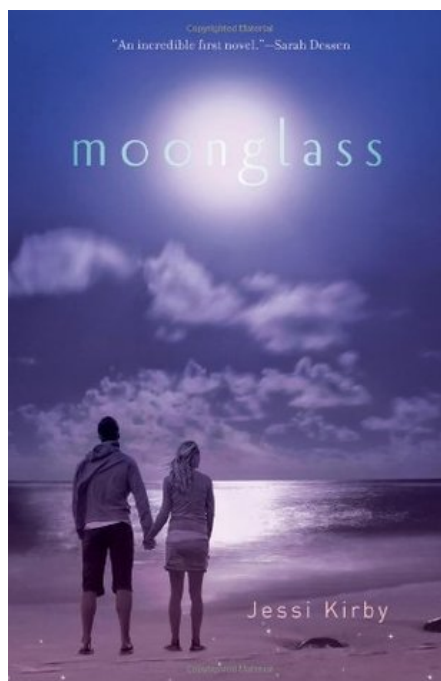




Moonglass

Jessi Kirby

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Jessi Kirby

Moonglass Jessi Kirby

I read once that water is a symbol for emotions. And for a while now, I've thought maybe my mother drowned in both.

Anna's life is upended when her father accepts a job transfer the summer before her junior year. It's bad enough that she has to leave her friends and her life behind, but her dad is moving them to the beach where her parents first met and fell in love--a place awash in memories that Anna would just as soon leave under the surface.

While life on the beach is pretty great, with ocean views and one adorable lifeguard in particular, there are also family secrets that were buried along the shore years ago. And the ebb and flow of the ocean's tide means that nothing--not the sea glass that she collects on the sand and not the truths behind Anna's mother's death--stays buried forever.

Moonglass Details

Date : Published May 3rd 2011 by Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers

ISBN : 9781442416949

Author : Jessi Kirby

Format : Hardcover 232 pages

Genre : Young Adult, Romance, Contemporary, Realistic Fiction

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From Reader Review Moonglass for online ebook

Melissa says

ACTUAL RATING: 3.5 STARS

This was a real, moving story of a girl struggling with the death of her mother, but compared to similar stories, this one falls a little behind.

I think I had too high of hopes for this novel. Don't get me wrong--it's pretty good, and I don't regret reading it for a single second. But earlier this summer I read *Things We Know By Heart* by Jessi Kirby and it was just...incredible. It's one of my favorite reads of this year, and it made its way to my favorite books of all time. That's how good it is. So I was hoping this would be just as fantastic, and it wasn't. Solid, sure. But not an endless wave of amazingness like I was expecting.

Anna is a strong, fascinating character, and she is written very honestly. I am very critical about grief fiction, but this was done very well and showed a lot of the different emotions that surround losing someone.

The ending felt a little too hopeful, though. I know that sounds weird, but without being spoilery, Anna has a breakthrough of sorts and it helps her deal with her tornado of grief. And then she's fantastic; she feels like a new, happy person. That just isn't quite accurate. Grief comes in waves. But in this novel, **after one good moment for Anna, it's written like everything is going to go back to normal and she'll never be sad again. It's not realistic.** I wish it was tweaked here and there to make it a little more honest. It's a small dislike, because in general it was done really well, but the ending was just a tad off.

In the end, I really did like this story. It was just a little too short and I had a little too high of expectations.

Racquel says

Totally sweet♥

This review is also posted on my blog: The Book Barbies

At first I thought this book was about mermaid, I don't know how I got that idea in my head because this is realistic contemporary at it's best!

Jessi Kirby portrayed the characters realistically from Anna the MC, to rich girl Ashely who comes off as stereotypical but thank goodness, Kirby saved her and actually gave her layers! Also, this is a complete beach read and who doesn't love those? Man, the way Kirby describes the beach or when Anna even mentions it makes me want to pull out my bikini and go to the nearest beach.

The romance was done well, it wasn't insta-love-let's-get-married-and-have-babies but like a normal females teenagers, Anna saw a sexy guy with no shirt on posed as a lifeguard and like a female Homo sapien she felt an attraction and wanted to get to know him better. Nothing more then that, there was no love at first sight besides the realistic, normal partner chasing (being done on Anna's part which I loved!!) and after that, Tyler and Anna's feelings grew. Let's all take a moment to praise Kirby for this!

To be honest though, first and foremost, I am a romance fan but with Moonglass, I was more interested to see what's going to happen with Anna and her father than Anna and Tyler. I cared for Tyler and his relationship with Anna (it definitely was realistic, sweet and I loved it) but I was aching to get to the parts with Anna and her dad to see what will happen between, it was amazing how Kirby blossomed their awkward relationship throughout the book and when Anna and her dad were having their 'confrontation' at the end, I TEARED UP. Yes, I was in the middle of my Aquatic Science class on the verge of tears. Thanks Kirby! And lastly, I loved the mystery behind Anna's mother, what happened to her and the cottages and the tie in with the crawling man and who he is is just AWESOME.

