

## Books & Authors

"When do I read most?"

GALE  
ENGAGE Learning

### About the Author

Full text biography:

**Kathleen Grissom**

Place of Birth : Canada, Saskatchewan

Nationality: American

Occupation : Novelist

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#### Personal Information:

Born in Saskatchewan, Canada; immigrated to the United States; married; husband's name George; children: (first marriage) Erin. **Addresses:** Agent: Rebecca Gradingier, Fletcher & Company, 78 5th Ave., 3rd Fl., New York, NY 10011. E-mail: thekitchenhouse@yahoo.com.

#### Career Information:

Writer. Has worked as a nurse, an advertising executive, and a farm manager.

#### Writings:

- *The Kitchen House* (novel), Touchstone Books (New York, NY), 2010.

#### Sidelights:

Growing up in rural Saskatchewan, Canada, Kathleen Grissom was a voracious and passionate reader from early childhood. Encouraged by her parents, and without a television set for entertainment, Grissom relied on books to learn about new worlds foreign to her own experience. Though she was also encouraged to write, she followed several different career paths before finding literary success. She trained as a nurse and found a hospital job in Montreal. Later, she moved to the United States with her first husband, and worked in advertising. Throughout these years, Grissom continued to write short stories, but was so lacking in confidence that she submitted only one for publication--unsuccessfully. After a divorce and a remarriage, Grissom moved with her new husband to a farm in New Jersey, where they raised cashmere goats. Rural life suited the couple, who eventually bought a bigger place in Virginia. The large brick house on the property, built around 1830, had once been a stagecoach station. As Grissom and her husband worked to restore their new home, the author was inspired to dig more deeply into the history of the place. She learned that a nearby area had been known as "Negro Hill," and was told that this name probably referred to a tragic event. Musing on what may have happened at that location, Grissom was inspired to tell its story in her first novel, *The Kitchen House*.

As the author explained on her Home Page, the characters and themes of her novel came to her unexpectedly, as a kind of gift. Sitting down to write in her daily journal one morning after having visited Negro Hill, Grissom suddenly saw an entire scene play out before her, which she caught in her journal pages: a frightened white woman and her terrified little daughter, running desperately up a hill where they see the body of a black woman hanging from a tree. "I set my pencil down, appalled at the story line," commented Grissom. "I had written the prologue to *The Kitchen House*."

Though she did not intend to continue with the story at first, Grissom had become intrigued by the history of indentured servitude in the Americas. Her father had told her about a friend whose ancestors had emigrated from Ireland; on the

sea journey, both parents died, leaving two young sons and a daughter. When Grissom learned that the family never knew what had happened to the little girl, the author realized that this child was connected to the imagined scene on the hill. After conducting extensive research on antebellum history, Grissom set to work writing the story of this girl and of the black slaves among whom she grows up. She followed the stories that her characters revealed to her, she stated on her Home Page. When she listened to their voices, her writing went smoothly, but on the few occasions when she tried to nudge the plot in a different direction, the author discovered that her writing would falter. Grissom came to see the story as something revealed to her by her characters, and she strove to be true to their experience.

Lavinia, orphaned en route to America at age six, is brought to work as an indentured servant at Tall Oaks, the Virginia estate of James Pyke, captain of the ship that brought the girl to America. At Tall Oaks, Lavinia joins the black slaves in the Kitchen House, where Belle, the chief cook and the daughter of Pyke and a slave woman, reluctantly takes the girl under her wing. While Lavinia finds a family of sorts among the slaves, she is never fully accepted in their world because of her white skin.

Lavinia and Belle narrate different parts of the story. They recount the difficulties of life at Tall Oaks, where Captain Pike is often absent and where his depressed wife treats her sorrows with laudanum, an opiate. They describe the brutal treatment that the plantation overseer, Rankin, metes out to the field slaves, who suffer frequent beatings and starvation. Yellow fever kills Campbell, the youngest Pyke son, as well as Campbell's wet nurse, Dory; Marshall, the eldest son, returns home from boarding school and rapes Belle, unaware that they are half-siblings. After Pyke dies, Marshall inherits the plantation and, through a course of events described by a *Kirkus Reviews* contributor as "convoluted," marries the seventeen-year-old Lavinia. But life as the mistress of the estate is not the bed of roses that the girl had hoped. Marshall shows himself to be as cruel as Rankin, and, as a *Publishers Weekly* reviewer observed, racial tensions at Tall Oaks "boil over into lynching, rape, arson, and murder."

A reviewer for the *CBC Books* Web site noted the novel's emotional power, but found the book "overwrought" and "formulaic." The *Kirkus Reviews* writer also considered the novel intensely melodramatic, but praised Grissom for avoiding stereotypes and for crafting a "pulse-quickenning debut." Similarly, the *Publishers Weekly* reviewer commented that *The Kitchen House* offers a fresh perspective on stock themes.

