



## Steele Secrets

*Andi Cumbo-Floyd*

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When Mary Steele mysteriously finds herself in an old cemetery down the road from her house in a tiny mountain town, she's not concerned. She's not even frightened when a ghost named Moses approaches her or when she has to stand-off against a bulldozer.

But when her inquiries into the history of the cemetery and the people buried there begin to draw out the worst in the members of her community, Mary begins to be afraid. Will she be able to recover history while keeping the people she loves safe?

## **Steele Secrets Details**

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Author : Andi Cumbo-Floyd

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## From Reader Review Steele Secrets for online ebook

### Marsha Paul says

A wonderful read! Touching. So sad that much of history has been forgotten. The lines and walls of misunderstanding need to be abolished

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### Wayne Pratt says

I just finished reading, "Steele Secrets" by Andi Cumbo-Floyd, a volume I won in a FB drawing. When I received this book, I opened it intent on reading a few paragraphs and laying it down until I had more time. Wrong! I couldn't put this book down as Andi threw out the lure and hooked me in no time at all. Her work is powerful. After but a few moments, I found myself not reading words, but living the story. Andi presents a very common human problem, and weaves a tale that moved my heart in so many ways. The ending made me realize that genuine friendships, reconciliation and justice, and people truly engaging with one another best take place around the table - even a potluck supper table.

Growing up in the 50's and 60's in northeast PA, in a small city, I experienced very little, if any, events or news of racism... I never witnessed or heard of problems between the races. I was free to come and go when visiting minority students in the neighborhoods and homes...

Andi Cumbo-Floyd reveals how much racism is often hidden from view .. but with conversation - even difficult conversations - efforts at unity can be accomplished, even if simply in some small ways.

I look forward to reading more and more of her work.

Thank you, Andi...

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### Alise Chaffins says

I have appreciated Andi Cumbo-Floyd's previous books and was looking forward to this one, despite the change of style. I was not disappointed. Because while this is not the same kind of book that Andi has written before, it was still one that reflected her kind heart and her desire for racial reconciliation.

Andi created a cast of strong female characters, which was my favorite aspect of this book. Mary Steele is a relatable, kind teenage girl who can just happen to talk to a ghost. She discovers that a local slave cemetery is about to be bulldozed, and she, along with her mother, friends, and other people in her town, work to save it. I appreciated that while help came in many forms, the women in the book didn't need to be rescued, but were able to stand on their own feet to do the necessary work.

I loved the end of the book in particular. It didn't have the kind of resolution that one might expect, but I felt like it was honest and true, and that resonates more with me than anything else.

Andi doesn't back away from the harsh realities of what it meant to own people as property, and how this still has an impact on the way that many view race relations today. But she also included much hope in the

narrative, and that hope allows us to accept things that are still not as we might want them to be.

Disclosure: I received an ARC of this book for review. All opinions are my own.

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### **Alison Clifford says**

Steele Secrets is a riveting story about a girl's fight to save an old cemetery. The plot starts with a small, but significant incident, and continues to build throughout the book to a dramatic conclusion. Mary is relatable as the main character, and the author tells the story in such a way that I found myself drawn into it and sharing it with the characters.

As an Australian I found the historical aspect of the story fascinating. It made me compare the things I read in the story to our own history and treatment of the aboriginal people, and raises issue that most around the world can relate to in some way. It's not heavy, but explores attitudes towards race and history in a sensitive and easy to understand manner.

I thoroughly enjoyed this book and highly recommend it to readers of all ages.

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### **Suzanne says**

This book officially comes out on February 9, but I received an advanced copy in exchange for an honest review.

Moderate spoilers ahead.

Fans of YA with a touch of magical realism and a nod to history, particularly concerning the treatment and remembrance of slaves - you're going to want to pre-order this one. The story is told from the perspective of a precocious teenage girl who gets zapped into an old cemetery and tries to save it from people who would have it destroyed. I like the juxtaposition of the typical teenage worries to the importance of the work she is doing. I also like that the ending was realistic. The story flowed smoothly and kept me interested. In fact, once I picked the book up, I couldn't put it down. I had to know what happened!

