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Sarah Dessen

the truth about forever



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A long, hot summer...

That's what Macy has to look forward to while her boyfriend, Jason, is away at Brain Camp. Days will be spent at a boring job in the library, evenings will be filled with vocabulary drills for the SATs, and spare time will be passed with her mother, the two of them sharing a silent grief at the traumatic loss of Macy's father.

But sometimes, unexpected things can happen—things such as the catering job at Wish, with its fun-loving, chaotic crew. Or her sister's project of renovating the neglected beach house, awakening long-buried memories. Things such as meeting Wes, a boy with a past, a taste for Truth-telling, and an amazing artistic talent, the kind of boy who could turn any girl's world upside down. As Macy ventures out of her shell, she begins to question her sheltered life.

Is it *really* always better to be safe than sorry?

The Truth About Forever Details

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From Reader Review The Truth About Forever for online ebook

Christina says

4 stars

"That was the thing. You just never knew. Forever was so many different things. It was always changing, it was what everything was really all about. It was twenty minutes, or a hundred years, or just this instant, or any instant I wished would last and last. But there was only one truth about forever that really mattered, and that was this: it was happening."

This was my first Sarah Dessen book and it was just what I needed after the craziness of ACoMaF.

This book is about Macy, a girl who lost her father a year and a half before and who is still trying to handle her grief in her own way. One of those ways being by making herself as perfect as she can be. Insert the perfect boyfriend, Jason.

Sheldon Cooper from the Big Bang Theory is literally who I kept picturing as Jason...except that Sheldon is way more endearing than Jason...at least to me.

While perfect boyfriend Jason is away for the summer at Brain Camp, Macy agrees to take over his job at the info desk at the library while he's gone. She spends her time when not at the library in her quiet house, doing SAT prep work to prepare for her senior year and helping her mom out with her buliding company, that she now runs alone.

One night during an event her mother is hosting, Macy gets involved in trying to help out with the caterers, which leads to the woman who runs the catering company, Delia, offering Macy a job. She initially turns down the offer.

During email exchanges with Jason, Macy complains about how she's not enjoying her co-workers attitudes at the library and closes out the email with an 'I love you'.

His response is that he feels that Macy is becoming too dependent of him and is not taking her job at the library seriously, so because of these reasons, he feels they should take a break from their relationship for the summer. He wants them to meet up after he returns from camp and see if they should return to their relationship or if they should make the break permanent.

Feeling lost and a little reckless, she accepts Delia's employment offer and in doing so, falls into a unique and wonderful group that accepts her immediately, despite the flaws she tries to keep hidden. Her new friends make her evaluate whether she really needs to be perfect all the time.

I really enjoyed this book and zoomed through it pretty quickly. Even the secondary characters were pretty well developed and I loved seeing all the different relationships throughout the book evolve and change.

I also could relate to Macy because of our shared loss of our dads. Reading about her and her family's grief was hard at times, because of how real it was.

I will definitely be reading more of Dessen's novels very soon.

Laura Newcombe says

This is my favorite book in the whole wide world forever and ever. Reviewing it would kill the magic. Just read it, please. That's all I can say. Now, now, now!

Sarah says

Excerpt: *"You should have seen your face," she said, her breath hot in my ear. "Sa-wooooon."*

I think this was the first book I read of Sarah Dessen and that made me love her forever. Enough said.

Chelsea ❤️Peril Please❤️ says

I'd tried to hold myself apart, showing only what I wanted, doling out bits and pieces of who I was. But that only works for so long. Eventually, even the smallest fragments can't help but make a whole.

Now that I finally have some time to put together a little bit of a coherent review, I'm excited to give a little more explanation to my thoughts. I've been seeing this author on the shelves of every big bookstore for years and never gave her a second look. And while **I think that there was something missing** that made this an absolute perfect and epic win for me, it also touched me in a way not many books do...and I think that deserves to be said.

Maybe that's what you got when you stood over your grief, facing it finally. A sense of its depths, its area, the distance across, and the way over or around it, whichever you chose in the end.

In many ways, this author's writing reminded me of Heather Demetrios's *I'll Meet You There*. This was an absolute favorite for me last year and an absolute shock. It wasn't particularly fast paced nor was it action packed. But every word, every page, every moment implanted itself into my heart and stole my breath. As

the book progressed it was built up in such a way that didn't bore you, yet you just NEEDED something to happen....this book was a lot like that. However, it lacked all those intense, tugging emotions that made IMUT an emotionally packed gut punch.

Leaning out my window, at the odd angle I was, I found myself almost level with the top of his head. A second later, when he looked up at me, we were face to face, and again, even under these circumstances, I was struck by how good looking he was, in that accidental, doesn't-even-know-it kind of way. Which only made it worse. Or better. Or whatever.

When what I wanted to happen happened, it certainly made me a total fangirl, but by then I had invested a ton of time and wanted a little more. Does that make sense? I appreciated and loved the slow, syrupy feel of Dessen's world and her writing, but it lacked one key emotion to make me a forever fan: Obsession.

