



Walls of Silence

Ruth Wade

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The patient has a story that isn't told and which no one knows of. It is the secret, the rock against which he is shattered. Carl Jung

The Great War is over but for Edith Potter an equally devastating conflict is about to begin.

She is unhinged by a secret so terrible her conscious mind doesn't acknowledge it.

It is 1927 and Dr Stephen Maynard is using the new science of psychoanalysis to restore her sanity.

From his first meeting with her in the lunatic asylum, Dr Stephen Maynard is determined to bring her back to reality. During the long challenge, her disturbed behaviour forces him to confront his limitations – already severely stretched by the presence of someone prepared to use whatever weapons they can to ensure she maintains her silence.

Walls of Silence Details

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Author : Ruth Wade

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From Reader Review Walls of Silence for online ebook

Scarlett Readz and Runz....Through Novel Time & Distance says

3.5 stars

This book starts off with that gripping hook that gives you all the disturbing feels, but you can't stop reading on.

It is post wartime 1927 England, and the surroundings in this novel envelop that time period almost a century ago perfectly. Small town, neighborly feel...you have the market, your grocery store, the butcher, the baker, your local doctor and your church. Small town talk, small town whispers...everyone knows. But do they?

Edith Potter lives alone. Her father, a prominent Doctor in the field of psychology had been murdered and her mother passed away at child birth. Her grandmother aided more or less in her upbringing, but that was far from being a loved child. Now, a spinster of it's time, in her forties, she isn't feeling as she thinks she should and has nightmares. Is it grief? Her doctor thinks she is just experiencing some loneliness and gives her suggestions to cope. Edith's favorite thing to do is tending to her roses. They are her joy and pride. She also is very verse in her father's field of work and poetry. Amidst these, coping with some things from her past, she falls into a deep and dark depression.

We find Edith later in an asylum for the insane. Among filthy inhumane conditions, she is in a catatonic state and amongst the worst cases to be studied. Dr. Maynard is a budding Doctor with his own theses on the subject and has a chance to try some of his hypnotherapy on Edith, aside from the medications and electroshock therapy that the other doctors are using on the patients. When he recognizes that Edith is the daughter of the renown Dr. Potter, he takes a special interest in her. One that could further his career, but also one of personal liking to the patient. Can he save her? Are his methods on the brink of a breakthrough or will his own vulnerabilities get in the way?

I enjoyed this intricate look into the methods of that time and Edith's mind. The experience of reading her states go from docile, to angry or sly kept me wondering and guessing. I was sometimes really not sure if she was playing them all? Was she a step ahead? Was she faking anything or was this really her disturbed mind that made her be different from day to day or minute to minute. You want to read it to the end to get your answers, and even then, I am left speechless.

The writing to me was at times a little too long, but so is Edith's arduous battle. It leaves you exhausted at moments. And although I recommend this book to others, just know you are going into some disturbing territory. If you are up for it, then this is the book for you.

I received a digital copy of 'Walls of Silence' from NetGalley in exchange of an honest review. All opinions are my own. Thank you!

Donna Maguire says

<https://donnasbookblog.wordpress.com/...>

I love this author's books and this is a fantastic release!!

I loved this book, the story was brilliant and I was gripped! To be honest, as soon as I read the blurb I knew I wanted to read this book and the cover is perfect for the story.

Stephen and Edith are great characters and work so well with the plot. The pace for the story, descriptive nature and setting in the late 1920s is great - I love historical fiction so books set in this era are normally a winner with me and this one is superb!!

No hesitation in giving this one 5 stars - such a great story - brilliant!!

Linda Strong says

Edith Potter has a story to tell. She suffers from a mental illness and is housed in an insane asylum. Dr. Stephen Maynard is determined to help heal her.

Whatever her story is, its been a secret for years. There is someone who will do anything at all to prevent that secret to see the light of day.

Her story involves the murder of her father .. a doctor who had been looking into shell shock. His killer was never found.

