



The Secret Life of Sparrow Delaney

By Suzanne Harper

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How do you ignore a ghost?

Sparrow Delaney absolutely, positively does not want to be a medium like her six older sisters, her mother, and her grandmother. She does *not* want to see, hear, smell, or talk to ghosts. If she sticks to her rules and doesn't let anyone know that she can do all those things—everywhere, all the time—Sparrow just might pass as a normal tenth grader at her new high school. She makes a new best friend and meets an irritatingly appealing guy in her history class. But when another boy catches her eye, all Sparrow's dreams of being ordinary go up in smoke. Because *this* boy is a dead one—a persistent, charming, infuriating ghost, who won't let her be until she agrees to help him Move On.

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Editorial Review

From [Booklist](#)

As the seventh daughter of a psychic, great things are expected of Sparrow, but she wants none of it, going so far as to begin her freshman year at a new high school, a bus ride away from Lily Dale, a real-life New York town centered on spiritualism. Nor has she mentioned to her family that she has been talking to spirit guides and seeing ghosts since she was five. But her life plan to eschew the psychic limelight begins to unravel when Luke, a teenage ghost, appears to insist she help him resolve issues that are keeping him from reaching the other side. It won't take readers too long to realize that the sullen (but handsome!) boy she's paired on a project with is Luke's brother, who vehemently denies ghosts and fervently believes his brother is alive. Harper gets everything right here. The intriguing premise is developed into a well-plotted story featuring a range of compelling characters, only some of whom are flesh and blood. A wistful subplot about Sparrow's missing father stays hauntingly unresolved. Cooper, Ilene

Review

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Harper's (*Boitano's Edge*) polished debut novel couches an unexpectedly poignant meditation on loss in a quick-moving plot about ghosts and the spiritual mediums who communicate with them. Fifteen-year-old Sparrow Delaney is the seventh daughter of a seventh daughter and therefore highly gifted in the psychic arts. The only problem: she wants nothing to do with her talent. She trains herself to ignore the ghosts that compete for her attention, at least in the presence of her family and fellow citizens of Lily Dale, N.Y., a (real-life) town that attracts tourists with its famous spiritualists and Spirit meetings. But how can Sparrow shake off the teenage ghost who refuses to stop haunting her unless she helps him, and what does he have to do with the cute boy in the new school she's transferred to in hopes of escaping the Lily Dale weirdness? A steady stream of wit refreshes familiar-seeming story elements. Harper serves up pitch-perfect dialogue from high school athletes and teachers; squabbling mediums; and such clever flourishes as the grandfatherly baker, the 19th-century young Indian gentleman and the exacting female professor who serve as Sparrow's spirit guides. Surprise turns add to the plot's pleasures, but what makes this book stand out most is Harper's attention to the pockets of sorrow in her characters' histories, each of them handled with care. For all of the imagination the author displays in inventing a spirit world, she shows equal skill in probing the nuances of tender emotions, too. -- *Publishers Weekly*

There's no getting around it: Sparrow Delaney's family is eccentric. She, her six older sisters, her mother and her grandmother live together in an old house that contains one bathroom, four graves in the front yard, bamboo skulls on the porch . . . and a room for communicating with ghosts. That's because the Delaney family is one of the oldest families of mediums in the very old town of Lily Dale. Out of all the mysteries within her family, though, the biggest secret actually belongs to Sparrow. For the past 15 years, she has been consoling her family, who are sorry that her own psychic abilities seem to be nonexistent, in spite of her potential as the seventh child of a seventh child. She's been lying. The only "people" from whom Sparrow

cannot hide her abilities are the spirits themselves, but up until her 15th birthday, she just ignored them: she has seen the impoverished, ridiculed life that comes from being a medium, and she wants no part of it. Then she meets Luke, a ghost who is haunting a mysterious (and very cute) boy in Sparrow's history class named Jack. As Sparrow gets to know both Luke and Jack, she wonders if she needs to rethink her stance on being a psychic after all. Sparrow Delaney is the sort of character who is exactly calculated to make the reader fall immediately and irrevocably in love with her, and the book's mystery-laden plot demands "just five more pages" of its reader all the way to its end. Harper alludes to *Pride and Prejudice* several times throughout the book, and any Jane Austen fan will appreciate the similarities between that story and this one (including a rather unexpected and satisfying ending!). With its masterful charm and superbly creative storyline, the only possible fault with this book is that Harper has not already written two or three sequels to it. -- *Cara Chancellor, Kliatt*
Starred Review

What high-school kid wants to be a freak, especially the kind who talks to dead people? Not Sparrow Delaney, which is why she's keeping the secret from her family of seven women, all skilled mediums, that she can see and talk to ghosts. Evidently, as the seventh daughter of a seventh daughter, she has a special psychic gift, but when the ghost of a teenage boy appears to her in her classroom and pleads for her help, she can't ignore him. The current abundance of supernatural and occult books usually have historical settings, but the clever twist in this offering casts Sparrow's family in contemporary Lily Dale, N. Y., a Spiritualist community. Early references to thrift stores and computers clue the reader as modern trappings enhance the confrontations and dilemmas between the dearly departed and the visionary living. Idiosyncratic sisters (all named for birds by their ornithologist father who's now missing), budding romance, a mysterious fatal accident and a live-wire grandmother all test Sparrow's own spirit as she faces her destiny. Sparrow's plight give new meaning to "not a ghost of a chance"--an entertaining one. -- *Kirkus Reviews*

About the Author

Suzanne Harper grew up in Texas and lives in New York City.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Bernice Hicks:

Do you one of people who can't read enjoyable if the sentence chained within the straightway, hold on guys this aren't like that. This The Secret Life of Sparrow Delaney book is readable by simply you who hate those straight word style. You will find the data here are arrange for enjoyable looking at experience without leaving possibly decrease the knowledge that want to supply to you. The writer connected with The Secret Life of Sparrow Delaney content conveys the idea easily to understand by many individuals. The printed and e-book are not different in the written content but it just different such as it. So , do you nonetheless thinking The Secret Life of Sparrow Delaney is not loveable to be your top listing reading book?

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