#### Related Information:

#### PERIODICALS

- *Kirkus Reviews*, December 15, 2009, review of *The Kitchen House*.
- *Publishers Weekly*, November 9, 2009, review of *The Kitchen House*, p. 29.

#### ONLINE

- *Book Movement*, <http://www.bookmovement.com/> (November 28, 2010), interview with Grissom.
- *Bookreporter.com*, <http://www.bookreporter.com/> (November 28, 2010), Christine M. Irvin, review of *The Kitchen House*.
- *Bookworm's World*, <http://luanne-abookwormsworld.blogspot.com/> (November 28, 2010), review of *The Kitchen House*.
- *CBC Books*, <http://www.cbc.ca/> (November 28, 2010), review of *The Kitchen House*.
- *Curled Up with a Good Book*, <http://www.curledup.com/> (November 28, 2010), Luan Gaines, review of *The Kitchen House*.
- *Fantastic Fiction*, <http://www.fantasticfiction.co.uk/> (November 28, 2010), Grissom profile.
- *Historical-Fiction.com*, <http://historical-fiction.com/> (November 28, 2010), review of *The Kitchen House*.
- *Kathleen Grissom Home Page*, <http://www.kathleengrissom.com> (November 28, 2010).
- *Linus's Blanket*, <http://www.linussblanket.com/> (November 28, 2010), review of *The Kitchen House*.
- *Mommy's Reading*, <http://mommysreading.wordpress.com/> (November 28, 2010), Kathleen Dassaro, review of *The Kitchen House*.
- *My Ever Expanding Library*, <http://everexpandinglibrary.blogspot.com/> (November 28, 2010), review of *The Kitchen House*.

- *Raging Bibliomania*, <http://www.ragingbibliomania.net/> (November 28, 2010), review of *The Kitchen House*.
- *Serendipitous Readings*, <http://serendipeter.wordpress.com/> (November 28, 2010), review of *The Kitchen House*.
- *Simon & Schuster Web site*, <http://authors.simonandschuster.com/> (November 28, 2010), Grissom profile and interview.
- *Thrifty Jinxy*, <http://www.thriftyjinxy.com/> (November 28, 2010), review of *The Kitchen House*.
- *Yankee Romance Reviewers*, <http://yankeeromancereviewers.blogspot.com/> (November 28, 2010), review of *The Kitchen House*. \*

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## About Kathleen

I love books. If I could eat them, I would. I love their scent and often put my nose in to inhale their aroma. The first book I owned was *The Secret Of Pooduck Island*, given to me by a dear family friend, Alphonse Gerwing, a man who later went on to accept the Order of Canada medal. That book today remains a prized possession.

Born Kathleen Doecker, I was privileged as a child to be raised in Annaheim, Saskatchewan, a hamlet on the plains of Canada. Although we lived in a small, tightly knit Roman Catholic community, I was fortunate to have parents who were open to other religions and cultures. Since television was not a luxury our household could afford, books were the windows that expanded my world.

Soon after Sister Colette, my first grade teacher, introduced me to Dick, Jane, and Sally, I began to read on my own. I was a fanciful child and became so influenced by books that while I was reading *Five Little Peppers And How They Grew* I ate only cold boiled potatoes (the truth is this lasted only for a day) as I suffered with them through their hardships. After reading *Anne Of Green Gables* I was convinced that I, too, was adopted, until my mother told me to stop the foolishness and to look in the mirror. I had her nose. She was right. I limped desperately during *Red Shoes For Nancy* until my sister, Judy, told me to cut it out, people would think that something was wrong with me. Wanting to more closely experience Helen Keller's tribulations, at every opportunity I walked with closed eyes until I solidly whacked my head on a doorframe. Enid Blynton's *Famous Five* series had me looking for adventure around every corner, and when in class Rudyard Kipling's, *Kim*, was read aloud, I couldn't wait to leave for far-off lands.

Throughout my high school years Simon Lizée, a poet of merit, was our principal. He taught us literature and it was he who encouraged me to write.

Upon graduating from high school, as I saw it then, I had four choices. I could marry (no), become a secretary (no), become a teacher (no) become a nurse (yes). After I graduated from nursing school, I left for Montreal and there worked on staff at the Royal Vic Hospital. Eventually I married and came down to the United States. Throughout, I read voraciously and I wrote, often sending my work back to Mr. Lizée in Saskatchewan, who took the time to continue to instruct me.

It wasn't until after I gave birth to my daughter, Erin, that I finally worked up enough courage to submit a short story to Myrna Blyth, who, I believe at that time was an editor at Family Circle. She sent back a lovely rejection note, telling me that this story was not one that she could use, but could I send others. I took that note to mean that she did not like my writing, but was being kind, and I foolishly submitted nothing further.

