



The Old Willis Place

By Mary Downing Hahn

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Diana and her little brother Georgie have been living in the woods behind the old Willis place, a decaying Victorian mansion, for what already seems like forever. They aren't allowed to leave the property or show themselves to anyone. But when a new caretaker comes to live there with his young daughter, Lissa, Diana is tempted to break the mysterious rules they live by and reveal herself so she can finally have a friend. Somehow, Diana must get Lissa's help if she and Georgie ever hope to release themselves from the secret that has bound them to the old Willis place for so long.

Mary Downing Hahn has written a chilling ghost story in the tradition of her most successful spine-tingling novels. The intriguing characters, frightening secrets, and plot twists will delight her many fans.

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Starred Review. Grade 5-8—Diana and her younger brother, Georgie, have been living on the grounds of the old Willis place for oh, so long. They've seen caretakers come and go, but the new one seems different. Mr. Morrison has a daughter, Lissa, who seems to be about Diana's age. Both girls are lonely and long for a friend but Georgie reminds Diana that it's "against the rules" to have friends; that they must remain out of sight. But Lissa remains intriguing to the children. She not only has a bicycle, but she also has many books and a stuffed animal that reminds Georgie of one he once had. They share even more; Lissa, too, has suffered a huge loss. Masterfully constructed, the story shows readers the same events from the perspectives of both girls; Diana narrates, and Lissa writes in her diary. The combination builds tension, raises questions, and allows characters—and the mysteries that surround them—to unfold gradually. The story is taut, spooky, and fast-paced with amazingly credible, memorable characters. More than just a ghost story, this riveting novel is a mystery and a story of friendship and of redemption. After this tale, readers are not likely to think of ghosts in the same way.—*Maria B. Salvadore, formerly at Washington DC Public Library*

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From [Booklist](#)

Gr. 4-7. Hahn is a master at stretching the suspense, and that's what she does here. Diana and her little brother, Georgie, watch as the caretaker and his daughter move into a trailer near the decaying Willis mansion. The children have seen caretakers come and go, but Diana, who has no friends, is tempted by the sight of a girl her own age. Hahn unfurls the story slowly, but because of the subtitle, readers will know there's a ghost. They'll assume it's wicked Miss Willis, who died in the house, but soon they'll start wondering about Diana and Georgie, too. Where are their parents? What are these arcane rules they seem to live by? To Hahn's credit, children won't be entirely sure of the answers until the very end. Some of the action is told through Lissa's diary. Most of the time this works, but it's too bad the climax is revealed this way as the device puts a barrier between readers and the action. Kids will love this anyway: it's just the right mix of chilling and thrilling. *Ilene Cooper*

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Review

"Hahn is a master at...suspense....Kids will love this; it's just the right mix of chilling and thrilling."

—BOOKLIST Booklist, ALA

"The young characters...are sympathetic and believable...Spooky, but with an underlying sweetness."

— KIRKUS REVIEWS Kirkus Reviews

"Hahn's sure hand at haunting is evident...creepy and enjoyable...it'll need no ghostly assistance to fly off the shelves" —BCCB Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books

"Masterfully constructed...taut, spooky, and fast-paced with amazingly credible, memorable characters...riveting...a story of friendship and redemption" —School Library Journal, Starred

"a mystery intertwined with a ghost story...a delicate message of guilt, forgiveness, loyalty, and friendship...a satisfying ending." —VOYA (Voice of Youth Advocates)

Users Review

From reader reviews:

David Barthel:

Book is to be different for every single grade. Book for children until eventually adult are different content. As we know that book is very important for all of us. The book The Old Willis Place seemed to be making you to know about other understanding and of course you can take more information. It is very advantages for you. The e-book The Old Willis Place is not only giving you much more new information but also to be your friend when you sense bored. You can spend your current spend time to read your guide. Try to make relationship with the book The Old Willis Place. You never sense lose out for everything if you read some books.

Tammy Mangold:

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Beth Call:

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Kimberly Silvestre:

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