



The Thirteenth Tale: A Novel

By Diane Setterfield

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Sometimes, when you open the door to the past, what you confront is your destiny.

Reclusive author Vida Winter, famous for her collection of twelve enchanting stories, has spent the past six decades penning a series of alternate lives for herself. Now old and ailing, she is ready to reveal the truth about her extraordinary existence and the violent and tragic past she has kept secret for so long. Calling on Margaret Lea, a young biographer troubled by her own painful history, Vida disinters the life she meant to bury for good. Margaret is mesmerized by the author's tale of gothic strangeness -- featuring the beautiful and willful Isabelle, the feral twins Adeline and Emmeline, a ghost, a governess, a topiary garden and a devastating fire. Together, Margaret and Vida confront the ghosts that have haunted them while becoming, finally, transformed by the truth themselves.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Settle down to enjoy a rousing good ghost story with Diane Setterfield's debut novel, *The Thirteenth Tale*. Setterfield has rejuvenated the genre with this closely plotted, clever foray into a world of secrets, confused identities, lies, and half-truths. She never cheats by pulling a rabbit out of a hat; this atmospheric story hangs together perfectly.

There are two heroines here: Vida Winter, a famous author, whose life story is coming to an end, and Margaret Lea, a young, unworldly, bookish girl who is a bookseller in her father's shop. Vida has been confounding her biographers and fans for years by giving everybody a different version of her life, each time swearing it's the truth. Because of a biography that Margaret has written about brothers, Vida chooses Margaret to tell her story, all of it, for the first time. At their initial meeting, the conversation begins:

"You have given nineteen different versions of your life story to journalists in the last two years alone."

She [Vida] shrugged. "It's my profession. I'm a storyteller."

"I am a biographer, I work with facts."

The game is afoot and Margaret must spend some time sorting out whether or not Vida is actually ready to tell the whole truth. There is more here of Margaret discovering than of Vida cooperating wholeheartedly, but that is part of Vida's plan. The transformative power of truth informs the lives of both women by story's end, and *The Thirteenth Tale* is finally and convincingly told. --Valerie Ryan

From Publishers Weekly

Setterfield's debut novel translates into a great audio book that loses none of the suspense, surprise and satisfaction that come with a wonderful tale. The voices of two of the best dramatic talents working today turn Setterfield's story into a glorious treat for listeners. Henshall, who reads as Margaret Lea, and Redgrave, who plays recluse writer Vida Winter, create mood and tension with their voices, which settles listeners into the narrative with ease. Margaret, a young bookseller and amateur biographer, is chosen by Miss Winter as the recipient of the secret of her tragic past. She reveals, layer by layer, the mesmerizing tale of the Angelfield family that includes murder, insanity, feral twins, a ghost and a fire. Margaret's own past in some ways parallels Miss Winter's, leading them both through the blaze of memory into the truth. Audio fans will be dazzled; fans of the written word will find new depth to *The Thirteenth Tale* thanks to the rich work of two veteran readers.

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From [Bookmarks Magazine](#)

The Thirteenth Tale received a reported \$1 million advance in the United States and an even greater one in Britain. That, combined with comparisons of Diane Setterfield's storytelling techniques to that of the Brontës, makes this debut novel a publicity coup of sorts. Certainly, *The Thirteenth Tale*—a family drama, romance, bildungsroman, mystery, and ghost story—intrigued most critics. Yet not all agreed that the novel lives up to the hype. Dazzling writing, a suspenseful story-within-a-story, and rich plot twists made an

imaginative story. Some reviewers, however, cited gaps in plotting, dull characters (especially the twins), and an unexceptional ending. In end, it's Setterfield's old-fashioned storytelling and love for literature that makes the novel stand out.

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Alice Hill:

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Amanda Grant:

As people who live in the actual modest era should be change about what going on or data even knowledge to make all of them keep up with the era that is always change and make progress. Some of you maybe will update themselves by reading through books. It is a good choice for you but the problems coming to you actually is you don't know what one you should start with. This The Thirteenth Tale: A Novel is our recommendation to make you keep up with the world. Why, because book serves what you want and need in this era.

Armando Mosley:

The book untitled The Thirteenth Tale: A Novel contain a lot of information on the item. The writer explains her idea with easy method. The language is very easy to understand all the people, so do certainly not worry, you can easy to read the idea. The book was published by famous author. The author will take you in the new time of literary works. You can easily read this book because you can keep reading your smart phone, or program, so you can read the book within anywhere and anytime. If you want to buy the e-book, you can open up their official web-site in addition to order it. Have a nice learn.

Clyde Traynor:

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