



The Last Forever

Deb Caletti

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Endings and beginnings sit so close to each other that it's sometimes impossible to tell which is which.

Nothing lasts forever, and no one gets that more than Tessa. After her mother died, it's all she can do to keep her friends, her boyfriend, her happiness from slipping away. And then there's her dad. He's stuck in his own daze, and it's so hard to feel like a family when their house no longer seems like a home.

Her father's solution? An impromptu road trip that lands them in a small coastal town at Tessa's grandmother's. Despite all the warmth and beauty there, Tessa can't help but feel even more lost.

Enter Henry Lark. He understands the relationships that matter. And more importantly, he understands her. A secret stands between them, but Tessa's willing to do anything to bring them together—because Henry may just be her one chance at forever.

The Last Forever Details

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Author : Deb Caletti

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From Reader Review *The Last Forever* for online ebook

Julia says

I don't like the writing style at all >.< also, in this last chapter there were already two stops of the road trip and the author shows nothing about them?? What's the point then?

eileen says

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When I found this on my Kindle library, possessing no previous knowledge of where or when I downloaded it, I decided to start reading, even though it seemed like a long shot after the first few chapters. However, still I journeyed on, and still found nothing too special about this book.

Tess was way too focused on the romance, overall. The book centered around two things: the romance and her efforts to try to keep a pixieball alive. The pixieball is supposedly a rare breed, the last one of its kind, that her grandpa stole and grew himself. Her mother carried on the tradition, caring for it, and now it's her turn. However, it's gotten sick, therefore Henry and Tess are in an "urgent" race to find a cure for whatever disease Pix (her name for the pixieball) has. But, even though the pixieball is super important to her, enough that she's willing to go through all the crap she goes through to try and save it, she doesn't care when it comes down to the plant, or Henry. Sure, she cares about Pix, but when Henry tries to talk about saving it, Tess is more focused on how much they're making out and the idea of them two together. Henry's trying really hard to immortalize Pix, and Tess is more concerned that a letter heading says, "Dear Tess and Henry." She's more interested in the fact that their names are together on a freaking letter than on her plant that's dying! And she constantly tries to make out with him when he seems like he may not be in the mood or want to talk about something on his mind.

Speaking of their romance, there was absolutely no chemistry between the two. Their "I really like you" statements could have held the equivalent passion as if they were acquaintances who barely knew each other in high school catching up on the side of the road. Their dialogue and conversations were bland, holding no substance or meaning. The beginning was cute, but when the story morphed into Pix's illness, I was hoping that the character development would begin. There were some nice sentiments made in *The Last Forever*, like how not everything is picturesque and perfect like in movies and television series, but in the end it wasn't quite what I was expecting or needing to compensate for the disposable romance and static characters.

During the first few chapters, Tess actually had a boyfriend named Dillon. But then it was dismissed within three sentences, something like, "Oh, apparently Dillon broke up with me..." and then Tess was free to chase after Henry Lark. It was an easy sentence to overlook, and because I was already disinterested in the story, I skipped over what I thought was a useless two sentences. Turns out, it was those sentences that freed up Tess's relationship status. I had to look back and double-check when I remembered she previously had a boyfriend. When I found and familiarized myself with the section in question, I realized that it had been glossed over and glorified. It wasn't memorable enough for me to remember it or for it to properly register in my brain. There wasn't even a telltale reason why he decided to break up with her, but whatever. No development needed there.

Kate says

I liked Tess. I liked her dad and the fact that he was allowed to have a total crisis while still very clearly loving his daughter. I liked the complicated journey their grief took them on. I liked the fact that her mother's death lived in her heart and in the heart of this book without everything becoming maudlin. It felt like a very real grief, one that will always ache when you poke at it, but not always in a bad way.

Really, I was with this book up until the reveal. Not that it was a surprise, because it wasn't. Rather, I hated the manner in which Tess found out. (view spoiler)

I wish this book had lived up to my idea of its potential. It came so close to delivering the kind of story I've hoped to read from Deb Caletti again, but in the end it never quite made it there for me.

Jenni Arndt says

I really don't even feel like I can effectively review this book because all I want to do is flail all over the place and shove it in people's faces so they read it too. This book was absolutely perfect for me, I picked it up on a Saturday morning and before I knew it I was halfway through and dreading the book ending. This book is emotional, this book is funny and this book is engrossing.

