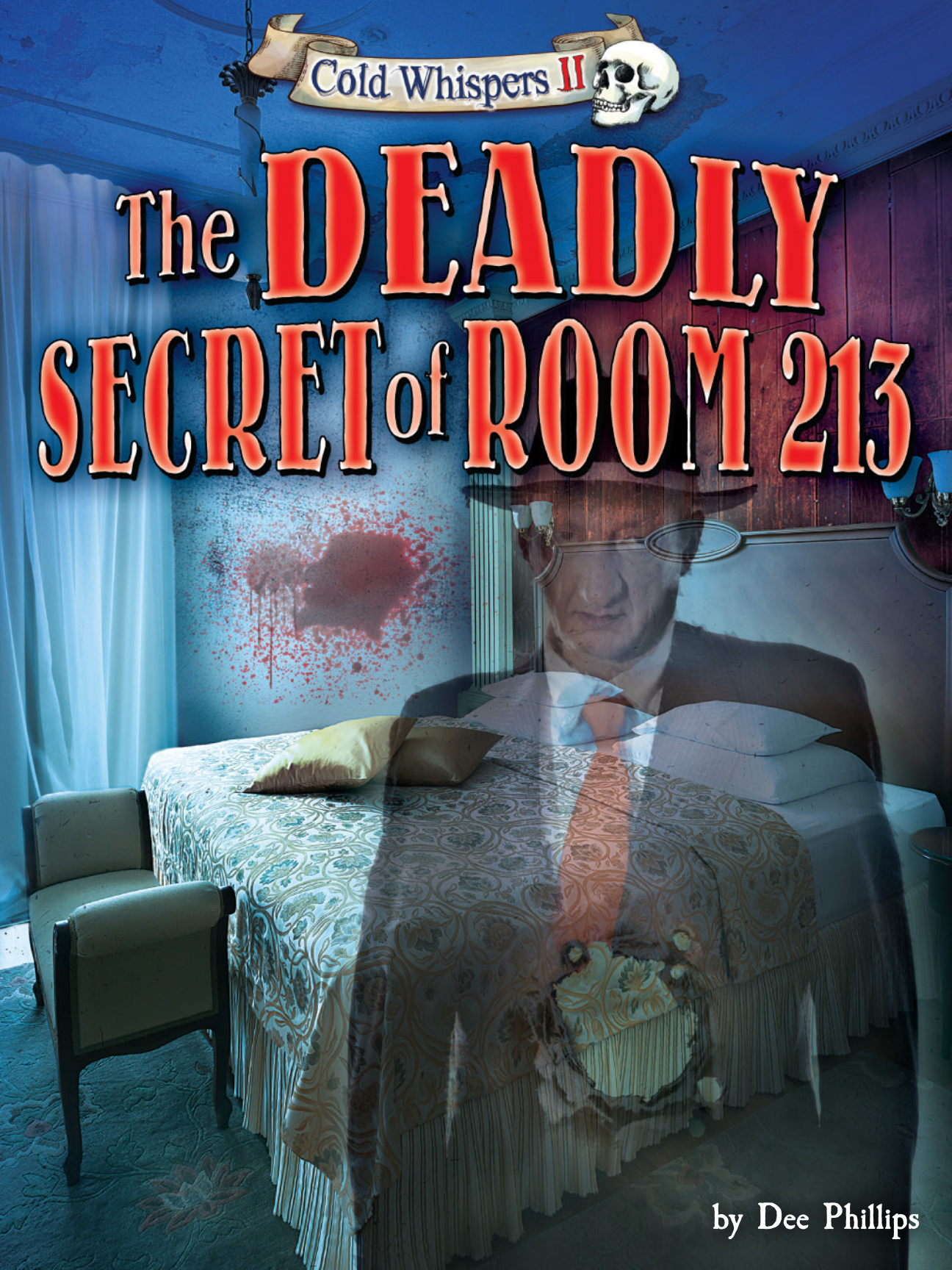


Cold Whispers II



The DEADLY SECRET of ROOM 213



by Dee Phillips

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by Dee Phillips

illustrated by Anthony Resto

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The Retreat Hotel

Josh dragged his suitcase into the lobby of the Retreat Hotel. His dad followed behind, carrying lots of tools. “This is our home for the summer, kiddo!” he said.

