

If you wish to see more of my most recent book and movie reviews, visit <http://www.jeffreykeeten.com> I also have a Facebook blogger page at: <https://www.facebook.com/JeffreyKeeten> ...more

Privilege. Secrets. History. Family.

The Guest Book is a sweeping tale of three generations of the Milton family. This book moves back and forth in time, showcasing secrets and consequences. This book showcases old money, racism, glamour, status, opulence, limelight, privilege, power, choices, inequality, and the economic divide. Each generation showcases the mindset of not only the family but society at large. With each new generation comes acceptance, awareness, growth and change. But is it eno Privilege. Secrets. History. Family.

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comes acceptance, awareness, growth and change. But is it enough? Time changes, society changes, the beliefs of society changes, but seriously is it enough?

What happens to a family that has it all (heck, they even own their own island) and over time becomes a family desperately trying to hold on to it. When a family feels their privilege but doesn't want to lose it. The family home (ahem, island) has been handed down, but so has elitism, racism and antisemitism. What happens when change occurs? What happens when you look back at your heritage? What happens when you learn certain truths about your family? What happens when secrets come out?

This book started slowly for me and I admit it took me a long time to get through this book. In the beginning, there were times I felt this book was painfully slow and then I would put it down and pick up another book. But I trudged along and soon found myself enjoying it. This book is told through three POVs in three different times. The book is a family saga but also looks at class, racism (lots of racism), inequality, and how choices made in the past can still be felt in the present.

Well written and thought provoking. We pass a lot of things down in families- our grandmothers broach, or our grandfathers service medals, a wedding dress, pictures, art, etc. But we also pass down our stories, our actions, our words, our beliefs. The next generation is always watching, learning, absorbing, and this book is a good example of how we pass down things some unintentionally and some covertly.

The book shows not only how the Milton family changed but how society itself has changed. Again, thought provoking. Slow to start but won me over. This is not a book to speed through, take your time, absorb it, ponder it, think about the issues this book brings up, and maybe examine your own family history.

Thank you to Sarah Blake and Flat Iron book who provided me with a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review. All the thoughts and opinions are my own.

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The Guest Book Review

Thereâ€™s a stunning scene toward the beginning of Sarah Blakeâ€™s new novel, â€œThe Guest Book,â€• that follows a wealthy young mother gliding around New York and then to her elegant mansion in a charmingly choreographed dance of delight that ends with her 5-year-old son falling from a window to his death.

Such a tragedy might shatter other families, but the Miltons are not other families. Ogden and Kitty Milton are the union of Americaâ€™s bluest bloodlines, aristocrats who have provided a model of decor

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Such a tragedy might shatter other families, but the Miltons are not other families. Ogden and Kitty Milton are the union of Americaâ€™s bluest bloodlines, aristocrats who have provided a model of decorum to a grateful nation since they arrived on the Mayflower. (â€œAlways remember you are a Milton,â€• a young scion is advised. â€œNot a Lowell.â€•) Ogden guides the familyâ€™s Wall Street firm with wisdom and discretion, just as Kitty manages their home.

As soon as they bury their son, everyone agrees that itâ€™s â€œbest not to mention it. Best not to dwell on it. . . . Some things were better off left unsaid.â€•

This is very much a novel about what is left unsaid, which is ironic considering that so much is said â€œ hundreds and hundreds of pages of repressed grief and strained smiles. Despite its dramatic opening, the bulk of the story is far more immersive than propulsive. These are people who imagine their boutique blend of gold and goodness can protect them from the vicissitudes of life, even as their dynasty dissipates with each passing generation. â€œThe Guest Bookâ€• offers an exhaustive study of Brahmin pain, the suffering stoically endured by that class of people who ask each other, â€œWhere do you summer?â€• Itâ€™s part of a long, distinguished line of beautiful costume dramas that allow us good liberals to luxuriate in the silken folds of privilege while reassuring ourselves that such privilege is doomed. . . .

To read the rest of this review, go to The Washington Post:

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/entert...>

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Lovely writing, a historical family drama featuring generations of characters, a focus on important social themes related race and privilege. Slow and a bit lengthy for my personal preference, but I can see many readers enjoying this overall.

The Guest Book

Thank you to Flatiron Books for generously mailing me an advance readers' edition of Sarah Blake's *The Guest Book*. In exchange, I agreed to share my honest thoughts on goodreads and my other favorite social media sites.

#readtheguestbook

The Guest Book Hulu

The Guest Book is epic in its scope covering three generations of a larger-than-life, well-to-do American family.

In the beginning of the story, it's 1935. Kitty and Ogden Milton have all the best in life: adorable children, beautiful appearances, and the perfect relationship with each other. A tragedy happens, and Ogden attempts to soothe Kitty by buying an island for her in Maine.

That house holds such importance for the family in the present and the future. It's also where Kitty proclaims something that will never be forgotten, the effects of which potentially rippling down to her grandchildren's generation.

Years later, in 1959, Len Levy, is employed by Ogden's bank. Ogden and one of his daughters accept and admire Len, but no one else does. Not only do they not like him, they despise him. Why? Because he's Jewish.

On top of that, Len's best friend is a black man, often the only black man in the room in social gatherings, at college, and in the Milton's Maine house.

Moving along, in the late 1990s, the Miltons can no longer afford to own the island. Kitty's grandchildren may have to sell it, but one of her granddaughters, Evie, refuses to accept this. Her husband uncovers a scandal related to Ogden, and now she realizes the potential root of all the secrets embedded in her family.

The Guest Book blends past and present in a powerful narrative addressing multi-generational racism in all its insidiousness. The writing is beautiful, and the themes are absolutely thought-provoking.

Sarah Blake isn't afraid to go to the bold places. The Guest Book stirred my emotions "making me think and feel and examine. As each generation of the Milton family goes on to become more aware of racism and privilege, is that awareness ever enough? Or can they (we) always continue to grow and open our minds and work to make the chasms in our society smaller? It was a fascinating and intelligent view on this topic that certainly illuminated many points for self-reflection.

Overall, *The Guest Book* is an important look at the evolution of society over time, as reflected in one privileged family, and just how slow that process can be. How do we fix the transgressions of the past?

I received a complimentary copy. All opinions are my own.

My reviews can also be found on my blog and instagram: www.jennifertarheelreader.com & www.instagram.com/tarheelreader ...more

The Guest Book is a sweeping family saga that shines a glaring light on the effects of privilege as well as cultural and racial divisions and injustices in the United States. Secondly, the novel examines the issue of whether a distinction should be made between inaction and willful decision-making when an individual is faced with a moral dilemma, and the age-old issue of buried family secrets. Spanning three generations, the book focuses on the Milton family, a powerful East Coast family, beginning with Ogden and Kitty Milton in the mid-1930s. Both Ogden and Kitty make choices that reverberate for years to come, and much of *The Guest Book* addresses the tragic impact of those decisions on their children and grandchildren.

Blake's prose is carefully and beautifully crafted. She raises a variety of thought-provoking issues requiring her readers to contemplate how these issues impact him or her and how the country can continue to learn from the past. The book will be perfect for book clubs and classrooms as it will foster healthy and vigorous debates.

The Guest Book is an ambitious and challenging addition to the debate on how to redress past transgressions.

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