**Dear reader of *The Silenced,***

“We teach fear.” This line is graffitied onto the wall of the Sleighton Farm School for Girls, a real reform school that operated in suburban Philadelphia from 1826 until 2001. I grew up only a few miles away from this “school,” which sits next the boys’ school, Glen Mills.

Much has been said in the press about the closure of Glen Mills in 2019, especially after The Philadelphia Inquirer published a multi-part exposédetailing its widespread abuse, ominous tunnels, and cemetery for boys who died in its care. But little is known about the neighboring girls’ school.

It was frankly jarring for me to walk the three-hundred-plus-acre campus of Sleighton Farm, comprising a series of Victorian farmhouses that now sit dilapidated. Trespassers are welcome to walk through the sagging buildings full of boxy computers, student files, chandeliers, couches, church pews, and organs. There is still writing on the blackboards and flyers are still taped to the walls, only now everything is covered in layers of dust and overlapping spray-painted messages ranging from “666” to “Go Birds!”

The Troubled Teen Industry (TTI)—which includes boot camps, wilderness programs, therapeutic boarding schools, and more—is a network of private facilities, unregulated by the federal government, that generates billions of dollars within the United States. Recently, survivors have begun to speak out, via social media, as well as in Netflix documentaries like The Program and Paris Hilton’s This Is Paris.

I spoke with one such survivor, who is now is the CEO of a nonprofit dedicated to shutting down troubled teen facilities, and I asked why she thinks Sleighton Farm has sat abandoned for more than twenty years. She responded with a question: “Have they found the bodies yet?” She meant this literally. A reform school of this nature, one that forced girls to work in the fields unpaid for countless hours a day for 150 years, likely saw a lot of death. And my answer to her was no. There is no cemetery at Sleighton Farm to match the one at Glen Mills. Whatever bodies lie beneath its soil are in unmarked graves.

This is where my idea for The Silenced begins. What would happen if a group of teens trespassed on this cursed land and came home haunted? Don’t the girls who suffered there deserve to have the horrors of what they endured told?

I consider The Silenced an unusual reimagining of Lord of the Flies, only instead of wondering what would happen if a group of boys were left on an island without supervision, I imagine what would happen if a group of men were left in charge of teenage girls without supervision. This is my story about girls learning to speak up, whether it’s modern-day Hazel in a grieving Catholic Latino family or 1995 Deirdre in an abusive reform school called The Farm. It’s my story for my teenage daughter, and all the girls out there, as they learn to use their voice.

**Sincerely,**

**Diana Rodriguez Wallach**

“Rodriguez Wallach conjured **a mesmerizing and atmospheric tale filled with unease, heartbreak, and retribution** that will cling to my back for the rest of my life.”*—Natasha Preston, #1 New York Times bestselling author of The Lake*

“*The Silenced* is a **fantastically eerie ghost story that unflinchingly reveals the sharp teeth of history** and how it can draw blood. Dread-inducing at its core, you’ll tear through the pages.”*—Vincent Tirado, award-winning author of Burn Down, Rise Up**“The Silenced* isn’t just a gripping story—it’s**a raw, unflinching look at the horrors hidden behind the walls of so-called ‘Troubled Teen Industry (TTI)’ programs. Wallach doesn’t shy away from the truth**, making this book a powerful and necessary reminder of the voices that institutions tried to silence.”*—Meg Applegate, CEO of Unsilenced and author of Becoming UNSILENCED: Surviving and Fighting the Troubled Teen Industry*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **The Silenced**  by Diana Rodriguez Wallach | **On Sale September 16, 2025!** |
|  | ***Welcome to The Farm.*** Hazel Perez thinks her school project on the abandoned Oakwell Farms School for Girls—the Farm, as it’s known to locals—will be just another assignment. But after a late-night research trip ends with her falling unconscious, she awakens with a desire for revenge that isn’t her own.  Desperate to free herself from these sudden violent urges—and the haunting visions of an unknown girl she sees in the mirror—Hazel decides to investigate.  As she delves deeper into Oakwell Farms’ past, Hazel discovers the harrowing experiences of the girls who were once forced to live under the watch of sinister men and encounters the spirits who still linger there. With the help of some unlikely allies, Hazel must navigate a treacherous path of corruption, history, and the supernatural to bring peace to the restless spirits and learn the truth about her family’s involvement. |
| **THE SILENCED is a thoughtful and gripping exposé of the Troubled Teen Industry,**  **this supernatural thriller explores how a haunted past collides with a traumatized present to reveal truths that were meant to stay hidden.**  **More Praise for Diana Rodriguez Wallach**  **"A thrillingly twisted tale**of haunted whispers and reeking secrets.**"—**Ann Fraistat, author of *What We Harvest* **"A propulsive thrill of a book!** You think you know what happens next, but there's a twist around every corner."**—**Zoraida Córdova, award-winning author of *Labyrinth Lost*  **"An absorbing, deadly spiral**of shadowed history and family secrets. Rodriguez Wallach knows exactly where to strike."—Hailey Piper, Bram Stoker Award-winning author of  *Queen of Teeth***"Absolutely riveting!***Hatchet Girls* is a must read filled with clever twists, dark thrills, and strong women. I loved every page."—Melissa Marr, *NYT* bestselling Author of *Graveminder***"An intense, feminist, thrill ride of a novel,***Hatchet Girls* brings the macabre world of Lizzie Borden into the twenty-first century. A must-read for fans of Claire Legrand and Kendare Blake."**—**Amalie Jahn, *USA Today* bestselling author of  *The Next to Last Mistake*  **“Mesmerizing and creepy,** Wallach combines an **evocative setting with historical legends** to weave a gripping tale about a modern-day axe murder. With its relentless pacing, Hatchet Girls takes you in its teeth and doesn't let go until the final, spine-tingling chapter!"*—Jennifer Lynn Alvarez, author of Friends Like These* **"A slick murder mystery**packaged within the terror of supernatural possession, *Hatchet Girls* feels at home set in Lizzie Borden's house, and the Fortean forest of the Bridgewater Triangle."**—**Johnny Compton, author of *The Spite House*"*Hatchet Girls* had me second-guessing every character, every motive, and kept me up late reading to find out what would happen. Layer that with the lore of the Lizzie Borden murders, and it's a **winning combination both teens and adults will not be able to put down."**—P. J. Hoover, author of *Solstice* | |

