



Secret Smile

By Nicci French

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Miranda's sister, Kerri, has a new boyfriend, a handsome charmer who seems to dote on Kerri. But Brendan isn't the man he says he is. Miranda should know - she broke off her own affair with him just a few weeks ago when she found him reading her diary. Rarely do the phrases "page-turning thriller" and "will keep you up all night" truly apply as well as they do to this unpredictable, intelligent, and vastly entertaining tale of one woman's strength and one man's madness.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Nobody does the dark underside of sex in the city better than the British couple who write as Nicci French, and their latest (after 2003's *Land of the Living*) is one of their most sustained and believable studies in terror against women. Miranda Cotton has an ideal life in London, doing work she loves (building and contracting; she always seems to have a spot of paint in her hair), with no current love interest but lots of dating opportunities. Then a short, nasty liaison with a man who calls himself Brendan Block rips her comfortable world apart. A charming and dangerous psychopath, Block worms his way into the Cotton family claiming that he dumped Miranda (when in fact it was she who tossed him out when she caught him reading her diaries); he immediately wins the trust of her flustered parents and does serious damage to her older sister, Kerry, and her mentally fragile younger brother, Troy. The trouble is that nobody believes the rather rough-edged Miranda when she tries desperately to stop Block's rampage. Studded with sharp insights into the strange compromises involved in modern relationships, this novel could be the horror version of *Bridget Jones's Diary*. And the authors are so subtle at bringing Brendan and Miranda to life that readers might even begin to doubt that what she's telling us is the whole truth—until a stunning climax in which all sorts of secrets and lies are revealed.

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From [Booklist](#)

Although French's thrillers are all stand-alones, they all have one element in common: delicious, constantly building suspense. Like *Land of the Living* [BKL Mr 15 03], this one focuses on a London-dwelling protagonist who must prove a point to disbelieving family, friends, and police. Miranda is dating a charmer named Brendan until she discovers him reading her diary and kicks him out. Dumped by Miranda, Brendan woos and wins her sister, Kerry. Gradually Miranda realizes he's more than just sleazy—he's sick. But her family and friends only see the charming face he shows them and believe that Miranda is the one who was dumped and won't let go. When a member of her family dies, Miranda feels that Brendan must be involved. But can she prove it before he kills her? In typical French fashion, the surprise ending will leave readers shaking their heads and grinning. Another not-to-be-missed adventure from a consistently satisfying author.

Jenny McLarin

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Review

Nicci French "know[s] exactly what thrills and terrifies."

-- *The New York Times Book Review* (*New York Times*)

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Christopher Helland:

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Louis Ono:

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