



Into the Water: A Novel

By Paula Hawkins

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#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

An addictive new novel of psychological suspense from the author of #1 *New York Times* bestseller and global phenomenon *The Girl on the Train*

“Hawkins is at the forefront of a group of female authors—think Gillian Flynn and Megan Abbott—who have reinvigorated the literary suspense novel by tapping a rich vein of psychological menace and social unease... there’s a certain solace to a dark escape, in the promise of submerged truths coming to light.” —*Vogue*

A single mother turns up dead at the bottom of the river that runs through town. Earlier in the summer, a vulnerable teenage girl met the same fate. They are not the first women lost to these dark waters, but their deaths disturb the river and its history, dredging up secrets long submerged.

Left behind is a lonely fifteen-year-old girl. Parentless and friendless, she now finds herself in the care of her mother's sister, a fearful stranger who has been dragged back to the place she deliberately ran from—a place to which she vowed she'd never return.

With the same propulsive writing and acute understanding of human instincts that captivated millions of readers around the world in her explosive debut thriller, *The Girl on the Train*, Paula Hawkins delivers an urgent, twisting, deeply satisfying read that hinges on the deceptiveness of emotion and memory, as well as the devastating ways that the past can reach a long arm into the present.

Beware a calm surface—you never know what lies beneath.

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Editorial Review

Review

“A captivating contemporary whodunit... suspense churns and the plot keeps you guessing.”—*People Magazine*

“Highly suspenseful... all these intrigues are teased out with impressive skill by Ms. Hawkins, who tells a complex narrative... in a chronicle whose final pages yield startling revelations.”—*The Wall Street Journal*

“[A] succulent new mystery... Hawkins, influenced by Hitchcock, has a cinematic eye and an ear for eerie, evocative language... So do dive in. The payoff is a socko ending. And a noirish beach read that might make you think twice about dipping a toe in those dark, chilly waters.”—*USA Today*

“Addicting... this novel has a little something for anyone looking for their next binge-read.”—*Marie Claire*

“Thrilling... we [are] kept guessing until the sobering conclusion.”—*O Magazine*

“Mother's Day is coming up. This one's perfect for the mom who always has shelf space for thrillers.”—*theSkimm*

“Hawkins is at the forefront of a group of female authors – think Gillian Flynn and Megan Abbott – who have reinvigorated the literary suspense novel by tapping a rich vein of psychological menace and social unease... there's a certain solace to a dark escape, in the promise of submerged truths coming to light.”—*Vogue*

“A unputdownable, smart, thoughtful thriller.”—*PopSugar*

“An intriguing pop-feminist tale of small-town hypocrisy, sexual politics, and wrongs that won't rinse clean.”—*Entertainment Weekly*

“Contains just as many hair-raising plot twists as *[The Girl on the Train]*. This time, Hawkins's absorbing and chilling cast of mothers, daughters, and sisters grapples with the implications of memory, exploring what happens when our conflicting recollections of personal histories collide to destroy the present.”—*Harper's Bazaar*

“Hawkins weaves another wonderfully twisted mystery.”—*Coastal Living*

“Readers will be locked in a guessing game until the unnerving conclusion... It'll give you the most thrills and chills.”—*Redbook*

“Page-turner... a thriller that intersects complicated cultural narratives of adolescent sexuality, the often fraught relationships between daughters, mothers and sisters, and the relationship between 'good men' and 'troublesome women.'”—*Jezebel*

“Hawkins has a real gift for exploring the manner in which we constantly turn things over in our minds, crafting inner monologues both rich and relatable... a lively, compelling, and surprisingly empathetic and humane page-turner.”—*The A.V. Club*

“Sometimes what we really need is a good thriller. And Paula Hawkins knows how to captivate readers with an enthralling and suspenseful mystery. Following her psychological thriller, *The Girl on the Train*, Paula Hawkins is at it again with *Into the Water*.” —Mic

“A page-turning thriller... Will haunt you long after this book is over.” —Bustle

“I couldn't resist Hawkins' anxiously awaited second novel ... scary and addictive.” —Cup of Jo