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### **JoAnne Macco says**

I don't think I've ever read a book that started out so seemingly simple and ended up so profound. Steele Secrets is the story of a teenage girl who meets a ghost in an unmarked cemetery. I could tell from the beginning that this "young adult novel" would be a good read, even for a 60-year-old boomer. But the ending was more than good. The ending moved me powerfully. I teared up several times during the last few chapters and sobbed at the end, but in a good way. Having gotten to know the characters and caring about them, especially 17-year-old Mary Steele, I cheered them on. I even cheered out loud once. Steel Secrets is a story about integrity, wisdom, and compassion. It's a story with the potential to change hearts and minds, to help people understand as Mary did, that "You don't have to fight with harm. You can fight with good, too." Steele Secrets is a book I'm proud to have read.

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## **Naomi Brignola-van calster says**

I didn't know what to expect when I started reading this book. But it was about slaves and I've always been fascinated with personal stories as opposed to just stiff old numbers.

On the one hand I want to learn, want to hear the stories, on the other hand it keeps me up at night because it happened to real people and it is happening to real people. The horror, sadness and pain in the stories are depressing but need to be told and in the form of a story it brings it so much closer. And it needs to come closer, so that we will care. It needs to come close enough to hurt.

Even if some stories are fictional, as is this one, other stories happened years ago to real people. Similar stories happened and happen.

I can't do anything about it for those people but I can do my part, a little part, in the stories of today. If just a fraction of the people on earth gave a few dollars a month, a lot could be done. And what would happen if we would all diligently pray?

On to my review itself ;)

Steel Secrets was a short, fun read. A Young Adult fictional novel, a little bit of mystery and a whole lot of activism. Friendship, family, adventure.

It gave me food for thought, it did certainly bring it closer. Some concepts about things that really happened to slaves, about their descendants and their master's descendants I had never really thought about. Mary Steel Secrets connects them with now in a surprisingly simple way.

It moves quite fast, focusses on the story/event at hand. This is fine, although I personally prefer slower moving stories with a lot more pages involved and more background and character development.

Even so, I really enjoyed reading this and came away with some beautiful lessons that are woven into the story without preaching.

The plus about it being a short-ish story is that it is good for teens who don't want to start reading a 1000 page novel ;)

It is well written and as far as I can tell, very well researched. The story itself gives very interesting information on how to go about doing family/history research. I love learning history and how-to's in a story. It all comes in without any effort on my part!

I liked this book, but the one I really loved was 'The Slaves Have Names' by the same author. It's geared more towards adults, tells beautiful stories about real people. Do read that and read this one as well

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## **Sharon says**

A young girl finds herself confronting racism and prejudice as she uncovers town secrets long buried ...and meant to stay buried. Steele Secrets provides excellent prompts for conversations on the legacy of slavery, racism, life after death, and even gender issues. The author weaves history and genealogical research techniques throughout the well researched book. The twists and turns of the plot kept me reading deep into the wee hours of the night. The characters (past and present!) are likeable and the dialogue is believable.

Many lessons are embedded in this new YA novel by Andi Cumbo-Floyd. I highly recommend Steele Secrets for the young adult audience as well as us not so young adults.

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### **Woody says**

Good book! YA officially but a good read for everyone.

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### **Katie Andraski says**

Steele Secrets is a wonderful book, grounded in history and the joys of research and learning just where you come from. It's about racial reconciliation, while being a great read.

It opens with Mary Steele picking beans in her garden one moment and finds herself in a cemetery the next. She meets Moses who turns out to be a ghost. The next day she finds herself blocking a bulldozer about to mow down the cemetery to make way for school playing fields. The story continues as Mary and her friends research who was buried there along with who was related to whom. They need to figure this out in order to keep the cemetery from being destroyed.

