



# The Mumbo Jumbo Circus

*Jane George*

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## The Mumbo Jumbo Circus Details

Date : Published April 15th 2011 by Red Willow Publishing (first published March 28th 2011)

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Author : Jane George

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# From Reader Review The Mumbo Jumbo Circus for online ebook

## Marik Berghs says

I am really surprised this book hasn't been batted from tongue to tongue like the rare treat it is. The well drawn, sympathetic characters pull you in and keep you hooked. the story is original, fresh and full of mystery. This is something to share, for adults and teens. I love the metaphor, love the magic—morphing polar bears, mojo and the challenge of discovering the unique talent in each of us. The writing is clean and eloquent, really looking forward to number two.

I thought this was a middle grade book because of the title, very quickly it all becomes clear and it is undoubtedly a story a fantasy reader will treasure. Let me reiterate ORIGINAL! If you are tired of the usual cast of paranormal, magical characters you will not be disappointed.

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## Beth Barany says

I really enjoyed this book. Jane George creates a compelling and sympathetic character in Evan. I was sad for her when she was sad and cheered for her when she managed to stand up for herself. The conflicts felt real and scary, and I really loved how magic was woven seamlessly into the fabric of the story. George's writing is vivid and compelling. Is there a book 2 in the works?! A bonus to the Nook version I read on my iPhone: George's color whimsical art that complements the story so well. I look forward to reading more from you, Jane!

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## S.M. Reine says

Loved this book. Very imaginative, great characters, well-written. Highly recommended.

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## Eric says

I picked up a Kindle copy of this book for free on Amazon.com. It was well worth my time. While a good deal of the story's elements have been well-paved by other young adult novels, such as Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone and Twilight, the writing is enchanting and infectious, and it had me turning pages from the beginning through the end.

The protagonist is the teenage Evan, and her story is a bildungsroman. Evan has a bad home situation, and runs away to join a magical circus, where she hones her "donvrai," or true gift, while two boys compete for her romantic attention. She meets talking animals and shape-shifters, discovers magic within herself, confronts her benefactor's evil uncle, and in the process, grows into quite a heroine.

The resolution at the end felt a little flat, however, as the evil uncle, Shock Jacques, and his Cirque Patron is still thriving in Las Vegas. But, this sets **The Mumbo Jumbo Circus** up nicely for a sequel, which I would read, as I'd love to spend more time with this motley cast of characters.

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## **Lisa Kilgariff says**

I've spent a while trying to express my wholehearted love for this book in a way that does not utilize capital letters, an overabundance of exclamation marks and the word awesome. I have clearly failed because I still want to shout: Dudes! This book is AWESOME!!!! \*ahem\* Right... having gotten that out of my system I can now attempt to tell you why you should stop reading this review and just go grab the book...

First of all, it's set in a circus. Having been to a grand total of... 0 circuses in my life, I love a good circus story to fill this gaping whole in my life experience. The Mumbo Jumbo Circus is just like a circus should be (according to my completely uninformed imagination), complete with clowns and fire and horses. It is even better though, because it has magic! Ta da, two of my favorite things, circus stories and magic.

I loved how Jane managed to balance the everyday circus appearance, the one that people like to go and eat popcorn and watch, with the wonderfully complex magical backdrop that holds the circus together. The magic controls the plot, which is written so perfectly that, even with some admittedly odd events, I never questioned anything. Each scene made sense, and every character fitted perfectly into the circus. I would apologize for my vagueness but really, having no clue what you are getting into is the best part.

So having described my love for the setting, the magic and the plot (which really is fantastic) I must give some acknowledgement to my absolute favorite part: the characters. Without this hodgepodge crew of people, who really come to life in the story, even the fabulous story would have fallen flat. We have a little bit of a love triangle, which I normally hate, but here it adds a bit of oomph. I loved Wally, the gothiest cook in history and I particularly loved Solly, the elephant. And of course, I loved the ringmaster who was exactly quirky enough to be perfect.... ok, I loved everyone.

I did warn you... So in summary: Go and read this book.... Now. I'll wait.

This review was originally posted at <http://baffledbooks.com>

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## **A Book Vacation says**

4.5 stars

I was pleased to find that this is a really great debut novel by Jane George, complete with love, betrayal, action, and a very interesting, original storyline! George has created a world in which the reader quickly becomes immersed, a world in which the tastes and smells of the circus become palpable as Evan is whisked away on an adventure after running away from foster home number eight. I highly enjoyed this novel and found myself glued to the pages from the very beginning. The magic and paranormal activity within the novel was extremely fascinating, and George's characterization left me feeling as if I truly knew the characters, having experienced their troubles and triumphs alongside of them...

To read my full review (9/15):

<http://bookvacations.wordpress.com/20...>

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## **Carma says**

Very fun summer read. I've never really been a "horse" girl, and wouldn't have thought I'd love a story about the circus, but this is a fun read with characters that stay with you. Fantasy with street cred...? Is maybe my best description. I just met the author who is very cool. You can find it on Amazon, probably not in bookstores (yet?)...

