



## Bittersweet

*Kimberly Loth*

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Every Sunday Savannah Ray gets an email from her dead dad. She doesn't know how the emails work but she's finally ready to start looking for answers. To find those answers she has to go to the one place she swore she'd never set foot in after he died—Haunted Valley, the amusement park. Once there and on the hunt for answers she is distracted by the charming Dallas and falls hard for him. When the answers she finds aren't what she expected and Dallas betrays her, Savannah must make a choice—succumb to the insanity that destroyed her father or find the strength to rise above it.

## **Bittersweet Details**

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Author : Kimberly Loth

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## From Reader Review Bittersweet for online ebook

### Samantha says

**Verdict:** A story of survival and maturation of a troubled teen.

After reading the book, the blurb seems inaccurate, so I've edited it. It's not my best work and might not sounds as enticing as the original, but I hope it fits the book better:

Every Sunday Savannah Ray gets an email from her dead dad. She doesn't know how the emails work ~~but she's finally ready to start looking for answers and she doesn't mind either as she's not ready to let go.~~ To find those answers **Now that her mum is fed up of her rebellious behaviour**, she has to go to the one place she swore she'd never set foot in after he died—Haunted Valley, the amusement park. Once there and ~~on the hunt for answers~~ **bullied by co-workers & customers**, she is distracted by the charming Dallas and falls hard for him. ~~When the answers she finds aren't what she expected and Dallas betrays her, Savannah must make a choice—succumb to the insanity that destroyed her father or find the strength to rise above it. But Savannah and Dallas both hold secrets that threaten their new relationship. Will Haunted Valley help her move on, or will it destroy her from the inside out?~~

The cover is also perplexing because Savannah has a shaven head, pierced eyebrow, and wears normal clothes. Seeing as I decide whether or not to request a review copy based on the cover and blurb, I feel mislead. I've tried to ignore this when writing the rest of my review.

Savannah was a difficult character to like. She starts off struggling with her dad's passing. While I felt sorry for her, I found her attitude only made things worse. At the same time, I could feel her pain. She really does have it bad. Her dad is dead, her best friend has betrayed her, her mum is nasty, some of her colleagues hate her, and even the season ticket holders are out to get her.

What I really like about this book is that Savannah grows as a character. A third of the way in, I warmed up to her. Her new best friend, Julia, makes Savannah's life bearable. Designated love interest, Dallas, lifts some of the grief from her shoulders and allows her to open up. Through her encounters with them, she shares more of her story as she starts to mature.

I didn't like how a lot of back-story was purposefully withheld yet discussed in front of me. For example, she shows another character her tattoo but we don't get a description of it. We see his reaction, but it's hard to know what it means without seeing the tattoo. Other sections discuss how what her best friend did was terrible, and if it was 'that incident' that went too far, and so many other vague, deictic references. I felt left out at times. I wanted something solid and specific to latch onto. However, if we knew all the details, there wouldn't be much point in reading the book so I'm still in two minds about it.

We spend a bit too much time at the park learning Savannah's job with her. There's a lot of detail on all the rides and how they're run, so at times I felt I prepared enough to step in for Savannah if she fancied a quick break. I found some of it interesting, but perhaps there was a bit too much detail surrounding the mundane.

After reading the last few chapters and the author note I was almost in tears. The message is powerful, and one that I think should reach more teens. The secondary message is conflicting though. If honesty solves a lot of the issues or at least allows them to heal, then a decision a few pages towards the end is questionable.

I think this book is worth reading just to see how Savannah grows as a character. She becomes a strong individual with a very honest and difficult message to share. I respect the author a lot for writing a book like this.

Source: NetGalley.com  
Blog: ScookieReviews

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## Frannie Pan says

Review @ In Clouds of Pages/Una lettrice tra le nuvole.

Please forgive me if I'll sound bitter or mean, I'll try to do my best not to be so despite this book was a huge disappointment for me.

I found it on NetGalley, the plot intrigued me immensely.

Savannah's dad took his life two years ago on a rollercoaster ride and since that moment she's stayed away from something they both loved: amusement parks. When the summer of her 18th birthday comes, she still feels nothing, her dad left her empty as a shell. So her mother decides to send her to work at her uncle's amusement park, hoping she'll learn about responsibilities and duty.

But Savannah doesn't want anything to do with her dad's brother and doesn't care about her mother's wishes. All she care about is her passion for European chocolates and not breaking the connection with her father that somehow is keeping his promise with sending her emails every Sunday.

That's a pretty good premise, uh? How is she going to deal with her father's death? Where are the emails coming from?

Bullshit.

