



# Pumpkin Spice Secrets

*Hillary Homzie*

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## **Pumpkin Spice Secrets** Hillary Homzie

Just as Maddie picks up her favorite pumpkin spice drink from the coffee shop counter, she spills it all over the cute guy standing behind her! Luckily, her embarrassment evaporates into a crush when she starts chatting with him -- his name is Jacob, and he's just starting in her grade at her middle school.

But before Maddie can tell her best friend Jana about him at lunch the next day, Jana announces her huge new crush -- on the same guy! Maddie doesn't want to cause trouble, so she keeps her feelings hidden. Jana will get over her crush soon, right?

Add major school stress to Maddie's secret, and it's a recipe for disaster. Can she keep her cool and work things out with both Jacob and Jana before it all turns into a total mess?

## **Pumpkin Spice Secrets Details**

Date : Published October 17th 2017 by Sky Pony (first published September 5th 2017)

ISBN : 9781510730076

Author : Hillary Homzie

Format : Paperback 240 pages

Genre : Childrens, Middle Grade, Contemporary, Realistic Fiction, Romance

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# From Reader Review Pumpkin Spice Secrets for online ebook

## Lisa Holloway says

This book was so much more than I expected. I don't know if it was the cover, the title, or the book's description, but I had in my mind that this was going to be a soap opera type book with lots of drama. It wasn't. It was a very realistic book about friendships, family, and crushes. It also showed the problems that can arise from keeping secrets.

The author is fantastic at looking at the world through a middle schooler's eyes. She was right on with this all around- in dialogue, behaviors, dress, relationships, and the way kids think, act, and react. The characters she created were likeable and believable. I think most middle school girls could relate to the protagonist in one way or another. I liked the way the author had Maddie learn and grow in this book.

It was a fun, light book, yet had real life problems and lessons in it including that there are always consequences for actions. There were parents with high expectations, forgetting homework, not studying enough, balancing activities and school, keeping secrets, losing friends, making friends, crushes, all different types of teachers and extracurricular activities- the world of an 11-14 year old. The book held my interest until the end. I really was rooting for everything to work out for Maddie.

If you're wondering, I would say this is rated G in the romance department- not even a kiss. I would recommend this for girls 10-13. I think it would be hard for a 8 or 9 year old to relate to the older characters.

I received this book from the publisher in exchange for an honest review.

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## Camryn Fisher says

### 1) Summary:

Maddie is your average 7th grade girl, she loves a sweet coffee drink, loves her best friend, and has a massive crush on the new boy at school, Jacob. One day, at the local coffee shop, Maddie spills her drink all over Jacob, who also becomes her new crush. Maddie can't wait to tell her best friend, Jana, all about the incident until Maddie hears Jana talk about her new crush, Jacob! Maddie decides to keep her crush a secret since Jana will just move on and find a new crush, right? Maybe not. How will Maddie solve her not so sweet situation?

### 2) 5 Higher Level Questions:

1. Remembering: What was the drink that Maddie spilled on Jacob?

While the title may give this answer a little bit away, it allows the reader to focus on remembering key points and details. It also teaches the reader that book titles have meanings.

2. Applying: What do you think would happen if Maddie told Jana her "pumpkin spice secret"?

This allows the reader to think more into the situation and understand the predicament the characters are in.

3. Evaluating: What choice would you have made if you were in Maddie's situation?

This allows the reader to put themselves in the main characters shoes and perhaps better understand the story or think harder about why what happens happens.

4. Understanding: How would you characterize Jacob?

This question has the reader look deeper into the main character's crush and think more about his character.

5. Creating: Draw or act out your favorite scene in the story.

This question allows the student to get creative with their own personal favorite part of the book. This book was fun and full of different scenes that would be funny and interesting to recreate.

3) Citation:

Homzie, H. (2017). *Pumpkin Spice Secrets*. New York: Sky Pony Press.

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### **Kate says**

I received this as an ARC from the publisher at ALA Annual.

