

The background features a network diagram with white nodes and lines on a purple-to-pink gradient. The nodes are connected by thin white lines, forming a complex web. Some nodes are larger than others, and the overall structure is abstract and geometric.

Miracle Creek

Written by Angie Kim

Published by mckeonandassociates

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Miracle Creek

By Angie Kim

Miracle Creek Book Review

A literary courtroom drama about a Korean immigrant family and a young, single mother accused of murdering her eight-year-old autistic son

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Miracle Creek Kirkus

My husband asked me to lie. Not a big lie. He probably didn't even consider it a lie, and neither did I, at first . . .

Miracle Creek Angie Kim Review

In the small town of Miracle Creek, Virginia, Young and Pak Yoo run an experimental medical treatment device known as the Miracle Submarine—a pressurized oxygen chamber that patients enter for therapeutic “dives” with the hopes of curing issues like autism or infertility. But when the Miracle Submarine mysteriously explodes, killing two people, a dramatic murder trial upends the Yoo’s small community.

Miracle Creek Summary

Who or what caused the explosion? Was it the mother of one of the patients, who claimed to be sick that day but was smoking down by the creek? Or was it Young and Pak themselves, hoping to cash in on a big insurance payment and send their daughter to college? The ensuing trial uncovers unimaginable secrets from that night—trysts in the woods, mysterious notes, child-abuse charges—as well as tense rivalries and alliances among a group of people driven to extraordinary degrees of desperation and sacrifice.

Miracle Creek Angie

Angie Kim's *Miracle Creek* is a thoroughly contemporary take on the courtroom drama, drawing on the author's own life as a Korean immigrant, former trial lawyer, and mother of a real-life "submarine" patient. An addictive debut novel for fans of Liane Moriarty and Celeste Ng, *Miracle Creek* is both a twisty page-turner and a deeply moving story about the way inconsequential lies and secrets can add up with tragic consequences.

Or perhaps the newspapers were right. Perhaps Elizabeth had been desperate to get rid of her son, and now that he was dead, she finally had a measure of peace. Perhaps she had been a monster all along. I had to take some time away to really process this book. It wasn't easy. *Miracle Creek* absolutely ripped my heart out. It's a fantastic, utterly thrilling courtroom drama; it's a mystery, perhaps a murder mystery; and alongside these things, it's also a powerful character study that examines immigration, parenthood, grief, disability and caregiving.

The trial and the mystery are the compelling backdrop here, but this book explores so many things that it's hard to know where to begin describing it.

It's now a year since the night that took two lives and injured several others. Elizabeth, the single mother of one of the victims, is on trial for murder. On the night in question, she dropped her son off for his HBOT treatment and purportedly left to drink wine and smoke cigarettes nearby-- the same cigarettes responsible for the blast that killed her son while she was absent.

HBOT was new to me. It's a kind of oxygen treatment said to improve everything from male infertility to autism, and the author has personal experience with it. Elizabeth's son was on the autism spectrum and, as we soon see, the pressure of looking after him was pushing her to the edge. Whether it was enough for her to murder her son, though, is the real question. The more we learn, the less implausible it sounds.

Having a special-needs child didn't just change you; it transmuted you, transported you to a parallel world with an altered gravitational axis.

But there are many other characters in this book and they all play an important role. The third person narration moves through each of their perspectives, filling in the night in question, piece by piece. Each person is fleshed-out and flawed. Kim explores them all in depth, creating so many intimate portraits that all come together to form a bigger picture.

The HBOT facility was started by Pak and Young Yoo. As Korean immigrants, they have had to struggle

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with the dismissal of their business as silly "Eastern medicine", and with being forced apart when Young and their daughter first came to the United States without Pak. I was especially moved by the discussions about language barriers. Pak is a smart and eloquent man in his native language, but he suffers the indignity of appearing unintelligent in his broken, accented English:

Pak Yoo was a different person in English than in Korean. In a way, he supposed, it was inevitable for immigrants to become child versions of themselves, stripped of their verbal fluency and, with it, a layer of their competence and maturity.

Another interesting discussion was that about the "fetishization" of Asian women. Janine really struggles with her feelings about it. On the one hand, she thinks it is a potential problem, but she also wonders why men who have a preference for blondes do not get accused of having a "fetish". Why, she wonders, are Asian women portrayed as something perverse?

I think I could write my own book about all the avenues this fascinating book goes down. I haven't even said anything about the in-depth look at parenting and parental sacrifice. But I should stop before this review becomes ridiculously long.

