



## The Kings of Charleston

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Casper Whitley is forced to move to Charleston, South Carolina where she'll be the new kid her senior year of high school. Casper's upset about the move until she meets the Roman family's gorgeous son, Cal, but there's a problem. A mystery surrounds him which can be summed up in one word...Kythera. Never heard of it? Neither has Casper until she finds the word tattooed on cars, paintings and all her new friends.

After Casper's life is threatened, someone is forced to tell the truth about her parents, the Romans and Kythera's motives for her being in Charleston. Once the truth is revealed, she must decide whether to protect her family and Kythera's secrets or walk away from everything she has ever known.

## **The Kings of Charleston Details**

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Author : Kat H. Clayton

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## From Reader Review The Kings of Charleston for online ebook

### Tee loves Kyle Jacobson says

The Kings Of Charleston is one of those books that takes you by surprise. I love Charleston, South Carolina and I found the scenery so familiar that I felt right at home reading this book. I love the world build up that Kat did. She started off slow and built you into this new life that was a secretive world that the characters are a part of.

Casper Whitley is upset because her parents are moving her to a new place to live for her senior year of high school. Every parent should know that is a no no because senior year is when you hang with your friends and act silly and get ready for the real world college. But no Casper has to move to Charleston, South Carolina and start all over again making friends and living in a new place. Casper finds herself on the first day of school feeling like the outsider but she quickly makes friends and she feels comfortable. Well as comfortable as you can get. Then she sees this gorgeous guy Cal and she is hooked instantly. Cal is your definite bad boy all male gorgeousness but Casper is determined to get to know him.

What Casper learns is that Cal is keeping secrets, actually all her friends the entire town is hiding a secret. Once Casper finds out that the secret revolves around this mysterious word and symbol that she sees all over the town. Kythera lord what the hell is that? Well that is what Casper is wondering to because she sees it every where and when she is threatened she learns what it is because her friends tell her. Lord want to talk about a sucker punch well Casper feels like she has been sucker punched. She learns that her parents have been keeping a secret and they know what Kythrea is and Casper finds out why she was moved to Charleston. See The Roman Family has a lot to do with the Kythera and Casper is placed right in the middle of a war that is brewing.

What will Casper do? Will she and Cal be able to survive this secret? Will Cal help her or is he part of the problem? I have to say this ended with a cliff hanger but boy what a cliff hanger. I need book two like ASAP!

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### Neyra ♦ says

#### Actual Rating: 2.5

Seventeen year old Casper Whitley's life has been turned upside down when her parents decide to uproot the family and move from Kentucky to South Carolina, to a little town called Charleston. Casper is less than thrilled, she not only leaves behind friends, her school, and her home, but her beloved horses. Upon arriving to Charleston, her father announces that an old friend of his and his family will be stopping by and once they do, Casper meets their handsome son, Cal. But Cal's got secrets, and they all involve the word, Kythera. Casper sees this on everyone she meets, cars, even in her new home. But what is Kythera, and why does everyone seem afraid of it? The more questions Casper has, the less answers she gets, but she's determined to find out what the mystery is.

This turned out to be one of those stories that, if I could, I'd reach into the book and strangle the heroine for her shallowness and stupidity. Don't get me wrong, the idea behind Kythera is interesting, and it's nothing like any of the books I've read. Maybe there's other books with this same kind of plot, but I've yet to read

them, so I was intrigued with *The Kings of Charleston* from the start. It's disappointing to know that no matter how much you tried, the story just wouldn't stick.

Casper was born a blue blood. Her family breeds horses and they win derbies. Her father is the head of the family while her mother is the type of woman who's all about the spotlight and what others think. I hated her right off the bat. If there's one thing I hate in a parent/person is when they look their noses down at everyone else simply because of the way they were raised, the clothes on their backs, or the friends they choose. Plus, she kept telling Casper what to do, and not once did Casper stand up for herself. I know she's a seventeen year old kid, but in my book, that's old enough for her to be able to dress herself -\_-

She hated the move to Charleston, but in comes Cal and *OMG, HE'S SO HOT, I JUST MIGHT LIKE IT HERE AFTER ALL!!* Smh. I didn't like how, no matter that she got so suspicious of him, she still kept going back to him. And she was a snob and hypocrite. I didn't really like Cal either, sure he's gorgeous and all, but he's got a stalker persona that got Casper involved in a world she never belonged in to begin with, as well as nearly got her killed. \*shrugs\* Like I said, the plot intrigued me, but the characters left me disengaged from the story. I am curious to see what happens in book two, **All the King's Men**, *The Kings of Charleston* ended with a cliffhanger and dammit, I'm curious to see if the group determined to bring Kythera and its members down wins :p LOL

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### **Natalee Grimaldi says**

The Kings of Charleston kept me hooked till the very end! A keep-you-on-your-toes thriller that made my heart race with every turn of the page!

