

# Silent Sister

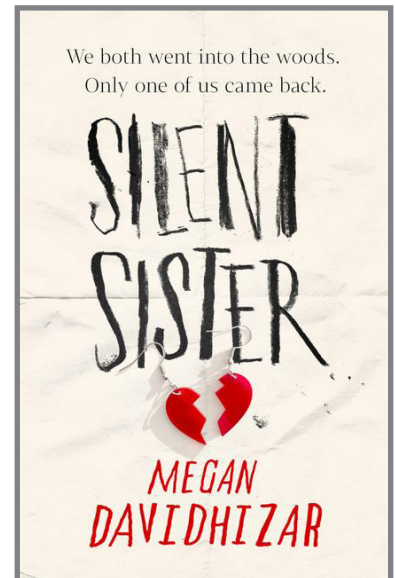
AUTHOR

**MEGAN DAVIDHIZAR**

SCIS: 5494663

ISBN: 9780008617004

**RECOMMENDED FOR:** Lower to Mid Secondary  
(Suicide References/Ideation)



## SYNOPSIS

Grace can't remember how her sister Maddy disappeared, and even the police think she's lying. But it's hard to look innocent with a missing girl's blood on your clothes . . .

One week earlier, Maddy—rejected for the college scholarship of her dreams, abandoned by her only friend on her birthday—was tired of living in Grace's shadow. She was ready to be someone new, which was exactly what was promised by an exclusive senior trip at their expensive private school.

But eighteen years' worth of awkwardness didn't evaporate just because Maddy was holed up in a mountain lodge with thirty classmates, playing games and learning so-called life lessons.

Now, without her memories of the trip, Grace must piece together notebook entries and classmates' revelations to discover how her sister disappeared. And unless Grace can find out what happened to Maddy, she'll never clear her conscience—or her name.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Megan Davidhizar grew up moving around the American Midwest. She now spends her mornings wishing she liked coffee, her days learning from the students in her English classroom, and her evenings reading stories to her three children while her husband tries to convince them the movies are better.

## STUDY NOTES

- Consider the cover and discuss the following questions:
  - The tagline suggests the genre—what would students predict?
  - The image of the earrings can have two meanings—often used in jewellery to indicate 'best friends', but is also a 'broken heart' of the traditional meaning—could it be both?
  - Why might someone be silent? Eg. mute (either selective or physiological), restrained forcibly or emotionally, unconscious/comatose/dead, etc.
- Using descriptions from the narrative, have students create an image (using whatever means are appropriate) of Shady Oaks Lodge. See p 48.
- Pause at p 110, after the following passage, for a class discussion: 'How do you think you got that blow? Or that bruise? How did you get to the lake? Why were you there in the rain?' Based on what you've read so far, brainstorm

what could have transpired.

- The author has chosen a first-person narrative told alternately by Maddy and Grace. The narrative is also punctuated by Maddy's poetry. How does this impact or create mood/tone/purpose? How does it help propel the narrative or complete a backstory?
- 'A rumour exposing what Krista Hawthorne and Ryan Jacobs did over the weekend burns through the school like a forest fire, yet everyone who attends FLA's senior trip is able to keep the traditions and events a secret, only admitting vague hints in cryptic phrases like, Breathe the 5th.'(p 54). Discuss the power, harm and negativity of gossip and rumours, including that of online platforms.
- 'She might as well be standing in the middle of a poorly decorated gym with his hands on her hips and hers around his neck. It doesn't matter that we're not in eighth grade anymore. With a single smile, she can still steal every gaze, including the only eyes that glanced my way. I will never forgive her for this . . .' (p 314). Discuss the dynamic between the sisters, especially the misunderstandings, the hidden emotions as well as the overt behaviours.
  - After finding Maddy's notebook, Grace comes to understand her sister in a new way, including their quite different experiences of high school. How does this affect Grace's grief over losing Maddy?
- After finishing *Silent Sister*, plot all of the clues in the novel.
  - Which ones led directly to Grace uncovering the killer?
  - Did any lead Grace indirectly to the murderer?
  - Which clues were 'red herrings'?
  - How did the unravelling of these clues help to create tension in the novel?