



Veil of Secrets

Shannon Ethridge (With) , Kathryn Mackel (With)

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"Knowing that one of the authors is a life coach with a counseling degree who portrays the experience realistically, may make readers who are considering a step in that direction feel more comfortable making that choice." —*Romantic Times*

Can a woman face—and forgive—her own painful past before her house of cards crumbles . . . and before her own daughter makes the same mistakes?

Melanie and Will Connors are the perfect power couple. Will is the chief campaign strategist for a rising presidential candidate; Melanie is a prominent advocate for protecting children in an over-sexualized culture. Their devotion to one another is admired, even envied.

But their marriage isn't what it appears to be.

Will maintains an apartment in Washington, DC, and over the years his visits home have grown fewer and farther between. The long-distance marriage has enabled Melanie to avoid intimacy—and has only increased her shame about her secretive past. But then Will issues an ultimatum: *We work on the marriage . . . or we work on the divorce.*

The Connors commit to marriage counseling in the most brutal of environments—snowy New Hampshire, a tiny state that is first in the nation for presidential primaries and a prize to be won at any cost . . . and the price of victory keeps rising.

As Melanie sifts through the debris of her past, she obsesses over the fear that she hasn't done enough to protect her teenage daughter. When Melanie sees her facing some of the same temptations, she knows she must intervene . . . but how can a woman with so many veiled secrets guide a daughter honestly?

While the country struggles with threats to its integrity and security, Melanie can no longer ignore the dangers looming in her own world. She can never undo the mistakes of her youth, but perhaps she can still save her marriage and family—if she can surrender her guilt and learn to open herself to her husband once again.

"Ethridge and Mackel merge their talents into one amazing novel." —*Romantic Times* for *To Know You*

Includes Reading Group Guide

Veil of Secrets Details

Date : Published July 15th 2014 by Thomas Nelson (first published July 1st 2014)

ISBN : 9781401688677

Author : Shannon Ethridge (With) , Kathryn Mackel (With)

Format : Paperback 368 pages

Genre : Christian Fiction, Fiction

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From Reader Review Veil of Secrets for online ebook

Staci says

Veil of Secrets has several story lines which revolve around sexual themes. I share that up front as this novel will not appeal to all or be appropriate for all ages.

Veil of Secrets could be read as a standalone novel, however, does pick up with the characters in To Know You.

The background of the novel is the Presidential Primary. Most of the focus is on those involved in the Dave Dawson campaign for the Presidency. That cast of characters includes Will and Melanie Connors, 15 year old daughter Sophie Connors and Will's sister Carrie Connors. There is also a member of the press Tuck Reynolds and a leader of a protest movement Jared O'Dea. Each of these characters has a unique point of view about what is important. Their stories intertwine throughout the novel.

Veil of Secrets carries a compelling story and message in its pages. The ending leaves room for a third book in this series.

I didn't enjoy Veil of Secrets as much as To Know You, however, it was a very good read. I definitely recommend it for readers that enjoy a story with strong character growth with a sexual theme throughout.

sue says

I am going to keep this brief, apart from the raw marital problems and family life in this book it was far to laid on the political for me.

The political agenda's seem to be more dominant in the book and then branches off to the marital difficulties which Melanie is experiencing due to her past, its also affecting her parenting, but for me, with the election going on and all those people coming and going confused me more than once.

If you like politics, maybe live in the USA, maybe you will 'get it' more than me, but I just found it very difficult to follow.

