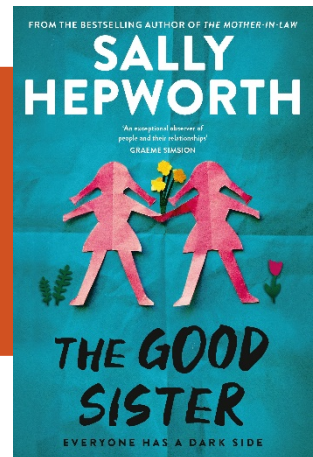




The Good Sister

Sally Hepworth



Author Background

Born in Melbourne, Sally Hepworth was the youngest of three children and has also lived in Singapore, London and Canada. She has worked in event management and human resources and first began writing seriously while on maternity leave with her first child.

Her first book, *Love like the French*, was only published in Germany but her second book, *The Secrets of Midwives* (2015), was a commercial success and published worldwide. Since then she has released a new book every year: *The Things We Keep* (2016), *The Mother's Promise* (2017), *The Family Next Door* (2018) and *The Mother-in-law* (2019), which has been optioned for a TV series by Hollywood actress and producer, Amy Poehler. *The Good Sister* (2020) was an instant bestseller and has been shortlisted for the 2021 Davitt Awards (the best crime books by Australian women).

Drawing on the good, the bad and the downright odd of human behaviour, Sally writes incisively about family, relationships and identity. Her domestic thriller novels are laced with quirky humour, sass and a darkly charming tone.

Sally's novels are available worldwide in English and have been translated into 20 languages. She lives in Melbourne with her British husband and three children.

Book Summary

"There's only been one time that Rose couldn't stop me from doing the wrong thing and that was a mistake that will haunt me for the rest of my life."

Fern Castle works in her local library. She has dinner with her twin sister Rose three nights a week. And she avoids crowds, bright lights and loud noises as much as possible. Fern has a carefully structured life and disrupting her routine can be ... dangerous.

When Rose discovers that she cannot fall pregnant, Fern sees her chance to pay her sister back for everything Rose has done for her. Fern can have a baby for Rose. She just needs to find a father. Simple.

Fern's mission will shake the foundations of the life she has carefully built for herself and stir up dark secrets from the past.

The Good Sister combines themes of romance, neurodiversity and sibling dynamics in a fast-moving story that will keep you guessing until the end.

Discussion Questions

- ❖ *The Good Sister* tells the story of two twins who are very close but very different. Do you think this is a true representation of a twin relationship? Do you know any twins that have a special bond or a secret language (like the bangle tapping that Fern and Rose share)? Do you think sibling relationships in general allow people to cross boundaries that friends would not?
- ❖ Fern displays many characteristics of someone on the autism spectrum, though she has never been formally diagnosed. Do you think we need to do more as a society to allow neurodiverse people to feel integrated, like the class Fern runs at the end of the book for children with sensory issues?
- ❖ In what ways does Wally change Fern's life? What does he do and what characteristics does he possess that allow him to replace Rose as Fern's 'person'?
- ❖ Much of *The Good Sister* relies on different interpretations of past events. Has there been an occasion when your siblings or parents have remembered things differently due to their personal perspectives/bias?
- ❖ How accurate do you believe Fern's accounts of working in a library are? In what way would a library be a good environment for someone like Fern? What features of her personality and behaviours do you think make her a good librarian?
- ❖ If she were able, how do you think Fern and Rose's mother would have described her relationship with each of her daughters. Do you think she favoured one over the other? Did she play a role in the tragic events of their childhood and their personality traits?
- ❖ This book is a relatively quick read – how long did it take you? Did you find the plot or language used complex enough?
- ❖ How did you feel about the ending of this book?

References

- ❖ Sally Hepworth: <https://www.sallyhepworthauthor.com/>
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