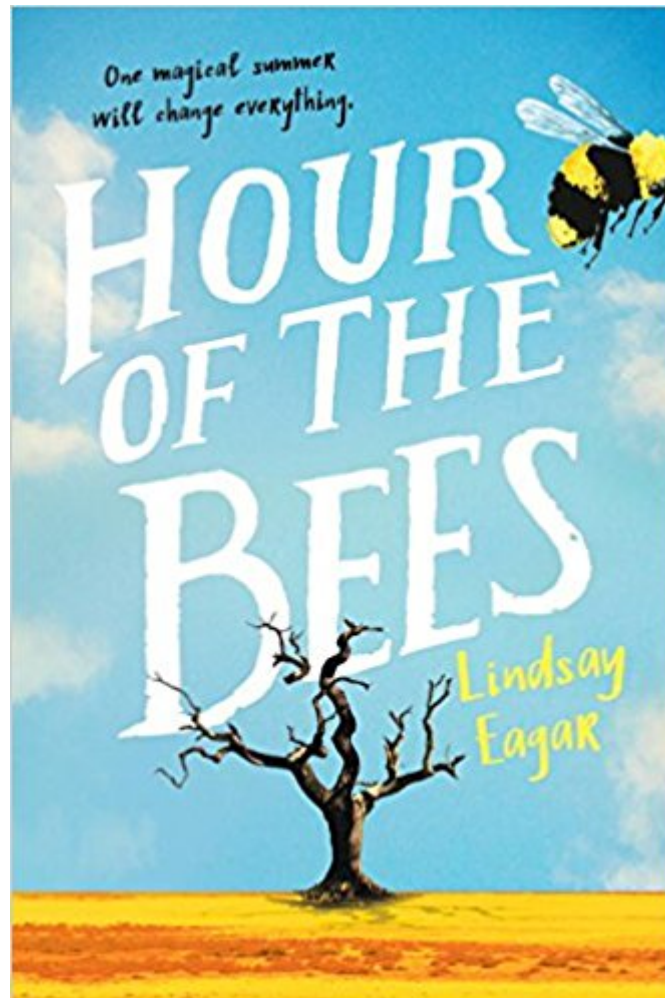




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# Hour Of The Bees



## Synopsis

What does it mean to be fully alive? Magic blends with reality in a stunning coming-of-age novel about a girl, a grandfather, wanderlust, and reclaiming your roots. Things are only impossible if you stop to think about them. . . . While her friends are spending their summers having pool parties and sleepovers, twelve-year-old Carolina *—* Carol *—* is spending hers in the middle of the New Mexico desert, helping her parents move the grandfather she *—*, *—*s never met into a home for people with dementia. At first, Carol avoids prickly Grandpa Serge. But as the summer wears on and the heat bears down, Carol finds herself drawn to him, fascinated by the crazy stories he tells her about a healing tree, a green-glass lake, and the bees that will bring back the rain and end a hundred years of drought. As the thin line between magic and reality starts to blur, Carol must decide for herself what is possible *—* and what it means to be true to her roots. Readers who dream that there *—*, *—*s something more out there will be enchanted by this captivating novel of family, renewal, and discovering the wonder of the world.

## Book Information

Paperback: 368 pages

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Best Sellers Rank: #57,073 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #74 in *—* Books > Children's Books

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in *—* Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life > Multigenerational

Age Range: 10 - 14 years

Grade Level: 5 - 9

## Customer Reviews

Gr 4 *—* 6 *—* • Twelve-year-old Carol is forced to spend her summer on her Latino grandfather's remote ranch in the sweltering New Mexican desert. The family is there to ready the ranch for sale and move grandpa into an assisted-living home. Carol's father, Raul, has a broken

