



## The Silent Swan

*Lex Keating*

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Once upon a time – better known as “now” - Gabriel Pritz reigns as king of his high school. Easy grades, perfect baseball season, a pretty date for prom—he's coasting into a golden future. Until his parents demand he cook dinner once a week. Caught between kitchen fires and ballpark withdrawal, Gabe is thrown into Tam Swann's orbit. Hostile, friendless, and stubborn, she's exactly the sort of person he'd prefer to avoid.

Tam's sphere of influence expands beyond Gabe's sad domestic skills, rapidly invading everything from his favorite game to parts of his soul he didn't know existed. It's uncomfortable, it's hard work, it's...making him a better man. And that's just what she does to people she doesn't like. The better he gets to know her, the more he has to face the truth: this sharp, heart-breaking outcast is worth fighting for. How many families, fairy tales, and felons will he go through to ride to the rescue of the bravest person he's ever met?

## The Silent Swan Details

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Author : Lex Keating

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## From Reader Review The Silent Swan for online ebook

### Christine says

First what a perfect title for this story. The story is about Gabe and Tam and how Gabe meets a girl named, Tam.

We get Gab's perspective on high school and Tam. I love how he has all these opinions about his social life, his friends, and his lunch table. I did not care for Gabe when I first started reading the book. I thought he was going to a tool throughout the entire book. His friends did not impress me or his girlfriend. However, as the story continues, Gabe changes. He starts talking to Tam and he sees something special.

When I first starting reading the book, I was a little confused as to whom the main character was going to be. It is written in third person, but we see the "world" through Gabe's eyes. I had to go back to the synopsis and check to make sure that it was Gabe who was going to be the main character. I wasn't sure and I felt like a lot was thrown at me; different characters, Gabe's family, Gabe's friends. I almost felt like I had to make a list. Who was who?

Everyone judged Tam. Her clothes, her hair, her behavior without knowing a thing about her expect that she was a foster kid. Tam came across as someone who has attitude, but she is constantly judged in high school. I would have attitude too. The girls at Gabe's lunch table were not the nicest girls. I wanted to talk to those girls about learning to accept people who did not always have everything given to them.

Nonetheless, I love these stories. I seek them out. Good looking popular guy gets to know a girl that has a huge heart, but is not popular with the great clothes and hair. A friendship starts where more develops. The story showed growth, morals, acceptance, values and responsibilities. Bottom line, it was a great YA book. A copy was provided in exchange for an honest review.

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### Kimber Wheaton says

\*I received this book from the author in exchange for an honest review\*

You all know by now that I'm a sucker for any retelling of a fairy tale, no matter how esoteric the reference. *The Silent Swan* pulls inspiration from a lesser known tale, *The Six Swans* by the Brothers Grimm. That particular fairy tale is beautiful (if not gruesome depending on the version you read). *The Silent Swan* definitely does this tale justice. Lex Keating has created a beautiful story, weaving together two endearing characters, along with a slew of interesting secondary characters, into a captivating plot.

Gabe Pritz is from a large family of boys. I absolutely loved the Pritz boys and their interaction with each other. They are loud and boisterous, playful beyond what their mother's prized possessions can probably handle (in house wrestling never works with china and art). Gabe is a top student, vice-president of the student council, captain of the varsity baseball team, and he coaches Little League. When his mother demands that he cook a family dinner once a week, it overwhelms him. Maybe it's his lack of cooking skills that overwhelm him. Really it's the, keep the fire extinguisher handy, kind of sad.

At first glance, Tam Swann does not seem like the type of girl Gabe would be interested in at all. I adored Tam, there's just something about her that leaps off the pages. She puts up a wall between herself and the

world, but inside she's a sweet, strong girl. The whole foster situation with Tam and her brothers is heartbreaking. I love the interactions between Tam and Gabe; even at the beginning when she seemed to despise him, they were still so perfect together.

