



**LAURA
LIPPMAN**

**Every
Secret
Thing**

A NOVEL

Every Secret Thing

laura lippman

 HarperCollins e-books

For Vicky Bijur and Carrie Feron

The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.

—ECCLESIASTES 12: 13–14

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Thursday, April 9

3 There are no seasons in the basement of the Clarence Mitchell...

4 Helen Manning took her lunch outside, thinking she might find a...

5 “Don’t you want dessert? They make great sundaes here.”

Saturday, April 11

6 Ronnie Fuller was used to waking in the morning with strange yearnings.

7 Wagner’s Tavern had become the county homicide detectives’ bar of...

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8 The first child disappeared from the Rite Aid at Ingleside Shopping...

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9 Summer finally began. It began over and over again. It began in MidMay,...

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10 It was at the Catonsville branch of the Baltimore County Public...

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11 “Where’s the baby, Mom?” Alice asked Helen at breakfast. She had...

12 The last customer of the day at the Bagel Barn was a tapper. She...

- [13](#) Cynthia Barnes was on Nottingham Road, heading home. She found...
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- [15](#) Brittany Little disappeared late in the afternoon on the first day of the...

Part II The Dogs of Pompeii

Saturday, July 4

- [16](#) The elevators in the Baltimore County Public Safety Building were...
[17](#) Cynthia had awakened that morning to the sound of a familiar song...
[18](#) Helen Manning had just gotten up when the detectives arrived on her...
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[23](#) “She in there?” Infante asked when he returned to the tenth floor...

Sunday, July 5

- [24](#) Lenhardt unfurled a regional map across a desk. There were the sisters...
[25](#) “You should go to her.”
[26](#) Although not much of a reader as a child, Mira Jenkins had never forgotten...
[27](#) Sharon Kerpelman was forever apologizing for her condo, which was...

Monday, July 6

- [28](#) Midnight had barely come and gone when a fourteen-year-old boy in...
[29](#) Cynthia Barnes was no longer interested in food, but she insisted on...
[30](#) Alice kept her eyes downcast as she walked, studying the ground. The...

Tuesday, July 7

- [31](#) “This is how it works in Baltimore,” Lenhardt said, perching on the...
[32](#) “Fuck,” Nancy said after hanging up the pay phone in a back corridor...
[33](#) Infante and Nancy arrived back at the office to find dozens of cardboard...
[34](#) Alice had been a baby when Helen Manning decided, in a matter of...
[35](#) Alice curled her fingers through the gaps of the chain-link fence and...
[36](#) “It’s my baby,” Alice said. “You can’t arrest someone for taking her...”

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- [37](#) “The date is wrong.”

Acknowledgments

About the Author

By Laura Lippman

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About the Publisher

July 17, Seven Years Ago

Prologue

They were barefoot when they were sent home, their dripping feet leaving prints that evaporated almost instantly, as if they had never been there at all. Had it been possible to retrace their literal steps, as so many would try to do in the days that followed, the trail would have led from the wading pool area, where the party tables had been staked out with aqua Mylar balloons, past the snack bar, up the stairs, and to the edge of the parking lot. And each print would have been smaller than the last—losing first the toes, then the narrow connector along the arch, the heels, and finally the baby-fat balls of their feet—until there was nothing left.

At the curb, they sat to put on their shoes—sneakers for Ronnie, brand-new jellies for Alice, who used whatever money came her way to stay current with the fifth-grade fashion trends at St. William of York. Jellies were *the* thing to have that summer, on July 17, seven years ago.

The parking lot's macadam shone black, reminding Alice of a bubbling, boiling sea in a fairy tale, of a landscape that could vaporize upon touch.

"It's like the desert in Oz," she said, thinking of the hand-me-down books rescued from her mother's childhood.

"There's no desert in Oz," Ronnie said.

"Yes, there is, later, in the other books, there's this desert that burns you up—"

"It's not a book," Ronnie said. "It's a movie."

Alice decided not to contradict her, although Ronnie usually ceded to Alice when it came to matters of books and facts and school. These were the things that Alice thought of as *knowledge*, a word that she saw in