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Mystery

The Tarnished Eye AUDIO978
Judith Guest
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This novel, like the author's most famous book, *Ordinary People*, examines the sadness and loss that lurk just beneath the surface of family life.

Sheriff Hugh DeWitt and his wife lost their infant son to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. Once obsessed with his work and over-eager for action, DeWitt now "longs for days when nothing happens" in his small town of Blessed, Michigan. He knows all the town's residents and has good relationships with most of them. The summer people, however, who come north to escape the heat in the area's mild climate, are strangers. They stay to themselves, coming into town only to buy necessities like groceries and gas. Their interactions with permanent residents are minimal and impressionistic.

To the locals, the Norbois family, who come for the summer, seem to have everything. Paige, wife and mother of four, has put aside her wishes and secret griefs for her husband and children. Her husband, accustomed to running a publishing house, remains the stern company man even on vacation. Their marriage may not be happy, but Paige has done everything in her power to ensure its stability. When a handyman finds the family executed and left to rot, DeWitt finds himself caught up in several wrenching situations. He attempts to solve the murders of the Norbois family as well as a series of rapes and killings at the University of Michigan, and, at the same time, deal with his own grief. The horrendous murder scene at the Norbois home stirs up emotions that DeWitt had hoped to keep buried for the remainder of his life.

The audio recording of this novel, read by Mark Bramhall and others, adds to the book's emotional depth. The quality of the audio is excellent, and the actors' intonations heighten the story's suspense and the characters' ennui. Bramhall studied acting at Harvard and the University of California, had a Fullbright Scholarship to the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art, and studied at the American Conservatory.

Guest is also the author of the novels *Errands*, *Killing Time in St. Cloud* (with Rebecca

Hill), *Second Heaven*, and *Ordinary People*, which was adapted for film and won the Academy Award for Best Picture in 1980. This novel, loosely based on an actual unsolved crime in the late 1960s in Michigan, is absorbing, suspenseful, and stunning. It belongs on the same shelf as *Ordinary People*, John Irving's *The World According to Garp*, and, more recently, Ron Rash's *Saints at the River*. Each novel delves into the way loss affects not only a family, but everyone who comes into contact with that family's grief.

Pam Kingsbury