We meet our MC Tess as she is grieving the recent loss of her mother to cancer. She is living with her father and just going through the motions of day to day life. One afternoon the two of them pack up her father's truck and head out to finally see the Grand Canyon. Once that's done, they decide to see Vegas, and then they just keep going North until they get to Tess's grandma Jenny's house. At this point Tess's father takes off to deal with his grief on his own and we see Tess start to plant new roots on the island of Parrish as she meets the locals and forms relationships. Ok, the small town feel of this was so awesome! I loved this little town, I loved how everybody knew everybody's business and just how there for each other they were. Every character that Tess meets on this island became someone I felt like I knew and cared about. Even poor 8 year old Kenny Travis who had created quite the name for himself as the town's little klepto.

While all of the secondary characters in this novel were fantastic the heart and soul of every page was Tess herself. Man, I loved this girl so much. I could relate to all of her thought patterns and I felt like her and I were kindred in a way. She was sarcastic & funny but it was her crushing thoughts about some of the regrets that she had that made me feel like I wasn't alone as I read through the pages. She didn't do everything she thought she could have as her mother was dying of cancer and the guilt of that was eating away at her. She also had this strained bond with her father that would boil over at times but always came back to a place of complacent understanding in the end that I understood so well. This girl quickly became my favourite MC that I have read about in a very long while.

As we watch Tess come to terms with everything that has happened in her life we also see her open up to love. She meets Henry Lark on the island and is smitten with him almost immediately (yes, he touches her and there are sparks that she just can't forget) but this relationship is so not your typical YA romance. These two bond over intelligent discussion and they genuinely care about one another. The thoughtfulness that passes between them in their thoughts and how they go out of their way for one another was fantastic. The relationship isn't filled with cheesy cliches and it doesn't take the path anyone can expect it to but I love how it all comes together in the end and how it helps Tess so much when she needs it most.

Another awesome addition to the novel is all of the botany in it. At the beginning of every chapter there is a little explanation about a different type of seed. I had thought that these would quickly become something that I would skip over but I loved the trivia! The things I learned about seeds are crazy, I mean they are scary little things when you learn what is inside them and what they are capable of. This all ties into the novel because Tess has a rare pixibell plant she is trying to keep alive that belonged to her mother after it was passed down by her father. I feel like even this plant became an important character in the novel because I was rooting for its well being and crying when things weren't looking so good for it.

So I think that is the last tidbit of information I will include in this review. Remember it: this novel made me fall in love with a plant, that's gotta be saying something!

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Krystina says

If a book that walks the path of a girl and her very special plant sound intriguing, then I highly suggest you read this novel. Deb Caletti created a realistic fiction book, "The Last Forever", that follows the path of a 17 year old girl, Tess Sedgwick, and her father. Sadly, Tess's mother had passed to cancer and it was just too much for Tess's father to handle. Before she passed she had left a plant, Pix, with Tess. Tess's grandfather had gotten the seeds to this rare plant and passed it on to his daughter, Tess's mother. With only a few days left in the school year, Tess's father packed his things and took Tess on a road trip. Leaving their hometown, in California, they decided to visit the Grand Canyon and stop at Tess's grandmother's house, Jenny. Tess's father had left Tess at Jenny's house, Tess's father's mother's house, in a small town called Parrish Island. Tess had no idea when her father would return or why he left. Ultimately, Tess begins to plant new roots in Parrish Island. She meets this guy, Henry Lark, and spends most of her time at the library, where Henry works. By the time Tess's father returns, Pix begins to slowly perish. Together, with the help of Henry and the town, Tess tries to save Pix. With this novel being published in 2014, it is easier to relate too than most books regarding war or events that happened hundreds of years ago. Overall, I really enjoyed this book and the fact that Deb Caletti was able to create images with words. In the end, you realize that nothing lasts forever but something new always follows the passing of something old.

Ladybug Lynn says

One of the best books about grief and loss and recovery. Tessa's grief over her mother's death is raw and real. As someone who also lost her mother after a long illness, I can testify that the book is true to life. At times, gut wrenching difficult to read but beautifully written and ultimately hopeful. The love story is not what you

would expect and the book was so much richer for that aspect of it. Loved every page even as cried through most of it.

Kalla [A Bookish Nerd] says

Actual rating: 3 stars.

