

Book Review: House of Glass  
By Sarah Pekkanen

Thanks to NetGalley and St. Martin's Press for this advance reader's copy, in exchange for an honest review.

An overused description of a book is that it's "a page-turner that's hard to put down." Sometimes that's accurate, sometimes not. But Sarah Pekkanen's soon-to-be-released (August 6, 2024) mystery thriller "House of Glass" is the real deal. It pulled me in and never let me go.

Nine-year-old Rose Barclay is a brilliant child who is experiencing traumatic mutism. She hasn't uttered a word since witnessing the death of her 26-year-old nanny, Tina, who fell and/or was pushed through a third-floor window at the Barclay home. Rose's parents, Beth and Ian, have since filed for divorce – not surprising given that Ian was having an affair with Tina and the young nanny was pregnant. The tension in the house is palpable.

Both Ian and Beth have filed for custody of Rose, and attorney Stella Hudson has been brought in to mediate and make a custody recommendation in Rose's best interests. The situation hits close to home for Stella, who as a child found her mother dead of a drug overdose in their apartment, and briefly developed traumatic mutism as a result. To this day, Stella doesn't know all the details surrounding her mother's death, but that will soon change.

Rose's emotional condition and lack of verbal communication make Stella's job challenging, not to mention the negative vibes she gets from both Ian and Beth (as well as Harriet, Ian's mother who lives in the Barclay home) who clearly resent her very

presence. Everyone seems to have an agenda, including Rose, who has taken to absconding with and hiding sharp objects (shards of glass, a knife, a box cutter) in her room. The dark presence in the home shakes Stella to her core every time she visits.

The police have not charged anyone with the nanny's murder, though the case remains open. All four members of the Barclay family have an apparent alibi, yet Pekkanen's writing is so superb it's clear that each also has motive and means. And just when you think you've got the murderer pegged, you'll change your mind. Everyone is a suspect. You'll even find yourself wondering about Stella's long-time friend and mentor Charles.

The writing, storyline and flow are excellent. Little by little, in very natural fashion, Pekkanen peels back the layers to reveal Stella's past as she struggles to maintain her focus on doing what's best for Rose.

Without giving away anything, the story wraps beautifully, with all questions answered and loose ends tied up without the murderer's long-winded explanation of why he or she did what they did. The ending is perfectly symmetrical, and everything comes out in the natural flow of the story, which is what makes "House of Glass" such a captivating and enjoyable read.

I highly recommend this book, and give it a full 5 out of 5 stars. You will not be disappointed.