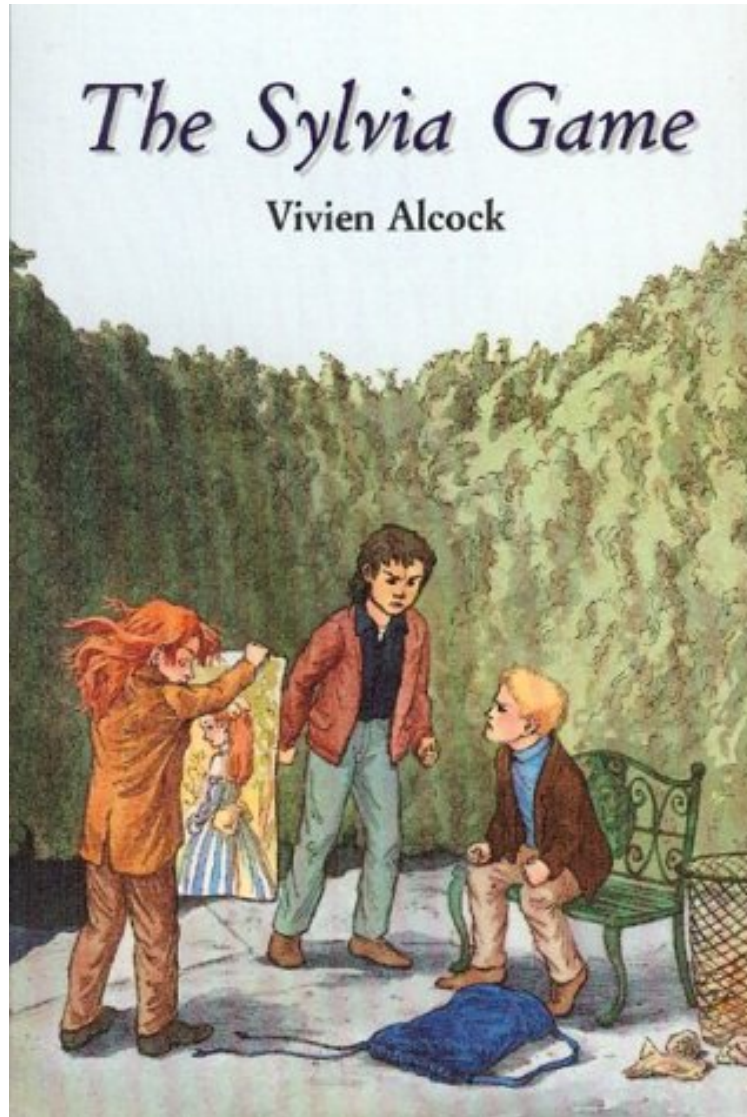


(Read free) The Sylvia Game

## The Sylvia Game

*Vivien Alcock*

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**Vivien Alcock : The Sylvia Game** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Sylvia Game:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A rare kiddie thriller By E. R. Bird Describing various disparate elements of Vivien Alcock's "The Sylvia Game" may lead the reader to conjure up a similar but vastly different British children's book. Listen to the following people, places, and things that crop up in this novel: A young girl who is sickly is sent to the British countryside. She encounters a mansion and hears a boy her age crying. The boy is sickly and often ill, spending much of his time indoors in bed. She also meets a rougher streetwise boy who is much different, in class

as well as personality, from the weaker blond boy. Sound just a touch like Frances Hodgson Burnett's well-known, "The Secret Garden" doesn't it? Though incorporating various plot points and characters similar to that of Burnett's book, the book is incredibly different. Yes, there are still potential ghosts haunting the living and mysterious elements (like a hedge maze with evil intents) but the book stands perfectly on its own. It's a more modern "Secret Garden", rife with plot twists and people you don't know if you can trust. Think of "The Sylvia Game" as a kind of "House of Cards" for kids. Emily's trip with her father to the countryside isn't as nice as she might have hoped. A permanently broke artist, Emily's father is schemer at heart. And while the two of them stay in an expensive inn (the money paying for it is mysteriously kept hidden from young Emily) it is clear that her father is up to something or other. In an effort to figure out what he's being so secretive of, the girl uses a local boy, Kevin, to help her track her dad. Her tailing takes her to the Mallerton Manor and into the presence of the Mallerton heir, Oliver. Oliver cannot help but notice how similar Emily looks to Sylvia, his drowned sister. Through constant contact with Oliver and Kevin, Emily suddenly finds herself in an odd twisted situation in which no one she knows is quite what they appear. Did Oliver even have a sister? What's Kevin's connections to the Mallertons? What are her father's connection to this undoubtedly odd family? And what does Oliver truly want from her? Who was Sylvia, really? The deeper the book gets, the less you trust what you've already learned. This occasionally made for confusing reading for myself, a twenty-six-year-old reader. You can just imagine how a ten-year-old would take it. Still, Alcock is to be commended for never allowing the book to decay into absolute dadaism. It's a twisty little creation, but not so twisty that it's impossible to keep up with. The real problem with the novel, in the end, is that the further you get into it the less likable the characters become. For example, poor little rich boy waif Oliver (a Twist he's not) lies with incredible ease. Emily pities the boy but never becomes as angry with him as she should. He manipulates all the characters in the story like some twelve-year-old Godfather, yet is never held accountable for most of his actions. This doesn't make him the most identifiable person in the book. And when he teams up with Kevin, the two can become truly awful to Emily sometimes. In the end, Emily herself was the only person in the book I really liked as a human being. Not the best recommendation for the story. Still, the book's a smart piece of work. Kids who like mysteries will enjoy putting together the puzzle of who Sylvia is, what Oliver's up to, and how the Mallerton fortune enters into it all. This is an ideal recommendation for those kids who liked "Chasing Vermeer" and want another kids-solve-a-mystery-involving-a-painting book. And even adults will find themselves pondering over the book's red herrings and sly meanderings. I didn't enjoy "The Sylvia Game" as much as I might have liked, but it's still a hearty and enjoyable read. You may not like all the characters as people, but you'll respect the writer who knows how to put them through their paces. A fun romp. 0 of 5 people found the following review helpful. A simple book with interesting content By A Customer The Sylvia Game is a book for children aged 8-12. The content is simple and easy to read containing a little morbidity. It is somewhat enjoyable. It is mostly centered on a sick girl and a misunderstanding leading to confusion and the shocking truth.

"Whom do I look like? I mean, whom do you take me for? . . . Who is Sylvia?" "He was silent for so long she thought he wasn't going to answer. An odd expression came into his face. He turned away as if to hide it, then, looking back over his shoulder, said, 'My sister. But she's dead.'" Emily hadn't meant to get tangled up with the likes of Oliver Mallerton and his dead sister. She had only been tailing her artist father to find out why he had been acting so mysterious lately. She certainly never meant to get mixed up in the Sylvia Game, a game that sounded harmless, not like a game that would nearly cause the death of one boy and lead to the banishment of another.

About the Author Vivien Alcock (1924 - 2003) is the well-known author of many compelling mysteries and supernatural fantasies for children. Childhood is, she once wrote, "an exciting and dangerous time, and it fascinates me." Her books reflect that excitement, danger, and fascination.