The Landscape of Love by Sally Beauman

A(N) (Rare, Nowadays) Excellent Read

If I didn't spy, Id be in the dark eternally. I live in a maze of unknowing - Maisies maze - and I hate it. I need to be informed ... The summer of 1967, at a decaying house in the heart of Suffolk: an artist is painting a portrait of thirteen-year-old Maisie and her elder sisters, beautiful Julia and bookish Finn. Maisie embarks on a portrait of her own: she begins an account of her family and of her village friend Daniel Nunn, a young man she idolises, whom she watches over the chasm of a class divide. But is Maisie's description of a summer idyll all it seems? This is the summer when the three sisters' lives will irrevocably, and terribly, change. The winter of 1991, in London: the now-famous portrait of the three sisters features in a major retrospective. Daniel Nunn, haunted by the vanished England of his childhood, obsessed by the three sisters and newly determined to understand what happened that last summer, pursues the ghosts of his past.

My Personal Review:
As has been pointed out, this is the UK title for "The Sisters Mortland," a saga of a landed, (and therefore?) commercially clueless, loyal, eccentric and extravagantly emotionally tragic family from different protagonist viewpoints. The dialogue is witty, poignant and savage; the plot twists are unexpected and wrenching, the characters are sympathetic in spite of, or rather because of their flaws. This is true great writing - it is clear that Sally Beauman's Oxford years have disciplined her craft but beware: she can, and does, go for the emotional jugular.

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