**­­**

**Order Now!**

**Visit Random House’s website for details:** <https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/755238/the-silenced-by-diana-rodriguez-wallach/>

**Add It on Goodreads!** <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/222346524-the-silenced>

**Set more than one hundred years after the Borden murders, this propulsive, supernatural thriller imagines what might happen if history were to repeat itself today. Perfect for fans of Kara Thomas and Courtney Summers!  
  
When Mariella Morse accuses her boyfriend, Vik Gomez, of murdering her wealthy parents with an axe, the town is quick to believe her. It doesn’t help that Vik is caught standing over her parents’ bodies with blood on his hands, unable to remember anything about the night in question.  
  
But Vik’s sister, Tessa, knows that Vik would never be capable of such a gruesome crime. Haunted by the mistakes she made that led her family to move to Fall River, MA in the first place, she sets out to prove her brother’s innocence.  
  
Tessa’s search for answers will lead her into a sprawling, notoriously cursed forest, where she and Mariella must face a darkness that has lurked within their town since before the days of Lizzie Borden—the original axe murderess of Fall River.**

**Set more than one hundred years after the Borden murders, this propulsive, supernatural thriller imagines what might happen if history were to repeat itself today. Perfect for fans of Kara Thomas and Courtney Summers!**  
  
When Mariella Morse accuses her boyfriend, Vik Gomez, of murdering her wealthy parents with an axe, the town is quick to believe her. It doesn’t help that Vik is caught standing over her parents’ bodies with blood on his hands, unable to remember anything about the night in question.  
  
But Vik’s sister, Tessa, knows that Vik would never be capable of such a gruesome crime. Haunted by the mistakes she made that led her family to move to Fall River, MA in the first place, she sets out to prove her brother’s innocence.  
  
Tessa’s search for answers will lead her into a sprawling, notoriously cursed forest, where she and Mariella must face a darkness that has lurked within their town since before the days of Lizzie Borden—the original axe murderess of Fall River.

**Diana Rodriguez Wallach** is a multi-published author of young adult novels, most recently YA horror novels. Her next book, THE SILENCED, described as *Girl Interrupted* meets *Poltergeist*, comes out in September 2025 through Random House/Delacorte. In October 2023, she released HATCHET GIRLS, a modern twist on the legend of Lizzie Borden, and in 2021, she published SMALL TOWN MONSTERS, named one of the “13 Scariest Books of 2021” by Kirkus Reviews (both through Random House). Additionally, Diana is the author of the *Anastasia Phoenix Trilogy*; first book in the series, *Proof of Lies*, was a finalist for the 2018 International Thriller Awards for Best Young Adult Novel. Additionally, Diana’s debut novel placed second in the International Latino Book Awards for Best YA Novel. Diana has previously penned a YA contemporary trilogy, a YA short-story collection, and is featured in several anthologies. She is also a co-host on the writing podcast, The Paper Trail, and she teaches an annual writing course through the Highlights Foundation. She lives in the Philadelphia area with her husband, two children, and two cats.

**Don’t Miss Diana Rodriguez Wallach’s Other Scary Reads! On Sale Now!**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Set more than one hundred years after the Lizzie Borden murders, this propulsive, supernatural thriller imagines what might happen if history were to repeat itself in this infamous New England town. | **A group of people standing on a street at night  Description automatically generated with low confidence** | An unputdownable story of a girl, a dark angel, and the cult hellbent on taking over her small, coastal community. |

**Connect With Diana:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| TikTok: @dianarodriguezwallach  Instagram: @dianawallachauthor  Threads: @dianawallachauthor  BlueSky: @dianawallachauthor | Website: <https://dianarodriguezwallach.com>  Email: [diana.wallach@yahoo.com](mailto:diana.wallach@yahoo.com) |