

A Gate at the Stairs By Lorrie Moore **A gate at the stairs review** Strike 3: A pregnant teenage tosses a grown woman (who wants to adopt her unborn child) a wrapped pat of butter at a restaurant and jokes.

A gate at the stairs book

Her satirical Sylvia Plath acolyte persona though is presented as a magnet for life altering events. **A gate at the stairs book** Knowing how dippy our narrator is (ironically if she was really so dippy and inattentive she wouldn't have been able to write this narrative which showcases how attentive she is to everything happening around her) we know she will omit to tell her flatmate about the gunge. **A gate at the stairs book** Like our narrator.

A gate at the stairs by lorrie moore

Dressing up in a bird costume to run in front of her father's tractor to warn the mice; or her climbing into a coffin with the corpse and staying there while it is carried to the cemetery. **A gate at the stairs summary** When she turns down a date with the creepy husband of her employer at the end I think you're supposed to feel she has achieved maturity but my feeling was the pair deserved each other and would make a good match. **A gate at the stairs review** Moore can't decide if she wants it to be about the travails of 20-year-old Tassie who grapples with being a country girl thrown into the big city campus (alarm bells rang in my head at the pointedness of making her half-Jewish as well) or about the 40- something chef Sarah.

A gate at the stairs summary

I absolutely can not abide fiction that is meant to be realistic and then is written in a way that does not accurately reflect any kind of reality. **A gate at the stairs by lorrie moore** Her employers are the 40-ish Sarah Brink the liberal highly strung chef and owner of a high-end French restaurant and her mostly absent husband Edward who's got a wicked silvery hairdo and a roving eye. **A gate at the stairs book** Of course something significant happened in September 2011 but it's referred to obliquely and has ramifications in Tassie's younger brother going to war and in one other plot point I won't mention. **A gate at the stairs summary** Emmie's biracial background allows Moore to riff a lot on race especially in a series of meetings in which parents of non-Caucasian children get to vent their frustrations once a week. **A gate at the stairs pdf** Tassie's insights seem much more mature and worldly than that of a college-age woman who was raised on a farm - and if Moore intends the narrative to be from a woman looking back on her life (which would explain the maturity) it's not always successful. **A gate at the stairs summary** The story's vehicle is Tassie a 20-yr old college freshman who becomes a nanny for a wealthy over-educated white liberal couple who adopt an infant girl who is part African-American. **A gate at the stairs pdf** It is best when it takes us on the journey of an open adoption that too in a situation where the complication is not only the class and race issues of this particular adoption but the conflicts and emotional fractures of the adopting parents. **A gate at the stairs lorrie moore** The adoption story is in fact where the novel's heart lies and where it is not only sweet and funny but heartbreakingly sad; the latter so much so that I had to put the put book aside at times. **A gate at the stairs review** However all this gets buried in extraneous sub-plots: Tassie's infatuation with a classmate (wont give the spoiler here) her brother Robert's aimless stumbling into volunteering for duty in Afghanistan and her ambivalent relationships with her parents. **A gate at the stairs book** The worst sections are pages and pages where the politics of interracial adoption are debated by a group of parents whom Tassie listens to while babysitting -- a clumsy and transparent device for directly inserting polemic and social commentary into the novel without bothering to give them the clothing of character and plot. **A gate**