The silence wasn't like the ones I'd known lately, though: it wasn't empty as much as chosen. There's an entirely different feel to quiet when you're with someone else, and at any moment it could be broken. Like the difference between a pause and an ending.

Probably my other large gripe was our main character's mother. Come on. Grief does absolutely horrible, dreadful, unspeakable things to a person, but I don't think when your daughter is sitting there telling you how much she likes people and how good they are that her kinds of reactions were necessary. A little naivety? Sure. Blase tone? Okay. But that utter disregard for her daughter's feelings? It bothered me far more than I'm even letting on now.

"What were you two talking about?" she whispered as Wes pulled the doors shut.

"Nothing," I said. "Running."

"You should have seen your face," she said, her breath hot in my ear. "Sa-woooooon."

And then there was Wes...sweet, adorable, loyal Wes. Always there for her, **always making her see herself the way she deserves to be seen**. And I think that's my favorite part about Wes-He doesn't belittle her. He always makes her search deep within herself for what makes *her* happy and not other people. And he never makes her feel small. **He is just one of those perfect guys** and you can't help but to love him from the moment you meet him-no matter how small his part is, at first.

Events conspired to bring you back to where you'd been. It was what you did then that made all the difference: it was all about potential.

Now, I know I didn't say much, but I just had to say more than what I did below. This book, while not a heart-stopping and pulse-pounding thriller by any means, is a great coming of age story. And hell, I'm 26 years old and I found some value in the deep, heartfelt words this author wrote through the eyes and mind of Macy. **We all can stand to learn something about ourselves** and become introspective even if just for a moment. As it is, this book, while not an absolute favorite, came at a time where I looked deep within myself and saw a little of Macy. **I don't want to live a life where I'm living for others and not myself...**and I'm glad I can still relate to books like this. What better way to get impartial advice than reading a wonderful book? There *is* no better way.

For more of my reviews, please visit:

This was absolutely adorable! Extremely well-written and a lot deeper than I really thought it would be (I was shocked).

It wasn't until I really got where I wanted to be in terms of the story that I realized I had been holding my breath in anticipation...and that's a good sign, to me.

A tad slow in places, but **building up to something deep**, meaningful, and heartfelt. I need more books like this in my life-It's the same description I've used for other books, but I'll say it again: It was like sitting on the front porch on a hot summer day sipping lemonade with a light breeze. It was just *that* kind of book.

And this Wes??Such a **totally believable good guy** who wasn't over the top perfect that I couldn't help but wish I had met him first. Sweet, kind, attentive, and only wants what is best for Macy. I fell in love with him slowly..then all at once (hehe bad-stealing lines from other books..).

RTC, maybe. Depends how my weekend goes! :P

Kai says

"For any one of us our forever could end in an hour, or a hundred years from now. You never know for sure, so you'd better make every second count."

My first and still favourite Sarah Dessen novel. I loved everything about it: Macy, Wes (oh Wes), and everybody of the Wish Catering crew. The plot was cute and exciting and even though it is easily predictable (I mean, that's why we read these kind of books), it was simply perfect.

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Wendy Darling says

I never, ever would have read Sarah Dessen if it weren't for my GoodReads friends. I'm not much on chick lit and I only occasionally come across realistic YA fiction that I truly enjoy, so I was extremely wary of what lay behind those pretty book covers, even though most of the reviews were positively gushing.

I fell for this book really hard, really fast, however. I expected a light, hopefully somewhat amusing read but what I got instead was a quiet, deep story that I absolutely loved reading from beginning to end. I felt so much empathy for Macy, who struggles to be the perfect daughter but feels small and unimportant in so many aspects of her life. The author also wrote incredibly touching examples of how people process grief in different ways, especially in how Macy witnessed her father's death as well as the funny and bittersweet packages that continue to arrive for him. I also found Macy's relationships with her mom and her sister to be painfully familiar as well as believably awkward and flawed.

This isn't a doom and gloom Message Book, however; it's surprisingly sweet and warm and grounded in a way that so many of these types of books are not. I loved the way Macy's friendships with Kristy and Monica and Delia and Bert, as well as her more-than-friends relationship with Wes, are portrayed. (view spoiler) Their interactions when they're working or hanging out are somehow relaxed and fun and full of self-discovery all at the same time. I truly believe that it's important to have people in our lives who bring out different sides of us, and sometimes the very truest friends turn out to be the ones who see things in us that we didn't even know are there. I'm so glad that this book spends just as much time on Macy herself, her family, and her friends as it does as on figuring out which boy she really wants.

I will say that although I enjoyed the small triumphs leading up to the end when Macy finally takes the big step towards changing her life, I do wish that there was a little more time spent with the characters afterwards. After roughly 370 pages of buildup and a really adorable friendship between Macy and Wes, I felt a little disoriented and cheated when the story ended just a few pages after the really big and sweet scene I'd been waiting for. But overall, this book was very well-written and was truly a pleasure to read. It gave me more than I expected, it put a big smile on my face, and it made me feel wonderfully warm and happy...especially because I now have so many more Dessen books to look forward to.