For readers wanting a good mystery with a mob-like feel to the plot, then this is the book for you. Written in Casper's(female lead) POV, you're taken deep into a secret society(Kythera) with dirty tricks up their sleeves, and even dirtier secrets.

Casper is a pretty great character. She develops and morphs from a quiet, introvert to a full-blown boss lady who really holds her own when she gets tested. She's actually one of the few female leads that didn't annoy me. And I think a lot has to do with her being very independent and self-reliant.

The plot of the book, well this is where the reason for my 4-star rating lies. I loved that it feels like a mob story, but at the same time I didn't really understand the point of this group. What do they really do, besides be super rich and powerful?? What's their ulterior motive? Not sure, but I feel like Kythera's goal or purpose should have been better planned. I mean there's such a buzz around their elusiveness, that when Casper figures out what they are I felt like they should've been bigger.

Even with the mysterious elements, the great thing about this book is that there are romantic twists to the story (high School love). But, it's not the main focus of the book. Atleast, we're gifted the mighty Cal Roman—the blue eyed prince of this secret society!! His description made me drool, and then I felt weird for creepin' on a high school kid lol.

I really enjoyed this book. Once I got into the flow, I didn't want to stop reading. I wanted to know what would happen next to Casper and Cal!\*Ends in cliffhanger\*

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## **Farrah says**

A unique book in the world of YA. The Kings of Charleston was a lovely read that I really enjoyed.

I had two minor issues with the book, so I'm going to get those out of the way now.

First, I wish that there had been more development in the relationship between Casper and Cal. I didn't feel like their relationship was fully developed. I wanted to see more of them falling for each other before they started throwing out "I love you"s.

Second, I wanted to know more about what the Kythera was. It was explained, but I still didn't feel like I truly knew what they were all about and why they started. I still had so many questions about the elitist group.

But, despite those issues, I really liked the book.

I thought Casper was a strong heroine. She wasn't going to let anyone walk all over her. But she wasn't stupid about the risks she took like some other heroines. She was smart about getting answers. And, when it came down to it, she wasn't afraid to defy everyone else when she didn't agree with what was happening. She was a very likable character.

Cal was more difficult to figure out. It was clear from the beginning that he didn't like being in the Kythera. But, I didn't understand why he waited until Casper defied them to finally take a stand. It made me question his strength of character. But the fact that he stood up to everyone when Casper needed his support showed me that he was a strong character. He was sweet to Casper and I thought it was adorable that he knew he liked her from the beginning and was determined to win her over.

The plot was fast paced and I was kept interested the entire time. There were definitely some surprises in store. And the ending had me insanely curious to find out what happens next.

\*I received a free copy in exchange for an honest review

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## **MGGMGGM says**

In a town where money and power speaks volume, can Casper's efforts make a difference to save herself and her family? After all the cards are laid out, Casper has only one choice and that is to be a part of them. Will she be able to handle what it takes to be inside Kythera?

Casper is a very cultured and down to earth young lady who grew up in the privilege side of town. Her family has money and power that can make anyone jealous. In spite being born with a silver spoon, Casper doesn't want any of it but her horses. With the recent developments, Casper's dad decide that a move to Charleston was the greatest business strategy for them. However upon settling in the town, Casper notices things that are a bit off. Bit by bit, Jasper finds out about Kythera and what that word means in Charleston.

My experience reading The Kings of Charleston resulted in mix emotions. I love the mystery evolving Kythera and the people involved however there are certain parts of the story that is lacking – character development for one but I'll go into detail in a bit. Let's talk characters.

Casper, as I mentioned earlier, is a privilege and polished lady. She's very likable and her charm is evident.

She's not your typical snobbish rich kid who flaunts what they have. She's not very sociable though but she likes it that way. She's quite unlike her parents who are social animals and I love her shy and down to earth demeanor. Her love interest on the other hand, Cal was structured to be the handsome playboy type of guy but apparently he's not. He's very charming and also likable but there's something deeper than what meets the eyes. Honestly, I don't have any qualms with these two but their relationship. I wasn't buying the chemistry between them. The attraction between them needed more than just a few stolen dates and walk in the park.

