

JEAN REYNOLDS PAGE

AUTHOR OF *THE SPACE BETWEEN BEFORE AND AFTER*

"Page portrays these past and present emotional quagmires with an acutely intuitive eye, drawing the reader into the complicated lives of her sympathetic characters."—Booklist

LEAVING BEFORE
IT'S OVER

A Novel



Leaving Before It's Over

Jean Reynolds Page

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Leaving Before It's Over Jean Reynolds Page

A deeply compelling novel that explores the true meaning of family, *Leaving Before It's Over* is masterful and provocative fiction from Jean Reynolds Page, the author of *The Space Between Before and After* and *The Last Summer of Her Other Life*. Fans of Jodi Picoult and Jacquelyn Mitchard will be moved and enthralled by Page's *Leaving Before It's Over*, as a 1970s family is thrown into turmoil when a previously unknown son and brother is brought into the fold.

Leaving Before It's Over Details

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Author : Jean Reynolds Page

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From Reader Review Leaving Before It's Over for online ebook

Liz says

This is a predictable quick read. No real excitement that leaves you on the edge of your seat, but still a nice novel to read. Ray is left with a decision to help his ailing wife by going back to his parents and asking for help. Parents whom he has been separated from for at least 10 years or so. His own children think they are dead. He ends of going back home asking for money to help his wife get the treatment she needs, and returns with his son (Lucas-whom really is Ray's twin brother's son because of some trouble with the law and in exchange he will be given the money for Rosalind to see a good doctor and get treatment. Lucas was being raised by Ray's parents after his mom died. Ray's family doesn't know what to think when they are told they have a brother. Lucas doesn't want to be there because he is soon to be graduating, but Ray did promise to take him back for his graduation. So as the story goes on they because a nice family and Lucas is warming up to his dad and his family. The girls don't know what to make of their new brother but learn to like having him around. A couple days go by and Mont (Ray's twin brother) wants Lucas back home. He makes a surprise visit when Lucas refuses to go back. A few more days pass again and the family goes back for graduation where Mont is threatening to tell Lucas that he is his real father. Ray and Rosalind try to reason with him that it isn't in Lucas's best interest to do so and that is pretty much where the story ends with Mont walking away and not telling him.

Geraldine says

The title?

Melissa says

Last night, I was talking to my husband about this book, and I told him about Mont and Sherry's "plot" with regards to Roy. My husband looked kind of confused and asked me "So that guy (Mont) is okay with having his girlfriend (Sherry) sleep with his brother?"

And that's pretty much this book in an nutshell. Juicy enough to keep you hooked but not quite well thought out enough to be a great story. Because, no, Mont wouldn't be okay with Roy sleeping with Sherry, particularly since there appeared to be undertones of a sibling rivalry.

There were a lot of things that I think could have helped this book be more streamlined. For example, Rosalind's illness served no purpose other than to be the impetus for Roy's return to Virginia. That made that whole section of the story seem lazy and stupid. Perhaps Luke could have been a year younger, and the grandparents could have threatened him with boarding school after he got arrested in the beginning of the book. Luke could have sought out his father on his own.

Did anyone find it odd that Roy spends much of the book lamenting that his family doesn't let Luke make his own decisions or treat him like an independent person, but then Roy unilaterally decides that Luke shouldn't know who is real father is? I kept thinking that this thinking would get turned on its head when Luke finds out. I thought Luke would find out, tell Roy it wasn't his decision to make, Roy realizes that his decision was

similar to one his family would have made (in fact, it was the exact same decision that his family made) and that some kind of resolution would come following this epiphany. But, I'm not sure that the author herself made this connection -- instead becoming complicit in Roy's decision and painting him as the angelic would-be father of the year.

Finally, the Jerry story served absolutely no purpose and thus should not have been in the book. Duncan seemed to be desperate for redemption. The author could have at least tried to tie the Jerry story in through Duncan, perhaps by having Duncan assist law enforcement in getting the money returned.

Jennifer says

From my book review blog Rundpinne .

