

*The Secret Life of Sparrow Delaney*

Suzanne Harper

Reviewed by Maddi Porter, Age 15

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*The Secret Life of Sparrow Delaney* by Suzanne Harper is a book about mystery, dealing with teenage life, and fitting in. The first copyright date is 2007. The price of the paperback book is \$8.99 and the ISBN is 978-0-06-113160-8.

Sparrow Delaney, a fifteen-year-old, stubborn and wishing-to-be-ordinary girl, is new in school. She comes from Lily Dale, New York - a place where mediums and psychics reside. Sparrow is expected by her family to be a great medium because she is the seventh daughter of the seventh daughter. But Sparrow, although she *is* a very talented medium, refuses to admit to her family and to the rest of the world that she has any supernatural ability. When a certain very desperate ghost comes to her for help to contact his family, Sparrow must decide whether she really wants to keep this amazing gift hidden.

The story starts out relatively slow, introducing Sparrow, her six older sisters, her mother, and her grandmother. Although each character has their own unique personality, the sudden onslaught of eight characters (not including Sparrow) gets confusing. Sparrow's only friend at her new high school, Fiona, is talkative and sweet, but there's nothing about Fiona the reader can connect with, which quickly makes Fiona annoying. Things start to heat up when Jack Dawson is introduced, an aloof boy in Sparrow's history class. He is never seen with any friends and always wears a beat up army jacket. Jack has a cool personality underneath his mask. His chemistry with Sparrow is cute and fun to read. And finally, a ghost named Luke appears to Sparrow in her history class, wanting her to contact his family who doesn't believe Luke has died. Sparrow refuses immediately, still not wanting to reveal her 'gift,' but when she begins finding out about how Luke died and where Jack recently moved from and why Jack always wears a beat up, ancient army jacket, Sparrow realizes that the events may not be so unrelated. After a long intro taking up about a quarter of the book, the story speeds up and begins taking unexpected twists and turns, making it an entertaining and great read.

*The Secret Life of Sparrow Delaney* is a good book for teens ages eleven to sixteen, both as a gift for a child or checking it out from the library. The book teaches several very important lessons. One, everyone is unique and special and that needs to be accepted, no matter who it is. Two, accept yourself for who you are and don't push away any talent that you may have. And three, never, ever give up on yourself – you may not yet realize what you can accomplish.