“Hawkins constructs a bracing, knotty ride in which the ghosts of the past come back to haunt those living in the present.” —W Magazine

“Hawkins keeps you guessing until the final page.” —Real Simple

“Arresting... Hawkins is an ambitious writer, inclining to the literary end of the spectrum.” —Financial Times

“*Into the Water*” captures all the suspense and terrifying emotions of *[The Girl on the Train]*, but it beams with a maturity in writing and in storytelling that will draw her fans right back over the edge... the novel also flows with an instinctual understanding of relationships, young love, devoted friendships and dedication to duty, familial faults and small-town paranoia.” —Minneapolis Star-Tribune

“When it comes to tension you could cut with a knife, no one does it better than Hawkins.” —New York Post

“An elegantly written tale that grips readers like a mighty current, guiding and taking them downriver toward the inevitable rocky ending and breathtaking plot twist in the novel's final pages.” —Deseret News

“Hawkins is a master of waging emotional warfare among her characters against a backdrop of murder. *Into the Water* is one to read with the lights on.” —SF Weekly

“Hawkins returns to the rotating-narration style of her breakout debut, giving voice to an even broader cast this time... Order by the ton.” —Booklist (starred review)

“Twisty and compulsive... Hawkins skillfully delves into the psyche of each character, extracting their feelings, fears and fallacies, slowly ramping up the psychological suspense as she goes.” —BookPage

“The payoff packs a satisfying punch.” —Publishers Weekly

About the Author

Paula Hawkins is the author of the #1 *New York Times* bestseller *The Girl on the Train*, which was made into a major motion picture.

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Why is it that I can recall so perfectly the things that happened to me when I was eight years old, and yet trying to remember whether or not I spoke to my colleagues about rescheduling a client assessment for next week is impossible? The things I want to remember I can't, and the things I try so hard to forget just keep coming. The nearer I got to Beckford, the more undeniable it became, the past shooting out at me like sparrows from the hedgerow, startling and inescapable.

All that lushness, that unbelievable green, the bright acid yellow of the gorse on the hill, it burned into my brain and brought with it a newsreel of memories: Dad carrying me, squealing and squirming with delight,

into the water when I was four or five years old; you jumping from the rocks into the river, climbing higher and higher each time. Picnics on the sandy bank by the pool, the taste of sunscreen on my tongue; catching fat brown fish in the sluggish, muddy water downstream from the Mill. You coming home with blood streaming down your leg after you misjudged one of those jumps, biting down on a tea towel while Dad cleaned the cut because you weren't going to cry. Not in front of me. Mum, wearing a light-blue sundress, barefoot in the kitchen making porridge for breakfast, the soles of her feet a dark rusty brown. Dad sitting on the riverbank, sketching. Later, when we were older, you in denim shorts with a bikini top under your T-shirt, sneaking out late to meet a boy. Not just any boy, *the* boy. Mum, thinner and frailer, sleeping in the armchair in the living room; Dad disappearing on long walks with the vicar's plump, pale, sun-hatted wife. I remember a game of football. Hot sun on the water, all eyes on me; blinking back tears, blood on my thigh, laughter ringing in my ears. I can still hear it. And underneath it all, the sound of rushing water.

I was so deep into that water that I didn't realize I'd arrived. I was there, in the heart of the town; it came on me suddenly as though I'd closed my eyes and been spirited to the place, and before I knew it I was driving slowly through narrow lanes lined with SUVs, a blur of rose stone at the edge of my vision, towards the church, towards the old bridge, careful now. I kept my eyes on the tarmac in front of me and tried not to look at the trees, at the river. Tried not to see, but couldn't help it.