at the stairs by lorrie moore Finally like so many contemporary novels the male characters are the worst and receive no compassion - the confused brother the vain and selfish husband the hopeless boyfriend and so on. **A gate at the stairs summary** As the United States begins gearing up for war in the Middle East twenty-year-old Tassie Keltjin the Midwestern daughter of a gentleman hill farmer—his “Keltjin potatoes” are justifiably famous—has come to a university town as a college student her brain on fire with Chaucer Sylvia Plath Simone de Beauvoir. **A gate at the stairs lorrie moore** The family she works for seems both mysterious and glamorous to her and although Tassie had once found children boring she comes to care for and to protect their newly adopted little girl as her own. **A gate at the stairs by lorrie moore** As the year unfolds and she is drawn deeper into each of these lives her own life back home becomes ever more alien to her: her parents are frailer; her brother aimless and lost in high school contemplates joining the military. **A gate at the stairs review** Each of these three events which I can't give away without spoiling what little plot there is possess a one in a five million chance of happening in the life of an individual; that all three happen to our narrator seemed little short of science fiction. **A gate at the stairs pdf** Like the reader Tassie half-listens to the bits of arguments that float up the stairs into the children's room where she is babysitting the kid of these parents occasionally scandalized and horrified by some of the more interesting nuggets randomly conjured up. **A gate at the stairs review** Throw in Tassie's heady and unsteady relationship with a would-be-Brazilian classmate with a tell-tale prayer mat in his room and we have an over-deliberate attempt to draw a parallel between Sarah and her baby Mary Emma (or Emmie from her initials) on the one hand and Tassie and Reynaldo on the other and to exoticize the story. **A gate at the stairs lorrie moore** Occasionally funny and with truly tragic bits that tug at the heartstrings (Sarah and her husband Edward's backstory about a bad parenting decision gone wrong still haunts me) the novel however is smaller than the sum of its parts. **A gate at the stairs lorrie moore** Tassie goes through her experiences more as an observer than a participant and one can't help feeling that she is a little disengaged even when she tries to explain her bond to the little Emmie and her employers. **A gate at the stairs book** This musical aspect of her character seems to be more a stereotype rather than a defining character trait and the clumsy references to it fails to give Tassie the person any more shape. **A gate at the stairs book** Coming from an author who has churned out genre-defining short story collections like *Self-Help* and the brilliant *Birds of America* I can't help but feel a little shortchanged by this novel. **A gate at the stairs lorrie moore** There was a moment on Sunday when the urge to throw it across the room and be done with it forever was so strong I had to clench my hands around the spine to keep myself from doing it. **A gate at the stairs book** In the meantime you can read the entire review at Smorgasbook 0375409289 *A Gate at the Stairs* is The new York Times' One Of The Best Books Of The Year winners as well as various other literary awards and nominations. **A gate at the stairs book** I'd liken Lorrie Moore to a cross between Zoë Heller and Lionel Shriver; this novel is insightful comic thought-provoking and tragic; beautifully rendered with some gorgeous turn of phrase. **A gate at the stairs summary** There's some real tragedy here including Tassie's brother's very short deployment to Afghanistan and Mary-Emma's adoption but also some beautifully warm moments; Tassie's relationship with her father and with Mary-Emma. **A gate at the stairs lorrie moore** I like the review of O The Oprah Magazine which says A miracle of lyric force beautiful and beautifully constructed with a comic touch that transforms itself to a kind of harrowing precision. **A gate at the stairs book** My response is that she IS too clever by half and -- so what? The narrator has the voice of a 50-ish academic professor because that is who is speaking ; she makes references to later I would find out or another boyfriend would later tell me. **A gate at the stairs review** Trust me it's perfectly plausible to be directly affected by war overseas become infatuated with swarthy secretive lovers who are wholly inappropriate for you nanny for white-liberal zealots with questionable backgrounds and/or ethics -- all during one's sophomore year! -- and view it all with a preternaturally wise wry eye. **A gate at the stairs book** In addition her passages on the weather and the natural world are astoundingly poetic her take on the harm done by passive complicity to gendered authority the bizarreness of government and law over-ruling love and nature and family and motherhood are all pretty eloquent.

After reading a slew of terrible pop fiction I have decided to institute a 50 pages or 3 strikes rule before I quit a novel: **A gate at the stairs pdf** Usually there are warning signs very early on that inspire me to toss the book aside but I ignore them and soldier on. **A gate at the stairs book** Strike 1: The main character's roommate passes her old vibrator on to her when she starts dating: **A gate at the stairs by lorrie moore** Instead she leaves it sitting on the counter where she occasionally uses it to STIR HER CHOCOLATE MILK, **A gate at the stairs book** An example I can give of the clumsy artistry of this novel is when the narrator's employer asks her to look after a poisonous concoction she has made to remove stains. **A gate at the stairs by lorrie moore** And there's no reason on earth why she needs to remove this concoction from her own freezer and give it to our narrator to put in her freezer, **A gate at the stairs pdf** As a piece of dramatic foreshadowing it's predictable and hammy. **A gate at the stairs book** The poisoning of her flatmate doesn't even serve a purpose in the book. **A gate at the stairs lorrie moore** It's another disconnected comic anecdote of which there are many, **A gate at the stairs by lorrie moore** Our narrator though loves resorting to the attention seeking theatre of a child: **A gate at the stairs summary** Its most interesting aspect is its criticism of white liberal America, **A gate at the stairs summary** The problem here is that better the well-intentioned blunders and shortcomings of white liberal America than the smug satirical nihilism of the narrator. **A gate at the stairs summary** I will give kudos to Lorrie Moore for creating such an obnoxious narcissistic narrator.