The final way I will summarize Miracle Creek is that it's a book about so many interesting characters who all want the best for their family, but grind themselves into the ground in the process - Elizabeth driven to the edge by parenting an autistic child, Pak the lonely "goose father" who wants the best for his family, Young who worked such long hours that she alienated her daughter, and there are others too.

I found it such a beautiful and sad literary mystery.

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Miracle Creek Barnes And Noble

"But that was the way life worked. Every human being was the result of a million different factors mixing together... Good things and bad-every friendship and romance formed, every accident, every illness-resulted from the conspiracy of hundreds of little things, in and of themselves inconsequential."

Oh boy. Where do I begin? It's quite possible that this book means so much to me because it's my unicorn-the perfect fit for this reader-and that may make my review a bit biased, so please keep that "But that was the way life worked. Every human being was the result of a million different factors mixing together... Good things and bad-every friendship and romance formed, every accident, every illness-resulted from the conspiracy of hundreds of little things, in and of themselves inconsequential."

Oh boy. Where do I begin? It's quite possible that this book means so much to me because it's my unicorn-the perfect fit for this reader-and that may make my review a bit biased, so please keep that in mind as you delve into my thoughts below. Miracle Creek is a novel so precisely tailored to my wants and needs as a reader, I was left pondering just how the author crawled into my brain and extracted such specific thoughts and needs before placing them in her tale. Full disclosure-I almost missed this book, and likely wouldn't have picked it up if it hadn't been for Emily May's recommendation. I was worried it would be too difficult for me to read, but I'm glad I tossed those notions aside, because feeling this wide spectrum of emotion was a needed exercise in facing some of my own issues and embarking on a journey of healing and acceptance.

Please know going in that this is not an easy read. It is disturbing at times, but in a natural way and not done for shock value. Miracle Creek is an emotional rollercoaster, and I cannot imagine you, reader, not being moved by this story if you are indeed a human being. There are some timely topics discussed that are difficult to read, but Ms. Kim has touched on these in such a delicate, respectful, and honorable way that it takes some of the sting away and replaces it with a softer approach. I really don't want to discuss the plot in deep detail here, as this is a literary courtroom novel and you'll want to find out all the juicy details on your own, but this is just as much a profound study on grief and the ripple effects of a few rash choices that spiral out of control.

"It was ironic-of all the parents of their patients, Elizabeth had been the most disheveled, and yet she'd had by far the most manageable child. Henry, her only child, had been a well-mannered boy who, unlike many other patients, could walk, talk, was toilet-trained, and didn't have tantrums. During orientation, when the mother of twins with autism and epilepsy asked Elizabeth, "Sorry, but what's Henry here for? He seems so normal," she'd frowned as if offended. She recited a list-OCD, ADHD, sensory and autism spectrum disorders, anxiety-then said how hard it was, spending all her days researching experimental treatments. She seemed to have no clue how she sounded complaining while surrounded by kids with wheelchairs and feeding tubes."

And, cue the sobbing once again. This won't likely be a popular opinion, and for those of you who have

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already read the book, I hope you don't think less of me, but I related to Elizabeth so much and felt a deep sorrow well up inside of me for who she could have been, and for how her story played out. You see, I have been almost precisely in her shoes. My 6 year old daughter was diagnosed with autism spectrum and sensory disorders, OCD, and generalized anxiety at the age of 3. The doctors have been preparing us for years for the likelihood of an ADHD diagnosis in a few years, as it goes hand in hand with her particular side of the spectrum. She has asthma, moderate stomach issues, and I'll be damned if I haven't spent years of my life trying to find ways to alleviate those symptoms for her. Please do not misunderstand, the idea behind this book and my own thoughts are not to "cure" autism; the point here is that the pressurized dives were a means of treatment of unwanted symptoms, not unlike any other form of therapy.

I'm ashamed to admit that, in the darkest of days, I have thought and spoken things into the empty void that I would never truly mean, but fortunately for me, I have a strong, loving, and caring support system that holds me together when I cannot hold myself up. I wanted to dip into this book, reach out, and hold Elizabeth. I wanted to comfort her and tell her that her child's needs were valid, even when other parents told her that her child was too "normal" and undeserving of receiving the therapies. I wanted her to know that it was ok to have those dark moments, because we are all human. But this was also a beautiful wake-up call, reminding me to live in the moment and appreciate all that my beautiful McKenna brings to our family. It was an endearing and heart-wrenching reminder that, if I ever lost our joy baby, that my life would essentially cease to exist. I could never survive if that bright light was extinguished from my life, and it hit me like a ton of bricks at how desperately we need to live each day to the fullest, and how grateful and privileged I am to be entrusted as a care giver to this incredibly gifted, loving, and special child.