I found the story to be complex. At times I felt I was in a rudderless boat being tossed about on stormy seas with no direction to lead me to safety. I can only imagine how it must have been to be locked into Edith's mind.

The story felt a bit disjointed, but the more I read, the more I could see what was before my eyes. I kept thinking it might have been better to leave her wherever her mind was. Some secrets should never, ever see the light of day.

It's a dark subject at a time in history where one could be committed to an asylum for any reason..or no reason ... a time where inmates almost always stayed until they died.

The book is well-written, with the author taking the reader this way and that way and a huge twist that could take your very breath away.

Many thanks to the author / Bloodhound Books for the advanced digital copy of this historical fiction. Opinions expressed here are unbiased and entirely my own.

Alexina Golding says

Ruth Wade has given us a mystery steeped in intrigue.

I had no clue as to why Edith was as troubled as she was, but I was definitely flicking the pages to find out. Walls of Silence has a beautiful and heart rendering prose to it. Having the story told with Stephen's experiences with Edith made for a fantastic take on the why, and I was unsure whether to trust him totally. The description of the era set and how many people were hidden away in asylums, homes, or institution's due to their circumstances of their injuries held my interest and brought to life the hardship of those times. I felt I had been taken back in time – where it wasn't as innocent as portrayed.

A wonderful story of a woman's struggle with life told in the most exquisite way. You might not like her, but you will want to know her.

I highly recommend if you like historical fiction, a conundrum of a character or want to delve a toe in to a new genre.

Thanks to Bloodhound Books, Netgalley for a review copy, all thoughts on the reivev are my own.

Katie says

Walls of Silence is an incredible look at the history of mental health and at times is very unsettling. I don't know much about the history of psychology or mental health so I did go into this blind however I enjoyed learning about it all.

I struggled with the first part of the book as it seemed very disjointed. However the further we dive into the book and into Edith as a person it all seemed to click and I flew through the rest of the book.

I'm a huge fan of books and films set in asylums – American Horror Story: Asylum season is my absolute favourite of the seasons they have made so I was looking forward to diving in to the book.

Edith had my opinions on her change every minute it felt like, at times I loved her, other times I thought she was absolutely vile. This added to the feeling of unease I felt throughout the book – I felt fearful of where the book was going.

I loved Ruth's writing, she really knows how to make the reader feel uneasy and uncertain. There were times I was looking over my shoulder whilst reading. At times I couldn't believe the things I was reading when looking at the history of psychiatry and it made me sad and angry that those things were common place in those times. I really admired the research Ruth must have done for this book, it was amazing.

I don't want to say too much about the book as I found the best part for me was discovering the journey we went on with Edith – it's one of those books that I think will stick with me for a while. It's one that I think you'll either love or hate – if you're into historical books or about psychiatry then I urge you to read it. It's unnerving, it's shocking and at times it's disturbing.

Alina says

Walls of Silence caught me by a surprise. From the first page to the last I had a completely different ending in my mind.

In the first pages of the book, we are introduced to Edward and Edith. Edith is a very peculiar individual. She lost her mother in a fire when she was only three years old. Her father, a well known physician, did medical experiences on her when she was at a very young age. Edith managed to hide the memories of those awful days on the back of her mind for most of the adulthood. However, two years after her father's death, Edith reunites with Edward. Since his return, a chain of events continues to happen, and as a result, Edith is being admitted into an asylum.

Dr. Stephen Maynard learns about Edith's case and is tempted to use the hypnotherapy to cure her. However, Dr. Maynard has no idea what he is about to reveal. And his patient is much smarter than he assumes. Stephen, like any other adult, has a few secrets on his own that he likes to keep private, but Edith is using the reverse tactic on him.

It's an interesting story, however I was not a big fan of the love triangle. It had nothing to do with the main story. It made a novel much longer. The novel had an unforeseen twist at the end that I really liked.

Camille says

I've always found the topic of psychiatry and the history of psychiatric hospitals (or lunatic asylums as they were called back in the day) fascinating. So I pounced on Walls of Silence.

It is for sure quite original, but a few things bothered me.

