



Circle of Secrets

Kimberley Griffiths Little

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Critically acclaimed author Kimberley Griffiths Little weaves a haunting story of friendship and family and the power of faith, once again set against the lush backdrop of the Louisiana bayou.

After her mother walked out on Shelby Jayne and her dad, Shelby thought she'd never speak to her mamma again. But with her dad leaving the country for work, it turns out she doesn't have a choice: Shelby has to move back into her mamma's house, deep in the heart of the Louisiana bayou.

Her new classmates tease and torment her, so Shelby's relieved to finally find a friend in Gwen, a mysterious girl who lives alone on the bayou. But Shelby can't help wondering if Gwen has something to do with the puzzling messages she finds hidden in the blue bottle tree behind her house. The only person who might be able to explain is her mamma -- but Shelby's not ready to ask. Not yet. It may take a brush with something from the beyond to help Shelby see that the power to put her own ghosts to rest is within her reach.

Kimberley Griffiths Little's haunting and powerful tale brings one girl's attempt to grapple with family, friendship, and forgiveness to beautiful, vivid life.

Circle of Secrets Details

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Author : Kimberley Griffiths Little

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From Reader Review Circle of Secrets for online ebook

Iris says

I always loved bayou secrets and ghost stories. This is what originally drew me into the story, but I didn't realize it was a YA gem. It was more perfect than what I thought.

Shelby Jane is a hurt little girl who just needed her mama. The past year was tough on her, but she soon learns the secrets of her splintered life and how it came to be. Not only is she brave, but she's intelligent and rebellious to her mother's ways.

Shelby Jane than has an adventure that most would love to have in their childhood. She learns the mystery that surrounds her blue-bottled tree and found that her mother never stopped loving her...

Meagan Spooner says

I don't normally write reviews, but I'm still thinking about this book weeks after I read it.

I read the whole book in one sitting, unable to put it down. Shelby is a beautifully drawn character placed in an unforgettable setting, and the story of her and her estranged mother is just heart-wrenching. The mysteries Shelby encounters throughout the story are engrossing, and exactly the sort of things that would have fascinated me, if I were in Shelby's place. Strange messages in bottles, a ruined house on a deserted island, mysterious charms on a bracelet; and if that's not enough, a healthy dose of ghost stories, to boot.

This book made me cry in all the right ways. Best of all, it felt like an old friend--it's the best sort of book I read as a child, and in reading it, I felt like a child all over again. In my effort to keep up with new releases, I often feel bogged down by mediocre books. But reading Circle of Secrets was like a much-needed breath of fresh air.

There's a reason I love children's literature, and Circle of Secrets is the perfect example why.

Kristina says

Another phenomenal book by Kimberly Griffiths Little . Circle of Secrets had me crying from beginning to end. Kimberly Little once again reveals an amazing insight into the complexities of Mother / Daughter relationships and the overwhelming power of trust and forgiveness in healing emotional hurts and wounds.

Circle of Secrets shows an astonishing insight into the mind of a child caught in the wake of matrimonial discord. After Shelby's mother walks out on her family, Shelby is left with heart-wrenching feelings of pain, betrayal and confusion. A year later, her father reluctantly takes a job overseas and sends Shelby to live with her mother in the Bayou. Shelby is torn between desperately wanting to be loved by her mother and desperately wanting not to care about her mother's feelings. Shelby is so filled with confusion, pain, and self-blame, that she lashes out at her mother with hurtful comments and silent treatments. She tells herself she cannot forgive Mirage, but secretly hopes for her mother's apology. Life seems to go from bad to worse for

Shelby when she is harassed by the popular kids at school.

Then one day Shelby meets a mysterious girl named Gwen. Gwen is sweet and fun and quickly becomes the refuge in Shelby's life. However, there's something about Gwen that just doesn't seem right. Soon Shelby finds herself embroiled in a mystery, and the clues seem to keep pointing toward her mother. As Shelby comes closer to solving the mystery she also comes closer to finding forgiveness and healing for herself and her family.

