



A Circle of Souls

Preetham Grandhi

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The sleepy town of Newbury, Connecticut, is shocked when a little girl is found brutally murdered. The town's top detective, perplexed by a complete lack of leads, calls in FBI agent Leia Bines, an expert in cases involving children.

Meanwhile, Dr. Peter Gram, a psychiatrist at Newbury's hospital, searches desperately for the cause of seven-year-old Naya Hastings's devastating nightmares. Afraid that she might hurt herself in the midst of a torturous episode, Naya's parents have turned to the bright young doctor as their only hope.

The situations confronting Leia and Peter converge when Naya begins drawing chilling images of murder after being bombarded by the disturbing images in her dreams. Amazingly, her sketches are the only clues to the crime that has panicked Newbury residents. Against her better judgment, Leia explores the clues in Naya's crude drawings, only to set off an alarming chain of events.

In this stunning psychological thriller, innocence gives way to evil, and trust lies forgotten in a web of deceit, fear, and murder.

A Circle of Souls Details

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From Reader Review A Circle of Souls for online ebook

Katie(babs) says

This is a murder mystery that has a slight touch of the supernatural that also deals with past lives. Preetham makes sure that the plot is not bogged down with too much mention of spiritualism, but more importantly the quest to find a killer who has targeted the most vulnerable of victim- children.

A Circle of Souls would be of interest to those readers who enjoy crime dramas. Keep in mind though the murder deals with Janet, a nine year old girl, who because she was curious, was killed by an individual who thinks a higher being is making him kill, or sacrifice, in order to reach enlightenment. Called in on the case is FBI agent Leia Bines who works in a special unit dedicated to crimes against children. She may be the only hope in cracking this case and figure out why the small town of Newbury, Connecticut has been targeted by a possible serial killer.

Around the same time of the murder, Dr. Peter Gram, who works at Newbury General and Pediatric hospital has a very interesting patient. Seven-year old Naya Hastings has been brought to the emergency room after her parents found a sleepwalking Naya standing on the second-floor balcony where she was trying to climb over it. Lately Naya has been having strange dreams and Dr. Gram recommends Naya be committed for a few days where he can monitor her brain and figure out why she is having these dreams that may make her harm herself.

As Gram tries to diagnose Naya, she continues to have disturbing nightmares of a little girl named Janet who wants Naya to help her. Naya begins to draw pictures of her interactions with her dream friend Janet, and Gram comes to the conclusion that something bigger is at play. And when Gram hears about the murder of Janet, he begins to put the pieces together and soon is helping Leia with the case before the killer can strike again.

I was glued to the pages of A Circle of Souls and had no clue who the killer was. Some of the blurbs I have read about this book compare Preetham's writing to Hitchcock and I can certainly see the comparisons. There are twists and turns that bring in a supernatural element, especially in regards to Gram that is surprising. Gram may seem to be more of a secondary character in this all, but he becomes a very important focal point, even more so than Naya.

Preetham does have a skill at writing child characters and I enjoyed Naya and the way she looked at things and her interactions with Gram and that of her the poor murdered Janet. The only graphic scenes are in the beginning when Janet's body is found.

If you like psychological thrillers, A Circle of Souls really excels in this aspect.

Bridget says

A little girl has fallen victim to a sadistic maniac who takes her life. Leia Bines is the agent called in to help solve this brutal murder. She's hoping with all her might that this case will turn out different than the last one.

Dr. Gram has been called on to help a little girl, Naya, who may or may not be suicidal. Naya's parents are worried for her safety and want the best medical care possible for their child.

Naya and her drawing pad may be the only link to that can bring this tyrant to justice. Will they be able to stop catch this creep before it's too late or will this grizzly evil roam free forever?

Every once in a while, I am caught totally off guard by an author. I figured that *A Circle of Souls* would be a good book based on the synopsis and some reviews that I have read. I must admit that I was highly impressed with Preetham's writing and story telling talent. Don't get me wrong, I knew by the information available that this book would have the potential to fly off the shelves. I did not expect to become a rabid Preetham Grandhi fan. He has captured this reader and I will more than likely be a fan for life. If you haven't read this book, you should pick it now so you don't miss out on this creative heart-pumping thriller.

Shellie (Layers of Thought) says

It was very exciting for me when I received a personally signed copy of *A Circle of Souls* from the author several weeks ago.

Mini Synopsis:

There's a serial killer on the loose, in this quiet upper middle class suburb, and he has stumbled upon a little girl. His killings are ritualized and have a psychological connection from his past and an exotic culture. The plot is further embellished by the main characters, a kind child psychiatrist with a fear of commitment, a gorgeous yet slightly damaged FBI agent, and an East Indian girl with a paranormal gift that is linked to her family and cultural background.