The whole idea with Kythera was good and the mystery around it was written strategically. There were instances that I became a little impatient and wanted to know what's up already. The story wasn't rushed and Clayton took her time developing her story around it. The issue I had however was how the pieces was put in. There were times that I thought I reached the highest point of the story but apparently I didn't. Confusing but I understand as this is the first book in the series. The story was build up to a certain level then it all eased down going to the next part of the story which I believe should have started on book 2. I wouldn't mind if this had a cliffhanger ending or if bits were taken off. I just felt like the story wasn't cut at the right part – if that makes sense.

*The Kings of Charleston* is indeed an engaging story but I needed more, character and story wise. I love the mystery and how Clayton writes. The series has a potential but I needed more with this installment so I have high hopes for the next book.

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### **Jessica (Stuck in Books) says**

*The Kings of Charleston* has a really interesting premise. That was what drew me in in the first place. It seemed mysterious and cool and I thought I'd have fun reading it. Add to that the fact that there was-- OHMYGOSH--some romance in here? I OBVIOUSLY needed to read this book.

Now that I've read it, I know I was right to look forward to the mystery. It was interesting, riveting, and kept me on my toes. The romance, however, wasn't really much to write home about. It wasn't BAD. It was not. But it didn't really take my breath away, either. It was just kind of THERE. I'm not going to lie, though-- there were a couple romantic moments I swooned for. Just not as many as I expected.

#### **Character Rundown:**

**Casper:** Her name is kind of awesome. Just saying. But anyway, Casper was...all right, I suppose. Her character didn't blow me away or anything, but there were things about her that I liked. She was pretty confident, for one. And she could actually be strong, in some situations, and I liked that. So Casper does not go on my MC hate list, but I don't really loooove her, either.

**Cal:** So, he's my boy (for now), obviously. But he didn't seem all that original. He was super mysterious, but other than that, he was pretty...normal. What we usually see from guys in YA. I must admit, he was a TOTAL sweetheart, though. I swoon, y'all.

**Plot.** There are SECRETS. The kind that you will guess and guess, but never get quite right. I personally did not guess anything EXACTLY right until the author wanted us to. The mystery portion of this book really held its own. Big time. It was so enjoyable.

**Romance.** I just was not feeling it a majority of the time. There were moments where I was TOTALLY into

it and swooning my drool off (um, HORSES, anyone?), but more often than I would have liked, the romance just did not seem very special to me. It was not bad, it was just commonplace. The kind we see all the time in YA. Expected. You know?

**The ending.** Well, I'm definitely going to be reading the next book! I was happy with the ending, and what Casper decided to do. And then what Cal decided to do. If they were real people, we'd be high-fiving right now. BOOM.

**Overall,** *The Kings of Charleston* was a great mystery that held me captive from the time the mystery began to the very last page. However, the romance didn't live up to my expectations. So, if you're reading this for the romance, prepare yourself. If you're reading this for the mystery, I salute you. You'll have so much fun!! Kat Clayton has written a rather wonderful mystery novel here. You'll want book 2, guys. You really will. :)

You can find more from me on my blog, Just a Booklover

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### **Alise (Readers in Wonderland) says**

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Kings of Charleston Review

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Full formatting of this review at link above.

I found my thoughts really hard to organize after reading this novel so I have sorted them into a Pros and Cons list.

Pros:

#### Mystery

Casper is forced to move into a new world, away from things she holds dear, to a town that seems to be surrounded by a word. Kythera. Casper finds it on a painting in her house, then on her neighbors' cars, and even on their bodies. The town seems to be afraid of the name and symbol, serving the people who have it anything and everything.

The mystery keeps the plot interesting because the reader is just as desperate to reveal the mystery around the word and people who wield it. In this aspect, the mystery is unpredictable and done in a way that takes almost the entire novel to uncover but still keeps you interested.

#### Writing

Extremely well written, the words flow easily and the descriptions are vivid. It is very easy to imagine people and settings. Spelling and grammar weren't an issue, I think I spotted maybe one or two grammatical errors.

#### The Ending

At first I was really confused, there was a definite climax and resolution but... the story continued. It seemed like a entirely new plot started and I found myself getting really bored until it picked back up again at the very end. I wish it would have ended in a different section, but the cliffhanger was a strong ending in and of itself.

