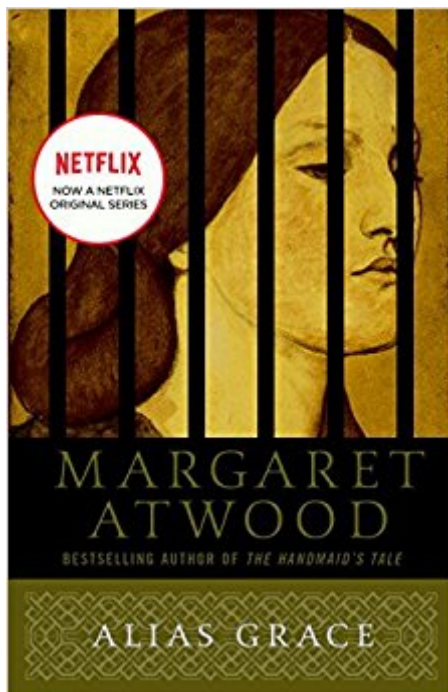


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Alias Grace: A Novel



Synopsis

From the #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Handmaid's Tale* Soon to be a Netflix Original series, *Alias Grace* takes readers into the life of one of the most notorious women of the nineteenth century. It's 1843, and Grace Marks has been convicted for her involvement in the vicious murders of her employer and his housekeeper and mistress. Some believe Grace is innocent; others think her evil or insane. Now serving a life sentence, Grace claims to have no memory of the murders. An up-and-coming expert in the burgeoning field of mental illness is engaged by a group of reformers and spiritualists who seek a pardon for Grace. He listens to her story while bringing her closer and closer to the day she cannot remember. What will he find in attempting to unlock her memories? Captivating and disturbing, *Alias Grace* showcases bestselling, Booker Prize-winning author Margaret Atwood at the peak of her powers.

Book Information

Paperback: 468 pages

Publisher: Anchor; Reprint edition (October 13, 1997)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0385490445

ISBN-13: 978-0385490443

Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 1 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 14.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 364 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #16,264 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #95 in *Books > Literature & Fiction > Genre Fiction > Historical > Biographical* #160 in *Books > Mystery, Thriller & Suspense > Mystery > Cozy > Crafts & Hobbies* #208 in *Books > Literature & Fiction > Genre Fiction > Historical > Mysteries*

Customer Reviews

In 1843, a 16-year-old Canadian housemaid named Grace Marks was tried for the murder of her employer and his mistress. The sensationalistic trial made headlines throughout the world, and the jury delivered a guilty verdict. Yet opinion remained fiercely divided about Marks--was she a spurned woman who had taken out her rage on two innocent victims, or was she an unwilling victim herself, caught up in a crime she was too young to understand? Such doubts persuaded the judges to commute her sentence to life imprisonment, and Marks spent the next 30 years in an assortment of jails and asylums, where she was often exhibited as a star attraction. In *Alias Grace*, Margaret

Atwood reconstructs Marks's story in fictional form. Her portraits of 19th-century prison and asylum life are chilling in their detail. The author also introduces Dr. Simon Jordan, who listens to the prisoner's tale with a mixture of sympathy and disbelief. In his effort to uncover the truth, Jordan uses the tools of the then rudimentary science of psychology. But the last word belongs to the book's narrator--Grace herself. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Intrigued by contemporary reports of a sensational murder trial in 1843 Canada, Atwood has drawn a compelling portrait of what might have been. Her protagonist, the real life Grace Marks, is an enigma. Convicted at age 16 of the murder of her employer, Thomas Kinnear, and his housekeeper and lover, Nancy Montgomery, Grace escaped the gallows when her sentence was commuted to life in prison, but she also spent some years in an insane asylum after an emotional breakdown. Because she gave three different accounts of the killings, and because she was accused of being the sole perpetrator by the man who was hanged for the crime, Grace's life and mind are fertile territory for Atwood. Adapting her style to the period she describes, she has written a typical Victorian novel, leisurely in exposition, copiously detailed and crowded with subtly drawn characters who speak the embroidered, pietistic language of the time. She has created a probing psychological portrait of a working-class woman victimized by society because of her poverty, and victimized again by the judicial and prison systems. The narrative gains texture and tension from the dynamic between Grace and an interlocutor, earnest young bachelor Dr. Simon Jordan, who is investigating the causes of lunacy with plans to establish his own, more enlightened institution. Jordan is hoping to awaken Grace's suppressed memories of the day of the murder, but Grace, though uneducated, is far wiler than Jordan, whom she tells only what she wishes to confess. He, on the other hand, is handicapped by his compassion, which makes him the victim of the wiles of other women, too?his passionate, desperate landlady, and the virginal but predatory daughter of the prison governor. These encounters give Atwood the chance to describe the war between the sexes with her usual wit. Although the narrative holds several big surprises, the central question?Was Grace dupe and victim or seductress and instigator of the bloody crime??is left tantalizingly ambiguous. Major ad/promo; author tour. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Taking a true account of an event and weaving a comprehensive and believable story around it is no easy feat. Historically, there is little information about Grace Marks. Margaret Atwood took the obscure facts and wove a tale that is rich with personality. It's hard to find any fault in this book.

Margaret Atwood creates a gripping story out of a mixture of historical fact and colourful fiction as she tells the story of convicted murderess Grace Marks. The story, set largely in Canada in the early 1800s, is enriched with social and domestic detail and we are given an interesting insight into developments taking place in the early science of psychiatry through the accounts of those who took an interest in the case. The inclusion of letters and poems from the time further enhance the authenticity of this powerful story.

I have to admit this is not my favorite of Margaret Atwood's books. I, as always, was kept interested in the story, it just seemed a little choppy at times. I think had I known it was based on an actual occurrence, I would have had an easier time. I think the information at the back of the book about it being based on fact should be put at the front. Knowing that, I now would recommend this book to those who enjoy historical fiction.

Though I'm not finished, I feel it is an exercise in Ms. Atwood's exhibiting her knowledge of 19th Century Canada. Feels studied, and the using the mouthpiece of an uneducated girl to say very sophisticated things in somewhat dumb-downed language is not convincing.

I love everything Margaret Atwood has written, and this is included. Very well written.

I honestly got quickly wrapped up in this book. Before I knew it there was no more and I'm left wondering what to do with my free time now. I really like that even though this is a work of fiction it is based on true events. the characters are very well described and it's easy to feel like you know them. I would highly recommend this book. In fact, I already have.

Excellent writing and an excellent true story.

Loved this book! Beautifully written. The characters and setting are well developed, and this provides a rich picture that can be imagined. The ending leaves the reader with their own interpretation as to the guilt of Grace Marks, and this is something I appreciate in a novel.

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