A special quote from the novel:

"Sometimes there are forces beyond our comprehension that we may have to accept without questioning their origins."

What I thought about the novel:

I adore thrillers with a medical/psychological flavor in the story line. This book had just enough to interest me and medical references were backed up with explanations making them accessible. It also had cultural interest, where part of this story is rooted in the ancient beliefs of the East Indian culture. I would have loved to see more.

The characters were very likable (except for the bad guy.) There is some gore, but just enough to give you a taste of the violence that has occurred. The language is clean and the writing is easy to follow and flows easily.

Summary:

I truly enjoyed *A Circle of Souls*. It was like reading an American thriller, but with a touch of the exotic - just a hint of curry and spice - all blending smoothly into a story that I did not want to finish but couldn't put down. Very appetizing! I'm hoping for a sequel?

Petra says

This review is going to be all over the place. This book is rather uneven.

To start, the story is intriguing. There's a touch of mysticism that requires a sense of belief of another

dimension of our souls, which lends to a inter-connectivity between characters, their pasts and aiding each other from beyond. Blend that with the murder of a child and the story is compelling. It was enough to keep me wanting to read and find out where this story ends.

However, there were scenes that were stilted, overly detailed in descriptions of routines & practices, characters weren't explored well, situations just ended (and therefore could have been excluded). Why have a budding romance throughout when the two characters just part at the end of the case with a finality that left the entire "romance" unexplored, unmentioned between the 2 and unnecessary to the book? Why make a good doctor (presumably a smart man) fall to pieces over having to pay back a debt? Yeah, I know why; he had a role to play but it seemed sudden and unnatural.

All in all, an intriguing story that will pull you through the book but with obvious flaws...leaving this story in the realms of "I liked it but....".

Reagan says

Okay, I'll admit it. I wasn't sure that I was going to like this book and kind of dreaded starting it.

I am very excited to say that I was absolutely surprised with this book. I just could not put it down!

The characters were easy to relate to and it's written extremely well. Fast paced and captivating. And that's just the tip of the literary iceberg. The mystery is what really makes this book special. While the exposition of the story is a little non existent - I didn't find myself missing it (odd - I know). The medical and legal parts of the book were spot on - and if they weren't, I couldn't tell!

If I absolutely had to pick something that I didn't like or could have done with out - I'd say the romance part, even though it is extremely minimal. And all the references to the FBI Agent's legs and figure - it made the very likable characters seem sleazy and shallow.

But really - even if you don't think this is your 'type' of book, you need to read it. I think it's for everyone who loves a good mystery! I gave it to my dad and he read it on the way back today. Mom's got dibs!

Vickie says

I received a message on Goodreads from the author, if I would like to read and review his book. I jumped on the chance as it is in the genre I take pleasure in reading, mystery-thriller. I was also pleased that this promised a hint of paranormal. This book delivered in aces.

This is an amazingly fast book to read. The story moves along at a good clip, divided between the doctor's story, the investigators', the killer, the children. Having Lady K in my life, I had a hard time reading the sections dealing with the abduction and murder of 7 year old girl, but Grandhi handles it well and wasn't superfluously awful in detail.

The author is a psychiatrist working with young children and it shows in the writing. He seems more comfortable writing the scenes with Dr Peter Gram. I could feel the emotions Gram went through: warmth

and concern working with Naya, aggravation with the insurance pre-authorization agents, disconcerted as he comprehended the metaphysical aspects of the investigation.

I stayed up late several nights to read "just one more page..one more chapter". The book affected my dreams the night I stopped reading after a chapter dealing with the killer. I made sure I stopped after a Dr Gram chapter after that.

Four dream affecting beans....

Natalie says

Preetham Grandhi's debut novel *A Circle of Souls* begins with the mysterious disappearance of young Janet Troy in the small town of Newbury, Connecticut. When her body is found, brutally mutilated, FBI agent Leia Bines, an expert in cases involving children, is called in.

Meanwhile, psychiatrist Dr. Peter Gram searches for the reason behind the devastating nightmares of seven year-old Naya Hastings. Nightmares that seem to be connected to a murder she couldn't possibly know about. As Naya begins to draw chillingly accurate pictures of the crime, Leia and Peter meet, both desperate to solve the case before another child is taken.

