

Passages

Reading Level 6



Title: When She Was Good

Author: Norma Fox Mazer

Sample From The Book

I didn't believe Pamela would ever die. She was too big, too mad, too furious for anything so shabby and easy as death. And for a few moments as she lay on the floor that day, I thought it was one of her jokes. The playing-dead joke. I thought that at any moment she would spring up, seize me by the hair, and drag me around the room. It wouldn't be the first time, but this time it would be deserved, my own fault, the way she always said it was. Punishment for standing there, for watching her, for letting it happen. For saying out loud, "Well, Pamela, are you going to do it? Are you going to die?"

As a little girl, I would often chant and sing two words, which I had decided were magic words. These words were happy home, and how I came by them I don't know, but I believed if I said and sang them often enough, it would change things – take away Mother's sadness and make Pamela nice and even turn Father cheerful. And then I would be happy.

Eventually, it became clear to me that this would not happen; yet, in some part of myself, I went on believing, not in chanting words, but in magical possibilities – I think that's the way to put it



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Canada: 1 (352) 271-9720
Fax: 1 (352) 384-3883

Postal Mail
Diarmuid, Inc.
P.O. Box 357580
Gainesville, FL 32635