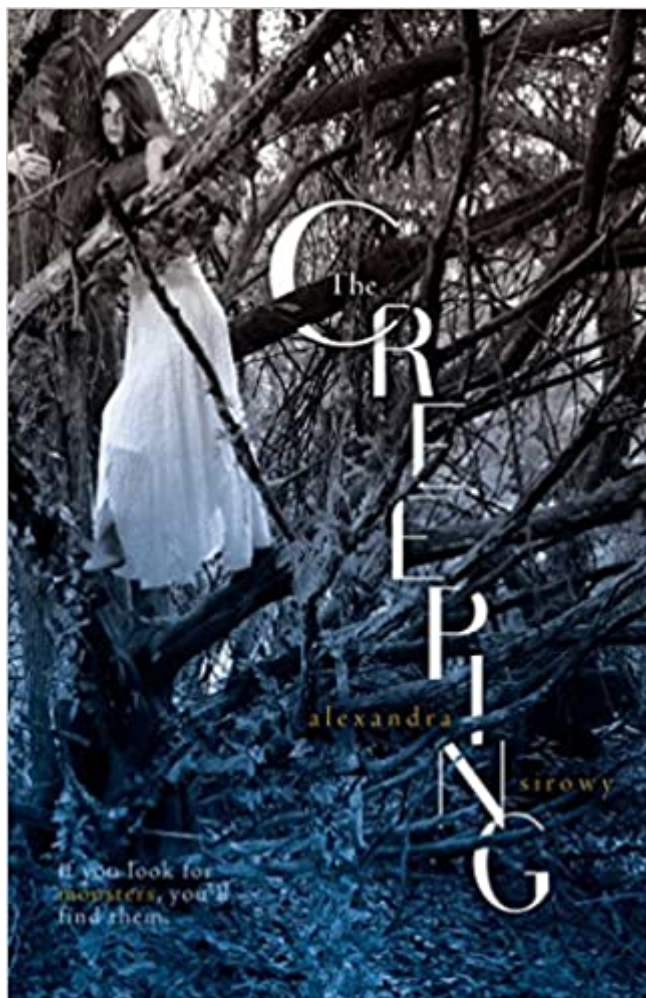


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The Creeping



Synopsis

Romance, friendship, and dark, bone-chilling fear fill the pages of this “genuine and truly eerie” (RT Book Reviews) debut in the spirit of *Miss Peregrine’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 she’s over it. She’s the lucky one who survived, and sure, the case is still cloaked in mystery and it’s her small town’s ugly legacy—but Stella is focused on the coming summer. She’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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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Gr 9 Up •Eleven years after two six-year-old girls disappear from the appropriately named

town of Savage, this satisfyingly chilling debut finds 17-year-old Stella, the girl who returned, trying to figure out a way to move on from the tragedy. The mystery of why Stella made it back while her friend Jeanie did not has never been solved, nor has Jeanie's body ever been recovered, and Stella has no memory of the event. However, when the teen stumbles upon another little girl's corpse on the anniversary of Jeanie's disappearance, shards of memories from her younger self push their way through and she starts trying to find more answers. Burgeoning love interest Sam and bubbly best friend Zoey might not get along, but they provide solid supporting roles in her search, and a cast of typical small-town characters (the quirky, and witchlike neighbor who spouts vaguely useful clues and the helpful but possibly reliable policeman who might not be as trustworthy as Stella originally believes) lend a hand as well. Sirowy successfully weaves in an unnerving supernatural backstory, but the book's very human conclusion is far more frightening than any of the town's superstitions. VERDICT A solid choice for horror fans, this novel will is a spook-tastic spine-tingler. —Joanna Sondheim, Columbia Grammar & Preparatory School, New York City --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

"A small town legend, a missing redhead, a monster in the forest...Sirowy's *The Creeping* is a haunting, modern day folktale, in the darkest sense of the word. Fantastic." (April Genevieve Tucholke, author of *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*) "Leave[s] chills long after the last page." (Publishers Weekly) "Genuine and truly eerie. Readers will be up all night finishing Sirowy's debut." (Romantic Times) "Sirowy successfully weaves in an unnerving supernatural backstory, but the book's very human conclusion is far more frightening than any of the town's superstitions. A solid choice for horror fans, this novel will is a spook-tastic spine-tingler." (School Library Journal) "Delivers with a nicely suspenseful plot that builds to a crisis point. Intriguing all the way through." (Kirkus Reviews) "[For] horror fans looking for a creepy thrill." (BCCB)

It is not gore and bodies dropping left and right like a slasher, nor is it full of breathless thrills like many murder mysteries. There's no big surprise twist. That is not to say it is predictable; because it isn't predictable at all. It's just that everything, every person, every landmark, every event is so realized that the conclusion feels satisfyingly inevitable. You don't go, 'whoa I didn't see that coming!' you go 'wow OK that explains so much'. You don't see it coming but once it's there, it's as if it's always been and you somehow failed to notice it. This story builds upon itself at an exponential rate. While the title refers to something else entirely, creeping is an apt description for how the plot grows. It's like stumbling upon an abandoned building and finding little bits of evidence that

something in the building's history is rotten and that tension of feeling like the answers are there but not being able to figure it out. And you get more and more tense and spooked and that sensation that someone or something is watching you from the shadows. While many things are tied up, nothing is tied up in one big neat bow. They are smaller, messier bows. And you're still left wondering if there's more to it, the ending leaving you with vague hope/dread that it isn't all she wrote. There's no black and white characters, no heroes vs villains. Everyone is a little good and a little bad. Doubt is cast on every single person as you and the main character start putting pieces together. Stella is selfish and self-obsessed, but also lost and brave and determined. Zoey is a hot mess with a slytherin esque ambition. Some characters are more than a little shady, but at the same time fair, or generous but cowardly, clingy and brave. The bad aren't entirely bad and the good aren't entirely trustworthy.

