

# DISCOVERIES

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**Cunningham, Leigh K.**

THE GLASS TABLE

Vivante Publishing (218

pp.)

US\$8.99 paperback

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Cunningham easily combines elements of fantasy into her cautionary tale for young readers, the first in a series, about the need for conservation.

Twelve children disappear on the same summer day by the banks of Lake Como, near Hanging Rock.

While the children's parents and police assume the worst, the children have actually been cast under a spell. Six have become water spirits, six wood spirits. The water spirits sit at a glass table under the lake and read the spell's instructions. To break the spell, the children must convince the Rumpole City Council to protect the woods, lake and river. Escape for each individual river spirit is also possible, but only at the cost of a wood spirit's life, and this sets the scene for mistrust and rivalries that further divide the two groups.

After several mistakes and some selfishness, wood and lake spirits do begin to trust each other and work together. The spirits—who are allowed to visit the real world for four-hour stretches although they cannot be seen—see how much they are missed and gradually, with the help of a local medium and the one little boy who has escaped, begin to convince the adults that the spell is real and must be obeyed.

Action-packed and abounding with quirky, likable characters, this small gem has the power to keep readers entranced.

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