

Booklist

Advanced Review – Uncorrected Proof

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The Best Bad Luck I Ever Had.

Levine, Kristin (Author)

Jan 2009. 272 p. Putnam, hardcover, \$16.99. (9780399250903).

While most of the residents in the tiny, World War I-era Moundville, Alabama, are shocked that their new postmaster is African American, Dit is simply surprised that said postmaster's child turns out to be a girl, not the boy his own age he was expecting. Bookish, timid Emma can hardly fill the role of fellow adventurer and baseball player that easygoing Dit, with more than a trace of a Huck Finn-like charm, had his heart set on. In unexpected ways, though, the unlikely twosome cross each other's paths and slowly build a partnership of complementary strengths. When Jim Crow rears its ugly head in the person of the menacing and blatantly racist sheriff, Emma and Dit embark on a risky adventure to save the life of a man sentenced to hang on trumped-up charges. Levine's story treats racism frankly and with no mincing of words. The highlight of this coming-of-age journey comes from watching the two kids learn about the world and come to care about each other in the way of 13-year-olds.

— *Anne O'Malley*