"Family, secrets, and choices, Leaving Before It's Over by Jean Reynolds Page explores the complex dynamics that make up the Vines family. Lola and Janie Ray Vines grew up believing their father's parents were dead, and had no idea they had an Uncle Montgomery until the summer their mother Rosalind became ill and money was desperately needed. Roy Vines hitched his way to Gray's Hollow to beg money from his parents and strikes a deal with his parents and his twin brother Montgomery. He will have financial assistance only if he takes 17-year-old Lucas to live with him. Roy does not know how he will explain this to Rosalind or his girls, especially when it is more complicated than it appears. Roy believes Lucas is Montgomery's son, but his father and Montgomery are adamant that Lucas is the product of his first marriage, unfortunately Sherry is no longer alive to tell her side of the story. Confused? So are the members of the Vines family. Leaving Before It's Over is filled with family love, adversity, misunderstandings, mistrusts, loyalty and love. The story is told through various members of the Vines family, which turns out to be an excellent choice allowing the complex emotions of the family members to shine through. Page writes a complicated family drama and clearly details how each family member deals with the dramas as they unfold. Leaving Before It's Over makes for a quick read and anyone interested in family dynamics or likes a good drama may find Leaving Before It's Over to be the perfect pick for an afternoon of reading."

Steffany Predosa says

Read this book today, and felt let down, it seemed to build up to a big reveal that just never happened. Easy read and quick, just didn't live up to the synopsis plot points.

Wendy says

I really liked this book and would recommended reading it. The only thing that I would have liked would be a better ending.

(Lonestarlibrarian) Keddy Ann Outlaw says

This was a \$2 remainder at Big Lots during a recent period of travel to a small town where there were no

good bookstores... And so, it helped me pass the time on my way home, especially during a three hour layover in Baltimore. (can't stand not to have a stash of books packed while traveling and often need to search out extra reads. No, I have not made the switch to an e-reader yet....)

In the opening chapter, readers meet Lola Vines, age 16. Time and setting: late spring of 1976, rural North Carolina. She is a smart girl whose family is just scraping by. Her father, a mechanic, Roy, has disappeared. Her mother Rosalind is unwell, but takes a waitress job. Chapter by chapter, we settle in with each of these three characters and their own takes on a tumultuous few weeks. As it turns out, Roy's disappearance has a worthy purpose. He is on a mission to ask his family in Virginia for money to help his wife get medical attention. They cast him out years ago for marrying Rosalind. Though Roy and Rosalind have kept Lola and her younger sister in the dark about the existence of Roy's family, suddenly this pretense is no longer sustainable. When Roy brings home his twin brother's "nephew", Luke, the Vines family dynamic is greatly changed. Without giving things away, let me say that Luke's identity is tied up in certain family secrets. Lots of other plot developments round out the drama, including a house fire in the neighborhood, the arrival of a cute firefighter who catches Lola's eye, a theft at Roy's garage, etc.

One of the themes that emerges is the safety and sanctity of this family as they face many challenges. We feel their love and support of each other. Luke, who at first does not want to be dragged away from his more prosperous life in Virginia, begins to realize that he finds more love and acceptance here than he's ever had before. In many ways, *Leaving Before It's Over* felt like a YA novel. It was one of those middling good reads with enough, but not too many warm fuzzies, as well as believable problems. I probably won't remember for very long, but it was a good find during deperate travel straits.

WifeMomKnitter says

From the book synopsis:

"When Roy Vines married his wife, Rosalind, he traded his family and his inheritance for love -- a painful choice that has blessed them with years of joy nestled in rural North Carolina with their beautiful daughters, sixteen-year-old Lola and little Janie Ray.

But their happiness is threatened when Rosalind suddenly falls ill. Desperate to get her the help she needs, Roy does the one thing he swore he'd never do -- turn to his heartless and bitter identical twin brother, Mont, for help.

The price is steep -- and includes opening their home to a teenage boy who believes Roy is the father who abandoned him. As bad blood threatens to destroy her family, Rosalind must make a difficult choice. Should she walk away -- like Roy once did -- for love, or try to mend wounds that may never be healed? And will the pain of choosing be more than her heart can bear?"

When I read the first couple of chapters, I didn't think this book was going to interest me much. *Boy, was I wrong.* I could not put this book down.

The story picked up a lot once Roy took the boy, Luke, back home with him. I think the best thing about the book was how the story was told through four different perspectives: Roy's, Rosalind's, Luke's and Lola's. This made it easier to understand where each of the characters was coming from, as the story progressed. This also made it easier to sympathize with the way each of these characters adjusted to the huge changes

going on in their lives in such a small span of time.

I felt most sorry for Luke. Going from his grandparent's house, where his basic needs were met but where there was little love and affection to a home where Roy, Rosalind and the girls are just about getting by but have a whole lotta love, had to have been so difficult. Especially as he had lived with the feeling his whole life that his father abandoned him.

After reading this book, I would definitely be interested in reading more books by the author.

Lindsay Otten-Knickerbocker says

I would have liked to know more about what happened with Rosalina and the summer following when Luke graduated.

