



★ Stay in the Light

A. M. Shine

Head of Zeus (Oct 22, 2024)

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In A. M. Shine's captivating fantasy novel *Stay in the Light*, people attempt to outrun frightening and powerful creatures called the Watchers.

The Watchers are changelings who take on the appearance of human beings and hide out in the secluded woods of Ireland. After escaping a Watcher entrapment, Mina is left reeling; she grapples with guilt from her past. Her allies are Ciara, who grieves her husband, John; Madeline, who only tells Mina to stay away or be caught; and "the yellow one," the bird she loves.

Elsewhere, a lonely researcher, Sean, mourns the loss of his father, David, a brilliant academic who disappeared three years previous. While attempting an awkward romance with his research partner, he funds the drilling of an archaeological site called the Burren on the west coast of Ireland. Continuing David's obsession and legacy, Sean hopes to discover tangible proof of the existence of changelings. However, he is on the precipice of a far more dangerous discovery that links the Watchers to the legendary Tuatha Dé Danann.

Oscillating between fascinating mythologies and Mina's fear, the novel exudes melancholy and isolation, evoking dread over the ancient and unstoppable Watchers. The descriptions of loss are sharp: Ciara makes John's favorite meals even in his absence; Mina drinks and scours the internet for evidence of the Watchers. The horror that the Watchers inflict is made palpable as Mina makes note of their ruthlessness toward human beings; with her experience, she is left quaking at each possibility that they are near.

In the terrifying fantasy novel *Stay in the Light*, those who escaped the Watchers live with the consequences of their survival.

NATALIE WOLLENZIEN (November / December 2024)

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