We all have pain and we are all in need of healing. For me, I identified strongly with Shelby and her relationship with her mother. I felt I was able to cry along with her and find some healing for myself as well. Circle of Secrets is a powerful and amazing book. Please read it, and then go call your mother.

Keli Wright says

I found this book on the coffee table, while I was baby-sitting for Tessa.. Tessa is 8. This book was published by Scholastic.. I thought I KNOW this is a kid's book and I know I have already read a LOT of kid's books this year.. BUT I felt like I had to read this one.. it just looked so fun. I went home and I googled some information about it and found out the author is LDS!!!! even better.. I loved the book, the story, the characters and had a lot of fun reading it.. and I know that if I was a little girl I would have even love it more.. I am going to start loaning it out to a few of my friends before I give it back to Tessa :)

Julie says

I am a huge fan of Kimberley's writing. She has such a way with words that every page feels as deep and as rich as biting into fine chocolate. Circle of Secrets is no exception. I enjoyed the texture of the setting and the innocence of the character. This was a haunting tale of friendship, forgiveness, and letting go of the past. Loved it.

Theresa Milstein says

I was a lucky winner of an ARC of this book.

Just like I had to compare Touch Blue by Cynthia Lord to her first book, Rules. I have to compare Kimberley Griffiths Little's Circle of Secrets to The Healing Spell.

The Healing Spell had personal meaning for me because I had a strained relationship with my mother and she spent time in a coma. I'd never read a book about a parent in a coma before. Because of my childhood experience, the book moved me even more deeply. But even without that connection, it was a beautiful book.

Kimberley can write layered, complicated feelings - especially when it comes to mothers and daughters. She can also bring the bayou alive. Even though I hate humidity, heat, and mosquitoes, this author makes me long to live on a bayou, boat near the alligators, and eat gumbo. Both books have traiteurs (healers), which give the books a mystical quality, which I love.

In the first, the protagonist who was born and bred on the bayou, was confident in her environment. In this one, the protagonist is uprooted from her grandmother and father to live with a mother she's barely had contact with for a year. (The mother's name is Mirage - how apt is that?) Everything about her new life, including the secrets of the bayou, makes her nervous. But soon the allure of the bayou calls to her. So does the mystery of the notes hidden in the blue bottle tree. Who wrote them?

The mean kids at school are written realistically, as are Shelby's reactions to them. Then she meets Gwen at a graveyard. The girls immediately click. But something doesn't seem right. To me, Gwen was obvious and I didn't know why it took Shelby so long to get it. But then I thought about, if it happened to me in real life, I wouldn't make that leap either. Besides, the very beginning of the book gives a hint about it, so we know Shelby will figure it out.

Kimberley Griffiths Little writes beautifully. She can get into the head of girls around age 11. She understands what adults seem like from the children's POV. And she does an excellent dialect.

While this book seemed to resolve itself more neatly than the last book, it didn't mean that it was too tidy. The last 50+ pages just made me think, WoW! I was happy to take the mental and physical journeys with Shelby, and to see the journeys of Mirage and her dad.

I. Love. this. Book.

Eva says

Very engaging, tone-wise, and a good walk-through of the feelings of betrayal you experience when a parent leaves. Love the setting as well.

Bre says

Kimberley Griffiths Little just has a way of pulling her readers into her stories! I was instantly drawn into this magical story of healing and loss. I loved "The Healing Spell", but I may actually love this one more! Everything is nicely tied together in the ending and I love the blue bottle tree and its meaning throughout the story. I am so excited to read more from this author!

Amy Bartelloni says

My 11 year old daughter has read this so many times that we've had to tape the pages together! She finally got me to read it and I'm so glad I did. I love a good spooky story. The characters were believable and easy to relate to, even the adults. A lot of times in middle grade I find the adult characters one dimensional, as if they're just there for decoration, but in this case the parents had their own struggles that were fully flushed out but not thrown in your face. I loved how she made the setting come alive, too. Being from the north I don't have a lot of experience with the bayou, but the descriptions were great.

Sheila says

4 1/2 stars...

