



Deception (Haunting Emma)

By Lee Nichols

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When Emma Vaile's parents leave on mysterious business trip, it gives her the perfect excuse to be a rebellious teen. Throw some parties, get a tattoo (or maybe just a piercing), and enjoy the first few weeks of her junior year. Then her best friend stops talking to her, the cops crash her party, and Emma finds herself in the hands of a new guardian-her college-age "knight in J.Crew armor," Bennett Stern-and on a plane to his museum-like mansion in New England.

After enrolling at Thatcher Academy, Emma settles in by making friends with the popular legacy crowd. But she can't shake the strange visions that are haunting her. She has memories of Thatcher she can't explain, as if she's returning home to a place she's never been. Emma doesn't trust anyone anymore-except maybe Bennett. But he's about to reveal a ghostly secret to Emma. One that will explain the visions . . . and make Emma fear for her life.

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Grade 8 Up—With her antiquities-dealer parents supposedly away on vacation, big brother Max somewhere abroad, and former best friend ignoring her, Emma Vaile, 17, is alone in San Francisco. Expecting freedom, she finds loneliness and trouble instead. Being abandoned and ratted out to Child Protective Services are bad enough, but there's also the return of disturbing visions she hasn't had for a decade. Then Max's ex-friend and Emma's long-standing crush, Bennett Stern, appears with guardianship papers. Taking Emma to his family's Massachusetts mansion/museum, he enrolls her in Thatcher Academy, where she experiences acute *déjà vu*. Concerned for her sanity, Emma eventually admits that she sees ghosts. Aloof Bennett reveals that they both have the ability to communicate with them. Someone or something is murdering ghostkeepers and leaving behind a symbol: the design on Emma's mother's unique pendant. The whereabouts of Emma's family, whether Emma and Bennett will (should) be together, and whether he can be trusted are questions to be answered. In this first book in a series, Nichols has left threads untied for future installments. Occasionally, the dialogue is trite and the action cartoonish, but the ghostkeeper premise, lingering mystery, and Emma/Bennett relationship compel the curious to return. Magical ancestors and passed-down powers aside, the novel is not of the caliber of Kami Garcia and Margaret Stohl's emotionally investing *Beautiful Creatures* (Little, Brown, 2009), but it will appeal to teens craving a quick read.—Danielle Serra, Cliffside Park Public Library, NJ

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From [Booklist](#)

Seventeen-year-old Emma has never really felt a part of her family. Then her parents leave her alone in their San Francisco antique store/home while they go on “vacation.” They don't come back, and Emma can't reach her brother, Max. Max's friend Bennett appears, claiming to be her guardian, and whiskers Emma to Boston, where he enrolls her in school and slowly reveals that she's a ghostkeeper, someone who can see and call forth ghosts. So that's why Emma's been seeing all those weird people in period costumes! After a strong start, this fantasy drags until the revelation of Emma's powers. Then it's full speed ahead as an evil force gathers strength and leads Emma's friend into the dangers of the ghostly world. Romance is one of the main reasons readers will keep turning the pages; the end contains a shocker that will leave them anxious for the next book in the Haunting Emma series. Grades 8-12. --Ilene Cooper

Review

Praise for Hand-Me-Down: 'Nichols is one of chick lit's brightest lights' Publishers Weekly Praise for Deception: 'Adorable, quirky and kind of creepy, I think it's impossible not to fall in love with Lee Nichols' latest book' Carrie Jones, author of *Need* and *Captivate*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Cleveland Wheeler:

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Amanda Bernard:

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