Three or even four stars for its intended audience, two stars for this jaded adult reader, although the story picks up towards the end. Our heroine and her best friends have a BFF code of sorts, so when Jada announces her crush on Jason, he's officially off-limits to the rest...but Maddie met him first and has some chemistry with him...so...tension! The characters are tragically popular kids with overachieving and overscheduling and large-amounts-of-pocket-money and Service Projects and rich parents stamped all over them, a sort of Sweet Valley High setting without the archetypes. Tweens will adore the love-story-friend-story-lite, even if they have to groan through the somewhat endless instruction in debate that sounds direct from the classroom. The interactions between the characters, including Maddie, her friends, her sister Elvie, and her parents are pretty well done, I just found myself wanting to kick the characters for their first-world problems, or maybe because I could swear I went to junior high with people whose lives had as little complexity as these kids'. The series looks to have all sweet coffee drink themed titles and perhaps we will run into the characters from one volume to the next, but it's not a romance-per-friend-in-the-group series as far as you can tell from the promo for Peppermint Cocoa Crushes at the end of PSS.

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### **Rakisha says**

My 10-year-old daughter read this book in one day, giving it 5 out of 5 stars because it was funny. Normally, she's into graphic novels, manga, action, and unconventional girl leads so this was quite a departure for her. It really says something that she liked it.

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### **Kelly Gunderman says**

Check out this, other reviews, and more fun bookish things on my young adult book blog, [Here's to Happy Endings!](#)

I was having a really hard time getting into a book - I was actually in the middle of four or five books when I picked up *Pumpkin Spice Secrets*. I wasn't sure why this one would be any different in getting me out of reading slump, but with the cover and the synopsis, this book just sounded incredibly cozy and exactly what I needed.

**So Sky Pony Press has come out with this new line of middle grade novels in a series called "Swirl Novels," with each one featuring a pretty picture of a yummy drink on the cover and a sweet story inside, each focusing on crushes and friendships.** This sounds like such an awesome idea, and while the covers are so much fun - bright colors, fun titles - what we're really after is the content, right? You don't want an overly cheesy middle grade book that is just completely full of fluff and nothing else. That's where these

perfect middle grade novels come in. Sure, they're light, fun, and a bit on the fluffy side, but they also have deep lessons buried inside. In the case of *Pumpkin Spice Secrets*, it's that friendship is the most important thing you can have when you're entering middle school, so it's important to try and protect it above all else.

One random morning before seventh grade begins, Maddie and her older sister go to a small coffee shop in town, where her sister says she wants to talk to Maddie about what things are going to go on during the school year - with her classes, friends, etc. However, what happens when they get there couldn't be anything like what Maddie had anticipated. When she orders her iced coffee (pumpkin spice!), she accidentally turns around and spills the coffee on a cute boy - Jacob. Of course Jacob is sweet about it, and Maddie finds out that he is going to be going to the same school now, and she instantly develops a crush on him.

**However, before she can tell her friends, including her best friend, Jana, Jana informs them that Jacob is her new crush, and she thinks he's super cute and awesome.** Since she doesn't want to break their BFF code, which states that they won't crush on each other's crushes, Maddie keeps the secret to herself.

When seventh grade starts and Maddie finds herself having a harder and harder time keeping the secret to herself, she isn't sure what she should do - should she tell Jana and hope for the best, or secretly pray that Jana's interest in Jacob goes away as quickly as it does with all the other boys she's crushed on in the past?

***"I can't become that girl. I can't become a Betrayer and an ex-best friend. A lump grows in my throat. If I don't say anything at all about Jacob, I prevent the possibility of being a traitor. I know what happens when you go against Jana. Like Fiona, I'd get totally cut off."***

It doesn't help that she and Jacob end up paired up for a big debate project - and that Jana has been talking to Fiona, her ex-best friend. How much longer can Maddie hide the fact that she has been texting and crushing on Jacob so that she doesn't ruin her relationship with her best friend?

