

THE LIST OF SUSPICIOUS THINGS by Jennie Godfrey

Published by Penguin

My latest book recommendation is '*The List of Suspicious Things*' by Jennie Godfrey. It is a touching story of childhood friendship, loyalty and the loss of innocence.

THE PLOTLINE

Set in Yorkshire in the 1970s, the story centres around two young girls, Miv and Sharon. Although from two very different backgrounds, the girls have been firm friends since they were eleven-years old.

Miv's family are dysfunctional to say the least. Miv herself is plain and a loner, and her mother has not spoken for years, spending most of her time in her room. Her father works hard to support the family while Miv's auntie Jean, does her best to keep house, ruling the place with a rod of iron. Sharon on the other hand comes from a normal, slightly wealthier family, is pretty with blonde hair and popular at school. Yet despite their differences, the two are inseparable.

When Miv's father starts to talk about possibly moving south, Miv is sure it is because of all the murders carried out by the Yorkshire Ripper. Terrified of losing Sharon, she then convinces her friend they need to catch the Ripper to stop her father wanting to move. The two then decide to compile a list of suspects and the reasons why they are suspicious. However, as the two start their investigations, they soon discover that the world around them is not the cosy, idyllic place they believe it to be.

MY REVIEW

'*The List of Suspicious Things*' is a departure from my normal preference for crime and thriller novels, having been given it as a present. Not having chosen it myself, I was not sure if I would like it, but I was pleasantly surprised. It is a touching story of two young girls whose youthful innocence is shattered when they come up against racism and other harsh realities of life, forcing Miv to finally examine more closely what is happening within her own family.

Inspired by the author's own childhood, the novel paints a picture of Yorkshire in the 1970s, where the Ripper's reign of terror is breathing fear into the community. As a naive eleven-year-old, Miv is unaware of the dangers surrounding her, although her friend Sharon seems to be more astute, especially after being confronted by the injustice of racism when her muslim friend Ishtiaq Bashir and his father Omar become victims of it.

‘The List of Suspicious Things’ is deservedly a *Sunday Times*’ bestseller, and I can thoroughly recommend it. The ending will leave you with a lump in your throat.

THE AUTHOR

Jennie Godfrey was raised in West Yorkshire and her debut novel, *‘The List of Suspicious Things’*, is inspired by her childhood there in the 1970s. Jennie is from a mill-working family, but as the first of the generation born after the mills closed, she went to university and built a career in the corporate world. In 2020 she left and began to write. She is now a writer and part-time Waterstones bookseller and lives in the Somerset countryside.

‘The List of Suspicious Things’ is published by Penguin and is available in ebook, paperback, hardback and audiobook format from Amazon. It is also available in paperback and hardback from Waterstones and Foyles.