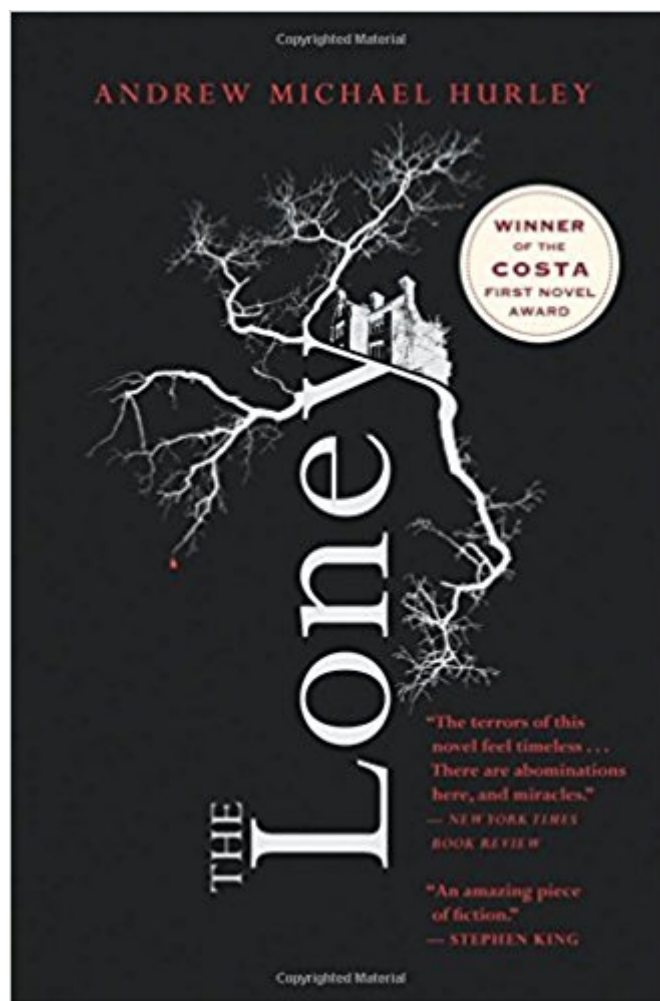


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# The Loney



## Synopsis

Winner of the Costa First Novel Award • A Best Book of the Year, London Times and Daily Mail | An Exceptional Novel, Sunday Times Best Book of the Year, British Book Industry Awards | A Best Summer Book, Publishers Weekly • "The terrors of this novel feel timeless." • "There are abominations here, and miracles." • "New York Times Book Review" • "An amazing piece of fiction." • "Stephen King" • "Completely terrifying." • "Paula Hawkins" | "Vibrantly written." • "Entertainment Weekly" • "Stunning" • "Jeff VanderMeer" • When Smith was a boy, he and his family went on an Easter pilgrimage with their local parish to the Loney, a bleak stretch of the English coastline, to visit an ancient shrine, in search of healing for Smith's disabled brother. But the locals were none too pleased to welcome them, and the two brothers soon became entangled in a troubling morass of dangerous rituals. For years after, Smith carries the burden of what happened that spring. And when he hears that the body of a young child has been found during a storm at the Loney, he's forced to reckon with his darkest secrets, no matter the cost. • "The masterpiece by which Hurley will enter the Guild of the Gothic" • (Guardian), • The Loney marks the arrival of a remarkable new talent. • "Fans of Shirley Jackson are sure to savor." • "Tight, suspenseful writing makes this masterful novel unsettling in the most compelling way." • "Washington Post" •

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Winner of the Costa First Novel Award • Sunday Times Exceptional Novel of 2015 • A Best Book of 2015 by the Times and the Daily Mail • "A palpable pall of menace hangs over British author

Hurley's thrilling first novel, narrated by a London boy, Tonto Smith, whose affectionate nickname was bestowed by a parish priest who likened himself to the Lone Ranger. Tonto and his family undertake an Easter pilgrimage to the Moorings, a house overlooking a treacherous swath of tide-swept Cumbrian coast known as the Loney. Smith's devoutly Catholic mother hopes that taking the waters at the nearby shrine will cure his older brother, Hanny, of his lifelong muteness. But the Cumbrian landscape seems anything but godly: nature frequently manifests in its rawest state and the secretive locals seem beholden to primitive rites and traditions that mock the religious piety of the visitors. Adding to the mystery is Coldbarrow, a spit of land turned twice daily by the tides into an island, where a man, a woman, and a pregnant teenage girl have taken refuge in a gloomy house named Thessaly. Hurley (*Cages and Other Stories*) tantalizes the reader by keeping explanations for what is happening just out of reach, and depicting a natural world beyond understanding. His sensitive portrayal of Tonto and Hanny's relationship and his insights into religious belief and faith give this eerie tale depth and gravity.