Big thanks to my GoodReads buddies for giving *me* the push I needed to find such a great author!

Rachel Maniacup says

This is a story of a young lady, MACY QUEEN, who is struggling to find herself for almost one year and a half now, after her father's sudden death, which she hasn't really grieved yet, and somehow blamed herself for that's why she never talk to anyone about her real emotions..not even to her mother or her sister.

To hide her emotions, she tried to be a perfect person for her mother (who never talk much and lacks affection because like her, her mother also shields her grief by keeping herself busy) and for her perfect boyfriend named Jason (who only thinks of himself) who went to Brain Camp for summer, leaving his job on her at the library. But then, she never felt happy working in this place until she met the "Wish Catering"

team, and met Wes (my favorite character here).

One thing I loved about this book, is the way how Macy and Wes developed their friendship, and the way their relationship built up, starting with the "Truth" game that they played whenever they got the chance.

What I didn't like was.. some of the chapters were slow and confusing because there were moments when the story's describing one feature of Macy's life, and suddenly, it will plunge into another aspect or scene. And I felt like the ending had been rushed up a bit.

The reason why I'm giving this book a four star rating instead of three, is because I loved the WISH Catering characters! I enjoyed them because they were well developed, and they have portrayed their roles effectively.

Over all, this one's a good book and I'm highly recommending it to young adults as it came out as a neat, wholesome romance.

Thanks to my dear friend, BOOTS for recommending this to me! ^^

Christine Riccio says

Wes was cute and all and I enjoyed their interactions. All the rest of the characters in the catering business felt real and were fun to read about but I WAS SO FRUSTRATED BY MACY (the narrator) THIS ENTIRE BOOK. It really took away from my enjoyment of the story.

Isamlq says

sa-woon..!

I am definitely a fan of Wes and Macy's! If Dessen keeps leaving me with this oh happy, happy feeling then I am well on my way to adding her to my list of favorite YA contemporary authors. What is it with these authors and their formulae? The very fact that there is a pattern followed should put me off. I mean, there can only be just so many ways to tell the same story, right? But, see, I am not put off, because with each book they offer up I find myself drawn in: There's John Green with his geeky/quirky boy (who is attractive nonetheless) with trusty sidekick/best friend on a road trip for a mysterious girl. There's Marchetta with her family drama (because pared down that is what Mackee/Francesca etc had to deal with... Peace, Marchetta fans! I too love her!) And now, there's Sarah Dessen's one girl, one boy and one summer thing. And yet, I LOVE EVERY ONE of their stories!

The Truth about Forever definitely left me grinning and *sa-wooning* at certain moments. But it wasn't just the pair of Wes and Macy that has me giddy. It's all of them... supporting cast and all! I found the sibling relations quite like my own. They were all so darned protective; their common history just there to be seen. There's Wes for Bert, Kristy for monotone Monica and much later Caroline over Macy.

And Macy? Well, she made me laugh, but she had me gnashing my teeth too! Her wanting to be perfect; her knowing it impossible, were these traits endearing or annoying? More likely the latter, yet I still rooted for her. When she finally decided on what she wanted, I went, "At last!"

Then there's Wes. *Sa-woon*. Nuf' said.

Nat says

Cute Boys, Late Summer Nights, and Blossoming Friendships

My umpteenth reread of Rainbow Rowell's **Fangirl** made me realize how compulsively readable the contemporary books that made my 2014/15 were. So the queen of the genre, aka Sarah Dessen, had to make a comeback for my next reread.

They just don't make them like this anymore. I've yet to experience a new summer contemporary read that receives the surrounding hype of Stephanie Perkins's **Anna and the French Kiss**, Morgan Matson's **Since You've Been Gone**, and Dessen's **The Truth About Forever**. Reading this made me recall how I achingly miss that feeling of *fun* and *ease* those iconic books that scream of summer provided when I needed it the most. I mean, remembering my reading experience of these books now feels like sifting through teen memories, and even though I didn't encounter the described events personally, I experienced so much joy reading them that they simply feels like mine. And it's exactly this rush of emotion that I haven't felt in a while with a YA book.

Now, I definitely feel the keen need to revisit more of the kind in the near future. But in the meantime, I've compiled a list of things I adored within this reread:

- The tiny random moments of resemblance **Fangirl** shares with **The Truth About Forever** (I had to note it down with the former book still so fresh in my mind): Wes's pickup truck coming to save the day (Levi's red truck), Macy's denying invitations (Cath), Bert pushing the doors *with too much gusto* (Reagan's quirk).
- My favorite catering crew to exist in fiction, aka Wish Catering, with their tiny mishaps somehow always solved before the night is done. I definitely had to rearrange my expectations when it came to them since I recalled the dynamics between the crew a tad different, but still, they were so good.

"They honestly seemed to believe that things would just work out. And the weirdest thing was, they did. Somehow. Eventually. Although even when I was standing right there I couldn't say how."

- One of my favorite scenes arose out of Macy sharing with Kristy her experience of being in a relationship with Jason, whose constant need for perfection makes her fall short again and again in his eyes and consequently makes her doubt her every move... So Kristy makes sure to pass onto Macy her confidence.

