



**MARGARET PETERSON HADDIX**

*"Artfully told with suspense and  
interesting twists." —School Library Journal*

# Among the Impostors

The second book in the Shadow Children sequence



## CHAPTER ONE

**S**ometimes he whispered his real name in the dark, in the middle of the night.

"Luke. My name is Luke."

He was sure no one could hear. His roommates were all asleep, and even if they weren't, there was no way the sound of his name could travel even the short distance to the bed above or beside him. He was fairly certain there were no bugs on him or in his room. He'd looked. But even if he'd missed seeing a microphone hidden in a mattress button or carved into the headboard, how could a microphone pick up a whisper he could barely hear himself?

He was safe now. Lying in bed, wide awake while everyone else slept, he reassured himself of that fact constantly. But his heart pounded and his face went clammy with fear every time he rounded his lips for that "u" sound—instead of the fake smile of the double "e" in Lee, the name he had to force himself to answer to now.

It was better to forget, to never speak his real name again.

But he'd lost everything else. Even just mouthing his

name was a comfort. It seemed like his only link now to his past, to his parents, his brothers.

To Jen.

By day, he kept his mouth shut.

He couldn't help it.

That first day, walking up the stairs of the Hendricks School for Boys with Jen's father, Luke had felt his jaw clench tighter and tighter the closer he got to the front door.

"Oh, don't look like that," Mr. Talbot had said, pretending to be jolly. "It's not reform school or anything."

The word stuck in Luke's brain. Reform. Re-form. Yes, they were going to re-form him. They were going to take a Luke and make him a Lee.

It was safe to be Lee. It wasn't safe to be Luke.

Jen's father stood with his hand on the ornate door-knob, waiting for a reply. But Luke couldn't have said a word if his life depended on it.

Jen's father hesitated, then pulled on the heavy door. They walked down a long hallway. The ceiling was so far away, Luke thought he could have stood his entire family on his shoulders—one on top of the other, Dad and Mother and Matthew and Mark—and the highest one still would barely touch. The walls were lined, floor to ceiling, with old paintings of people in costumes Luke had never seen outside of books.

Of course, there was very little he'd ever seen outside of books.

He tried not to stare, because if he really were Lee, surely everything would look familiar and ordinary. But that was hard to remember. They passed a classroom where dozens of boys sat in orderly rows, everyone facing away from the door. Luke gawked for so long that he practically began walking backwards. He'd known there were a lot of people in the world, but he'd never been able to imagine so many all in one place at the same time. Were any of them shadow children with fake identities, like Luke?

Jen's father clapped a hand on his shoulder, turning him around.

"Ah, here's the headmaster's office," Mr. Talbot said heartily. "Just what we were looking for."

Luke nodded, still mute, and followed him through a tall doorway.

A woman sitting behind a mammoth wood desk turned their way. She took one look at Luke and asked, "New boy?"

"Lee Grant," Jen's father said. "I spoke with the master about him last night."

"It's the middle of the semester, you know," she said warningly. "Unless he's very well prepared, he shan't catch up, and might have to repeat—"

"That won't be a problem," Mr. Talbot assured her. Luke was glad he didn't have to speak for himself. He knew he wasn't well prepared. He wasn't prepared for anything.

The woman was already reaching for files and papers.

"His parents faxed in his medical information and his



# OUT OF HIDING INTO DANGER.

Luke Garner is an illegal third child. All his life has been spent in hiding. Now, for the first time, Luke is living among others. He has assumed a deceased boy's identity and is attending Hendricks School for Boys, a windowless building with cruel classmates and oblivious teachers. Luke knows he has to blend in, but he lives in constant fear that his behavior will betray him.

Then one day Luke discovers a door to the outside. He knows that beyond the walls of Hendricks lie the secrets he is desperate to uncover. What he doesn't know is whom he can trust—and where the answers to his questions may lead him. . . .

"The unsettling, futuristic totalitarian society created in *Among the Hidden* continues in this equally compelling sequel. . . . Leaves readers longing for more. . . ."

—Kirkus Reviews

*Read the rest of the books in the chilling Shadow Children sequence . . .*



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