In time, I divorced and remarried, relocated to Manhattan, and there worked as an Ad Executive for a graphics company. I did not stop reading, nor writing, and over the next years took various classes in creative writing.

After four years in the city, we decided to try life on a small farm in New Jersey. When our collection of animals grew to include twenty-five Cashmere goats, two horses, three dogs, and two cats, we knew that it was time to relocate to a larger farm in rural Virginia. There we found twenty-seven acres and a large brick house, circa 1830, that once served as a stagecoach stop. But with the move came a glitch. For the first year my husband's transfer didn't happen as planned, and although he joined me every weekend, I was left on the new farm to manage on my own. It was an exciting yet frightening time, and I began to journal the experience. I joined a writers' group, and the Piedmont Literary Society, and when I met Eleanor Dolan, a gifted poet, she generously agreed to mentor me in my writing.

In the following years, Charles and I established an herb farm, a tearoom, and a gift shop that we filled to the barn rafters with work from local artisans. As we restored our old plantation home, I began to research the history of our home and the land that surrounded it. Then I discovered the notation 'Negro Hill' on an old map. Unable to determine the story



of its origin, local historians suggested that it most likely represented a tragedy. To this day I am uncertain why the notation captured me so, but fascinated, I gradually set aside everything else to pursue the research and writing of the story that is now *The Kitchen House*.

Presently, I am researching and writing about the true life story of Crow Mary, a Native woman who carried a Colt revolver on her studded belt and wasn't afraid to use it! Can you imagine the fun I am having?

Back

## How I came to write THE KITCHEN HOUSE

A few years ago, my husband and I restored an old plantation tavern in Virginia. While researching its past I found an old map on which, near our home, was a notation, 'Negro Hill.' Unable to determine the story of its origin, local historians suggested that it most likely suggested a tragedy. For months it played on my mind. Each morning, I walked across our land to go down to the stream where I would meditate, and on my return trip I faced the direction of Negro Hill and wondered aloud what had happened there?

Finally, one morning when I returned from that walk, I sat down to do my daily journaling. What happened next left me baffled. In my mind's eye I saw a scene play out as clear as a movie. I began to write, and the words flew onto the paper. I followed in the footsteps of a terrified little white girl, running up the hill behind her frantic mother. When they reached the top, through their eyes, I saw a black woman hanging from the limb of a large oak tree. I set my pencil down, appalled at the story line. I had written the prologue to *The Kitchen House*. Although fascinated by antebellum history, I abhorred the thought of slavery and had always shied away from the subject. Quickly I slipped the writing in my desk drawer, determined to forget about it.

Some weeks later, during a conversation with my father, I learned that an acquaintance of his had traced his ancestry back to Ireland. Around the turn of the nineteenth century, this man's Irish ancestors had come over on board ship and, on that journey, both of the parents had died. Two brothers had survived, along with their little sister. They were able to track what had happened to the boys but they couldn't find any trace of the little girl. As my father related the story, a deep chill ran through me. In my deepest core, I knew immediately what had happened to her. She was brought home to the Captain's plantation as an indentured servant in Southside Virginia, and put to work in the kitchen house with the kitchen slaves. She awaited me in my desk drawer.

I began to do the research. I visited the many plantations in the area, particularly Prestwoud Plantation. I studied slave narratives from that time period and interviewed African American people whose ancestors had been slaves. I spent hours in local libraries, the Black History Museum, the Virginia Historical Society and Poplar Forest. I visited Colonial Williamsburg many times over. Finally I began to write. Each day more of the story unfolded and when I finished, often emotionally spent, I was left to wonder what the following day would bring. The only time the work came to a standstill was when the characters took me to an event or to a place where I had not yet done my research.

I tried on a number of occasions to change some of the events (those that I found profoundly disturbing) but the story would stop when I did that, so I forged ahead to write what was revealed.

I am forever grateful to the souls who gifted me with their sharing. I can only hope I have served them well.

Interview with Kathleen Grissom  
**A Conversation with Kathleen Grissom, Author of *The Kitchen House***

**What information surprised you while doing research on white indentured servants?**

When I first began my research I was astonished to discover the great numbers of Irish that were brought over as indentured servants. Then, when I saw advertisements for runaway Irish indentured servants, I realized that some of them, too, must have suffered under intolerable conditions.

**At times in the novel, you can almost smell the hearty foods being prepared by Mama and others. In your research, did you find any specific notes or recipes from kitchen houses that you can share with your readers?**

In 1737, William Byrd, founder of Richmond, wrote of the many types of fruits and vegetables available in Virginia. Watermelons, pumpkins, squashes, cucumbers, artichokes, asparagus, green beans, and cauliflower were all being cultivated. I discovered that many of these were preserved by pickling. For those interested in how this was done and for recipes from that time, an excellent resource is Martha Washington's *Booke of Cookery and Booke of Sweetmeats*, transcribed by Karen Hess.