If you haven't read Moonglass, I suggest you wait until summer time to read it because it's a perfect beach read that made me a fan of Jessie Kirby, she has great writing style, she knows what's she's writing about when she's creating her YA world and I can't wait for her sophomore novel, In Honor!

-thank you&come again.

Sarah (YA Love) says

I read some mixed reviews for this one, but I wanted to read it anyway, especially after my mom read it and told me how much she liked it. The blurb from Sarah Dessen helped too. I ended up really enjoying Moonglass. It's a wonderful summer read, full of beaches, lifeguards, etc. Don't let the beach atmosphere fool you. Yes there's a budding romance, but Anna is really struggling with the memory of her mother's death. This challenges her relationship with her father and her ability to grow as a person. It's an emotional read that I didn't want to put down.

Christina (A Reader of Fictions) says

Having recently accepted the startling fact that I love depressing contemporary novels, I have begun to work on a huge backlist of titles I've missed out on because I looked at the subject and scurried in the other direction. Having heard great things about Jessi Kirby's books, I added her to my tbr pile, and my crazy system of choosing reads told me that it was time. Right now, I want to pat my crazy rituals on the back for choosing such a good book for me to read.

Actually, based on the cover, I feared that Moonglass might be cheesy, but it was actually true, touching and oddly magical. Kirby's writing caught me right away, like a rip tide catches a swimmer, only perhaps not so menacing. Her prose has this natural beauty to it, and she describes the settings perfectly. Her author blurb at the back informed me that she actually lives in the same sort of place she wrote about and her love for the ocean, the cottages, and walking on the beach really shine through.

The book also has a sort of dreamy quality to it, and not just because a few of Anna's dreams are sprinkled through the text in italics. Most any scene in nature had this eerie, ethereal, slightly magical quality, and it set the tone so well. Some authors transport the reader to a place, and Kirby certainly does that. Though I'm not a visual reader, I could picture the settings vividly, because of how well Kirby describes everything.

In another thrilling turn of events, Moonglass turned out to be less about romance, as implied by the cover, and more about family. Anna's mother died when she was seven, and she and her father never really talk about it, which has come to bother Anna more and more, especially now that they're moving back to where her parents met. Now, do not take away from this that we have another neglected child, because we don't.

Anna's dad loves her, both in words and actions. He can be a bit overprotective, sure, but what loving dad isn't? Even better, though they have rough patches, Anna and her dad really talk and they hang out together regularly, like at the weekly Poke-N-Eat dinners.

The characters all felt very real to me, and their relationships felt very natural. Anna, adventurous but reserved, does not make friends particularly easily. On her first day, a girl she expects to hate (the kind with a little dog in an oversized purse) approaches her and basically insists on them being friends and coerces Anna into joining the cross country team. Ashley has tons of money, is a bit of a ditz, and has nothing in common with Anna. She's the kind of person I generally despise, but, like Anna, I could not help being charmed by her good heart and generosity. For example, Anna lies to her about her mother, because she hates the pity when people know her mom died, and, usually when that happens in YA, the friend storms off in a huff, but Ashley immediately accepts it and moves into helping mode. Ashley's not the brightest about most things, but she's a genius about people.

Of course, there is a romance, but a very sweet, understated one. There are no declarations of love and it has all the awkwardness of a high school crush. Other than the fact that Anna gets the hottest guy in school, the romance felt very much not tropey. Actually, not only are their no "I love yous," but Anna and Tyler really don't profess their feelings at all. They're totally in the awkward what-are-we phase for all of the book, which totally happens in real life but I haven't really seen much in fiction. They have a lot of awkward silences, but they're definitely growing closer to one another slowly. I enjoyed this, particularly with it on the back burner.

Kirby tackles a dark subject but surrounds it with so much beauty that I think Moonglass will satisfy both readers of darker and lighter contemporary novels. This was just such a lovely, flowing novel. Now I'm off to add all of Kirby's other books to my tbr list.

Carolina says

There's one place on Earth I want to go to more than any place else. New Zealand. But I didn't grow up wanting to go there. I merely read about it a few years ago--in a work of fiction. The setting was so vivid, so inspiring and beautiful, even with all its fictional flaws, that I made a vow to go there someday. Maybe live there.

Okay. So.

Guess what new place I'm determined to go to? The latest addition to my bucket list? Crystal Cove. MOONGLASS has done this. No, Jessi Kirby has done this. Reading MOONGLASS was a bit like sitting at the beach, digging my toes in the sand, the scent of salt in the air, the sound of waves crashing and children laughing and seagulls screeching in the distance. I swear I could smell the coconut sunscreen. When I closed my eyes, I could see the white teeth against tan skin, the finely cut abs coming up out of the red swim trunks...the sparkling sea glass half buried in the sand. Kirby knows how to paint a picture and then suck you into it. I don't know that I've ever been more absorbed in a story's setting.

