



The Truth About Keeping Secrets

Savannah Brown

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Sydney's dad is the only psychiatrist for miles around their small Ohio town.

He is also unexpectedly dead.

Is Sydney crazy, or is it kind of weird that her dad-a guy whose entire job revolved around other peoples' secrets-crashed alone, with no explanation?

And why is June Copeland, homecoming queen and the town's golden child, at his funeral?

As the two girls grow closer in the wake of the accident, it's clear that not everyone is happy about their new friendship.

But what is picture perfect June still hiding? And does Sydney even want to know?

THE TRUTH ABOUT KEEPING SECRETS is a page-turning, voice led, high school thriller.

The Truth About Keeping Secrets Details

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Author : Savannah Brown

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From Reader Review The Truth About Keeping Secrets for online ebook

Savannah Brown says

With the pub date less than four months(!) away and ARCs soon to be released into the wild, I thought it was a good time to mention that there are content warnings on my website if you need them, as well as links to a bunch of resources (which are also included in the back of the UK edition).

That's all! Hope you all enjoy! Back into my hole I go!

Edit: A small addition because I've seen a few people who didn't know: TTAKS is f/f! ?

Acqua says

3.5 stars

The Truth About Keeping Secrets is a quiet, slow-paced contemporary novel following a girl who has lost her dad in a car accident - but was it really?

I'm seeing that this is being marketed as an **f/f thriller**, but while it does have a mystery element, I'd **recommend it more to those who loved Nina LaCour's *We Are Okay* than to fans of *Far From You* or *People Like Us*.**

That's because to me this book felt more like an exploration of grief than a thriller, at least for its first half. The second half did feel more like a thriller, but I also thought it was the weakest part of the book. While the first half was an **atmospheric, vaguely creepy story about grief and associated unhealthy coping mechanisms** that also talked about what it's like to be the only girl who is out as a lesbian in your high school, the second half was about the main character **trying to piece together a mystery whose resolution seemed** - at least to me - **obvious from the beginning**. I guess I just like introspective character driven stories more?

And as a character-driven story, *The Truth About Keeping Secrets* is really good, since it succeeds where many other supposedly character-driven books fail: the main character's voice was perfect. Sydney is a teenage girl who is grieving, who is dealing with her father's death in an unhealthy way, and she's **sad and angry and using sarcasm as a coping mechanism, and she felt real in a way very few characters do**. Even other people's reaction to her felt very realistic (I have seen something very similar to the Dylan Thomas poem scene happen. Some teachers really are that insensitive). I loved reading about her, and when the focus shifted from grief to the actual mystery, I wasn't as interested.

This is also a story that talks about **imperfect friendships, abusive relationships** and that "liminal" space queer girls often find themselves in when they have a maybe-unrequited crush on a girl - the "does she like me or am I just misreading everything" space. ***The Truth About Keeping Secrets* is an f/f book**, and there's a romance between Sydney and June, the seemingly "perfect" girl Sydney becomes close with after the death of her father - but for most of the book, Sydney doesn't even know whether June likes her back. There's a scene in which the two girls talk about liminal spaces and I was thinking that "liminal" is exactly how their

relationship felt at the moment. I really liked how it developed after that.

Also, **the writing was gorgeous**. I can't share any quotes because I read an ARC, but I highlighted a lot of things while reading this.

One more thing: you can find trigger warnings for this book here. As this book deals with some heavy themes, I recommend reading them before going into it.

London Shah says

I consider myself very lucky to have read an arc of this YA thriller! A true page-turner, thanks to the main character's utterly believable, natural, and realistic voice. I loveeee Sydney, loved being in her head, and enjoyed this story immensely. The emotional truth throughout is on another level, and I really appreciated it. The voice! Oh gosh, I could go on forever about the voice—it's unlike anything I've read in YA; it's bold, engrossing, and oh so perfect <3 Brown's writing is incredibly confident, skilful, and engaging, and I truly look forward to whatever they write next. *The Truth About Keeping Secrets* is a very brilliant debut.

Patrick Sproull says

Soooooooo... due to some weird circumstances I was very fortunate to read this book in an early form and with the knowledge that books evolve as they're edited, I'm gonna try and tell you why this book is special.

It's a testament to Savannah Brown that I couldn't stop thinking about this book for a long while after I put it down. It's weird, it refuses to budge from your mind, it made me question a lot that I previously held as the norm. It's one of the most atmospheric contemporaries I've read, to the point where it doesn't feel like it exists within the confines of the 'contemporary' novel.

TTAKS has a touch of the Gothic to it - I could almost see it working in a historical setting - there's a lot of scenes of isolation, a lot of restraint in the gorgeous way Brown writes.. and it all works. God, does it work - it's a thriller heavy on emotions, and I was gripped. It's about lost girls, about angry kids, about finding a kindred soul, and a lot of it feels very pertinent to today. There's graveyards and flowers and deaths and a plethora of gays. If Stevie Nicks wrote a YA novel, this would be it - and it's going to make a lot of people very happy.

Alexandra says

This novel has romance, mystery, angst, humour and some thriller all rolled in one. It has a f/f relationship involving the main character and includes other LGBT characters too. I thought it was great!

First off, i want to say that story kept me fully engaged. I really wanted to keep reading to find out what happened, although it was only towards the end of the book that it really felt like a thriller. That said, the earlier stages of the book are so interesting in exploring how the characters connect through their grief, and the creepy messages that Sydney keeps receiving keep the mystery and the creepy feeling going through the book.

Second of all, the characters in this story have been amazingly written. When the author writes their feelings, especially when it comes to Sydney and June, it feels very real and easy to imagine. A lot of the novel deals with Sydney's anger and grief along with her attraction to June, and it was interesting to see how the characters interacted and became closer as they helped each other.

