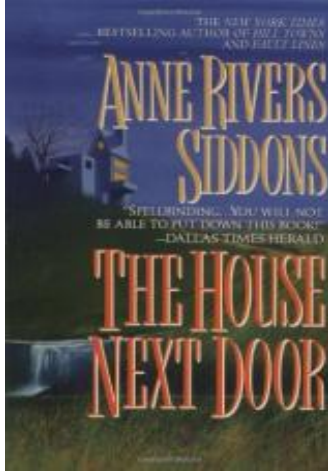


# The House Next Door

by Anne Rivers Siddons

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## About the Book

Walter and Colquitt Kennedy love their neighborhood, with its genteel parties, friendly neighbors and the great view out their windows. But then the Harralsons buy the beautiful empty lot next door and hire the young, incredibly talented Kim Dougherty to build their dream house. At first the Kennedy's bemoan the loss of their lovely view, but soon strike up a friendship with their new neighbors and an even closer relationship with Kim. And then the mysterious mishaps begin. They start small, missing pets, strangely butchered wildlife, but soon the tragedies escalate. At the Harralson's first housewarming party, the new house receives full town approval and glowing reviews, but Kim detects something wrong, "there's something in this house I didn't put here. I can feel it, I can hear it talking to me, but I can't understand what it's saying." At first, Colquitt's mind balks at the idea of a "haunted house," but she cannot ignore the growing number of tragedies associated with it. It is as if the house preys on its inhabitants' weaknesses and slowly destroys the goodness in them, ultimately driving them to disgrace, madness, and even death. As the house's influence grows and begins to extend to its closest neighbors, Colquitt and Walter find themselves caught up in a desperate struggle to keep their sanity and marriage intact. Desperate to find some means of warning each successive family that moves in before it's too late, the Kennedys risk losing their friendships, their happiness, perhaps even their very existence, to the mysterious force that is tearing their neighborhood apart.

## Discussion Guide

1. How does the house drive the Kennedys toward madness? What is it that enables them to resist for so long? In the end, do they defeat the house, or does it defeat them?
2. Why is it so hard for the Kennedy's to warn the town and even their closest friends? How do their attempts backfire? When Claire is finally convinced of the house's danger, why won't she help Colquitt?

## Author Bio

THE GIRLS OF AUGUST is Anne Rivers Siddons's 19th novel. Her previous bestselling novels include BURNT MOUNTAIN, OFF SEASON, SWEETWATER CREEK, ISLANDS, NORA NORA, LOW COUNTRY, UP ISLAND, FAULT LINES, DOWNTOWN, HILL TOWNS, COLONY, OUTER BANKS, KING'S OAK, PEACHTREE ROAD, HOMEPLACE, FOX'S EARTH, THE HOUSE NEXT DOOR and HEARTBREAK HOTEL. She is also the author of a work of nonfiction, JOHN CHANCELLOR MAKES ME CRY. She and her husband, Heyward, split their time between their home in Charleston, SC and Brooklin, ME.

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