I pulled over to the side of the road and turned off the engine. I looked up. There were the trees and the stone steps, green with moss and treacherous after the rain. My entire body goose-fleshed. I remembered this: freezing rain beating the tarmac, flashing blue lights vying with lightning to illuminate the river and the sky, clouds of breath in front of panicked faces, and a little boy, ghost-white and shaking, led up the steps to the road by a policewoman. She was clutching his hand and her eyes were wide and wild, her head twisting this way and that as she called out to someone. I can still feel what I felt that night, the terror and the fascination. I can still hear your words in my head: *What would it be like? Can you imagine? To watch your mother die?*

I looked away. I started the car and pulled back onto the road, drove over the bridge where the lane twists around. I watched for the turning—the first on the left? No, not that one, the second one. There it was, that old brown hulk of stone, the Mill House. A prickle over my skin, cold and damp, my heart beating dangerously fast, I steered the car through the open gate and into the driveway.

There was a man standing there, looking at his phone. A policeman in uniform. He stepped smartly towards the car and I wound down the window.

"I'm Jules," I said. "Jules Abbott? I'm . . . her sister."

"Oh." He looked embarrassed. "Yes. Right. Of course. Look"—he glanced back at the house—"there's no one here at the moment. The girl . . . your niece . . . she's out. I'm not exactly sure where. . ." He pulled the radio from his belt.

I opened the door and stepped out. "All right if I go into the house?" I asked. I was looking up at the open window, what used to be your old room. I could see you there still, sitting on the windowsill, feet dangling out. Dizzying.

The policeman looked uncertain. He turned away from me and said something quietly into his radio before turning back. "Yes, it's all right. You can go in."

I was blind walking up the steps, but I heard the water and I smelled the earth, the earth in the shadow of the house, underneath the trees, in the places untouched by sunlight, the acrid stink of rotting leaves, and the

smell transported me back in time.

I pushed the front door open, half expecting to hear my mother's voice calling out from the kitchen. Without thinking, I knew that I'd have to shift the door with my hip, at the point where it sticks against the floor. I stepped into the hallway and closed the door behind me, my eyes struggling to focus in the gloom; I shivered at the sudden cold.

In the kitchen, an oak table was pushed up under the window. The same one? It looked similar, but it couldn't be; the place had changed hands too many times between then and now. I could find out for sure if I crawled underneath to search for the marks you and I left there, but just the thought of that made my pulse quicken.

I remember the way it got the sun in the morning, and how if you sat on the left-hand side, facing the Aga, you got a view of the old bridge, perfectly framed. So beautiful, everyone remarked upon the view, but they didn't really see. They never opened the window and leaned out, they never looked down at the wheel, rotting where it stood, they never looked past the sunlight playing on the water's surface, they never saw what the water really was, greenish-black and filled with living things and dying things.

Out of the kitchen, into the hall, past the stairs, deeper into the house. I came across it so suddenly it threw me, the enormous windows giving out onto the river—*into* the river, almost, as though if you opened them, water would pour in over the wide wooden window seat running along beneath.

I remember. All those summers, Mum and I sitting on that window seat, propped up on pillows, feet up, toes almost touching, books on our knees. A plate of snacks somewhere, although she never touched them.

I couldn't look at it; it made me heartsick and desperate, seeing it again like that.

The plasterwork had been stripped back, exposing bare brick beneath, and the decor was all you: oriental carpets on the floor, heavy ebony furniture, big sofas and leather armchairs, and too many candles. And everywhere, the evidence of your obsessions: huge framed prints, Millais's *Ophelia*, beautiful and serene, eyes and mouth open, flowers clutched in her hand. Blake's *Triple Hecate*, Goya's *Witches' Sabbath*, his *Drowning Dog*. I hate that one most of all, the poor beast fighting to keep his head above a rising tide.

I could hear a phone ringing, and it seemed to come from beneath the house. I followed the sound through the living room and down some steps—I think there used to be a storeroom there, filled with junk. It flooded one year and everything was left coated in silt, as though the house were becoming part of the riverbed.

I stepped into what had become your studio. It was filled with camera equipment, screens, standard lamps and light boxes, a printer, papers and books and files piled up on the floor, filing cabinets ranged against the wall. And pictures, of course. Your photographs, covering every inch of the plaster. To the untrained eye, it might seem you were a fan of bridges: the Golden Gate, the Nanjing Yangtze River Bridge, the Prince Edward Viaduct. But look again. It's not about the bridges, it's not some love of these masterworks of engineering. Look again and you see it's not just bridges, it's Beachy Head, Aokigahara Forest, Preikestolen. The places where hopeless people go to end it all, cathedrals of despair.

