



## Mice: A Novel

*By Gordon Reece*

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**Mice: A Novel** By Gordon Reece

**An electrifying psychological thriller about a mother and daughter pushed to their limits.**

Shelley and her mom have been menaced long enough. Excused from high school where a trio of bullies nearly killed her, and still reeling from her parents' humiliating divorce, Shelley has retreated with her mother to the quiet of Honeysuckle Cottage in the countryside. Thinking their troubles are over, they revel in their cozy, secure life of gardening and books, hot chocolate and Brahms by the fire. But on the eve of Shelley's sixteenth birthday, an unwelcome guest disturbs their peace and something inside Shelley snaps. What happens next will shatter all their certainties-about their safety, their moral convictions, the limits of what they are willing to accept, and what they're capable of.

Debut novelist Gordon Reece has written a taut tale of gripping suspense, packed with action both comic and terrifying. Shelley is a spellbinding narrator, and her delectable mix of wit, irony, and innocence transforms the major current issue of bullying into an edge- of-your-seat story of fear, violence, family loyalty, and the outer reaches of right and wrong.

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## Editorial Review

### About the Author

Originally from the United Kingdom, Gordon Reece studied English literature at Keble College, Oxford, before emigrating to Spain and then Australia, where he has lived since 2005. In the UK and Spain, he has published several illustrated children's books and graphic novels. *Mice* is his American debut and first novel.

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My eyes snapped open and I was instantly wide awake. Even though I'd been sunk in the depths of a deep, deep sleep, the unmistakable pig squeal of the fourth stair had reached that part of the brain that never sleeps. I had no doubt what I'd heard, and I had no doubt what it meant: *someone was in the house*.

The fluorescent display of the alarm clock on my bedside table said 3:33.

I could feel my heart throbbing in my chest like something with a life of its own, like a rabbit writhing and twisting in a snare that grew tighter the more it struggled. I strained to hear above the booming roar in my temples. My ears probed outside my bedroom door—the landing, the staircase—like invisible guard dogs, constantly sending back information: *silence, silence, silence, there's only silence, we can find nothing*. Could I have been mistaken? But I knew I wasn't. I'd heard the fourth stair scream under a person's weight.

Sure enough, after what seemed like an eternity of waiting there came the groan of another stair, a higher stair: *someone was in the house*.

I was paralysed with fear. Since my eyes had opened I hadn't moved a muscle. It was as if a primitive instinct—to keep absolutely still and not make a sound until the danger had passed—had taken control of me. Even my breathing had become so slow, so shallow that it made no sound, and didn't move the quilt the tiniest fraction. I thought about the rounders bat I kept under the bed "in case of burglars", but I was powerless to reach down to grasp it. Something stronger held me frozen and immobile. *Keep still*, it ordered, *don't make a sound until the danger's passed*.

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