I could go on and on about this book, but I won't. Between the setting, although containing a fictional town in Virginia was set geographically within miles of my home, the deep, relatable characters, and a riveting plot that kept me glued from beginning to end, I cannot recommend Miracle Creek highly enough. I'm going ahead and calling it now-this will be THE debut novel of 2019, and I'm not just saying that because it was tailored so perfectly to my every whim. Do yourself a favor and pick this one up the moment you can get your hands on it. If you're a BOTM member, make this your April selection!

*Many thanks to the publisher for providing my review copy via NetGalley. ...more

It's really gotten to the point where I literally just see a pretty cover and add the book to my TBR as a natural reflex!!!! Send help!!!!

Miracle Creek Excerpt

This fascinating debut novel covers all the bases - family drama, mystery, courtroom drama. A Korean couple opens an alternative health clinic that provides HBOT - hyperbaric oxygenation, which is supposed to help with autism, infertility, CP and other health problems. On a day that protesters have gathered outside the facility, it explodes. The same day one of the mothers chooses not to accompany her autistic son into the chamber. The same day the couple are both away from the controls of the chamber. So, who exactly is to blame when all the participants are either killed or injured? Who could be that much of a monster?

Told from multiple points of view, we get to see both the day of the "accident", their lives prior to it and the ensuing court case when the mother is charged with murder. The multiple points of view are extremely effective. "Teresa hadn't expected an exact match between his memories and hers - she watched Law and Order; she wasn't that naive- but still the difference was unnerving."

We are taken into the world of parenting autistic children; the anguish and the hardships but also the bliss of a small achievement.

Some of the scenes described are gruesome. They're also so incredibly well described you feel like you're there. The image of a child's adult teeth exposed above the baby teeth will stay with me for ages.

OMG, I loved these characters. They all seem to have something to hide, they all are so achingly imperfect. So often thinking that their one little omission doesn't matter. Kim uses these omissions to keep the reader guessing. Every time I thought I had figured out who the murderer was, Kim would throw a wrench into the mix and it would all be up for grabs again.

And the writing is spot on perfect. Not necessarily lush, but so descriptive. I found myself repeatedly nodding my head in agreement. There are some fascinating philosophical issues raised here. This would make a great book club selection. Highly recommend!

My thanks to netgalley and Farrah, Stroud and Giroux for an advance copy of this book.

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Super impressed with this debut novel! It's a solid mystery/courtroom drama in which there are so

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many suspects you really aren't really sure who is guilty or what exactly happened until the very end. The author masterfully weaves some complex issues into the story which just take the book to a higher level than most others in the genre.

The Miracle Submarine is a pressurized oxygen chamber run by Young and Pak Yoo. It's a controversial and experimental treatment for patients hoping to cure such Super impressed with this debut novel! It's a solid mystery/courtroom drama in which there are so many suspects you really aren't really sure who is guilty or what exactly happened until the very end. The author masterfully weaves some complex issues into the story which just take the book to a higher level than most others in the genre.

The Miracle Submarine is a pressurized oxygen chamber run by Young and Pak Yoo. It's a controversial and experimental treatment for patients hoping to cure such things as autism and infertility. A mysterious fire breaks out one day and two people are killed. The mother of the boy killed in the explosion is now on trial for the double murder. But is she the only one with motive to start the fire? Of course not, this is one of those books in which just about everyone is a suspect.

The mystery in my opinion was really well done and that's reason enough to read this book. The Miracle Submarine has a bit of a futuristic feel to it but the story itself reads like a good, old fashioned whodunit. I love what the author chose to bring to the table in terms of making this more than just a mystery. The experiences of a Korean immigrant family were fascinating to read but what I enjoyed the most out of the story was reading the perspectives of the parents who had children with health concerns. There's just so much to take away from the book that I think it will appeal to many readers. Highly recommend checking this one out!

I won an advance copy of this book in a giveaway but was under no obligation to post a review. All views expressed are my honest opinion.

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Miracle Creek Angie Kim Epub

When I requested this title, I had no idea what to expect. After reading Miracle Creek I know one thing: I'll follow Angie Kim and reach out for her next book.