1) I didn't like any of the characters, apart from maybe Helen, who isn't as bad as the others. They are all very humanely flawed, so kudos to Ruth Wade for creating such realistic, human characters. But neither Edith, Edward, Peter nor Stephen had anything that made them likeable to me. I guess PC Billings was quite a nice guy. I find it quite difficult to care about characters I don't like.

2) I get that the whole novel deals with psychiatry but the medical debates between Peter and Stephen were quite difficult to follow for someone who hasn't much knowledge of it and just bogged the story down. Entire chapters were merely made of conversations between the two men on psychoanalysis or Stephen's personality. Some of the scenes where Stephen works in Edith also go on and on and make for slow reading.

3) The twist at the end was quite good, actually. I personally never saw it coming. But everything is still unclear as we aren't told enough about what happened. And it's a bit of a WTF moment, if you'll excuse my French (side note - I'm French, I get to use this saying :-D).

Now, on to the good things.

1) Ruth Wade did an amazing job at recreating the time period (1927). As you read, you're just there with the characters, part of the everyday life of the time, without even realising there is world building going on. From a historical fiction point of view, it's a 10 out of 10.

2) I loved the shell-shocked veterans of WW1, having them as characters was so beautifully done. Actually, I wish they had a more prominent role in Walls of Silence as it is a fascinating subject. So, if Ruth Wade ever reads this, please write a novel about it, I'll be the first in line to buy it!

Disclaimer: I received a free digital copy courtesy of Bloodhound Books and NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

Karen Kay says

I received this from netgalley.com in exchange for a review.

Set in the backdrop of The Great War, Edith Potter has an equally devastating conflict that is about to begin. She is unhinged by a secret so terrible her conscious mind doesn't acknowledge it and she devolves into a catatonic state. Floating up and down on the waves of her disturbed mind, it takes until the end of the book to discover Edith's devastating secret.

This is an interesting study of a disturbed and fractured mind. I did get a little lost in the complexity of the story while trying to figure out what happened to Edith and understand her reactions.

3.5?

Susan Hampson says

I must say that I was rather intrigued when I read briefly what this book was about, as I do have to admit to having a little bit of a morbid fascination with lunatic asylums of years gone by. What I have been left with, after reading this book, is the equivalent of that feeling when you go over that hump back bridge in a car. A sheer wave of all the wows that are grouped together in one total pleasurable moment. This book just took me off my feet.

Set in the 1920's the story is centred round Edith, not a person that suffers fools, has little patience for anyone and comes across as darn right unlikable. Now this is a long book and at this point I was thinking, Do I really want to read so many pages about such an arrogant character? and YES, YES, YES, I did. A chain of events occur that are so unthinkable to deal for Edith that she literally closes her mind down and the only foreseeable future for her is the asylum.

Now I was intrigued and so was a man who at first saw Edith as a quick way to make a name for himself in the new approaches and techniques that had developed. Dr. Stephen Maynard got far more than he bargained for as he edged into her mind and tried to coax her back to reality.

This is no way a quick paced read, there are no racy bits but the impact of it all is so very powerful. It feels very much like two steps forward and one step back with Edith to the point of me asking myself what had happened to her that was so terrible? Surely it couldn't be so horrific?

Ruth Wade's characters have left a very impressionable impact on me, where I am still getting a wave unbelievable emotions. And Edith? She is now character that has woven a permanent place in my mind.

Taylor Holt says

3.5 stars.

WALLS OF SILENCE is a novel that delves into the early study of psychology and the people that were directly affected. This was a tough book for me in terms of both content and writing style, but I'm very glad that I got the opportunity to read it. I was fascinated to learn about the treatment, or lack thereof, of soldiers horrifically injured in WW1, and I thought Wade did a masterful job of highlighting what these men dealt with after surviving the battlefields.

Similarly, Wade's protagonist Edith Potter is a woman who has had a very difficult life. Just how difficult is unfurled throughout the book, and is more devastating than I had initially imagined. This book is quite slow-moving, but I was kept engaged throughout, needing to know what horrors were in Edith's past.