"—would totally want to hear say she loved him. You're smart, you're gorgeous, you're a good person. I mean, what makes him such a catch, anyway? Who is he to judge?"

"He's Jason," I said, for lack of a better argument.

"Well, he's a fuckhead." She sucked down the rest of her beer. "And if I were you, I'd be glad to be rid of him. Because anyone that can make you feel that bad about yourself is toxic, you know?"

"He doesn't make me feel bad about myself," I said, knowing even as my lips formed the words this was exactly what he did. Or what I let him do. It was hard to say.

"What you need," Kristy said, "what you deserve, is a guy who adores you for what you are. Who doesn't see you as a project, but a prize. You know?"

"I'm no prize," I said, shaking my head.

"Yes," she said, and she sounded so sure it startled me: like she could be so positive while hardly knowing me at all. "You are. What sucks is how you can't even see it."

It brought to mind this empowering exchange from Skam:

- The ongoing "gotcha" scare game shared between the two brothers, Wes and Bert, reminded me of the trailer for the upcoming film Tag and the true story behind it, titled: *I've played a game of tag for 23 years*. The game came from a bad period in life that later blossomed into a more concrete focal point for the brothers.

"Truthfully, it's just this dumb thing we started about a year ago. It pretty much came from us living alone in the house after my mom died. It was really quiet, so it was easy to sneak around."

"Plus," Wes continued, "there's just something fun, every once in a while, about getting the shit scared out of you. You know?"

- Speaking of, seeing Wes care for his younger brother, Bert, who's beyond nervous to go to a very important engagement (...Armageddon club), was a huge sa-woon worthy moment for me.

"Calm down," Wes said, stepping around me into the room and walking up to Bert. He untangled the tie, smoothing the ends. "Stand still." Then Bert and I both stood and watched as, with one cross, a twist, and a yank, he tied the knot perfectly.

"Wow," Bert said, looking down at it as Wes stepped back, examining his handiwork. "When did you learn that?"

"When I had to go to court," Wes told him. He reached up, plucking the piece of tissue off his brother's face, then straightened the tie again. "Do you have enough money?"

Bert snorted. "I prebought my ticket way back in March. There's a chicken dinner and dessert. It's all paid for."

Wes pulled out his wallet and slid out a twenty, tucking it into Bert's pocket. "No more cologne, okay?"

I do have to mention, though, that after the initial excitement slipped away, I couldn't help but notice the few irks that came to bother me: the way Macy's mother was characterized, Kristy barely appearing after Macy and Wes grow closer, Wes himself not being given enough character building so that he essentially resembled a mirror image to Macy (both have lost a parent, both have a bf/gf on hold, both can't accept a compliment, etc.), and it was too unequivocally convenient to feel real. And then it also hit a bit of a rut when the catering crew, who were one of the biggest highlights for me, didn't appear in the following scenes.

Overall, I had a nice walk down memory lane by rereading **The Truth About Forever**, but the memory of the book still holds more appeal for me than the actual book.

I did, however, really enjoy this Rex Orange County song that gets the mood of this read. These next lines, in particular:

I'll find a spot that's just for me and see if I can cope without An ounce of pain, without an ounce of pain Said the likelihood just frightens me and it's easier to hide But I can't ignore it endlessly, eventually things die

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Adrienne says

I hadn't even heard of Sarah Dessen until I came across this book on my friend Mahyars read shelf. I noticed the 5 stars and as we share a liking for certain types of books thought I'd investigate this author further. It didn't take much persuading, 1st person POV, heavy on the emotion, I was definitely up for it. And I wasn't disappointed! Oh no this book has to be one of my all time favourites. I'm not going to give a re-tell of the story because other reviewers have done that, but what I will do is try to tell you how this story made me feel.....So here goes. Having lost a parent when I was about the same age as the heroine Macy I understand the emotions running through this story. I know how difficult it is for the remaining parent to try and be the person everyone knows and also grieve for their partner. To lose a partner is different to losing a parent. I also understand why Macy ended up with Jason (there is always a danger when we lose someone we love that the turmoil of our emotions attracts us to people who are in the long term not good for us (too safe or too wild or too controlling)), and was so glad that he was out of the picture for most of the story. So when Macy decides to live dangerously and go to work for Wish I was overjoyed this was the next step for her, to escape the safe, and emotionally numb and sterile life that she had been living and start to find herself again.

I loved all of her new friends, Delia who plays opposite to her Mom, and Kristy who takes on the role of sibling /best friend, and best of all Wes who was emotionally far older than his years and balanced the emotionally retarded character of Jason. Whilst Monica and Bert have the role of younger siblings. So the guys from Wish become a kind of surrogate family (you notice the only father figure is Pete who never really plays an active part in story so is distant like Carolines (Macys sister) hubby. I think all of these things highlight the choices and decisions Macy had to face, in this, an important turning point in her life. I liked that an already emotive issue was not further complicated by sex, with Macy having to choose which path to take with regard to that. The only downside for me was, what would Macy have done had Caroline not told her mother about Wes (Wes and Macy form a close friendship and Macys mom disapproves to the point where she actively prevents Macy from seeing him) and his good character, had Macys mom continued to exert her control over Macy would Macy have been strong enough to disobey and go her own way? Having been under the emotional restrictions of a controlling parent I can say from my POV probably not, she would have got back with Jason and spent the rest of her life with an emotionally retarded man ruled by his ability to control people via a mindless set of lists. So thumbs up to Caroline, who orchestrated and manipulated her mother with no-one knowing, and in doing so set the wheels in motion for everyone to start the healing process and find themselves.