Miracle Creek is a courtroom drama and a thriller telling a story of an explosion that kills a child and an adult, and leaves several people injured. The tragic circumstance is that Miracle Submarine provides an unconventional treatment for several chronic diseases, autism among others, and is operated by Korean immigrant family who, having lived in the USA for some years, still are trying to find their way in the new surroundings. There are several characters and we learn gradually the truth, which is a perfect way of narrating a story, at least for me. I enjoy discovering new threads with every page, and Miracle Creek leads me meandering beautifully.

Truly unputdownable!!

Many thanks to Angie Kim, Farrar, Straus and Giroux for providing me with ARC in exchange for my honest review. ...more

added on 2/22/2019 Below on what should be post 12 is a link to an article the author wrote that details her son's experience with hyperbaric oxygen therapy. Thank you to Teresa for pointing out this article.

Miracle Creek, by Angie Kim, was a book that I didn't want to put down because the author made me care about these people who are nothing like me. It's the story of Korean immigrants, Young and Pak Yoo, who run the Miracle Submarine, a pressurized oxygen chamber that is used by young patients with a variety of health issues. It's also being used, unwillingly, by an adult doctor, Matt, whose Korean wife railroads him into being the first adult to go through the treatments, in an effort to cure his infertility. Although there are other treatments each day, the book focuses on a group that is undergoing twice a day treatments, for 40 days.

One of the patients is Henry, an 8 year old autistic boy, son of Elizabeth, who has tailored very hour of their day, full of treatments, therapies, camp, and very restrictive eating and sensory input, to give her son the best chance of being a "normal" boy. When there is a fire that kills Henry and Kitt, the mother of

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TJ, and severely injures Matt and Mary, the daughter of Young and Pak Yoo, Elizabeth is charged with the crime of starting the fire and murdering Henry and Kitt. Pak loses the use of his legs as he runs in and out of the chamber, trying to save the lives of all the people under his care, people who he feels he is responsible for and is willing to give his life to save.

This book is about lies, big lies, little lies, and the belief that it's ok to lie because telling the truth can't bring back the dead, that maybe the person accused of murder might not have murdered anyone but she had thoughts of wishing her son dead at times, as might other full time caretakers, with no relief in sight from care taking a helpless "forever" child that will outlive them. Even though each of the characters had secrets, most of them also had my sympathy. The Yoos were weighed down by traditions from their homeland that didn't allow them to "discuss" things with each other, that kept them trying to protect the pride of the father, even though some of those archaic ways caused the daughter to dislike her mother for not fighting against those traditions.

The many lies of the story started long before the day of the fire and so many of the people involved, once they start telling tiny bits of the truth, continue to lie, hold back information, allowing others to believe things that are false. A large part of the book is in the courtroom and I really enjoyed the courtroom drama. Both lawyers are willing to do anything to either get their client acquitted or get the accused convicted, even if they find out or know truths that make what they are doing extremely wrong and unethical. At any time, many of the characters could have told what they knew and turned the entire case around, inside out, and shed light on what really happened but they didn't, even when they had moments where telling the truth would have been the easiest thing to do.

The hardships that the Yoos endure in the years before they begin their chamber business are overwhelming but even once they are together again, after years of being apart while waiting for their family visa, the family is not happy. The mothers of the children using the chamber had a lifetime of hardship ahead of them and each mother fights with the guilt of sometimes wishing they could have a minute to themselves, dreaming of a 'normal' life, a life so many of us take for granted because we aren't full time caretakers, for life. There seems to be no relief in sight for most of these people and it's clear that once this is all "over", that no one will really be able to let go of the fact that they lied...their lies will always be with them.

As we meet the various people involved in what happened that day and as we go through the trial, we are flooded with the extent of the lies that have led to the fire. So many things had to come together to allow the fire to happen and any one of those things could have happened differently or not at all and then this tragedy would not have happened. In the end, this book is about facing one's role in what has happened, acknowledging one's part in the tragedy, big or little, taking responsibility in how we hurt others even if we did not mean to at the time and how we continue to hurt others by holding back the truth.

So much that happened, could never be "fixed" but I do like how the story is handled at the end. I think the ending has a realness to it that we sometimes don't find in crime stories. The ending doesn't make

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what happened disappear but instead plays out in a realistic way that allows the characters of the book to make amends and have room to breathe in a life that could seem unbearable otherwise. I can see a way for these people to heal and move on, even if they never forget the past and even though their lives are changed forever.

Thank you to Farrar, Straus and Giroux and NetGalley for this Advance Read Copy.

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