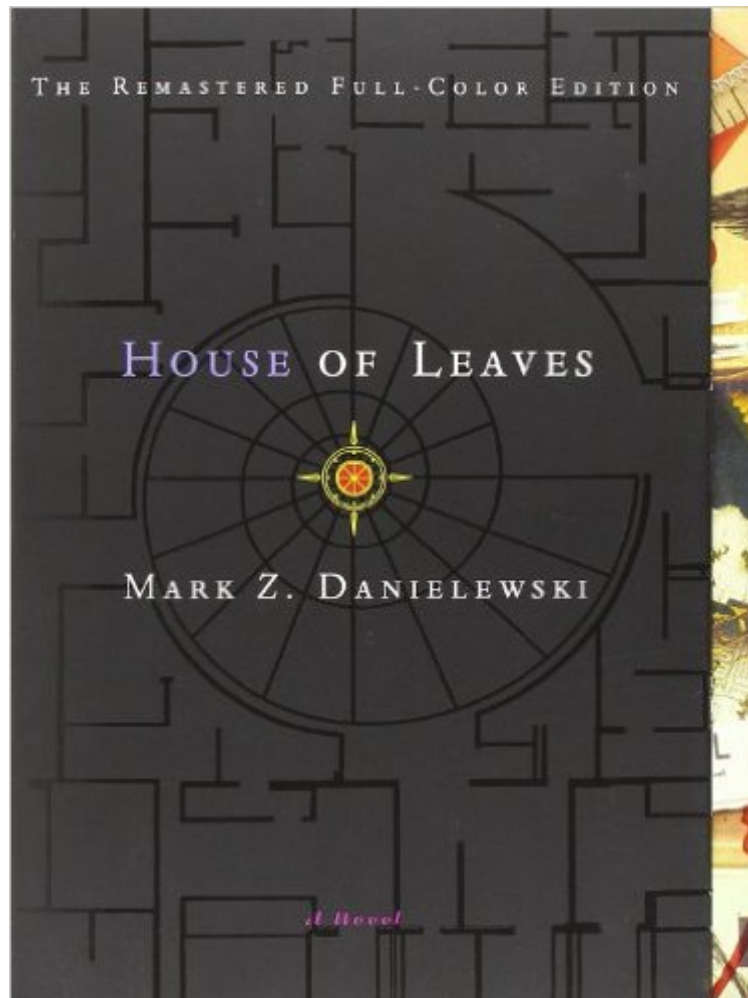


The book was found

House Of Leaves



Synopsis

Years ago, when *House of Leaves* was first being passed around, it was nothing more than a badly bundled heap of paper, parts of which would occasionally surface on the Internet. No one could have anticipated the small but devoted following this terrifying story would soon command. Starting with an odd assortment of marginalized youth -- musicians, tattoo artists, programmers, strippers, environmentalists, and adrenaline junkies -- the book eventually made its way into the hands of older generations, who not only found themselves in those strangely arranged pages but also discovered a way back into the lives of their estranged children. Now, for the first time, this astonishing novel is made available in book form, complete with the original colored words, vertical footnotes, and newly added second and third appendices. The story remains unchanged, focusing on a young family that moves into a small home on Ash Tree Lane where they discover something is terribly wrong: their house is bigger on the inside than it is on the outside. Of course, neither Pulitzer Prize-winning photojournalist Will Navidson nor his companion Karen Green was prepared to face the consequences of that impossibility, until the day their two little children wandered off and their voices eerily began to return another story -- of creature darkness, of an ever-growing abyss behind a closet door, and of that unholy growl which soon enough would tear through their walls and consume all their dreams.