But while the setting might lure you in, it's the characters that will have you reading to the end at a breakneck speed. What starts out as a more typical new-girl-in-a-new-town story quickly turns into something much more complex, more beautiful, and far more heartbreaking. It is exactly what a story of a girl who has lost her mother should be. No melodrama or trivialization. And most importantly, no stereotypes (and yet perfectly relatable characters). Just a girl who is lost, finding her way as best as she can to answers--and to herself. Anna also happens to be the kind of character I would love to have as a friend, so spending a book with her was cake. She's laid back, more of an observer than a reactor, just on the edge of snarky, but kind--

and she's confident in her differences and who she is. Her only real insecurities revolve around her mom, and those drive the plot in a very natural, genuine way. Then of course, there's the secondary characters which feel as appealing and three dimensional as Anna. The romance is built up beautifully, and in an unexpected way. The love interest contradicted nearly all of my expectations--and I'm a sucker for any book that can take me by surprise like this.

As if that weren't enough, the prose is gorgeous with turns of phrase that will have your breath catching. And the images Kirby creates--it's like opening a picture book. So sharp, so memorable. And so perfectly in tune with Anna, delivered to us through her eyes, adding to our understanding of who she is. All of it--the setting, the characters, the writing--it's like a trifecta of bookish awesomeness. It's not an action-packed, suspense-filled sort of book, but it's packed with tension and curiosity and love and humor and heart-wrenching soul-searching. MOONGLASS is more than just a coming of age novel. It's a quest for forgiveness, understanding, and acceptance of a reality that cannot be altered.

Reynje says

Jessi Kirby's 2011 debut, *Moonglass*, is a gentle, introspective novel about facing the past and moving forward. Reminiscent of Sarah Dessen's thoughtful, subdued style, Kirby has an excellent grasp of teen emotions and beautifully captures the internal journey of her sixteen-year-old protagonist, Anna.

The focus of *Moonglass* is fixed squarely on Anna's emotional arc – understanding and acceptance of her family's past in order to embrace her future. She begins the story unsettled and guarded, having just relocated with her father before commencing her Junior year. Leaving her friends and former life behind, Anna soon realises that her new home holds the key to long neglected memories and the secrets of her deceased Mother.

Anna is a refreshingly confident and self-assured character, and her voice is fluid, effortless to follow. While dealing with the challenges of starting at a new school and making new friends, she has a strong sense of a self and a solid relationship with her father that prevents the opening of the story from falling into overused “new girl” clichés.

Moonglass tackles several heavy themes, such as suicide and mental illness, yet it never feels cumbersome to read. Kirby's light style affords the subject matter the necessary gravity and respect without weighing the narrative down or coming across awkwardly didactic. Through Anna's perspective, the issues presented feel authentic and organically developed. As Anna gradually learns the truth about her mother and comes to accept certain facts about her life, the emotional repercussions feel realistic and in keeping with her characterisation.

While there's a romantic element to *Moonglass*, it is by no means the focus on the story. Rather, it is a subplot that complements Anna's internal journey. Kirby uses a light hand, choosing to tentatively progress the connection between Anna and Tyler, while keeping the spotlight on Anna's familial relationships, past and present.

It's a character driven, sedately paced story – carefully layered and developed in order to create the depth required for the climax. In this respect, some may find the pacing rather placid, particularly if accustomed to plot-driven novels. However, while I read *Moonglass* more slowly than I anticipated, I appreciated that focus was on crafting believable characters.

My only real reservation about Moonglass is that I occasionally found the symbolism a little obvious and heavy handed. Though thematically appropriate, some of the motifs (sea glass, mermaids etc) did begin to feel somewhat laboured.

Despite this, Moonglass is a solid, touching contemporary with strong characters and a slightly different take on the central issues. Highly recommended for fans of Sarah Dessen and Sarah Ockler.

This review also appears at The Midnight Garden

Christina (Reading Extensively) says

Moonglass is a lovely story that works because it focuses on Anna's relationship with her dad and the loss of her mom. If more time had been devoted to the romance or Anna's experiences as the new girl in town then it wouldn't have had the same impact. We do meet a number of characters that play a part in Anna's healing such as Tyler, Anna's love interest. Though the romance is not the focus of the story, I really liked reading about Anna and Tyler. Their relationship is not intense or "love at first sight" (though Anna is interested from the beginning). The characters take the time to get to know each other and the romance never overwhelms the story but instead enhances it.

Anna's new friends Jillian and Ashley also help Anna in their own way. Ashley is one of those great characters who on the surface appears to be a flake but surprises the reader (and Anna) by being a caring and supportive friend. She could have easily ditched Anna to hang out with wealthier and more popular people but she sticks with Anna even when Anna isn't as warm towards her. Jillian like Anna, has suffered a personal tragedy-her sister was killed by a drunk driver. Unlike Anna, Jillian is able to talk about it but both girls struggle with blaming themselves for their respective loss.