While in Williamsburg, I watched re enactors roast beef over a spit in a kitchen fireplace. Small potatoes in a pan beneath the meat were browning in the drippings, and I cannot tell you how I longed for a taste. That was my inspiration for the Christmas meal. For basics, such as the chicken soup, I built a recipe around what I knew would have been available for use in the kitchen house at that time.

Whenever Belle baked a molasses cake, I craved a taste. I did try several old recipes that I found, but I was unsatisfied with the results. So, using the old recipes as a baseline, my daughter, Erin, and I created our own version of a simple yet moist and tasty molasses cake. I am happy to share it with the readers.

*½ cup butter*  
*1/3 cup packed brown sugar*  
*1 egg*  
*½ cup milk*  
*1 cup molasses*  
*2 cups flour*  
*1 teaspoon baking soda*  
*1 teaspoon ground ginger*  
*1 teaspoon cinnamon*  
*2 dashes ground cloves*  
*¼ teaspoon salt*

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Grease an 8-inchesquare baking pan.

In a large bowl, cream the butter and sugar. Beat in the egg. In a separate bowl, combine the milk and the molasses. In another bowl, combine the flour, baking soda, ginger, cinnamon, cloves, and salt. Add each of these alternately to the butter mixture, beating well between additions. Spoon batter into the prepared pan.

Bake for approximately 45 minutes, or until a toothpick comes out clean.

**Why did you chose not to go into detail about some of the most dramatic plot points in the novel, for example, the death of Waters or the abuse of young Marshall?**

For the most part, Lavinia and Belle dictated the story to me. From the beginning, it became quite clear that if I tried to embellish or change their story, their narration would stop. When I withdrew, the story would continue. Their voices were quite distinct. Belle, who always felt grounded to me, certainly did not hold back with description, particularly of the rape. Lavinia, on the other hand, felt less stable, less able to cope; and at times it felt as though she was scarcely able to relate her horror.

**It is interesting that your novel has two narrators—Lavinia and Belle. Do you have any plans to continue the story into the next generation—perhaps from the perspectives of Jaime and Elly?**

In 1830, Jamie is a well-respected ornithologist in Philadelphia and Sukey is enslaved by the Cherokee Indians in North Carolina. Theirs are the two voices I hear. In time I will know if I am meant to tell their story.

Presently I am writing *Crow Mary*, another work of historical fiction. A few years ago I was visiting Fort Walsh in the Cypress Hills of Saskatchewan. As I listened to an interpreter tell of Mary, who, in 1872, at the age of sixteen, was traded in marriage to a well-known fur trader, a familiar deep chill went thorough me. I knew then that I would return to write about this Crow woman. Some of her complex life is documented, and what fascinates me are her acts of bravery, equal, in my estimation, to those of Mama Mae.

**This is your first novel after diverse careers in retail, agriculture, and the arts. How have each of these experiences contributed to your writing style?**

I don't know that any endeavor specifically contributed to my writing style, but I do know that every phase of my life helped prepare me to write this book.

**The dialogue of the slaves in this novel is very believable. It must have been a difficult thing to achieve. How did you go about creating authentic voices from two hundred years ago?**

At the very beginning of my research I read two books of slave narratives: *Bullwhip Days: The Slaves Remember* and *Weevils in the Wheat: Interviews with Virginia Ex-Slaves*. Soon after, the voices from *The Kitchen House* began to come to me. My original draft included such heavy dialect that it made the story very difficult to read. In time I modified the style so the story could

be more easily read.

**You said you wrote the prologue in one sitting after being inspired by a map you found while renovating an old plantation tavern. Since this is your first novel, do you think you were “guided” by residents of the past?**

Not only do I feel I was guided but also that I was gifted with their trust. However, I am not alone in this. In Alice Walker’s book *The Color Purple*, she writes: “I thank everybody in this book for coming. A.W., author and medium.” Unless I misread that, I’d say, in this experience, I’m in good company.

**Your book has been described as “*Gone with the Wind* turned upside down.” Are you a fan of Margaret Mitchell’s novel? Which writers have inspired you through the years?**

I have only recently read *Gone with the Wind*. Although I did enjoy it, a few of the writers that have truly inspired me are Robert Morgan, Alice Randall, Susan Fromberg Schaeffer, Edward P. Jones, Nuala O’Faolain, Alexandra Fuller, Susan Howatch, Rick Bragg, Breena Clarke, Beryl Markham, Alice Walker, Joan Didion . . . this list could go on forever. I love to read.

**There are many characters in this novel. How did you go about choosing their names?**

They were all taken from different lists of slaves that I found in my research.