When I started the book, I was a bit overwhelmed, myself. It's sort of like showing up at school on the first day, the new kid when everyone else knows what's going on. The story just starts and we're thrown in to sink or swim. I suggest swimming since I doubt you'll regret it. The characters in this book are well developed. By the end, it felt like I actually knew these people.

I recommend *The Silent Swan* to everyone high school and up that enjoys a contemporary romance with rich characterizations. I love the cover. It really does an awesome job representing the story. Be sure to keep tissues handy while reading this one.

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### **Angie Arndt says**

Lex Keating and Pauline Creeden somehow got into the mind of a high school boy. That's the only way they could have written such a smart, funny and particularly poignant story like, "The Silent Swan." Warning: before you sit down to read this book, purchase a new box of tissues.

Gabe is a typical high school jock, unaware of anything but his next meal and his next girl. One of the elites in school, Gabe's entire family of boys are ruled by his dad and his mother, the judge. The only reason Gabe knows that there is another world out there because of his adopted brother, Alex, who came from an abusive home.

Tamryn Swann is the only girl in a family of boys: many, many boys. After she and her brothers were orphaned, they were split up put into the foster care system. It's up to Tam, a high school student herself, to keep her brothers safe, make extra money to help out and somehow behave enough so that she doesn't lose her own foster parents.

Keating and Creeden skillfully weave this story using authentic point of view to craft a heart-breaking story of love and hate, trust and distrust. Told through Gabe, the story unfolds gradually and you learn Tam's story as he does, little-by-little between ball games, dances and the daily, busy life of today's family. If you have a young adult, get them to read this. It will open their eyes about those who live on the fringes.

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### **Tamara Hook Me Up Book Blog says**

4.5 Stars

I don't read a great deal of Young Adult books but when I do I look for those that steal your heart by introducing you to a story about love, family, friendship and growth. There is something powerful about a story with characters who experience deep emotional growth and even more so when they are in their teens. I particularly like characters who are not easy to love at first; the kind that the more you get to know them they more you love their individuality. This book, *The Silent Swan* was one of these books.

It is the story of Gabe and Tam. Gabe comes from a well known family and lives a life of privilege whereas Tam endures struggle in her life. They come together to help each other and from this point on Gabe starts to

see things in life differently and discover that some things aren't what he thought they were.

This story is written from Gabe's POV which I really enjoyed. It is really well written and keeps a steady pace throughout which kept me interested, although I have to admit I was pretty much hooked from the beginning. I was intrigued about Tam's character in particular and wondered just where the author was going to take us with the story.

If you enjoy Young Adult books I highly recommend this one to you. It has its heartbreaking moments but it is an uplifting story with amazing characters.

\*\*ARC given in exchange for an honest review\*\*

For more reviews visit my blog - Hook Me Up Book Blog

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## Jenna says

REVIEW ALSO FOUND ON MY BLOG, for a blog tour stop.

<http://www.coffeebooksandme.com/2013/...>

The Silent Swan was not something I expected. Not in a bad way, but in a good way. The book cover pre-empted you to assume the book is a happy-go-lucky all-the-way kind of book. But it actually has some depth that the cover did not show us. Don't get me wrong, I love the cover! It depicts the whole story. But it just doesn't tell you there's much more to the happy dispositions of the cover models.

Let's begin with the writing. I admit I was a lot confused with who is who and what is what and where is where when I started reading The Silent Swan. It was like I attended a party where I knew no one, and I don't even have the slightest idea what I'm doing there. The story began with Gabe, the main character, narrates bringing a certain table to school. I have no idea what he was talking about and who he is talking about. Afterwards though, I got used to the writing and adjusted pretty well that I began to enjoy and empathize with the characters.