I also loved how this novel showed different relationships and how people can try to use these relationships to manipulate you. Manipulative friendships and abusive relationships are explored in this book well, and it took me by surprise of the extent of what someone can hide.

Some of the book is slower-paced, in terms of how it explores the developing relationship between Sydney and June rather than going straight after the mystery - but there's a reason this build up is important and i think it makes you connect to the later events much more. I loved the later parts of the book - it was creepy, darkly obsessive, and i was afraid for the girls.

Overall, i thought this was a great read. I loved the relationship in this book and the mystery in the story kept me hooked.

I received a free copy of this book via netgalley in exchange for an honest review.

Dorine says

I was so excited when I saw that Savannah is coming with a debut YA book, I can't wait to pick it up! The blurb gives me a bit of a Riverdale vibe, and I'm all for it tbh.

Nick says

sounds very intriguing

Lex says

Devoured this in a day. The characters feel so real, the explorations of grief and fear were so good they hit a little too close to home, and every few pages you come across an exquisite paragraph or turn of phrase that knocks you out. If this isn't a prize-winning bestseller I'll eat my own face.

Melanie Murphy says

Prompt: 'What did you think?'

Ans: I think I want to tell every girl who has ever fancied or felt for another girl to read this when it comes out. I think I discovered things about myself and my separation anxiety from reading about Sydney's journey with grief. I think I'll re-read this book any time I lose somebody very dear to me. I think the climax was well executed and the Big Discovery isn't something I saw coming (often I see these things coming from a mile away because I watch so many movies and have read so many books, but Sav PROPER surprised me in her delivery/plotting). I think I want, no, I NEED to see this as a Netflix mini series. Ugh, it would be fucking

awesome. I think Savannah's writing is delicious and poetic and that her metaphors are sensory, caressing, and I loved how smoothly the words ran through my brain. I think I'm very satisfied with the ending and that this girl has a bright career ahead of her. Okay, I'll stop now.

Ellie (faerieontheshelf) says

this sounds delightfully sapphic

Zoë ? says

I thought this was 'just' going to be a murder-mystery going in, but it was about so much more: grief, mental illness, love, friendship. I couldn't stop reading it once I started! I quite liked the writing as well.

Natassa says

4.5/5 stars

I read an ARC of this, so I can't know how the final version might differ from the book I read, but I'm certain it will be adored by many.

I've said this before, but Savannah Brown has this fascinating way of combining beautiful descriptions with occasionally simple sentences to mirror the protagonist's age and the fact that sometimes things can only be described with a "holy shit" or other similar phrases. This is a difficult story to read; raw, painful, goes deep into grief and what it's like to lose someone. The guilt you feel for simply just breathing when they're not.

And, in the midst of all this pain and chaos and suspicion that someone murdered her dad and that it wasn't an accident, you also get to see happy, simple moments. Glimpses of teenagehood. An unhealthy obsession, but you can't blame anyone for it. It's so human. Savannah Brown has created something so stunning and raw and HUMAN. A wonderful debut. I think the only thing that keeps me from giving this five stars is that I think certain parts went on too quickly, but it truly was a fast paced book that I managed to fly through without realizing. Keep an eye out for this one when it comes out in March.

Liz Barnsley says

The Truth About Keeping Secrets is a beautifully plotted novel with mystery elements but mostly focusing on a portrayal of grief – one young girl and her journey through the loss of her Dad, as such it is an emotional, compelling story that will have you hooked.

I loved Sydney and engaged with her fully – her distinct sense of loss, her reaching for connections and in doing so her developing friendship with June, the golden girl, who is hiding behind a facade. But why and what does this have to do with Sydney's loss?

Intriguing and nuanced, The Truth About Keeping Secrets is enduringly spirited and often unexpected- a page turner with real heart and soul that digs deep into human reality.

Loved it. Recommended.

Mary says

So poignant and beautiful, i honestly don't have the words.

Evie Braithwaite says

The Truth About Keeping Secrets is a slow-paced novel and an exquisite portrayal of grief following the sudden death of Sydney's father in a car accident.

I have mixed feelings about this book. The first half is an atmospheric exploration of grief and the unique coping mechanisms one can develop. Sydney is reeling from the sudden death of her father and her coping mechanism? Scrolling through a website which posts surveillance footage of deadly road accidents. We delve into her mind and see how she struggles. She's sad, angry and she uses sarcasm and jokes as her way of brushing off serious conversations.

Moreover, a large portion of the book is dedicated to establishing the relationship between Sydney and June; the golden girl who Sydney is fascinated by. We watch her feelings develop for her, picking flower petals in her mind while she is stuck in the liminal space of 'does she love me back?'. The 20 minutes she spends in the car rides to school with her are her only moments of joy. Although I empathised with June's story, I struggled to take a shine to her. I wish what we learned about her wasn't confined to the climax, but rather explored further over the course of the novel.

The second half of the story was weak. It is centred around the mystery behind Sydney's ominous texts and peculiar incidents following her father's death. However, I thought the answer was predictable from the get-go. Various red herrings emerge throughout which only made me more certain of the foreboding outcome.

The Truth About Keeping Secrets touches upon not only grief but other poignant relationship issues; manipulative friends and abusive relationships. This isn't a story for the faint of heart. It is predictable, the mystery isn't too compelling. Nonetheless, there is an abundance of beautiful paragraphs and turns of phrase which made this a pleasure to read.

Thanks to NetGalley and Penguin Random House UK Children's for providing me with an eARC in exchange for an honest review.
