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Picture The Dead



Synopsis

"A perfectly haunting combination." •Jon Scieszka, bestselling author and Caldecott Honor winner
"I loved Picture the Dead. Eerie, romantic, moody, and immersive. A beautifully illustrated gothic delight!" •Holly Black, New York Times bestselling author of Black Cat "A tour de force, a remarkable feat of visual and verbal storytelling, as playful as it is serious, as haunting as it is delightful." •Michael Chabon, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay
Jennie feels the tingling presence of something unnatural in the house now that Will is dead. Her heart aches without him, and she still doesn't know how he really died. It seems that everywhere she turns, someone is hiding yet another clue. As Jennie seeks the truth, she finds herself drawn ever deeper into a series of tricks and lies, secrets and betrayals, and begins to wonder if she had every really known Will at all.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars • See all reviews • (32 customer reviews)

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Age Range: 12 - 17 years

Grade Level: 6 - 12

Customer Reviews

Jennie Lovell has suffered much tragedy in her 16 years. Her parents died, her twin brother was killed fighting in the Civil War, and now her fiancé/cousin has also fallen on the battlefield. The aunt and uncle who have taken her in--never overly warm towards her-- have fallen on hard times. She doesn't know what she'll do if they put her out. Jennie's cousin Quinn seems to be harboring a

secret about his brother's death, and his own wounding in combat. When the family turns to a spiritualist photographer to help calm their grief, Jennie begins to feel her fiancé is trying to send a message through the prints made. Deciphering the meaning of what she sees may just save her life. *Picture the Dead*, written by Adele Griffin and illustrated by Lisa Brown, intertwines the interest in spiritualism that was rampant during the American Civil War with the story of soldiers who fought in the war and the families they left behind. So many young men died in bloody conflict it's not surprising that their mothers, fathers and siblings sought to know if their loved ones found comfort on the other side. Photography had only recently been created, so it's maybe not surprising that people tied the mysteries that went on in a photographer's dark room with the mysteries of death. Readers also see the precarious position that women of the times were often in. Dependent on the men in their lives for support, their entire futures could easily be turned upside down if a husband, father or brother died. During the Civil War, many of them did. Part historical fiction, part mystery, *Picture the Dead* is deliciously creepy and fun to read. Jennie keeps a scrapbook, and black-and white illustrations portray the things she secretes away: newspaper clippings, photographs, lists, letters, and notes from her twin. I highly recommend this book for mother-daughter book clubs with girls aged 14 and up.'

I'll be very honest and say that I had some preconceived notions about how awesome this book was going to be because it had three of my favorite things: ghosts, the civil war and PICTURES! Yes, I'll admit that I'm basically 12 at heart and love illustrations to go along with a story. I'm a very visual person so the right illustrations can really enhance my reading enjoyment. Many people scoff at such things but I welcome pictures in novels! Ghosts and the Civil War kind of go hand in hand for me so if a book has both, it is a must read. Throw in an author like Adele Griffin and a super spooky plot and I expect nothing less than awesome. *Picture the Dead* mostly lived up to this expectation. Mostly. **LIKES:** Scrapbooks: Not only was this book beautifully illustrated, the illustrations were done as a scrapbook. They included letters and drawings as well as photos. Each scrapbook page pulled you farther into the story and helped to move it along at an exciting pace. The only problem with this is that I did catch myself cheating and jumping ahead to see what pictures were next. Bad! **Twists and turns:** I thought at one point that I new exactly what the "twist" was going to be and I was feeling pretty smug about the whole then. Then the story did a one-eighty and I was completely at a loss. I just didn't see the end coming and It hit me hard. I love it when a story surprised me. **Jennie:** Jennie was a genuinely likeable character with a lot of spunk, especially for a nineteenth century girl. I really felt for her and cared about her plight. She pulled me into the story and made it very

real.DISLIKES:Kissing cousins, no seriously: First off let me say that I understand that it was common practice until fairly recently (in the grand scheme of things) for people to marry cousins. That being said, it still creeps me right out. For whatever reason I just can't put it in the context of "that was then, this is now". This is probably because I grew up being very close to my cousins. They were like my siblings so the idea of being romantically involved with one of them makes me want to heave. Jennie isn't just involved with one, but two cousins, with whom she has lived for the past several years after the deaths of her parents. This is probably the thing that bothered me most about the book.It could have been scarier: I was looking forward to a scary read and, while spooky, I wouldn't call this book scary. It really read more like an historical fiction with some ghostly elements. I would have like to have seen a bit more creepiness.Jennie's Uncle: This character really didn't add much to the story except to underline Jennie's desperate situation. I wish he would have been developed a bit more.When all is said and done, Picture the Dead is exactly what it claims to be: a spooky, romantic story with some really great twists and turns. The illustrations and the scrapbook idea only adds to the story and the overall ambiance of the tale. This is a quick, fun read that is sure to keep the reader guessing.

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