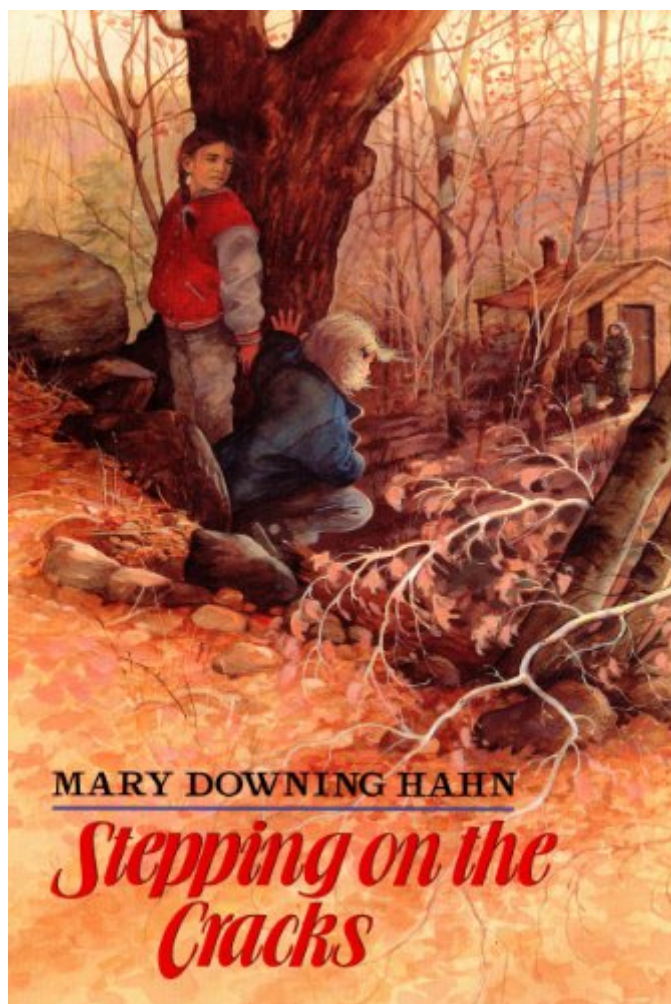


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# Stepping On The Cracks



## Synopsis

In 1944, when her brother is overseas fighting in World War II, eleven-year-old Margaret changes her mind about the school bully, Gordy, after she discovers he is hiding his own brother, a deserter.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Stepping On The Cracks is a great book filled with excitement and patriotism. In this book young and courageous kids bump into many surprises along the way. This book takes place during the time of World War II in the tiny town of College Hill. The book focuses on Margaret, Elizabeth, and Gordy. Margaret and Elizabeth are best friends that can't stand Gordy who is, of course, the school bully. The two girls and their families are going through a rough stage that includes a lot of stress and anxiety because both Elizabeth and Margaret have brothers that are fighting in the war. On top of everything going on with their families they have their own personal issues with Gordy; he keeps picking on everyone in the 6th grade, especially Margaret and Elizabeth. Elizabeth, who can sometimes have a bad temper, wants sweet revenge, and she gets even more than what she ever thought she could get. Margaret, who follows along and usually does what Elizabeth wants, gets

persuaded and joins in on the whole revenge idea. Just when Elizabeth and Margaret started to enjoy blackmail they realize that they want to help Gordy. Without much enthusiasm Gordy allows them to help and for the girls, the idea of revenge fades away more and more. Gordy's family wasn't an average one and Margaret and Elizabeth see a different side of him and they learn more about what his family is like "behind the scenes." Both of the girls try to help out and they want to tell someone about Gordy's little secret but they promised not to tell a living soul. Finally, not even Gordy can stand trying to solve his problem so the 3 kids go to a loyal friend, Barbara, who helps out more than what was required. I think that readers from ages 9- 13 will enjoy reading this book.

Two girls helping save a life, crazy man in the woods, and much more drama is only a small portion of this book. *Stepping on the Cracks* is one of the most outstanding books I've read this year. Mary Downing Hahn has written many other fabulous books like *Wait Till Helen Comes*, *Hear the Wind Blow*, and *Daphne's Book*. Along with winning the Scott O'Dell Award, *Stepping on the Cracks* has been praised by the ALA Booklist, *School Library Journal*, and *Starred Review ALA Booklist*. This book is filled with two hundred sixteen pages of an extraordinary, well-written story. While Margaret's older brother is overseas fighting the Nazi, she is fighting her own war against the bully, Gordy. Margaret and her adventurous best friend, Elizabeth, try to take revenge on Gordy after he ruins Elizabeth's school books. The two friends set out to damage his hut in the woods. When Gordy finds out what they did, he tells them a scary story about a crazy man on the loose. Margaret and Elizabeth soon discover a surprising secret about Gordy. He was trying to keep them away from his hut because he was hiding his brother who had deserted the army. Gordy's brother, Stuart, got extremely sick. Elizabeth and Margaret decided to help Stuart. When he takes a turn for the worse, Margaret comes up with a plan to ask Barbara, an adult friend, for help. Barbara takes Stuart to a doctor where she gets medicine for Stuart. Will Stuart get better? Will the someone tell the army he deserted? Will Margaret's brother come home safe? The relationship the two main characters had was wonderful. Although Elizabeth would occasionally boss Margaret around, they still had a strong friendship. When Margaret was afraid there was a crazy man lurking in the woods, Elizabeth would try to convince her there wasn't.

Nowadays there are so few books written about the era of war times, and fewer about the families of military personal and what they go through. *Stepping On The Cracks* is a wonderful book written about two friends Margaret and Elizabeth and the notorious class bully Gordy. Gordy continuously bothers and bugs the two girls and the only thing that they want is for him to leave them alone.

When all hope seems lost they discover something that Gordy is hiding. Gordy is doing everything to help his brother Stuart (who is a deserter from the army) keep hidden so he is not taken away. Of course Elizabeth and Margaret take full advantage of this situation, so they make a plan to blackmail Gordy. This plan goes well for a few days but Stuart gets desperately sick and is in need of a doctor. The girls do not want to turn him in, so they do their best to take care of him from giving him soup to playing "hookie" at school. Margaret at first did not accept Stuart because her very own brother was fighting in the war and risking his life. She thought he was a plain sissy but as she gets to know him better she realizes that there is a gentler side to him. Eventually, she gets feel sympathetic for him but his health was getting worse by the minute. This book goes through all the different feelings that Elizabeth has with her brother and family to her own views about war. She struggles over the choices about turning him in or if she should take him to see the doctor. Mary Downing Hahn is a brilliant writer and this book goes through many twists and turns. I really liked that the book was written by the view of a kid who had her own personal views conflicting from her family. It shows that we should have our own views which is very important nowadays.

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