At the beginning of the book, Anna is sullen and angry towards her dad both about the move and because they no longer talk about what happened with her mom. As she starts to let go and build a new life for herself, we see flashes of the warmth and camaraderie that Anna and her dad used to share. It is obvious that though he isn't perfect, he is a good father and equally obvious that though Anna is upset, she still very much loves her dad. I liked how Anna and her dad begin to reconnect and I liked seeing her grow. I also really liked the writing style and the use of themes and imagery (mermaids, sea glass, running). The parallel stories of Jillian and the beach tragedy from years ago also added to the story. Overall I was really pleased with this debut novel and I look forward to seeing what Jessi Kirby will write next. I would suggest Moonglass to fans of Sarah Dessen, Sarah Ockler, and Heidi Kling.

Readalikes: Sea by Heidi Kling, Twenty Boy Summer by Sarah Ockler, The Truth About Forever by Sarah Dessen, The Sky is Everywhere by Jandy Nelson, Elizabeth Scott

Yani says

I liked this book, plain and simple. However, I wanted to LOVE it! It has all those elements that lead for a great book: the beach, a cute boy, single dad, loss of a family member... but for some reason I just didn't connect like I wanted to. Don't take it the wrong way, it was still a tragic and beautiful story - definitely al la Sarah Dessen style - but I can't profess my love and favoritism over it. I think if you are looking for something that touches your heart and has a little romance, you might enjoy this book.

~Tina~ says

Moonglass is a story about a girl named Anna, who lost her mother when she was just seven year old. Ten years later, Anna and her dad move out to Crystal Cove where her father has been transfered and also where her parents meet and fell in love.

Starting over at a new place comes pretty easy to Anna, already meeting a nice girl and the cute lifeguard on the beach, but soon old stories and memories surface about Anna's family history and eventually Anna has to face the mysteries about her mother and what really happened to her.

...and well, that's pretty much all that happened in this book.

I think I might have hyped this one in my head a little to much, cause it wasn't exactly what I thought it would be about. Not that this book was bad, cause it wasn't. I didn't love it nor did I hate it, I guess it was just an okay read.

Jessi Kirby's writing is well done. Strong, steady and definitely had it's captivating moments, more so during the stories about the history of the beach and cottages around it and the people who lived there and it did have a few scenes that I enjoyed, the dive off the rocks being the main one and the story that went with it, but other then that, there wasn't much plot to this book.

A myth was delicately weaved into the storyline, making me wonder throughout the book. It was a sweet touch once this story was said and done and I almost wanted to believe in it and wanted it to be real just as much as Anna did. But, as it turns out this is a very simply story, lovely in it's own light, when the water and moonlight is being described with vision and beauty, but it also lacked that spark that could have made this book really stand out.

I liked Anna, she's a confident person, comfortable in her own skin and skills and I liked how she didn't judge people even though she clearly wanted to. My heart wanted to go out to her in the end of this book, but it ended just as fast as it started that I didn't have time to really sympathize.

I liked Tyler as well but there relationship wasn't properly developed and we didn't get enough screen time between the two. There were a few scenes, sure, but it would always be cut short, so I had a hard time connecting with them as a couple. Not that I need endless hot kisses and sweet romance to satisfy my reading experience, but it's a factor I thought would be somewhat explored in a book like this, so it was kinda of a disappointing when it wasn't delivered in the way I expected.

All in all, this book lacked and had it's flaws, yes, but it also had it's moments as well. It turned out to be a decent stand alone read and a promising start for a debut novel. I look forward to seeing what Kirby has in store for us next.

Angela says

Breezy but touching read about family & forgiveness

As a debut novel, Jessi Kirby's *Moonglass* delivers a breezy but touching read about dealing with the past and moving forward. After years living along the beach where her mother died, Anna is uprooted when her father takes a new job. Despite being angry about the move, Anna soon learns that her new beach home is

closer to her mother's memory than she expected. She also finds that new friends and a new perspective might bring her closer to understanding her father and the tragic past that has distanced them.

This short, succinct book has so many things to like about it. Kirby's writing is clean and clear, and the story doesn't dwell too long on anything, resulting in excellent pacing. Great dialogue that always felt real also moves the story forward. Anna is a confident, capable, and self-assured character that I believed could be a real teen. The romance, while present, wasn't the focus and didn't overwhelm the main story about Anna and her father. The author also creates an excellent sense of place and beach culture. Whether the characters were walking on the beach or exploring deserted cottages, I could imagine being there too.

The greatest strength of the novel, however, lies in Anna's relationship with her father and how it's depicted. Their relationship is touching, even with their reservations around each other, and felt very honest. Anna's father is portrayed as a real person, complete with his own emotions, friends, and issues. Despite Anna's frustration with him and their growing silence about her mother, he is there for her. I really enjoyed reading about this type of parent-teen relationship instead of the absent or neglectful parents so often seen in young adult literature.