Cons:

Characters

Unfortunately, the story was heavily brought down by lack of character development and connection to the reader, and a generic mold all the characters seemed to fit in, with one differing from another just by hair color. Some of their behaviorisms really made me puzzled, Casper seemed like she had two personalities at times.

Keeping with the characters, the relationship between Casper and Cal was really hard to take seriously. There was instant attraction, and from that point on, Casper was stuck on Cal and their relationship progressed way too fast. At one minute, Casper was angry at his sudden advances and cheesy compliments, and the next she was flirting and encouraging him. It was hard to get a read on her.

Overall, KINGS OF CHARLESTON is a book for those who like a mystery surrounding a certain group of people or word, and writing that your eyes can easily glide over and enjoy.

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### **Marybeth (Manhattan Reader) says**

A fun mixture of romance and mystery all thrown together into one big novel, where a central theme keeps asking the same question and wondering what is going on.

When Casper moves to Charleston, South Carolina she finds more there than what she had originally anticipated, especially when it comes to Cal and his family. And when it comes to the town as a whole and the one mysterious word: Kythera.

Why I liked the mystery aspect of this so well is that Clayton didn't say that  $2+ \text{ blank} = 5$ . She gave an entire equation into the mystery instead of laying it out for the reader to see, and that added to the tangled mystery and how it worked to the benefit of the story as a whole.

Her writing, on top of that, was amazing. The words connected and drew the readers in from page one. The one thing that kept going was on what Kythera meant, and just who was Casper herself.

And of course the story between Casper and Cal - well, I'm always a sucker for a good romance.

While there were a lot of great aspects to the story, some parts left me a little shaky. One of them had to deal with the characters. Her writing was well, but sometimes I kept going back to the characters and seeing that there wasn't much development at all. While resolutions may have happened, I didn't see the growth that I would have liked.

And I think what set my teeth on edge a little was what happened in the end. I know this is a series, especially since book 2 is about to be released, so I wasn't expecting the wrap up that happened in this book until the last one or at least to let it hang over into the second novel. Yet, Clayton closed up like that was the final and even beginning a new plot, or at least from where I stood that's how it felt like.

Despite these moments, I still found the book enjoyable enough to make it to the end and even anticipate the second book.

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## **Christianna Marks says**

You can read this and many other reviews on my YA book blog The White Unicorn!

Who doesn't love a good mystery? That's what I thought to myself before digging into The Kings of Charleston. And I have to admit that there was quite a bit of mystery woven throughout the novel, even though I also have to admit that I wish more would have been brought to light as the book progressed. I'm guessing that we will find out more in the second book in the series?

The novel itself was very slow moving and in a way that took away from the over all feel of the ultimate menace that was lurking around the corner. But I have give it to Clayton for giving us some really horrific moments throughout her book. I won't tell you what those moments are, but they are action packed and well done, even if they were a little predictable.

Where Clayton tends to excel is in her character development. Okay and her naming abilities! I have to give it to her for coming up with some awesome character names! Casper being the lead and a female. I've met a guy named Casper before, but never a girl. I kinda like it. She takes her time letting us get to know the many characters that fill this land of the rich and infamous. Even the characters that we don't get to meet in detail stay with us. None of them are unforgettable, which is always nice to have.

Casper, our lead is an interesting one. She doesn't seem like she really loves the lavish lifestyle that she's been brought up in. Preferring jeans and a plain tee to the dresses and pantsuits that her mother wants her to wear. I actually really enjoyed the tension between Casper and her mom, it was well played out. And her love of horses and The Kentucky Derby were also well played. It added something interesting to her character.

Now Cal. I liked him and I liked that he wasn't perfect. You kinda got that feeling from him from the beginning. Cal and Casper were a little insta-love for me, but as things progress you figure out why.

Charlotte and Sarah were two of my favorite background characters. They added some really fun moments into the book, as well as a couple laughs! I also really liked Jacob too and would have liked to learn more about his background.

And I loved the idea of an elite group of people who take their name from a Greek island! I just wish we would have found out more about the illusive Kythera and not spent so much time trying to uncover things that never fit together to become clear. What is going on there? I want to know!

\*Book provided by the author for honest review\*

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## **Maija says**

Source: I received an e-copy for reviews purposes

When thinking about this book, I get this warm and happy feeling regarding the story this book tells. I just really like this book, the story is nothing like I have read before and the idea for it is really good.

