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When Piper Mills was twelve, she helped her grandfather bury a box that belonged to her grandmother in the backyard. For twelve years, it remained untouched.

Now a near fatal riding accident has shattered Piper's dreams of Olympic glory. After her grandfather's death, she inherits the house and all its secrets, including a key to a room that doesn't exist—or does it? And after her grandmother is sent away to a nursing home, she remembers the box buried in the backyard. In it are torn pages from a scrapbook, a charm necklace—and a newspaper article from 1939 about the body of an infant found floating in the Savannah River. The necklace's charms tell the story of three friends during the 1930s— each charm added during the three months each friend had the necklace and recorded her life in the scrapbook. Piper always dismissed her grandmother as not having had a story to tell. And now, too late, Piper finds she might have been wrong.

The Lost Hours Details

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From Reader Review The Lost Hours for online ebook

Holly says

Surprisingly engaging!

Piper Mills hasn't ridden a horse since she fell off and severely injured herself six years ago, ending her dreams of becoming an Olympic equestrian. Now she has returned to the house that her grandfather bequeathed to her upon his death, where she spends her days numbed and unattached to anything. Her grandmother Annabelle is in the advanced stages of Alzheimer's disease, and cannot remember who Piper is. Piper is trapped in her past, and cannot find a way to connect with her current future.

All this changes when she looks in her grandmother's hope chest on a whim and finds a blue baby sweater and no clue as to who it was knitted for. When she tries asking her grandmother, it is clear that the sweater is significant, but Piper cannot determine why, and her grandmother dies shortly after, taking her secrets with her. Piper then remembers a mysterious box that she once helped her grandfather bury, and upon exhuming it, she discovers pages torn from a scrapbook and an old charm necklace. Combine all this with the discovery of a secret room in the attic, where she finds a bassinet and a baby blanket that matches the sweater, and Piper suddenly knows that her grandmother led more of a life than she ever knew.

Piper turns to the only person who might be able to give her answers: her grandmother's childhood friend Lily, an elderly widow herself. With the aid of Lily's grandchildren, Piper is on a mission to discover the secrets that Lily, Annabelle, and their third friend Josie kept together and that eventually split up their friendship, causing them to no longer speak to each other for the rest of their lives. It's a race against time to discover the secret and unravel the mystery before Lily, too, passes and takes the secrets with her.

This was not a very long book, but it was engaging and I had a hard time putting it down once I got started. All the characters are well developed and the setting is so picturesque that I can picture it in my mind as I read. The alternate setting of 1930's Georgia is well-written as well, and the descriptions of horse-related things makes me want to go for a ride myself! A fantastic story with a satisfying conclusion.

Mary says

This is basically a Harlequin Romance with a slightly more interesting plotline and very little passion. I got impatient with how none of the main characters would just *spit it out* instead of drawing out the Big Secret until I wanted to chuck the book across the room. I don't enjoy people who seem to want to wallow in their own misery instead of just getting on with their lives. It frustrates me to read over and over again about the "haunted look" or "the pain" in someone's eyes all the time. Self-pity is not an attractive characteristic, especially with everyone tip-toeing around each other as if they were all made of blown glass, instead of administering a brisk slap to the face and a "Get over it!". I didn't feel any sympathy for anyone. Maybe that's just me--I'm not one to live in the past, paralyzed by regrets, but that is what all these people--with the exception of Helen, the Amazing Blind Painter--had in common.. The final revelation of The Big Secret was not only predictable but flat and anticlimactic--is that all? Granted, it was sort of sad, but frankly I just couldn't muster up any real feeling about it, except relief that it was finally over.

Anna says

I really liked this. As with all dual-timeline stories, there's a long-held secret to be discovered; this particular secret is tantalisingly just out of reach until the very final part of the reveal. You're almost there on the clues, but you just can't second-guess the full revelation twist. As Lillian herself would say in the book, 'stop jumping ahead, be patient!'

What sets this dual-timeline story apart from others though, is the poignant theme of loss, grief, guilt and regret, before finally finding the courage to let go and move on. All the main characters have their own sets of inner pain, and it's very touching to watch them slowly lower their emotional barriers as they're all brought together by their search for the truth.