Though all of these things were great, the story had a few places where improvements could be made. Some plot points were too convenient or predictable, and the characters' problems were often resolved a little too easily. Some descriptions in the first part of the story also made Anna seem a bit shallow and too boy-focused. Tyler, the love interest, came across as too cocky to be really swoon-worthy. Ashley, while a great secondary character, also seemed a bit unrealistic in her immediate connection and friendship with Anna, especially since Ashley could have been friends with many other people due to her combination of beauty, wealth, and personality.

Even with these quibbles, *MOONGLASS* was just the summer beach read with a bit of substance that I needed now as winter sets in. I look forward to reading what Kirby writes in the future, and I hope that fans of similar authors (Sarah Dessen, Deb Caletti) will snap up her work too.

Amanda says

Moonglass is a book that I probably would have never picked up had the Jessi Kirby hype been at such an extreme level for these past few weeks. What I really wanted to read of Kirby's was her newest publication, *Golden*, but unfortunately my library did not have a copy yet, so I decided to bide my time waiting for a copy of *Golden* by reading Kirby's debut.

It's been nearly ten years since Anna Ryan's mother died. Ten years since she trailed behind her mother on the beach, watching as her mother walked straight into the ocean, never to return. Since then Anna and her father have worked to achieve a semblance of normalcy in their lives. They appear to be doing all right when Anna's father suddenly announces that he's taken a job in the southern California coastal town of Crystal Cove. Anna is not happy about leaving the town she's lived in all her life, nor her friends and her grandmother, and giving up the daily walks along the beach where she last saw her mother.

As Anna adjusts to a new home, new friends, and a new beachfront view, she learns that there was a particular reason her dad chose to take a job here. It was at Crystal Cove that Anna's mother was raised and where her parents met one another. And perhaps it is in Crystal Cove where Anna can come to terms with her parents' pasts and finally be able to address her family's present and future.

First and foremost, *Moonglass* is a novel about grief. Although her mother has now been gone for longer

than she was there for Anna, she remains an important part of Anna's life. Anna keeps up the nighttime walks along the beach, searching for sea glass by the moonlight, or moonglass, as she and her mother referred to it. In these past ten years, her mother's death has created a rift between Anna and her father. At first they talked often about her mother and what had happened to her. But over the years Anna simply stopped asking questions, also turning away from the mutual support her father could provide. Grief is ever present in the story, but is handled not as an outpouring of emotion, but as a constant longing.

Just as central to the story is Anna's father and the relationship she has with him. While Anna continues to feel confused and broken over her mother's death, she is hesitant to expose her feelings to her father. Consciously or not, Anna has difficulties expressing her grief in front of him. While the move to Crystal Cove initially helps Anna begin to accept the person her mother once was, it is an equally important factor in beginning to mend the rift that has developed between Anna and her father.

Contrasted with the strong focus on family bonds, Anna's friendships and romance are appropriately relegated to secondary concerns. Anna's relationship with Tyler is awkward and uncertain. There's never any indication that he and Anna are meant to be forever, but he nevertheless plays an important role in the story. Along with her friend Ashley, Anna begins the slow process of picking at the scabs of her grief and allowing it to become fully exposed in order to heal.

A dreamlike quality pervades the narrative, as Anna frequently allows herself to become overtaken by memories and fantasies. She finds it easier to explain her mother's death by putting it in more fantastical terms. What if she was a water elemental such as a mermaid? Why else couldn't she resist the siren call of the sea and remain with Anna and her father? At Crystal Cove, Anna is given the opportunity to discover who her mother once was, and to learn what could have caused her to become the person who would drown herself in front of her child.

In Kirby's able hands, the setting itself becomes like a character. Lush description and poetic language help the beaches of Crystal Cove come to life. The fluidity of the water, its ebb and flow, mirrors Anna's own conflicting desires. Kirby manages to capture not only the beauty of the ocean, but also the solemn vastness of it all. There's a sense of inevitability and darkness about the draw of the ocean, and also a renewed sense of life and hope. Beachfront oceans encapsulate Anna's life, an important part of her from before her birth to the present day.

Despite the strong relationships Anna forms, none of the characters themselves are particularly memorable. Sure, Anna is likable enough and her situation warrants a certain amount of sympathy, but it's almost as if the glass wall between her and her father also could prevent readers from better connecting with her. What made this lack of emotional connection so frustrating is that I never felt as though Kirby was trying to make Anna distant. For the most part she acts like a normal teenager, albeit one who has had to endure some harsh tragedies early on in her life. It is through her dreams that readers witness the emotional turmoil that continues to affect Anna's life, and even those are more memorable for their content rather than their effect on Anna.

On the surface, *Moonglass* seems like a simple enough story; it is by examining the story with a more critical eye that one can appreciate the great maturity and depth of Anna's story. Due to a lack of emotional connection, *Moonglass* will not be a favorite of mine, but I appreciate how Kirby handled some dark topics.