The characters were not all relatable to me but were all easily likable.. well some just enough but the main character Gabe is so funny and he made the awkward sound not-so-awkward. Anyway, I love how big the families mentioned in the book are. I won't deny how confused and how OC I did get just to try to imagine each one of them, like Jake, Alex, Dan, Mike, etc.. then there are Tam's brothers and sisters.. I actually love reading books with big families involved (like My Life Next Door by Huntley Fitzpatrick). There's something spontaneous and more fun about it. lol

The story. As I said in the first paragraph, the story has some depth in them that I never expected it to have. The issue at hand are foster cares and the story behind each child or family broken by tragic events and such...How deep it is, and the sudden twist and turns..some expected, some unprecedented.

Overall, it was a nice story with nice characters and I had a good time reading it. I recommend it not only to those of us who are family-oriented, or going through the same troubles the characters in the book do, but to everyone who loves a feel-good story with a feel-good ending. :) And maybe shed a tear or two too!

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## **Bobbie Grob says**

The Silent Swan by Lex Keating is the story about a family of seven children fighting to stay together despite being thrown into the foster care system after the sudden deaths of their parents, one of whom was a major league baseball player. Tam Swann is the eldest and only girl in the family, and throughout the book she does her best to support and care for her six younger brothers as they move through the system, even when their foster families try to stand in her way. When Tam meets Gabriel Pritz, one of six brothers himself, her life is tilted by more than hormones as his mother is proved to be involved in every aspect of Tam's case with Social Services.

Lex Keating really got it right with The Silent Swan. The dual themes of family loyalty and sportsmanship are entwined perfectly in this story. Although I did not get to know the Swann boys as well as I felt like I knew Tam, their characters were developed enough that even if this isn't your kind of book, you'll find yourself rooting for the Swanns. If I had any issue at all with the book, it was that I don't know anything about the foster care system myself, and there were many times when I wasn't entirely sure what was going on. I would have appreciated a bit more insight into the system, but when I went to give the book 4 stars because of this, I couldn't do it. This is a 5-star book all the way.

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## **Tracey (Life and Literature) says**

*She made his life better -- not simpler, but more full -- and she challenged his character. It was getting to where all roads led to Tam.*

The Silent Swan was one of those books that slowly but surely snuck its way up on me. I admit that through the first section of the book, I wasn't completely taken in. There are a lot of people to meet and get your head around and I found the going a bit slow, but then just completely out of the blue I found myself getting drawn into this story and completely and utterly taken in by these characters.

Gabriel Pritz has a nice, neatly packaged life. He gets good grades at school, has a love of baseball, is incredibly popular, and the girl he likes has agreed to go to prom with him. But then his parents put in place the new rule that Gabe and his brothers will each have a night where they must cook dinner. Gabe has no idea how to cook and after a few near disasters Gabe enlists the help of Tamryn Swann. To say Tam is distant, stubborn and hard to get a handle on would be an understatement. But boy if she doesn't have her reasons.

The silent Swan was a longer read than a lot of Young Adult books, and while it is slowly paced, that allowed for time to really get to know the characters. Told from Gabe's point of view, him and Tam were where the story was mainly centred around, but Lex Keating has an amazing ability to write a story where at the end of reading it I felt like I knew each and every one of them and all of them played a special part in the story.

*A familiar caged beast snarled whenever Tamryn's name was mentioned. Time alone with her was a supremely bad idea, regardless of whether she welcomed the attention. She might 'know' testosterone, but Gabe lived with it. Ate it, slept it, wanted very badly to corner her and exercise it.*

This book would have to be one of the best that I have read that was so deep rooted in the love of family. I'm a sucker for a book that tugs at the heart strings and this tugged so hard that I was a complete goner!! Gabe

and Tam both grew so much throughout the book. I was so smitten with Gabe by the end of it but I was also completely in love with Tam. She just had that effect on everyone.

All of the cooking throughout the book had me constantly drooling. Tam was a whizz in the kitchen and I loved the bonding that was done over food.

Baseball played a pretty big part in the story and it really appealed to my love of sport. Never having had much to do with baseball in my part of the world, I loved getting glimpses into the game and a better understanding. But it was always discussed in a way that a novice like me could understand. Towards the end of the book there was a pre-game speech that was just so perfectly done. I actually went back and read it a few times.

