



Mister Death's Blue-Eyed Girls

By Mary Downing Hahn

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Based on an actual crime in 1955, this YA novel is at once a mystery and a coming-of-age story. The brutal murder of two teenage girls on the last day of Nora Cunningham's junior year in high school throws Nora into turmoil. Her certainties—friendships, religion, her prudence, her resolve to find a boyfriend taller than she is—are shaken or cast off altogether. Most people in Elmgrove, Maryland, share the comforting conviction that Buddy Novak, who had every reason to want his ex-girlfriend dead, is responsible for the killings. Nora agrees at first, then begins to doubt Buddy's guilt, and finally comes to believe him innocent—the lone dissenting voice in Elmgrove. Told from several different perspectives, including that of the murderer, *Mister Death's Blue-Eyed Girls* is a suspenseful page-turner with a powerful human drama at its core.

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Gr 7 Up-Nora Cunningham's world turns upside down when two of her teenage girlfriends are killed. Buddy Novak, the ex-boyfriend of one of the girls, is the prime suspect, and Nora and the rest of the town believe that he is guilty. As she learns more, however, she starts to doubt that he was involved. Nora also faces her own tribulations in her small town of Elmgrove, Maryland. She once was so sure of her life, but now she questions who she is and what she wants. Hahn's novel (Clarion, 2012), set in 1955, is a combination of a mystery and a coming-of-age story and is based on an actual crime that the author lived through as a teenager. It is told through alternating points of view between Nora and the individual responsible for the crimes. The narration immediately sets the mood with Nick Podehl's dark, hushed tones that sound manic and even scary at times. A definite purchase for those looking to add quality fiction to their audiobook collections.-Katie Llera, Bound Brook High School, NJ©(c) Copyright 2013. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.

Review

A Kirkus Best Teen Book of 2012

* "An engrossing exploration of how a murder affects a community."—*Kirkus Reviews*, starred review

"This is a thinking-teen's mystery."—*Bulletin*

"Hahn emphasizes the universality of growing up and facing death."—*Horn Book*

* "This wrenching novel offers an aggregate portrait of the effects of loss and grief, including both the strengthening and dissolution of relationships."—*Publishers Weekly*, starred review

"This creepy tale slowly and craftily builds tension . . . It has the added feature of offering a unique snapshot of life in the 1950's."—*School Library Journal*

"The veracity of this tragedy raises the stakes for readers who are already fans of Hahn's supernatural fiction, and the coming-of-age component of Nora's shattered naïveté is all the more searing."—*Bulletin*

From the Author

This is the most difficult book I've ever written, mainly because it is based loosely on my own experiences as a teenager. Writing it brought back memories as intense as the day they happened. When I sat down at the computer, I traveled straight back into the past. I remembered the words of songs I'd never really forgotten, poetry and books and movies, the clothes we wore, the things we talked about -- and thought about, my feelings of inadequacy and insecurity, my increasing religious doubts, my uneasy relationship with my mother, and so on. Since it is unlike my other books, I challenged myself to experiment by using the present tense and employing multiple points of view-- very liberating. When I finally finished the book, I was very nervous about its reception. Would kids read it thinking it was a typical middle school ghost story? Would some be offended by Nora's leaving the Church? Or by her curiosity about sex? Or the smoking and drinking? Would people who remembered the murders be upset by my factionalized treatment of the events set in motion that June morning in 1955? Well, I told myself, we write the stories we have to write. And this is the best book I've ever written. At least I think so.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Jo Daigneault:

Why don't make it to be your habit? Right now, try to ready your time to do the important work, like looking for your favorite publication and reading a reserve. Beside you can solve your condition; you can add your knowledge by the publication entitled Mister Death's Blue-Eyed Girls. Try to the actual book Mister Death's Blue-Eyed Girls as your good friend. It means that it can to become your friend when you experience alone and beside that of course make you smarter than in the past. Yeah, it is very fortuned for you personally. The book makes you more confidence because you can know every little thing by the book. So , we need to make new experience and knowledge with this book.

Lauren Marine:

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Diane Gonzales:

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