I received this novel through NetGalley, from Bloodhound Books, in exchange for an honest review.

taylorhavenholt.com/thhbooks.html

Sara says

I struggled to like Edith, and Edward creeped me out from the beginning, but I wanted to know what Edith had hidden in her memory, so I flew through the book. The twist was surprising, and I liked the ending.

Beadyjan says

Oh My Goodness!

This book packs a powerful punch that smacked me in the gut, there's a real shocker of a twist that I really didn't anticipate until just a chapter or two before it is to be revealed I began to have a nauseous sense that there was something coming that I hadn't been expecting then wham!

But I digress, it's hardly surprising that my thoughts are a little muddled having just spent several days locked in the mind of a woman incarcerated in a lunatic asylum.

This woman is Edith Potter, daughter of the renowned Dr Potter leader in the field of examining the psychological impact of shell shock following the first world war.

Spinster Edith lives alone, since her father was murdered by an unknown intruder, no wonder she is jumpy and nervous living in the very house where he was killed.

It's clear from the onset that Edith's mind is a little disturbed, she has secrets and has built a wall to keep them away, but this is to become her undoing and one day she flips completely and ends up an inmate in a cruel and uncaring mental asylum where she is catatonic and unresponsive.

In comes Dr Stephen Maynard, young and ambitious he hears of Edith and her plight and decides she will be the perfect subject for him to test his theories using the new-fangled psychoanalysis to try and help her. But is he about to unleash more than he can cope with? As he starts to break down the walls that surround Edith and she begins to respond we realize that she is harbouring a few terrible secrets which she needs to keep buried at all costs.

There is quite a lot of detail about psychoanalysis as we delve inside the mind of this deeply disturbed yet very intelligent woman and at several points throughout the book I really thought it was me that was going insane, so deeply does the author make us feel the despair and confusion of a deeply damaged psyche.

The story is rather disjointed but this all adds to the feel of unease, uncertainty and a terrible sense of madness. When I discovered the final secret she is keeping hidden, it both shocked and saddened me. This is a thoroughly great historical look at mental health issues and a twisty psychological thriller combined. It is dark and scary and despite the despair I loved it. Highly recommended.

ebookowl says

Having read and thoroughly enjoyed the May Keaps novels published under Ruth Wade's pseudonym BK Duncan, I was intrigued by *Walls of Silence*, another historical mystery released under her own name.

The Great War is over but for Edith Potter a different kind of conflict is about to begin. When we first meet her, Edith's going about her daily life in a small village in Sussex, England. A spinster living on her own following her father's death, Edith's mental stability slowly begins to unravel. Her GP diagnoses loneliness; Edith's father was an eminent psychologist, a pioneer in the field of shell-shock, who was attacked and murdered by an unknown assailant while Edith was out running errands.

A series of unfortunate events and displays of bizarre behaviour culminating in Edith attacking her neighbour's geese with an axe eventually leads her to being institutionalised. It is while incarcerated at Lewes County Lunatic Asylum that she meets Dr. Stephen Maynard. Whereas Dr. Johns, charged with running the asylum, believes none of the inmates will ever be well enough to be released back into society, Dr. Maynard is of the opinion that he can help Edith's fractured mind, albeit it initially with an ulterior motive. Having followed her father's career through psychological journals, Dr. Maynard can't believe his luck when he's given the opportunity to include Edith in his own research.

Responding well to shock-therapy and medication, and fearing remaining in a lunatic asylum will do Edith more harm than good, Dr. Maynard arranges for her to be transferred to Beddingham Hall, a facility funded by the Ministry of Defence, run by his long-term friend Peter and Peter's wife, Helen, to house severely disfigured WW1 veterans. It's while Edith's at Beddingham Hall that she makes the most progress, Dr. Maynard travelling from his practice in London to gently probe her psyche. But what secret lurking beneath the surface could be so terrible that Edith's own mind won't allow her to recall it?

