

The Girl With The Paintbrush

Written by: Christie Allen

SYNOPSIS:

Emilia, a young woman with Down syndrome, and her younger sister, DeeDee, have lost their mom and are moving in with their aunt—a woman estranged from the family. Forced to say goodbye to all they've ever known—the girls move to their aunt's cottage in the country.

The woman the girls meet is a reserved, recluse. The girls quickly learn that their aunt may have opened her home to them, but not her heart. Mercifully, Cilia's long-time housekeeper, Franny, is a welcoming presence. She and Emilia form a sweet and special bond—cooking and baking, together. They even join forces to sneak a kitten into the cottage. Although heartbroken, Emilia tries her best to adapt, but DeeDee struggles with her grief. At 15-years-old, DeeDee believes she's lost everything—except for her beloved sister who she feels acutely protective of and responsible for.

Furthermore, and much to DeeDee's dismay, Emilia becomes hellbent on saving Aunt Cilia from her solitude. Emilia's well-intended but misguided steps are repeatedly rebuffed and threaten the already fragile dynamic in the cottage. Things go from bad to worse when the girls stumble upon Aunt Cilia's fiercely guarded secrets. A volatile confrontation ensues, and Emilia tries to run away from home. Racked with grief, DeeDee contemplates suicide. Cilia finds DeeDee at this consequential moment and offers up her own vulnerability, creating a bridge to healing.

The fiercely guarded secret that Cilia kept hidden to protect her family is that she had loved and ended up pregnant during an innocent tryst years earlier with the girls' father, James. Cilia sacrificed all to protect her sister and James as the two prepared to wed. The girls arrival at the cottage is the reason that old and deep wounds are unearthed, but they also become the remedy that heals.