



# Funhouse

*Diane Hoh*

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## **Funhouse** Diane Hoh

When The Devil's Elbow roller coaster goes off its track and several teenagers are hurt, everyone thinks it was just an accident. So no one listens when Tess says she saw someone tampering with the track. — But one person knows it's true. That person is playing a deadly game--and is going to make sure Tess doesn't stand in the way. Tess soon finds she's being terrorized, with threatening notes, menacing phone calls, slashed tires and nasty pranks. When another "accident" occurs in the Funhouse, Tess is sure that she was the intended victim. Who is committing all these horrifying acts? And why?

Tess is just beginning to realize that the Funhouse can scare you...to death.

## **Funhouse Details**

Date : Published July 1st 1990 by Scholastic

ISBN : 9780590430500

Author : Diane Hoh

Format : Paperback 163 pages

Genre : Horror, Young Adult, Thriller, Childrens, Teen

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## From Reader Review Funhouse for online ebook

**Roberta R. (Offbeat YA) says**

**Excerpt from my review - originally published at Offbeat YA.**

**Pros:** Clean, short book - an easy introduction to the genre for young, reluctant readers. No graphic descriptions...but see below.

**Cons:** Lacks substance. Requires suspension of disbelief on many levels. The outcome of the first "incident" might upset some youngsters.

**Will appeal to:** Those who are new to thrillers and mysteries.

*Sort-of-disclaimer: I read the Italian translation of this book, so I can't really judge the writing style. Also, I don't know if any parts of this novel have been cut off in my version.*

So, I bought this book a while ago because...who doesn't love funhouses? Also, the blurb sounded promising. What I got, though, was a simplistic tale, a typical '90s product I guess, because YA has drastically improved since then (despite instalove, love triangles, abundance of vampires/creatures and recurring themes derivative plots doing their best to destroy the genre...). Mind you, I should probably judge Funhouse as a child of its time, and it would likely rate much better if I did - but I can't. It's an OK book, nothing wack, but nothing that good either.

Tess is a teen with a problematic family - and here comes the first issue I have with this book, because it all seems a bit overdone. Her mother died when she was 9; her father remarried 4 years after; now his second wife Shelley has recently left him, and Tess is living with said stepmother because her father has very little interest in her - while Tess' brother, Guy Joe, decided to stay with his father despite not even liking him, because he's "his real parent" at least. Also, Shelley decides to go on a long vacation with a friend, carelessly leaving Tess alone in their isolated flat. Talk about bad parenting. Not to mention that Tess and Guy Joe's relationship can only be described as dry.

Tess' friends are fairly typical, and some of them don't even get enough screentime for us to really get to know them. What's worse, they can't seem to give Tess the benefit of the doubt when the roller coaster "incident" happens and she thinks she may have seen someone tampering with it. The police is even less willing to give Tess any credit, which is short-sighted to say the least. (...And where are the C.S.I. anyway?...). Especially since further "incidents" happen after the first one. But of course, the heroine must remain isolated and an easy prey for the villain (see also: stepmother going on vacation). [...]

**Whole review here.**

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**Ava Haine says**

I own a paperback but I can't find the version here in Goodreads so I chose to save this Audio version for my shelf.

For a stand alone pocketbook read, I find the story highly entertaining. You can actually see both sides of the story because the protagonist and antagonist's point of view is clearly depicted. The backstory is amazingly historical, in my mind it's like I was watching from an actual flashback scene of a film.

Funhouse is a good read, I gave it four stars because the twist is a little predictable, but nevertheless

satisfying.

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### **Kirsty says**

Re-read this for Episode 8 of the Teenage Scream podcast (lovingly dissecting the best and worst of 90s teen horror). Listen here, or subscribe on your podcast app:

<https://soundcloud.com/teenagescream>

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### **Quill Ampersand Key says**

It's just another evening at the local Boardwalk for Tess and her friends... until the Devil's Elbow roller coaster jumps off the tracks, with deadly results. Everyone thinks the derailed roller coaster was an accident. Everyone except Tess. She saw someone there, tinkering with the track. It wasn't an accident—it was murder. And the killer isn't done yet.

