



The Lake of Dead Languages: A Novel

By Carol Goodman

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In the evocative tradition of Donna Tartt's first novel, *The Secret History*, comes this accomplished debut of youthful innocence drowned by dark sins. Twenty years ago, Jane Hudson left the Heart Lake School for Girls in the Adirondacks after a terrible tragedy. Now she has returned to the placid, isolated shores of the lakeside school as a Latin teacher, recently separated and hoping to make a fresh start with her young daughter. But ominous messages from the past dredge up forgotten memories that will become a living nightmare.

Since freshmen year, Jane and her two roommates, Lucy Toller and Deirdre Hall, were inseparable—studying the classics, performing school girl rituals on the lake, and sneaking out after curfew to meet Lucy's charismatic brother Matt. However, the last winter before graduation, everything changed. For in that sheltered, ice-encrusted wonderland, three lives were taken, all victims of senseless suicide. Only Jane was left to carry the burden of a mystery that has stayed hidden for more than two decades in the dark depths of Heart Lake.

Now pages from Jane's missing journal, written during that tragic time, have reappeared, revealing shocking, long-buried secrets. And suddenly, young, troubled girls are beginning to die again . . . as piece by piece the shattering truth slowly floats to the surface.

At once compelling, sensuous, and intelligent, *The Lake of Dead Languages* is an eloquent thriller, an intricate balance of suspense and fine storytelling that proves Carol Goodman is a rare new talent with a brilliant future.

From the Hardcover edition.

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The Lake of Dead Languages: A Novel By Carol Goodman Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #2646558 in Books
- Brand: Ballantine Books
- Published on: 2005-12-27
- Released on: 2005-12-27
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 6.75" h x 1.22" w x 4.16" l,
- Binding: Mass Market Paperback
- 432 pages

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Penzler Pick, February 2002: It has been 20 years since Jane Hudson graduated from Heart Lake School in the Adirondacks. After marrying, having a child, and separating from her husband, she returns to her old, all-girls school to teach Latin.

Heart Lake, like many schools, has its legends, the most persistent being that the lake claims the lives of students. All three daughters of the founder of the school were drowned in it, and while the bodies were never found, it is said that three rocks rose out of the water to lure young girls to their doom. Jane is more than aware of this legend. When she was at school, two of her contemporaries drowned in the lake, and Jane has always felt that it was looking for a third victim--herself.

While she does not discuss this with her students, she is aware that they know of the legend. Her three most promising students room together, are close to each other, and look on Jane as their special teacher, a situation that mirrors Jane's experience as a student. But soon Jane is into a routine, has renewed her acquaintance with teachers, now colleagues, who are still at Heart Lake, and has met other teachers new to her.

But when a portion of her journal is left for her to see, Jane is puzzled. She has not seen the journal since she left school. Then one of her students almost drowns in what appears to be a suicide attempt, and Jane realizes that the nightmare she lived through at school may be recurring.

Jane tries to piece together what really happened in her school days and what is happening now. As a young girl, Jane was poor and managed to get to Heart Lake because she won a scholarship. She was befriended by the charismatic Lucy and her brother Matt, and it is with Lucy that she roomed, together with Deirdre. The three girls bonded with their Latin teacher, Helen Chambers. As we learn more about Jane's school days and contrast it with what is happening 20 years later, it becomes obvious that history is repeating itself--or someone is trying to make it seem that way.

While it takes a while for the pieces to fall into place, this compelling first novel is as much about the charged atmosphere of adolescents and their new and sometimes dangerous emotions as it is about what exactly is happening at Heart Lake School and why. You will want to know the answers. --*Otto Penzler*

From Publishers Weekly

Goodman debuts strongly with this intricately plotted and captivating tale of buried secrets. When Jane Hudson returns to her high school alma mater, the Heart Lake School for Girls, as a Latin teacher, tragic events of the past begin to resurface. Twenty years earlier at Heart Lake, roommates Jane, Lucy and Deirdre were inseparable. They studied the classics together under the tutelage of the mesmerizing Helen Chambers, sneaking out for midnight skinny dipping in the lake and meeting Lucy's brother, Matt, in the sheltered woods of the campus. Their clandestine friendship ended in the winter of senior year, amid scandal and suicide. Only Jane knows the truth behind the mystery of Matt and the other girls' deaths and now, two decades later, the secret comes back to haunt her: someone has found her missing journal, written during that tragic time, and begins a macabre re-enactment of the past. When one of Jane's troubled young students is found dead in the frigid waters of Heart Lake, an apparent suicide, the school board suspects Jane is the harmful influence. The dark and shocking secrets of Jane's adolescence, revealed gradually in flashbacks, progressively absorb the reader until the final disquieting denouement. Sexual rites, pagan rituals and

forbidden love all come together in this deft exploration of youthful innocence and guilt. Goodman weaves ancient mythology with modern legend into a chilling and evocative story of deception and complicity. (Jan. 2)Forecast: Marketing plans include a major national ad campaign and a five-city author tour. Though a bit less sophisticated than Donna Tartt's *The Secret History*, the novel will appeal to the same audience. The beautifully spooky cover image of a female figure standing on the surface of a moonlit lake will intrigue browsers.

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From Library Journal

When Jane returns to teach at the Heart Lake School, where three friends committed suicide, she encounters more death and pages from a missing journal she kept at the time. A highly touted first novel.

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Pamela Bradley:

In this 21st hundred years, people become competitive in every single way. By being competitive now, people have do something to make these individuals survives, being in the middle of typically the crowded place and notice simply by surrounding. One thing that at times many people have underestimated the idea for a while is reading. Yep, by reading a book your ability to survive increase then having chance to remain than other is high. For yourself who want to start reading any book, we give you this kind of *The Lake of Dead Languages: A Novel* book as beginner and daily reading e-book. Why, because this book is greater than just a book.

Mary Bradford:

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Kent Brown:

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Joseph Boyd:

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