



## Secrets at Camp Nokomis: A Rebecca Mystery

*Jacqueline Dembar Greene, Jennifer Hirsch (Editor), Jean-Paul Tibbles (Illustrator)*

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Rebecca loves everything about summer camp, but making friends turns out to be harder than she expected. What secret is her bunkmate hiding--and why? When camp pranks start getting out of hand and a girl goes missing, Rebecca is determined to find out what's really going on at Camp Nokomis. At the end of the story, the Looking Back section provides interesting facts about summer camps in Rebecca's time.

## **Secrets at Camp Nokomis: A Rebecca Mystery Details**

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## From Reader Review Secrets at Camp Nokomis: A Rebecca Mystery for online ebook

### 704Majka says

This book was good but I thought it was kind of slow.

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### Talia says

Rebecca is lucky enough to get to go to a week-long sleepaway camp, far away from the city and the current polio scare. At camp, Rebecca is excited to make friends, learn to swim, and perform as the narrator for a camp skit, but she feels her bunkmate Tina is harboring a deep, dark secret.

Meh. The “mystery” within this book was ridiculously easy to figure out, and I was kinda disappointed that Rebecca couldn’t figure it out sooner. I’ve liked other Rebecca stories more.

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### Amanda Kay says

Read all of the Rebecca mysteries today, and this was one was a gem. I believe I had actually read it before for a Children's Lit class, but it was a nice little reread. Good character development for Rebecca, and I do really love that Rebecca's stories let you see so many different sides of turn of the century NYC.

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### Bree says

This is the first AG Mystery I've read. I'm delighted that they decided to continue on with the historical characters past the core 6 "lessons" books, and it's clear they are marketing to a slightly older reader, with the lack of pictures and heavier on lengthly text. I'm sure that the older part of their target audience loves mysteries and it might extend the playability of the doll for the owner, but I'm not sure if I'm going to read any others.

The story starts off interesting, if a bit unsubtle, in its build up of Rebecca going off to a free camp alone because her friend Rose is quarantined due to the polio outbreak. It swiftly transitions to the dynamics between the campers, and it devolves from there. Most of the campers are caricatures, not real characters, particularly the bossy, bullying Corky. Rebecca doesn't get up the nerve to deal with her, and it costs her later. It is nice to see the friendship blossoming between Rebecca and Tina. Strangely, we get less insight into camping in 1914 then we do in Molly's core book.

I figured out the mystery before the mystery even happened, but I'm not sure the target audience would. I do think the dynamics of the relationships and interactions of 11 year olds is realistic, and Rebecca learns quickly that her own inaction gets turned right back at her when the shoe is on the other foot.

I read this last week, and I already can't recall if there was a Looking Back section. So it was either not very memorable, or they skip it in the historical mysteries.

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### **Sydney says**

Rebecca goes to camp and notices that her bunkmate is limping. While they were playing a game Corky one of the camp girls opened this lid that belonged to Rebecca's bunkmate and inside was a cast which meant Tina (Rebecca's bunkmate) had polio....

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### **Laura says**

This is a good summer story that highlights the threat of polio. Rebecca learns how to be friends with a different set of girls at camp and solves a mystery in the process.

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### **Ashley says**

Rebecca is off to summer camp, where she can't wait to swim, canoe, and meet new girls. She loves the shivery tales told around the campfire and seeing the stars and fireflies at night, but making friends turns out to be harder than she expected. What secrets is her bunk mate hiding - and why? When camp pranks start getting out of hand and a girl goes missing, Rebecca is determined to find out what's really going on at Camp Nokomis.

Age 9 and up.

**About the Author:** Jacqueline Dembar Greene is the author of more than thirty fiction and nonfiction books for young readers. The camp setting for Secrets at Camp Nokomis was inspired by her research for the American Girl series about Rebecca Rubin. Ms. Greene's previous studies of Native American Lore and her interest in ancient caves added to the mystery's plot. She has walked, swam, slid, crawled, and squeezed through caves and caverns throughout North America, Mexico, Puerto Rico, and Europe. She especially loves the random caves scattered around the Hudson Valley of New York, where each one seems to hold its own silent secrets. Ms. Greene lives in Wayland, Massachusetts, with her husband. In addition to writing, she loves to hike, garden, and travel off the beaten path.

I loved every minute of this thrilling mystery. I love everything American Girl, the stories are always awesome!

