



# The Year of Needy Girls

*Patricia A. Smith*

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“A tense story about a small town swept up in bigotry and paranoia after the brutal murder of a local boy sends the residents into a frenzied witch hunt . . . Smith’s crisp prose and dedication to realistic moral ambiguity make for a provoking read.”

--**Publishers Weekly**

“Smith’s first novel successfully builds tension and a sense of dread among the picture-perfect New England fall.”

--**Library Journal XPress Reviews**

“Smith conveys the impact of this prejudicial hostility on two young women who are struggling to make their way in an intolerant world with a tender and delicate understanding in this nuanced tale of identity and misperception, connection and alienation.”

--**Booklist Online**

“*The Year of Needy Girls* is a study in hypocrisy and small-town secrets. Patricia A. Smith’s contemporary witch hunt north of Boston is a collision of *The Children’s Hour* and *Mystic River*.”

—**Stewart O’Nan**, author of *Songs for the Missing*

“*The Year of Needy Girls* is as much about how fear can cloud our perceptions of both self and other as it is about the persistent search for love and home. Patricia A. Smith’s vision is at once keen and generous.”

--**Elizabeth Graver**, author of *The End of the Point*

“This is one of those compulsively readable novels that keeps you up far too late at night. A thrum of dread begins on the opening pages, and yet the two heroines are so compassionately drawn, so understandably flawed, that you keep hoping, against all reason, that nothing will happen to them. Patricia A. Smith’s portrait of a paranoid community is gripping: a Salem of the twenty-first century.”

--**Suzanne Berne**, author of *The Dogs of Littlefield*

A young boy’s murder unleashes chaos in the life of a schoolteacher and a small New England town.

Bradley, Massachusetts is in many ways a typical small New England town, but a river divides it in half—on one side, the East End: crowded triple-deckers, the Most Precious Blood parish, and a Brazilian immigrant community; and on the other, the West End: renovated Victorians, Brandywine Academy, and families with last names as venerable as the Mayflower.

Deirdre Murphy and her partner Sara Jane (SJ) Edmonds have just moved to their first house—and for the first time are open in their relationship—in the West End, where Deirdre teaches at Brandywine Academy. A dedicated teacher from a working-class background, she is well loved by her students. But the murder of ten-year-old Leo Rivera from the East End changes everything—for Deirdre and SJ, for the girls at Brandywine, and for all of Bradley. And when Deirdre is falsely accused of sexually molesting one of her students, the entire town erupts.

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