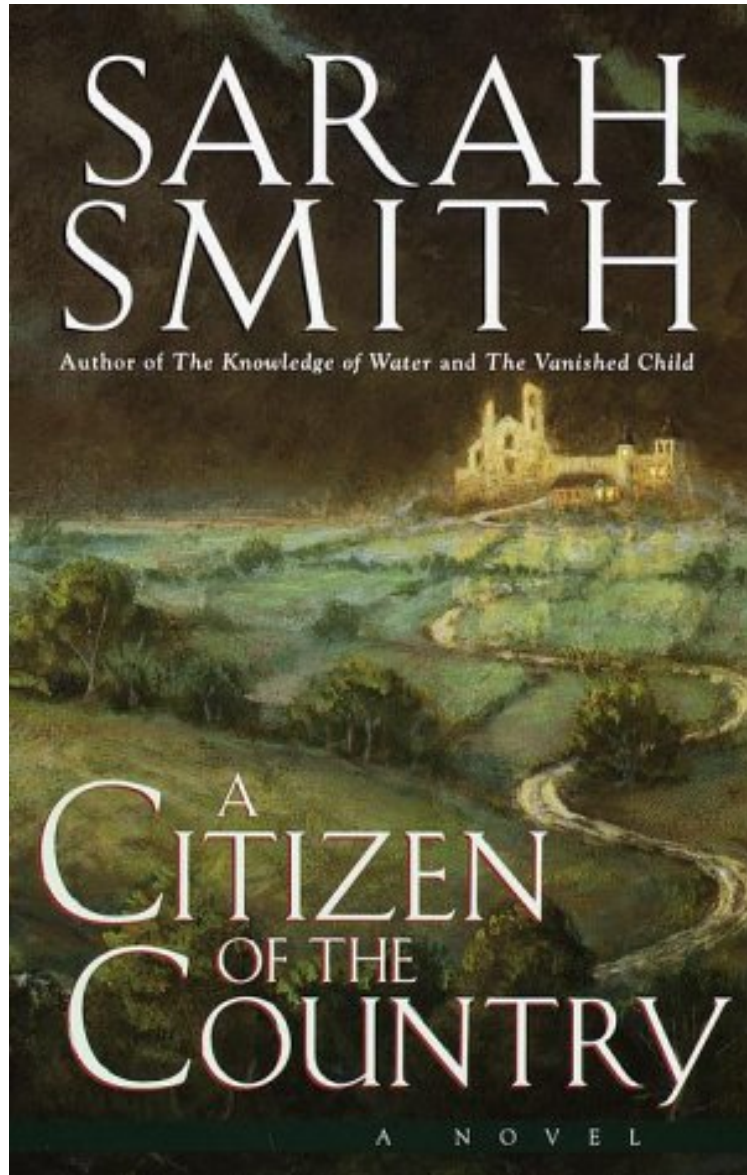


[Free and download] A Citizen of the Country

A Citizen of the Country

Sarah Smith

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Sarah Smith : A Citizen of the Country before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Citizen of the Country:

7 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Excellent By A Customer There is a dark foreboding of change is in the air, leaving a state of uneasiness settling throughout Europe in 1911. To restrain Germany, France and Russia have formed an alliance. However, Germany will go to any length to destroy that pact. The enigmatic Baron Alexander Von

Reisden owns the very advanced mental institution, Jouvét. Though Alexander is running from his own past, his patient files contains information that would shatter the Franco-Russian agreement. As valuable as that data seems, the Germans seek something else at this moment. At Montfort Manor in Northeast France, the owner, a war hero, is doing extensive remodeling. The Germans want to know what secrets are being concealed beneath the walls of the chateau. They try to blackmail Alex into obtaining the buried "treasures." Alex will do whatever he needs to do to fulfill his role in destiny. Although *A Citizen of the Country* is the final volume of a historical fiction trilogy (see *The Vanished Child* and *Knowledge of Water*), the novel remains an excellent stand-alone tale. The story line combines suspense, character analysis, and drama into an exciting thriller. Cast members from the previous stories return as more of their personal histories are revealed and the author provides hints as to their futures. As with her first two novels, Sarah Smith has written a notable book that will provide her much acclaim.

Harriet Klausner⁵ of 8 people found the following review helpful. Third time is a charm, but.....By B. Morse