Tessa is a teenager dealing with the recent death of her mother from cancer. She's depressed. She doesn't know what to do. Her father is addicted to weed and alcohol. He isn't coping well at all, and he isn't being a father figure for Tessa. All Tessa wants to do is just get through each day, and taking care of Pix, her mother's plant that her mother took care of her entire life. And then one day her father says they're going on a trip: an epic road trip that should be everything Tessa needs. But Tessa soon finds herself at her distant grandmother's in a small coastal town after her father hauls off and leaves. Pix isn't doing well at all, and Tessa knows that Pix will die if she can't find a way to help it. It's the last thing she has of her mother's, and letting Pix die just isn't an option. Enter Henry Lark, a boy who loves to read and plays the piano. Tessa falls in love with him. Along with the help of Henry and others, Tessa soon learns the fate of Pix, and somehow along the way, also learns how to find herself in the midst of grief.

San Bernardino to Barstow, Route 66, 70.6 miles. Interstate 40 east to Williams, Arizona, 319.5 miles. From Williams, Arizona Route 64 north, fifty miles to the south rim of the Grand Canyon.

This is supposed to be the trip of a lifetime for Tessa and her father. It's a chance to get away from the house that reminds them so much of Tessa's mother. It's supposed to be a chance to just *let go* and get away for awhile.

But Tessa isn't expecting to be left in Parrish with a grandmother that she doesn't know while her father "gets his life together". It's the ultimate betrayal. All Tessa wants is to go home. She doesn't want to be in Parrish with Jenny, her grandmother who had nothing to do with her. Or Vito, Jenny's annoying mutt.

And then she meets Henry Lark.

I watch his profile and then the back of his head, the thick wave of hair, as he descends the stairs, and I feel this energy between us, an awareness that we're looking at each other, only not looking. He feels it too, I know. He feels it until he must turn around. He smiles. I don't know exactly what this smile means, only that it means something. Something immense. It curls around me like smoke, or like the arm of true love, and I wonder then if it's possible to fall ten thousand miles into the Grand Canyon and be held safe at the same time.

I do not like Henry Lark. He's boring. Overrated. There wasn't anything about him that really stood out to

me. Is he the worst love interest? No. But he's definitely not the best. There was just something about him that made me dislike him. I don't hate his character, but there were not many things that I liked about him. I know that Caletti portrayed Henry as an awkward boy and I'm sure that that was supposed to make the reader relate and like him, but it didn't work for me. More times than not, he stood out as jerk. He was aloof and distant, but not in an attractive way. It lessened the chemistry between Tessa and Henry. Maybe I'm crazy for not liking him, but oh well.

The book was slow at times. There were many times that Caletti could have edited out paragraphs and the story still would have flowed smoothly. I think that Caletti added in said paragraphs just to lengthen her story, not strengthen it. Taking out some paragraphs that weren't needed would have really made the story less slow. There were times when I skimmed pages because *it just wasn't needed*.

The characters. I didn't really connect to any of the characters. To be honest, I felt that some characters which I presume to be main characters in this book weren't in the book enough. They sort of just popped in at random times and weren't even really needed. And that's a shame. I think the only character I liked in this book was Vito, and he was a dog and said nothing! There also wasn't enough Elijah appearances in this book and that was really really needed as you'll find out later.

Those three reasons are why I gave this book 3 stars. When I began this review, I had this book at 3.5 stars but soon realized that I have more problems with this book than not. However, there were some good qualities.

I really enjoyed the plot with Pix. It's unique and sweet and had me tearing up at times. The relationship between Tessa and her mother is clear in this book, which is something really amazing because her mother isn't actually in it. I love that Tessa will go to extremes for Pix because it is the only thing she has left of her mother. She feels that if she loses Pix then she will lose her mother forever. As the reader, I could understand the deep connection between Tessa, Tessa's mother, and Pix. It was amazing and Caletti did a great job with it.

Tessa's father. I said I didn't really connect with any of the characters in this book and that's true, but I do want to talk about Tessa's father. Caletti did an amazing job of portraying the grief that he was going through. At the beginning of this book, all he really cared about was smoking weed and watching tv. Tessa had to do everything on her own. Gradually through the book, he starts to change. The reader sees small growth in his actions and how he handles things. Again, well done Caletti.