I was granted this book to read by Thomas Nelson--FICTION via Net Galley

Hallie Szott says

<http://pagebypagebookbybook.blogspot....>

Shannon Ethridge and Kathryn Mackel have created a beautifully winding and connecting tale in their Veil of Secrets. The characters are blatantly flawed and wholly authentic; their histories painfully broken, full of

shame, fear and regret. Yet, at no point did I lack hope for their futures. This story honestly captures the challenging and continual process of healing – anger and sorrow, grace, forgiveness and love. It is raw, emotional, real. Add these personal and relational struggles to the ever-present backdrop of the political intrigue of a presidential campaign and *Veil of Secrets* is a hard book to put down. I would definitely recommend it, though younger readers should beware of some mature thematic content. I am thankful BookLook Bloggers provided me with a copy of this book and the opportunity to honestly review it. I was not required to write a positive review, and all the opinions I have expressed are my own. (I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255: "Guides Concerning the Use of Endorsements and Testimonials in Advertising.")

Michelle says

This is the first fictional book I have read by Shannon so I wasn't sure what to expect. In typical Ethridge fashion she does not shy away from real life and what happens in a marriage. The first part of the book I was really intrigued and excited to read the book. The story line started right off and I slowly started to understand the characters. Then it started switching between many people. While the marriage between Will and Melanie is the central part of the book and I really enjoyed reading about Carrie who has her own crazy life going on.

I liked the real raw emotions about life and marriage and family. This book is all set during a Presidential Primary season so it's very political and many times I had no idea what was going on. This book reminded me a lot of the TV show *Scandal* only with a Christian back ground. It still holds all the drama of long lost secrets that happen to be uncovered in order to ruin the other candidate.

This was a decent read, though I probably won't read it again.

I rate it four stars.

Look for this book July 8, 2014!

"I received this book from BookLook for free in exchange for an honest review."

Violet says

Take a large cast of characters including: **Dave Dawson**, senator; **Will Connors** his friend and backroom organizer; **Melanie Connors**, Will's frigid wife; **Sophie**, their 16-year-old hungry-for-life daughter; **Caroline Connors**, Will's sharp, attractive, single sister; **Tucker Keyes**, Carrie's old drinking buddy from Princeton, now a wanna-be-journalist; **a tent city of MoveIn protestors**; and a series of **frightening cyber attacks** that for brief periods commandeer all electronic devices. Superimpose the above on the November to December months of Dave Dawson's run for president—the season of presidential primaries in New Hampshire—and you have *Veil of Secrets*, a contemporary story about politics, relationships, and morality in

America by Shannon Ethridge and Kathy Mackel.

Lots of action, complications, and trouble in the characters' lives drew me into the story from the opening chapter. These people are complex and well-developed with detailed pasts. The plot develops naturally as the veils covering those pasts keep getting torn away by events of the present.

The writing style is smart, punchy, and perfect for this fast-paced tale. Take, for example, this description of Tucker Keyes:

“He had tried veganism and Catholicism, yoga and Pilates, Madison Avenue and Wall Street, faith and cynicism, fine arts and day trades. And still the emptiness echoed inside him like an existential tinnitus” – KL 538.

The story deals with themes of marriage, sexual abuse, the impact of one's sexual history on the rest of life, abortion, life in politics, and the place faith in God has in all the above. I found the counseling sessions, where Will and Melanie are forced to face the dynamics of their relationship, interesting and informative in the way they show readers strategies for uncovering roots of marital dysfunction and dealing with the exposed issues.

I really wanted to give this book five stars, I enjoyed it that much. But as the story progressed, the antics of Carrie put me off. The cavalier manner her trappy ways are portrayed (keeping two guys on the hook while she's pregnant by a third) and then everything working out just fine for her, gave me pause. I felt that the authors' depiction of her gives a sanitized version of sin and its consequences, thus the four stars.

I received *Veil of Secrets* as a gift from the publisher, Thomas Nelson, for the purpose of writing a review.

Beth says

I received this book from Shannon Ethridge for no charge in exchange for my honest review of this book. The opinions expressed here are my own.

Book Description:

Can a woman face—and forgive—her own painful past before her house of cards crumbles . . . and before her own daughter makes the same mistakes?

Melanie and Will Connors are the perfect power couple. Will is the chief campaign strategist for a rising presidential candidate; Melanie is a prominent advocate for protecting children in an over-sexualized culture. Their devotion to one another is admired, even envied.

