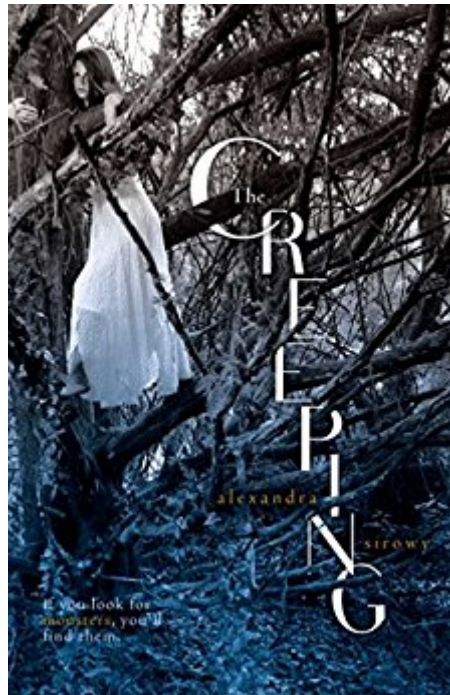


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The Creeping



Synopsis

Romance, friendship, and dark, bone-chilling fear fill the pages of this âœgenuine and truly eerieâ • (RT Book Reviews) debut in the spirit of Miss Peregrineâ™s Home for Peculiar Children. Twelve years ago Stella and Jeanie vanished while picking strawberries. Stella returned minutes later, with no memory of what happened. Jeanie was never seen or heard from again. Now Stella is seventeen, and sheâ™s over it. Sheâ™s the lucky one who survived, and sure, the case is still cloaked in mysteryâ”and itâ™s her small townâ™s ugly legacyâ”but Stella is focused on the coming summer. Sheâ™s got a great best friend, a hookup with an irresistibly crooked smile, and two months of beach days stretching out before her. Then along comes a corpse, a little girl who washes up in an ancient cemetery after a mudslide, and who has red hair just like Jeanie did. Suddenly memories of that haunting day begin to return, and when Stella discovers that other red-headed girls have gone missing as well, she begins to suspect that something sinister is at work. And before the summer ends, Stella will learn the hard way that if you hunt for monsters, you will find them.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

First, I have to say that I could not put this book down. Literally, for a day and a half this mother of four had to be reminded to cook meals and read way too late into the night. Stella, the book's main character, is both the town's celebrity and pariah. At the age of 6, she and her friend, Jeanie, disappear. Stella appears a day later unable to remember anything that happened and Jeanie is never found. For the next 11 years, the town of Savage takes turn blaming Stella for her lack of memory and hailing her for surviving. Things have finally settled down a bit when a corpse shows up, causing the town to panic and Stella resolves to remember what happened on that fateful day. This book has been compared to *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children*, which I don't think is accurate at all. I would compare it to "I Know What You Did Last Summer," by Lois Duncan, "The Thirteenth Tale," by Diane Setterfield or the movie, "Stand By Me," with a little bit of superstition and monsters thrown in the mix. (I love all three.) The character development in this book is fantastic, with the "good" characters having enough bad or creepiness about them and the "bad" characters having enough good or charm about them, that you are never totally sure who you can trust. Spot-on plot pacing makes this a real page turner and the dialogue flows naturally and is very believable, which is not an easy task, especially when writing about teenagers. For Parents, Librarians, Teachers: Despite all that praise, I have some serious reservations regarding this book. One is the publisher's decision to recommend it to 12 year olds/7th graders.

"The Creeping" would not have been my choice as a title for this excellent YA novel that is part thriller, part romance and part exploration of friendship. (The significance of the title only becomes clear about 2/3 of the way through the book.) The book is told from the perspective of Stella, during the summer before her senior year of high school. When Stella was six, she and her friend Jeanie were abducted; Stella returned physically unharmed, but no one ever saw Jeanie again. As you might expect, Stella has been deeply affected by this experience, even though she can't remember what happened on that long-ago day. When the book opens, Stella is hanging out with her friends, including her best friend Zoe; they are pretty and popular girls at their high school. Then one night a body is found -- a young girl's body. Stella has a sudden flash of memory of Jeanie but most of her traumatic experience remains out of reach. Over the course of the book Stella tries to regain her memory and figure out exactly what happened to Jeanie. Trying to track down Jeanie's murderer is the thriller aspect of the book, and the book also plays around with the possibility of a supernatural element; Stella's relationship with Zoe addresses issues of friendship, including loyalty, popularity & peer pressure, and conflicts between friends and boyfriends. For of course, there is a boyfriend,

Sam, a longtime neighbor of Stella's who has always had a crush on her. Sam isn't part of the popular clique that Stella and Zoe run with, and this creates friction in Stella and Zoe's friendship. Although the book is a bit on the long side, it's well-written; enjoyable to read; and does a pretty good job of writing from a teenager's perspective.

This YA Mystery has quite the intriguing premise - eleven years earlier, Jeanie and Stella were last seen picking strawberries in Jeanie's front yard when both girls went missing. But later, only Stella returned, with French-braided hair and no memory of what happened. Now seventeen, on the anniversary of Jeanie's disappearance, another body of a little red-headed girl is discovered - and again, Stella is nearby enough to see the corpse. Flashes of memory that have eluded her for so many years begin to creep through her consciousness and despite a police-enforced lockdown, Stella decides that she must do everything she can to restore her memory of what really happened that day. More than some cross-market YA novels, this one has a very high school appeal, and Stella is not initially very sympathetic at all. As one of the most popular girls in her high school, she is overly concerned with what people think and her shallow best friend only exacerbates this. But, luckily for Stella, her other childhood best friend, Sam, is a prince of forgiveness (despite some truly appalling scenes that Stella puts him through) and is the only one who agrees to help her. Stella begins to truly grow up and separate from the high school drama and reconnect with her old friend. The book initially moves slowly, perhaps spending a bit too much time in affirming just how unlikable seventeen-year-old Stella is, but the premise is intriguing and the atmosphere lives up to the book's title. It's a compelling read and soon becomes quite difficult to put down. Stella's character truly develops - something not always seen in Young Adult books where characters can remain static to be more effortlessly relatable.

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