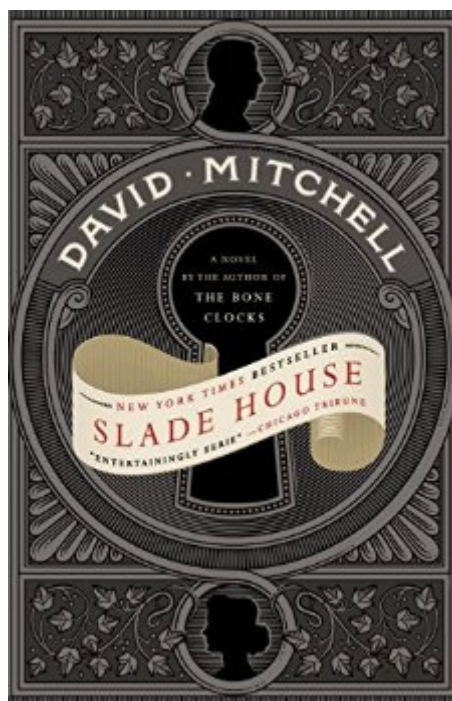


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Slade House: A Novel



Synopsis

The New York Times bestseller by the author of *The Bone Clocks* and *Cloud Atlas* | Named One of the Best Books of the Year by San Francisco Chronicle, NPR, Los Angeles Times, The Guardian, The Telegraph, National Post, BookPage, and Kirkus Reviews Keep your eyes peeled for a small black iron door. Down the road from a working-class British pub, along the brick wall of a narrow alley, if the conditions are exactly right, you'll find the entrance to Slade House. A stranger will greet you by name and invite you inside. At first, you won't want to leave. Later, you'll find that you can't. Every nine years, the house's residents—an odd brother and sister—extend a unique invitation to someone who's different or lonely: a precocious teenager, a recently divorced policeman, a shy college student. But what really goes on inside Slade House? For those who find out, it's already too late. . . . Spanning five decades, from the last days of the 1970s to the present, leaping genres, and barreling toward an astonishing conclusion, this intricately woven novel will pull you into a reality-warping new vision of the haunted house story—as only David Mitchell could imagine it. Praise for *Slade House*—“A fiendish delight . . . Mitchell is something of a magician.”—*The Washington Post* “Entertainingly eerie . . . We turn to [Mitchell] for brain-tickling puzzle palaces, for character studies and for language.”—*Chicago Tribune* “A ripping yarn . . . Like Shirley Jackson's *Hill House* or the *Overlook Hotel* from Stephen King's *The Shining*, [*Slade House*] is a thin sliver of hell designed to entrap the unwary. . . . As the Mitchellverse grows ever more expansive and connected, this short but powerful novel hints at still more marvels to come.”—*San Francisco Chronicle* “Like Stephen King in a fever . . . manically ingenious.”—*The Guardian* (U.K.) “A haunted house story that savors of Dickens, Stephen King, J. K. Rowling and H. P. Lovecraft, but possesses more psychic voltage than any of them.”—*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* “Tightly crafted and suspenseful yet warmly human . . . the ultimate spooky nursery tale for adults.”—*The Huffington Post* “Diabolically entertaining . . . dark, thrilling, and fun . . . a thoroughly entertaining ride full of mind games, unexpected twists, and even a few laughs.”—*The Daily Beast* “Plants died, milk curdled, and my children went slightly feral as I succumbed to the creepy magic of David Mitchell's *Slade House*. It's a wildly inventive, chilling, and—for all its otherworldliness—wonderfully human haunted house story. I plan to return to its clutches quite often.”—Gillian Flynn, #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of *Gone Girl* and *The Grownup* “I gulped down this novel in a single evening. Painstakingly imagined and crackling with narrative velocity, it's a *Dracula* for the new millennium, a reminder of how much fun fiction can be.”—Anthony Doerr, author of *All the Light We Cannot See*, winner of the Pulitzer Prize “David Mitchell doesn't break rules so much as he proves them to be

inhibitors to lively intelligent fiction. •â " #1 New York Times bestselling author Dean Koontz From the Hardcover edition.