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## **Jenna says**

### **THE TWEET**

THE MUMBO JUMBO CIRCUS: an imaginative story of a magical circus, a teen girl w/a special ability & her journey to find a place to belong.

### **WHAT WORKED**

I requested to be part of this tour because the book synopsis said it was about a teen girl who joins a magical circus to get away from an abusive life. Really, what could be better than a circus and a magical one at that? Nothing apparently! THE MUMBO JUMBO CIRCUS was an adventurous novel that gave readers an inside look at circus life. And the magical aspect of the story really drew me into the plot and characters.

Evanje, a.k.a. Evan, is a wonderfully developed character. I was immediately drawn into her story and could empathize with her feelings of wanted to escape her abusive foster home and find a place where she would not only belong, but where she would be truly loved. And she found this at the circus. I especially liked the development of the unconventional family the circus members represented. Even though they were not all related by blood, they stood up for their fellow circus folk and were willing to do anything to help each other. This was a great contrast to the "family" situation that Evan escaped, where she was treated completely opposite.

THE MUMBO JUMBO CIRCUS also contained black and white illustrations that made the story come alive for me. They made the imaginative and magical story seem more real because I would actually see an artist's rendition of the world and people existing in it.

### **OVERALL**

I loved the circus atmosphere described in THE MUMBO JUMBO CIRCUS. The individual characters and their special abilities, or donrovai, were interesting to read about and made THE MUMBO JUMBO CIRCUS an exceptional story.

### **MY RATING IS**

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## **Lauren Suero says**

Fact: I've never been to a circus in my entire life. Fairs and Carnivals are certainly not the same and apparently don't bring the same amount of magical elements that come with attending the Circus. But as usual, I love living through books and THE MUMBO JUMBO CIRCUS was definitely a story that I got completely lost in it's magical world.

All Evanja Leane wanted in life was to be loved and feel like she belonged somewhere after being separated from her mom when she was just a baby. Abusive Foster House #8 becomes a thing of the past when a series of magical words are spoken on behalf of Evan (and her foster parents) and a mysterious Ringmaster shows up with a proposition that Evan can't find the heart to refuse. Join the Circus life, discover who you are AND get away from horrible Foster family? WHY NOT?!? Enter Wally (the goth teenage cook), Johnny (the elephant boy) and we have ourselves a tame Love Triangle! But not everything in the Circus is fun and games, especially when the business is dying off and someone out there knows Evan's gift and plans to do whatever it takes to acquire Evan and her gift. Will her fears continue to prevent her from furthering her gift or can she accept whatever life throws at her to save not only the Circus, but her newly acquired friends and family?

WELLLLLL... you'll just have to read the book, now won't you? :)

Obviously plot in a story really helps determine whether one will like a book or not. Ok, well there are many other elements to a story but the characterization in MUMBO JUMBO CIRCUS really captured my full attention and had me singing this book's praises since the very beginning. I'm all about relateable characters, and I felt at one point of the book (or many other times!!) I could identify with each character in the emotions, experiences, etc. of what they were going through. Evanja was a strong lead female character who thrived to discover who she really is, while often thinking of others before herself.

And OH THE LOVE TRIANGLE.

Ok, so it really wasn't a HUGE, EPIC love triangle but it doesn't hurt to have two strapping young men yearning after one girl's heart. In this case we have Wally, the goth boy cook with a knack for bringing the angst and Johnny, Solly the elephant's assistant with a wicked awesome grin sure to melt any heart. Alas, Wally comes out strong from the very beginning and the relationship between Evan and Wally becomes more evident throughout the novel...although not the sole plot of the story!

Jane George's THE MUMBO JUMBO CIRCUS is a charismatic and fascinating tale that left me wanting more with every page turn. The additions of the illustrations throughout the novel was a delightful element and great visual to place within the story. I would definitely recommend this book for anyone who needs to take a "magical vacation" within a book.

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## **Cecilia Gray says**

Scrappy heroine? Check.

Fascinating world-building and circus setting? Check.

A paranormal take I haven't read before? Check.

Delightful illustrations? TOTAL BONUS!!!

A magically fantastical and richly developed story that was a treat (especially for someone who grew up always wanting a pony...)

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## **Anna (Curiosity comes before Kay) Partrick says**

Evan is foster care child, bouncing around from home to home pretty much ever since she was born. There have been good placements and bad ones, but this latest one (number eight) is pretty much the worst. So when she is called a freak and then says the magic words, Evan is approached by Compere, the Ringmaster of the Mumbo Jumbo Circus, about becoming part of the traveling show. That is when the adventure starts, because the circus possesses magic that Compere's Uncle, owner of a rival circus, will stop at nothing to possess?. Not to mention the Ju-Ju gives donvrai, true gifts, the power to express themselves. Evan's gift is that she can speak to horses by reading their minds - problem is she's terrified of them. But with a traitor among the ranks and a devastating loss of something key to the show, it might be up to Evan to save Mumbo Jumbo with her amazing act. Along with help from the Pickled Punk (the Panhandle Prophet), the elephant boy, the Circus' teenage cook and some illusionist shifting polar bears Evan might be able to do something important and find something even more special along the way - a family to call her own, ragtag as they may be. I have almost no experience with books set in circuses, magical or otherwise. The closest I can come to that is The Dreamland Social Club by Tara Altebrando. I got a lot more than I expected.