I was pleasantly surprised by *A Circle of Souls*. I received this book from the author for review purposes, and wasn't expecting it, as a debut novel, to be anything great. I'm happy to say that *A Circle of Souls* was full of suspense and interesting, well-developed characters. It was a very entertaining psychological thriller, with a wonderful addition of Indian culture which made the story all the more appealing. Though this book is a rather new addition to the world, I expect it will be extremely popular in a few months once word gets out. I would recommend *A Circle of Souls* for those interested in psychology, crime novels, or for those looking for an overall thrilling read.

Marvin says

A first-reads win. Three and a half stars

A Circle of Souls is best described as a supernatural thriller. It is a pretty good psychological suspense novel dealing with the murder of a child by a ritual killer. At the same time, a young girl is admitted to a children psychiatric center and may have the knowledge from her dreams to solve this crime. The strength of this novel lies in the interaction between child and her psychiatrist. The author, Preetham Grandhi, is a psychiatrist specializing in children and adolescent behavior and his knowledge of this is what makes this story come alive. Having worked in psychiatric facilities, I can attest to the authenticity of these scenes. However, once away from that setting Grandhi is not on solid ground. His action scenes are awkward and the secondary characters such as the police and detectives seem one dimensional. Yet he has an imaginative story and when the hospital scenes are on center stage, the book sizzles. I also like the addition of Indian mythology and metaphysics within the storyline. Overall, it is a solid debut novel and an entertaining supernatural suspense tale.

Hanife says

Bu yorum ayn? zamanda Romancekolikte yay?nlanm??t?r.

Kitap de?i?ik bir konuya sahipti. Bu tür - gerilim, cinayet - romanlar? okumaya al???k biri olmad???mdan kimi zaman beni etkileyen unsurlar oldu. Katilin ufak bir k?z? yakalay?p kurban etmesi gibi. ?nsan ister istemez gerçek hayatta böyle ?eyler oluyor, küçük çocuklar kaç?r?l?p öldürülüyor diye dü?ünmeden edemiyor. Okurken anlad?m ki ben gere?inden fazla empati kurmu?um karakterle :) Ayr?ca ufakta olsa bir reenkarnasyon konusu i?lenmi?.

Hikayemize gelirsek Newbury ad?nda sessiz sakin küçük bir üniversite kasabas?nda 10 ya??nda ki Janet'in yanl?? zamanda yanl?? yerde olma tahlisizli?iyle bir katil taraf?ndan öldürülmesiyle ba?l?yor. Ölümünden 9 gün sonra bir arazide cesedinin parçalar? bulunuyor. Eklemlerinden kesilip parçaya ayr?lm?? ve arazinin dört bir yan?na gömülmü? parçalar. Cinayet çözülmeye çal???l?rken, kasabada ki pediatri hastanesine yat?r?lan 7 ya??nda Naya cinayetin çözülmeye yarayacak rüyalar görüyor ve bunlar? detayl? bir ?ekilde çizebiliyordur. Doktor Peter'a bu rüyalar? Janet'in iste?i üzerine anlatmas?yla gizem çözülmeye ba?lam??t?r ama katilinde Naya'dan haberi vard?r ve y?llard?r yakalanmadan özgürce ya?am??ken bu ufakl???n özgürlü?üne son vermesine izin vermeye niyetli de?ildir.

Elizabeth Neas says

In my opinion Dr. Grandhi should keep his day job
(as a pediatric and adolescent psychiatrist
- as Chief of Service for House 5 at Bronx Children's Psychiatric Hospital-
and in private practice in Westchester County, NY)
and then use every spare moment on nights and weekends putting pen to paper!
A Circle of Souls, grabbed me on the first page,
and held on to the very end.
Before now, I had never read a murder with a paranormal twist,
but you can be assured, that I'll now be reading more of this particular genre.

On several occasions, I had just about convinced myself,
that I had figured out "who done it", and then after reading a few more chapters, I'd have another suspect to
add to my list.

This may sound strange, as this story is about a gruesome crime
(and the sick and complex mind of a killer),
but I found it to be "touching".
Dr. Grandhi has a gentle, simple, and easy to read style of writing
AND
he was able to tell a tale of horror
without the use of foul language or explicit gratuitous sexual content.
He used his medical expertise and Indian background,
to weave a story of suspense, mental illness,
and the idea of a connection

that some [of the living:], seem to have with the dead.

