



The Little Secret

Kate Saunders

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When Jane is invited to spend her summer vacation with her new—but admittedly odd—friend, Staffa, it feels like a dazzling daydream. Jane is lured by the promise of beautiful gowns as delicate as cobwebs, fancy parties as elegant as castle balls, and more fun than she can possibly imagine.

But there's something menacing about the gleam in Staffa's mother's eyes. Something not-quite-right about the long drive over the hills of Scotland. Something strangely alluring about the mysterious, glowing box she is told she must never open. Never, ever, for any reason . . . Until, of course, it is opened on her behalf.

If Jane goes home with Staffa—if she enters the world of the box—will she be trapped forever? Or will she become every girl's secret idea of a princess?

Kate Saunders takes readers into a wildly imaginative miniaturized world of castle balls, death-defying bee riders, and giant racing spiders. A world where wicked plots are hatched, exciting rescues staged, and where the power of friendship can be a match for even the most dastardly of villains.

The Little Secret Details

Date : Published June 23rd 2009 by Feiwel & Friends (first published 2006)

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Author : Kate Saunders

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From Reader Review The Little Secret for online ebook

Tessa Joy says

Even though Jane was reluctant at first, she and the new girl at school, Staffa, become close friends. Even Staffa's controlling mother, Lady Matilda, is happy with their growing friendship. Lady Matilda even gains permission to have Jane join her and Staffa on their summer vacation. As their vacation begins, Jane notices that Lady Matilda acts strangely around a small, beautifully painted box that she warns the girls never to touch. When the group reach their destination on a lonely Scottish island, the box is opened and all three of them are sucked into the miniature world inside. In this world, Lady Matilda is an oppressive queen over her children and subjects. But when she tries to control Jane's future, Lady Matilda underestimates Jane's powerful potential.

Saunders creates a unique fairy-tale adventure in *The Little Secret*. In this world bugs are the means of transportation and food and sugar is a valuable commodity. But in this micro-kingdom, Queen Matilda is a dictator that forces anyone, including her children, to obey her every whim. When Jane is tricked into joining the Matilda's kingdom, Jane becomes the lynchpin that inspires a kingdom-wide revolution. A smartly written and lively tale with great descriptions and details told from an insect-like perspective. Fans of such classic children's books like *Stuart Little* or *The Borrowers* would enjoy Saunders story. Great for young readers, ages 8 and up.

(Found on Children's Compass Chronicle: childrenscompasschronicle.blogspot.com)

N.A. Cauldron says

Excited to find a new children's book, imagine my disappointment when I found it a great chore to finish it. In fact, I skipped a great deal of the last several chapters.

A girl (Jane) with many brothers is befriended by a little girl (Staffa) who is basically Wednesday Adams. Staffa's mother is a torrentially overdone villain, as though someone were trying way to hard to make another Nanny McPhee or other odd character, only evil.

I love surprises and fantasy. Characters riding a bumble bee? No problem. Characters who are really elf-mice in disguise? Love it! However... I cannot tolerate unbelievable actions. For example, would you, as a mother of a 12 year old girl, allow her to leave the country for several weeks with a girl she has only known for a few months? I think not. Furthermore, would you, as a mother, allow said 12 year old girl to go to such a place where cellphones are not allowed and she can only converse with you via post cards? I think not again! This book was full of ridiculous actions such as these. I give you another example. Character A tells character B where character C is. Character B comments, therefore making the reader realize that she knows exactly what's going on and where he is. Two pages later, "Where's character C?" Uh ... he would be where you were told he was 5 seconds ago. And then she acts all surprised with his predicament, an emotional reaction she did not have in that prior 5 second window. The plot was beyond obvious to any leveled reader, yet the characters seemed completely baffled by results of theirs and others actions. (That, and by the end of the book, I was literally gagging with the constant mention of sweets. Whole cakes for every meal? Gag!) Another major flaw was the writing, or lack of variant writing. One example that I pointed out to my husband was three sentences in a row, all starting with "She looked". These were not written in such as fashion as to make a statement or be funny. Even my husband noticed, and that's not his forte. Repetition was

rampant in this book. Pronoun-verb-object, pronoun-verb-object. There were no varying structures or even vocabulary.

Now, one could surmise that this was because it was written for children. Any human being, whether children or adult, could not possibly enjoy this fashion unless they were still on the Dick and Jane series. This book was far thicker than its apparent intended audience. When I pick up a children's book that is written for a younger audience than I prefer, I place it down and do not review it. But this book was presented in an older format, as though for an older audience. It drove me crazy.

Betsy says

One Sentence Review: I think the problem with this book wasn't the writing, which was nice but not particularly gripping, so much as the extremely unfortunate illustrations which caused me to repeatedly cringe while reading.

Blabla says

The Little Secret written by Kate Saunders illustrated by William Garman follows the tale of a young, ordinary girl, an odd other-worldly creature, and a selfish, power hungry Queen. Kate Saunders writing is able to bring this beautiful piece of literature to life and Mr. Garman's illustrations only add to a reader's enjoyment of this book. I, personally, feel disheartened when author's leave the ending up to you, as Kate Saunders did in this lovely rendezvous. Their were many quotes in this book that elaborated the need for democracy, rather than a Queendom or a Kingdom. I think the main points the author wants to emphasise are balance and friendship. I would definitely recommend this book to upper elementary and middle grade children because there is some advanced vocabulary, and to enjoy the book and understand the book you need a mature "reading palate". If you read this book, I would request you to read it in one go, because if you spread out the events the spark of interest disappears. Happy reading!