Fred says

The summer before Anna's junior year, her father moves them back to the beach where he and her mother

met. Aside from being uprooted, this stirs up memories, issues, emotions and questions that they had both suppressed since her mother's death when Anna was seven.

Wow, what a powerful read. I was not expecting this at all, I thought it was kind of a beachy summer albeit bittersweet book (I mean, look at the cover, right?) but it really affected me on many levels. First, it is a very well crafted book -- all the elements which seem so random and disparate and fragmented come together like the stones in a kaleidoscope suddenly forming a recognizable and impactful image that you realize was there all along, you just needed to shift focus to see it (sorry for the crazy extended metaphor, there ;). Second, the story is so believable and real you are completely drawn into it. The characters and the setting are also beautifully drawn and have a depth and intensity not found in many books. Sarah Dessen blurbs the jacket, and it is reminiscent of her best books. It has that dreamy, intense and vivid summer languor that she is so good at creating, but it has its own authentic voice, too. One of the best of this summer for me!

Laurence R. says

This is such a good YA novel! It has just the right amount of emotions and it's well written. I'm starting to become a very big fan of Jessi Kirby!

PinkAmy loves ☹️; books📖, cats🐾; and naps💤; says

Right before the start of senior year, Anna and her father move to the town where he grew up and met her mother, who committed suicide when Anna was seven. Anna wants but fears learning more about her mother as she reluctantly settles in to her new town.

MOONGLASS was not a fun read. Not much happened during the first 90% of the book, though I enjoyed the last 10% very much. Jessi Kirby's word-building was the strongest component of the story. Anna's surly voice felt authentic.

Anna wasn't kind or likable for most of MOONGLASS, though she behaved better than the thoughts in her head. Most of the characters lacked interest and depth. Ashley had personality, vapid and stereotypical, but she stepped up in the end.

Kirby's later books are better, I don't recommend MOONGLASS.

Cindy says

This debut by Jessi Kirby blew me away. The book opens with Anna moving to a small seaside resort with her father--a move she isn't very happy about. She's going to miss all of her friends and her grandmother, but also she fears the memory of her mother will fade if she leaves.

It's obvious that Anna is still suffering from the loss of her mother, despite the fact that she's been gone for years. There is some mystery surrounding her mother's death that kept me guessing and intrigued throughout

the book. Her dad is kind and lovable but there are plenty of secrets between them that come out as the book progresses.

Kirby infused bits of mermaid mythology into the storyline that flowed exceptionally well. And I loved the tiny tidbits of information that Anna learned from her teacher, who was also old friend of her mother. Anna makes unexpected friends in her new location and despite my own wariness of the characters early on, I ended up adoring them just as much as Anna did. They brought humor and challenges into the story that were perfect for each scene they were written into.

That brings us to the completely gorgeous and talented (Hello, lifeguard!) Tyler. Anna is instantly drawn to him and it's not hard to see why. BUT his charm doesn't end at good looks. He's also an entertaining character in that he's not predictable. He sets the tone early for the type of relationship he and Anna will have. It's not an easy one for them but they find their way eventually. I really, really loved his character.

Moonglass is an extremely emotional read. It made me smile, laugh and cry, sometimes all on the same page. This tale of a daughter's search for answers and is exceptionally well written. I was caught up from the very first paragraph and found myself savoring the beautifully crafted words. It's truly a fantastic debut. I highly recommend it!

Lauren says

Summary: Anna watched her mother commit suicide when she was a little girl. Now, many years later, Anna is still pushing aside grief and self-blame for her mother's death. She and her father move to a new town to start over: the town where her parents first met. Anna finds herself learning more about her mother than she'd ever known...

My thoughts: Moonglass starts out solidly; Jessi Kirby slowly builds on Anna's grief as she moves to a new town. The simple interactions with local boy Tyler make the beginnings of the story feel lighthearted, but as the book progresses, the depths of Anna's experiences and insecurities are exposed. Moonglass ends on a powerful note, and is successful in conveying a good message in an honest rather than preachy manner.

I'm a resident of Orange County, California—the county in which Moonglass takes place. I haven't been to Crystal Cove, but after reading the book, I'd really like to check it out. Jessi Kirby's descriptions of the ancient cottages and lingering history made me absolutely fascinated with the setting of the novel.

The thing I enjoyed most about Moonglass was the relationships Anna had (and built) with the sub-characters. Anna's strained yet still amiable bond with her father fluctuated and strengthened over the duration of the novel; her at first shallow relationship with the local girls soon turned into something more. Then, of course, there's Anna's relationship with Tyler, a love interest who was cocky and confident without being annoying. I really liked those two together!

All in all, Moonglass is a beautiful debut that covers grief in the best way. The ending, especially, moved me quite a bit. If you're a fan of bittersweet stories (or even if you're not), give Moonglass a try!

