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The Peculiar Peggs of Riddling Woods

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~~Not a Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

4

?Why hasn't mum visited Gran for so long?? Poppy wonders, when she goes to stay in the quaintly named village of Suds after her mother's death. And why does Gran have such strange house rules? Washing must be brought in from the line before six p.m., wet or dry; all sugar cubes must be kept under lock and key; the windows are to be closed and locked at night, with the curtains drawn; and ?NEVER, DON'T YOU EVER, dust the window sills.? Poppy is already an anxious child but, it slowly becomes clear, there is a lot in Suds to make her downright terrified. Why do children apparently slowly fade away? What is the old man feeding with cat meat through a door in the floor of his houseboat? And what is the mystery of the mill in Riddling Woods that floats such finely crafted cloth down to the village? Debut novelist Samuel J Halpin builds up the macabre atmosphere carefully, amidst the rather more mundane pains and pleasures of Poppy establishing herself at a new school. A mixed pleasure is her friendship with the extraordinary Erasmus Tall. This is a boy whose desire for answers and unshakeable belief in his capacity to find them, leads both of them further and further towards a horrifying confrontation. Halpin has a nice turn of phrase and this is an ingenious and original story. It intrigues and grips from the very beginning; and its final solution is suitably bizarre and disturbing, relieved only by the reader's awareness that the author has his tongue firmly in his cheek.

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