So, would I read anything by Sarah Dessen again? You bet!

Ari says

First thoughts:

I might need to change my rating system for this book to be given only 5 stars..

Also i need some time to sort out my feelings (between both overwhelming joy and sadness) and come up with a proper review, because i have lots of "wow"s in my mind right now, but i fear that it might not be enough to express how beautiful this book really is.

This story really touched a soft spot in my heart.

"It's all in the view. That's what I mean about forever, too. For any one of us our forever could end in an hour, or a hundred years from now. You never know for sure, so you'd better make every second count."

Full Review:

This book was so beautiful that I felt the urge to cry so many times, but not just for sadness, but because of all those strong emotions that this story has brought out of my heart.

Truth being said, I think I've felt in love that night, while reading it.. not only with Wes but with all the crew members from Wish. I have a big heart in my tiny body, so maybe even Caroline can squeeze in there, also I have a lot of affection for Macy's father, and - if she wasn't so damn stubborn - Macy's mother could've won a little spot too.. just a tiny one.

I haven't enjoyed the side characters this much since maybe On the Jellicoe Road , I haven't cheered as much for the main characters since Anna and the French Kiss, I haven't cared this much for someone's (as a character) death since Winter Longing or The Hunger Games as a matter of fact.. Oh God, I simply love it!

This is a story about loss, and I understand it;

This is a story about first love, and remember it;

This is a story about beginnings, and I am already there;

This is a story about real life, and I am living it...

This is one of those beautiful books that I will grab some other time and read it again, and I really hope that I will be able to feel the same emotions, that I am going to love it even more..

I liked the way every character in the story handled the loss in their life (and how different their choices were):

- Macy's mother and Wes found refugee in their work (the same path but in such a different way)

- Macy kept all the pain inside, waiting for it to just disappear in time, but in fact it only got stronger until it became unbearable. I understood her friendship with Wes, how good it felt for her to talk to someone that could understand her and her fears, someone who could take the pain away with only an embrace, or a word, or an understanding smile.

- Delia was a mixture between them all. She knew how strong her pain was, and she learned how to live with it (I liked the comparison with the hole in the road, I could understand her better)

- Macy's sister was probably more like me. She was the one crying her heart out at the beginning, and after that she was the one trying to put the pieces of her life (and even theirs) back together.

Now about the love story, oh, it was precious.

Macy and Wes are adorable, too adorable for words.

It was such a slow development, in the best possible way, it made me feel like a teenager again, falling in love for the first time.. I loved their truth game and the way they kept finding out things about each other, it

was nice to see how perfectly they fit together, how close they became day by day. There are few couples in the YA literature that made me feel so much joy and sadness for them.

It's just crazy how beautiful this book really is.

And now I'm at a loss for words, so go read the book and then tell the world how much you love it, because I bet you will, with all your heart.

"...the truth about forever is that it is happening right now..."

This review can also be found at ReadingAfterMidnight.com

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Cait • A Page with a View says

This was one of my favorite books in early high school and still stands out as one of the first true YA books I ever found. I'm doing this book for Penguin's #ReadADessen blog tour right now and am all sorts of nostalgic.

Macy's still trying to recover from her father's sudden death that she witnessed over a year ago. She's tried to make herself as perfect as possible so life can be safe and predictable, but she still feels inadequate. Her boyfriend looks ideal on paper (super smart and spending his summer at Brain Camp), but is actually seriously boring in person.

So enter the awesome characters: Delia and her catering crew of Wes, Bert, Monica, and Kristy. They're working an event at Macy's house and end up offering her a job when she steps in to help them. She initially refuses, but then accepts and gets swept up in this eclectic new family she's found. I loved this crew so much in high school that I went out and catered a few events, no joke.

Throughout the story the new friends help Macy drop her "perfect" facade, relax more with the unknown in life, and start to really be herself. Wes is my favorite Dessen guy for sure (no wait... maybe he's tied with Owen). He and Macy have an ongoing question game that's all sorts of adorable. The romance kind of took a backseat to the main story, but I really liked that in this case. Everything worked. The story is ultimately a journey of healing as the characters all deal with grief in different ways. I thought it was super touching and really well done overall.

The whole story has this really peaceful, contemplative tone that I really loved in high school. My top two Dessen recommendations will always be this book and *Just Listen*!

Thank you to the publisher for sending me a finished copy.

K.D. Absolutely says

I thank this book for giving me an important insight on what could be going on in the mind of a 16-year old girl in today's world.