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### **Ciara says**

Rebecca is eleven now, it's 1916, & her name was chosen by the children's charity to go to sleepaway camp in the country for one week. Her friend Rose was supposed to go too, but a boy in her building was diagnosed with polio, & the entire building was quarantined. Rebecca & all the other campers from the city have to present the town where the camp is located with health certificates identifying them as polio-free. Rebecca is

really sad that rose can't join her, & she's worried about the polio epidemic in the city--kids get a fever, & the next day, they're paralyzed or dead. but she's excited about camp & she hopes to become fast friends with all the other girls in her tent. she plans to learn how to swim so she can go on a canoe trip, & when she learns that the entire camp will be staging a production of "the song of hiawatha," she decides to try out for narrator.

there are two notable characters in rebecca's tent. corky is a bossy irish redhead who comes up with cute nicknames for the other campers, but seems to have a mysterious manipulative streak. she occasionally pulls pranks on the other campers & acts like she knows everything because she'd been at camp the summer before. tina is small for her age & reluctant to change or bathe in front of the other girls. she also occasionally disappears during lessons, & is a target for corky's bullying tendencies. rebecca & tina share a bunk, & rebecca decides to draw out a friendship with tina. but as camp progresses, she begins to realize that she has told tina all about herself, but tina hasn't reciprocated. rebecca wonders how much to trust tina when tina is so secretive & mysterious.

all the campers are scared that a monster called the windigo lives in the woods. rebecca's tent goes on a hikinig trip one day without their counselor, & corky tricks the group into splitting up. she leads her own group safely back to camp, where they sit in the crafts tent & have fun, while rebecca's group gets lost, finds a scary cave, & is scared that they have discovered the monster. rebecca is disappointed with corky's tricks.

their counselor selects rebecca to be the narrator of the play based on a brief audition, in which rebecca did great & corky did terribly. corky is really jealous & upset, & tells the other campers she'll do their chores if they vote for her to be the narrator instead. rebecca makes a drum to beat while narrating (because much of this book is historically accurate in terms of little white girl appropriating native american culture & traditions to lend a little extra flavor to their camp experiences), but when corky stages her coup, she takes rebecca's drum. even tina doesn't stand up for rebecca, & rebecca cries herself to sleep.

corky is also jealous when rebecca receives a letter from home. corky's mother is illiterate & won't be writing any time soon. when rebecca's letter goes missing, she starts to feel like the whole camp is against her.

one day, corky organizes an i-spy-style game for the girls in the tent, & uses this as a pretext to open tina's trunk, where she discovers a leg brace. apparently tina had had polio. she's not contagious anymore, & she's at camp to enjoy the food & exercise & build her strength back up. my one complaint is that the foreshadowing on this big reveal was incredibly heavy-handed. as soon as tina was introduced as "small for her age" with "bloomers that were too long," i knew she was a polio survivor. i'm thinking the girls in the tent are a little on the slow side...or they're clueless children. anyway, tina is embarrassed & upset & runs away in the middle of the night because she doesn't think anyone will want to be her friend now. she knows first-hand how terrified people are of the polio epidemic, & no one knows for sure what causes it, so no one wants to buddy up too much to someone who has had it.

rebecca realizes tina is gone & she decides to go into the woods after her. corky comes along too. they re-discover the cave where they think the windigo hangs out, & there are weird noises coming from inside it. but it's just their tent counselor, ginni, & the lake instructor, roger, reading poetry to each other (riiight). rebecca & corky explain that tina has run away, & roger leads them to a house near the woods. inside, they find tina with miss pepper, the camp cook. it turns out that miss pepper is actually mrs. pfeffer, & she's tina's mom. mrs. pfeffer took the camp cook job on the condition that tina could become a camper to help with her recovery from polio. the camp director broke a lot of rules to allow tina to be a camper, but he thinks he made the right choice for tina's health.

corky acknowledges that rebecca would be a better narrator for the end-of-week performance & returns the drum. everyone makes up & the girls in rebecca's tent learn that it's not okay to shun someone just because they have a non-communicable debilitating disease (i guess?). on the last day of camp, the girls get the news that due to low camp enrollment due to polio quarantines in the city, everyone gets to stay an extra week! yay! so rebecca & her tentmates have an extra week to be friends now that all the drama & bullshit are behind them. & yes, corky stole rebecca's letter because she was jealous. she returns it & rebecca forgives her. the boy in rose's building recovers from his bout with polio, & no one else in rose's building contracts it. happy endings.

