



# *Bodecia Book Club!*



## **The Girl on the Landing by Paul Torday**

The novel begins as Michael, a middle-aged man of means, is dressing for dinner at a friend's country house in Ireland. As he descends the grand staircase, he spots a small painting of a landing with an old linen press and the white marble statue of an angel. In the background is a woman clad in a dark green dress. During dinner, Michael comments on the painting to his hosts but they say there is no woman in the picture. When Michael goes up to bed later, he sees that they are correct. This is only the first in a series of incidents that lead Michael to question his grip on reality.

As you read on you find that Michael's life was full of routine, dull and boring, and because he does not want to be tied down, feeling that he is being held under water, he decides to come off the medication that has been suppressing the real him.

We found it confusing at first skipping between the two main characters, this led to it being quite boring at the beginning. Although when you read into the book, it is a very good way of finding out the two main characters perspectives on each situation and you learn more about what Michael is going through. This kept us reading right to the end and we found we could not put it down.

As the medication starts to wear off he starts to become his old self. Of course when Elizabeth married him he was on medication and was the dull boring Michael. She didn't know this one, the one who was becoming more happy and interesting. It does make you wonder why Elizabeth married Michael in the first place, she definitely wasn't head over heels in love with him, and we found it hard to relate to Elizabeth because of this. Why would she marry someone she didn't know anything about? Michael was independently wealthy (meaning he didn't need a job!) with a family estate in the Scottish borders. The author say she did not marry him for his money, she was not a gold-digger as she had a good job that paid well. Was it for some stability? We were crying out to say why did she not know that he had such severe mental health problems before now?

There is a part in the book where Elizabeth talks to Michael's housekeeper, Mrs McLeish, and she finds out that she calls him Mikey. We found it very far fetched that Elizabeth then started calling him Mikey, it was like she was dividing the two personas, the old Michael and the new Mikey. Perhaps this is what the author was trying to get across to the reader.

With the new Michael it is like they can start their honeymoon and Elizabeth says "that's what it is like to be married". We really enjoyed the new relationship of the two main characters and their time in Rome, for this brief time everything was peaceful and going well for them. Michael even comments "happiness never lasts", it was like he knew what was about to happen.

We felt that the author could have given more perspective on the situation around Michael trying to get a person of Asian origin into the gentleman's club and the issues around that.,We found the book very interesting in comparison to Salmon Fishing in the Yemen, Paul Tordays first book.

It is a thriller and the ancestral home being set in the Scottish borders gives it a mysterious air. I could not get Skyfall out of my head! The hallway from the painting reappears later on in the book, when Elizabeth is in the house alone, and it seems that that painting could play a bigger part than once thought.

The books leaves a lot of unanswered questions about what has really happened and wanting to know more – One thing we have all learnt, trust dogs, they are very sensitive creature and know when to run!

**We gave The Girl on the Landing 7.6/10**

The book we are now reading is **The Memory Keepers Daughter by Kim Edwards**



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