Though *Funhouse* was originally released prior to the launch of the Point Horror series, in my opinion, it's the pinnacle of '90s YA horror. Why? 1) Tess is a smart, realistic teenage girl (more down below). 2) The stakes are real (death! maiming!) and the scares are actually scary (minus the random food poisoning).

Read the full *Funhouse* review [here](#)

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### **Tracy says**

I remember reading this sometime during high school, for fun of course. I bought it the night before me and my family were supposed to take a trip to visit Canadian relatives, so I should have been going to bed early to wake up early. But I recall staying up very late because I couldn't stop reading it. It's one of those "Point Chillers" from "my day" as a high school student. It's a creepy story about teenagers in and around an amusement park/ funhouse where accidents are occurring and people are getting killed. Part mystery-part creeper, and is especially good for late-at-nights. Very enjoyable.

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### **Kim says**

Another teen horror novel whose cover was instantly familiar to me. Oh my gosh, the font for the title!!! So good.

This book was really silly and full of plot holes. But I am burying the lead . . . which is that there is a character named "Guy Joe." Seriously. Actually, it is Guy Joe, Jr., which means there is a Guy Joe, Sr. Guy Joe!!!! For real.

The book starts with a pretty grim scene in which a roller coaster derails, killing and maiming several friends of the main character, Tess. But there's no time for any of the teenage characters to mourn or have feelings

about it because there is PLOT to get to! Tess sees a mysterious person underneath the roller coaster tracks right before the accident, but when she tries to tell people about it, no one believes her because she is a silly emotional girl who is probably seeing things. Then she gets a letter containing death threats, so she takes it to the police station. Before she can even speak, a police officer says, "You got a problem, little lady? What's the matter, you missing a boyfriend? . . . Fellow'd have to be crazy to walk out on a pretty little thing like you." Tess is 17. She can't even report a death threat without being sexually harassed and silenced. Yikes. I don't know. It was starting to depress me. I think if the main character was a guy, no one would question what he had witnessed or the fact that he felt threatened. But I digress . . . More bad things start to happen to Tess and her group of friends and still everyone but Tess thinks it is just coincidence - which, of course, it is not. The resolution of this book doesn't really make sense and the killer's motivation is strange and his/her methods are way too complicated. If you want them dead, just kill them - stop being so convoluted about it. I don't know, all of these teen books are kind of cliched and silly, but this one felt like it was worse for some reason.

Two other random thoughts:

- The roller coaster of doom from the beginning of the book is called "The Devil's Elbow" - which feels like kind of a laughable name for a thrill ride. Are elbows scary?

-This book contains maybe the most 80's line of all time: "Clamping the headphones over her ears and snapping the cassette player on the metal chain belt circling the waist of her jeans, she began her search." The music on the cassette: George Michael.

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### **Tazzie Dee says**

Tess socializes with her friends at the Boardwalk where there is an amusement park with a variety of rides from the famous Devil's Elbow rollercoaster to the creepy Funhouse. But someone is out for Tess and her friends and is rigging the rides to hurt them. After a couple of trips to the hospital and with the police doing nothing, Tess takes it upon herself to try and figure out who is behind the attacks. But Tess soon finds herself in mortal danger....facing the person she least expected....

I used to love reading the Point Horror books as a teenager. I can't remember if I read this one or not back then....but I enjoyed it. It's creepy and fun and I loved the whole 90s vibe from it.

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### **Trisha says**

Hmm, weird. I could have sworn I'd put this on "currently reading" again, since I just re-read it!

This was one of the very first Point books my brother owned and so one of the first either of us read. Possibly the very first, though THE ACCIDENT also by Diane Hoh is up there as a candidate too. I just re-read it now, at the age of 31, and...I've got to say it was pretty cheesy. Some of the other Point books I've read are definitely much higher quality writing. This one had a good plot (or so I thought), but sometimes the chapters that were from the POV of the bad guy were almost too cheesy to bear.

Inauthentic dialogue tends to irritate me, too, and this book had a lot of that. Anyway, this WAS rated 5 stars but I've lessened it to 3 (and one of those stars is for pure nostalgia's sake).