But their marriage isn't what it appears to be.

Will maintains an apartment in Washington, DC, and over the years his visits home have grown fewer and farther between. The long-distance marriage has enabled Melanie to avoid intimacy—and has only increased

her shame about her secretive past. But then Will issues an ultimatum: We work on the marriage . . . or we work on the divorce.

The Connors commit to marriage counseling in the most brutal of environments—snowy New Hampshire, a tiny state that is first in the nation for presidential primaries and a prize to be won at any cost . . . and the price of victory keeps rising.

As Melanie sifts through the debris of her past, she obsesses over the fear that she hasn't done enough to protect her teenage daughter. When Melanie sees her facing some of the same temptations, she knows she must intervene . . . but how can a woman with so many veiled secrets guide a daughter

honestly? While the country struggles with threats to its integrity and security, Melanie can no longer ignore the dangers looming in her own world. She can never undo the mistakes of her youth, but perhaps she can still save her marriage and family—if she can surrender her guilt and learn to open herself to her husband once again.

My Thoughts:

Veil of Secrets is the second book the awesome writing team of Shannon Ethridge and Kathryn Mackel. I had the pleasure of reading their debut book, *To Know You*. A book that touched me and has stayed with me. *Veil of Secrets* tells the story of Destiny Connor's adopted family and their struggles in their lives. Melanie Connors grew up in and around politics. Melanie and Will met on the campaign trail and now Melanie, Will, and their youngest daughter Sophie are on the campaign trail for Dave Dawson, who is running for president. Melanie and Will are having issues especially since most of their lives Will has been on the campaign trail while Melanie stayed home with their children to give them some normalcy. Now as their daughter Sophie has become a big part of their work, Melanie sees so much of herself and her experiences that she tries to protect her even though everyone around her including Will call her a helicopter Mom. Will doesn't understand what Melanie is seeing. As their marriage continues to deteriorate, Melanie agrees to counseling with Will and his therapist, Dr. Sierra. As they dig into their lives, Melanie is faced with the past and dealing with it head on. As Melanie and Will deal with their stuff, Carrie, Will's sister is dealing with an unwanted pregnancy, and the whole campaign is dealing with threats to the county from someone called, Joshua. Melanie works hard to help everyone while dealing with her own secrets.

Veil of Secrets is the second book by this fantastic writing team and it is wonderful. *Veil of Secrets* deals with secrets, marriage, teenage rebellion, and finding faith and forgiveness in the midst of chaos. These authors write with authority on political campaigns, issues that plague marriages, parenting, forgiveness, and moving forward. As I read this book so many different quotes stood out to me that I felt compelled to mark them, especially as I go through a very tough season in my marriage. The first one that spoke most to me is one made by Dr. Sierra as she and Melanie work through Melanie's past. Dr. Sierra says, "We don't have to be defined by what we've done, but it does help to understand the nature of what we've done...and more importantly, why. If we don't discover the answers to those questions, we are in danger of repeating history." The second one that spoke to me is when Melanie attends a speaking engagement and one woman states, "And I am afraid that there is no God, Then we're all alone and what we are—who we are—is just dust." Melanie's response is one that really did speak to me "Sometimes I fear that too. That God exists but when He looks at me, He only sees dust. And I know that isn't true but sometimes the fear is so overwhelming, it's a veil over the truth." So much truth and conviction in these 2 quotes...but there are many more. I enjoyed the characters in this book and being part of their journeys, especially Melanie as she struggles with her marriage and parenting I see so much of myself and my life in her, even though it is fiction. I loved getting to know more about Destiny's adopted family and others from her life but I also loved getting to know how old

friends from To Know You were doing and how all of their lives intersected. Even though there are characters from the first book, Veil of Secrets can be read as a stand alone. The authors do a great job including just enough details for new readers but not too much that repeat readers are bored or bogged down by details. I could not put this book down. This book grabbed a hold of me and held on until the end. I needed a few days after reading it to truly process the whole thing. I highly recommend this book to anyone who enjoys Christian Fiction, you will not be disappointed. I cannot wait to read what is next from this writing team! I give this book 5 STARS

Erin says

The secrets of Melanie Connors' teenage years are drastically affecting her marriage and her parenting. Her husband insists on either marriage counseling or divorce, and Melanie can't tell if her daughter really is in danger, or if she is projecting her own emotions onto the situation.