The Silent Swan is an emotional, touch your heart, but uplifting story of love, friendships and family. For me, it was also a story of the impact that one girl can have on so many lives, and a boy who is willing to do whatever it takes for his girl.

*Toast. Lightly burned, heavily buttered, drizzled with honey. The girl was owned.*

4.5/5 Stars.

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### **Stephan Stücklin-wightman says**

Lex Keating's riff on the lesser-known fairy tale "The Seven Swans" sets the characters in today's high school scene and gives them tempers and hormones worthy of the youthful athletes they are. I enjoyed the story for both character development and the satisfying resolution, even though I found it hard to identify with both the setting and the tempers most characters display.

Keating's writing pops and fizzes to match the characters and kept me reading well past my bedtime. I enjoyed not being told everything, but after staring at the screen for hours (I read a PDF ARC, free, no strings attached), elliptical references to past events sometimes were a little much. Not getting it doesn't hurt the plot, though, and I'm sure I'd do better on a second reading and enjoy discovering the added depth that gives the novel.

The plot doesn't quite follow the fairy tale, but closely enough to make it clear where the tale's heading. Keating throws her characters more than a few curve balls, and generally (after they've said "Gah!" and called a close relative a moron) even the minor characters develop and grow through the course of events. Food lovers get lots of cooking, romance lovers get romantic tension (with tissues), and sports lovers get baseball - what's not to like? Why only 4 stars?

Ratings are personal, and that's true in my case. The characters were a bit too agitated for me to identify, my high school experience was vastly different, and baseball's really not my thing (it speaks to Keating's ability that I still burned midnight oil on this book with those three strikes against it). I have some minor detractions: I would have wished for more sounds and smells of the Low Country, for one calmer, less awkward character (some respite for my poor phlegmatic heart), and for a more sparing use of "Gah!"

But would I recommend it? Gah! Moron. Of. Course. I. Would.

P.S. For typo fiends: I'd estimate no more than a dozen in the ARC, which will still see editing before the print run. Read without worries.

## **J.L. Mbewe says**

This book is going to be a HARD one to review for me. I hated it, I loved it. It's a contemporary young adult with a literary feel.

Gabe is a high school jock who has everything he needs and everything he thinks he needs until he meets Tam who is the exact opposite. No money, no friends, and a broken family. At least, that's what it looks like from the outside looking in.

First off, I could not relate to a hormone raging teenage boy who was the "king" of his school. So at first, he did not have my sympathies. But it was interesting to see the story told from his perspective. That said, it was great to see him change his "Bottom feeders did not mix with student council" mentality. This was a story of a rite of passage for this boy, yet it was the "Swans" story as well since this book is a modern retelling of the Grimm's fairy tale: The Six Swans.

Second, I did not always get the baseball slang or pop cultural references. There were so many brothers and characters that I had a hard time keeping up with who was who in the beginning. And for one who doesn't know a thing about cooking, but could describe in detail what kind of seasonings, spices, or ingredients were in the food, was a little hard to believe.

Despite my hang-ups, the story swept me away. It triggered anger, tears, laughter. I lived it. And when I got to the end, amazing! How the author wove the story together, the culture, the fairy tales, and all the little seeds coming to fruition at the end. Nice.

Highly recommended! Although, I do not like to read contemporary stories, especially ones set in high school, I will check out the next book in the series when it is available.

\*I received an ARC for an honest review

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## **Amber says**

The Silent Swan by Lex Keating is a heart-wrenching, all-consuming story of purpose from inconvenience, selflessness from selfishness, and love from disregard. This story is one that immediately took hold of my heart and never let go. I was swept away into a world of nearsightedness and privilege that slowly transformed into one of opportunity and passion. It will take me a while to even begin to scratch the surface of the full impact of this story on my own heart and life. I feel like a veiled layer of naivety and ignorance has been lifted from my eyes and heart. I hope that it stays down and takes others with it.