Jane George has a gift with words and from the very beginning when Evan is being knocked around by her hillbilly foster parents, she painted a picture that was so real I could see it in my mind. Once she meets up with the Mumbo Jumbo folk and gets caught up in their problems and joys, there really is no turning back. There is a budding love triangle between Evan, Wally (the cook) and Johnny (the elephant boy) but it is very tame and it becomes quickly apparent who she actually has feelings for. The everyday struggles of a dying circus, the camaraderie between the performers and the magic of the show itself definitely came across in technicolor for me as a reader. Evan's wonder is easily shared and I became very invested in the fate of the circus and everyone involved in it. The addition of the talking elephant Solly, and the jarred but sassy, prophetic Pickled Punk (another term for a human fetus preserved in formaldehyde and used for a sideshow attraction), the polar bear shifting Nanurark family and a host of other colorful characters only added to the richness of the story. The plotline involving the evil uncle, Shock Jacques, could have been less stereotypical but it never fell too far into predictable villain tropes to be truly annoying. The revelation of what the Ju-Ju actually was fit perfectly into the setting of the story and was hilarious. Overall, a wonderful coming of age tale set in a magic circus that I would love to visit. Definitely one of a kind! :)

VERDICT: 5/5 Stars

\*No money or favors were exchanged for this review. This book is now available online in ebook format, or maybe even at your local library.\*

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## **Forever Young Adult says**

**Graded By:** Meghan

**Cover Story:** Flea Market Find

**BFF Charm:** Yay!

**Swoonworthy Scale:** 7

**Talky Talk:** Somehow Straight Up

**Bonus Factors:** The Circus, Magic, Illustrations

**Relationship Status:** Coffeeshop Friend

Read the full book report here.

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## **Read for your future! says**

Read emma's review here:

<http://readforyourfuture.blogspot.com...>

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## **Stephanie says**

15 year old Evanje Leane is approached by the mysterious and magical Ringmaster and asked to join his circus. She doesn't hesitate at all to run away with him, as she's been abused in many foster homes over the years. What she soon discovers, though, is this circus involves magic, and each teen in it has a donvrai, or true gift. Evan can read horses minds, even though she's been terrified of them since childhood. The Mumbo Jumbo Circus is at risk of losing everything though, because of the Ringmaster's uncle and his enemy circus, their big top burning down, and the lack of interest in circuses. However, the Ringmaster is convinced that Evan is the one who will save their circus. Is her gift and magic enough to save the crumbling circus, or will her fear and their enemies bring them down?

What a magical and whimsical novel! I was completely captivated and spellbound by the magic of this tale. What's better is that the magic was never over the top; it blended in perfectly with the story and just seemed right. This story is so incredibly unique with a dark undertone, though always fun.

I love the circus world Jane George created. I was truly enchanted by the story and all the characters within, such as Solly, the talking elephant, and Daffy, the shrinking woman, who are both charming and funny. This book is imaginative and full of life. Also sprinkled throughout are illustrations which were really cool and only added to the story.

I think this is the ideal read for fans of Harry Potter, with the magical atmosphere and newly created world. If you suspend disbelief for a little while, and jump into this world, you won't want to leave. Be prepared for an adventure ride and one heck of a good time!

Note: I received a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

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## **Karen Toz says**

The Mumbo Jumbo Circus by Jane George, is the story of Evanja Leane (Evan), a teen trying to get through one day at a time in a failing foster care system. When her foster mom calls her a "freak," little does she know she has spoken the final word in an incantation, which leads Evan into the magical world of The



Mumbo Jumbo Circus. Although hesitant at first and in complete denial that she will have to work with the one animal she fears the most, Evan soon begins to feel that The Mumbo Jumbo Circus is where she belongs.

The Mumbo Jumbo Circus is a wonderful novel. I loved how the author put color illustrations throughout the book. The further I got into the story, the more I wanted to be a part of the circus, right alongside the talking elephant, polar bear family, and the woman who is able to turn people into little bottles of nail polish - It's true! Trust me - this is no ordinary circus, but one filled with mystical Ju-Ju, magic, friendship, a smattering of romance, and most importantly, a sense of true family for Evan.

The author recommends this book for ages 14 and up. There is a decent amount of swearing and some sexual innuendos. As a parent of a fourteen year old, I might hold off for a couple of years, but that's just the "I'm in denial that my kid is already exposed to this kind of stuff" in me. Others might feel differently. In any event, it honestly doesn't take away from the book or my review. As an adult, I found this book entertaining, well written, and engaging. I can't wait for the next book in the series!

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