**What advice do you have for writers working on their first novels?**

If you feel called to write a book, consider it a gift. Look around you. What assistance is the universe offering you as support? I was given an amazing mentor, a poet, Eleanor Drewry Dolan, who taught me the importance of every word. To my utter amazement, there were times she found it necessary to consult three dictionaries to evaluate one word! Take the time you need to learn the craft. Then sit down and write. When you hand over your completed manuscript to a trusted reader, keep an open mind. Edit, edit, and edit again. After you have written a great query letter, go to AgentQuery.com. This site is an invaluable resource that lists agents in your genre. Submit, accept rejection as part of the process, and submit again. And, of course, never give up!

Source: <http://authors.simonandschuster.com/Kathleen-Grissom/63275410/interview>

Retrieved: 10/29/12 jle

# *The Kitchen House*

## AUTHOR'S NOTE

A FEW YEARS AGO, MY husband and I restored an old plantation tavern in Virginia. While researching its past, I found an old map on which, near our home, was a notation: Negro Hill. Unable to determine the story of its origin, local historians suggested that it most likely suggested a tragedy.

For months it played on my mind. Each morning I walked across our land to go down to the stream where I would meditate. On my return trip, I faced the direction of Negro Hill and, to myself, wondered aloud what had happened there.

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to the captain's plantation as an indentured servant in Virginia, and put to work in the kitchen house with the kitchen slaves. She awaited me in my desk drawer.

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## TOUCHSTONE READING GROUP GUIDE