This book caught my attention right from the first page and held it throughout. There's a lot of action and fascinating things happening- about Charleston and its' natives, the story Casper tells us and the secrets she

unravels through the whole book.

Casper is a boyish girl who loves horses and has talent riding them. Her life is easy- she has money, a family and horses she loves, and a whole future ahead. There are problems, of course, no one has a perfect family- Casper's mom controls her life and her father is absent the whole day, working. And now her life turns 180 degrees- she has to move away to a town she doesn't know much about, without her horses and her father having only one reason for moving there- it's for his work.

One she finds this mysterious painting with a line written on the edge of it- Kythera forever. Yeah, what's a single line? That doesn't mean much, does it? But when after she meets Cal and finds that his car is tattooed with the initial "K" and "Kythera". That triggers Casper's attention and she decides to do the usual thing everyone does when they want to find information- she Google'd it. But guess what she found out? A whole lot of nothing except for a post that Kythera is involved with charity.

From there the story takes you on an exciting joy-ride that involves a intriguing tasting cotton candy, a mysterious box of popcorn and a lot of sweet first-love romance.

What I found a bit disturbing is that this book gives me the feel of Twilight-ish story. Not like it a fan fic or anything, I just had the feel of Twilight-ish vibe, the one I felt when I read the vampire story. I'm not sure if it's the strange love-story or the love-triangle (don't worry, there's a guy that flirts with Casper and thinks he has a chance, but Casper doesn't feel anything but friendship-y feelings for him). Cal does have mysterious life, he's hot and has some stalkerish features in his behaviour, a lot like Edward does. But there's nothing Paranormal about Cal.

Anyways, I really enjoyed this book- it's a light but interesting read. I'm definitely reading the sequel. I had a lot of fun reading The Kings of Charleston and would recommend YA and Mystery fans to add it to their TBR, because they'll love this book.

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### **Jenni Arndt says**

I have to be honest and say that what sold me on THE KINGS OF CHARLESTON was the cover. I liked how, for a YA novel, it exuded a bit of sexiness that you don't normally see. It's pretty simple and yeah, it just worked for me. What didn't work was what was inside. A long drawn out story about a high society of complete riff raff that I cared nothing about.

My hatred for this novel has to be started with the MC Casper (I know right? We have the friendly freakin' ghost here.) This girl was such a paradox of herself. Her inner dialogue spoke of a girl who had her head on her shoulders and knew that she needed to put herself first and not fall all over some guy that she doesn't even know. But then she meets Cal. To be honest, I didn't even really find him all that charming, he was a bit too forceful and creepy for my taste. But all along Casper knows that Cal is hiding something HUGE from her and yet she still falls head over heels for the guy and starts dropping love bombs after a week or so. Not only does she know the entire time that Cal is blatantly lying to her (or withholding may be a better word)

but she also almost gets murdered and then agrees to lie to the police for this guy! I'm sorry, she had been on the hunt the entire novel to find out the secret behind these Kythera people and then almost gets murdered because of the group and then lies to the police for them! Hell to the no! Give your head a shake girl.

Another huge turn off for me with this novel was Casper's parents. They were high society Richie Rich people and through the entire novel they are putting their need for money and a lavish lifestyle in front of their child's well-being. They make her move across the country the summer before she starts her senior year, which isn't the end of the world or anything but what comes next is. After Casper is almost murdered in a heist against the Kythera they decide to stay in Charleston and make her join the Kythera because otherwise they will be poor! They make her join this group who brands the members and has murderers after them! Loving parents if I've ever seen them!

There were also quite a few technical parts of the story that irritated me as well. In the ePub that I read rather than italicizing words that were supposed to be emphasized by the speaker they were underlined and that felt really juvenile to me (entirely personal preference, I know.) Also the pacing was just all over the place. At one point, I kid you not, I took a nap. When Callie goes to take a bath we get every minute detail from her taking off her clothes, turning on the water, feeling the water to get it to the right temperature, turning the water off, getting in the tub, soaking, getting out of the tub, almost slipping, wishing she had cushy blue bath mats... you get the picture. There were some adrenaline infused moments but they came much too late in the story to really grab me, I had already pretty much checked out.