**This book was incredibly charming. The characters, the plot, the friendships - they were all great and brought the story together.** I can see a lot of middle graders falling in love with Maddie and Jacob, and the friendship that Maddie and Jana share. That was my favorite aspect of the book - the amazing and sweet friendship that the two of them had that reminded me of my own time in seventh grade. The bond that was between Maddie and Jana is such an amazing one, and this book reminds everyone that friendship should be the most important thing, even if a cute boy comes along.

**I also love how important family was in this book - Maddie and her older sister were really close and spent a lot of time together.** I love seeing that in books, particularly middle grade books. I've read a lot of middle grade novels that don't put emphasis on family at all (or simply come up with depressing backstories about the main character's family), so I love that this one was pretty much happy. It was a really fun, cheerful novel.

**I really can't wait to check out the other books in the Swirl series, because I have the feeling they're going to be equally as fun and uplifting as *Pumpkin Spice Secrets*.**

*Pumpkin Spice Secrets* is a fun middle grade crush story that has so much emphasis on friendship that it instantly became one of those books that gave you the warm and cozy feelings inside. It's one of those books that are perfect for a nice chilly fall day or a great book to read during a winter snowstorm. **Any way you look at it, *Pumpkin Spice Secrets* is the kind of book that will fill you with smiles and warmth, especially if you pair it with your own pumpkin spice flavored coffee drink!**

**Note:** I received a copy of this book from the publisher in exchange for an honest review - Thank you!

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### **Rachael Fryman says**

Genre: Fiction - Contemporary

Age Range: Upper Elem/MG

Six word Summary: Middle School Drama, crushes, and frappes.

Ratings:

Plot: 2

Pacing: 2

Characters: 3

Writing: 2

Enjoyment: 3

Overall: 2

#pumpkinspice #middleschooldrama #girlcode #debate

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### **Kristina says**

This super cute tween novel opens with two of my favorite things: pumpkins and coffee shops! I knew I had to read it! And I wasn't disappointed. 12-yr old Maddie spills her pumpkin spice frappe all over a cute boy in the coffee shop and her heart goes a fluttering. There's plenty of friendship dramas and swoony crush moments throughout the book plus a does of sisterly love and advice. I passed it on to my two daughters (11 and 13) to read and they also give it two thumbs up. It makes a perfect fall (or any time!) read.

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### **Carolyn Leiloglou says**

Tweens will pick up this book for the "meet cute" story (which is very sweet), but this book is really about friendship and the way secrets, even those kept with the best intentions, can threaten to ruin them.

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### **Vanessa Linares says**

"Pumpkin Spice Secrets" by Hillary Homzie is a really exciting book. My favorite part of the book is when Maddie and her friend likes the same guy so it's exciting, what's going to happen next between them to. If you love books about romance and relationships I would recommend this book to you.

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### **Helene Hoke says**

Pumpkin Spice Secrets is such a great book. Its cute, funny, and sweet! I love how funny the situation was, and it teaches you not to keep secrets from your best friends. I just couldn't put it down!

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### **Jaclyn says**

Such a sweet story of friendship, romance and developing confidence in oneself. Middle graders are sure to love it.

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### **Mark Buxton says**

My name is Maddie, and my seventh grade year has become very complicated. I bumped (literally) into the cutest boy a few days before the year started and instantly had a crush on Jacob. However, before I could tell my best friend Jana, she announced she had a crush on him. Now, we all know the BFF Code, right? You can't steal your BFF's boyfriend, so I couldn't tell anybody how I felt. I had hoped Jana would quickly lose interest, like always, but she didn't. I think I could have handled the problem, except Jacob and I were paired together for a Social Studies debate and had to work closely for two weeks. We got along great, and I knew he liked me. I've lied to Jana to save her feelings, but I'm afraid of what will happen when she finds out. Can you help me? What should I do?