Ethridge and Mackel take us to the heart of a presidential primary race. A God-fearing senator named Dave Dawson is doing his best to win votes based on his conservative platform, and his right-hand man Will Connors runs a tight ship. Their whole staff is camped in New Hampshire as they await the kickoff of primary season. I'll be the first to admit that politics are not my thing, but the authors did a great job seamlessly inserting us into the frenetic and pressure-packed world of campaigning.

There are three point of view characters in this novel. Melanie's marriage to Will holds many secrets on both sides, and she knows the rest Dave's staff sees her as a helicopter parent over her daughter Sophie. Will's sister Carrie holds an important position on staff, but an uncharacteristic one-night stand has left her with a surprise pregnancy which she is thinking of terminating. Rounding out the trio is Tucker Reynolds Keyes, a wealthy young alcoholic and ladies man whom the Dawson camp has handpicked to turn into their pocket journalist.

Adding to the relational turmoil and stress of the campaign is a national threat from a hacking group called Jericho. They are terrorizing citizens with power outages, media takeovers, and the release of private information on all of the presidential hopefuls and their staffs. The Jericho subplot adds quite a bit of suspense as the story unfolds.

As I noted in my review of Ethridge & Mackel's first collaborative novel (To Know You), this is an honest story for mature readers only. The different subject matters are all handled tastefully, but just like all life, there are plenty of messes to be waded through. There is redemption and hope to be found for those of our characters who are bold enough to walk that path. A life lesson emerges: secrets are never more important than the people we may be tempted to keep them from.

I received my copy of the book from the publisher in exchange for this honest review. All opinions are my own.

This review originated at <http://reviewsbyerin.livejournal.com>

Martha says

I was reading this book in shorter segments and likely because I was reading an advanced review copy on the Kindle, it messed up the format, which played into my enjoyment of the book. This book has several story lines that intertwine and mesh. It was hard at times to keep Miranda, Melanie, Sophie and other all in their places. There were times when I just got lost completely. It seemed like there were so many things that were behind the veil of secrets, even to the readers.

Some very interesting things that I really liked that this book touched on was the fact that even the most paranoid parent cannot always protect their children, even when they know what to look for. This book touched on molestation and how the victims often blame themselves. It touched on political issues, prostitution and marriage issues that can come forth in a political race. I really found that the authors were not afraid to shy away from the hard things. They addressed them hard on and that made this a not so light read for anyone.

It hits them all. Abortion is actually also talked about as well, and planned by one of the young women that is part of the “family values” political campaign. It shows the struggle and how a young woman might make that choice, even if she believes it is wrong or not what she wanted.

Over all, this book is one that I would have preferred to read in print so the format didn’t irritate me so much, but also I think I may have been able to keep track of the character better that way as well.

This book was provided for me for review by NetGalley. The opinions contained herein are my own.

Iola says

There is a sameness about a lot of Christian novels. The characters are “good” Christians, whose main faults are emotional, not physical. *Veil of Secrets* is different. To be blunt, it’s about sex (not that there are any sex scenes. It’s more about the consequences of bad decisions around sex). These are characters who live in the real world, where otherwise intelligent people still sometimes do stupid things, and then have to work out how to live with the consequences. I liked that. Not that the characters did dumb things, but that the authors showed a realness not often seen in novels from Christian publishers.