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## **Sandra says**

Seventeen-year-old Tess Landers is hanging out with many school friends at the amusement park on The Boardwalk, in Santa Luisa, California. After she stops in the ladies restroom she comes back out and watches the rollercoaster go up the track (with three of her friends on board). To her horror she sees it fly off the track and crash before her eyes, killing and maiming many on board, including three of her friends. She tells the friends she's with that she noticed someone that looked suspicious underneath the rollercoaster, dressed in black, quickly slip away after the crash, not coming to help, but going in the other direction. Tess is pretty shook up, but she eventually goes home. She lives at an exclusive condominium complex with her stepmother, Shelley, who is now divorcing Tess's father. But Shelley just took a trip to Europe so Tess is now all alone in the apartment. That night, someone slips a threatening note under her door.

After this, more accidents keep happening---all to her friends, and all at The Boardwalk. Tess is also receiving more threats, menacing phone calls, notes... She tells the police but they don't take her seriously. Why is someone targeting her friends? And why The Boardwalk?

I really enjoyed this book. I liked Tess and I liked the settings---The Boardwalk, the amusement park, etc... This was a fun and entertaining young-adult suspense story from the 90's. A fast and easy read.

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## **Holden (malfunctions without books) says**

For the people who occasionally read my reviews: you know I never really give a book just 1 star. I'm going to have to make an exception here, though....

This book was terrible, laughably ridiculous and a total waste of time. The plot had more holes than there are assholes in this world. Tess, the main character was the dumbest cow I've ever read about in a book. Example: having the feeling that she was being followed, she felt unsafe walking alone at night on the main street of town. So what did she do? She decided to walk through the fucking woods in the middle of the night... Yeah, cause that's so much safer when you're being followed...

The killer in this book was also a pure joke. The motives, the hatred.. Nothing made any sense.

I grew up with the Point Horror novels and I really loved quite a few of them, but this one was just shit. I will continue to read the Point Horror novels because I know some of them are very enjoyable. This one, however, was just terrible.

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## **Matt Garcia says**

I love the point horror novels and the like that I grew up reading. They always bring forth a rush of nostalgia and I remember reading this one in particular, several times. The cover is classic and looks awesome. I love anything to do with clowns, carnivals, circuses, and amusement parks. They're my favorite settings and concepts for novels and films, particularly in the horror genre. Hoh uses the boardwalk setting effectively and I enjoyed her descriptions of all of its attractions, concessions, features, and California beach

setting.

The writing is good. The plot is certainly intriguing, entertaining, and classic 90's young adult horror fare. The chapters about the boardwalk's history and its previous owners that were interwoven with the main storyline were very good and interesting.

The mystery was solid. Hoh gives subtle and not so subtle clues that you can pick up on to figure out the culprit's identity which was clever. I guessed who it was immediately but it was still very satisfying when my suspicions were confirmed.

The characters were fine. Generic but indicative of the genre and its conventions from the time. You almost feel some sort of sympathy for the antagonist due to the bad hand that they were dealt.

The horror presented was a bit dark for a young adult novel and I loved it. The book doesn't try to take a very tame approach and offers up some macabre scenes and scenarios.

The dark ending was awesome. I loved it!

I had a really fun time with this one and now I remember why this was a go to for me when I was younger.

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### **Nicole Loop says**

I figured the funhouse would play a bigger role in the book seeing as it's called Funhouse. Too bad the place sounded cool so I was hoping the climax would really get into it and go max creepy with that crazy place but nah too quick.

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### **Layla says**

This is actually pretty good for a point horror and was definitely one of my favourites when I was younger. Had a lot of fun re-reading.

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### **Donna says**

There are few things more awesome than cheese and FUNHOUSE certainly fit that mould nicely. Not only that but I love reading un-updated works if for nothing more than the outdated styles of dress. Boys in cutoff jeans? Ha! But I remember it. Most of it would probably be pretty innocuous to the younger readers now simply because the descriptions aren't too detailed but every once in a while you'll get the little nugget of nostalgia that'll have you going 'yup.' Love it.

FUNHOUSE combines two of my favorite things: horror and boardwalks. Thanks Lost Boys. You rear your mulleted head once again. There just always seems to be something sinister underlying a carnival-like atmosphere. I'm pretty sure it's the clowns. Are the looking at the same cover I am? So going in it had the proper ambiance for me to be nice and cozily happy.