Teri says

A Circle Of Souls by Preetham Grandhi

This riveting debut novel by Mr. Grandhi is a fascinating psychological thriller that takes place in Newbury, Connecticut. The town is shocked by the murder of ten year old Janet Troy, who disappeared after school. When Dr. Peter Gram, young Psychiatrist Fellow, is intrigued with 7 year old Naya Hastings' dreams of murder and her drawings of Janet, he helps FBI special children's Agent, Leia Bines in solving the case. Peter is also mystified as to why Naya has sleepwalking episodes where she has conversations with Janet while on the adolescent psychiatric unit of the hospital. A long ago murder that occurred in the same area and in the same way is baffling police, causing Leia and Peter to rush to find the killer before they strike again.

Forever Friends Rating 5 Stars by Teri
Until Next Time, See You Around The Book Nook.

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Lindsay says

A Circle of Souls is a psychological thriller about a small girl who is brutally murdered in a small town in CT. Agent Leia Bines is put on the case as the leading expert in cases regarding children, but unfortunately law enforcement has very little to go on. Meanwhile, Dr. Peter Gram, a psychologist working in the pediatric unit meets a new patient named Naya, a seven year old girl who suffers from nightmares. It quickly becomes apparent that Naya is having more than just nightmares, and Peter decides that her problem is beyond medical. Naya appears to be communicating with the murdered girl when she is sleeping and then shares her "dreams" with Peter afterward. Peter shares this information with Agent Bines, who is skeptical about following leads from a seven year old being seen by a psychologist. However, after checking out the information provided by Naya, a series of events unfold that make it nearly impossible to put the book down.

One of my favorite aspects of this book was the characters, and how the author brought them to life. Peter, the male lead of the story, is introduced to the reader at a time when he's suffering from a cold. How often do you come across a book where the characters are suffering from a head cold? It seems trivial in context with the story, but it helps to bring a level of normality and lifelikeness to the story which is uncommon in writing. I realize many writers bring medical conditions into their writing, but normally they are serious diseases, while typically the insignificant conditions are overlooked. I also liked how lifelike the environments of the story were. It is obvious that Grandhi has knowledge of medicine and psychology, and this shows in the quality of descriptions of certain settings in the book, such as the hospital and psych unit.

Another feature that I loved about this book was the shift between points of view. The book's prologue drops you right into the shoes of the killer, giving you immediate insight into the mind of the monster. You then shift to the little girl, Janet, who is the unfortunate victim of the murderer. From there on out, you experience the story progression through a variety of characters, including Dr. Gram, Agent Bines, and Naya. Through the telling of each of their side of the story, the path to discovering the killer is uncovered. By frequently alternating narrators (chapters are typically very short- only a couple of pages long), the story gains momentum and never allows the reader to grow bored with any aspect of the story.

It was refreshing to come across a story where although romance was alluded to, it never took hold. In many stories these days, the lead characters end up together at the end of the book. In the case of this book, Agent Bines and Peter seemed to be hitting it off, and even seemed to share an attraction. Based on previous experience with books and movies, I was anticipating that they would end up together in the end. I was pleasantly surprised when Leia returned home, with nothing more than flirting ever occurring. I can't even tell you how great it was to read a book where I couldn't predict the outcome! Predictability is my pet peeve when reading, and can make a book incredibly boring. I promise you this- this book is anything but boring!

I couldn't put this book down once I started reading it! From the outset, you are intrigued by how all of the events taking place tie into the brutal murder of the little girl. As events unfold, one can't help but be impressed by how the author ties all of the seemingly unrelated characters into the situation. A variety of lore and supernatural elements create a mysterious vibe which support the story in a way that doesn't seem cheesy or completely out in left field. It was interesting to see how a man of medicine responded to the numerous spiritual implications that his case set forth, and I think that his open-mindedness was very forward thinking of Grandhi. Many people perceive scientists as incapable of accepting "supernatural phenomena," but it is rarely the case. Science is completely open to the idea of natural and supernatural forces in our world, and this book does a great job of representing that fact.

One thing that I want to point out is that although the murder is described as "brutal", the book is in no way graphic. Aside from a relatively vague description of the body, there is no grisly detail about the murder itself, or the body. There's also no offensive language in the book, for those readers who find it objectionable. The writing flows well, and overall I feel the book was very well written. I would happily read another work by Preetham Grandhi in the future!

Sheila says

A Circle of Souls, by Preetham Grandhi, is an intriguing book. The story opens with the shocking murder of a small girl, then moves into the local hospital where a psychiatrist is trying to understand another girl's sleepwalking attempt at suicide. But a wonderful lightness of touch keeps the reader hopeful in spite of it all, and quickly turning the pages. The psychiatrist is a warm, engaging character; the FBI investigator likewise. Both of them are driven and devoted to their jobs. And their stories intersect when Naya makes drawings for her doctor depicting her dreams and Janet's death.