A tender, tragic, uplifting, haunting story. I'll definitely be reading more by this author.

Dannielle says

This was such a powerful, poignant, beautifully written novel. The story was amazing and so very compelling, every character interesting and well developed, and her writing was fantastic. I enjoyed reading this, and for once I just wanted to soak up the story, enjoy the journey, and didn't want it to end. I loved the plot, and the actual story, but the message behind her words were more powerful in my opinion. It's what makes this such a great read.

Not only is this about discovering the past, but the process of grieving, grieving of all kinds, and the process of how everyone needs to "get back up on the horse before you forget why you got up there to begin with." It's about how it's never too late to get, or give, forgiveness. It's about how you always need to ask questions before it's too late. It makes you remember that the generations before us have a story to tell, and we owe it to them to listen.

"Every woman should have a daughtr to tell her stories to. Otherwise, the lessons learned are as useless as spare buttons from a discarded shirt. And all that is left is a fading name and the shape of a nose or the color of hair. The men who write the history books will tell you the stories of battle and conquests. But the women will tell you the stories of people's hearts."

Char says

This mellow southern tale kept me engaged. The main characters helped keep me interested in turning each page. Each time I thought I knew what event was revealed I was surprised and still kept turning the pages. A good book with a believable baseline

Carey says

Piper Mills has lived a life filled with loss. Her parents were killed when she was six years old, so she went to live with her grandparents. She was very close to her Grandfather, with whom she shared her love of

horses and her drive to be an Olympic class show jumper.

Her relationship with her Grandmother was not close but Piper never felt the lack of that connection. When she was twelve, her Grandmother developed Alzheimer's disease and was placed in a nursing home. Driven Piper barely noticed her absence as she piled success on top of success, becoming a champion equestrian.

Her world quite literally came crashing down with a fall off of her horse during a competition. Piper was severely injured when the horse fell on her and for the next six years she quit riding, quit trying, quit living.

Until the death of her Grandfather shakes her out of her inertia. Piper comes into possession of some papers and heirlooms of her Grandmother's that, for the first time, spark her interest in learning about her Grandmother's past and make her regret her childish lack of care for the woman who had loved and raised her.

The mystery that Piper begins to unravel will take her into the family of her Grandmother's childhood friend, Lillian. Though she meets them under false pretenses, Piper begins to find the answers that she is looking for as well as the beginnings of her way out of the pain that she has lived with for so long.

The effects of loss, of various kinds, and of the process of grief and healing are at the heart of this powerful novel. It is a story that will remind you that the older generations will not be here forever. Treasure them, learn their stories, spend time with them and value them. All hours that have passed may be lost, but might not be wasted if we spend them wisely.

The Lost Hours made me long for one more day with my own wonderful Grandmother, even one more hour or minute. And I listened to many of her stories. But I know I have forgotten much of what she told me and I would give more than I now possess to hear her voice again.

Cassandra. says

Another Good/Great Read from Karen White! A granddaughter discovers hidden clues concerning secrets in her grandmother's life. Oh, the tangled webs we weave! The characters are all wonderful & so well developed, from the early 1900s to the present. From the Jim Crow south to the more enlightened (?) 21st Century. READ THIS BOOK!

Barrie Gardner says

This book was so melodramatic, reading it was exhausting. The hot tears! The hand wringing! The low whispers! The knowing smiles! The haunted looks! The author writes in such detail about certain things (like the main character's horse injury and trees at the horse farm) and then glosses over major turns in the story. Piper's grandmother (the catalyst for this whole book) dies and it is just noted in passing.

And then Piper changes her name and pretends to be studying a family's history to learn answers about her grandmother. The family invites her to stay at their estate while she is doing her research. What??? I had lots of problems with this. First, there is no lead up to her thinking about pulling this ruse. That would have been nice to know. Second, why would a family invite her to LIVE on their horse farm while researching their

history? That is weird. Third, the matriarch has so many secrets. Why would she agree to have anyone live with her and delve into her family history? Fourth, how does this family not realize Piper is not who she says she is? The author makes a big deal of how astute and sharp the matriarch is and the clues are so obvious. Fifth, why would Piper want to live on a horse farm when she is terrified of horses? Sixth, this matriarch knows all the answers to Piper's questions and yet makes her go through weeks of research instead of just telling her.

