



The Secret Pond

Gerri Hill

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Grieving over the loss of her family and feeling like her life is unraveling, Lindsey McDermott quits her job, gets a puppy and retreats to her grandparents' home in the Texas Hill Country. She spends her solitary days walking childhood trails and reminiscing, trying to reconcile the conflict within her as she struggles with survivor's guilt.

Hannah Larson, after the death of her husband, needs a change. At the suggestion of her mother-in-law—and against her better judgement—she and her nine-year-old son, Jack, move to tiny Utopia and into her husband's grandmother's house.

When Jack and Lindsey form an unlikely friendship, Hannah reluctantly joins them and the three spend the summer swimming and healing as laughter eventually replaces tears. After Jack goes back to school, Hannah assumes their summer fun is over. Instead, Lindsey continues to come around and now—as they find themselves alone—Hannah realizes just how close they've become. Soon, she finds herself struggling with her feelings as their friendship threatens to shift into something much deeper...something she fears she won't be able to fight. Something she fears she won't want to fight.

Genre: Romance

The Secret Pond Details

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From Reader Review The Secret Pond for online ebook

Tiff says

Gerri Hill is a phenomenal writer. I love her books and have read almost everything she has published. What I love most about Hill's writing is she sets the scene perfectly. In The Secret Pond, I felt as if though I could truly see the landscape of Leakey, Texas. She described it perfectly, Hill transported you right into one of the most beautiful places in the vast state of Texas.

There's going to be a but now. While the setting for the book was perfect, the romance was not. Our two main protagonists in the story have been dealt horrific losses. Lindsey McDermott, an architect from Dallas, has lost her entire family to a plane crash. I'm talking everyone, parents, grandparents, both siblings, siblings spouses and their children. Hannah Larson lost her husband to a fifteen month battle with a brain tumor. She watched her husband deteriorate as cancer ravaged his body. So when these two ladies meet, they have so much backstory and pain to navigate through.

The majority of the book is spent with Hannah's son Jack, playing in the Frio River or a secret pond on the McDermott ranch. Lindsey meets Jack, and they see a bit of themselves in each other, grief recognizing grief. They fish, swim and enjoy summer, finally including Hannah on their adventures. That takes you through almost 75% of the book. After halfway, I could not see any way for these Hannah and Lindsey to have a romance. They do, but it feels less than and rushed.

I will continue to read every book Hill writes, this one just was not my favorite. It felt long, a bit repetitious and the romance felt like an afterthought. 3 stars

Netty says

Far too repetitive for me to enjoy and also how the hell does one eat so much crap without dropping down dead, disappointing....

2.5

Jo reece says

Never have been able to put a Gerri Hill book down without having to read it in one sitting...

This read is Brilliant.

Kathryn says

Heartwarming story of two people with a shared grief that find each other . A small boy and a twenty-nine year old woman.

Rach (Les Rêveur) says

For me this book meant more by the end... actually it meant everything. I felt like I was reliving the emotions along with the characters.

Lindsey has lost everything... her family, her life and her self worth. She flees the city with her new puppy and hides out at her grandparents home. She spends her days reliving the most awful day of her life and then one day she meets a young boy called Jack and everything changes... Lindsay starts to live again.

Jack's mum, Hannah has moved them from their old life after her husband dies. She is hoping the new start will help her and Jack heal but she doesn't expect to meet Lindsay...

Could this be more than a new start?

This book was an emotional rollercoaster that I didn't want to get off. The books highs and lows with tears and laughter were certainly worth every moment. I'm a massive fan of Gerri Hill but I think this is one of her best works to date.

As a mum I had to say the idea of my son going off everyday secretly to meet a women I didn't know anything about would have drove me just as crazy as Hannah. I totally understood her stance but admired her ease of acceptance of Lindsay once she knew she was not a threat.

Be forewarned that this is definitely a slow burn book but with ultimately the perfect union of two women who really grow to be perfect for each other. But not only that, they become the most wonderful family even before Hannah and Lindsay realised any feelings mounting.

I won't go into too much because it could spoil what could be the most beautiful and heart felt story I have read in a while.

Kudos Gerri Hill. You're the maestro for a reason.

5 stars

Gaby LezReviewBooks says

Review of 'The secret pond' by Gerri Hill.