You see, I am a father of a girl of that same age. The age of the **Macy**, the narrator-main protagonist of this book.

My daughter is my only child. For the past 16 years, I have been trying to be a good father. But what is a good father? Since there is no school in good parenting, most of my styles come from what I thought were the good points my father showed me or what I thought he should have done or showed to me but he did not. This could be wrong. Reasons: (1) Those experiences were for a father-son relationship; (2) I grew up with 3 other siblings; (3) I was 16, 31 years ago - almost 1 generation in between. So, times, indeed changed already.

Macy loves his father. They run together every morning. The father dies of heart attack one morning when Macy is too lazy getting up from bed. So, Macy thinks that her father would still be alive if she was not lazy that morning. She blames herself but she doesn't tell this to anyone. As an outlet for this guilt, she tries to excel in everything she does: in school, in the library where she works or in her occasional job at Wish Catering. She thinks that by being excellent, she will be able to please her dead father and that somehow will ease up her guilt.

Since the birth of my daughter, I've been trying to be a hands-on dad. When I was growing up, my father was almost always at home because he was a plantation owner so he did not have to work at all. So, in a way, he was *there* when I needed him but just like many "traditional" fathers: he was distant especially when he was busy playing chess, drinking with his friends or reading newspaper. He stayed seven years in college but was not a diligent (my impression) student and I could not remember an instance when he helped me with my homework except to correct my grammar or pronunciation when I read aloud my speeches prepared as required by my teachers. I knew that my father was proud of us when we got good grades, medals or distinctions for excellent performance in school but he did not show any emotion in front of us. I thought that I would have been happier as a child if he jumped up and down when I bought home medals from school or when it was announced that I was in the top 4 of my graduating class in high school.

So, when I became a father, I was like that. Always jumping up and down and really appreciative of whatever good news my daughter told me. Each day. Each school report card. Each school year. I always tried attending her school events. I was always eager listening to whatever news she brought home from school. Pre-school. Elementary. High school.

Little did I know that she was feeling the pressure. She thought that I was expecting too much from her. She thought that I would like her to achieve what I achieved. I knew this not even from my wife but from my wife's older sister who was close to my daughter.

So, where did I go wrong? Where is that balance between too little and too much?

That was the dilemma of Macy in this book, *The Truth About Forever*. Where is that point to strike and the seesaw will stand still? She thinks that Jason does not love her despite her trying to do her best in her work in

the library. She feels the pressure that she has brought to herself. She assumes so many things that the unnecessary emotions have bottled up and so the seesaw is not balanced and her feelings are all mixed up and her life is in turmoil.

I'm too old to appreciate her romance with the tattooed Wes and I did not really care about his dark past. Maybe my daughter would love this book. But for me, I still liked this but not for that reason, that same reason why my Goodreads friends, liked this.

I read this as a father and I liked it.

Thank you, Tina, for recommending this book. Thank you, Sheryl for lending me this copy! Thank you, Maria for being my reading buddy. I struggled finishing this book. I felt the pressure but it was worth it! Thank you! Thank you!

Tina says

Original post One More Page

I've been trying to think of the best way to review this book, because I feel like the first review I wrote for ***The Truth About Forever*** did not do it any justice. The thing is, I don't know how to write a proper review for this book without squealing or "sa-woon"-ing so much. Because believe me, I know I did that so many times when I was rereading this book.

But let me try again. Sarah Dessen's ***The Truth About Forever*** is one of my favorite books of all time. It's not my first Dessen, but it's the book that made me love Dessen and made her one of my auto-buy authors. It's one book I've reread multiple times and still get all swoony and happy and wishing for a romance like Macy and Wes did. Yes, even with their drama, because it made the ending so much satisfying in the end.

The Truth About Forever is about Macy Queen, whose life spun out of control when her dad died in front of her. Macy tried to hold it together for the sake of her family, hiding her grief and seeking perfection, thinking that this would help her mother who seeks perfection in everything she does as well, her own way of dealing with loss. The story starts with Macy's boyfriend, Jason, leaving for Brain Camp and Macy facing a long summer with her strict schedule and routine. She's okay, she always thought. Until one day, she meets the Wish Catering crew. One bad afternoon at her summer job, with a bad email to boot, she joins Wish, makes new friends, and meets Wes -- the seemingly perfect guy with his own not-so-clean past, who likes flaws. Things turn interesting for Macy as she gets to know these people, and as she realizes that maybe it's not so bad if her strictly-scheduled life unravels and she lets chaos in bit by bit.

Ah, this book. I think what makes me love this book more than I loved ***This Lullaby*** is how much I could relate to Macy. I'm fortunate enough to have my parents here with me so I can't relate to Macy at that front, but the schedules? The need to be as perfect as I can be (sometimes, anyway)? Oh, I've been there. At the next rereads, I found that I wanted to shake Macy so hard -- she needs to cry! She needs to snap out of the illusion that she needs to be perfect to hold things together. She needs to let go and reach for her mom so they could grieve together! Ah Macy, why do you frustrate me so much?