At various points in the novel we're introduced to a character called Edward. Initially I thought he was a figment of Edith's fractured mind; a companion invented to help ward off her crippling loneliness. The truth was far more terrible than I could've possibly imagined and when all was revealed, I was left speechless. Bravo to the author for the plot twist I didn't see coming.

As with Ruth Wade's May Keaps novels, *Walls of Silence* has been meticulously researched, not only to give an authentic portrayal of mental illness and the available treatment, if you can call it that, of the late 1920s, but also in the vivid description of Beddingham Hall and the poor, unfortunate young men who came to inhabit it. While Beddingham Hall is entirely fictional (I think), homes such as this one were indeed needed and I found both subjects, while terribly sad, incredibly fascinating.

So why only 3 stars? Firstly, I found Edith's character difficult to warm to. At times vulnerable, at times

callous, manipulative and vindictive, I wavered between feeling empathy towards her and wanting to lock her up and throw away the key. Although when you discover why Edith's mental stability declined, it's hard not to feel sorry for her. Secondly, for me the story lost momentum towards the middle of the book, with a few scenes being a little too drawn out for my liking. Finally, I much preferred the May Keaps novels I mentioned earlier, written under the author's pen name, which contain more of an investigation-type mystery, a plucky heroine and a number of recurring characters that you can become more invested in as the series progresses.

That said, *Walls of Silence* is still an enjoyable novel; it's a slow-burner that builds in intrigue, keeping you turning the pages to discover Edith's secret, with more than a couple of surprises along the way before the revelation at the end.

I'll definitely be keeping an eye out for more of Ruth Wade's novels but for me, having read some of her previous titles, this one wasn't quite as good as I'd hoped.

Note: *Many thanks to the author, Bloodhound Books and Netgalley for giving me the opportunity to read this title in exchange for an honest review.*

Jane says

I struggled a bit with this one. I could never work out where the author was going--which should be a good thing, since there's a big twist near the end, but somehow it wasn't. Perhaps the author was trying *too* hard to conceal the twist?

I think the main problem for me was lack of discernible structure. We start off in a small village--and then suddenly we're in a lunatic asylum--and just as suddenly in another institution with a side of WWI vets with horrific facial injuries (why? this added nothing to the plot)--and then in Edith's mind we're bouncing all over the place, including going back to some early locations we hadn't visited before. It made the whole story seem very fragmented.

And then there was the central relationship between Edith and Stephen Maynard. That got pulled out of kilter by the focus so frequently switching to other relationships between various characters, so that its centrality was watered down and failed to become as fascinating as it should have been.

Also, I didn't like Edith, or Stephen, or his horrible "friend" Peter--and I wasn't all that keen on the sainted Helen even after hearing again and again how hot and amazing she was. And why was Stephen so extraordinarily sensitive? Talk about the cliché of all psychiatrists being nuts.

My overall impression was that the author was just trying to pack too much research into one novel, instead of focusing more on developing characters you could (either or both) love and hate. We ended up with characters I felt distinctly unenthusiastic about without ever getting to the point of hating them, and when I feel lukewarm about the characters I tend to end up feeling lukewarm about the entire novel. A pity, because there was some really good stuff in there and the writing was solid.

Sarah says

I've always had a bit of a fascination when it comes to asylum's so reading the blurb for this book definitely piqued my interest.

The story is set into different parts. We first meet Edith when she is going about her every day life. She is a spinster and lives on her own. As with most small villages, everyone knows everyones business and Edith tries to keep herself to herself.

Stephen becomes fixated with Edith. He is determined to break and fix her. She isn't like most of his patients and he knows as well as us that there is something dark and disturbing that is buried deep in her mind and I was as desperate as him to know just what that was.

Edith is a hard person to take to. What ever has happened to her she wants to forget about it. She also doesn't want anyone else's help. She has built a wall around her and so I did find it hard to empathise with her at times.

Walls Of Silence is one of those slow burners that with a build up of intrigue, keeps you turning those pages. It certainly held some surprises in store of which I totally did not see coming. The perfect read for lovers of a solid historical mystery.