Opposite the entrance, images of the Drowning Pool. Over and over and over, from every conceivable angle, every vantage point: pale and icy in winter, the cliff black and stark, or sparkling in the summer, an oasis, lush and green, or dull flinty grey with storm clouds overhead, over and over and over. The images blurred into one, a dizzying assault on the eye. I felt as though I were *there*, in that place, as though I were standing

at the top of the cliff, looking down into the water, feeling that terrible thrill, the temptation of oblivion.

You loved the Mill House and the water and you were obsessed with those women, what they did and who they left behind. And now this. Honestly, Nel. Did you really take it that far?

Upstairs, I hesitated outside the master bedroom. My fingers on the door handle, I took a deep breath. I knew what they had told me but I also knew you, and I couldn't believe them. I felt sure that when I opened the door, there you would be, tall and thin and not at all pleased to see me.

The room was empty. It had the feeling of a place just vacated, as though you'd just slipped out and run downstairs to make a cup of coffee. As though you'd be back any minute. I could still smell your perfume in the air, something rich and sweet and old-fashioned, like one of the ones Mum used to wear, Opium or Yvresse.

“Nel?” I said your name softly, as if to conjure you up, like a devil. Silence answered me.

Farther down the hall was “my room”— the one I used to sleep in: the smallest in the house, as befits the youngest. It looked even smaller than I remembered, darker, sadder. It was empty save for a single, unmade bed, and it smelled of damp, like the earth. I never slept well in this room, I was never at ease. Not all that surprising, given how you liked to terrify me. Sitting on the other side of the wall, scratching at the plaster with your fingernails, painting symbols on the back of the door in blood-red nail polish, writing the names of dead women in the condensation on the window. And then there were all those stories you told, of witches dragged to the water or desperate women flinging themselves from the cliffs to the rocks below, of a terrified little boy who hid in the wood and watched his mother jump to her death.

I don't *remember* that. Of course I don't. When I examine my memory of watching the little boy, it makes no sense: it is as disjointed as a dream. You whispering in my ear— that didn't happen on some freezing night at the water. We were never here in winter anyway, there were no freezing nights at the water. I never saw a frightened child on the bridge in the middle of the night— what would I, a tiny child myself, have been doing there? No, it was a story you told, how the boy crouched amongst the trees and looked up and saw her, her face as pale as her nightdress in the moonlight; how he looked up and saw her flinging herself, arms spread like wings, into the silent air.

I don't even know whether there really *was* a boy who saw his mother die, or whether you made the whole thing up.

I left my old room and turned to yours, the place that used to be yours, the place that, by the look of it, is now your daughter's. A chaotic mess of clothes and books, a damp towel lying on the floor, dirty mugs on the bedside table, a fug of stale smoke in the air and the cloying smell of rotting lilies, wilting in a vase next to the window.

Without thinking, I began to tidy up. I straightened the bedding and hung the towel on the rail in the en suite. I was on my knees, retrieving a dirty plate from under the bed, when I heard your voice, a dagger in my chest.

“What the fuck do you think you're doing?”

I scabbled to my feet, a triumphant smile on my lips, because I knew it—I knew they were wrong, I knew you weren't really gone. And there you stood in the doorway, telling me to get the *fuck* out of your room.

The smile died, because of course it wasn't you at all, it was your daughter, who looks almost exactly like you did when you were a teenager. She stood in the doorway, hand on hip. "What are you doing?" she asked again.

"I'm sorry," I said. "I'm Jules. We haven't met, but I'm your aunt."

"I didn't ask who you were," she said, looking at me as though I were stupid, "I asked what you were doing. What are you looking for?" Her eyes slid away from my face and she glanced over towards the bathroom door. Before I could answer, she said, "The police are downstairs," and she stalked off down the corridor, long legs, lazy gait, flip-flops slapping on the tiled floor.