The quotes in this book were amazing. They were so good. So deep. I could totally relate to a lot of things that were going through Tessa's head. Caletti did a great job with this.

A few examples:

His lips are so soft, and he's not here with me at first because I've surprised him. But then, there. There we both are, and the kiss becomes that kind where you forget you're even in a room in a house in a town. You're just so present and transported that place has altogether disappeared, and it's only mouths and mouths and together and together and everything else has vanished, even- especially- sadness.

Instead, tonight, we have simply shared a meaningful event. And next we share this: a look between us that says we've gone from here to there, from shame to a shaky, mutual forgiveness; from a time when our lives felt like a to-scale model, three feet equaling one and a quarter inches, to now, where the whole wide world is ours.

So, *The Last Forever* wasn't terrible. I was expecting more from Deb Caletti, but it wasn't a bad book. Would recommend for people who like to read grief-based books and romance.

Myndi says

While it took me a bit to really get into this book, once I did I was hooked. I think it takes a good look into the grieving process, especially focusing on the guilt the ones left behind often feel. It also shows how when you love someone, it doesn't always have to be a romantic love.

If you're anything like me, you're going to spend a majority of this book really pissed at Tessa's dad. I even stopped reading to lecture my husband about how to treat our kids... I also spent a lot of time confused about how to feel about Jenny...and wanting to know what on earth happened between her and Tessa's mom. But the biggest part of the story, for me, was Henry...and how he helped Tessa grieve, move on, find something to help her say goodbye. Henry is probably my favorite character, though there are some great ones in this story. I was pleased with how things ended up for Tessa and Henry in the end. I was pleased with the ending as a whole actually, it was a really great ending to the book and the story that the author was trying to tell.

I think fans of YA Realistic Fiction will really enjoy this book. I found this book by searching Sarah Dessen in What Should I Read Next, so I feel like fans of Dessen will also really enjoy this book.

Jamie-leigh Haughn says

I was sent this book by Simon and Schuster for review a few months ago and I finally got to it!

I went in to this book not knowing what to expect and I really enjoyed it! I was expecting the story to be an epic love story, but it wasn't at all. It really focuses more on family and personal growth. This is something that I usually don't enjoy but I really like the way this one was handled. The book had a bit of a slower start and parts of the beginning were a bit hard to follow, but once you get used to the writing style its smooth sailing from there.

The story follows a girl named Tess who has recently lost her mother to cancer. Her father is a bit irresponsible and suggests to her that they go on a road trip, but they end up getting much much more than a road trip! The story also follows Tess and her journey to save her mother's plant that she had taken care of

her whole life, Pixiebell. Pix plays a huge role in the story in so many ways.

The characters in the book are very relatable and interesting. Tess is a great character, she is hurt but still has a lot of love in her heart that she doesn't always know what to do with. Her grandmother Jenny plays a huge role in this story and Jenny ended up being my favourite character in the whole book. There is a lot of character development and growth throughout this whole story both for Tess and her father, especially with her father and it was a really nice relationship development as well between the two.

There is a love story in this book, of course! However, it may seem to be the focus of the book for a bit but it really isn't. The relationship is kind of weird and awkward..Henry, the love interest is a good character as well, he is more complex and you will find something a little mysterious and even off about him and his relationship with Tess. It all makes sense in the end!!

The side character, her friends Sasha and Larry are great! The interactions between the group of friends is really fun to read. They all work at the town library and that is where a lot of this story takes place, which was also really cool as a reader who enjoys reading and the library. Books play a big role in this story and that is nice to see.

There is a pretty big twist in this story, and it makes a few things totally make sense that you may be questioning, and I just happened to have guessed the twist, that being said, I don't think its very obvious! I just had a lucky guess!

Overall, I really enjoyed this book, I definitely recommend it to anyone looking for a good self discovery book or a book focused on family. It was great!

Leah Wolff says

I have absolutely fallen in love with this book. Deb Caletti is a wonderful author, but sometimes her books can be a little hit or miss. This one is a definite hit and has quite possibly taken the spot of my favorite Caletti book. Yeah, it's that good. I read it in about 6 hours just because I couldn't put it down.

I think I loved it so much because Tessa was so relatable, at least to me. It's like I was reading about myself. She could be really sensitive and then sarcastic, but all around just real and raw. Her emotions weren't exaggerated or crazily displayed. I felt everything she felt. I loved that she was a book worm just like me and I completely understand her point of view on things.