A gate at the stairs lorrie moore

Except I'm not sure this was her intention. **A gate at the stairs summary** It's interesting to learn she seems to favour short stories as I can imagine her being much better suited to this form. **A gate at the stairs book** As a novelist I'm afraid I found her essentially ham-fisted and irritating, **A gate at the stairs pdf** 0375409289 The problem with this book is that it has no centre: **A gate at the stairs lorrie moore** Another reviewer on here mentioned that Moore is out of her league and is writing about being a grad student I got you a gift too and its wrapped: **A gate at the stairs book** The woman proceeds to unwrap the butter and spread it on her lips while remarking that it will keep her lips from getting chapped. **A gate at the stairs book** 0375409289 Lorrie Moore takes on a lot - possibly too much - in her third novel: race class war and post-9/11 anxiety, **A gate at the stairs book** But her sharp eye beautifully attuned ear for language and wry sense of humour help the novel over even its roughest patches: **A gate at the stairs book** It's the coming of age story of Midwestern college student Tassie Keltjin who in the fall of 2001 takes on a part-time job as a nanny to help pay for school: **A gate at the stairs book** Then there's their newly adopted African-American toddler Mary Emma nicknamed Emmie (to stand for M: **A gate at the stairs pdf** I'll just say that a feeling of unease and restlessness settles over most of the book - just think of the thin protection suggested by the title. **A gate at the stairs by lorrie moore** There's clever smart writing in these scenes but they're also repetitive and monotonous. **A gate at the stairs book** And the author can't resist a play on a word or some aren't-I-so-brilliant observation - coming out of anyone's mouth, **A gate at the stairs review** But line by line she is such a good writer and there are images in the book of startling haunting clarity and power: **A gate at the stairs review** In her short stories Moore's always been able to find the humour in pain and heartbreak and she does so again here except on a larger and more ambitious canvas. **A gate at the stairs summary** 0375409289 I came to this novel with great expectations considering the praise heaped on it (dozens of top 10 and bestseller lists), **A gate at the stairs summary** And indeed from the first few sentences you had the feeling you were in the hands of a sure masterful storyteller. **A gate at the stairs review** But over the course of the novel it unraveled and became an inchoate mix of sophomoric polemic coming-of-age story caricatureish depictions of terrorists and clever wordplay, **A gate at the stairs book** Along the way we get lots of biting comments on the class and social differences between the liberal college town where Tassie goes to school and her country roots. **A gate at the stairs by lorrie**

