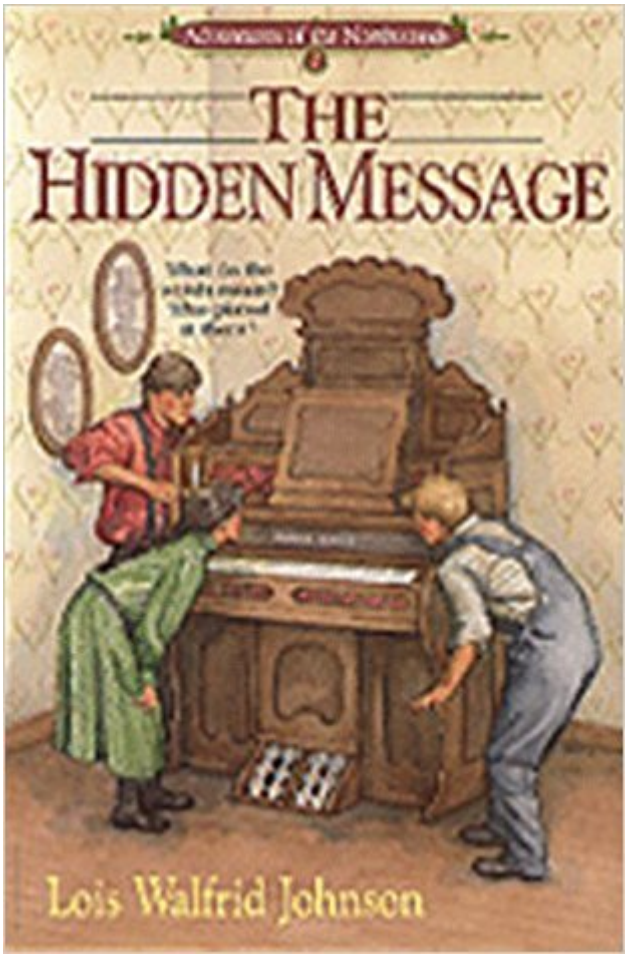
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The Hidden Message (Adventures Of The Northwoods, Book 2)



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Synopsis

With their father away, who will solve the mystery?In the darkness of a November night, Kate O'Connell awakens to the murmur of voices coming from below her room in the Windy Hill farmhouse. Sneaking down the stairs, she learns that Papa Nordstrom must take a job at a lumber camp to earn money for spring planting and be gone for two or three months during the worst part of the winter. Just when they had come together as a family, Papa must go.In his absence, all the children are given greater responsibilities for the farm. Them simply have to make it through the winter without him. And then Kate thinks of all the things that could happen on a northwoods farm in Wisconsin. What if something goes wrong?And things do go wrong. First in the community, then on the farm with some mysterious disappearances.Join Kate and Anders as the mystery unfolds!

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Lois Walfrid Johnson is the award-winning author of more than twenty books. She has received the Gold Medallion award, the C.S. Lewis children's book award, and the Silver Angel Award from Excellence in Media and the Wisconsin State Historical Society Award for Distinguished Service to History for the stories in the ADVENTURES OF THE NORTHWOODS series. She and her husband, Roy, have three grown children and live in Minnesota. size : 5.2 x 8

From Chapter One - Kate Listens In In the darkness of a November night Katherine O'Connell woke suddenly. For a moment she lay without moving, wondering if something were wrong. A

