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## ***The Lost Songs (review)***

Deborah Stevenson

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REVIEW

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**In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content:**

Reviewed by:

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Cooney, Caroline B. *The Lost Songs*. Delacorte, 2011. 250p. Library ed. ISBN 978-0-385-90800-9 \$20.99 Trade ed. ISBN 978-0-385-73966-5 \$17.99 E-book ed. ISBN 978-0-375-89805-1 \$10.99 R Gr. 7-10.

A multifaceted narrative focalizes through four different teens at the same South Carolina high school. There's Lutie, a gifted vocalist and star student haunted by her drug-addict mother; Doria, a transplanted New Englander more comfortable with her music than her new classmates; Kelvin, Lutie's childhood friend, Doria's crush, and the guy liked by everybody; and Train, once tight with Lutie and Kelvin, now a swaggering thug in the sway of his jailbird older brother. Plot strands, too, are multiple: a music teacher and visiting professor are trying to convince Lutie to share the songs created by her great-grandmother, an impoverished laundress; Doria's friend-seeking involvement in the church youth group brings her into closer **[End Page 249]** contact with Lutie; Train's desire to make his criminal name leads him to focus on the vulnerable Doria. This is rich with plot, character, and emotion, and it's all carefully combined into a highly readable tale that touches on family secrets and loyalty, the wonder of music, the strength of community, and the benediction of a fresh start. The book credibly captures the complexities of a small town with shifting social categories based on history, economics, class, neighborhood, and race: in a subtle touch, Doria automatically notes when other people are black, while the African-American protagonists don't; Lutie still retains connections to the old and disadvantaged African-American neighborhood where she grew up despite now living in a better off part of town. Cooney offers an eloquent tribute to the possibilities of music and religion, focusing on their power to bring people together and strengthen the community as well as the individual. That's a lofty message, but the book's firm focus on personal and everyday teen reality ensures that readers will stay with the story every step of the way, and they may well reconsider their own familial legacies and community possibilities.

helps Isobel research the Wickham family history, and Nathaniel, Isobel's irresistibly handsome stepbrother, who blames his father for his mother and sister's death, and who is as attracted to Isobel as she is to him. Cook starts with some classic territory (there's even a boating accident à la *Rebecca*) while effectively updating things with Isobel's brashly realistic contemporary voice; the chills of a damp drowned specter and mysterious supernatural messages are still plenty creepy even in a modern setting. Though subplots get a little out of control at times (especially the messagey thread about Isobel's father and his schizophrenia), the main storylines of the ghostly mystery and her blossoming romance with Nathaniel remain successful, and the latter is all the sweeter for her victory over a queen-bee classmate. This is ideal for readers who like their stories supernatural but their dream guys human. DS

**COOMBS, KATE, ad.** *Hans My Hedgehog: A Tale From the Brothers Grimm*; ad. by Kate Coombs; illus. by John Nickle. Atheneum, 2012. [40p]  
ISBN 978-1-4169-1533-1 \$16.99

Reviewed from galleys

Ad 6-9 yrs

A farmer and his wife, long childless, welcome a child into the world who is half human and half hedgehog and name him Hans My Hedgehog. As a young man playing his beloved music in the woods, he has two encounters with kings who have lost their way; each time, he offers to help in exchange for the first thing that meets the king upon returning home, and each time, a princess meets the king. The first king chooses to ignore the promise; Hans subsequently sets his band of pigs loose to destroy his castle. The second king vows to keep the promise, and he and his daughter welcome Hans into their family. In the midst of the wedding celebration, the enchantment is broken and Hans is magically transformed into a complete man. This lesser-known tale from the Brothers Grimm, loosely adapted here, is an intriguing one, but some gaps in logic and explanation compromise the storyline; it's especially baffling that there's no justification for Hans' transformation. Nickle's art is similarly mixed; his acrylic illustrations, densely saturated in hue but delicately modded in hedgehog spines and other details, gives the animals an interesting combination of vivid realism and fantastical action, but the humans are stiff and ungainly. This adaptation offers a unique opportunity to share an unfamiliar traditional tale, however, so true folktale fans may want to have a listen. A note explains the changes Coombs made to the story. HM

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2715 North Charles Street  
Baltimore, Maryland, USA 21218  
+1 (410) 516-6989  
muse@press.jhu.edu



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Carlow, Regina. Exploring the Connection Between Children's Literature and Music. Libraries Unlimited, 2008. Print. ISBN: 978, the supply reflects the micro-unit.

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