Some parts of the story line were seriously underdeveloped while others were overdeveloped. I wondered why Josie was needed in the book. I never got the sense that Annabelle, Lillian and Josie had such a deep friendship. Josie's character development was sorely lacking. The characters weren't even described well. Then the author includes a story line about a suicidal wife who killed herself when she found out about the matriarch's secrets. Really?? So dramatic and not believable. It was unnecessary to the rest of the book and could have been left out. I am picturing the book without Josie and the suicidal wife and it is better. The ending was anti-climatic and I was just glad to be done.

I guess I was looking for another Sarah Addison Allen and thought this author might be similar. I am going to try her other books and I hope I enjoy them more.

Patty says

I can always count on Karen White to write amazing books about the human spirit. No one gets out undamaged in this world, but where there is a will there is a way to move beyond our pain and our failures and to engage fully in life again. Forgiveness is the key, not just for others but for ourselves as well.

Piper Mills parents die when she is young and she goes to live with her grandparents. There are a few flashback to her childhood but mostly the book is in the present. Piper got hurt in a horse competition and she is damaged, afraid to ride again. Her grandfather dies and leaves some papers for Piper which send Piper investigating as to just who was her grandmother. As she searches she finds that when her grandmother was young she had two amazing friends and they kept a scrapbook of their lives. Piper searches out those two friends and find one of them, Lillian, and reaches out to come and talk about her grandmother but Lillian has no desire to talk about things in the past. So Piper comes up with a plan to investigate without Lillian knowing she is the granddaughter of her childhood friend.

It is a moving story about moving on, getting up and getting on with ones life, moving beyond regrets and pain both mental and physical. It is a generational story of tragedy and triumph.

Dale Harcombe says

When her parents were killed in an accident, Piper Mills figured the worst that could happen to her had already happened. That is until a near fatal fall from a horse cuts short her dreams of being an Olympian .The accident left its mark on Piper's life in more ways than one.

While at her grandparents' place thinking about all life has taken from her Piper finds a scrapbook that hints at secrets in her grandmother's past. I'm not a person who reads horse books or books about riders, so it is perhaps surprising that I picked up this book. I think it was probably the secrets that drew me in. Piper tries to find out more from one of her grandmother's two close childhood friends but the woman, Lillian, refuses

to see her. What Lillian hadn't counted on was the determination of Piper to learn the truth.

This is story of more than one secret that will in time be uncovered. Although I arrived at what the secrets were before Piper and other characters did, it did not lessen the enjoyment of this novel. I like being proved right.

There are some interesting characters in this. Piper and Tucker and Annabelle Piper's grandmother are three. Lillian's blind granddaughter Helen, is a beautiful strong character. At the back of the book is an interview with the author and a guide for reading groups. I thought this was an enjoyable story with complex characters and I will look for more by this author.

Amy says

I am a huge fan of Kate Morton. When searching for her books, Karen White continually popped up as an author I might like. I did enjoy the book, but it didn't have that same lasting and haunting quality of a Kate Morton novel.

After her grandparents pass away, Piper Mills is given an envelope from her Grandmother containing a key and a charm with no explanation. Apparently her Grandmother meant to tell her the story that goes along with these items herself, but suffered from dementia before she was able to relate it to her granddaughter.

Even though Piper is surrounded by people with keys to the puzzle, no one is saying anything; only after she starts putting the pieces together do they start talking.

While the story is somewhat suspenseful and does have a great payoff, I wished that the suspense lied more in the secrets she was discovering and less in the actual act of discovering them. The secrets were definitely worth spending more time on, not to mention a wealth of character back-story that could have been told.

Overall it was a good read, even if a little forgettable.