Veil of Secrets was a more complex book than most I read. There were a lot of characters, and it probably took longer than it should have for me to work out who was related to whom and how. This might have been a bit easier if I’d read the first book in the series (*To Know You*), but reading the first book isn’t necessary for the story—*Veil of Secrets* can be read as a standalone novel.

The other layer of complexity in *Veil of Secrets* was the plot. As well as the obvious political background of the beginning of a presidential campaign, there was the issues plots: the “good Christian” career woman who finds herself pregnant after a one-night stand, and the broken marriage of a Christian couple. Shannon Ethridge has an extensive background in ministry around healthy sexuality and spirituality, and this comes through in the counselling scenes.

Recommended for mature audiences (meaning that a lot of Christian fiction appeals to a wide age group, from teens to grandparents. This won’t. The target reader is probably people like me: young professionals, married women, or parents of teens).

Thanks to BookLookBloggers and NetGalley for providing a free ebook for review.

kerrycat says

Overarching themes of forgiveness and redemption hold this busy story together, while the various characters and their complicated lives are fast-tracked back and forth, making it difficult to connect with any of them. Melanie and Will's therapy sessions feel a bit out of place in the larger narrative, but they — as well as knowing that one of the authors is a life coach with a counseling degree who portrays the experience realistically — may make readers who are considering a step in that direction feel more comfortable making that choice.

Melanie Connors joins her husband Will in his work on their friend Dave Dawson's presidential campaign in an attempt to reconnect and prevent the divorce he suggests, but her painful past makes her overprotective of their daughter, Sophie, causing more difficulties for the family. Will's single sister, Carrie, also on the campaign staff, is forced into a tough decision of her own when the one time she drifts from her strict, self-imposed work demands leads to an unplanned pregnancy. (THOMAS NELSON, Jul., 336 pp., \$15.99)

Reviewed by:

Kerry Sutherland

- See more at: <http://www.rtbookreviews.com/book-rev...>

Liz Terek says

America is fascinated with media. Digesting every tidbit that the press delivers has become as American as apple pie. Hollywood celebrities aren't the only targets, of course. During election years, we're slammed with the latest mud-slinging & catch phrase as quickly as we can absorb it.

In 'Veil of Secrets', we encounter a group of people who are in the middle of a Presidential election bid. Candidates are examined all the way back to their years in diapers during a campaign. However, this campaign story involves an ultra-conservative candidate & his inner circle. We join them beginning the third week of November.

Each member of this inner circle has something to hide. One has a long-held secret involving a prostitute while another is dealing with a surprise pregnancy. Alcoholism & marital woes are being dealt with as wives try to maintain marriages & control of their daughters. Some of the characters have a deeply rooted Christian faith; others have no interest in God & it shows.

At the heart of it all, we have families in crisis who must bare it all to fix their problems. Can any of them survive the displaying of dirty laundry? Better yet, can any of them last this campaign?

'Veil of Secrets' presents a very interesting plot that isn't often tackled: a Christian Presidential candidate. While it revolves around the inner circle, there are a lot of characters all together. At times, readers may become a bit befuddled. I had this issue due to two main characters with similar first names.

While the plot is fresh & well-done, it becomes a little wordy in spots. I felt it dragged a good bit.

Regardless, if you are looking for a good piece of contemporary fiction with depth, 'Veil of Secrets' is for you. I give a 4 star rating.

I received a copy in exchange for an honest review. All opinions are my own.

Nadine Keels says

This book's blurb doesn't do it justice.

Veil of Secrets has well crafted characters and an intricate storyline that moves at a great pace for its material. Admittedly, I was bemused for the first 25% of the book, which was pretty high on the political intrigue, the threats to national security (given a brief mention toward the end of a long blurb), the supporting characters Carrie and Tuck and their corresponding subplots, and pretty low on what the book blurb and cover image indicate are the main characters and story: Melanie and Will Connors and their dying marriage. Authors Shannon Ethridge and Kathryn Mackel deal well with this imperfect but clinging-to-faith husband and wife who still plainly love each other, even like each other, while they're mutually grieved over what's happening to their relationship in the middle of a stressful campaign.