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Customer Reviews

Since Cloud Atlas, David Mitchell has been one of the very few authors on my list of "automatically read" as close to publication-release date as possible, even though he's been, in my opinion, on something of a downhill trajectory beginning with The Thousand Autumns of Jacob de Zoet. With Slade House, I'm hoping he's bottomed out. Not that I didn't read the book in a single gulp, drawn in by both the familiar Mitchell terrain - not just the now characteristic generational sweep of his chronology but the familiar topical terrain, that of The Bone Clocks, although easily my least favorite of Mitchell's novels - and by the easy, engrossing linear narrative and the snippets of recycled characters who pop up from time to time like harmonic resonances in overtones of earlier chords. In this brief and - it seems to me, excessively and ostensibly holiday-timed - commercial book, in its pretty (but dysfunctional) design (which forces readers to hold a hole in the front board and invites us to ponder the meaningless Clue-like boardgame titlepage), Mitchell seemed to have been sweeping up the cutting room floor of his abundant imagination, feeding us leftovers from The Bone

Clocks, or perhaps parts of an abandoned first draft of Clocks that, in new form, morphed from a relatively straightforward haunted-house story to its convoluted concatenation of tales involved a cataclysmic battle for the fate of the universe. Some two-thirds of the way through, however, the short novel struck me as Mitchell's simplified explication of the main elements of *The Bone Clocks* for readers simply befuddled, as I was, by the long sequences of Deus ex machina rabbits-pulled-from-hats Battle of Immortals stuff that literally deranged me through the final 100 pp or so.

Slade House by David Mitchell is a tale that happens to be an extension of his brilliant novel, *The Bone Clocks*. In the world of *The Bone Clocks* the Horologists and the Anchorites wage a war over immortality. The Horologists are reborn again and again while retaining their memories and skills while the Anchorites must feed on the souls of others to maintain their immortality. *The Slade House* is the tale of a brother and sister duo who must feed every nine years to keep themselves alive, from the souls of those they capture in the Slade House. Norah and Jonah Grayer are the inhabitants of the Slade House. A home that can only be accessed through a small doorway down the dark and dismal Slade alley. They entice their victims with the promise of granting them what seems to be missing from their lives. Companionship, love, respect. Whatever will get them to walk through the dark alley, come through the tiny door and venture into Slade House. Once there, the duo feed on the souls of their victims who in turn begin to haunt the house and try to warn the new victims that arrive. *Slade House* spans five decades as the brother and sister need to feed and tells the story of each encounter. And that is where it fails. It tells little to nothing of the nine years between the feedings. Nothing of the lives the Grayers' live or of the victims and how they come to this place. It sets up each encounter briefly and then on to the entrapment and feeding. Its interesting the first few times but after that it simply becomes repetitive. And with repetition comes boredom. *Slade House* is not a horror story. There is very little that goes bump in the night here. After the first soul feeding you pretty much know what is coming next.

In the world David Mitchell created in his 2014 novel, *THE BONE CLOCKS*, the Horologists are waging a long battle against their enemies, the Anchorites, and ordinary people are often pulled into the violent fray. The Horologists are aetemporals • who are born again and again into new bodies but with the memories that drive them forward and with particular skills and knowledge that they hope will help them defeat the soul-eating Anchorites determined to gain immortality at any cost. In *SLADE HOUSE*, Mitchell revisits the Horologists and Anchorites but narrows his focus to

the story of two twins, bent on immortality, and the victims they curate. The Slade House is the metaphysically hidden lair of Norah and Jonah Grayer. It appears every nine years to those the Grayers select and lure there --- those whose souls they plan to feast on to keep themselves alive. In 1979, they invite a boy named Nathan along with his mother for an afternoon of music. Acting as an aristocratic mother and son, Norah and Jonah tease Nathan with the promise of friendship for himself and happiness for his mother before they reveal their true selves and let him get just a glimpse of the *â œlacunaâ* • that is Slade House before consuming his soul. This first section of the novel is highly charged and increasingly surreal as Nathan's already unique perception of reality is challenged by the slipping and shifting scene that the Grayers have created for him. He is almost warned of the danger, but is unable to understand the message he is being sent and instead runs toward his terrible fate. In 1988, a tough cop --- aging, egocentric and lonely --- is summoned by the twins to investigate the disappearance of Nathan and his mother. Detective Inspector Edmonds, like Nathan, is romanced by a new friendship.

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