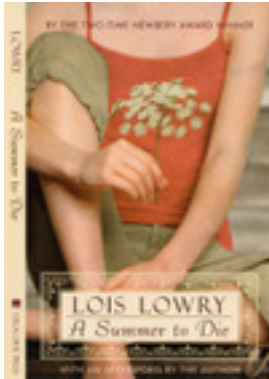


One More Summer

Posted on Oct 28, Posted by [Lois Lowry](#) Category [Uncategorized](#)



I've just received a copy of the new jacket that will be on a new (and slightly larger in size) paperback edition of A SUMMER TO DIE.

A SUMMER TO DIE was my first book for kids, published in 1977...still around after 29 years!...and if I were to re-read it, I think I would probably not find it dated except for the fact that Meg's father uses a typewriter (as did I when I wrote the book.)

I had been asked by an editor to write something for young people (I was a writer for adults at the time) and the story that came to my mind was my own story, that of a younger girl facing the death of her much-loved older sister, as I did many years ago. In truth, my sister Helen was 28 when she died; I was 25. But because I was writing for a young audience, I made the sisters 15 and 13. They were very much like Helen and me: the older girl pretty and popular, the younger one more scholarly and awkward. I always got better grades in school than Helen did, but I would have traded those grades in a heartbeat to be May Queen or Homecoming Queen or one of those silly things, and to have the ease and self-confidence with which she moved through the world of adolescence and school, while I plodded along a couple of years behind.

I do like this new jacket for the book; the old one had begun to seem a little tired and out of date. The hardcover has a lovely jacket which has not changed or become dated through the

years...just a painting of the farmhouse where the book is set.

In the writing of the book, I moved the family from their town life into the country for a year by giving the professor father a sabbatical year in which to write a book. (on a typewriter. Hah) I did that so that i could isolate them and write of the family together without the distractions of town and job and long-time friends. Many books for young adults get rid of the parents (setting the book in summer camp, for example) in order to focus on the young protagonist within a peer group. And certainly the teenage years are the years in which parents recede into the background. But A SUMMER TO DIE was dealing with circumstances and relationships within this small family and if I remember correctly, there is no scene that takes place outside of their immediate home environment, or the homes of the nearby neighbors. No classrooms, no school scenes. They would have been a distraction.

Not even a dog. I wish I had given them a dog during that year in the country; maybe a nice retriever. It would have been the perfect spot for one and would have been such a solace to the lonely 13-year-old I named Meg.

Oh well. You can't rewrite a book years after it is published.

Maybe I'll put a dog into whatever I write next.

Tags: Untagged