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What Happened To Goodbye



Synopsis

A New York Times bestseller—A new day. A new place. A new life. In the past few years, McLean has pretended to be so many different people that she hardly remembers who she really is anymore. The adorable guy next door might be able to help her figure it out. But is she ready for it? —*cut above* • "People" Also by Sarah Dessen: *Along for the Ride* *Dreamland* *Just Listen* *Keeping the Moon* *Lock and Key* *The Moon and More* *Someone Like You* *That Summer* *This Lullaby* *The Truth About Forever*

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars— See all reviews— (245 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #54,977 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #10 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Family > Marriage & Divorce #41 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life > Marriage & Divorce #86 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Self Esteem & Reliance

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

I wish I could read "What Happened to Goodbye" with a clean slate. I wish I didn't have *Keeping the Moon*, *Someone Like You*, *Dreamland*, and *This Lullaby* clouding my expectations. I also wish I didn't have *The Truth About Forever*, *Lock and Key*, *Along for the Ride* dulling my palate. I feel like the plot of *What Happened to Goodbye* is too similar to her previous three books, and the quirk is too manufactured. It has become formulaic. Just like McLean changed her wrappings from drama girl to student council girl to cheerleader, Dessen changes the wrapping from 'girl with dead father, workaholic mother finds love' to 'girl drunk mother, absent father finds love' to 'girl emotionally reserved mother and father finds love'. It feels like they're all the same story a millimeter under the

surface. There are so many things to be enjoyed about this book, but overall, it's too weighed down by the ponderously heavy metaphors that Mclean seems to find EVERYWHERE. Leave a hospital=another place she's leaving behind; come out of a cellar=tunneling out of the darkness, someone passing her the potatoes, links on a chain. I know teenage girls are self absorbed, but come on. Not even the most introspective teenage girl can turn the end of every section into a metaphor about her life. It's impossible to be that self absorbed and still function in polite society. Also, she told us so much more than she showed us with this one, there were long weighty paragraphs dedicating to explaining characters' inner motivation. She didn't seem to trust us to make any of the leaps on our own. All that said, Sarah Dessen could write a grocery list with more charm, depth, and realism than most of the YA writers out there.

Sarah Dessen's latest offering, *What Happened to Goodbye*, fails not so much because it's an objectively worse book than any of her previous nine novels, but because it never emerges from their shadows. Dessen's made a career out of revealing the interior lives of teenage girls, surrounding them with "quirky" friends or co-workers and one sweet and long-suffering boy of the type that's never been seen in a high school, placing her characters in schools and towns familiar to her long-time readers. Dessen doesn't shy from family drama or classic moments of teenage self-doubt or introspection, but *What Happened to Goodbye* reads like a novel written from a mold. While the book provides a comforting read it's not one that's comparable with Dessen's earlier efforts for the simple reason that it tries too hard to reimagine what those books had. Dessen here follows Mclean Sweet, the daughter of a former restaurateur and the wife who left him for the basketball coach of the family's favorite university team. Doing her all to avoid her mother and her new family (which includes two new half-siblings), Mclean moves across the country with her father, Gus, spending a few months in town after town as he attempts to resuscitate failing restaurants bought by his friend Charles's company. In each town Mclean renames and remakes herself, becoming "Liz" or "Eliza" or whatever iterations her middle name offers; but in her latest move, she is stymied in her efforts at self-recreation and becomes, again, simply "Mclean."

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