?eah *e??* says

This is a thrilling story about an unsuspecting girl and her unfortunate adventure. Loved it<3 read it!!!!!!!!!!!!!!:)=]

Susan says

When Jane is invited to spend her summer vacation with her new—but admittedly odd—friend, Staffa, it feels like a dazzling daydream. Jane is lured by the promise of beautiful gowns as delicate as cobwebs, fancy parties as elegant as castle balls, and more fun than she can possibly imagine. But there's something menacing about the gleam in Staffa's mother's eyes. Something not-quite-right about the long drive over the hills of Scotland. Something strangely alluring about the mysterious, glowing box she is told she must never open. Never, ever, for any reason . . . Until, of course, it is opened on her behalf. If Jane goes home with Staffa—if she enters the world of the box—will she be trapped forever? Or will she become every girl's secret idea of a princess? ~from book cover

This delightful story made me laugh out loud in places. Filled with themes of friendship, determination, and over coming obstacles this story is just the right mix of fantasy and adventure. This story would make a great read aloud and is a 2010-2011 Maine Student Book Award Nominee.

Breanna says

I have been reading a book called "The Little Secret" by Kate Saunders. I chose this book because I never got a chance to finish reading it. The main characters are Jane, Staffa, Jane's mom and dad, Jane's brothers Martin, Dan, Jon, Mike, Phil, Little Ted, Lady Matilda, Twilly, Quarley, and more. The story is about a girl named Staffa came to Jane's school to look for one friend only. On Staffa's first day of school she didn't exactly make friends so easily, but Jane thought it would be nice to help her out. More into the story Staffa and Jane get to be great friends. The setting in the story are at school, the boy garden (Jane's house), and the kingdom of Eck.

Later, in the story Jane goes to Staffa's home and finds out that she isn't exactly normal. When Jane goes to Staffa's house they have a lot of things to do when there isn't a revolution. They're having a revolution because some eckers (villagers) had decided to try and overthrow the queen from her thrown. The queen ends up going mad with power. She ends up putting people in jail or execution. Jane ends up safe and most importantly the little secret is safe. If you like adventure, mystery, part comedy type of books you should read this book.

Whitney Hallam says

very good and great for people who have a lot of imagination.

Elaine Bearden says

gr. 3-6

Jane is the object of new girl Staffa's attempts at getting a new best friend. Staffa succeeds, and she and Jane have a great time together, constructing a "Boy Garden" with Jane's brothers. Then Jane joins Staffa on a vacation, which then turns into a nightmare, as Jane is shrunk to join Staffa and her evil mother in the parallel world in a mysterious painted box. The cover is what lured me into this book, with the two girls riding a giant bumblebee through the air, and the more timid of them leading the charge. It is a beautifully produced book. However, I felt like it wasn't edited well in places. Also, it felt like it didn't truly build to a climax, instead, plucking a wire of tension, and then pulling back. Also, Jane's immediate forgiveness of Staffa, though she had lied to Jane, felt too easy. Sigh. I forced myself through this. The very very last pages were break-neck pace and great.

Breanna Covarrubias says

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Martin, Dan, Jon, Mike, Phil, Little Ted, Lady Matilda, Twilly, Quarley, and more. The story is about a girl named Staffa came to Jane's school to look for one friend only. On Staffa's first day of school she didn't exactly make friends so easily, but Jane thought it would be nice to help her out. More into the story Staffa and Jane get to be great friends. The setting in the story are at school, the boy garden (Jane's house), and the kingdom of Eck.

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Jacey says

Rereading this was a treat. I noticed that some parts seem a tad bit too rushed now, but overall, I still loved The Little Secret. One of my all-time fave Middle Grade books <3

Elizabeth says

I absolutely loved this book when I was younger. A sweet fantasy story about friendship and magic.

Rebecca J. says

Something about those Brits---they sure can spin a fantastic tale! Kate Saunders is no exception. Her story has all the mystery, oddity, humor, and charm I've come to expect from that camp.

Staffa, the new girl at Jane's school, may talk funny, sit and drink coffee at recess, and dress like a grandmother, but kind-hearted Jane sticks up for her anyways. Jane isn't exactly thrilled when Staffa immediately claims her as a best friend, at least not at first. It turns out that Staffa's mother is disgustingly rich, and Jane soon finds herself showered with presents and invited to posh afternoon teas. To top it all off, Jane is eventually invited to spend a few weeks of summer holiday at Staffa's country home, a real castle in northern England.

It's a fairy-tale come true for Jane. And I mean that very literally. And not one of those nice little Disney fairy tales either.

I loved this book from the beginning, knowing there's something odd about Staffa and her mother, and being drawn along by not knowing quite what it was. Kate Saunders handles Jane's reactions and decisions so well, I believed every bit of it. I had the chilling conviction that in Jane's shoes I would have put my foot right in the very same trap. A very fun read for ages ten and up.

Rachel says

I thought it was AWESOME!!!!

Cat says

Loved this to pieces. Fast, fun and charming middle grade read.
