

Hahn, Mary Downing One for Sorrow M Gr. 5-7

Annie Browne moves to Mount Pleasant, Maryland in the fall of 1918 in time to start the year at a new school. Annie finds herself in the outcast circle when she is befriended by Elsie Schneider, the girls everyone thinks of as a liar and thief. After Elsie worms her way into an invite to Annie's house and then purposefully breaks Annie's favorite doll, Annie regrets hanging out with her. The popular girl, Rosie, and her group of friends tease Annie and Elsie, but Annie longs to break away from mean, clingy Elsie and join Rosie. Annie makes her move to buddy up with Rosie when Elsie misses a week of school due to illness. Annie then joins in on the physical and emotional bullying of Elsie, but feels guilt for harassing Elsie when Elsie suddenly dies during the Spanish Flu epidemic. Then, after a sledding accident leaves Annie with a concussion, Elsie returns as a ghost and turns Annie's life upside down.

Hahn's tale is less a chilling ghost story and more a despicable look at the darker side of adolescence with no feeling of resolution. The characters fall into tired tropes (Rosie, the popular mean girl; Annie, the new girl trying to fit in; and Elsie, the poor, motherless girl from the wrong side of the tracks) with little depth. The only horror found in these pages is the abuse the young girls inflict on one another and their lack of respect for others (they take advantage of classmates' deaths during the epidemic by going to wakes to fill up on snacks). Readers looking for a good ghost story are better off with Hahn's classic *Wait Til Helen Comes* or Neil Gaiman's *The Graveyard Book*.

Rebecca Strang, July 2018

R* Starred, Recommended
R Recommended
Ad Acceptable
M Marginal (in content or style), consider carefully

This review was completed for MSLIS coursework.
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