Last year I read one of the most incredible books, called The Healing Spell. It had such charm and substance to the story, and was based in the bayou of Louisiana. The story was full of strong characters and Cajun magic. Kimberley's newest book, Circle of Secrets, is no different. It also has that magical feel to the story; this time it includes ghosts, real and figuratively. Though there is a feeling of awe and mystery concerning the ghost, there is nothing there that would scare someone younger reading this story.

To read the rest of my review please go to my blog...

<http://whynotbecauseisaidso.blogspot....>

While you are there, please follow my blog! Thanks!

Debbie Graham says

Ya'll, this was a bit of an etouffee of issues; family disintegration, intergenerational conflicts, bullying etc etc (not wanting to give spoilers here). The start was a bit slow but then the drama makes up for it, and (strong) 4th grade and up readers will really enjoy it, I think. Unless they see through the plot twists early on... Note there are no significant young male characters. I don't like the title though even though upon conclusion it smacks you with all sorts of significance. I would give it an extra half star.

Cindy Hudson says

When Shelby Jayne's mamma, Mirage, left their family, Shelby swore she'd never forgive her. Now it's a year later, and because her father will be out of the country working for six months and her grandmother recovering from hip surgery, Shelby finds herself deep in the swamps of Louisiana on Mirage's doorstep with a suitcase in hand.

She's not interested in Mirage's reasons for leaving or in her box of recipes for healing spells, but she is drawn to the blue-bottle tree in the backyard. The tree is beautiful and mysterious at the same time, and it's mystery grows when Shelby finds notes inside some of the bottles that seem to be written from one person to another. Also mysterious is her new friend Gwen, who is always hanging around the cemetery and seems to be abandoned by her parents. If Shelby can solve the mystery of each, she just may be able to create a healing spell of her own that will mend her family and lift the burden of a tragedy from long ago.

Circle of Secrets is Kimberley Griffiths Little's newest book set on the banks of a Louisiana bayou. A companion to The Healing Spell, it expertly weaves a new tale while giving a nod to the previous one. Shelby Jayne faces many issues that should lead to good discussion as she deals with bullies in a new school, struggles to forgive and reconnect with her mother, and sees family conflict with new eyes.

Little never misses a beat as she weaves this tale of mystery, magic, and mother-daughter relationships. I highly recommend this for mother-daughter book clubs with girls aged 9 to 14.

Shanshad Whelan says

A nicely written little ghost story set in the Louisiana bayou. While the paranormal thread runs through the story and ultimately creates the pivot point for the main character, the majority of the tale is grounded in real-world family schisms and one preteen's effort to struggle through her emotions and find a way to reconcile her life and family.

Ms. Yingling says

Shelby is angry at everyone. Her father, because he's going away and can't leave her with her grandmother, who is in the hospital. Her mother, who walked away from the family a year ago. The new students in her school who slyly taunt her. Shelby's mother is a healer and her house is in the swamp, so her new classmates have plenty of ammunition to tease her. When Shelby meets Gwen, she is relieved to have someone to talk to, but she's concerned because Gwen's parents are missing and she is staying on her own. While dealing with Gwen's problems, Shelby becomes somewhat more understanding of her mother's difficulties in living away from the swamp with Shelby's overbearing paternal grandmother, and starts to embrace the odd life the two make in the swamp. Gwen's secrets, however, take on a new urgency when they put Shelby in danger.

Strengths: This was a good ghost mystery, reminiscent of Barrett's *Cold in Summer*. There is a very strong sense of place, and Shelby's difficulties are realistic and not easily solved.

Weaknesses: Anything with a quirky/Southern component is never my favorite, especially when there is a bit of dialect ("jest" for "just"). No idea why.

Kimberley Little says

It's kind of strange to mark your own book as "Read". Yep, read many, many times! The basic premise of *CIRCLE OF SECRETS* came from one of my very first "practice" novels written about 15 years ago. I completely rewrote it, set it in the lush Louisiana bayous, added a mysterious charm bracelet, a quirky mamma, a blue bottle tree, and a brush of magic! My nieces and nephews and sons all begged me to publish this book 15 years ago - and finally it's here - enjoy!