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### **QNPoohBear says**

Secrets at Camp Nokomis is the first mystery for Rebecca by the same author as her core series. The book takes place in the summer of 1916, when Rebecca is 11. A polio outbreak in New York City has prompted the Children's Health Fund to create free summer camps for city children to get away from the diseases of the city. Rebecca and her best friend Rose are excited when their applications are accepted for the first group of campers. Sadly for Rose, a boy in her building has contracted polio and therefore, her entire building is under quarantine. Rebecca is excited and nervous about going to camp and making new friends.

Rebecca loves camp right away. She loves the fresh air of the country, the charming Indian theme of the camp taken from Longfellow's poem "Hiawatha", the camping, the activities and everything! At first Rebecca's tent mates seem like they will be good friends. She is especially close to her bunkmate, the shy, small girl, Christina (Tina) Pfeffer. Rebecca quickly makes an enemy in her tent though and she's not sure how to deal with the bully. Her friend Tina also seems to have a big secret but won't confide in Rebecca. When the bully goes too far, Rebecca has to decide what, if anything, she's going to do about it.

This mystery isn't much of a mystery. It's a typical camp story and adolescent bullying story. The details of camp activities are nice but nothing new. I did like how the author incorporates "Hiawatha" into the story, and not just in the camp name. I figured out the mystery early on and it seemed so obvious that I don't know why no one else figures it out. The kids act pretty realistically for girls that age and the issues are and aren't resolved in a fairy tale manner. The conflict between Rebecca and the bully is pretty good and handled well. The bully is who she is and though she learns a lesson, her personality is still the same.

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### **Marian says**

I'm not sure whether my younger, more demo-age self would have figured out pretty much the entire book as early as I did, or if I'd have enjoyed it more then.

As it was, I figured out the mystery before the mystery even happened. As soon as they mentioned Rose couldn't go to camp due to the polio outbreak, I knew there'd be a mystery camper who had polio before, and that odds were good she'd be someone important's daughter, and none of the campers would know her secret until, somehow, Rebecca helped reveal it.

What I didn't plan on was the 'fun' stereotype of the hotheaded, redhaired, ignorant Irish kid who is an odd sort of bully. Really. That's what you're going with? I guess the AG series has Nellie to off-set this character, but still. Just hit each and every stereotype (except for the drinking since these are eleven year olds) while

you can. Oy.

If you ignore that, the book is a fun camp read, except for that part where Rebecca doesn't really have a whole lot of fun at camp due to Corky, the aforementioned walking stereotype.

What is worth noting is that Tina, Rebecca's only friend at camp, is believable in her actions when presented with Corky's bullying. When Corky turns her attentions away from Teeny and towards Rebecca, Tina doesn't always stick up for her friend. She might not side against her, but she doesn't stand up for her, either.

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### **Kathryn says**

I thought it was good and pretty funny. There is a girl named Rebecca Rubin who is the main character and she goes to a camp called Camp Nokomis. There she has an interesting bunkmate named Christina, but the girls call her Tina for short. There is a girl who they call Corky and who bullies people into doing what she wants. In the end, you discover Tina has Polio, but had it last year. She goes to camp because her mom is the cook.

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### **Kristine Hansen says**

I wouldn't call this a mystery so much as an adventure. There's plenty of strange goings-on, there's a whole lot of action. The bullying made me sad, and the resolution was satisfactory. Overall I liked this story and wish there were more books about Rebecca.

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### **Cathy says**

Suspenseful and well-told, lots of good stuff in there like friendship and trust themes. My child, eleven like Rebecca, calls the book "very good" and "advises other people to read it." I read this after she did.

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### **emma grace says**

February 2010 review:

Rebecca is sent away from her home in New York city to a summer camp for girls in the country, so as to avoid a frightening polio outbreak. She can't seem to make any friends, and one of her tent mates is a bully; always wanting everything for herself. Rebecca is starting to think maybe camp wouldn't be as fun as she thought, when she begins to notice something mysterious about another of her tent mates; a girl named Tina. Rebecca tries to be as friendly as she can, because Tina seems to be lonely as well. Tina seems to be nice girl, but there is definitely something mysterious about her. Will Rebecca find out what it is? Or will the bullying tent mate ruin Rebecca's summer? If you want to find out, read this book! This is the first "Rebecca" mystery in the American Girl's Mystery collection.

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**Meghan says**

Of all the American Girl characters, Rebecca is my favorite because of her decade. I am also fascinated with the history of Polio so when I found out that the backdrop for this story was the 1916 polio epidemic, I was ecstatic. This has become my favorite book in the entire American Girl series.

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