Pearson, Kit. *The Whole Truth*. Toronto: Harper Collins, 2011. Print.

Victoria, B.C.-based children's author (and one-time children's librarian!), Kit Pearson's tale of family intrigue will have you hooked from the first line, 'After it happened they were sent away." A Governor General Award-winning author for *Awake and Dreaming*, Pearson won the 2012 Canadian Library Association's Book of the Year for Children Award for *The Whole Truth*, which delightfully has been followed with a sequel, *And Nothing But the Truth*.

The year is 1932, and, like many areas, Winnipeg is gripped by the Depression. Following a tragic incident which resulted in the drowning death of their father, nine-year-old Polly and her older sister Maud must make a long journey, first by train and then by ferry boat, to Kingfisher Island, a small island near Victoria, to live with their maternal grandmother whom the girls do not remember. Maud will attend boarding school in Victoria while Polly will go to the small island school. Before Maud leaves, however, she makes Polly swear a strict promise to keep a secret regarding their father.

Polly's daily struggles with her grief and loneliness are juxtaposed with her desire to be happy. Maud deals with her sadness by pouring her energies into her new friendships and all that comes with attending a boarding school: uniforms to buy, sporting events, and school plays. The girls' well-respected and loving grandmother, along with their interesting extended family, provide a safe home, and Polly's school offers new opportunities for friendship and adventure. But Polly is just a young girl, and keeping a secret bears heavily on her. She copes by writing touching yet so very sad letters to her deceased father.

As the shocking secret is revealed, Polly and Maud's newfound happiness is threatened and the bounds of family loyalty are tested. I eagerly await the sequel to this novel and the next chapter in the lives of Polly and Maud.

Highly recommended: 4 out of 4 stars
Reviewer: Debbie Feisst