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### *The Kitchen House*

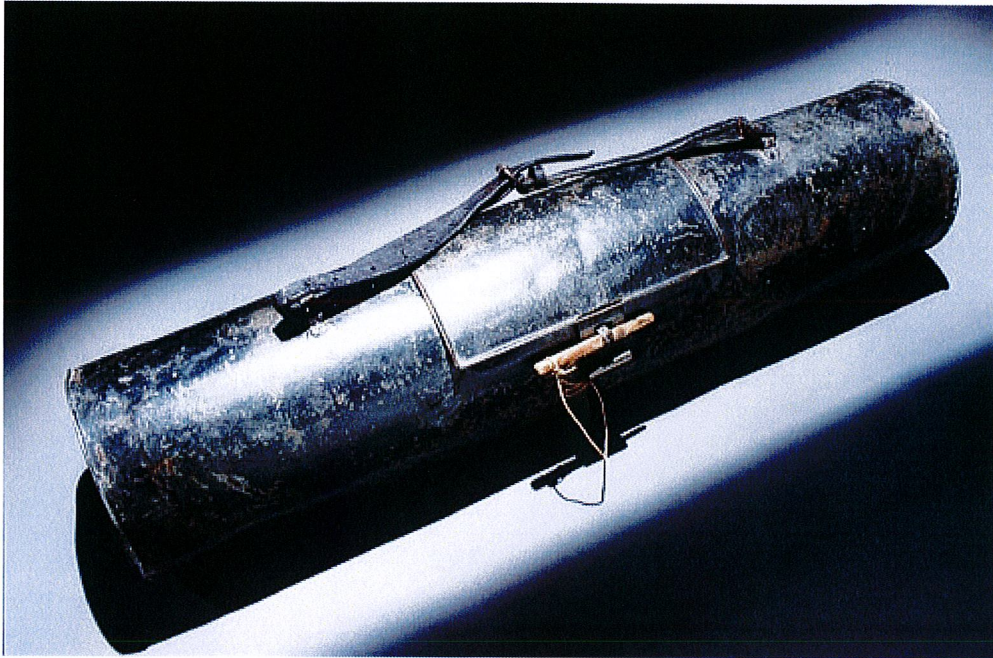
#### FOR DISCUSSION

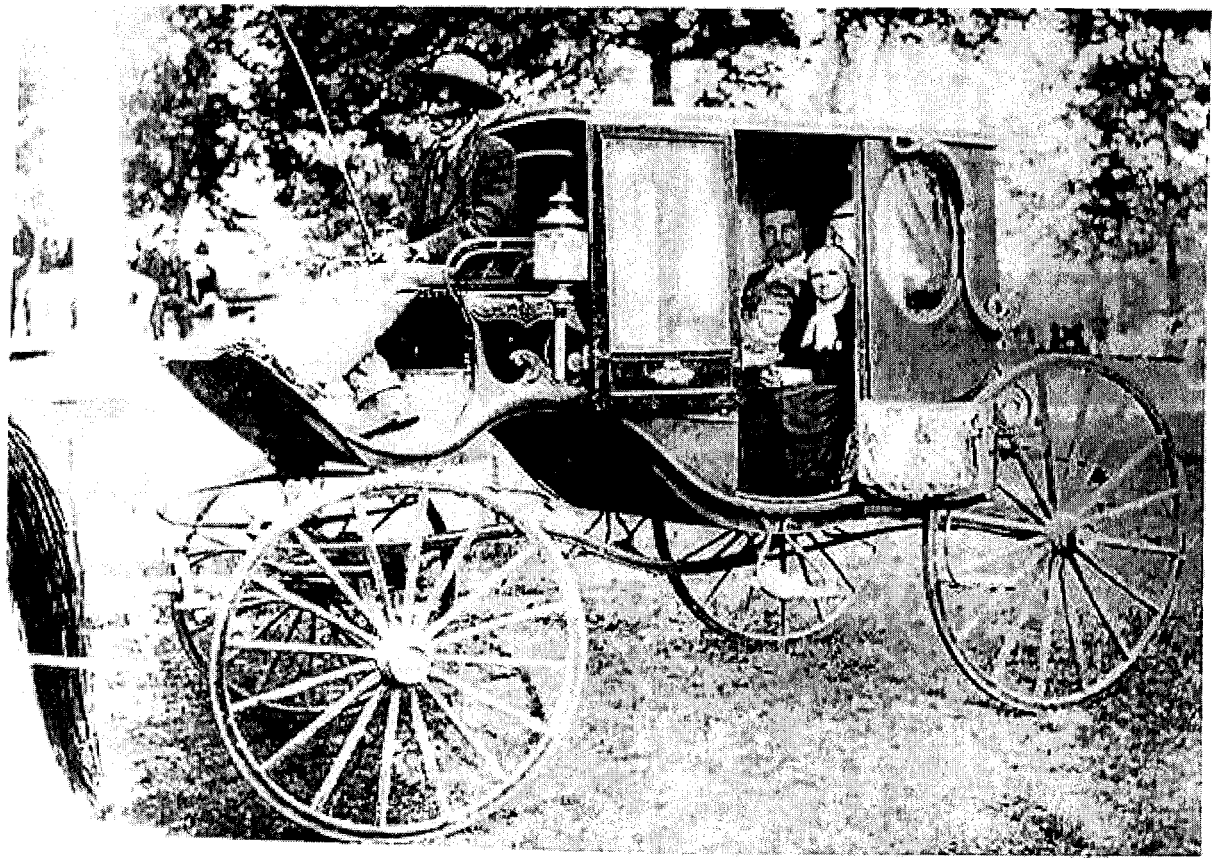
1. Why do you think the author chose to tell the story through two narrators? How are Lavinia's observations and judgments different from Belle's? Does this story belong to one more than the other? If you could choose another character to narrate the novel, who would it be?
2. One of the novel's themes is history repeating itself. Another theme is isolation. Select scenes from *The Kitchen House* that depict each theme and discuss. Are there scenes in which the two themes intersect?
3. "Mae knows that her eldest daughter consorts with my husband. . . . Almost from the beginning, I suspected their secrets" (page 107). Why does the captain keep Belle's true identity a secret from his wife and children? Do you think the truth would have been a relief to his family or torn them further apart? At what point does keeping this secret turn tragic?
4. Discuss the significance of birds and bird nests in the novel. What or who do they symbolize? What other symbols support the novel?



5. "When I saw their hunger I was struck with a deep familiarity and turned away, my mind anxious to keep at bay memories it was not yet ready to recall" (page 24). Consider Lavinia's history. Do you think the captain saved her life by bringing her to America as an indentured servant? Or do you think it was a fate worse than the one she would have faced in Ireland? Discuss the difference between slavery and indentured servitude.
6. Marshall is a complicated character. At times, he is kind and protective; other times, he is a violent monster. What is the secret that Marshall is forced to keep? Is he to blame for what happened to Sally? Why do you think Marshall was loyal to Rankin, who was a conspirator with Mr. Waters?
7. "I grew convinced that if she saw me, she would become well again" (page 188). Why does Lavinia feel that her presence would help Miss Martha? Describe their relationship. If Lavinia is nurtured by Mama and Belle, why does she need Miss Martha's attention? Is the relationship one-sided, or does Miss Martha care for Lavinia in return?
8. "Fortunately, making myself amenable was not foreign to me, as I had lived this way for much of my life" (page 233). Do you think this attribute of Lavinia saves or endangers her life? Give examples for both.
9. Describe the relationship between Ben's wife, Lucy, and Belle. How does it evolve throughout the novel? Is it difficult for you to understand their friendship? Why or why not?
10. "I was as enslaved as all the others" (page 300). Do you think this statement by Lavinia is fair? Is her position equivalent to those of the slaves? What freedom does she have that the slaves do not? What burdens does her race put upon her?

















HANOVER TOWN, May 12, 1774.

