



Sea Escape

Lynne Griffin

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Acclaimed novelist and nationally recognized family expert Lynne Griffin returns with *Sea Escape*—an emotional, beautifully imagined story inspired by the author’s family letters about the ties that bind mothers and daughters.

Laura Martinez is wedged in the middle place, grappling with her busy life as a nurse, wife, and devoted mom to her two young children when her estranged mother, Helen, suffers a devastating stroke. In a desperate attempt to lure her mother into choosing life, Laura goes to *Sea Escape*, the pristine beach home that Helen took refuge in after the death of her beloved husband, Joseph. There, Laura hunts for the legendary love letters her father wrote to her mother when he served as a reporter for the Associated Press during wartime Vietnam.

Believing the beauty and sway of her father’s words will have the power to heal, Laura reads the letters bedside to her mother, a woman who once spoke the language of fabric—of Peony Sky in Jade and Paradise Garden Sage—but who can’t or won’t speak to her now. As Laura delves deeper into her tangled family history, she becomes increasingly determined to save her mother. As each letter reveals a patchwork detail of her parents’ marriage, she discovers a common thread: a secret that mother and daughter unknowingly share.

Weaving back and forth from Laura’s story to her mother’s, beginning in the idyllic 1950s with Helen’s love affair with Joseph through the tumultuous Vietnam War period on to the present, *Sea Escape* takes a gratifying look at what women face in their everyday lives—the balancing act of raising capable and happy children and being accomplished and steadfast wives while still being gracious and good daughters. It is a story that opens the door to family secrets so gripping, you won’t be able to put this book down until each is revealed.

Sea Escape Details

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Author : Lynne Griffin

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From Reader Review Sea Escape for online ebook

Marjorie says

I don't usually post after finishing a book. However, I liked this book and think it would make a good selection for a book club.

Elizabeth Whitehead says

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Laura Martinez is the person in the life of her mother Helen, who is reliably there for her. Helen lives alone in a wonderful beach home and Laura lives about 15 minutes away. Helen is in frail health but because she and Laura don't discuss much Laura is unaware of some of her health issues.

This story is heart wrenching and heart warming. It shows the restrictions that people growing up in the 1950's felt and how it relates to their offspring. How families perceive things that happen and never clear them up letting silences go on for decades. Ms. Griffin relates to the reader that no matter what problems exist in a relationship with a parent, when you are losing that parent you aren't ready. This is a wonderful story and I couldn't put it down once I started reading.

Deborah says

2.5 stars. A lot of the "revelations" were very predictable or had been heavily hinted at earlier.

James (DayOldNews) says

Sea Escape bounces between the histories of a a middle-aged woman and her mother, detailing how their relationship went from loving to strained and the secrets behind that stress. The story got more interesting the deeper into the book, but the start was a bit plodding.

Maggie says

The last chapter(s) had me bordering on tears - not good when you're listening in your car driving home in traffic. I'm not an easy crier but the end of this book really gets you in the feels.

In some ways a difficult story to like - one of the major characters is a difficult person. But this is also a very good representation of life, and how you deal with it. A well-told story.

Meg says

Lynne Griffin's *Sea Escape* is a quiet, moving novel centering on mothers and daughters, fathers and sons — families, complicated and vast and difficult. Shades of Helen and Laura's relationship can probably be seen in any mother/daughter duo, no matter how close — or how distant — they may appear. From the onset, I was drawn in by Griffin's language. Her words brought me straight onto the porch of *Sea Escape*, her mother's beloved home, or into the hospital room where she stood reading letters to Helen. The ability to crawl right into language is important to me as a reader.

Sea Escape alternates between Helen and Joseph's courtship in the 1950s and present day, when Laura is tending to her mother's needs and attempting to reconcile their difficult relationship. I loved the scenes explaining Helen's origins most of all — especially those detailing her early life and struggles with her own parents and, later, the difficulties in her marriage with Joseph. As a reader, I never questioned how madly in love Helen was with Joseph, and vice versa — though even that love, at times all-consuming, wasn't always enough.

Religion plays an important role in the story, though it's never heavy-handed. A devout Catholic, Helen seeks solace in her faith and the trinkets Laura's sister-in-law, Luce, brings her as her health is failing. I appreciated the light touch Griffin used when discussing the ways in which Helen found comfort in God while Laura — a realistic, sympathetic narrator — still questioned her mother's feelings. As the story unfolds, Laura begins to see things a little more from her mother's perspective — but she doesn't suddenly “find Christ.” Sudden epiphanies are a major pet peeve of mine.

Overall, *Sea Escape* was a captivating glimpse into a complicated mother/daughter relationship, and I loved getting to know Laura and Helen through one another's eyes. Though not a fast-paced, happy or humorous tale, Griffin's second novel succeeded in twisting my heart. Despite its somber tone, I enjoyed this novel steeped just long enough in historical details to give us a flavor of a different era — but still ringing with contemporary truths with which many women, old and young, will understand.

Vivian says

This was an enjoyable read. I will admit to being surprised at the ending though. It didn't quite feel right to me. I guess I'm a little old fashioned but I'm always sad when a great love is shown to have been flawed.

V says

2.5

Judy says

When I read the synopsis about a woman who starts her own sewing business and buys her dream home, I

thought this might be a fun book to listen to. But the story doesn't focus on that aspect of Helen's life; instead, it is typical, formulaic, overly-descriptive chick-lit. Disappointment abounds for my dream of an inspiring story.