The main characters Gabe and Tam are ones that you may not like at first, but you will inexplicably want to know more about them. They don't just pull you into the story; they bring the story to life in a very palatable way. While it's Gabe's perspective that the story is told from, this doesn't make it any less inviting or meaningful. In fact, his voice is what makes it wholly real and enticing to find out what happens next.

I loved watching Gabe grapple with the complications caused by the intrusion of Tam into his pristine and mapped out existence. It was delightful to watch as his eyes refocused from being solely on him to finally seeing those around him. What little time and effort it truly takes to look past our own nose and capture the

drama that surrounds us. What we hold as important may not be worth anything in the light of those who are truly deserving of our time and effort. I hope that each of us will soften our hearts and dare to look around for those who are in need of friendship or support. We can't expect to become who we are meant to be if we zip up our lives into a nice, neat package not allowing anyone to touch us. We must allow our hearts to be vulnerable and open our arms to those who are hurting. The human race is at its best when it is vulnerable, self-sacrificing, and authentic.

The Silent Swan is not a story to be taken lightly. It is a story that has teeth that will sink into the life vein of your heart. What you think you know will be turned on its head, and what you don't know will become an intoxicating fragrance that will be hungrily breathed in by all of your senses. Don't doubt your heart during this journey. Listen to its wisdom. Cling to its yearnings. Walk by its light. I was enthralled by this delectable work of art that highlights the passion and determination of the human spirit at its best. Lex Keating has such an inspiring and mesmerizing talent that I recommend this story to those who aren't afraid to be challenged and desire to see the world with their eyes wide open.

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## Carrie says

Tam wants to hold her family together, but after the death of her parents, she and her brothers are scattered into a deeply flawed foster care system. She meets Gabe Pritz at school and begins giving him cooking lessons in exchange for math tutoring. Gabe is charming, and seems to have a golden life; Tam is withdrawn, concentrating only on her family and the future. The two seemingly could not be more different, but they find more in common than they expect.

I almost loved this book. Halfway through this book I loved this book. Then I realized I was only halfway through. The main problem with The Silent Swan is that it is much too long. It is bowed down under excess characters whose motivations are poorly explained and descriptions of things that do not matter.

Point blank, if you take the core of this book, you have a good story, interesting characters and strong writing. But you have to WORK to get to the core of the story. There is so much going on here that at times it's like you don't know if you're still in the same book.

The fights between Gabe and his brothers were especially disturbing to me. Well beyond the rowdiness expected amongst a crowd of siblings, they are violent well beyond the point of excess, but treated as all in good fun. That seems like a good metaphor for the entire book. Things that were almost normal were taken to the point of excess. Rather than describing Tam's new apartment, the author spends CHAPTERS detailing the paint in each room and giving each and every detail a deeper meaning. Having said that, however, it was never actually made clear what each room was meant to be. There is a weird mix of excessive detail and a lack of clarity that I struggled with.

You root for the characters, but with the exception of Tam, you never understand anyone's motivation for their actions, which is a bit bizarre. Why does Mrs. Pritz act like she does? Why does Kerry do what she does? There's never any explanation given for that and it makes parts of the book seem deeply unnecessary. We needed a villain, so Keating gives us a villain in Kerry, but with no explanation for Kerry's behavior, it becomes a side plot that distracts from the main point.

I am torn on whether this book deserves a 2.5 or a 3 – because at one point it would have been a 3.5, but at one point it changed from “I can't wait to finish this book!” to “I hope this book is almost over”, and clearly, that's a problem.

Keating has a lot of potential – and the book isn't bad – if it was, I would have simply put it down and walked away. There's a need for a strong editor here, and potential for the future from the author.  
Disclaimer: I received a free copy of this book for review.

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### **Mlpmom (Book Reviewer) says**

There were quite a few great reviews for this one already when I first saw the ARC of this, which is why I took the chance and requested it.

I would love to say that I was able to jump right into this one and love it from the very beginning but that sadly just wasn't the case.