**JUST arrived in York River, the Brilliant,**

Captain Miller, from London, with a Cargo of choice healthy INDENTED SERVANTS, the Sale of which will begin at Bismarck Town on *Wednesday* the 25th of May, among whom are the following Tradesmen, viz. Blacksmiths, Bricklayers, Edgetool Makers, Bricklayers and Plasterers, Shoemakers, Stone Masons, Carpenters, Joiners and Cabinet Makers, Cloth Weavers, Stocking Weavers, Barbers and Peruke makers, Gardeners, Farmers, Laborers and Husbandmen, Book-keepers and Schoolmasters, Tailors, Silk Dyers, Bakers, Painters, Leather Driers, Sawyers, Butchers, a Steward, Groom, Surgeon, &c. I will sell them very cheap, for ready Money, or Tobacco; and for those on Credit, Bond and Security will be required.

(1)

THOMAS SMITH.



## 5b. Indentured Servants

The growth of tobacco, rice, and indigo and the plantation economy created a tremendous need for labor in Southern English America. Without the aid of modern machinery, human sweat and blood was necessary for the planting, cultivation, and harvesting of these cash crops.

While slaves existed in the English colonies throughout the 1600s, indentured servitude was the method of choice employed by many planters before the 1680s.

This system provided incentives for both the master and servant

to increase the working population of the Chesapeake colonies.



William Hogarth, 1747

This picture, *Industry and Idleness*, shows 2 apprentices starting in identical circumstances, one is the industrious Francis Goodchild and the other is the unsuccessful Thomas Idle from.

Virginia and Maryland operated under what was known as the "**HEADRIGHT SYSTEM**." The leaders of each colony knew that labor was essential for economic survival, so they provided incentives for planters to import workers. For each laborer brought across the Atlantic, the master was rewarded with 50 acres of land. This system was used by wealthy plantation aristocrats to increase their land holdings dramatically. In addition, of course, they received the services of the workers for the duration of the indenture.

This system seemed to benefit the servant as well. Each **INDENTURED SERVANT** would have their fare across the Atlantic paid in full by their master. A contract was written that stipulated the length of service — typically five years. The servant would be supplied room and board while working in the master's fields. Upon completion of the contract, the servant would receive "freedom dues," a pre-arranged termination bonus. This might include land, money, a gun, clothes or food. On the surface it seemed like a terrific way for the luckless English poor to make their way to prosperity in a new land. Beneath the surface, this was not often the case.

Only about 40 percent of indentured servants lived to complete the terms of their contracts. Female servants were often the subject of harassment from their masters. A woman who became pregnant while a servant often had years tacked on to the end of her service time. Early in the century, some servants were able to gain their own land as free men. But by 1660, much of the best land was claimed by the large land owners. The former servants were pushed westward, where the mountainous land was less arable and the threat from Indians constant. A class of angry, impoverished pioneer farmers began to emerge as the 1600s grew old. After **BACON'S REBELLION** in 1676, planters began to prefer permanent African slavery to the headright system that had previously enabled them to prosper.



# *The* KITCHEN HOUSE

BY KATHLEEN GRISSOM

★ ★ ★  
*It's*  
BOOK CLUBS

★ ★ ★  
*What-READERS*  
are SAYING

★ ★ ★  
ABOUT *the*  
BOOK

★ ★ ★  
ABOUT *the*  
AUTHOR

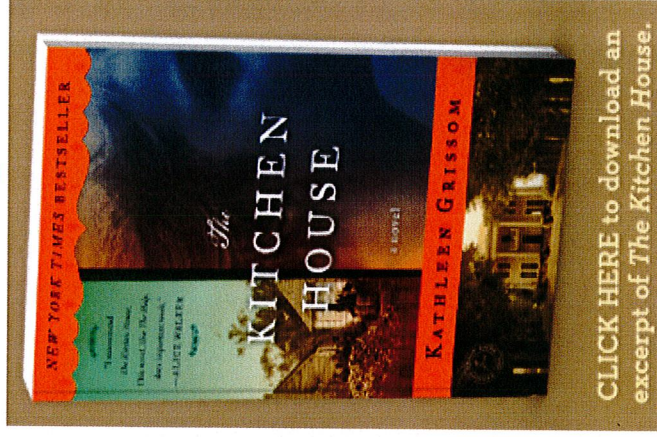
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CONTACT

**When a white servant girl violates the order of plantation society, she unleashes a tragedy that exposes the worst and best in the people she has come to call her family.**

Orphaned while onboard ship from Ireland, seven-year-old Lavinia arrives on the steps of a tobacco plantation where she is to live and work with the slaves of the kitchen house. Under the care of Belle, the master's illegitimate daughter, Lavinia becomes deeply bonded to her adopted family, though she is set apart from them by her white skin. Eventually, Lavinia is accepted into the world of the big house, where the master is absent and the mistress battles opium addiction. Lavinia finds herself perilously straddling two very different worlds. When she is forced to make a choice, loyalties are brought into question, dangerous truths are laid bare, and lives are put at risk.

*The Kitchen House* is a tragic story of page-turning suspense, exploring the meaning of family, where love and loyalty prevail.