There are things in life that are hard or impossible to explain. All too often, novels introduce such things only to beat them into the ground with a call to follow the author's chosen set of religious beliefs. A Circle of Souls avoids this trap. While introducing Naya's Indian relatives and their mysterious faith, the author leaves the reader, like the characters, to wonder how all this might be made to fit in with modern America and modern science.

Intriguingly, Naya's uncle feels she'll be safer in America with her powers than in India. And oh how I'd love to read a sequel and see how that works out.

By the end of the novel, the murder is resolved. Several cultures have collided with a mixture of pain and joy. And the characters, once devoted only to work, have moved on and begun to change. The dark recesses of the human mind have been exposed, leaving the reader filled with sympathy that might once have been denied. And mysteries unknown are still hard or impossible to explain. They're just a little more real.

Cindy says

Preetham Grandhi, MD, immigrated to the United States from India to pursue a career in child and adolescent psychiatry. He currently resides in Westchester County, New York, with his family.

The sleepy town of Newbury, Connecticut, is shocked when a little girl is found brutally murdered. With the murderer on the loose, the police desperately look for any clues to lead to his identity. Meanwhile, a psychiatrist in a nearby hospital is also in a desperate search to find the cause of seven-year-old Naya Hastings' devastating nightmares. Afraid that she might hurt herself in the midst of a torturous episode, Naya's parents have turned to the bright young doctor as their only hope. When these two situations converge, they set off an alarming chain of events. In this stunning psychological thriller, innocence gives way to evil, and trust lies forgotten in a web of deceit, fear, and murder.

In this debut psychological thriller by new author, Preetham Grandhi, a seven-year-old named Naya Hastings, now in the care of Dr. Peter Gram, a psychiatrist appears to be communicating through her dreams with recently murdered, ten-year-old, Janet Troy.

But that's not all! Thirty years prior, there was another murder committed in almost the same manner and now the town of Newbury, Connecticut has something to worry about. Are the two murders connected? Do they have a serial killer in their midst?

Once Dr. Gram realizes Naya must know more about the recent murder of little Janet, in whatever unorthodox manner, he decides to try to help the FBI find the killer through Naya, who sketches images from her dreams and chillingly, are the only clues the FBI has in their search for this faceless, "bad man".

Dr. Gram and FBI agent Leia Bines, an expert in cases involving children, combine their efforts and specialties in this page-turning, gripping novel. Naya also talks to the dead girl while sleepwalking and during their conversations, Janet shares snippets of information the FBI on the case don't have, including information never brought forth to the public on the never-solved murder three decades ago, making the case even more puzzling and the story, more intriguing.

Preetham Grandhi backs up his plotting with his own medical knowledge in psychiatrics, making the story even more fascinating and believable. With each chapter broken down into time periods during days in a week, Grandhi's ever-twisting plot, descriptive prose and attention-grabbing dialogue will keep the reader engrossed as the author draws the reader deeper into the crevices of the mind of a disturbed child.

Also, Grandhi has masterfully blended the suspense of a thriller with the Federal agent assigned to the case and the psychological knowledge of the doctor assigned to the child whose parents have entrusted him with

her care.

In the end, Dr. Gram is forced to accept the many lives a soul has actually had previously and his own past lives eventually led to the person he is today, compared to the person he was in another time, another realm. This isn't easy for him to deal with at first.

As a debut novel, the author has done very well and I'm looking forward to future works. A definite must read!

Morris says

A Circle of Souls falls into the fast-read thriller category. I finished the book in just two days, basically in about 4 reading sessions. The chapters are quite small and the author is very capable of encouraging the reader to keep turning the pages.

I found the characters to be interesting, especially the psychiatrist, Peter. The author's background in psychiatry provides a captivating look into the world of childhood mental disorders, while not distracting from the plot. Peter's care for Naya during her time of distress provides a thread of hope throughout the book.

The mystery behind the killer was somewhat easy to guess about middle-way through the book. The characters saved the book, in my opinion, the mystery would not have held up with lesser characters. I did find one mistake in logic, concerning Peter's connecting Naya's drawing to a newspaper article concerning the death of Janet, that was a little hard to get past. Peter's problem solving skills were quite good, although I was a little disappointed at the lack of any real contribution from the police or FBI agent Leia Bines.

The ending provides the correct amount of closure with both the mystery and the disposition of the characters. I did feel that the fight scene near the end had a made-for-TV feel to it. The author is much more successful with suspense building and character development than action scenes. Still, as a psychological thriller, the book is a success. I do not know if Preetham Grandhi plans on writing another novel, but I hope that he does. I would read it.