Having now finished Sarah Smith's Vanished Child Trilogy, I can conclude that the sequel is rarely ever as good as the original. While Vanished Child thrilled, and Knowledge of Water disappointed, A Citizen of the Country strives to bring readers once again into the dark clouds that hang over Alexander Von Reisden since he was recognized and proven to be the missing Richard Knight, who vanished at the age of 8 on the night his grandfather was murdered; himself being the killer. But this time around, Reisden and wife Perdita are parents to a happy, healthy boy. However, Reisden and Perdita are far from happy themselves. Reisden mistrusts his nearly blind wife to care properly for their son; Perdita strives to understand why Reisden has distanced himself from Gilbert Knight, a surviving Uncle of Richard's, who can end the financial woes of Jouvét, the psychiatric facility that Reisden owns, nearly destroyed in the Paris flood described in *The Knowledge of Water*. Enter Maurice Cyron, who holds the key to delivering a Government contract to Jouvét that will ensure its financial well-being for years to come. Cyron charges Reisden to complete a task begun long ago at Jouvét, to help put to rest the demons of his adopted son, Andre, a friend of Reisden's youth. Andre, the unbalanced host of alter-ego Necrosar, writes dark, murderous plays for a 'Theater of Horror' in Paris. Being shut in with his dead parents for days when just a young boy seems to have permanently unhinged Andre, though he has married a beautiful young woman, Sabine, who obsesses with bearing a child for Necrosar, whom she worships, herself a witch. Andre and Cyron bring Reisden and company to Montfort, Andre's ancestral home, to film a treatment of Macbeth, a la Necrosar, complete with the beheading of the heroine, played by Sabine, by guillotine, as the culmination of the film. But amidst all the make-believe death and gore, real bodies begin to turn up, and a mystery unfolds. Reisden and his friend Jules are blackmailed to uncover the 'secret of Montfort'... Jules' sister Ruthie uncovers Sabine's secret, and a witch's poison, which nearly claims her life. Tunnels below Montfort itself are found to be far more than just a challenging labyrinth, and Reisden is forced to overcome his own demons about committing murder in order to help solve the mystery surrounding the death of one of the principal characters, lest an innocent person suffer the same fate.

Sound good? Technically it is... Smith delivers dark, gloomy prose, of the same ilk as *Vanished Child*. *Citizen* is far superior to *Knowledge of Water*, in the respect that, like *Vanished Child*, there was a central plot that the other sub-plots fed from, and that affected them all. The 'secret of Montfort', while not quite as exciting as I had hoped, feeds into all other plot-lines, like a body of water feeding tributaries. Many demons are laid to rest by the end of the story, which is one of its strengths, a 'satisfying' conclusion for several of the story threads. But where the novel fails to live up to the original is a lack of excitement when the 'secret' is finally revealed. The so-called 'secret' of Montfort is lackluster at best, and really not enough to keep perpetuating its mention time and again as a plot line. Further, Smith shoots herself in the foot by foreshadowing the death of one of the principals in the story, so that when the event takes place, it is expected, and therefore not much of a shock. While the first novel held my interest until the end to find out 'the truth', this novel does not deliver the same satisfaction. A contrived 'resolution' (from the characters of the novel) does not really answer one of the major questions of the story; the identity of the person who commits the 'shocking' murder. It seems as though Smith, in the hopes of a resolution for all the characters involved, left out a resolution for the reader. That said, I do recommend reading this book if you have already read the other two. Without having them as a background, many things here will not make much sense to a reader, and although the story can be read autonomously, a foundation of the first two parts of this trilogy only adds to the overall read. I sincerely hope that Smith will revisit the characters, and expand this trilogy into something larger. She is a capable writer, with a talent for creating a hazy, gloomy setting, and painting equally despairing characters to populate that setting.

9 of 10 people found the following review helpful. superbly plotted finale

By A Customer

A Citizen of the Country succeeded where *The Knowledge of Water* failed, in that it was truly worthy of being called a sequel to the tremendous opening book, *The Vanished Child*. While typically complex, the mystery plot here was at least understandable. But, as always, the key to these novels is the human plot introduced in the *Vanished Child*, and the denouement of that plot here was just fantastic; it was truly a payoff for people who have read all the books in the trilogy. Hopefully, the author will reconsider her decision to make this only a trilogy, and write one more episode set during World War One. The ending of this book certainly sets up the possibility of such a sequel. All in all, this was a great read, and anyone who may have been slightly turned off of this series by *The Knowledge of Water* should definitely give this book a try.

"Stunning," raved the New York Times of Sarah Smith's first novel, *The Vanished Child*. USA Today called her second book, *The Knowledge of Water*, "as satisfying a mystery as the Mona Lisa's smile." Now the bestselling author of two New York Times Notable Books has created a new, intricately plotted story of intrigue, passion, love, and the most terrible of betrayals. "My wife will murder me unless I murder her first." In the ancient, bloody region of French Flanders looms Montfort castle, home of Count Andr du Monde, owner of a famous Paris horror theatre. To repair his fortunes, he marries an heiress. Sabine is young, blameless, beautiful, and rich, a perfect leading lady for Andr's first film--but the eccentric count suspects his wife is a practicing sorceress. Then the Grand Necropolitan Theatre is suddenly stricken with disasters: an unexpected death, a puzzling disappearance, and the savage beating of lead actor Jules Fauchard. Andr believes Sabine has placed him under a curse. No one believes him, not even his old friend, Alexander von Reidsen. To watch over the couple, Reidsen agrees to take a part in their film--and finds his own secrets threatened and his marriage becoming as poisoned as theirs. Amid escalating tension, the players assemble at Montfort to begin filming Andr's movie. Then, within the deep medieval basements of Montfort, life and fiction intersect--as the Grand Necropolitan becomes a true theatre of horrors. Filled with a host of unforgettable characters whose agendas tangle as secretly as the underground tunnels of Flanders, *A Citizen of the Country* is a compelling novel of desire, poisonous secrets, and love gone terribly wrong.

