



The Sitter

By R.L. Stine

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Master of chilling suspense R. L. Stine proves that you never outgrow a good scare. If he frightened you then, he'll terrify you now. . . .

Ellie Saks is dying to escape the city. She's sick of dead-end jobs, her mother's disapproval, her loser ex-boyfriend, Clay, who won't take a hint, and the memories of a terrible incident that occurred years ago. When her best friend suggests a summer in the Hamptons, full of glitzy parties, cool cocktails, and hot dates, Ellie's on the first Jitney out. To fund all this glamour, Ellie takes a job as a nanny.

From the outside, the family's beachfront home is perfect. But then Ellie meets four-year-old Brandon, who hasn't spoken for months. The boy's icy stare and demonic laughter make clear to Ellie that he is troubled, haunted by something too horrible for words.

She begins to receive threatening messages and disturbing gifts. But it's not until she barely escapes a harrowing experience that she realizes her life may depend on figuring out who's behind it: Clay? Brandon? And why? And every once in a while, in a crowd, she sees a face she hasn't seen in seven years—the face of a boy who died long ago. It would seem that Ellie's summer of fun has turned into a summer of horror—one she'll never forget . . . if she survives it at all.

From the Trade Paperback edition.

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Editorial Review

From the Inside Flap

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About the Author

R. L. Stine began his writing career when he was nine years old, and today he has achieved the position of the bestselling children's author in history. In the early 1990s, Stine was catapulted to fame when he wrote the unprecedented bestselling *Goosebumps*® series, which sold more than 250 million copies and became a worldwide media phenomenon.

R.L. Stine has received numerous awards of recognition. He lives in New York, NY.

From the Hardcover edition.

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1

Two Months Earlier, New York City

What are you drinking?" I shouted.

My friend Teresa stared back at me. We had moved to the bar in the corner of the club, but it wasn't much quieter over here.

"What are you drinking?"

She squinted at me. “Huh?”

“What . . . are . . . you . . . drinking?” I screamed over the music.

“Oh.” Teresa held up her glass. The ice cubes jangled in a dark liquid, darker and thicker than Coke. “It’s Red Bull and Jägermeister. Here. Try it, El.”

She shoved the glass into my hand. I took a sip, swallowed, and felt my face shrivel up. “It’s disgusting. That’s the worst thing I ever tasted.”

She smiled. “I know.” She took back the glass and raised it, toasting me.

The place was called Beach Club, even though it was nowhere near a beach. We were on Second Avenue on the East Side of Manhattan. It was our favorite club, our subterranean hideaway where we escaped nearly every weekend.

My name is Ellie Saks, and I’m twenty-four years old. Why do I need a subterranean hideaway? Don’t ask.

A long metal stairway, dark and kind of creaky, like a subway entrance, led down to the club. And when we got to the bottom, our heels clicking on the rickety metal steps, we found ourselves in this amazing place, all silver and chrome and lights and mirrors.

Rows of silver tables and booths stretched along both walls, with the dance floor between them. Couples jammed the wide dance floor. Red and white lights pulsed in time to the throbbing dance music.

An enormous ceiling mirror reflected the dancers and the lights. Following Teresa to the curving chrome bar in the back, I had stared up at the upside-down dancers and thought it might be fun to be up there with them, graceful and oblivious, safe from the chaos below.

The bar was full, but two tall, long-haired girls in embroidered red halter tops and short shorts stood up just as we arrived, and we grabbed their high-backed stools. I ordered my usual glass of chardonnay. Then I made the mistake of tasting Teresa’s drink.

I kept swallowing, trying to get rid of the taste. “It tastes like . . . bubble gum and Robitussin.”

Teresa tilted the glass to her mouth and took a long drink. “Hey, you got it. Cough medicine. Yeah.” She laughed.

She has a high, hoarse laugh, sort of like a little boy’s. She doesn’t look like a little boy, though. She’s tall and a little plump, with sexy big green eyes, and piles of long, coppery curls streaked with blond, hair that she’s always playing with, tossing from side to side.

“Everyone’s drinking it. Know who introduced me to it? Ellie, remember Paulo? The guy in the mail room?”

I set my glass of chardonnay down on the bar. “You went out with Paulo?”

Teresa nodded, grinning.

“Does he speak English?” I asked.

“I’m not sure. The bar he took me to was as noisy as this one. I couldn’t really hear a word he said. Then we went back to his place. On Avenue A, I think. But he didn’t talk much.”

I shook my head. “Teresa, why did you go out with him?”

She coiled and uncoiled a thick lock of hair. “I wanted to see the rest of his tattoos.”

We both laughed.

I turned the stem of the wineglass between my fingers. “And? Go on. Tell. Did you see them?”

She nodded. “Yes. But it didn’t work out. When I read one that he had down there—you know, down there—I had to leave.”

“Excuse me? What did it say?”

“M-O-M.”

I shouldn’t have taken a drink. White wine went spewing out my nose. I was sputtering and choking and laughing, all at the same time.

The guy next to me turned around. “Are you okay?”

My eyes had teared up, but I could still see that this guy was drop-dead gorgeous. Sort of a young Brad Pitt, with a curl of streaky brown hair falling casually over his forehead and a stubble of beard over his boyish cheeks.