Cara says

After reading this book now I want to go find some sea glass. I've never done that since I live in a landlocked

state. Woe is me. *rolls eyes at myself* Okay now I'll commence to stop my complaining about the lack of beach experience I have, and get on with the book which was nicely written. Suicide is a really hard issue to talk about, and ironically enough even though that's what Anna's mother did I don't recall the word ever being used (do correct me if I'm wrong). A good writer can do that.

Anna is one of those horrid individuals who have a dead mother and not just that, but she watched her mother end her life. She has moved on and lives with her dad and all isn't great but it's working for them. Then out of the blue Anna's dad decides they need to move back to where it all began. To where Anna's parents met. There Anna will uncover lots of hidden secrets and stories about her parents she didn't know. For the first time she'll have to face the way her mom died, why it's important for her to understand why her mother did it, and how loved she truly is.

Oh yes, as you can guess I read this because of the cover. Actually the image here doesn't do it justice, but I think it is a *tad* misleading. Though there is a romance in the story it's not a prominent aspect, it's important but not the main frame of the story. I have to be honest, in the beginning I wasn't really into the story and it was because I didn't feel I could empathize with Anna. She seemed a little aloof and the beginning of the story too light, but as I read on I understood it was presented this way to show how Anna has come to act like things are "okay" even though in reality she hasn't had the closure she needs. She hates when she has to tell people her mother is gone, when her dad is overprotective, and most of all how she can't shake the feeling the whole thing is her fault. To chase away the thoughts she runs, and in the story even becomes part of the cross country team. The beach setting is done well and you can tell it's a big part of who Anna is, who her mother was, and it's even an integral part of her dad's job.

I also appreciated the characters. I loved Ashley, Jillian, and Tyler. All who become important people in Anna's life. My personal favorite was Ashley. Now the relationship between Anna and Tyler seems kind of off and frustrating in the beginning, but realistic. Relationships aren't clear cut and it's hard to figure out your way through them, and this story shows that. The reason I didn't give it a full five star rating was because I would have like to have seen more interaction between Anna and these other characters.

The ending was done beautifully and had the full circle feel to it. Things played out the way they should have, and thank goodness the guy didn't do all the saving this time. It isn't a typical story but has a very accessible feel to it. Keep an eye out for Jessi Kirby, if this novel is any indication I'm expecting some great stories that still need to be told from her.

Now I'm off to go find some sea glass in a sandbox. *What...* you don't think I'll find some there? *sigh* You're probably right, but one can dream.

Andrea at Reading Lark says

Review Posted on Reading Lark 5/1/11: <http://readinglark.blogspot.com/2011/...>

Moonglass by Jessi Kirby is a moving debut that kept me riveted and wouldn't let me go. It didn't take me long to read this book, but in spite of its brevity it has given me so much to ponder. Kirby follows in the footsteps of Sarah Dessen as she paints the tale of a troubled teen who is seeking to find beauty and meaning in a life full of secrets and questions. If this novel is the calibre of writing we can expect from Kirby in the future then I feel that she definitely has staying power.

Moonglass tells the story of Anna Ryan, who at the age of seven, watched her mother walk into the ocean and never return. The guilt of knowing that her mother's death was not an accident ways on Anna, but she

can't seem to bridge the topic with her father. For years, the pair have tiptoed around the issue and tried to live with the dark shadows left behind.

Mr. Ryan takes a promotion as a head lifeguard; Anna's life is disrupted when she must leave her home and friends for a new life in Crystal Cove. Anna isn't sure how she feels about the change - especially because this beach marks the location of where her parents first met and fell in love. Will the move be the first step in healing for the Ryans or will it tear them further apart?

I didn't know much about this book when I joined the ARC tour other than the fact that it took place on a beach. I was surprised by the seriousness of the plot, but I feel that Kirby did a beautiful job with some difficult material. Losing a parent is hard for any child, but losing a parent to suicide is something that leaves deep emotional wounds behind. I can't even begin to imagine how I would deal with a situation of that nature. Anna is such a strong character in spite of the guilt she feels. I truly admire her. Throughout the read, I felt so in tune with Anna that I actually began to feel her emotions coursing through the sentences. I was so invested in her thoughts that I couldn't put this book down. I had to know how things would end up.

I also loved this book because of the setting. You get a true sense of the nature of beach life. Nostalgia vibrated through this novel for me as I thought about the beach trips my family took each summer. Even though this book is about loss and finding peace - there are some typical teenage summer moments as well. Anna is all about get a tan and catching the eye of a certain cute lifeguard, Tyler. The description in this one is spot on - I could almost feel the wind and waves. I also just learned that Crystal Cove is a real place. I love books with real settings. I may just have to make a trip there someday!

Another aspect of this book that I absolutely loved was all the mermaid references. One of the things Anna remembers fondly about her mother is their beach walks to find sea glass. The mermaid myth that sea glass is actually crystallized mermaid tears plays a prominent role. I also liked the parallel between Anna's mother and mermaids. I have to admit that part of me wanted her mother to actually be a mermaid to put a supernatural twist on this one and give Anna and her father a happy ending. However, since this is realistic fiction, that didn't happen.

