

The Night Guest



Ruth is widowed, her sons are grown, and she lives in an isolated beach house outside town. Her routines are few and small. One day a stranger arrives at her door, looking as if she has been blown in from the sea. This woman? Frida? claims to be a care worker sent by the government. Ruth lets her in. Now that Frida is in the house, is Ruth right to fear the tiger she hears on the prowl at night, far from its jungle habitat? Why do memories of her childhood in Fiji press upon her with increasing urgency? How far can she trust this mysterious woman, Frida, who seems to carry her own troubled past? And how far can Ruth trust herself? The Night Guest, Fiona McFarlane's hypnotic first novel, is no simple tale of a crime committed and a mystery solved. This is a story that soars above its own suspense and tells us, with exceptional grace and beauty, about aging, love, trust, dependence, and fear; about processes of colonization; and about things (and people) in places they shouldn't be. Here is a new writer who comes to us fully formed, creating wonders with language, renewing our faith in the power of fiction to describe the mysterious workings of our minds.

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