But it served as a good starting point. If there was anything that Sarah Dessen really knows, it's how to write a story that seeps into you and hooks you, pulling you in up until the last page. There's no need for magic or

any supernatural creatures -- just plain everyday things magnified, with added significance. The conversations could be just any normal conversation, but somehow they pack a punch. For example:

"Honestly," I said.

"What?"

"Come on. You have to admit it's sort of ridiculous."

"What is?"

Now that I had to define it, I found myself struggling for the right words. "You know," I said, then figured Kristy had really summed it up best. "The sa-woon."

"The what?"

"Wes, come on," I said. "Are you seriously not aware of how girls stare at you?"

How cute is that?

There's really nothing new with the story, but thanks to the writing and the vivid characters, it becomes a little bit extraordinary. This book is one of the reasons I appreciate characters more, why I believe that even the most common storyline can be interesting when the roles are played by strong, well-developed characters.

And then there's **Wes**. Dessen boys are well known among readers, and Wes is definitely my favorite. He just seems so...*perfect*. Strange to see a seemingly perfect guy in a book that tells the main character that perfection isn't everything, don't you think? Believe me, I'm still trying to find some kind of flaw in Wes. But I guess that's what crushes are -- it's so hard to find a flaw in them. I think I'm not *that* infatuated with Wes that I'd try and look for someone exactly like him (but hey, I wouldn't mind, haha), but I would like to have the same kind of development that Macy and Wes had. Their relationship is one of the most authentic ones I've read -- built on shared experiences and conversations. Now where is that guy I could play a game of Truth with?

So yeah, even on my third reread, I still loved ***The Truth About Forever***. It reminds me of why I started reading YA and why I like the contemporary genre. If you're looking for a good contemporary YA novel you can sink your teeth into, or if you're looking for a good Sarah Dessen novel to start with, I highly recommend ***The Truth About Forever***. Read it and *sa-woon*. :)

Penny says

This book deserves 4 stars at least. It is well done, deep and introspective. There is nothing cliche here and yet, it is about something completely mundane in a very good way.
I absolutely recommend to read this book.

In terms of personal tastes, I would give this book 3 stars. The topic is one that usually doesn't absorb me much and the only reason I read it was because all the good reviews it has. The pace was slower than I

usually like; same with the excitement level. However I am very glad I did read it. This book lacks some elements that I usually look for in a story, but it was undoubtedly beautiful and well crafted. That it is way I decided to give it 4 stars instead of the 3 that I would normally have given it. In this particular case, it didn't feel right to lower its rating just because my personal tastes. As I said before, the 4 stars are well deserved.

The Truth About Forever is a good book.

Exina says

No one could tell you: you just had to go through it on your own. If you were lucky, you came out on the other side and understood. If you didn't, you kept getting thrust back, retracing those steps, until you finally got it right.

The Truth About Forever is one of the few YA books I loved. The story is captivating, so touching and so real.

Engaging writing style, loveable characters, and Wes who is just the most perfect fictional boyfriend ever. Aww, I wish he was real...

I finally felt I was on my way. Everyone had a forever, but given a choice, this would be mine. The one that began in this moment, with Wes, in a kiss that took my breath away, then gave it back—leaving me astounded, amazed, and most of all, alive.

Highly recommended! :)

Rachel E. Carter says

I tried to give Sarah Dessen another chance. Unfortunately it did not work out. This is the type of contemporary I shy away from -really, really slow build up of romance and lots of real life issues (for this reason I steer clear from some of the hugely famous contemporaries with cancer, etc.). A lot of people love this kind of thing but I guess I am just not the right reader. I choose books as an escape and when I read about realistic characters & horrible events in a contemporary setting it just brings me down:(

Jo says

“For any one of us our forever could end in an hour, or a hundred years from now. You can never know for sure, so you’d better make every second count.”

High Points.

Not a wizard/mind-reader/necromancer/vampire/werewolf/Cornish Piskie (I feel there is lack of Cornish Piskies in YA novels....maybe I'll remedy that soon)/zombie in sight. HURRAH. Outstanding supporting cast. Food (seriously, I put on about five stone just reading this book). Best friends. Good grief and real emotions. Being the person you want to be not the person *they* want you to be. Boys with tattoos. Girls with go go boots. Running out of petrol. Arts and crafts. Sa-wooon.

Low Points.

This book was really quite slow at points and there were a lot of description that didn't add much to the story. (Did we need four consecutive pages about houses?!)

But it got there in the end and I ended up enjoying it a lot and I will not be shunned by the entire YA community for treason against Queen Dessen. HURRAH.

Heroine.

Macy Queen, 16, wants to be perfect and I have to admit alarm bells began ringing pretty early on in this book... but then they shut off when I realised that just because she *wanted* to be perfect doesn't mean she actually was. Which is great because perfection is overrated.

So, even though for the first couple of chapters Macy kept her personality cards very close to her chest, I could see through her poker face... and I don't even know how to play poker (even when we play for Smarties on the table instead of money..and I *love* Smarties!). So even though I know she wanted me to, I did not write Macy off. Because I'm stubborn and I knew there was the fun-time Macy in there somewhere.