Josh stared at the peeling paint and **antique** furniture in the big, **dilapidated** hotel. A sign that said CHECK IN hung on a rusty chain above an **ornate** wooden desk. Josh marched up to the desk and hit a small brass bell. *Ding! Ding! Ding!*

“What do you want?” a voice snarled.

Suddenly, Josh was face-to-face with a short wrinkled man who had popped up from behind the desk.

“Uh, hi,” said Josh’s dad. “You must be Reggie Baker. The owners of the hotel tell me you used to work here as a **bellhop**, and you stayed to keep watch over the place after it





was closed down.”

Ignoring Dad, the man pulled a cloth from his pocket and began polishing the brass bell.

Josh stared at the grumpy little man. He guessed that Reggie had to be at least eighty years old. Wisps of white hair sprouted from under the man’s red cap, and he wore a faded red jacket with rows of buttons.

Dad tried again. “My name is Ben Silva. This is my son, Josh. I’m the new repairman, and I’m here to fix up the hotel before it reopens later this year.”

“I was expecting you,” growled Reggie. He shuffled from behind the desk. “I’ll show you to your apartment.”

Josh and his dad followed Reggie through a door marked **STAFF ONLY** and down a corridor. Reggie stopped in front of one of the doors in the hallway and handed a key to Dad.

"This is where you'll live," said Reggie gruffly. "Let's get one thing straight. You stay out of my way, and I'll stay out of yours." Then he walked away.

Josh's heart sank. Now that he'd met the hotel's only other resident, he was less excited about living at the Retreat.

As they started unpacking their suitcases, Josh asked his dad, "How old is this place?"

"It's almost one hundred years old," said Dad. "It was a popular vacation spot for rich people and movie stars. But over the years, fewer people came, so the owners closed it down."

"Can I take a look around the hotel?" asked Josh.

Dad nodded. "But be back for dinner in an hour, and don't bother old Reggie. He doesn't seem to like company."

Josh made his way back to the lobby. He spotted a large glass cabinet that contained faded black-and-white photographs of the actor Charlie Chaplin, the gangster Al Capone, and other famous visitors to the hotel.

As he studied the pictures, Josh was sure he saw one of them move! He jumped when a gray rat appeared from behind

a photograph of the hotel. The creature gnawed on the photo's wooden frame. Then the rat eyed Josh and quickly disappeared to the back of the dusty cabinet.





ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dee Phillips develops and writes nonfiction books for young readers and fiction books—including historical fiction—for middle graders and young adults. She loves to read and write stories that have a twist or an unexpected, thought-provoking ending. Dee lives near the ocean on the southwest coast of England. A keen hiker, her biggest ambition is to one day walk the entire coast of Great Britain.



ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Anthony Resto graduated from the American Academy of Art with a BFA in Watercolor. He has been illustrating children's books, novellas, and comics for six years, and is currently writing his own children's book. His most recent illustrated books include *Happyland: A Tale in Two Parts* and *Oracle of the Flying Badger*. You can find his other illustrated books and fine art works at anthonyresto.com. In his free time, he enjoys restoring his vintage RV and preparing for the zombie apocalypse.

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When his dad gets a job at the Retreat Hotel, Josh is excited to explore the run-down building. But when he enters room 213, Josh discovers a gruesome bloodstain on the wall. Then he meets a very unwelcome guest—the ghost of a gangster! Who is the long-dead gangster, and what secret is he trying to hide?

The Deadly Secret of Room 213

Nightmare in the Hidden Morgue

Doomed on Death Row

Terror in the Underground Tunnel

Fright at the Freemont Library

Trapped in the Abandoned Hospital

The Ghostly Secret of Lakeside School

The Vampire's Lair

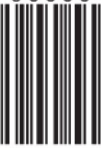
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