



# Go Home Lake

*Megs Beach*

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In the late 1960s Penny is the youngest of four kids, known on her street as the girl with the mean brothers. She spends all year looking forward to her summers spent at Go Home Lake, where she passes the days in a soaked bathing suit, catching frogs, and getting her daily fill of fresh air.

Yet Penny's summers are far from pleasant. Her father's weekend visits to the cottage are sporadic, and her brothers prey on her innocence in every way, while her mother offers little sympathy. But Penny holds onto a secret ambition – she's going to be a real cowboy. If only her dad would buy her that pony he's been promising each year.

Told from the perspective of Penny looking back on those pivotal summers, Go Home Lake tells the story of a seemingly "normal" family. Megs Beach deftly balances a child's naiveté with razor-sharp observations of a 1960s middle-class family and of a childhood that only felt wrong years later.

## Go Home Lake Details

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Author : Megs Beach

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## From Reader Review Go Home Lake for online ebook

Shelby \*trains flying monkeys\* says

This book messed me up.

I loved the first 50% of it. Penny is a very young girl growing up in the late 1960's. Her imagination knows no bounds. She does know that she is going to be a cowboy. Her rowdy family goes to Go Home Lake every summer and she just knows that this summer is going to be the one where she gets a pony.

**"My Dad's going to get me a pony and I'm going to be a cowboy." I announced grandly.**

**"Girl," Ginny corrected helpfully.**

**"Wha-pardon?"**

**"Cowgirl. You're a girl, so you're going to be a cowgirl."**

**Cowboy. I was going to be a cowboy. I knew what a cowboy was. I fully intended to be one. Ginny just didn't understand. I'd show her. When I was a cowboy, I would show her.**

The family heads off to the summer cottage and of course, Penny doesn't get her pony. She and her "mean brothers" do manage to create havoc as usual.

Her dad shows up on weekends to fight with her mom. Life is normal.

Until next summer when the pony wishes start again.

**"Then can I get a pony?" I spun from vertical to horizontal and into a dizzy canter.**

**"Simmer down."**

**Not having heard 'yes' immediately, reflex triggered me into full beg mode.**

Now if you follow my reviews you know I have a somewhat warped sense of humor. And during the reading of this book I had to stop several times because I was laughing so hard that tears were blurring my vision. Some of this book is very good.

Penny's voice as a young girl reads true about growing up in that time frame. Things were not always so politically correct, parents threw you outside at the crack of dawn and dared you to come in before dark. Your brothers might have used you as a punching bag and no whining was ever allowed.

**All objections were quickly laid to rest when Dad promised to knock some sense into us by knocking our heads together. The clinical theory behind this Three Stooges therapy was not clear to me, but it was a treatment I desired not to endure.**

Then on a later summer Penny's brothers must have read too many of the Playboy magazines that her father have left thrown about the cottage. They take a interest in young Penny.

This part completely destroyed this book for me. I got sick to my stomach. Penny's voice is still a young child and it seems to be an ongoing thing. I did dnf this book at 86% because I just did not want to read anymore of it. Usually I can read just about anything so don't get your panties in a twist that I didn't finish it.

I hate that such a fun book for me was ruined but such is life. Books sometimes are a crap shoot and this one fell on the lower side of wishing I had never read it.

I hate that sometimes these things do happen in life. I just wasn't in the mood to subject myself to it. I wanted that imaginative child in Penny to have her pony and be a cowboy. In freaking peace.

**The best retort was to say, "Go shove a flaming hot ramrod up your rosy red rectum."**

**Such alliteration always sent me into fits of giggles. And I made a point of not spoiling the fun by asking what a rectum was.**

*Booksource: Netgalley in exchange for review.*

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### **Penny (Literary Hoarders) says**

Okay. wow. There is quite a bit packed into this 260-page book. I smiled and smiled and smiled all along at the beginning. Although Penny's childhood memories of being at the cottage in Go Home Lake take place in the 60s, there were many times when my childhood in the 70s could be fondly recalled in Penny's memories. However, her life takes a very dark turn at the hands of her older brother and also because of two parents that cannot be together without erupting into great and loud arguments ending in violence. It turns into a big punch in the gut and is a disturbing and heartbreaking read. Hard on the stomach. So, I still have to process it all....but it's quite the debut. Thank you to Second Story Press for sending.

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### **Ann Douglas says**

I loved the premise of this book (a novel about summers spent at a family cottage) and I loved the fact that the book tackles a really important subject (violence, abuse, and neglect in a family), but I had a couple of major problems with the book. First of all, the copy editor really let the author down. I spotted three really glaring typos in the first 27 pages of the book (Irma Bombeck instead of Erma Bombeck; bridal instead of bridle; break instead of brake). Secondly, the narrative perspective wasn't consistent. One moment, the story was being told by an older narrator who had insight into the experiences of her young self; the next, the older narrator was simply channelling those earlier experiences. I found the shifts confusing and frustrating.

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### **Catherine says**

I'm sorry. I'm so sorry, but I just did not enjoy this book. What I did enjoy was the very last section of the book - the last two pages. This is when the older Penny is looking back on her younger self and reflecting on her past. I wish the novel was more of a reflection and how she is coping now, with flashbacks from the past, rather than the entire novel a retelling.

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### **Kelsi H says**

Please read more of my reviews at <http://ultraviolentlit.blogspot.ca!>

This is the story of Penny, a young girl growing up in the 1960s in Ontario with several bullying older brothers, and a mom and dad who fight viciously while pretending everything is fine. Penny's coming of age story is punctuated by her family's annual summer trips to Go Home Lake, which she looks forward to all year. However, as Penny gets older, she realizes that the seemingly idyllic family trips are not as perfect as they seem.

Because the story is told from the point of view of a naïve and innocent young Penny, it is not at first obvious to the reader what is happening within the family. Her childhood seems pretty normal for 1960s America, with her only desire to own a pony. As Penny gets older and begins to realize that things are amiss, we learn that she must fend off awkward and inappropriate sexual advances from her older brothers, who prey on her innocence. Meanwhile, the cops are involved in keeping things civil between Penny's parents, opening them up for judgement within the neighbourhood.

The novel is filled with interesting socio-political observations from the era, including the moon landing and "Trudeau Mania." Beach's clever writing turns clichés upside down by allowing us to see them through the eyes of a child. Penny's language shows us her strong will, as shown by her ambition to become a "cowboy," not just a cowgirl. She is desperate to fit in with her brothers, but she doesn't yet know how gender differences can affect relationships, or the danger in trying to play along with the boys when she doesn't fully understand the game.

The second half of the novel was much stronger than the first, and I was happy that I stuck with it. What started out as light and comedic quickly becomes very dark. An older Penny looks back and says, "[t]he cottage was the closest thing we had to hope" (Loc. 2461) but after her experiences, there is no hope left at the lake. She had to separate from her childhood self in order to carry on, and there is no going back – either to the cottage or to the girl she once was.

I received this book for free from Second Story Press and NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

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### **Peggy Rose says**

Really enjoyed the beginning of this book. Took me right back to my childhood. Actually laughed out loud in several places. As I got more into the hood I didn't enjoy it as much. Found it somewhat disturbing.

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