I had so many problems with this story that the reading experience was far from enjoyable. The thing that kept me going for most of it was finding out who these Kythera people were and then by the time I got to find out I was so far gone that I didn't really care anymore. I think they might have been rich snobs? Who can get anyone they want? And they have lots of money. Yeah, money. I can't recommend this one to anyone, which makes me sad because I wanted this to be a mob type story that stood out in YA. It failed at that. Badly.

**An Advanced Reader's Copy was provided by the author in exchange for an honest review.**

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*You can read all of my reviews at Alluring Reads.*

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### **Sadrina says**

I have to admit *The Kings of Charleston* is very interesting in terms of the plot. The story itself is unique and full of mystery. Every time I read any book, I have a habit of guessing what kind of people I'm dealing with. And I have to say, I never got it right with *The Kings of Charleston*. In fact, none of my guesses came close to what they actually are, which I liked and see as a challenge.

As *The Kings of Charleston* is told in our heroine, Casper's point of view, we get to feel how frustrated she was being left in the dark. The secrets dragged on to half the book, making us readers feel a bit frustrated yet curious at the same time, until it finally got out.

I find that *The Kings of Charleston* is pretty fast-paced in terms of building up the atmosphere and also in the relationships. It didn't take too long for Casper to adapt to her new surrounding, and make friends with the

weird, mysterious kids in their circle. Casper was a pretty nice girl despite her wealth, who also had very little interest in whatever her parents want for her. I like how she was so fond of horses, especially Wendy. Cal was the typical swoon-material who has got the looks and the wealth to get him by, yet there was a sense of oddness in him whenever he spent time with Casper. In fact, the first time he spoke to Casper, he pretty much gave off this strange aura.

The relationship between Cal and Casper went a bit too fast for my taste, but who am I to complain, anyway? What I felt isn't right, was the unexpected, and a bit too unreal, love-triangle that formed somewhere near the end of the book. Sure, I usually don't mind it, but it seemed a bit forced, especially when Casper herself never had feelings for the new *beau* before then.

Overall, *The Kings of Charleston* is a good read for those seeking for mystery and a bit of romance. A very good read; 3.5 stars.

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### **Justin says**

*The Kings of Charleston* wasn't quite as great as I was hoping it would be. It was still a good book though, there was just some things that I got a little aggravated about. Kat is a talented writer, her story was well written and concise but when it came to the characters I was a little let down by them which I will discuss later. I was looking for an epic mystery which I really didn't find in this book, I did however find a good mystery.

The overall feel of the story is great. The plot is engaging, which was awesome. I found myself connecting to the plot more than anything else. I wanted to know what was going to happen, and if things might work out the way I had pictured it. There are a lot of things that go on that you won't expect which I also love. I like it when authors make you think something, and then blow you out of the water with some crazy event that takes place later in the book.

The characters were my main problem with this book. They were all well written, but I just didn't find myself connecting to them. Even though they were written well, they all felt somewhat bland. I kept trying to find some redeeming factor in them that would allow me to really be able to connect with them and enjoy the story more but it just wasn't there. I am hoping that as the series continues there will be a little more emphasis on improving the characters and making them easier to connect to. Kat was really on the right track with them though, they have a good voice it just needs to be a little stronger.

Overall this book was decent. Not my favorite, but I feel like if some of the things I mentioned above are improved on as the series continues it could get a lot better. One major plus for this book though was the ending, things really did start to pick up so I have pretty high hopes for the rest of this series and will be reading them for sure. If you mystery, suspense, etc then I would suggest that you check this book out. As I said, it isn't the most incredible book out there but it is worth reading. And I think that the rest of the series will be a step up from this first book.

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### **Raina {The LUV'NV} says**

*The Kings of Charleston* is one of those books I find hard to review. For one, I don't want to spoil the plot,

which is the strongest attribute the book has. Two, I'm torn, with a lot of mixed feelings. There were parts I loved and others I didn't like at all.

As soon as I started the book, I was pulled into the female protagonist's life as the heir of a business empire, and I liked her immediately. Casper is no Southern Belle or typical teenage blue blood. She's a tomboy who loves horses and isn't at the top of the high school food chain though she comes from an affluent family. Although she has the perfect socialite mother, her hard-working father built the business from the ground up, and Casper's childhood sounded wholesome and down to earth along with charmed and exclusive.