Gerri Hill is a veteran lesfic author of romances, mysteries and even paranormal. 'The secret pond' is a beautiful slow burn romance but also a story about overcoming grief and finding home. Written from both main characters' point of view, the book describes a summer in south Texas spent by Hannah, a straight mother of a 9 year old recently widowed, and Lindsey, a single lesbian architect who lost her whole family in a plane crash. Both women (and Hannah's son) find solace in each other and slowly their relationship start to evolve into something more meaningful and unexpected.

I enjoyed this book very much though I needed some time to like Hannah, as I was alarmed by her parenting choices at the beginning of the book. I slowly warmed to her as I started to understand her actions and her suffering. Lindsey is an adorable character with her guilt complex and family devotion that it's hard not to like her. As the book progresses, the reader can see their chemistry growing and their relationship changing without much angst but with deep feelings and care for each other. Ms. Hill's love for the outdoors and south Texas permeates throughout the book in her beautiful descriptions of the area and the suffocating summer. 'The secret pond' is Gerri Hill at her best.

Overall, 4.5 stars. Highly recommended if you like slow burn romances without much angst.

ARC provided by the publisher in exchange for an honest review.

See all my reviews at
www.lezreviewbooks.wordpress.com

Agirlcandream says

Loved hearing Abby Craden read this story of two lost souls finding comfort in each others company. Both Hannah and Lindsay have lost so much in their lives as has Hannah's son Jack. The friendship which develops quickly between Lindsay and Jack sets up the inevitable connection between Hannah and Lindsay. Too bad the ending was so abrupt. I had to check my phone to see if I missed something. The rushed HEA doesn't take away from a heartfelt story. Bring your hankies for this one.

Joc says

This is a really sweet story of loss and new-found life and love. Nearly all of the dialogue and interaction is between Lindsay, Hannah and Jack, Hannah's 9-year-old son. Both Lindsay and Hannah are likeable characters. Jack was well-characterised for the age he portrays. It didn't blow me away but it is well-written. 3.5 rounded up.

Rosi says

With regret, because the author is one of my favorites, I did not like this book at all.

The story is good, it's interesting even, but as for the romance between the two protagonists, the thing is slow and repetitive. Even the variety of food menus is scarce.

Actually, this book should have been called "Jack's mother" for the number of times Lindsey repeats it in her head.

It has not been a total waste of time, but I will not remember much of it either.

Lex Kent says

This is a new, slow-burn romance by Hill. I'm a big fan of Hill but I normally enjoy her action-romance or romance-thrillers the best. Instead this is a sweet, heartfelt romance that is just really well written.

Lindsey and Hannah are both suffering over great losses. Lindsey's is so big, she is wondering if life is worth living. When she meets Hannah's son, who is also grieving, the two form an immediate bond. Hannah doesn't know what to think of her 9 year old son in a friendship with an adult. She needs to understand this woman who has captured her son's heart. In a summer spent at a secret pond, bonds form almost like a family. But what will happen when the summer is finally over?

This is a story of overcoming great loss, friendship, family, and potential love. This is a slow-burn romance that has no angst. I used to call these straight romances, but saying that about a lesfic book just doesn't really work. So I guess traditional romance would be better? I'm the kind of person that can get a little bored by these romances. No mystery, crime, dragons or spaceships, just a very real heartfelt romance. But Hill writes so damn well that this book kept my attention and I really enjoyed the read anyway.

If you are looking for a romance with no angst, just a story about people becoming a family, give this book a try. When Hill writes a traditional romance, this is the type of quality you come to expect from her. I can't wait to see what she writes about next.

An ARC was given to me by Bella, for a honest review.

Pin says

One sad boy, two sad women, two puppies, a river and a secret pond. That is what it took for Gerri Hill to write a perfectly beautiful and heartwarming story. She is the master writer of lesfic. My favorite by her is At Seventeen, and The Secret Pond is equally amazing. The characters, the plot, the emotions (especially the emotions!), the ending... everything is just perfect.

If you are looking for a touching and tender story of loss, grief, love and family -- this is your book. Highly recommended for everyone!

5 stars

Oct 29, 2017

A review copy of this book was provided by the publisher.

Kara says

“The Secret Pond” was absolutely delightful, and it was joyous listening to Abby Craden once again!

Instead of the typical lesfic formula of meet-misunderstanding-breakup-HEA, this book positions the tragedies as happening before the book begins. Although we meet the MCs as they are battling loneliness and depression, the tone of the book is very positive as they individually and together heal and rebuild a

sense of happiness and purpose.