sliver of moonlight slanted across the upstairs bedroom she shared with her sister Tina. The little girl still breathed evenly, her sleep peaceful. Kate slid farther beneath the quilt, trying to put aside her uneasiness. Since moving to northwest Wisconsin, Kate had lost sleep more than once. Sometimes it was only a rooster that wakened her. Other times a screech owl shattered the peaceful woods around Windy Hill Farm. Then there was the night when Kate watched from the storeroom window and spied the disappearing stranger. Now twelve-year-old Kate had no reason to stand watch, or so she thought. Closing her eyes, she tried to go back to sleep. A moment later a murmur of voices brought Kate upright. Sliding out of bed, she reached for her robe and tiptoed across the cold wooden floor. Slowly, quietly, she turned the knob and opened the door just enough to slip through. Still tiptoeing, Kate started down the stairs, keeping to the side of steps that squeaked. Mama and Papa's bedroom was on the first floor next to the dining room. Tonight, though, the voices came from the front room just beneath Kate and Tina's bedroom. Four steps from the bottom, hidden by the wall between the stairs and the front room, Kate sat down. Pushing back her long hair, she leaned forward to listen. "We need seed money for next year's crops." Papa Nordstrom's voice was low. Money! thought Kate, disliking even the word. Kate's Irish father, Daddy O'Connell, had died in a construction accident. In the year that followed, Mama and Kate struggled to earn enough money for food and rent. Then Mama married Papa Nordstrom, and she and Kate moved from Minneapolis to Windy Hill Farm. "He needs help with his three children," Mama had told her. "As we work together, I'll grow to love him." Kate knew that had happened. Papa Nordstrom and Mama, Anders, Lars, Tina, and Kate had become a family. But Kate hadn't expected to be the only one in the family and in her school who didn't speak Swedish. She hadn't expected to have to earn the respect of Anders, the new brother her age. Now Papa Nordstrom spoke again. "Wages in the lumber camps are good this year." For a moment there was silence. As she thought about his words, Kate felt an emptiness in her stomach. "I'm just getting to know you!" she wanted to cry out. Papa Nordstrom's voice sounded sad. "I'd be gone two or three months during the worst part of winter." Kate moved down another step, but couldn't hear Mama's answer. "Yah" came Papa's Swedish yes. "Anders will help, and Lars, and Kate." His voice was gruff, the way it sounded when he cared deeply about something. "But I don't want to leave you." "Can you think of any other way?" Mama asked softly. For a time, Kate heard only the ticking clock. Then Mama spoke again. "If there isn't any other way, we'll do it. We'll handle it because we have to." "But with the baby coming-" Papa said. A baby coming? In her excitement Kate leaned farther forward, trying to hear more. Suddenly she tumbled down the remaining steps. As she fell into the doorway of the front room, Papa Nordstrom jumped up. "Kate! Are you all right?" Mama jumped up

too, but her voice was stern. "I've told you, Kate, you aren't supposed to listen to other people's conversation." "But, Mama, is it true you're going to have a baby?" Mama's smile softened the sternness in her face. Standing up, she reached out and pulled Kate to her in a hug. Mama was tall for a woman, and Kate short for her age. Kate also knew her own eyes were a deeper blue than Mama's. Yet now, as Kate looked up, Mama's eyes were shining. "The baby will be born in the spring," Mama answered. "You're the first one to know." The next morning at breakfast Mama and Papa Nordstrom told the other children the good news about the baby. But Anders and Lars and Tina also heard the sad news that Papa would go away to work in a lumber camp that winter. "When you were at school yesterday, I butchered the pig," Papa told twelve-year-old Anders. Anders nodded, his face solemn below his shock of blond hair. Like his father, his shoulders were muscular from farm work. But Papa had brown hair and a neatly trimmed moustache and beard. Papa went on. "With this weather the pig should stay frozen. It's on the cookstove in the summer kitchen. The meat saw is there for you to cut off pieces when you need them." Anders pushed his hair out of his eyes and nodded again. When days grew too warm for a fire in the house, the family cooked meals in the summer kitchen. In winter the small building wasn't heated. As Papa turned to Lars, the nine-year-old looked just as serious as Anders. "Lars, you and Anders split the wood and carry it in the way you always do. Take good care of the cows." A tuft of hair stood up at the back of Lars's red head. Papa reached out, smoothed it down, and smiled. Lars blinked, then blinked again, as though holding back tears.

interesting story

Almost as good as Box Car Children. Daughter reads these to grandchildren ever night. She said after children are in bed, she has been tempted to finish the story.

perfect

Set in Northwest Wisconsin on Windy Hill farm in the early 1900's Kate O'connell and her mother just moved in with Papa Nordstrom her mothers new husband. Kate has three new brothers and sisters she needs to get to know. Just as she is getting to know Papa Nordstrom he needs to go to lumber camp to earn more money for the winter. After he leaves, the children have more responsibilities and Kate is worried about something going wrong. Papa said "All of you must be responsible, keep your head on your shoulders. Don't make momma worry take good care of her

and each other." After Kate's stepfather goes to lumber camp, a new boy came to Spirit Lake School. They called him stretch because he was known to stretch the truth. The teacher warned the children not to go on the ice because it was to thin, but after class stretch talked kate into going to the lake with him. When they got to the lake, Kate saw her brothers dog, Lutfisk. Kate called him but he wouldn't come. Kate stepped onto the ice, she could hear it cracking under her feet suddenly she plunged into the water. She yelled for help and someone told her to take off her coat and mittens. Then she tried to grab the ice but it kept breaking. She saw a stick above her and grabbed it and was pulled out. She expected to see Stretch but it was her friend Eric. After she was back in school she was furious at Stretch and thought to herself " Because of you I could have died!" Throughout the book Kate learns the importance of telling the truth and taking responsibility of her actions. Everyone who wants to understand the importance of being independent should read this book.

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