She's an ordinary girl with possibly ideal circumstances, but that's just it—she's ordinary. By the end of the story, I didn't know how I felt about *her*, as a character. I liked her well enough, but I didn't love her. I wanted to see her grow, but as I did, I was underwhelmed. She started out as a small fish in a big pond. I felt she stayed that way, and I was more fascinated with the pond—the society, her parents and friends—than her.

Then there's Cal, the love interest. While he was mysterious and supposedly gorgeous, I didn't love him. That could just be me, though. There were moments he started to grow on me, but he was so secretive and rarely spent time with Casper that it was one step forward, two steps back with him, and I found the connection between them hard to believe. I needed more than "You're beautiful" coming out of his mouth to believe genuine affection.

I did, however, love Alex, one of Cal's best friends. Now he did mystery and gorgeous just right, as well as inner conflict. He oozed all that from every pore. He was fun, charming, and I could feel the war within him. The interaction and connection between him and Casper was more believable and palpable than hers and Cal's, too. All of the secondary characters and their relationships with Casper were great, actually. It was the main characters and their relationship that didn't work for me.

Although the Romance disappointed me, the mystery aspect was really intriguing and better written. I needed to know all about the secret society Casper finds herself thrown into and how she unravels it. There were parts I thought the writing needed some work—less sentence and action repetition, unnecessary details, etc.—but I couldn't put the book down until everything was revealed.

*The Kings of Charleston* was good, just not what I was expecting and in the way I expected. With intrigue and unique elements, Kat Clayton captured a shady high society, and I'm interested enough in the storyline and the secondary characters to read the next book. Fans of YA novels with a mafia plot might want to check this one out.

\*eBook provided by the author via Xpresso Book Tours in exchange for a review. Thank you!

**\*Review also posted on the The LUV'NV blog.**

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### **Heather says**

There were a couple of things that attracted me to *The Kings of Charleston* after reading the synopsis. First off, I am a big fan of secret societies in the books I read. I love the mystery, the initiations, all of it. Plus it feels like most secret societies in books and films are either a) totally elitist and snobby (and thus, aching to be trounced in a very public fashion) or b) sinister and foreboding in nature, and usually up to no good. The

Kings of Charleston definitely gave me a sinister vibe. And I really wasn't sure if there was a supernatural or paranormal element at work before I started reading, so I was curious about that as well.

And I also liked that this book was set in the south. I'm a Florida girl, and have actually never visited Charleston, South Carolina, but I'm drawn to books with southern settings, be they East Coast, Gulf Coast, or Deep South.

So, basically the story goes like this: Casper Whitley, heir to family fortune built on thoroughbred horse breeding and racing, is completely uprooted and distraught when her family moves her from her beloved Kentucky horse farm to Charleston. Once there, she begins to meet new business associates of her father's, including one very hot guy by the name of Cal (why are guys named Cal in YA book's hot? Has anyone else noticed this trend? I digress...) But something about this new life, and the new people they are surrounded by, just doesn't feel right to Casper. She notices that a painting in her house which bears the inscription Kythera on it is also in Cal's home. What's more, Cal, his family, and some of the other new friends she meets all have black cars with a red "K" marking them. And then there are the tattoos that Cal and some of the others have that also have that strange word Kythera on them. Casper, still reeling from the move, wants to know more but every time she questions someone about Kythera, be it Cal or just a random Charleston local, they clam up and change the subject. Hmmm. Very curious indeed...

I won't go into any more details because part of the fun is trying to figure out what the mystery of Kythera is exactly. But as I was reading I was reminded of John Grisham's book (and adapted film) *The Firm*. Remember that? Recent law school graduate is courted by a big firm who offer him a ton of money but in the end turn out to not only be extremely shady, but also seek to control every aspect of his life. Like that book, there are quite a few twists and turns and surprising revelations in *The Kings of Charleston* as well.

I will say that as far as characterization, some of those featured in *The Kings of Charleston* felt like they could have been better developed. Well fleshed out characters is a big thing for me when I'm reading, and I would have liked more in that regard.

And, as you can surmise from the synopsis, there is definitely a romance at play. The romance was fine in my opinion, but there was insta-love in full effect, something that I'm not a big fan of. And, hate to tell you, but this one does end with a bit of a cliffhanger! (The good news is that the second book is already out!) On the bright side there is no love triangle, so woo hoo for that! :)

In the end I was entertained by *The Kings of Charleston* and the story that Ms. Clayton crafted. I was hoping for better character development, and more realistic romance, but was pleased with the mysterious secret society plot and southern setting.

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