The writing was a bit all over the place, it jumped around and the MC never really seemed to form coherent thoughts. It jumped around a lot and I never quite felt like I had a grasp on exactly what was going on. Was this the cause of being suck inside the head of an adolescent teenage boy? Possibly. Maybe in reality, it was actually very realistic. I have no clue. Either way, it took me awhile to get use to the writing style and finally feel like I really understood Gabe and his seemingly, easily distracted thought processes. I think it didn't help that we sort of jumped into his life and all the chaos that ensued from having four very active and equally crazy, brothers under one roof.

Was there a great story under all the maddening chaos? Absolutely. In fact Tam and her home life (or lack thereof) was very endearing. She was aloof and distant and very hard to like but under all that roughness was a girl very much wanting to be loved and wanting to take care of her brothers. In essence, there was a lot under that gruff exterior that just had to be polished up so it could shine.

I would love to say I fell in love with Gabe but I never did quite connect with him the way I was hoping that I would but that wasn't necessarily a bad thing. He was a good character and he did grow a lot throughout the story, which is always a plus in my book. And he did do a world of good for Tam in the end. He never gave up on her even when she wasn't easy to put up with and I have to give the boy props for that. I just wish this would have been a little easier to follow and comprehend at times. I never was able to fall into the story and get lost but I did enjoy the way that it picked up at the end and all of the characters growth throughout the story.

Overall this was a sweet story about two people coming together and helping one another in the only way they know how. Changing for the better and letting others end and knowing when to ask for help and letting others help you as well as helping them.

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### **Vanya D. says**

*NOTE: I received the eARC via Netgalley in exchange for an honest review.*

This novel rendered me speechless. Good news? I don't feel depressed that it's over. It left so many incredibly deep feelings inside of me, that I can only say I'm grateful for the journey.

Also, I had no idea it was a retelling of a fairy tale until the very end. In this case, it was a good thing, because I couldn't go on comparing the stories at all.

There's a lot that needs to be addressed about The Silent Swan. Mainly because it was just incredibly well written, the characters were developed in a realistic way, with depth and color, and I just fell in love with everyone (minus Kerry or however her name was spelt).

To be honest, I don't know where to begin. I guess I'll talk about the story first, then stop at the characters. It's going to be difficult though, so bear with me.

This must be the only novel where the lead characters don't even kiss. Don't get disappointed though, the pressure and passion between them is buzzing throughout the book in a way that can't be ignored. I actually loved this development. You'd ask why. Well, have you ever tried to express your feelings without the ease of a kiss? Or an intimate touch? Try it and let's see how successful you'd be. Gabriel and Tam though... these two rocked the boat. Not a kiss, just a fleeting touch from time to time, but boy was there love. And this love grew stronger with each page, until it all climaxed in the final chapter. I just can't effectively describe the feeling of pure euphoria this romance left in me. It was pure and innocent and just so touching! \*sigh, swoon, fall\*

Something else I rarely see in books is the real, tangible presence of Gabe's parents. Arnold and (I believe it was) Amelia (or close to that) Pritz had five sons, one of them adopted. Those boys could make any parent proud. They were respectful of their parents most of the time, and of each other. Sure they had their brotherly 'fights', but that's only natural. I was amazed at the way Arnold disciplined his sons, how he demanded honor was shown to his wife at all times, how he set rules and everyone obeyed out of sheer respect. It was truly amazing, in a loving kind of way. I simply adored that family, the Pritzes. They were well liked in the community, had connections and were respected.

Then there was Tam Swann's family. Her parents were no longer alive, and she and her brothers (seven I believe) were 'taken care of' by the foster care system. There were lots of legal terms that I didn't understand about each of the Swann's cases, but none of them hindered the story. And those boys... they were sweethearts. Deprived of a real family, they all jumped foster homes, in hopes that perhaps someday they'd be together. All of them. They seemed to only feel safe with their sister, who fought with everything she had to get to see them often. To be able to hug them, comfort them. My heart was constantly in need for stitches, because the pain those kids went through tore it to pieces time and time again.