MCs Lindsey and Hannah, and 9yo MC Jack are all extremely likable. The friendships and bonds they form over a summer evolve very naturally and believably into love between Lindsey and formally straight-woman Hannah. Hannah's initial belief that Jack's new friend was imaginary was hilarious, and Hannah's later careful consideration for the emotions of Lindsey and Jack were more thoughtful than her initial reaction to meeting Lindsey.

I really appreciated that Gerri Hill resisted any temptation to throw in some late angst just as Lindsey and Hannah recognized they were falling for each other.

Hannah's meddlesome mother-in-law was amusing, and the dogs were terrific.

This is one of the sweetest books I've listened to in awhile, and I really look forward to listening to it again (and again), and returning to "The Secret Pond". 5* oh, and btw, as sweet as the book is, the sex scenes are wonderfully steamy!!

Serena says

4.5 stars.

Gerri hill is a wonderful story teller!

While reading this book I noticed I had more patience than ever before. I'm a sucker for A slow pace romance. A romance where the writer takes the time to create a realistic, emotional and passionate bond between characters.

For me the timing of a love story is often as important as the story itself. I've read books that went too quick, where I didn't even have a chance to get into the feel of the story. I've read books where the writer waited too long, and to story bled to death.

But gosh..... miss Hill, she is such a great story teller, that it was beyond "the pace" with this one, I seemed to have all the patience in the world reading this book. She just drew me in, and I knew from the first page, it would be worth the wait!

This story is about grieve, loss, about being brave enough to love again. It's also about family and true love, and how love can make us forget about gender and what's expected from society, it all comes down in the end, to what simply feels "RIGHT" to us!

Arien says

3 stars. Forgot I finished this one on my tablet awhile back. It was both a heartbreak and soul healing story but ultimately it was too repetitive, I felt it was too long in the healing part of the story (almost put it down) and too rushed in love story part of it. And there was barely any love at all, felt more like lust and then it ended just as soon as it began.

The story didn't expand on the issues with both parts of the family about old and new problems so a lot of the topics felt unfinished or rushed. What about the overbearing mother in law and her reaction to her daughter in law turning into a lesbian all of a sudden. What about Hannah's parents? What about their relationship, they just got together and that's it. Did they stay in Utopia or did they move? Did they stay together at all?

I understand that the story is about healing but it's also supposed to be about love and while the healing part is good if not too long the love part feels rushed and unfinished. Would rate higher if there was a proper epilogue. I guess I'm not a fan of open endings, at least not this kind of open ending.

Luce says

5 STARS. Bonus 0.5 Stars for the excellent narration by Abby Craden. Huh. I was sure I'd listened to her before. Turns out I've just seen her name on a number of Lesfic audiobooks by Radclyffe, Hill & Beers plus a light comedic werewolf series I've been eyeing. I'm looking forward to listening to her again. Especially when she uses her swoon worthy sexy voice.

Ok. This is hands down my favorite Hill book. I've read a number of Hill's early books but other than *At Seventeen*, nothing recently. I'm so glad I read this one.

The book opens with Lindsey McDurmott. She has recently moved to her Grandparents homestead in southern Texas. I'd never read (listened) to anything so heartbreakingly sad as the opening chapter of Lindsey walking the property with her puppy, Max as she grieves her loss of her family and loneliness. Her grief is palpable. You just know that it wouldn't take much for her to possibly end it. I didn't realize the real extent of her loss until she opens up to the 9 (almost 10!) year old boy that she met at the creek along with his own puppy, Barney. Jack Larsen & his mother, Hannah are also grieving the recent loss of her husband & Jack's father to brain cancer. They have just moved into Jack's Great-Grandmother's house to have Jack get to know his paternal grandparents and to escape. Though right away Hannah questions her decision because it also meant living nearby her shrew, judgmental, opinionated mother-in-law.

Jack & Lindsey form a special friendship as they meet everyday to fish the creek and later swim at the river or at Lindsey's family's Secret Pond. Jack tells his mother about his new friend which she assumes is imaginary! The three of them (& their dogs) spend a magical summer together becoming best friends and a family as they help each other heal. When the summer ends, Jack starts school and Lindsey & Hannah grow closer. As the synopsis says, a story of grief, healing... a story of love. My highest recommendation.