— Publishers Weekly, starred review

When a landslide during a winter storm reveals the body of an infant, the desolate Lancashire coastline known as the Loney is in the news, and the narrator called Smith realizes he must tell the story of his past there. Thirty years earlier Smith's family and other church members undertook an Easter pilgrimage to an old shrine in order to heal his mute brother Hanny and reconvene with God. However, the adventure was one of clashing attitudes, strange locals, loud noises in the night, hidden locked rooms, and miracles that may not have been God's will at all. First-time novelist Hurley weaves an intricate story of dark mystery and unwavering brotherly love that lends itself to many rereads. The characterizations are superb; even the Loney becomes a distinct character as it seems the place, not the people, is to blame for the bizarre happenings. Also, while religion plays a major role, the reference is more an observation of traditions. VERDICT: This eerily atmospheric and engrossing novel will captivate readers who like their fiction with a touch of the gothic.

— Library Journal, editor's pick

It's not just good, it's great. An amazing piece of fiction.

— Stephen King

The Loney is one of the best novels I've read in years. From the very first page, I knew I was in the hands of a master. Atmospheric, psychologically astute, and saturated with the kind of electrifying wrongness that makes for pleasurably sleepless nights.

— Kelly Link, author of *Get in Trouble*

The Loney is a stunning novel about faith, the uncanny, strange rituals, and the oddity of human experience. Beautifully written, it's immensely entertaining, but also deep and wide. A moving evocation of desolate wilderness and a marvel of complex characterization, *The Loney* is one of my favorite reads of the past couple of years.

— Jeff VanderMeer, New York Times best-selling author of the

Southern Reach trilogy. Here is the masterpiece by which Hurley must enter the Guild of the Gothic: it pleases me to think of his name written on some parchment scroll, alongside those of Walpole, Du Maurier, Maturin and Jackson.

• "Guardian. . . Astonishing . . . Beautifully literary and absolutely horrific.

• "Times Literary Supplement. A masterful excursion into terror.

• "Sunday Times. Modern classics in this genre are rare, and instant ones even rarer; The Loney, however, looks as though it may be both.

• "Sunday Telegraph. Enigmatic and distinctly unsettling. The Loney's power lies in all that Hurley dares to leave out. This is a novel of the unsaid, the implied, the barely grasped or understood, crammed with dark holes and blurry spaces that your imagination feels compelled to fill. It takes both confidence and talent to write like this and it leaves you wanting more of whatever slice of darkness Hurley might choose to dish up next.

• "Julie Meyerson, Observer. An extraordinarily haunted and haunting novel, arrestingly in command of its unique spot in the landscape.

• "Telegraph. A tale of suspense that sucks you in and pulls you under. As yarns go, it rips.

• "New Statesman. Bone-chilling, poetic writing.

• "Times. Nuanced, deliberate and building insensibly from a murmur to a shriek. The Loney is an unforgettable addition to the ranks of the best British horror.

• "Metro, five-star review. An eerie, disturbing read that doesn't let up until its surprise ending.

• "Daily Mail

The eerie, suspenseful debut novel about two brothers hailed as a masterful excursion into terror by the Sunday Times (UK) that is taking the world by storm. When the remains of a young child are discovered during a winter storm on a stretch of the bleak Lancashire coastline known as the Loney, a man named Smith is forced to confront the terrifying and mysterious events that occurred forty years earlier when he visited the place as a boy. At that time, his devoutly Catholic mother was determined to find healing for Hanny, his disabled older brother. And so the family, along with members of their parish, embarked on an Easter pilgrimage to an ancient shrine. But not all of the locals were pleased to see visitors in the area. And when the two brothers found their lives entangled with a glamorous couple staying at a nearby house, they became involved in more troubling rites. Smith feels he is the only one to know the truth, and he must bear the burden of his knowledge, no matter what the cost. Proclaimed a modern classic by the Sunday Telegraph (UK), The Loney marks the arrival of an important new voice in fiction. " --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