Debbie says

Thoroughly enjoyed this book. It had a few twists and turns that weren't expected.

Rachel says

I loved the simplicity of this book. Growing up in the south, things really do move as slowly as depicted in this novel. Extravagant lives are unnecessary. Finding a family that relishes family time and just being together was great for my soul. I identified with the characters, and their growing pains, and I liked that every character grew during the novel. That's a huge sticking point for me when I read. Know your characters, own them, become them. This book did this. I only gave it four stars because it was a bit slow at times, and I thought that maybe the pacing could have been a bit faster. Other than that, great book.

Erth says

now I am hooked. This was such a great, easy and creative book. I was hooked after the first page.

The characters were easy to fall in love with and follow, along with the story. The author made the mental visions so easy and vivid of the surroundings and the characters actions felt so real.

I would highly recommend this author and this book.

Gina says

Goodreads Description- When Roy Vines married his wife, Rosalind, he traded his family and his inheritance for love--a painful choice that has blessed them with years of joy nestled in rural North Carolina

with their beautiful daughters, sixteen-year-old Lola and little Janie Ray.

But their happiness is threatened when Rosalind suddenly falls ill. Desperate to get her the help she needs, Roy does the one thing he swore he'd never do--turn to his heartless and bitter identical twin brother, Mont, for help.

The price is steep--and includes opening their home to a teenage boy who believes Roy is the father who abandoned him. As bad blood threatens to destroy her family, Rosalind must make a difficult choice. Should she walk away--like Roy once did--for love, or try to mend wounds that may never be healed? And will the pain of choosing be more than her heart can bear?

I was a little worried when I picked up this book when I saw that many of the reviews on Goodreads and Amazon were low. But this book goes to show you just how different people can perceive and react to the same book with such strong differing opinions. In my case, I am glad that I ignored the negative reviews and gave it a shot. Once I was off I could not put this book down!

The story starts off a little confusing with Roy, the husband, father, and one of the main characters, has left home. Rosalind, his wife, doesn't seem worried that he is gone but Lola, his sixteen year old daughter senses trouble and thinks he has left for good. I would say that the beginning is the weakest part of the story because it leaves the reader really confused because the author doesn't reveal why Roy has left until a few chapters into the book. I think this really is the reason for many of the negative reviews. If a book doesn't start off strong a reader isn't going to stick with it. This book requires the reader to keep going and trust that the author will explain everything in time, so if you are just starting and reading this review...keep reading...much will be revealed.

Ok back to the story...so Roy has left his family with no explanation that the reader knows and we can clearly see that Rosalind isn't worried about his departure. Well it turns out that he has left to go to Virginia to visit his family who he hasn't seen in over 16 years. His 2 daughters, Lola and Janie Rae, don't even know that they exist. They have been told that their grandparents are dead. The reason for this visit is Roy's wife, Rosalind, is sick with a rare blood disorder and he needs his family's financial help so she can see a specialist. Along the way we learn that Roy hasn't spoken to his family because years ago he fell in love with Rosalind when he was married to his first wife, Sherry. Roy never cheated on Sherry physically but he turned away from her in their marriage because of his overwhelming love for Rosalind. Sherry, seeking love and trying to keep Roy, gets pregnant with Roy's married twin brother, Mont, and uses her pregnancy to keep Roy in a loveless marriage. When Roy finds out about his brother's betrayal, he leaves his pregnant wife for a life with his true love, Rosalind. Ever since his leaving Sherry, Roy's parents have blamed Roy for Mont's betrayal. They think that if Roy hadn't turned away from his marriage, then Mont wouldn't have been "forced" to betray his own wife, daughter, and brother by cheating and impregnating Sherry. Roy's mother knows the truth about the paternity of Sherry's son, Luke, so she uses that also as a reason to vilify Roy as a man who not only cheated and left his pregnant wife, but also a man who abandoned "his own son", when Roy isn't really Luke's father.

Roy's whole family situation back in Virginia is pretty messed up. Luke's mother died when he was 8 and since then has been living with his grandparents with his "Uncle" Mont always around. It is also important to know that Mont is in the middle of a campaign for a local government position so any disruption or negative press will destroy his chances of being elected. This all makes the reader feel true empathy for Luke, who has no idea of his parentage, and has spent his entire life hating Roy for not being the father he needed when his real father has always been right there but has never claimed him as his own.

Roy's timing couldn't be worse because when he shows up at his parent's house, Luke has just gotten in trouble with the police and his parents want Roy to take Luke back with him to North Carolina in exchange for the money Rosalind needs. They don't want Luke's mishap with the law to ruin Mont's chances of being elected.