This is not only a book about how important it is to preserve history, including that of the most marginalized among us, it is also about how exciting and life changing research into people's past lives can be. This novel clearly shows how we must fight for racial justice, but goes about it gently, winning over a skeptical reader. I highly recommend it.

I received a free copy in exchange for an honest review.

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### **Thomas DeWolf says**

Told from the perspective of a young girl named Mary Steele comes the story of a town's secrets, and our nation's secrets. An old cemetery is about to be bulldozed. Mary encounters a ghost there and what she learns inspires her to try to save the cemetery. Part ghost-story, part contemplation about the importance of preserving the past, part acknowledgment of our nation's need to confront the legacy of slavery as we never really have, I literally could not put this book down once I got half way into it. Late at night as I tried repeatedly to put it down, visions of Mary and Moses, the other characters, the headstones, and the town where they all converge, kept me turning the light next to my bed back on until I finished at 4:00 in the morning. Steele Secrets is technically a "Young Adult" novel, but I'm 61 and loved it. I highly recommend it.

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## **Adrienne says**

The supernatural blends seamlessly with the natural; the past with the present. Well written and a good story, this is a book that will make you wonder if you really know your past -- especially if you are from the South.

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## **True says**

### **Mary Steele & Moses**

Mary Steele a young girl who stumbled a cross a cemetery. There was a reason. The Ancestors wanted to be known and heard. Sometimes their Spirit comes through to us in many ways and we just have to have a open heart. The relationship between a modern day girl in our time and her relationship with the Ancestor Moses tells of a beautiful story of how we should remember and honor those that came before us. That one persons spirit tho they may be gone from this Life and young person can take action and make a change. With her Community and Circle of friends this Story shows how we can change the Narrative of our daily living with all of our differences and work towards making a change for the greater good for all. It just takes one Person. Moses family and his Descendants will be dear to me heart and I can't wait for him to come back another day. I felt like I was having some of the same conversations and moments as I sit with my own family history and genealogy and the Author wrapped this Family History, Community and all its Characters and made us think a while and appreciate all that we bring to the Table.

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## **Becca says**

From the moment I met 17 year old Mary Steele, the heroine of Andi Cumbo-Floyd's new novel Steele Secrets, I wanted to know more about her. This is a young woman of uncommon intelligence and integrity, of gentle courage and a strong heart filled with deeply sensitive emotions. Through a series of strange-but-true circumstances, Mary is moved to take a stand against racism and injustice in the small town she calls home. True to her name she demonstrates nerves of steel as she uses her intelligence and her determination to prevent the town from destroying an old and forgotten cemetery, one that holds the remains of slaves from a local plantation.

Cumbo-Floyd has woven so many lovely themes throughout this book, one that she is marketing for young adults, but one this definitely older adult could not put down. These themes are vitally important for people of all ages: appreciation of our heritage, tolerance for those who are different, honoring the past, learning from our mistakes, and combatting evil with good.

Steele Secrets was a completely un-put-downable story, and inspired more than a few tears along the way. I'm so glad I got to know Mary Steele, and I'd love to read more about her and where life might take her next. Somehow, I have a feeling wherever it is and whatever she does, she'll make it matter.

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## **Lisa says**

I started reading this book because of the mad respect I have for the author and her work. I didn't know if I

would enjoy it, but I'm happy to say that I LOVED it.

Let me be clear from the beginning: this book has a ghost (not scary, though) and deals with racism and slavery. And while the author has some important things to say about the latter two, her views are woven into the story so well that readers are challenged in subtle ways. She doesn't flat-out preach her views, and there isn't what I would call a wrapped-up-with-a-bow kind of ending. (I was afraid we were headed there and it didn't feel right, so I'm glad she did what she did. That's all I'll say.)

The teenage narrator Mary Steele is likable and moves the story along at a good pace. I look forward to more books in this series from this author.

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