There was lots of baseball in this book. If I'm not wrong, at least ten games were featured - some in full, others partially. And let me tell you, I don't know anything about baseball, but I learned a lot. And I actually think I may get to like it. At least I saw how a sport can teach discipline, order, passion, love, control... It was simply unexplainable and I'm in complete admiration of this author.

Now let's talk characters.

I'm starting off with Gabe, who was not a favorite of mine in the beginning. He was cocky and full of himself. He didn't appreciate any of the things he had - and he had a lot. He took everything for granted - his family, his friends, his carefree life, the girls that circulated him... But then things changed when Tam Swann entered his life. She didn't give a crap about Gabe, and he was definitely NOT used to that sort of treatment. She was bold, honest, responsible. And she could cook - which proved to be very important. Gabriel's mom was promoted to a position which required more work at work and less work at home. Which left all five sons to cook dinner during the week. So, Gabe, with his cockiness and ego, proposed Tam a deal - she'd teach him to cook, he'd tutor her in math. And that's basically how it began between them.

But the beginning had nothing to do with the end. Because by the end, there was nothing left of the Gabe we

met on page one. He'd grown so much with every turn this story took, that he wasn't easy to recognize. He started realizing that his view of the world isn't exactly accurate. He used to think that he ruled the world - what with being captain of the baseball team and a rising star and all; that being beautiful automatically meant you were good within (talking about his girlfriend Kerry); that his mom was perfect in everything; that he didn't need anyone outside his circle of people. Well, by the end of the story, he'd had his perspective changed. He realized that most of the time he had been wrong in his decisions, and had to amend his ways and attitude.

One thing that didn't change in him though was the respect he felt for whoever girl he was wooing at the moment. This is true with Kerry and with Tam too. No matter how much he wanted to kiss or touch the girl, he was too afraid that he'd cross a boundary he wasn't allowed near. At one point Kerry even called him a prude, but that only made me like him more. Because he wasn't the kind of guy who'd push a girl to sleep with him, because he wanted it. He was the kind of guy who'd keep a tissue in his pocket, so he'd keep his hands occupied. I just wish those kinds of guys weren't just fictional. Our world has a great need of them.

And then there's Tamryn, Tam for short. She was a puzzle of a thousand pieces and since we followed Gabe's thoughts not hers, it was both fascinating and impossibly difficult to figure her out. One thing that was obvious from the very beginning though was her love for her family. Not only what was left of it, but also her parents. To her, their deaths didn't mean they had to be forgotten. She constantly tried to keep them alive, not only in her mind, but also in her brothers'. The youngest ones barely remembered their father, but Tam made it her purpose to have them remember. She taught them the family song, their father's moves in baseball and lots of other things that the foster parents resented (which I didn't understand at all!)

Tam was hardworking, concentrated on her goals, whatever they were. She was honest, giving, beautiful in every meaning of the word. Her heart was breathtaking. Her mind was exquisite. I just can't put into words how special she truly was. And I saw her heart breaking every time she pushed Gabe away. I just felt for this girl, you know? Like she was a close friend that I personally know.

In conclusion I can only say that the journey The Silent Swan put me through was worth every minute of my time. It had euphoric highs and lows that had me tearful. I can say that reading it has made me realize that beauty is hidden in the most unexpected places.

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## **Sandra says**

If you read any YA novel this year, make it this one. Absolutely amazing. Rarely have I seen such character growth and love and loyalty towards family as in this book.

Gabriel (Gabe) Pritz initially comes across as somewhat of a douche. He's king of the school, captain of the baseball team, planning his prom date. Great family, well off, great life. All of it taken for granted. There is not an ounce of gratitude that came across from this guy when I first started reading. The only thorn in his side is Tam Swann, foster kid, who recently started at his school. She's easily ignored, though, and he pretty much writes her off as difficult and not worth getting to know.

