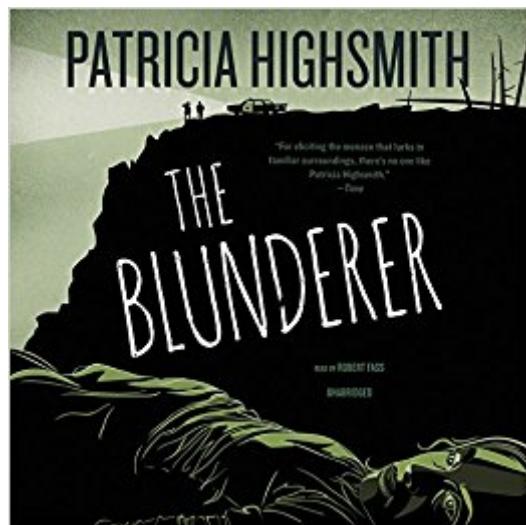


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# The Blunderer



## **Synopsis**

[Read by Robert Fass] The Blunderer examines the dark obsessions that lie beneath the surface of seemingly ordinary people. With unerring psychological insight, Patricia Highsmith portrays characters who cross the precarious line separating fantasy from reality. For two years, Walter Stackhouse has been a faithful and supportive husband to his wife, Clara. But she is distant and neurotic, and Walter finds himself harboring gruesome fantasies about her demise. When Clara's dead body turns up at the bottom of a cliff in a manner uncannily resembling the recent death of a woman who was murdered by her husband, Walter finds himself under intense scrutiny. He commits several blunders that claim his career and his reputation, cost him his friends, and eventually threaten his life.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Published in 1954 and 1985, respectively, this duo offer more of Highsmith's signature characters in plots where fairly ordinary people perform extraordinary acts of brutality. The Blunderer finds protagonist Walter Stackhouse, who fantasizes about knocking off his wife, in hot water with the cops after the Mrs. ends up at the bottom of a cliff. When Richard Alderman becomes a born-again Christian in People Who Knock on Doors, his family is shattered, leading to a violent outcome.

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"Highsmith's The Blunderer, like her well-remembered Strangers on a Train has a striking plot idea: a curious intertwining of the motives and methods of two deaths, so complex that it defies brief

synopsis." --New York Times "Has much of the malevolent intensity of Strangers On A Train and the whim of circumstance does much to victimize Walter Stackhouse, a lawyer . . . Clever." --Kirkus Reviews (starred review) "Offer[s] more of Highsmith's signature characters in plots where fairly ordinary people perform extraordinary acts of brutality." --Library Journal "For eliciting the menace that lurks in familiar surroundings, there's no one like Patricia Highsmith." --Time "Almost unputdownable. Miss Highsmith writes about men like a spider writing about flies". --The Observer "Highsmith's novels are peerlessly disturbing ...bad dreams that keep us thrashing for the rest of the night." --The New Yorker "One of the greatest modernist writers." --Gore Vidal "My suspicion is that when the dust has settled and when the chronicle of 20th-century American literature comes to be written, history will place Highsmith at the top of the pyramid, as we should place Dostoevsky at the top of the Russian hierarchy of novelists." --A.N Wilson Daily Telegraph

I was sitting watching this movie on Paytv one day and noticed the story line to this "A Kind of murder" movie was the same as the novel "Blunderer" I was reading. Yep, it was the novel in theater form. I had a double dose of this plot and it was great. The protagonist did silly things to cast suspension upon himself for murder. Did he comity murder? Watch it or read the novel; very suspensions!

I am a big fan of Strangers on a Train and The Talented Mr. Ripley, so I was looking forward to reading this novel. What a letdown and a disappointment! Not only was there very little suspense, but nothing much happened that couldn't have been predicted. Now I'm reluctant to read her other novels that have also been highly rated.

The Blunderer might seem a little slow to some readers, but Highsmith's strength is her ability to let the psychological turmoil of her protagonists develop slowly as a quasi-natural response to external events. Here our blundering anti-hero is first seen in a fairly everyday life, but the psychological pressures and the disappointments mount. The process by which Highsmith turns this average Joe into fodder for the newspapers seems credible and even inevitable. Few genre writers I know of are so adept at depicting the steady deterioration of a person's character and values, a process that might unfold slowly in this book. But don't take my word for it. I'm over 70 and don't, as they say, even buy green bananas.

Well written, but a little frustrating. The protagonist IS such a blunderer that it kind of sticks to ones

craw. Still, recommended for the imaginative beginning.

This was not my favorite Highsmith novel, but her disdain for humanity was never more evident. By that measure it's a great book. But, plot makes little sense and the characters are over the top. Walter, the blunderer, lives up to distilling. His two adversaries, a murderer named Kimmel and a ruthless, violent police officer named Corbett, are hateful to the extent they have not one redeeming quality. While the overall plot fails to hold together, Kimmel's murder scheme is truly inventive. However, the murder comes early in the book and the rest of the book doesn't lo

What does the title mean? Without giving away any critical clues, the reader quickly sees that a blundered is someone lacking an Ethical Core. What happens when a blunderer and a psychopath come together in a complicated drama? Find out in this page turning masterpiece. Watch out though as you might find that discovering how a distorted mind perceives people is terrifying.

It is difficult for me to say anything negative about Patricia Highsmith's work. I am a inveterate fan: I enjoy everything that she wrote and am especially fascinated by her sociopaths. This novel is an excellent example of her ability to infuse apparently ordinary people with extraordinary neurotic actions and thoughts. In this case really bad luck complicate (and wrecks) the copycat's life. It is almost on the level of my favorites, the books of the Ripliad--that's why I gave it 4 stars instead of 5, although as a crime story, it deserves a 5. The characterization of the bitchy wife is superb!

There is something about Highsmith's work that captivates me. It has mystery that feels it could REALLY happen to you. I am reading all of her work. I really liked Cry of The Owl, and this one did not disappoint. I am looking forward to the weekend to start Strangers on A Train. Be prepared, her endings are always of the charts.....

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