

Winter of the Wolf

Martha Hunt Handler

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In Martha Hunt Handler's young adult mystery *Winter of the Wolf*, a girl recovering from her brother's death searches for answers.

Bean is devastated when her brother, Sam, is found dead after an apparent suicide. As her family falls apart, Bean questions everything. Sam was one of the gentlest, most alive people she knew. He also had a deep interest in Inuit culture and beliefs. To deal with her grief, Bean investigates her brother's death, hoping to find out what really happened that snowy night.

With the help of her best friend, Julie, Bean questions her family and Sam's friends. The one missing piece is Sam's friend Skip, who disappeared the day after Sam's death and has not been in touch since. As she discovers more about Inuit culture, Bean decides to conduct a shamanic ritual to connect with Sam's spirit and find out what happened.

The book blends spiritual elements with its mystery, colored by the emotions of Bean's family. When it comes to what others think of her, Bean is mature beyond her years, but in other respects, she's a typical teenager, talking in slang, crushing on a boy from school, and hanging out with her best friend. Still, she channels spirits and goes deep when it comes to loss and acceptance, and her perspective shifts as she realizes how much she doesn't know about her own family.

Clues regarding Sam's death come through Bean's dreams, family revelations, and the Inuit ritual that ties it all together. As Bean learns more about Sam, she learns about herself, too, and her place in her family and in the world.

Winter of the Wolf is an emotional novel in which discovering the truth sets a mourning teenager free.

ANGELA MCQUAY (July / August 2020)

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