It is after all of this that the story finally picks up. As expected Luke is angry for having to leave and Roy's girls are shocked to learn that they have an older brother. However, Luke begins to realize that his "father", who has been absent all of his life, and his family becomes more of a loving family to him in just a few days than his family in Virginia ever was to him. Just as things start to settle down and when Luke realizes that living with Roy's family is a much better situation than he ever thought, Mont calls and states that he wants Luke to return to Virginia and is ready for a fight to the point of revealing to Luke his true paternity. From there we see the struggle for Roy to make the right decision and to do right by Luke and his own family.

I think the best thing about the book was how the story was told through four different perspectives: Roy's, Rosalind's, Luke's and Lola's. This made it easier to understand where each of the characters was coming from as the story progressed. This also made it easier to sympathize with the way each of these characters adjusted to the huge changes going on in their lives in such a small span of time.

For the most part, the characters are kind, honorable and true to themselves. They help their neighbors, reach out to those in trouble, and make room in their home and hearts for a boy that seemingly no one wants. And this is part of the message that I think the author wanted to convey...that you have to be true to yourself to be happy. If you do things only for the sake of others you may end up living a life you don't really want or you could miss out on something that you don't even know you are missing. The author also definitely explored what makes up a family. Is it DNA or the love and relationships that you have with others?

There were some negatives about the book as well but they weren't bad enough to keep me from reading the book. I kept coming back for more even though there were some weaknesses to the plot. One negative was that I couldn't really formulate a setting until a few chapters in. I knew Roy was going to Virginia but I didn't know from where he was leaving. It wasn't until looking over the reader's guide that I knew that the book took place in the mid-1970's. Not knowing a setting is a pet peeve of mine and I was frustrated because I only knew it took place in a small southern town. I wish the author would have been more clear in her actual story rather than have to put the setting in the notes, especially since setting is a basic literary element. I guess that is the teacher in me...pay attention to basic literary elements: setting, character, plot, theme, symbolism, etc...

I also thought the ending was disappointing and just fell flat. The author seemed to be building up to Rosalind having an ultimate confrontation with Mont to save Luke from learning the truth. But it just didn't happen with the gusto that the author built up. There were also some highly questionable actions on Roy's mother's part that were revealed but nothing ever came from them. I don't want to spoil anything but this was a BIG thing!! And the author just let it drop! I was just shocked! Her actions truly should have had some more story time. I also have so many unanswered questions. What happened with Luke and Charlotte and Lola and Duncan? Where do they all end up after the story? Do they go to college or stay in town. What happened with Rosalind's illness? Was she able to get it treated? Did the drugs affect her like she was so worried about?

This book brought out quite a few feelings from me, hence the long review, so that has to mean something. I also practically devoured the book and couldn't wait until I had more time to keep reading. I would recommend this book with the warnings that I gave earlier....stick with it and the story will come. Even though the plotline is missing a few things I still think that this is a solid 3.5 star book just because of the

emotions it raised. I do have to say that I read this as a library book on my Kindle and am truly glad that I didn't spend \$10.00 on it so that would be my recommendation to other readers. Get it from the library, don't spend your money, and you will have a decent fast read. I have already put a few of Page's books on hold at the library. I am not ready to give up on her yet.

Sherri says

I picked this book up because the summary on the back cover made it sound very compelling, (I know better than falling for that but this time I did), especially with the following: "As bad blood threatens to destroy her family, Rosalind must make a difficult choice. Should she walk away -like Roy once did- for love, or try to mend wounds that may never be healed?" Unfortunately, I have no idea what choice this was and I've finished the book!

I tried to like this book even though it dragged, and I was interested in what happened, but it just didn't live up to its sales pitch. For example, her illness was never clear enough to understand why they needed to beg for money from his family; there was no "choice" nor any reason for her to "walk away" that I could understand and the whole paternity issue made no sense to me. Probably my biggest issue with this story though, was the black and white character portrayal of Roy's family. No person is all good or all bad and when a story is built on this kind of characterization, (without a compelling reason), I find myself losing interest in what I'm reading.

This book was not awful and I didn't have to force myself to finish reading it, (which has occasionally happened), but I would not recommend it to anyone who enjoys a good plot.

Kristina says

This book has been languishing on my nook for years, so I finally decided to give it a shot and I was pleasantly surprised how much I enjoyed the story. My only criticism would be the ending. It was a little abrupt for me.