The Lonely by Andrew Michael Hurley is certainly not what I expected. Promoted as a gothic horror

novel, complete with an ecstatic blurb by Stephen King, *The Lonely* surprises because it really isn't a horror tale. At least a horror tale that readers of the genre would expect. Reading the reviews on [Amazon](#) and Goodreads will clearly support this observation. While I am one of those horror fans, I must say that I was not disappointed in the novel. In fact, I found it suspenseful, original, and more than a little unnerving. By now you know the plot. A family, accompanied by their Catholic priest, family friends, and other parishioners, travel to a desolate part of the UK for a retreat. The purpose of the retreat is to once and for all complete a ritual which will cure one of the family's teenage sons who is stricken with autism (although I cannot recall if this diagnosis is ever revealed as such). The narrator is the young man's younger brother who recounts the tale as it occurred nearly forty years ago. The geographical depictions are a central part of the story. The atmosphere, complete with fog, rain, and constant overcast skies, is a character in itself. The damp and gloomy houses haunt the reader on every page. The dank chill is always evident. There is even an old mansion that is off the coast and only accessible during low tide. The gothic nature of the tale oozes constantly. The natives resent the presence of the pilgrims. And, there is something not quite right about these people. There's a hint of witchcraft and pagan rituals, and there are veiled threats towards the visitors. The author keeps explanations for the strange events just beyond our grasp, and the depiction of the climax is ambiguous enough that it may not be to everyone's taste. All of the action is reported through the first person account of a fifteen-year-old boy, and his experientially-limited frame of reference adds to the mystery. Oh, and the visiting retreatants are conservative Catholics (this being the 1970's). The depiction of their beliefs and rituals is so well done that the reader can't help but observe that these also have a bizarre/pagan feel to them (and I'm a Catholic, so my reaction wasn't due to unfamiliarity). Anyhow, I really liked this book. But, be aware, it is not a traditional horror story. Those who disliked it often referred to it as boring. These folks were clearly expecting standard horror fare. It's not. But it is eerie, strange, and atmospheric. If you're in the mood, give it a shot.

There is a lot to like in this book - a well-designed process of plot revelation and some fine observations of nature. But there's also a lot of box-ticking: island reached by regularly flooded causeway - tick; religious mania - tick; quaint but threatening rural customs - tick; a local yokel, vaguely sinister - tick. Still, there are a few tropes not followed through, and little things like the tea lights and the simnel cake reveal a wry humour that I wish there'd been more of.

An excellent, atmospheric book which avoids sensationalism and either "slasher horror" or "monster horror." Hurley has produced an extremely evocative and well-written exploration of mystery, dread, and the nature of "truth." I liken this book to some films of the 1970's - a slow burn which focuses on the people involved in unusual circumstances, rather than being sensationalist and blatant. Although the focus of this book is on a sense of nameless dread and people overwhelmed by circumstance, it's also a lyrical exploration of family and faith. In fact, the book would work exceptionally well even if all elements of supernatural strangeness were completely removed. Hurley writes characters and relationships more than anything else and he is gifted there. In fact, the land itself is as much a character as any of the humans in the book; and a strange land it is. Not the book for you if you're looking for blood dripping from the talons of hell beasts or serial killers quoting the Bible. It's really a wonderful, dark book which realistically depicts real people faced with frightening situations. An excellent read and I recommend it most highly.

This book is well worth all the awards and praise it has received! The setting is a character. Such atmosphere. I had to wrap up in multiple quilts to keep off the damp chill as I read it. The mood put me in mind of *The Wicker Man*. I pictured Brendan Gleeson as the new priest who is brought in to minister to the parish after the untimely death of the last one. Their pilgrimage to the Loney is wonderfully dark and gothic.

A pilgrimage to a shrine with waters that are said to heal leads to a miracle, for sure, but the unreliable narrator leaves the reader uncertain as to what kind, for the ritualistic Catholicism seems cruel and ineffective, the paganism seems cruel but effective, and the temptation of an unforgiving and unappealing naturalism tempts. An atmospheric thoughtful read, with unforgettable portraits of a small community of believers, two brothers, a mad priest, and an apparently God-forsaken place.

The ending could definitely have been better. A lot more happens in the book than is resolved by the conclusion, making it feel in places as though a far longer story was rather ruthlessly hacked at the editing stage. But you only realize that when you reach the last page... before that, it's a great and supremely unsettling story

I do like the writing style, but the story is tedious. I am having issues beyond the first third of the book. I don't usually write a review until I have finished a book, but honestly feel I may not finish.

This book is like a hot bath, at first it is uncomfortable as you ease into it but the you kind of get engulfed in the warmth of the characters and story telling. It seems to move slowly towards it's conclusion. The ending is a little ethereal, but I guess that describes a lot of things in life. Honestly I was expecting a little more based on the critical reviews and awards.

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