However, my bemusement dissipated after I, who normally doesn't put a whole lot of stock into book blurbs anyway, settled into the idea that this book is about so much more than a power couple's intimacy struggles and immediate family concerns, and I would venture to say that much of the novel is a political thriller. My assumption: the blurb must have focused on Melanie and Will's marriage to leave room for another character or two to expand their own stories, and possibly the politics and suspenseful plot, into another book.

With the bigger picture of a nation heading toward crisis and the more intimate look at human hearts caught in the balance of fears surrounding their insecurities, this novel is quite an engaging read.

BookLook Bloggers provided me with a complimentary copy of this book from the publisher for an honest review.

Victor Gentile says

Shannon Ethridge and Kathryn Mackel, in their new book, “Veil Of Secrets” published by Thomas Nelson takes us into the lives of Melanie and Will Connors.

From the back cover: Can a woman face—and forgive—her own painful past before her house of cards crumbles . . . and before her own daughter makes the same mistakes?

Melanie and Will Connors are the perfect power couple. Will is the chief campaign strategist for a rising presidential candidate; Melanie is a prominent advocate for protecting children in an over-sexualized culture. Their devotion to one another is admired, even envied.

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While the country struggles with threats to its integrity and security, Melanie can no longer ignore the dangers looming in her own world. She can never undo the mistakes of her youth, but perhaps she can still save her marriage and family—if she can surrender her guilt and learn to open herself to her husband once again.

Let me start by saying “Veil Of Secrets” is a tear-jerker. This is not to say this is bad just that it is highly emotional and you should have a box of tissues standing by. A marriage in danger, a wife with secrets, a daughter who may be in danger, a sister-in-law who is in trouble, an alcoholic friend and a terrorist threat these are just some of the ingredients that are woven into this storyline. Secrets need to be revealed, pasts need to be forgiven and the future needs to be embraced. This is the kind of movie that they air on a Sunday night. It has plenty of atmosphere, great characters and an incredible story. Your chores will suffer once you start reading this book because you will not want to put it down. Ms. Ethridge and Ms. Mackel have done an outstanding job.

Disclosure of Material Connection: I received this book free from The Suspense Zone for this review. I was not required to write a positive review. The opinions I have expressed are my own. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255: “Guides Concerning the Use of Endorsements and Testimonials in Advertising.”

Dianna says

This book really toys with the mind. Part of this is because it's a busy maze of scenarios, running here-there-and-everywhere trying to keep up with the demands of a political agenda. There are so many characters to keep straight in Veil of Secrets that I felt like making an attendance book. It was difficult to relate to any one character in particular, probably because my life is so different from the high-profile personas in the book. No one in my life has a trust fund, goes on tours, or regularly shuttles off between Nashville and D.C. for their line of work. The most intriguing part of the story was the hacking mystery that kept escalating to huge proportions. The biggest struggle I had with Veil of Secrets was knowing whose side to be on. If I felt so conflicted, as an outside person reading this fictional story, I can't imagine how difficult it would be to live this kind of life.

I received this book to review. The opinions shared here are 100% mine.

Robyn Helsel says

When I read the blurb about Veil of Secrets I was definitely intrigued. This book ties politics, politicians, campaign workers, families, protestors, the media and Christianity in a fast paced drama that jumps from one characters story to another and yet ties them to each other. As I read Kept wanting to know what was going to happen next. It was somewhat difficult to get to know the characters in-depth because of the jumping

around and at times I felt like I was reading a soap opera. I was very disappointed when the book ended; there are too many unresolved questions. Where is the sequel? After reading the book I found out that this book is a follow-up to another book. If I had known that I would have read the previous book before reading this one although I would still want to know what happens next.