Heather Pulley says

It was difficult choose a rating for this book for the simple fact that I really couldn't put it down, making me feel it should be at least 3 stars. But then I thought about the following things and had to give it 2. First off, the first 100 or so pages are excruciating. The author uses really over the top metaphors far too much and spends a lot of time alluding to internal pain and scars without actually telling you anything. The next 100 pages are much better, although the story still doesn't get very far. By the last third of the book, the "mystery" was so obvious that I had to wonder what kind of idiots these characters were to not see it. Seriously. The specific details of exactly what happened are eventually revealed and it's sad, but all the melodrama leading up to it made it difficult for me to feel anything but relief to FINALLY have it out!

Katherine says

This book while engaging and beautifully written, took me a long time to finish. I found that I was longing for faster paced books and wanting to put it down and quit. I'm glad I did not though. The ending was exactly

what I wanted/needed from it.

Lisa says

Some authors weave a tapestry ... others stitch a quilt. This book is definitely the latter: a jumbled patchwork of various themes that have been overused, almost to the point of being cliché.

Piper Mills is the broken heroine -- a numb loner/horselover, who is recovering from a riding accident that killed her horse and shattered her Olympic dreams. When her Alzheimer's-addled grandmother (who raised her) dies, Piper hardly feels anything until, conveniently, a mystery about grandma's past draws her out of her Savannah home and into the lives of the Ross family, whose history is littered with secrets, as well.

Sounds interesting so far; but it degrades from there. There are too many convenient coincidences to lend the book credibility. White employs the mistaken-identity device, concealing Piper's identity from her new friends. The widowed hero (a doctor who conveniently rescues abused horses) has two adorable daughters who conveniently need horseback riding lessons. Since it's a "Southern" novel, racial prejudice has to be interjected, of course. And the "secret," which is really none of Piper's business -- or anyone else's for that matter -- would have been better left alone.

"The Lost Hours" is a PERFECT title for this one because that's exactly what I've "lost:" HOURS of my reading time that could have been used for better books than this one. (With all due respect to Ms. White: You could've done better, honey. You're too good for rehashing clichés.)

Verdict: Skip it. If you want a good family-secret book try "The Thirteenth Tale" or any title by Kate Morton, instead.

Tiffany says

It took quite some time to get interested in this book. After about 100 pages, nothing really important had happened and I was beginning to wonder if anything was going to happen at all. The biggest problem I had was with the constant delay the characters had in just spitting out whatever it was they needed to say. Then, when they are finally getting somewhere, they are tired or angry and just stop for the time being. Just get it out already!

The book jumps back and forth from first person, by the main character Piper, to third person, for everyone else. I don't know why this drove me crazy, but it did. I think the flow of the book would have been much better if it was all the same, everyone in third person.

The writing style was also something to get used to. There was so much detail for even the smallest things that one sentence of no importance could run on for an entire paragraph. I found myself skipping some sentences just because it was too much, and that is something I never do.

We hear a lot about Tucker and Susan's relationship and how he just couldn't save her, but that is all. None of the problems they had, just that they had some. Yes she was mentally ill, but what about how they interacted? And why was Tucker so upset when he learned who Piper really was? It's not like she told him some horrible lie. She just didn't mention her background.

That being said, I still enjoyed this book overall. The story was interesting, once you finally get into it. It was a little predictable, but that was ok. Once it finally picked up and started moving fast paced, I couldn't put it down and stayed up all night to finish it.

Jessica Brasseal says

I really wanted to enjoy this book but it just wasn't for me. It felt like way to much build up to an anticlimactic ending. I mean it was a decent plot twist but everyone's reactions and the way it played out was just not worth it to me. Parts of this book had me interested and wanting to keep going but honestly if I didn't win this book in a giveaway I would have DNF'd it before I was halfway through.

Safae says

The books that are mostly worth of your time, are the ones that leave you with a mixed feeling, you don't know whether you're sad or happy, you have no idea how the book left you, you just know that you really really enjoyed it.