Carol says

This somber tone of this book fits. There are quite a few family relationships that are aching for more affection and less secrets in this book. Even though the situations were often very sad, I could not stop reading especially when the book centered on the mother's sewing. The book made me recall the draperies and curtains that my mother artfully made for every room of all house that she lived. The act of sewing was a gift of love from the mother to her husband and children but that did not come together until the end of the book. Lynne Griffin really brought the images of the sea and beach to life and the beauty of the fabrics and care of the sewing. The psychological pain of the family had me in tears by the end of the book. I wept because I really cared about the characters, they were very genuine. This is what happens so the author must have had a difficult time telling it. It is very painful to let secrets guarded so long out. Sometimes in families, so much is not said and so much is secret. Just as in the book when the secrets are finally released in this book, it is often a big relief. It creates understanding and make it easier to love others. I think this would be an excellent book for classes on the family. If you cannot bear sad stories then do not read this book, if you want to understand the dynamics of families, and then read it.

Missi Stockwell says

Lynne Griffin does it again !!! She writes the story so well that you dont want to put the book down. You end up getting to a point where you CAN'T put it down. Her style of writing is so unique, you find yourself very emotional and captivated with the people in the story. This, like her other book, leave you with alot to think about....especially at the end of the book. You will continue to think about the story for a while after completing it.

Kathleen says

I saw a review of this book that said "I wouldn't recommend it, but it wasn't a waste of time." I think that sums up my reaction to the book perfectly. I got to the end and felt vaguely let down. Two stories - a daughter's and her mother's are told, coming together at the end. The problem was that neither character was particularly interesting (or appealing), the storylines were fairly pedestrian and the resolution unsatisfying. Still, while I was reading it, I was reasonably interested. Count me as lukewarm to this one.

Penny says

* Much of this review has been quoted from another reader because it so closely spoke my own thoughts. Griffin's Sea Escape is a quiet, moving novel centering on mothers and daughters, family secrets and family

ties. Shades of Helen and Laura's relationship can probably be seen in any mother/daughter duo, no matter how close — or how distant — they may appear. From the onset, I was drawn in by Griffin's language. Her words brought me straight onto the porch of Sea Escape, her mother's beloved home, or into the hospital room where she stood reading letters to Helen. The ability to crawl right into language is important to me as a reader.

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Overall, Sea Escape was a captivating glimpse into a complicated mother/daughter relationship, and I loved getting to know Laura and Helen through one another's eyes. Though not a fast-paced, happy or humorous tale; each chapter unveiled more pieces to a puzzling truth holding the readers attention. Despite its somber tone, I enjoyed this novel steeped just long enough in historical details to give us a flavor of a different era — but still ringing with contemporary truths with which many women, old and young, will understand.

Diane says

I thought the author's last book, her debut: Life Without Summer was wonderful. Her latest novel: Sea Escape, is based in part on letters discovered about the author's own family. It is also a story about the ties that forever bind mothers and daughters.

Laura Tobin Martinez is a 40 something, working wife and mother of two, who suddenly finds herself being stretched even further. Her mother Helen has had a debilitating stroke, and will require extensive rehabilitation. Laura and her mother have always had a strained relationship, and Laura never understood why she could not seem to please her mother no matter how hard she tried. Despite this Laura is committed to stepping up to the plate to care for her mother. She puts her own life on hold in the process.

Helen's husband Joseph was the love of her life, when he was killed in 1975 while working for the Associated Press during the Vietnam Era. After Joseph's death Helen found solace at Sea Escape, a beautiful beach home the couple built, and Helen painstakingly decorated to perfection. It is here at Sea Escape, that Laura discovers old letters written by her parents, dating back as far as 1951. It is through these old letters that Laura discovers shocking things about her parents that she is learning for the first time. The reader gets insight into why Helen was like she was, and why she rarely showed her feelings. The story alternates between the past (letters) and present, Laura's family life and Helen's stroke and rehabilitation. The writing is good, and the story moved along at a satisfying pace.

Sea Escape is a story that should appeal to lots of women, especially those who enjoy stories about the mother/daughter relationship. In many ways I could relate to Laura and her strained relationship with her mother, as well as her struggles trying to please too many people at the same time. I thought the author did a good job overall with this novel. **RECOMMENDED** - 4/5 stars

Aimee says

Sea Escape is a story of a mother and a daughter trying to forgive and love each other. Laura Martinez is the daughter. Laura is a busy wife, mother of two, and nurse who must also add taking care of her mother, Helen, after she suffers a stroke. Laura tries to connect with her mother by reading the letters she finds from her father to her mother that he wrote while working overseas. Helen we get to know through reading about her past and her life with her beloved husband, Joseph, who she lost many years before but still mourns deeply. It is a story of past secrets, of family, and most important the bond between this mother and daughter.

I fell in love with Lynne Griffins writing after reading only the first few pages of this book. The book starts off with the line "Letters are windows casting light, illuminating the ties between two people." The first description we get of Helen through Laura's eyes was "If only she didn't wear her unhappiness like an unflattering dress." The book is filled with beautiful descriptions of both the beautiful and the sad moments in the book.

The story is divided between the present time with Laura dealing with her mother's stroke and the past with Helen and Joseph's courtship and marriage. Both stories were interesting and touching. Helen loved to sew curtains throughout her marriage and there are some great descriptions of her love of sewing that really add to the book.

I enjoyed reading this book from start to finish. It made me think a lot about my own mother and the relationship I have with my daughter now. It is a very well written look at family relationships and I am looking forward to reading other books by this impressive author.