.com "Murder didn't define Alexander Reidsen anymore," the narrator declares coyly on the first page of Sarah Smith's *A Citizen of the Country*, the final installment of her *Vanished Child* trilogy. But the truth is that Reidsen, former Austrian spy and protective new father, is perpetually haunted by the consequences of having murdered his grandfather at age 8. Set in Paris and Flanders just before the outbreak of World War I, *A Citizen of the Country* is an intricately plotted, maddeningly complex novel that may frustrate readers who expect mysteries to deliver a corpse before delving into an exploration of motives. In *A Citizen of the Country*, competing motives are palpable if peculiarly unattached to a definite crime. The first corpse doesn't show up until page 81, for example, but we know intimately many creepy people capable of having poisoned Mlle. Franoise. Though *A Citizen of the Country* is unconventionally plotted (perhaps overplotted), it nevertheless spins a web of moral dilemmas that seem to trap the main characters between indecision and desire. The characters struggle mightily against the choices that their lives seem to impel them towards, and this is richly rewarding. In a novel brimming with deftly drawn personalities, Andr de Montfort is the most compelling. Shut in at age 5 with his parents' decomposing corpses during a cholera outbreak, Andr's personality is subsequently macabre and imbalanced. His alter-ego Necrosar writes and directs a horrifying meditation on *Macbeth* in which he casts childhood friend Reidsen, adoptive father Cyron, and potentially treacherous Sabine, his wealthy, nubile wife. During the filming, which occupies the second half of the novel, a series of unexplained murders flummoxes Reidsen, and lures his blind wife Perdita and toddler Toby into frightening proximity to blackmailers, thugs, and sorcerers. The novel's densely involved plots climax in the shocking death of one of the principals, which motivates the best sequence in the novel, a truly terrifying plunge into the claustrophobic, pitch-black tunnels burrowed beneath Arras, an ancient village. *A Citizen of the Country* amply rewards readers who savor a writhing plot bursting with hundreds of expertly culled historical details. --Kathi Inman Berens
From Publishers Weekly
Set within both the city of Paris and mysterious fictional Montfort Castle in Flanders on the eve of WWI, this stylish and literate historical drama rings down the curtain on Smith's popular trilogy (*The Vanished Child*; *The Knowledge of Water*) that illuminates society in early 20th-century France. Dark snatches of memory still trouble Alexander Reidsen, director of Jouvett Medical Analyses, an eminent Parisian mental health clinic. Did he murder his grandfather? Is he the heir to an American fortune? As war threatens, Reidsen's personal troubles are pushed into the background. On the verge of procuring an important contract with the French army for the mental competency testing of soldiers, he learns that former military hero Maurice Cyron stands in his way. Cyron, who intended a military future for his stepson, Andr?, the count of Montfort, blames Reidsen for encouraging Andr?'s theatrical bent. Fascinated by death (for reasons Smith eventually reveals), Andr? channels his dark thoughts into his work at the Grand Necropolitan Theatre, where he is driven to act out his obsessions. Though recently married, he ignores his seductive wife, Sabina, and accuses her of trying to poison him. While struggling to appease Cyron and help Andr?, Reidsen strives to satisfy his own wife, Perdita, a legally blind concert pianist who wants to resurrect her career with a trip to America, where she hopes to compel Reidsen to come to terms with his past. When Andr? and Cyron join forces to make a military film on the grounds of Montfort Castle in Arras, with Reidsen's participation, Smith ratchets up the tension. In addition to providing fascinating background on early filmmaking, the author adds French military secrets, murder, blackmail and witchcraft. Though the buildup to the revelation of Reidsen's dilemma seems unnecessarily complicated, readers will care about the splendidly realized characters, whose fates are decided in an eminently satisfying conclusion. Agent, Jane Otte. 3-city author tour. Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.
From Library Journal
Now that he and his concert pianist wife have a young son of their own, physician Alexander von Reidsen wants more than ever to wipe out a past full of hidden identity, tangled relationships, and murder, but a dangerous blackmailer forces him to confront his demons and accept himself and a family relationship he has tried desperately to forget. The trouble starts when von Reidsen is forced to take on the case of the deeply disturbed Andr du

Monde, sponsor of the Grand Necropolitan Theater, whose ghoulish productions feature his young wife. Smith's concluding volume to her "Vanished Child" trilogy, set in a bellicose France on the brink of World War I, is a murky and sinister tangle of political and domestic intrigue, witchcraft, and murder. It will resonate more with readers familiar with *The Vanished Child* (LJ 2/1/92) and *The Knowledge of Water* (LJ 8/96), but it offers compelling reading for everyone. Highly recommended. DCynthia Johnson, Cary Memorial Lib., Lexington, MA Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.