One of my first thrillers of the season--ish was Alexandra Sirowy's debut *The Creeping!* And while I found it to be very intriguing and mysterious, it wasn't exactly all I had hoped for. *The Creeping* definitely has some chilling moments, but I found it to be more mysterious than "thrilling". When Stella was six years old, she and Janie disappeared, and only Stella came back. She could never remember what happened to Janie. It's assumed that she's dead now that eleven years has passed, but no one's really forgotten the case. Neither Stella, the detective still working the case, Janie's family, and other members of town. When a new body of a little girl who resembles Janie shows up, the case is blown open once again as the police try to find the mysterious child killer. Where to begin with this book...I have to admit Stella was a hard character to like. She wasn't the best of people, and I think that can be blamed on her best friend Zoey, who was a total witch with a B. Zoey is the ultimate party girl, she's selfish and is all about being the most popular and dating only the hottest guys. Years ago, she even made Stella choose between her and her other best friend Sam. And naturally, Stella chose Zoey, leaving Sam in the dust. Sam amazed me! He was the kind of guy who could forgive and forget. He didn't care that Stella treated him like dirt over the past few years. He still tried to be her friend all this time, with a smile here, a friendly inquiry there. And Stella blew him off again and again, because it's what Zoey wanted. Yes, she's the kind of girl who basically does what her "best friend" tells her to do. And it didn't help that Zoey was kind of hard to like. She had her moments where you could see that she did care for Stella. They were friends after all, but more often than not, she didn't show her that kindness, it was more excessive teasing or basically witchiness. Anyway, Stella struggles to remember that day long ago about what happened to Janie. It's likely the killer is back due to the new dead little girl. But other things keep

happening that start making her question if it truly is the same killer. There were past murders and talks of a monster like creature who lives in the woods and demands sacrifices to be paid in order for there to be peace in the town. Trying to figure out what's fact from fiction becomes a challenge. That, and it's very clear that someone is stalking Stella. Naturally, old sparks start to fly between Stella and Sam. I liked Sam a lot, though Stella was harder to like. She does change for the better, but at times it feels too hard to believe that she won't revert to her old ways, but I think that's just the pessimist in me. I like to believe people can change for the better, it's just harder to see. Even in fiction, it would seem. While there were some suspenseful moments, there were a little more few and far between. I wasn't feeling that chill creep up the back of my neck when reading, sadly. Though I will say the mystery was good. It was very well built up with clues and puzzles, and then the reveal was quite shocking. Since it took me a bit longer to read this one, I can't really say if I saw it coming. It was definitely a shock though! The story wrapped up rather well, though I felt like the reveal came a bit too soon and the final wrapup was a bit drawn out. I mean, once you know the whodunit, there's very little patience left, because what else is there to learn? There were about 40 pages or so left in the book after the reveal. I felt like those could've been wrapped up a little neater or at least make the reveal happen later. The ending was just a tad drawn out. While *The Creeping* wasn't a perfect read, it was still a pretty good one! I enjoyed it to a point and will definitely keep my eye out for Alexandra Sirowy's name because she is an author I won't be forgetting any time soon! Overall Rating 3.5/5 stars

An excellent book. I loved it. It was spooky and creepy. The setting was dark and eerie. The plot, about the monster in the woods who eats redheaded children was chilling. The characters were well-rounded. At first I didn't really like them. Stella and Zoey are quintessential mean girls. But after a while, they become more complex and sympathetic, and they grew on me. I like the nostalgic theme of all these characters having been friends as children, hearing the horror stories, and going hunting for monsters. Only one of them doesn't come back. In the aftermath, the remaining friends grow up and grow apart, but they can't quite get over, or in Stella's case, remember what happened. It gets pretty gruesome, especially for a young adult book. It's definitely for older teens. But I loved it, from beginning to end.

The story and characters are well written. It's intriguing and I was riveted from the start. Didn't like the sex scene, didn't feel it was needed but I suppose it's realistic these days. I'm a bit confused by a coyote of things, her memory of a gnarled hand grabbing Jeanie and blood running down her

head in one memory but at the end of was an arrow to the abdomen.

The ending seemed rushed to tie up loose ends with little detail. Many of the facts going back and telling the reader what happened days and weeks prior in an effort to clean up the story. A real let down.

I wanted to love this book. It looked good and creepy. But by 50 pages in, I still wasn't gripped by the story. Maybe I should give it another try, but I just found I didn't care enough about the main character to keep going.

I stumbled upon this book while searching for another. Although listed as young adult, it read well. After the 3rd chapter, I couldn't stop reading it. Very well done. Plot is twisty and jaw dropping. I highly recommend this book.

This book started a bit slow. Normally I prefer books to keep feeding me info, but this one held it all in until the end! It even spooked me (and CREEPed me out a bit!). Great read.

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