First of all, the synopsis on goodreads leads you to think that she is going to the amusement park to find who's behind those emails when actually she doesn't want to know it because she's afraid it'll stop. Not that it's a huge mystery, you figure it out at page 10 if not sooner.

It just goes downhill from here.

- Overall, all the characters were so flat I couldn't even bring myself to care about them.

- Savanna is such a whiny girl. She doesn't have any reason to be a total bitch to whomever speaks to her, she's disrespectful and mean and stubborn and so immature (you have no idea), impulsive and unpolite. And she has the guts to complain why her coworkers go out together after they finish their shift and do not invite her? Are you even for real?

Then, obviously, a 22 year-old graduated guy that works at the park is attracted by her "try to stop me" attitude and every girl on the planet is at his feet but, obviously, he chooses the one that is younger and a complicated mean loner and shaved her head for stupid reasons.

Naturally, all this leads to her starting feel again after TWO years because a random guy with whom she has no interest or anything else in common comes along. That's so realistic. Ugh.

- The topics. The topics, guys. Say one tragedy that can possibly happen to a human being and you have a 90% chance to find it in here: suicide, suicide attempts, rape, cheating, betrayal, divorces and complicated

marriages, you name it.

The thing is.. none of them was done accordingly to the seriousness of these situations. None of them, and they were totally insultingly unnecessaryA book that really dealt with the topic of suicide would have sufficed but no, she had to overdo it.

I'm not saying the author didn't know what she was talking about; in the acknowledgements she said her dad killed himself, so she experienced it and I'm terribly sorry she had to live through something like that, but not everyone can put into words what they went through and write a book and I'm terribly sorry to say it but she just couldn't do it.

The only reason why I didn't give this book only 1 star is because I reached the end, even though I considered the idea of DNF so many times I lost count (and I wish I did it).

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\*thanks to NetGalley for providing me with an ARC of this book\*

### **Topsues says**

I have read and enjoyed several of Kimberly Loths books but only in the fantasy/paranormal genre, so when I saw this one, it appeared to be something completely different, so I gave it ago, even though I wasn't convinced that the switch of genres would work for her.....how wrong was I

It appears this authors inspiration know's no bounds.... Bittersweet, is such an easy read, but with such a powerful message, that has been crafted and neurtured. You can feel the delicacy of explanation that has been woven into a storyline that had me in tears. I had that feeling when I knew what was going to happen, but couldn't bear to read on, as my heart broke for the main female character.... the ending was crafted in such a way that you could see that there was more than one lesson that could be learnt from this book...However apart from the meaningful parts of this book, you get a story full of hate, betrayal, hormones, but also love, fortitude and laughter, the story is well defined so you constantly know where you are....the plots are easy to see and feel, but never to much to distract you from the storyline. The story is told mainly in the first person, but it is supported by other characters that mainly run in the background, until more is needed from them individually for more significant parts, so the story can feel as natural as possible. She also has such a remarkable way of turning characters emotions into those of your own. I am totally in awe of this author, she has tackled a major problem that effects millions of people worldwide, and given it a heartbeat, a voice and gives it clarification, a meaning, a cause amongst the infinite causes that are possible , but also hope

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### **Mandy says**

This was an amazing, thought provoking book by Loth that was such a different turn for her but well worth it. Savannah has been devastated by the suicide of her father and it shows in her actions and attitudes. her love of chocolate and the hope of getting to go to Europe and visit all the great chocolatiers of the world are the only thing holding her together. But not for long, she has to face her demons and the worry the she'll end up like her father. I tell ya, I couldn't put this down. I was on the same emotional roller coaster that Savannah was. Loth proved that she is not just a fantasy writer, but that she can tackle contemporary with an emotional punch!

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## **Agustina Zanelli says**

### **ENGLISH:**

**Savannah** is dealing with the tragic death of her father... and the mysterious fact of receiving an email from him each week. Her bad attitude takes her far from home, to live with her uncle and to work in an amusement park that brings her so many memories of her father. What begins as the worst punishment of all, becomes a process of healing for Savannah, surrounded by people who will make her life so much better.

I liked the protagonist a lot, I think she's a very complex character. I loved the process that Savannah is going through, waking up her feelings and learning to be happy again. Depression is a disease that affects so many people and it's something serious, I really liked that the author talked about this issue and that she did it so well. I also loved that she took such a complex subject and gave it a touch of mystery, with Savannah receiving emails from his deceased father. This gave to the story a suspenseful effect, keeping me hooked from beginning to end, making me guess and wanting to discover the truth.

There were fun parts in this book and a bit of romance, as well as a lot of drama. The plot is extremely interesting and entertaining, a really addictive reading.