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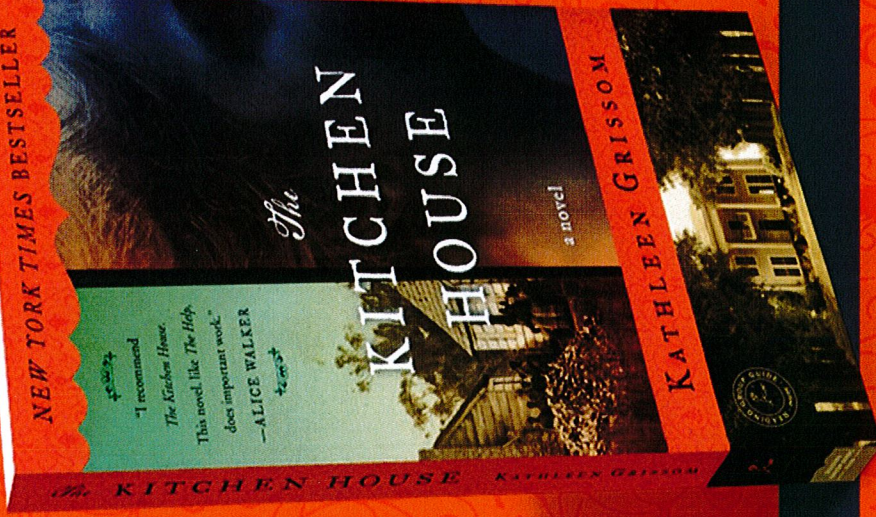


**CLICK HERE to download an excerpt of *The Kitchen House*.**



# Old-Fashioned Apple Cake

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER



3 cups flour	2 tsp. vanilla
2 cups sugar	3 eggs
1 cup vegetable oil	3 cups grated apples
1 tsp. baking soda	1 cup chopped walnuts
1 tsp. salt	1/2 cup raisins or currants

1. Butter or grease a 9" x 12" inch square pan.
2. In a large mixing bowl combine all ingredients, blending well as you go with a spatula.
3. Pour mixture into baking pan.
4. Bake at 325 degrees for 50 to 60 minutes. or until a toothpick comes out clean.

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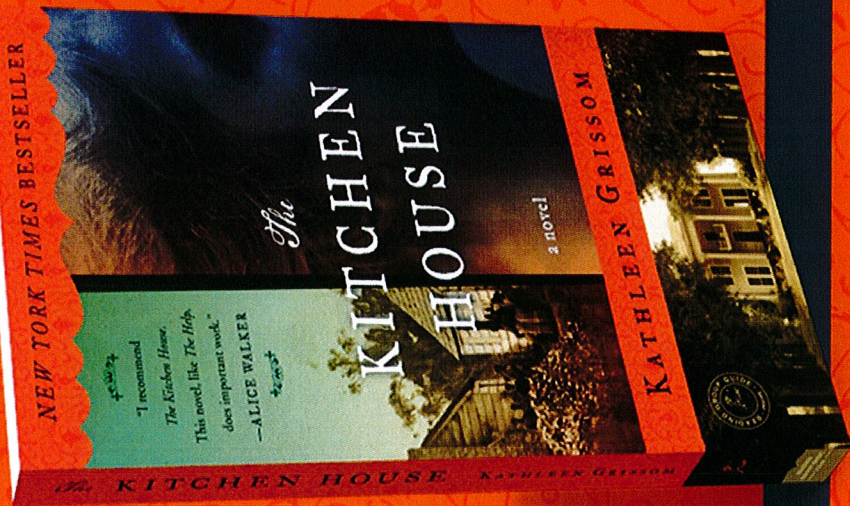
# Belle's Molasses Cake

"Whenever Belle baked a molasses cake, I craved a taste. I did try several old recipes that I found, but I

was unsatisfied with the results. So, using the old recipes as a baseline, my daughter, Erin, and I created our own version of a simple yet moist and tasty molasses cake." -Kathleen Grissom

- |                            |                        |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| 1/2 cup butter             | 1 tsp. baking soda     |
| 1/3 cup packed brown sugar | 1 tsp. ground ginger   |
| 1 egg                      | 1 tsp. cinnamon        |
| 1/2 cup milk               | 2 dashes ground cloves |
| 1 cup molasses             | 1/4 tsp. salt          |
| 2 cups flour               |                        |

1. Butter or grease an 8" inch square baking pan.
2. In a large mixing bowl, cream the butter and brown sugar with an electric mixer. Beat in the egg. In a separate bowl, combine the milk and the molasses. In another bowl, combine the flour, baking soda, ginger, cinnamon, cloves, and salt. Add each of these alternately to the butter mixture, beating well between additions. Spoon batter into the prepared pan.
3. Bake at 350 degrees for 40 minutes, or until a toothpick comes out clean.



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