

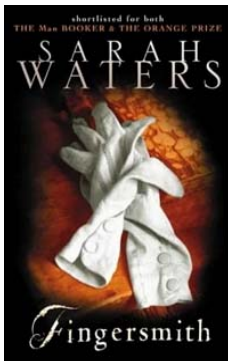


# LGBT Reading Group



## October/November 2007

### The Read... Fingersmith



Divided into three parts, the tale is narrated by two orphaned girls whose lives are inextricably linked. Set in 1862, orphaned Susan is nearly 18 and has been raised in a household of fingersmiths (pickpockets), coiners and burglars. One day, a handsome confidence trickster arrives with an elaborate scheme to defraud Maud, a wealthy heiress. If Sue helps him she'll get a share of the "shine". Duly installed in the Lillys' country house as Maud's maid, Sue finds that her mistress is virtually a prisoner controlled by her uncle.

An intimacy develops between the two girls and, as the plan takes shape, Sue begins to have doubts about the con. As Maud commences her narrative in part two, it's hard to tell who's double-crossed who...

This novel was dramatised by the BBC in 2005. ISBN: 1860498833

### The Author... Sarah Waters



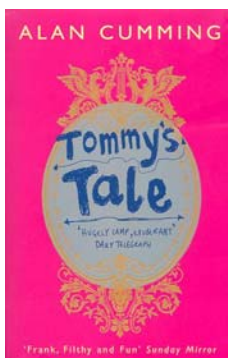
Sarah Waters was born in Neyland, Wales in 1966 and is best known for her first novel, *Tipping the Velvet*, as well as the novels that followed, including *Affinity* and *The Night Watch*. Before becoming a writer, Waters worked as an academic, earning a doctorate and teaching. It was during the process of writing her thesis that she thought she would write a novel. All of her books contain lesbian themes "I'm writing with a clear lesbian agenda in the novels. It's right there at the heart of the books." She calls it incidental, because of her own orientation. Waters lives with her two cats in south-east London.

### Our Opinion...

Protagonist Sue has been raised in a life of crime by Mrs Sucksby, who adopted her after her mother went to the gallows; Maud's mother died in an asylum and was raised by her awful uncle in the county. The two orphans want a better life beyond their present circumstances so, when a trickster promises them each a richer future, they are readily compliant - even though both must sacrifice the life of the other to get what they want.

When the two girls actually meet they fall in love but, despite this, their deceitful plans proceed - meanwhile readers hope that Sue and Maud would simply confess everything to each other and get one over on the baddies... but that story would have been much shorter!

Following many twists and turns it is revealed that somebody else has orchestrated a much grander plan and deceived both girls entirely. This even-paced, long novel has a grim Dickensian feel about it - most the characters are, in essence, thoroughly repugnant and morally lacking - but the tale is compelling and often amusing. Conveniently, there are circumstances that bring the story to a 'happy' end but readers were left wondering what kind of future these two girls could have together, considering their wretched experiences. Nevertheless, a highly recommended read!



### What Next... Tommy's Tale

By Alan Cumming. Tommy, an e-popping, pansexual Londoner, just will not grow up. He's bisexual and can't resist the occasional dalliance with members of either sex. He spends his time hanging out with his sort-of boyfriend Charlie, working as a photographer's assistant, taking drugs and creating a bohemian dream flat with his beloved roommates. His life is all about fun until he finds himself growing attached to Charlie's 8-year-old son Finn. As a result of this relationship, Tommy develops an irrepressible desire to have a kid of his own and the rest of this hyperkinetic, diaristic novel is devoted to that pursuit. ISBN: 978-0141003764



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