Something I loved about this book, was knowing the inner workings of an amusement park, it was very interesting. But the emotional part was the most special of the story, because it broke my heart, it gave me goosebumps and left me with a bittersweet feeling. I think it's a deep and really complete story. I loved this book.

### **ESPAÑOL:**

**Savannah** está lidiando con la trágica muerte de su padre... y el misterioso hecho de recibir cada semana un email suyo. Su mala actitud la lleva lejos de su casa, para vivir con su tío y trabajar en un parque de diversiones que le trae tantos recuerdos de su padre. Lo que comienza como el peor castigo de todos, se convierte en una etapa de sanación para Savannah, rodeada de personas que harán de su vida un mundo mejor.

La protagonista me gustó mucho, creo que es un personaje muy complejo. Me encantó el proceso por el que va pasando Savannah, descongelando sus emociones y aprendiendo a ser feliz nuevamente. La depresión es una enfermedad que afecta a muchas personas y que es algo serio, me gustó mucho que la autora abordara esta temática y que lo hiciera tan bien. Me gustó mucho que tomara un tema tan complejo y que le diera un toque de misterio, con Savannah recibiendo emails de su difunto padre. Esto le dio un efecto de suspense a la historia, manteniéndome enganchada de principio a fin, haciendo deducciones y queriendo descubrir la verdad.

Hubo partes divertidas en este libro y un poquito de romance, como así también mucho drama. La trama es sumamente interesante y entretenida, una lectura realmente adictiva.

Algo que me encantó fue conocer el funcionamiento interno de un parque de diversiones, fue muy

interesante. Pero la parte emocional fue la más especial de la historia, que rompió mi corazón, me puso la piel de gallina y me dejó con una sensación agridulce. Creo que es una historia profunda y súper completa. Me encantó este libro.

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### **Mandy says**

[ suicide (hide spoiler)]

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### **Donna says**

Bittersweet is a hard book to review without writing spoilers. It deals with a couple of sensitive topics-- clinical depression and suicide--as well as the effect suicide has on the loved ones left behind. I wanted to hate Savannah's father for what he put her through but I know he wasn't thinking clearly at the time. In his mind, it was the only solution. I did hate her mother. She only made Savannah's life more difficult with her self-centered behavior. She never tried to help Savannah deal with depression or the aftermath of her father's death. Grant was a beacon of light in Savannah's darkness and I believe without him she would have committed suicide. I can't decide how I feel about Candie. She brought everything on herself and caused so much chaos but I don't know enough about her home life to determine if I have any sympathy for her. Julia was definitely a bright spot in the story. She seemed to have her life on track even though it could have easily been derailed. I know I wouldn't have liked Dallas before he got his act together but I feel he did get railroaded with the charges leveled against him. I know when I was 12 I could easily pass for 18. Don't tell me he should have asked the girl her age--she would have lied. I have mixed feelings about his situation. I do feel he was good for Savannah.

Overall, Bittersweet handled depression and suicide in a very realistic manner. There is no right or wrong way to grieve. We all handle loss differently. When that loss is through a tragic event, and the person is dealing with clinical depression, too...well, feeling numb is a perfectly natural reaction.

50% of proceeds from this book go to American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.

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### **Kristin says**

In BITTERSWEET, Loth weaves a story of mental illness and suicide with sensitivity and grace. Teenager Savannah Ray is one of the ones left behind, one of the ones still reeling from the sudden and tragic loss of her father. She's the one struggling to answer tough questions, the ones that gnaw at her and make her wonder "why" and "what if". And when her deceased dad's emails start pinging her inbox, advising her on life, Savannah obliges. She takes a job at the place where her dad felt the most alive and vulnerable, Haunted Valley Amusement Park. Only instead of enjoying a summer of free rides, she begins to battle the biggest question of all: What if she has the same demons to fight?

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## **Jeanne Arnold says**

I looked forward to reading Bittersweet and I wasn't disappointed. This book is an emotional, satisfying story that surprised me pleasantly when I wasn't expecting it.

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## **vvb says**

An amusement park setting for this story makes it a perfect one for a summer read. I liked some of the behind-the-scenes scoop on what goes on with ride operators and culture.

I found this story to be a kind of coming of age or rather coming to terms (with issues) for the protagonist, Savannah. The issues she deals with include grief, depression and love. Some painful and sad moments arise but Savannah handles them well enough.

Loved the Savannah's dream goal of doing a Europe chocolate themed trip.

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## **Amanda says**

Remember how I told you I don't give out five stars very often? 'Nuff said.