The thing about a lot of these old school cheesy YA horror books is that there really isn't any supernatural involved; they're mostly thriller but the way they're written it could go either way. This particular novel utilized pseudo-flashback pieces that involved a diary and insinuated at maybe a haunting. Personally I think that's just enough to pull it all together.

Another common theme in the cheese is the novel having at least one character that you desperately wish

would get hit by a bus. They're just total shitbags that you can't help but wonder why they have friends at all. Trudy was that person in FUNHOUSE. She's just an all around nasty, negative human being that any normal person would probably drop like a bad habit. But I guess because she's rich and all their daddies work together she's automatically lumped in with the rest. Sucks for the rest of them.

Tess is the kind of heroine that I wish I saw more of in today's YA. She has Sam (her perhaps/maybe-boyfriend) constantly trying to protect her but she's so adamant that she can take care of herself that I couldn't help but go yeah! Granted she takes it to a point of it being a fault, especially when the events start getting drastic and her life appears to really be in danger but she wants to stand on her own two feet. She don't need no man to protect her! Yes! Aside from that she is strong, wanting to solve the mystery behind all of these events even in the face of doubt and ridicule. Everyone else things it's a string of unfortunate accidents (of course) but Tess knows better. There are too many elements going on for any of it to be coincidental.

Hoh is one of the better old school YA horror writers. She doesn't pander to her audience and just lets the story tell itself. None of the dialogue feels contrived and the characters feel real to me. Of course there's a bit of the melodrama going on and the entire plot centers around a bunch of rich kids but they're not obnoxious about it. They don't flaunt their parents' wealth. It's not a motivating factor in the story; they all just are and who their parents are just happen to be who their parents are. It's not a card to play, which I liked.

FUNHOUSE is a great addition to my cheese library and one I'll probably re-read at some point in the future. There's a classic feel to it, aside from the fact that the roller coaster is named The Devil's Elbow. How . . . threatening?

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### **Angela says**

Thoroughly enjoyable reread.

The whole concept and plot of this book is complete nonsense of course (I mean, if you were planning on murdering people you would do so in a not so over-the-top fashion that would result in your capture and/or possible escape of the intended victims) but still very fun to read if you decide to gloss over the nonsensical storyline (like I've chosen to do).

One thing that really annoyed me however was the attitude of the police force and the men in this book. They were so belittling and demeaning to any female character that it totally incensed me.

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### **Alex says**

I've been re-reading a lot of the Point Horror books lately and enjoying them, but this one was hard to read. To be honest, they're all a bit cheesy and/or full of plot holes, but it usually doesn't bother me too much since they're still fun to read. This one, not so much.

First off, the names were ridiculous - Doss, Beak and Guy-Joe? That's just a travesty. I mean come on - Guy-Joe??? Really?

Every chapter that was written through the killer's point of view was laughably bad. The killer's motivation also made zero sense, as did their overly complicated and not-well-thought-out-at-all plan. If you wanted to



kill someone, this would be the slowest and stupidest way to go about it, leaving the most room for error possible.

I know I'm tearing this book apart but it wasn't THAT awful, it's just that it was such a letdown after the other ones I've been reading. As a kid, I think I liked this. As an adult, it was really hard to take. Nostalgia can only take me so far, and the other ones I've read lately were legitimately good. This one just didn't measure up.

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### **Mauoijenn ~ \*Mouthy Jenn\* ~ says**

I remember reading this back in the day when I use to come home from school with book order forms. Super fast re-read.

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### **Taffey Champion says**

I bought this book while on study abroad in London, England for Elon College, which is now Elon University. I always loved it as a cute and gripping Murder Mystery for young people. I actually believe it was my first Murder Mystery to read, but it will always be a fond favorite of mine.

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### **Rebecca McNutt says**

*Funhouse* was a pretty good book, not amazing or anything but it has its really great moments.

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### **Jenelle says**

Oh Point horror books. These were my addiction when I was in junior high. For that reason, they don't have the best impression in my head, as far as books go. I love them, but I think of them as crap. I don't know why, because that really isn't true.

Funhouse IS decently written and a fun read, the mystery is as good as half the mystery books I read. I'm absolutely going to go back and read a bunch more of these books :)

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