relationship with his father, and his children have never met their prickly grandfather. But Serge's dementia has forced Raul to return home and face some hard facts. Almarie Guerra does a nice job narrating throughout, and her portrayal of Carol is authentically that of a preteen. The story itself is laden with metaphor (bees, eternal life, alternative measurements of time), which may be difficult for some listeners in the intended age range to grasp. The narrative moves between real time and a past full of magical realism. This shift is marked by italics in the print version to let readers know that the subplot is about to begin. Sadly, this was not mimicked in any way in the audiobook. Listeners are left to figure things out as the narration continues on as before. This may adversely affect overall comprehension and frustrate even the most ardent listeners. VERDICT Despite the narrator's strong performance, the audiobook is flawed. There is nothing to separate the past stories from the present, leaving listeners adrift each time a shift occurs. ["A sentimental but undistinguished coming-of-age story with touches of magical realism": SLJ 3/16 review of the Candlewick book.]  
—Joan Kindig, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Eagar seamlessly blends a 12-year-old girl's summer of change with a hefty dose of magical realism in this accomplished debut...Fairytale motifs ("No rain for a hundred years") emphasize the stark physicality of the New Mexican mesa, with its oppressive heat, spindly sheep, and numerous dangers. Through this atmospheric setting, Eagar sustains a sense of wonder and longing for small things (bees, seeds, stories) to respond to big human needs.  
—Publishers Weekly (starred review)Tightly plotted and elegantly characterized, this is a striking debut. Both Carol's journey and Serge's stories seem inherently true, and the juxtaposition of the two results in a moving, atmospheric novel of family, heritage, and fairy tales that are more real than not.  
—Booklist (starred review)The delicate magic of Serge's story ties present and past together in a beautifully written, affecting story of forgiveness and understanding that enables Carol to move forward in her own life, resetting her values and claiming her own place in her grandfather's story. Her sulks, fears, and desires render her credibly twelve, and the storytelling ably prepares readers for her less predictable decisions. Offering a compelling introduction to Latin American magic realism, this will have appeal for middle-school lovers of literary fiction.  
—Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books (starred review)Serge and Carolina's story is a touching reminder to "squeeze the juice out of every day" and remember where (and who) you call home. A poignant intergenerational story about finding and honoring your roots.  
—Kirkus ReviewsReaders who enjoy Pam Muñoz Ryan's novels or

Jennifer Cervantes's *Tortilla Sun* (Chronicle, 2010) will find Carol's angst compelling and her wide-eyed brushes with the likes of magical bees and life-giving trees amusing. •School Library Journal  
*Hour of the Bees* is as grand as the landscape it springs from, an ode to family and heritage but also to living fearlessly. Forget about the middle-grade designation; everyone who reads this will be touched, and quite possibly moved to re-secure their family ties. Dreamlike while also gritty and real, this is a gorgeous work of art. •BookPage  
Lindsay Eagar has said that her novel "Hour of the Bees" first came to her as a title without a story, involving elements •bees approaching a man named Serge •whose meanings she did not know. Only after she had finished writing did it all make sense to her, which is a nice echo of what the reader will experience in this mystical, memorable riddle of a book. •The Wall Street Journal  
This is a deeply moving story on so many levels. The family dynamics are so real that readers will be drawn to the emotions and actions of each of the characters...The author does an excellent job of offering character struggles that most readers can relate to •Carolina with her sister Alta, and Carolina's dad with Grandpa Serge. Bordering on magical realism, this book will leave its readers spellbound and is destined to be a favorite enjoyed by readers of all ages. •School Library Connection

Gorgeous and lush magical realism with strong, relatable characters and fantastic setting that is almost a character on its own. I was swept deeply into this story and didn't want to stop reading. Very easy to booktalk to any reader: A girl has to spend the summer with her family at her grandpa's ranch -- she's never met him before and isn't sure what to think, but finds herself drawn to him despite a long-ago dispute he and her father have. He starts to tell her a story of a magic tree that keeps the people of the village safe. The children in her grandfather's story have the same names as her grandparents. Is it a real story? Or is it just her grandpa getting his words mixed up as his mind slips away?

When I started this book I wasn't sure it was for me, but a little way in I couldn't put it down. Some books touch your heart , you can read them over and over and love it every time. This book fills your soul your heart and your mind. A treasure for sure.

Absorbing, emotional, and bursting with magical realism, *Hour of the Bees* is a book that challenges readers's ideas about what they know and what they think they know. Carol is a relatable, imperfect protagonist, struggling to deal with the changes in her family and her

relationships and her own sense of who she is. Her resistance to the impossible ideas her grandfather states with such conviction is believable, as is her slow change of heart when unexplainable events support his tales of a life-giving tree in the desert. The details of the story may shimmer between literal and figurative like waves of heat in the desert, but the reader, like Carol, comes to see that it doesn't matter if her grandfather's stories are real or not only that they are true.

This book is one of those stories that reaches out and grabs your attention right from the beginning. This book covers so many potential connections to its readers. Dementia, grandparents, family dynamics, distance, love, and story telling.

The story was a bit unusual compared to others in middle grade that I've read because of the main relationship on the page - kid and grandparent. I loved it. Maybe in part because the character who was the grandfather was just fantastic. I truly enjoyed him. Or maybe because I had a close relationship with my grandparents and this struck a nostalgic chord with me. The other aspect I really enjoyed was the magic and the unusual and thoughtful way it was brought to the story ( don't want to give too much away on that).

Hour of the Bees grabbed my attention and pulled me into a beautiful tale of family and love and loss. I read it in one sitting and highly recommend it. Infact Hour of the Bees is my choice for bookclub next month and Im sure it will be well received and loved by all who read it!

I thought this was a beautiful, lyrical story with a touch of magic realism to it and excellent characters. I did feel the imagery of the "bees" was a bit much, but overall a great book.

good book

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