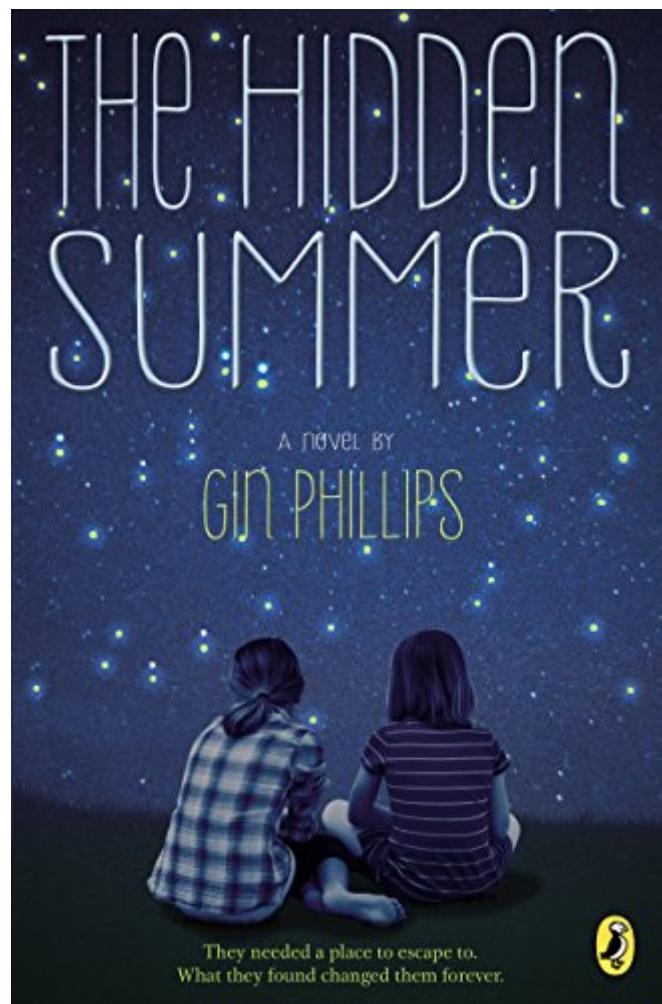


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# The Hidden Summer



## **Synopsis**

After a falling out between their mothers, 13-year-old best friends Nell and Lydia are forbidden from seeing each other for the whole summer. Nell struggles with the thought of not only losing her best friend, but also losing the only person in whom Nell finds refuge from the difficulties she faces at home. Determined to find a place of their own, Nell and Lydia spend the summer hiding out in an abandoned golf course where Nell and Lydia find mysterious symbols scattered throughout the grounds. As they reveal the secret of the symbols, Nell discovers she isn't the only one seeking haven and begins to uncover what's really been hidden all along, finally allowing herself to be truly seen. *Hidden Summer* is a quietly beautiful coming of age story about self-discovery, family, and friendship. An elegantly written children's book debut from an award-winning author in the vein of *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* and for fans of *Moon Over Manifest*.

## **Book Information**

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## Customer Reviews

A touching book about the length people will go to have a friend. I love her friends hideaway in the spaceship almost as much as I like her's in the dinosaur. And the people she meets living in the aquarium (and no, I'm not going to spoil it and tell you who), it simply touched my heart. A brilliant book by a good author, and a must read for all!

I loved the tone of the story. The characters and challenges were real, and the sense of adventure and uncertainty that characterizes this age group was palpable. I thoroughly enjoyed this author's latest work.

Gave this book to a school requested by a teacher.

super

Good book

One thing I notice is that in books, a lot of kids' parents are dead. Or they're missing or on vacation. If they are around, the parents are kind and wise and do things like braid your hair and play board games with you. In books, parents aren't bad unless they're stepparents. (That's not fair, in my opinion. I've had several stepparents, and some of them were very nice.) Real parents are nice to their kids. That is not my experience. Nell's thoughts in *The Hidden Summer* by Gin Phillips (page 13), sum up the "mother problem" that is in a lot of middle grade fiction. I loved the observation that the parents are missing, and in fact, this whole story is how Nell and her best friend Lydia escape for the summer. They're sort of 9 to 5 runaways, inventing excuses for their summer-long absence, as a means of dealing with their own mother problems. Nell's mother is not really abusive, but she does have angry outbursts, and she doesn't seem to like Nell at all. Lydia's life seems perfect - a perfect house, perfect mom - but it's all about appearances. Lydia's mom also seems indifferent about her being around or not. I loved the idea of the adventure of packing food and supplies and having a getaway hangout. It reminded me a lot of one of my all-time favorite childhood books, *Mandy* by Julie Andrews. This

novel read a bit more like an exciting adventure than these others which are more introspective. In fact, while I was consulting the book for my review, my 4th grade son (who isn't drawn to quiet introspective books) said that it sounded good after reading the back. Because it's not quite so deep, it is one that is easily accessible to the younger 4th graders of the middle-grade reading set, even though the girls are 12, and in spite of the fact that my public library shelved it in the YA section.

Both of my daughters read The Hidden Summer and loved it. The book has well-developed characters that the kids understood, cared for and now miss. As well, the setting of an abandoned putt-putt course fits every kids' wildest imagination while introducing a deep and thought-provoking theme. A great summer read for age 9+.

Was a little mysterious, just the kind of mysterious adventure a tween dreams of having. I would totally recommend it for any and all tweaks.

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