Jennifer says

My mother-in-law bought this for me as birthday present and described it as a perfect "beach read"; since I was going to the beach, I took it along and read it. Overall, I agree with her assessment of its beachiness; it is a quick read with a happy ending and nothing truly bad happens. However. I had some serious issues with the book. This will sound overly critical, and some of this can be chalked up to the fact that I didn't pick the book; it is probably not my type of read. But, here they are:

1) The conceit of having the main character choose not to read the journal entries immediately, but slowly throughout the book, was lame. Who in their right mind tries to solve a mystery, has the clues in hand, takes up a false identity to solve said mystery, and then chooses to wait to investigate the only real clues available? Nobody. It was a heavy-handed way of introducing the journal entries at the appropriate place in the "present day" story.

2) I dislike books where everybody is harboring some terrible pain/loss. I get that for the book to be uplifting, there should be issues to resolve, but honestly? A blind woman, a widower who's wife committed suicide, a crippled ex-rider... the list goes on and on!

3) I had the "mystery" of the grandmothers' past solved almost from page one. Piper and Helen were so slow on the uptake, even after reading some very blatant journal entries, that I was screaming in frustration.

Those were my main criticisms, which taken together, add up to some really large aspects of the book. On

the plus side, though, I liked the setting of Savannah and the horse farm, and that the book tackled issues of race in the south (though I did wonder if Lillian and Annabelle were a little too progressive for their time).

Terri says

Review also found at <http://kristineandterri.blogspot.ca/2...>

4.5 stars

I was looking for a book to read, not sure what to look for, when I remember that I had read some other work by Karen White and enjoyed them so decided to pick up another one. The reason I chose this one was because I was looking for an audio book and this was the first one I found by White and it sounded interesting.

One small comment on audio books. I have a love/hate relationship with them. I love them for the fact that I can multi-task while listening. I can browse the internet, cook dinner & clean the house without putting the book down. This means that when I am not working, I can literally be listening to the book the rest of the time. What I hate about them is that they take so long to get through. Knowing that I can read at a much faster pace, I would be able to solve the mysteries and come to the conclusion that much faster kills me. Patience is not one of my virtues and audio books require them in spades. Knowing this going in only slightly makes it easier, I just kept focusing on the fact that I could listen to the story during times I would not have been able to read it if it was a paperpack.

Now back to the story. As I previously mentioned, I have read a couple of other books by White before picking this up. After reading (listening to) this story, I don't know why I have not read all of White's books already. I was instantly reminded of what I previously enjoyed in her work, and knew that I was in for a treat. Her ability to mix together stories of the present and past, complex relationships and hidden secrets is a skill she has mastered. In many stories of this genre, the plot that is centered in the past usually strongly outweighs the present day story. This is not the case in this book. The present day story does not remain in the shadows of the past, and holds its own in both substance and my interest with its complex relationships and fragile characters.

I will not spend a lot of time on the plot. The synopsis describes the storyline well and based on the fact that the story was released in 2009 and has had a ton of reviews, I am sure it has all been said and I think I made it clear that I really enjoyed this story. I love a story that unravel a mystery or secret in the past yet has a storyline in the present. Those who know me will also know that this stories that bounce between present and past are my favorite and also tend to garner the best ratings from me. This is why I read White's work to begin with and why I am glad I have added another book to my read pile.

If you like strong yet flawed characters, a glimpse in to the past when times were not as they are today and a story of love and friendship, look no further. This one is a good one!

Lavonne says

Depressing in tone, but an engaging story, if not very plausible. The problem I have with this author is the way things never seem to tie together well. Case in point: In this book, a black baby is found dead in the river. It turns out that he was accidentally smothered and then a man throws the body in the river. The body is discovered and then the SAME man retrieves the body after the autopsy. No questions, no accusations. (Why would he throw the body in the river and then claim it later?) He takes the body to the grandfather of the baby, who btw is a white plantation owner in the South, a member of the KKK, and the father of a white debutante (the mother) whom he hoped to marry to a successful banker. The grandfather buries this mixed-blood baby in the family cemetery with an unmarked tombstone with an angel engraved on it. I mean, seriously? On what planet did this happen? It just doesn't add up, like the whole story.
