

Contagion

Teri Terry

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Teri Terry's *Contagion* is a riveting, paranormal start to a new science fiction trilogy.

When sixteen-year-old Shay, who's hooked on quantum physics, realizes that she was the last person to see missing eleven-year-old Callie, she offers to help Callie's caring older brother, Kai, find her. The two bond instantly, though the search for Callie is soon overshadowed by a lethal pandemic. Though Callie is no longer alive, her strong, vibrant spirit joins Shay and Kai, making them aware of her presence.

This richly imagined story is narrated by Shay and Callie in short, alternating chapters that illuminate each girl's character. Shay's growing attachment to Kai plays well against her adolescent insecurity, while Callie copes with jealousy over Shay and Kai's more and more exclusive relationship. Kai is developed through each girl's perspective.

The pace is swift, propelled by the teens' flight from the spreading pandemic, a deepening plot, and fresh revelations about characters' hidden connections to each other and to the plague itself. The writing is assured and skillful, and the northern Scotland and Shetland Islands settings are used to maximum effect. When Shay and Kai escape by rowboat across a misty, twilight loch, the scene is Druidian in its sense of timelessness. When lines of communication with Callie open, the paranormal elements are naturally incorporated.

This first installment ends with a theory about the origin and vector of the contagion that comes with a shattering realization. There are enough twists to provide a promising foundation for the second book.

Exciting, thoughtfully plotted, and featuring accomplished writing, *Contagion* is a page-turning science fiction treat.

SUSAN WAGGONER (July/August 2019)

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