Impressively, the author also gives him a brain and a good set of morals, painting him as a gentleman when it comes to his girlfriend Kerry, always worried that he might go too far, sweating when her parents are near and busy making a good impression. This is a horny teenage boy, but he is also very careful in his affections towards Kerry. I also immediately liked Gabe's easy dynamics with his brothers, both older and younger. It felt natural and, despite the ribbing and mock-fighting, very loving.

When his mother announces to Gabe and his brothers that they will need to pitch in with cooking dinner (each of them once a week), Gabe is outraged. He also sucks at cooking and their early dinners are mostly a huge mess. Then Gabe happens to hear about Tam's excellent cooking skills and offers her a deal - she helps him with the dinner prep and he helps her with her math grade.

From there, the plot slowly unravels as Gabe realizes not all is as it seems and that his view of the world was seriously skewed. He learns that his mother is not as perfect as he thought, and that his father has some great insights that Gabe still needs to learn. I was impressed with the description of the relationship between Gabe's parents, and their handling of their children, demanding respect but doling it out as well.

The amount of character growth in this novel was absolutely astounding. As Gabe gets closer to Tam and sees behind the mask, sees the obstacles thrown in her way and the pain she has had to live with, his whole attitude changes and he starts to become her greatest champion. He exhibited a maturity that is unusual for a teenage boy in YA books, and I really found myself rooting for his characters, laughing and crying with him. As he struggles with the implications of Tam's influence in his life and begins to see the big picture, the transformation of this character is breathtaking.

The plot moves at a good pace, and while the entire book is told from Gabe's POV, we get sufficient insights into the other characters' motivations and actions.

The book pits privilege against poverty, selfishness of one girl against selflessness of another, and truth against lies. It's asking Gabe to see his friends for who they are and see that what he thought was truth might be a falsehood after all. It's demanding your attention from start to finish.

It's deep, it's heartbreaking, it's uplifting.

The writing flows naturally, the prose is perfectly fitted to the mind of a teenage baseball star, and the authentic tenor of the story gives the reader no choice but to be drawn in completely, waiting with bated breath for the next epiphany, the next step forward, the next turn in the plot.

The only thing that felt just a little bit unauthentic was the perfection of Tam Swann. Who could do anything and everything. Who was the glue that held her and her brothers together, who fought tooth and nail for what was right and who never wavered from her course, not even when temptation came knocking. And while Tam might have been just a little too perfect, I reminded myself that she was seen through the eyes of Gabe, who is possibly a little bit biased. As such, I was okay with her portrayal.

I read a lot of books. It's quite rare that one touches me so deeply such as this one, and remains with me long after I've closed my Nook.

*I stumbled over this on Netgalley and feel blessed to have been given the opportunity by the publisher to read this outstanding book. While I didn't promise a positive review, this one gets all the stars.*

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## **Alistair Mcneer says**

I've read a lot of books. Good books, bad books, and an absolute heap of mediocre books. Honestly the really good books are hard to find. Stories that have intriguing and realistic characters coupled with a plot full of interesting settings and situations, all held together with an excellent writing voice. A rare and particular recipe that is difficult to pull off and won't please everyone.

The Silent Swan is one of these good books. The writing is tight, the pacing is well done, the story

compelling, and best of all, it possesses an incredibly diverse and intriguing cast of characters. I loved each and every one of Gabe's brothers as if they were one of my own and rooted for Tam's more and more as the story progressed. The brilliance and accuracy of the glimpse allowed into Gabe's mind through the story often left me feeling the same emotions as he was, whether that emotion was attraction and interest or rage and chivalry. All of these elements were woven together into a beautiful tale of fighting for one's family.

I love this story. Yes, I'll happily admit that as a young man in his early 20's. It has all of the trappings and substance of an excellent story with a delightfully flavorful dose of brotherhood. I highly recommend this book and am overjoyed that y'all get the chance to share in this experience with me.

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