



# White Crow

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[Rebecca Butler](#) [3]

Editor's Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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Rebecca Case's father is an unhappy soul. His wife has died, though initially the reader doesn't know how. He has a fractious relationship with his 16-year-old daughter. He is a former policeman who was falsely accused of murdering a girl. He doesn't know whether his daughter believes in his innocence.

He decides that he and Rebecca should leave London, fraught with memories, and set up home in a sleepy seaside town called Winterfold. Rebecca has left behind everything, including her boyfriend, and feels lonely in the country. She meets a girl named Ferelith who lives with a misfit band of lodgers in an ancient rectory and who is so academically gifted that she left school two years earlier, having taken A levels at the age of 14!

Rebecca and Ferelith strike up a passionate yet uneasy friendship. Ferelith takes Rebecca to inspect Winterfold Hall, an ancient derelict mansion. Coastal erosion means that many of the Winterfold buildings are at risk of being swallowed by the sea. It seems that a doctor conducted spiritualist experiments at the Hall, trying to prove that there is life after death. Interspersed in the contemporary narrative are diary entries made by a priest in the late eighteenth century. For some bizarre reason, belief in the afterlife is linked with belief in the existence of white crows.

This book is a fairly daring mixture of gothic horror and existential speculation. Does God exist? If so, what are the consequences? If not, what then? As is typical of Sedgwick's work, what might have been a simple tale of friendship between two girls turns out to draw the reader into more profound reflections about the nature of human life and death. The act of suicide casts a shadow over the book. The narrative is fast paced and dark. The characterization of the two protagonists is powerful with one slight reservation. Ferelith could be seen as a prototypical visionary figure. This is a book whose serious subject matter suggests that it be read more than once.

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