Book Information

Series: *House of Leaves* (Book 1)

Paperback: 709 pages

Publisher: Pantheon; 2nd edition (March 7, 2000)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0375703764

ISBN-13: 978-0375703768

Product Dimensions: 7 x 1.3 x 9.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 2.4 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

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Customer Reviews

I first heard of "House of Leaves" about a year ago on the Internet. Somebody said it was the best

new horror novel they had read in years. Then when I started working at a bookstore in town, one of my new friends there told me it was the scariest book he had ever read. All of this quite intrigued me. So I bought the book and read it over a period of about six months. It's not a quick read, or at least it wasn't for me. I had to have other, more normal, sane books going on at the same time. "House of Leaves" is over seven hundred pages long and it's loaded with literary detour signs, unsuspected landmines (some duds, some live), and good old "holding the book upside down in a mirror so you can read the words printed that way" fun. "House of Leaves" is a contortionist's daydream, and a conservative reader's nightmare. I fall somewhere in the middle of the spectrum and found myself admiring the new unhallowed ground Danielewski was breaking, but at other times longing for a more conventional, satisfying structure. This whole thing is very postmodern. The house is aware of itself as a house, and the book is aware of itself as a book. There is a story of a family moving into a house, trying to sort out its interpersonal demons, and finding that the insides of things (lives, minds, houses) can often be darker, scarier, stranger, and more convoluted than they would appear from the outsides. That alone would have made a great book, told with inventive language and a compelling psychological subtext. But that's just the beginning, the backstory really. "House of Leaves" is a story inside a story inside a story, etc. In fact, it puts the dizzying structure of Mary Shelly's "Frankenstein" to shame.

I had never heard of this book when I picked it up, and I'm glad. I actually meant to order another book from my book club, but ordered this one mistakenly. My first thought was "House of Leaves, that looks boring, maybe I can give it as a gift". Then I saw the quotes on the back by some of my favorite authors and wondered if I should give it a chance. Then I flipped through it and was interested by the way the book was put together. Then I read the description on the inside cover (which is mostly fictional) about the book being a collection of papers that circulated for a while on the internet, but had never been put together in a book format before, and the story about a house whose dimensions keep changing, and I was intrigued. This is definitely a challenging read, in that it demands your full attention. In a couple places, it tells you to skip to the appendices and read a certain section, then return to where you were. The narrative goes back and forth between Johnny Truant's first person narrative (told in sections and footnotes) of how the book, by an elderly blind man who lived in his apartment complex and may not have been entirely sane, came into his possession and what it has done to his mind and his life, and the story told by the blind man about...about...you know, this is really a hard book for me to describe. It has stories within stories, about 800 different typefaces (it must have driven the typesetters, or whoever did the formatting at

the publishing house, crazy) and formats that include interviews, bibliographies, letters, transcripts, and even a section where there are just photographs of different scraps of paper.

I was attracted to *House of Leaves* because of an article about it in *Newsweek*. That sent me to this site, where I found the critics polarized: Joe Pro loved it, Joe Shmoe hated it. I had to find out for myself! If you're like me and don't usually use words such as "metafiction" and "no vivifying center," I just want to say, the book was a total hoot. At times trying, yes. But so is Monty Python--I think it takes that experimental attitude to reach the breakthrough stuff. Contrary to other reviewers, I found the central narrative genuinely eerie, much more so than anything I've read by Steven King or Dean Koontz. In some places I was turning the pages breathlessly. At the same time, I found myself chuckling with delight at pages that are typeset to match the scenes they describe. For example, in one scene where explorers are hopelessly lost, the pages feature dense footnotes in random columns -- some even printed upside-down, some backwards. As you try to puzzle out what to read next, you suddenly realize you are experiencing some of the same disorientation as the explorers. I think this is just plain old fun. The author purposely interrupts the story in places to frustrate you; saves some of the best stuff for obscure appendixes (be sure to read the letters from Johnny Truant's institutionalized Mom); and generally challenges your assumptions about what a book is supposed to do or be. At the same time, for the most part he delivers the goods in the old-fashioned narrative sense. So, yeah, it takes a little work to read, and it's not conventional, and it's not perfect. But it's ORIGINAL. I'm REALLY glad I bought it. I enjoyed it a ton, and the emotions of the book continue to resonate with me days after finishing it.

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