First I want to address the really negative review. If you are coming into this book thinking that an eighteen-year-old girl is not going to whine and that all people take all situations with an "equal" degree of seriousness, or that all of us handle grief in the same way, then this book is not for you. For the record, I know adults who whine more.

Anyway... \*SPOILER ALERT!\*

I absolutely loved this book. I love the writing style, I love Savannah and how she changes throughout the book. She's living with her difficult mother and a step-father that she doesn't feel particularly close to. She's dealing with depression, a scary and often unavoidable mindset often brought on by the death of a loved one. And it's not that new gorgeous guy didn't help her out of it. Yes, sometimes we are helped along by good-looking guys, but really I think it's her uncle that helps her out the most. Getting into a more "normal" living situation was another factor. Often, a change of scenery and new friends are what he need. A distraction.

I also liked the love story. I liked Dallas, and the fact that he was not "Edward." (Forgive me, I do like Twilight, but come on...) One of my favorite lines when she first meets him is: "Nod. Words. Where are my words?"

We all have a dark side. This book explores them, and not in the sick way that I've come to dread reading. There has to be an appropriate way to deal with these dark issues in books, and I think Loth does extremely well. Do you know someone that was raped in high school? I do. Do you know someone who died in precarious circumstances? I do. Does that mean we don't go on living? Nope. We have to. And this is how we do it, like Savannah did. By accepting a good change and then changing ourselves to be better people. To support Loth's campaign for suicide awareness, go to <http://afsp.donordrive.com/index.cfm?...>

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## **Virginia Wall says**

I received an ARC of this book. I found this story very touching and compelling. Savannah is a very raw character and I felt drawn to her struggle and her story. I don't read a lot of this genre (I prefer fantasy/paranormal) but I couldn't put this book down. The end was a surprise to me and I appreciated the thoughtful conclusion to all the questions and suspense throughout the book.

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## **Randy Tramp says**

Written in the first person, we get a glimpse into the world of an eighteen-year-old girl, who lost her dad.

Finally, a book that tells the real story about sex, drugs, and alcohol. Sleeping around isn't all glamorous as Hollywood portrays.

Savanna has to work through a very difficult part of her life. Her dad's suicide. I can't imagine the pain of experiencing that, especially from a parent.

Wonderful read, realistically going into the world of teenagers. The pressure of conforming to a sex-craved environment. This fiction story showed the consequences of "giving in."

I applaud the author for a well-written story. (I loved the ending.)

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## **Jantine Kampes says**

Wow, just wow ...

I have no other words right now.

I received a free copy through Netgley in return for an honest review. A longer review can be found on my blog (<http://www.eccentriclady.nl>)

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## **Kirsty Bicknell says**

Kimberly Loth has written Bittersweet, drawing on her own experiences, meaning she is able to create a story with a deep emotional quality. Despite Savannah's flaws, in particular, her self-depreciation, her character is one whose story we invest in and are compelled to follow.

Bittersweet is a coming of age story in which Kimberly Loth introduces her protagonist during a time when her grief controls her. We are given the opportunity to understand that Savannah's moods are rooted in her pain, mainly because she is burdened with the truth of her father's death.

Savannah reluctantly agrees to spending the summer working for her uncle at Haunted Valley. For her, it is a painful reminder of the time she spent with her father at amusement parks, but yet Kimberly Loth hints at the fact that there is another reason behind her fear.

Savannah's individual appearance already separates her from the majority of her colleagues at Haunted Valley; she has a tattoo, an eyebrow piercing and shaved her head in response to her best friend's betrayal.

Yet Savannah's antisocial behaviour only widens the gap between 'them' and 'her'. Kimberly Loth approaches this situation objectively and we can see fault on the side of Grant's employees, but wish Savannah would break down her walls.

Savannah becomes more receptive as her relationship with Dallas develops. Kimberly Loth combines this romance with the already existing storyline and though Dallas does not always act like a Prince Charming, we sense that his support is one of the reasons why Savannah is able to acknowledge the real events leading up to the death of her father.

Savannah and Dallas' romance is not always simple, but Kimberly Loth shows how these two characters change each other. This is why I think Bittersweet works as a clean romance; we don't need the explicit details of their private moments to appreciate the strength of the emotion between them.

Bittersweet is powerful, moving and beautifully written. As readers, we should feel privileged that an author has opened up so honestly about a difficult time in her own life. Bittersweet wrapped its way around my heart and not only do I recommend it as a brilliant story, but I hope that readers are touched enough to donate to the fund which Kimberly Loth set up in honor of her own father:

<http://www.afsp.donordrive.com/campai....>

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