



Deep and Dark and Dangerous

By Mary Downing Hahn

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Just before summer begins, 13-year-old Ali finds an odd photograph in the attic. She knows the two children in it are her mother, Claire, and her aunt Dulcie. But who's the third person, the one who's been torn out of the picture?

Ali figures she'll find out while she's vacationing in Maine with Dulcie and her four-year-old daughter, Emma, in the house where Ali's mother's family used to spend summers. All hopes for relaxation are quashed shortly after their arrival, though, when the girls meet Sissy, a kid who's mean and spiteful and a bad influence on Emma.

Strangest of all, Sissy keeps talking about a girl named Teresa who drowned under mysterious circumstances back when Claire and Dulcie were kids, and whose body was never found. At first Ali thinks Sissy's just trying to scare her with a ghost story, but soon she discovers the real reason why Sissy is so angry. . . Mary Downing Hahn is at her chilling best in this supernatural tale that's certain to send shivers down her readers' spines.

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Grade 4-7—Thirteen-year-old Ali is excited to be spending the summer with her Aunt Dulcie, an artist, and her four-year-old cousin, Emma, in the Maine lakeside cottage where her aunt and mother spent their childhood summers. But why is Ali's mother so terrified to let her go? Why did the sisters' annual sojourns there stop so abruptly 30 years earlier? And what is the meaning of Ali's recurring dream in which, while walking along the shore of Sycamore Lake, she meets a young girl who points to three girls in a canoe and admonishes, you must do something about this? Ali soon discovers that Teresa, her mother's and aunt's playmate, had disappeared and was presumed drowned when their grandfather's empty canoe washed up on shore. When a strange girl calling herself Sissy shows up at the cottage and lures Emma into defiant and dangerous behavior, Ali finally realizes who she is. Hahn weaves into the story some classic mystery elements such as a torn photograph, a waterlogged doll, dense fog, and an empty grave, all of which add to the suspense and keep the well-plotted story moving along to a satisfying conclusion.—*Marie Orlando, Suffolk Cooperative Library System, Bellport, NY*

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From [Booklist](#)

Hahn offers another eerie, suspenseful ghost story filled with family secrets. Thirteen-year-old Ali is thrilled when her aunt Dulcie invites her to spend the summer at the family's Maine cottage, where Ali will help babysit her four-year-old cousin, Emma. Things fall apart, however, when Sissie, a mysterious, manipulative girl, befriends Emma. As tensions rise, Ali begins to piece together rumors about a childhood tragedy that continues to haunt her mother and Dulcie. Early on, Hahn drops heavy hints about who Sissie is. Guessing her identity won't spoil the suspense for readers, though; on the contrary, it will feed their sense of terror as events unfold. The emotional weight of family dynamics and the private burdens of adults might have overwhelmed the ghost story, but Hahn maintains the momentum with scenes that will chill readers as surely as a plunge in cold water. Young people will easily connect with sensitive Ali, whose search for family truths feels like "good practice for crossing a minefield." *Gillian Engberg*

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Review

"Signature spooky Hahn sends appropriate shivers up the reader's spine. . . satisfyingly chilly."

—*Kirkus Reviews*

"Hahn offers another eerie, suspenseful ghost story filled with family secrets."

—*Booklist*

"Classic mystery elements . . . add to the suspense and keep the well-plotted story moving along to a satisfying conclusion."

—*School Library Journal*

"A compact and approachable shiveriness . . . an easygoing vacation read."

—*Bulletin*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Daniel Smith:

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