moore The continual wordplay by Tassie her room-mate Murph her brother and her father are wearing: **A gate at the stairs by lorrie moore** 0375409289 Try angsty atmospheric and utterly self-indulgent never mind the fact that it's too obvious that her editor must be illiterate: **A gate at the stairs book** Either that or she knows someone or is related to someone to get this kind of bottom-of-the-pit novel published by a major publishing house, **A gate at the stairs pdf** I love it so much that I spent my college years ripping her off (well trying to anyway) in fiction writing workshops. **A gate at the stairs by lorrie moore** Her short story collections rank high among my favorite books, **A gate at the stairs book** But I've never fallen in love with any of her novels in the same way, **A gate at the stairs review** All of those wonderful little moments of wry humor amidst sadness are there but the structure of it just doesn't quite work for me. **A gate at the stairs review** There's a bit with a college boyfriend who isn't what he appears that gets handled in a way that left me cringing. **A gate at the stairs lorrie moore** The couple Tassie's babysitting for who also aren't what they appear didn't quite ring true to me either, **A gate at the stairs pdf** I still tore through it and I still had those moments where I set the book down for a second because my breath was taken away and that's tough to come by: **A gate at the stairs pdf** I still love Moore's writing but I couldn't help but be a bit disappointed in this novel, **A gate at the stairs review** 0375409289 LORRIE MOORE is the Gertrude Conaway Vanderbilt Professor of English at Vanderbilt University, **A gate at the stairs pdf** She is the recipient of a Lannan Foundation fellowship as well as the PEN/Malamud Award and the Rea Award for her achievement in the short story, **A gate at the stairs pdf** She is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters: **A gate at the stairs summary** A novel on the anxiety and disconnection of post-9/11 America on the insidiousness of racism the blind-sidedness of war and the recklessness thrust on others in the name of love, **A gate at the stairs pdf** Tassie finds herself becoming more and more the stranger she felt herself to be and as life and love unravel dramatically even shockingly she is forever changed. **A gate at the stairs by lorrie moore** A Gate at the Stairs On the evidence of this book Lorrie Moore is a much better sentence writer than she is a novelist or a storyteller: **A gate at the stairs pdf** Essentially this read like the diary of a country girl uprooted to a hip college town with three dramatic events forcibly shoehorned in to give it some dramatic foundation, **A gate at the stairs pdf** Our narcissistic narrator with her faux scattiness as a grown woman with a mysterious past and who adopts a little girl of mixed race parentage, **A gate at the stairs book** For a large part of the story Sarah looms uncertainly as a close-to-central character likeable in a loopy kind of way as she faces the big bad world of adoption protocols: **A gate at the stairs review** But in the latter part of the novel she disappears without a trace when some trouble arises regarding custody of her adopted daughter: **A gate at the stairs review** Lest it be said that this novel is without a theme Moore inserts interracial issues into the plot albeit in a half-hearted fashion: **A gate at the stairs book** These are dealt with in the weekly meetings that Sarah organizes in her home with racially-blended families who are grappling with the same issues of raising adopted kids: **A gate at the stairs book** Even when she deals with a family loss there is a sense Tassie goes through the mourning in a robotic must-feel-numb fashion: **A gate at the stairs book** Part of the problem is that Moore does not quite get under the skin of a 20-year-old who is also a sometime guitarist, **A gate at the stairs lorrie moore** 0375409289 It has been a long time since I disliked a book this much. **A gate at the stairs summary** This was made more imperative by the fact that I was standing outside in a bus terminal at the time and this was a library book: **A gate at the stairs by lorrie moore** Note: The rest of this review has been withdrawn due to the recent changes in Goodreads policy and enforcement: **A gate at the stairs lorrie moore** Tassie is a wonderfully touching character you come to love and admire; she's a twenty year old who while being somewhat naive with guys is also surprisingly mature about life, **A gate at the stairs lorrie moore** The story in a nutshell: Tassie moves from the family farm into Troy to attend college and gets herself a part-time job as a nanny to Mary-Emma for Sarah and Edward. **A gate at the stairs review** My favorite part is Tassie donning her bird costume to scare the mice from her father's crops. **A gate at the stairs by lorrie moore** My one criticism; not long enough I could have easily read another 150 pages of this exceptional

novel, **A gate at the stairs book 4** 0375409289 Some reviewers are responding to this novel much as I expected: Moore is too clever by half the voice of her narrator is too mature the plot is unbelievable. **A gate at the stairs review** As for the plot and its spotty verisimilitude I would suggest that reviewers who suggest as much may not have grown up as a girl in the Midwest[1]

Something she clearly knows nothing about. I couldn't agree more. No more. Under no circumstances would this EVER happen. Strike 2: The main character does not use the vibrator. Why she has made this is a mystery. Her problem is she can't grow up. On the plus side there were lots of great sentences. Stop just stop.E.).Moore has some problems with pacing and plot. A character can't pass a flower without describing it. All in all disappointing and not worth the effort. 0375409289 I love Lorrie Moore's writing. She lives in Nashville Tennessee. Between semesters she takes a job as a part-time nanny. You can read why I came to this decision here.I am so impressed with Martin's work. 0375409289