“I’ll probably survive,” I said, wiping my nose with my hand. I reached for a cocktail napkin on the bar and knocked the wineglass over.

But he caught it before it spilled.

“Wow. Good hands,” I said.

His blue eyes flashed. “I’d better have. I’m going to be a surgeon in another two years.” He slid the wineglass back to me.

Okay.

Teresa and I had been hanging out at this club for months. And yet, somehow this was the first time a movie-star surgeon-to-be had said hello to me. Maybe things were looking up.

He leaned closer, bringing his face close to mine, so close I got a strong whiff of his Gio cologne. He breathed into my ear, “Maybe I could operate on you tonight.”

I knew Teresa was watching this whole exchange intently. I could feel her breath on the back of my neck.

I slid away from the Love Doctor. “Could I offer you some advice?”

His eyes narrowed. “Advice? You mean, don’t ever say that line again?”

I nodded.

We both laughed. He clinked his Heineken bottle against my wineglass. “One-to-nothing, you,” he said. He didn’t take his blue eyes from mine. He didn’t even blink. “You’re kinda pretty.”

I smiled. “So are you.”

He didn’t react to that at all. I guess he hears it a lot.

“You’ll have to cut me some slack tonight,” he said. “I spent the whole day with cadavers.”

I took a sip of chardonnay. “Is that your second-best pickup line?”

I know. I should have been nicer to him. I could feel Teresa’s disapproval, feel her eyes burning through the back of my blouse. She’d been trying her best to find me a new boyfriend, and here I was, letting her down.

I took a sip of wine and decided to show some interest. “Which med school do you go to?” I asked.

He emptied his beer bottle, set it down, and then grinned at me. Perfect teeth, of course. “I’m taking a home-study course.”

I laughed. “You’re getting funnier.”

“Actually, NYU,” he said. He signaled the bartender for another Heineken and ordered another glass of wine for me. He stuck out his hand for me to shake. “I’m Bernie.”

Bernie? With that face? How can he be a Bernie?

“Ellie,” I said. His hand was cold from the beer bottle.

I took a long sip of wine. Someone bumped me from behind. I heard Teresa groan. A hand grabbed my shoulder. “Ellie, hey. Here you are.”

I let go of Bernie’s hand and spun around. And stared into a familiar face, its red cheeks glistening with sweat, eyes cloudy, furry eyebrows moving up and down rapidly, as if alive.

“Clay? What are you doing here?”

“Looking for you, naturally.”

“Whoa, listen—”

Teresa stuck her face between us. “I don’t think she wants to see you.”

Clay blinked several times, as if clearing his head. He frowned at Teresa. “Who are you?”

He swayed a little, still holding on to my shoulder.

Clay's friends call him Bear because—well, he looks like a bear. He's stocky and broad-chested, with muscular arms and legs, covered with dark brown hair. He has a round, boyish face, with red cheeks you want to pinch. Wiry brown hair on his head, cut short like fur, and round gray eyes under thick brown eyebrows.

I used to think of him as a cute teddy bear, but I don't now. After I told him I didn't want to go out with him anymore, Clay stopped being cute.

He started calling me night and day, following me, showing up at my apartment in the middle of the night, totally wasted and strung out, sending flowers and gifts, flooding me with e-mails, begging, pleading.

It took me a long while to realize he was stalking me. I mean, it's not exactly something that happens to you all the time.

And then when I finally figured it out, I didn't know how to deal with him. You see, I never meant for it to get serious.

Clay was one of the first guys I met when I moved to New York. He took me out to restaurants and to Knicks games at the Garden, jazz clubs in the Village. It was great to be living in New York City and have someone to be with on weekends.

He was an intense kind of guy. But I never stopped to realize how serious he was becoming. And then when I knew I had to get out of it, I tried to explain it all to him. I tried to be nice. I didn't want to hurt him.

I just wanted him to be gone.

And now he had his arms around me, and I tumbled off the bar stool. He was holding on to me, grinning, his eyes glassy, unfocused. "Just one dance, Ellie."

"Clay, you're totally wasted, aren't you," I said, struggling to loosen his hold.

"Maybe. I guess I'm a little fucked up. Hey, I have some little pills we could share."

"Excuse me?"

He pulled me with both hands. He was very strong. His shirt was open. I could see sweat glistening on his carpet of chest hair. "Maybe we could talk. You know. Just . . . talk."

"On the dance floor? Clay, I can't hear a thing."

We stumbled into other dancers. His face grew even redder under the pulsing lights, like a bomb about to explode.

The music repeated:

Y'all ready for this?

Y'all ready for this?

No, I'm not ready for this. I didn't want to dance with Clay. I didn't want him to pull me away, his eyes so crazy,...

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Natalie White:

This The Sitter book is not really ordinary book, you have after that it the world is in your hands. The benefit you will get by reading this book is information inside this guide incredible fresh, you will get info which is getting deeper an individual read a lot of information you will get. This kind of The Sitter without we realize teach the one who reading it become critical in considering and analyzing. Don't possibly be worry The Sitter can bring whenever you are and not make your tote space or bookshelves' become full because you can have it in your lovely laptop even telephone. This The Sitter having very good arrangement in word as well as layout, so you will not truly feel uninterested in reading.

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Jackie Frost:

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Betsy Haley:

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