

## Gaslight

**Miles Joris-Peyrafitte**

**Sara Shepard**

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In Miles Joris-Peyrafitte and Sara Shepard's thriller *Gaslight*, a power-seeking cult exploits its members.

Having escaped her controlled past, Rebecca lives a quiet life with her husband and two children in Nevada. This changes when her old friend, Danny, shows up unannounced, bringing with her reminders of earlier years. Rebecca tries her best to help Danny, but she soon realizes that Danny is under the influence of the Infinite Spiritual Being community, a cult whose members are forbidden contact with the outside world. Rebecca wonders about Danny's true intentions and tries to keep those she loves out of harm's way.

Members of the ISB are manipulated by the cult's leader, Ben, who assures them that they "deserve to be happy." The novel's resultant unnerving tone mimics Danny and Rebecca's inner feelings. Herein, everyone has a secret; as the story continues, questions are answered. Certain plot points start to lose their enigma as they're repeated, though, as with the secret that Rebecca keeps from her husband regarding how she and Danny know each other.

However, other elements of the story that seem drawn out or discursive are revealed not to be so: a flashback to a conversation regarding cookies between Rebecca and another person proves pivotal, revealing characteristics like humility and self-awareness. And as different perspectives and stories are incorporated, stark contrasts are drawn between the cult members' once-normal lives and their existences once they are reshaped by the cult. Further, rapid timeline shifts are used to deepen understanding of the cult and the extent of its power over its victims.

*Gaslight* is a gripping thriller in which a woman once controlled by fear confronts her past.

DANICA MORRIS (September / October 2024)

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