I hurried after her.

"Lena," I said, putting my hand on her arm. She yanked it away as though scalded, spinning round to glare at me. "I'm sorry."

She dipped her eyes, her fingers massaging the place where I'd touched her. Her nails bore traces of old blue polish, her fingertips looked as though they belonged to a corpse. She nodded, not meeting my eye. "The police need to talk to you," she said.

She's not what I expected. I suppose I imagined a child, distraught, desperate for comfort. But she isn't, of course, she's not a child, she's fifteen and almost grown, and as for seeking comfort—she didn't seem to need it at all, or at least not from me. She is your daughter, after all.

The detectives were waiting in the kitchen, standing by the table, looking out towards the bridge. A tall man with a dusting of salt-and-pepper stubble on his face and a woman at his side, about a foot shorter than him.

The man stepped forward, his hand outstretched, pale grey eyes intent on my face. "Detective Inspector Sean Townsend," he said. As he reached out, I noticed he had a slight tremor. His skin felt cold and papery against mine, as though it belonged to a much older man. "I'm very sorry for your loss."

So strange, hearing those words. They said them yesterday, when they came to tell me. I'd almost said them myself to Lena, but now it felt different. Your *loss*. I wanted to tell them, she isn't lost. She can't be. You don't know Nel, you don't know what she's like.

Detective Townsend was watching my face, waiting for me to say something. He towered over me, thin and sharp-looking, as though if you got too close to him you might cut yourself. I was still looking at him when I realized that the woman was watching me, her face a study in sympathy.

"Detective Sergeant Erin Morgan," she said. "I'm very sorry." She had olive skin, dark eyes, blue-black

hair the colour of a crow's wing. She wore it scraped back from her face, but curls had escaped at her temple and behind her ears, giving her a look of dishevelment.

"DS Morgan will be your liaison with the police," Detective Townsend said. "She'll keep you informed about where we are in the investigation."

"There's an investigation?" I asked dumbly.

The woman nodded and smiled and motioned for me to sit down at the kitchen table, which I did. The detectives sat opposite me. DI Townsend cast his eyes down and rubbed his right palm across his left wrist in quick, jerky motions: one, two, three.

DS Morgan was speaking to me, her calm and reassuring tone at odds with the words coming out of her mouth. "Your sister's body was seen in the river by a man who was out walking his dogs early yesterday morning," she said. A London accent, her voice soft as smoke. "Preliminary evidence suggests she'd been in the water just a few hours." She glanced at the DI and back at me. "She was fully clothed, and her injuries were consistent with a fall from the cliff above the pool."

"You think she *fell*?" I asked. I looked from the police detectives to Lena, who had followed me downstairs and was on the other side of the kitchen, leaning against the counter. Barefoot in black leggings, a grey vest stretched over sharp clavicles and tiny buds of breasts, she was ignoring us, as if this were normal, banal. As though it were an everyday occurrence. She clutched her phone in her right hand, scrolling down with her thumb, her left arm wrapped around her narrow body, her upper arm roughly the width of my wrist. A wide, sullen mouth, dark brows, dirty blond hair falling onto her face.

She must have felt me watching, because she raised her eyes to me and widened them for just a moment, so that I looked away. She spoke. "You don't think she fell do you?" she said, her lip curling. "You know better than that."

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Joseph Barnett:

Information is provisions for individuals to get better life, information currently can get by anyone at everywhere. The information can be a expertise or any news even restricted. What people must be consider whenever those information which is in the former life are hard to be find than now could be taking seriously which one is acceptable to believe or which one typically the resource are convinced. If you find the unstable resource then you get it as your main information there will be huge disadvantage for you. All of those possibilities will not happen inside you if you take Into the Water: A Novel as the daily resource information.

Virginia Gauvin:

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enjoy both. It is excellent combination right, you still wish to miss it? What kind of hang type is it? Oh can happen its mind hangout men. What? Still don't have it, oh come on its named reading friends.

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