**spoiler starts here

I knew there was something weird about Henry. She always had to ask him to kiss her or hold her, yet he told her he loved her and acted so perfect. However, I definitely didn't see it coming that he was in love with Elijah. I didn't like Elijah from the start, but I thought his attitude was just the way he was, not because he was in love with Henry. But it makes a lot of sense.

Even though this book was slightly predictable in the sense that OF COURSE she's going to go put the seed in the vault, I loved how it happened and that she actually did get to go and preserve Pix. I think that was really good closure for her because she wasn't there for her mom when she died.

Everything in this book was insightful. I loved the real pain and loss but also the real love-the relationships Tessa was able to build with Henry, Jennie, and even Sasha and Larry. There were so many quotes that I took from this about life and loss in general.

Sarah says

3.5/5 stars

Lory Blanco says

This book was magical. There were so many elements to this book that I just loved so much. We have the main character Tess, who has recently lost her mother and she is trying to deal with the grief and guilt of it. One day her father decides he wants to go on a road trip and they leave their lives behind and embark on this journey. But soon she finds herself on this tiny island where her father grew up. Here she meets Henry Lark. And she immediately feels a connection to him. I loved their relationship. Its definitely not your typical YA romance that you would expect. They connect more on an intellectual level. And of course Henry has his secrets.

All through this they are trying to figure out how to save a plant. Yes a plant, people. It has been in the family for years and recently it has started to die. They embark on this journey on trying to save it. All I can say its the first book thats made me fall in love with a plant.

I really recommend this book. Its one of the best books about grief, loss and recovery Ive ever read.

Stephanie A. says

[Deborah, Debbie, Debs, why couldn't we have just had either a nice romance or the discovery of a Gay Best Friend to subvert the Randomly Meeting A Cute Boy trope, instead of a horrible feelings-ruining mash-up of the two. On the bright side, I guess that's better than the Creepy Unknown Half Sibling Pheromones I was expe

Sarah says

(Source: I received a digital copy of this book for free on a read-to-review basis. Thanks to Simon Pulse and Edelweiss.)

17-year-old Tessa lives with her father after her mother died of cancer, and they still haven't really learned how to live with just the two of them.

When her father than wants to go on a crazy road-trip to the Grand Canyon, Tessa has to go, and takes with her 'Pixiebell', a plant that was her grandfathers, which her mum looked after. Unfortunately though, Pixiebell starts to look a bit ill.

What is wrong with Pixiebell? And can Tessa save it before it's too late?

I didn't enjoy this book at all, I just found it boring.

I couldn't connect with Tessa. I felt sorry for her because her mum was dead and her dad was an ass, but I couldn't feel sorry for her stupid plant, and her preoccupation with it was annoying. I also didn't get her need to keep telling us her darn geographical location via co-ordinates; I mean did we really need to know that?

The storyline in this just didn't interest me, and the writing didn't suck me in. I was bored from pretty early on, and although some of the little bits about plants were mildly interesting, the rest of the book was just ridiculous. The whole storyline was basically about a plant for pity's sake! And it wasn't even all that interesting a plant as it turned out. Tessa was more interested in the plant than her father, her grandmother, her dead mother, the boy who wanted to be her boyfriend and pretty much anything really. I personally could not have given two hoots about the stupid plant, and why anyone would want to go all the way to Alaska, just to preserve some freaking seeds that they could have just posted there was also beyond me.

There was some romance, but it didn't interest Tessa, and it didn't interest me either.

To be honest I didn't like this book, and I found it pretty darn boring, you cannot believe how pleased I was to finally make it to the end.

Overall; dull and boring,

4.5 out of 10.

Stacee says

This book was sort of all over the place for me. I couldn't really connect with the MC because her narrative was such a jumble.

I was hoping for some serious swoons, Henry seemed to have so much promise. Alas, I was a bit disappointed in that aspect. In fact, it all of the relationships just didn't really make sense to me. I feel like we didn't get enough of a meeting between anyone before they were all BFFs.

I can definitely see the appeal, I'm sure a lot of people will enjoy the journey that Tessa is on, it just wasn't enough for me.

Thanks to Simon Pulse and Edelweiss for providing the arc in exchange for an honest review
