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Deadly

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New York City in 1906 many people were falling ill and dying of typhoid fever. Sixteen-year-old Prudence Galewski decides to leave school and finds a job to support her mother and herself. She gains employment with the Department of Health and Sanitation where she is an assistant to Mr. Soper, the sanitation engineer. Mr. Soper is trying to determine how typhoid is spread, and as Prudence types up Mr. Soper’s notes it is concluded that many cases had one common element—a cook. The department tracks down the cook, Mary Mallon, and declares her a healthy carrier of the typhoid fever, known as Typhoid Mary. As Prudence works with Mr. Soper, she discovers a sense of purpose and a desire to learn more about medicine.

Chibbaro wrote this historical fiction novel in diary form from Prudence’s point of view. Chibbaro’s facts are very authentic; the role women played during that time, the investigation that Mr. Soper conducted, the controversy surrounding Mary Mallon, and the emotions of Prudence as she figures out who she is and what she wants to do. The book focuses on science because it is Prudence’s passion, and there are illustrations throughout the book as if Prudence herself was drawing in her diary. This book would be excellent for young adults who want to understand the discovery of diseases.