This book is definitely for middle grade girls. It addresses many common problems they face at this age, and first crushes is the main focus of the plot. All middle grade students experience these feelings. In addition, Maddie's parents have high academic expectations, her sister is a high-achiever with a secret of her own, and Maddie has a fear of public speaking. My feelings? Well, I'm a grown man reading about the problems of a seventh grade girl, so I had some trouble connecting to her character. The plot was easy to follow, and the author told it from Maddie's point of view. This was obviously a great choice, since Maddie's feelings were the most important part of the plot. I understood Maddie's reluctance to hurt her friend's feelings, but things would have been so much easier if she was honest in the first place. A lesson learned for all! Overall, middle grade girls should enjoy this book and might get some hints on how to survive their early teenage years.

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### **Marilee says**

I had so much nostalgia when reading this, the author totally nailed what it's like to be in middle school! A cute, and fun read!

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### **Jackie Bardenwerper says**

Sweet to the last drop! This fun novel is the perfect fall treat for any middle school girl. Light and fun with a dash of drama, this novel brought me right back to middle school all while making me laugh (and cringe!) out loud. In the story, protagonist Maddie has a new crush on Jacob, the cute new seventh grader she meets at the end of summer break. Yet before she can tell her BFF Jana about it on the first day of school, Jana announces she has a crush on him too, leaving Maddie torn between supporting her best friend and her feelings for Jacob. Throw in a few bad grades at school and enough pumpkin lattes to have you craving a Starbucks trip, and you have the perfect recipe for a good read. Homzie's characters are realistic and likeable - I found myself cheering Maddie on throughout the story - and the plot is something almost all tween girls

will relate to. Highly recommend!

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## Schizanthus says

A book with a name that includes a type of muffin and frappé, both of which feature in the book? Sold!

This is one of those cliché tween first crush books that follows the usual script:

- \* Shy girl meets first crush / dreamy boy of her dreams.
- \* Shy girl plans on gushing about dreamy to her outgoing friend.
- \* Outgoing friend gets in first and tells shy girl about dreamy new crush.
- \* Turns out dreamy 1 and dreamy 2 are actually the same boy. What's a shy girl to do?!
- \* Shy girl pretends not to be crushing on dreamy while internally cringing every time outgoing girl openly crushes.
- \* Dreamy starts spending more time with shy girl and develops his own crush. Aargh! Panic stations!
- \* Outgoing girl finds out she's not the only girl in the world and some boys will actually like someone **other** than her. Oh, no! The sky's falling!
- \* Friend break up scene ...
- \* Drama, drama, drama.
- \* Friends make up. Aww!
- \* Shy girl and dreamy are free to live happily ever after - until one of them develops a new crush.

*The moral of the story:* If you can communicate openly and honestly you will never secure a leading role in a romance novel.

Snarky, anti-romance, I'm going to die alone surrounded by my cats sarcasm aside? This was actually quite a sweet story. Sure, I wanted to strangle shy girl and outgoing girl, and tell them to wake up to themselves and actually talk, but I accidentally enjoyed reading this one.

I loved that dreamy wasn't a pretentious pretty boy. I liked that shy girl had an older sister who came through with some sisterly love and had a surprisingly rebellious attitude beneath her studious exterior. There's a café in this book so major props for that. The school sounded like one I'd like to attend. I loved the birthday locker idea. The girls play soccer.

My favourite thing about this book is that the tweens actually acted their age, and even a tad younger sometimes. It bugs me when the 12 year olds are really 20 year old characters in disguise. The tweens in this book spoke and acted like kids. They didn't sound like walking thesauruses. They got cranky and grounded. They planned sleepovers. There weren't any drugs or tween sex or even any swearing that I can remember. It was just a really sweet book.

And did I mention the pumpkin spice muffins and pumpkin spice frappés with whipped cream, caramel swirls and sprinkles?? Yum! ? I definitely need to find more books with food items included in the title.

*Favourite sentence:* "Mom doesn't get angry very often, but when she does, she spews like a shaken-up soda can."

I received a copy of this book from NetGalley (thank you so much to NetGalley, Sky Pony Press and Xpresso Book Tours for the opportunity) in exchange for honest feedback.