As the book progressed, Macy started to stand up for herself and develop that little thing we call a backbone and start living the life she knew was out there. Macy had a lot to deal with in the past couple of years and had built up lots of sturdy walls around her to stop anyone seeing that she is finding grieving for her father difficult (read: human).

I know I've said it before but there *is* something so satisfying about seeing a character come into their own and fight for their right to *party* be someone they've been trying to squash because they're afraid.

And if there is a sexy boy involved, then that's just fine too.

Love Interest.

Jason. Seriously... what was he? Are there any seventeen year old boys actually like that? Do they truly exist? And if so why did Macy, as a girl with a pulse, stay with him so long? I guess nothing says passion like lists. *Lists*

Well, hello Wes with your tattoo and your *past*. Which is different to a past because it's *in italics* exciting and dangerous and sexy. Even though it was so very obvious that you and Macy were going to end up canoodling as soon as you loped (I don't think I've ever met a boy who loped. *One day, Jo. One day*) onto the page.

But I was OK with it because, although you had a *past*, you never made a secret about it and you never kept anything from Macy because you felt she couldn't handle it and it was never an issue and Macy didn't go mental over it. Which was refreshing because I find girls often get blind sighted by a boy with a *past*.

Yes, my dear Wes, you have baggage but you have managed to fold it into a nice and stylish bag that you can carry around with ease that doesn't drag you down and make you insufferable and boring.

You are also a massive goof, you're such a cute big brother and a loyal nephew and you are scared of

clowns, which pretty much makes us soul mates.

And you and Macy are really cute together and you encouraged her to be the girl she was too afraid to be just in case she slipped up and was no longer perfect.

Also, you can weld. Which is *always* hot.

Best Friend(s).

I loved their interactions and their tomfooleries and the way they embraced Macy, no questions asked. Also, they have an ambulance as their method of transport. AN AMBULANCE.

It's safe to say that I would go out with vommy Sherman from Shreveport to be friends with Kristy, Monica, Delia and Bert.

Theme Tune.

Live Forever- Oasis.

This song will always remind me of being young and giving a metaphorical middle finger to all the bitchy, stuck-up people ~~who work in libraries~~ who look down on you because you're not 'perfect'.

"*We see things they'll never see.*"

I'll take living passionately over perfection any day, thank you very much.

Angst Scale.

9/10. There was great deal of angst in this book. Whether it was Macy and her grieving for the death of her father or Macy always striving for unattainable perfection, there was always the sense of angst looming in the background. And as I mentioned early... this book was a *tad* wordy and it *sometimes* felt like I was being clobbered over the head with a brick made of teenage emotion, but it fit well with the pace of the book.

Because even though it was heavy going in places, when it was funny it was really funny. I was snorting and hiccoughing with laughter here there and everywhere with this book.

I liked the dichotomy of trivial angst vs real life emotions that Dessen sets up because it allowed me to understand the difficulties that Macy feels and her insecurities and allowed me to not only understand her but to relate to her.

I thought the way that Dessen depicted losing a family member was effective and the raw emotions that come after death were written perfectly. I especially liked the parts with the products that Macy's dad bought from the catalogues...so poignant.

BUT, I'm OK with boy angst when I care for the boy and think he's worth your angst and fretting. But Macy... why did you even care about Jason? He did not deserve the amount of angst you gave him. He wrote lists, for goodness sake. *Lists*.

Recommended For.

People who like contemporary YA books. People who don't really like contemporary YA books but who are willing to give them a try. People who like boys with a *past*. People who have always wanted to quit a job in a dramatic way. People who find welding a sexy past time. People who like driving around in converted ambulances with excellent best friends. People who like meatballs.... so basically, everyone.

Kristin (KC) - Traveling Sister says

4 Stars! What a sweet and lovely story! This was my first book by Miss Dessen, and will not likely be my last. The writing is engaging and effortless--and the way the author realistically tackles grief is encouraging.

Macy is a teen who strives for the impossible--perfection. Her father's sudden death has impaired her

relationship with her mother, to whom she barely speaks. Her 'braniac', emotionless boyfriend who possesses the personality of a twig leaves her for summer camp...then she meets Wes and the rest of the perky catering gang who will bring life to her monotonous, boring summer.

The relationship between Macy and Wes was tender and I enjoyed their ongoing, adorable game of 'truth.' Although I was hoping for a little more development with in their interactions, their connection possessed the memorable innocence which can only be obtained through youth. The secondary characters were fun and also struggled internally--proving that imperfection is not only acceptable, but endearing.

This story left me with a smile and a warm heart. Its messages of hope, overcoming grief, and finding love were ones I hope to instill in my own daughter. Very charming book, and perfectly appropriate for teens.

Book Stats:

? Genre/Category: Young Adult

? Steam Caliber: Clean

? Romance: Tender and sweet

? Characters: Well developed and layered.

? Plot: A broken girl finds hope in friendship and young love.

? Writing: Beautiful, effortless, engaging.

? POV: 1st Person: Heroine

? Cliffhanger: None/Standalone

? HEA? (view spoiler)