Overall, this is a beautiful and endearing read with realistic characters, a great setting, and a well paced plot. I highly recommend it to YA fans.

One Last Gripe: I didn't like how things ended between Anna and Joy. I wanted more closure there - more answers about Anna's mother.

My Favorite Thing About This Book: The mermaid lore and symbolism

First Sentence: I read once that water is a symbol for emotions.

Favorite Characters: Anna, Tyler, Mr. Ryan, Ashley

Least Favorite Character: I honestly didn't have one in this read

Lori (Pure Imagination) says

A simply perfect Summer read. Moonglass is filled with rushing waves, sand and lifeguards. How could you possibly go wrong with a book like that? From the very first page of Anna's story I was hooked. She lives this seemingly fantastic beach life, but just under the surface there is guilt and confusion about her Mother's death.

The book starts off with Anna moving to a new place, and I was so afraid that she was going to be morose and depressed about it for a long time, but thankfully no. She sucked it up and moved on. That was one of the things I loved most about Anna. She was very strong and smart. She didn't dwell too much on the bad things. Even though they were always there.

The romance in the book wasn't as prominent as I thought it was going to be, but it was still wonderful. The way things developed between Anna and Tyler was sweet and realistic. It left a smile on my face. My most favorite thing about the book, though, was the setting. I've honestly never been a beach person--probably because I live in a land locked state--give me my mountains any day! But in Moonglass I found myself yearning for the ocean. The descriptions are so vivid and rich, I felt like I was there. The history, and all the little details that went into Crystal Cove, made it come to life. Maybe because it is a real place! Either way, it was delightful.

I recommend this book. If you have an afternoon, a hammock and a need for a good story, read Moonglass.

Ari says

*"I read once that water is a symbol for emotions.
And for a while now, I've thought maybe my mother drowned in both."*

If it weren't for the heartbreak I would love to be one of Jessi's characters. I love her stories. She has this talent – she can make you laugh and cry almost in the same time. She is wonderful and I don't know how I'll be able to wait for her next book.

"Moonglass" is a story about how to break and un-break a heart – Anna's mother broke it into so many little piece and now it's time for someone to put it back together. It might seem silly to you, but love can heal everything and even if she didn't know it yet, Anna found love everywhere around her. It was just time to open her heart for all that love and leave the past behind her.

...Again, this is exactly my type of book – the one that makes my heart bleed in a moment and makes my cheeks hurt (for so much laughing) in the next one.

...Again, I love Jessi Kirsby – I love her style, her stories, the way she knows how to put together heartbreak and joy and come up with a perfect composition. I love how her characters are full of life even though their hearts are clouded by drama and death, I love how she gives you hope, how she breaks you and makes you whole again with the power of her words..

I have this theory, that the first book written by an author (even though it might not be flawless by some standards) comes straight from their heart, and that's why it might be just.. perfect.

I think that the first book they write is for themselves, not for the audience, and this is why the debut novels hold the essence of the author. Off course, it's not a rule, only an observation; off course they evolve in time and their writing gets better.. but there is something that gets lost through too much editing, something you can only find in their first book. I can't put my finger on it, but maybe some of you have noticed it too. So, if I loved In Honor so much, I must confess that I might be even more in love with this story here.

Moonlight is an emotional roller coaster, so prepare yourself: The sad moments are as heartbreaking as Jessi can write them, and the happy, joyful moments made me really laugh out-loud.

You can almost taste Anna's pain and her father's, and I was so relieved to see them work their way and make things better, because they've both been so alone for so long, and it was time to be close again.

But also you have to love Anna's girlish side – how she tries to fit in, to make friends, to seduce the boy she likes, to hide in a hole when she makes a fool of herself.

Also, the love story is so sweet that you might get a sugar high, LOL.

As I said too many times before, I love the cuteness of this type of stories, and with all the drama surrounding this love story, the book seems complete - like the inn and yang, like two halves of a heart. I liked it when they first met, also the initiation night, and the first kiss.. and everything in between. It was a bit of a hot and cold relationship with a lot of laugh-out-loud cute moments, and some ups and downs; it was a fun ride that I would take anytime.

I have only one complain to make – it felt too short. I wanted more. More of Anna's cuteness, more of Tyler's confident flirting, more about Anna and her mother and the way she started to cope with the past, more about lifeguard legends and stories, more about.. everything, because I couldn't get enough of this story.

I think that the next time I go to the beach I will keep looking for sea-glass.

I loved the story behind the moonglass, I loved the legend about the mermaid's tears, there were so many things I loved about this book that I can't even put them into words – there were so many, so beautiful, so deep, so full of emotion... Oh yeah, you got it, it's great. Now just go get this book and read it!

Happy midnight reading!

*** For a better visual effect, read this review at ReadingAfterMidnight.com*

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