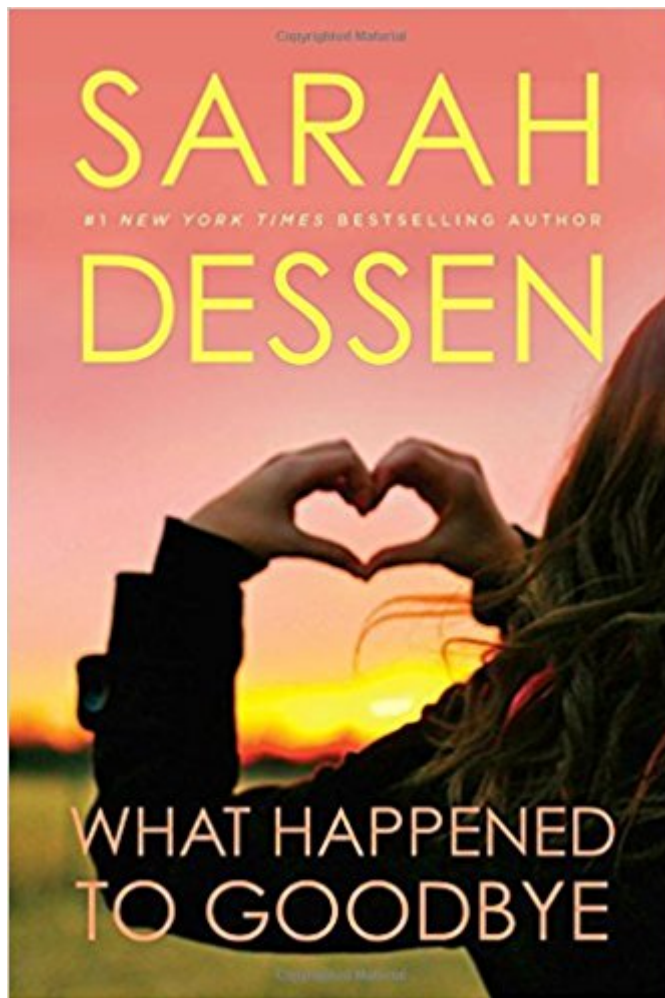




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What Happened To Goodbye



Synopsis

From the award-winning and *New York Times* bestselling author of *Once and for All* *A new day. A new place. A new life.* In the past few years, McLean has pretended to be so many different people that she hardly remembers who she really is anymore. The adorable guy next door might be able to help her figure it out. But is she ready for it? *A cut above* *People* Sarah Dessen is the winner of the Margaret A. Edwards Award for her contributions to YA literature, as well as the Romantic Times Career Achievement Award. *Books by Sarah Dessen:* *That Summer* *Someone Like You* *Keeping the Moon* *Dreamland* *This Lullaby* *The Truth About Forever* *Just Listen* *Lock and Key* *Along for the Ride* *What Happened to Goodbye* *The Moon and More* *Saint Anything* *Once and for All*

Book Information

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Best Books of the Month, May 2011: After a scandal involving her mother and a famous college basketball coach rocked her family and her old hometown, McClean decided to live with her dad. His job as a restaurant consultant requires they pick up often, and at each new place she carefully selects who she'll be *Eliza*, Beth, or someone else with a new name and different interests. It's easier this way for McClean, who is reluctant to form any true attachments.

Then at their latest stop, McClean does something she's not done in a long while—reveal her real name. But who is this McClean and is she ready to forgive her mother, fall for the boy next door, and finally stick around? Fans of author Sarah Dessen will recognize her compelling dialog and characters so intricately-drawn it's as if they're the reader's friends, too. Yet the real meat of *What Happened to Goodbye* is in Dessen's mastery of the emotional ups-and-downs of McClean's supportive relationship with her father and struggles with her mother. Keenly-observed and terrifically-written, Dessen's latest is a delightful read about self-discovery and maturity that by the end is hard to say goodbye to. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"Dessen's talent is creating just that comfortable space for young adults struggling with identity, relationships, and all that messy family stuff. Her quirky characters reach out to one another to forge genuine friendships and gentle first loves." *The Horn Book* "Dessen's fans will be happy to devour this latest offering." *SLJ* "Dessen once again offers a substantive, well-crafted exploration of a teen's life that will deeply satisfy her legions of fans." *Booklist* "Dessen's prose is clean and focused, the characters are developed and real, and the plot is believable. McClean's journey through the healing process after her parents' divorce provides bibliotherapy for any teen dealing with family issues, and the secondary plot of tentative steps toward trust and friendship is beautiful. This is a must-have for any young adult collection." *VOYA*

After her mother's public affair and her parents' subsequent divorce, McLean and her dad have moved a lot. Every town is an opportunity to become a new version of herself: Eliza, Lizbet, each with different interests and personalities. When McLean and her dad move to Lakeview, she meets brilliant but accidental delinquent Dave and makes friends, while still trying to deal with her incessant mother's attempts at reconnecting. If *Along for the Ride* didn't signal a bit of a decline for Sarah, this book did it. While it's an unique enough concept, in execution this book falls flat and forced. I found this book to be rambling without much of a focus, and it never feels as if the story has a clear direction or motivation. The "climax" didn't make sense, and while I enjoyed the characters enough, *What Happened to Goodbye* was just okay upon a reread.

Anyone who is a fan of Dessen and has read her works can basically agree that in her last few releases the charm of her romances has seemed to be brewed down to almost a formula for charming romances. Which unfortunately removes all the charm. The adorable romances we have enjoyed in her first entries are just flat in the last few. I was completely convinced *What Happened to Goodbye* would be another victim of this unfortunate trend and it took me a long time to even pick it up. The summary of the book didn't help. "McLean" and her multiple personalities seemed a bit contrived to me in the summary. Here now finally that I have actually read the book I feel badly that it took so long for me to give it a chance. The story, characters, and romance in *What Happened to Goodbye* are nice, strong, and charming. I'm not saying it is *Keeping the Moon* or even *Just Listen* but I thoroughly enjoyed it. The plot was not hollow or perfectly predictable. The issues on the table were complex and interesting to delve into. Even the side topics were interesting. I would recommend that any Dessen fan even those that have felt put out recently to give it a shot. It won't be your favorite but it is a good read nonetheless. If I had to complain it would be that Dessen seems to be entirely too interested in referencing former locations and characters. I think this is more distracting and hollow than it is enjoyable. Using the same locations is one thing but inserting all the old characters awkwardly just isn't enjoyable to me especially since it seems slapped in rather than carefully fit in. It also comes off as a bit rushed in the end. I think this has always been the case for Sarah Dessen as she really likes the build up and not so much the resolution and I am sort of okay with that. It leaves you to draw your own conclusions. There was also maybe less resolution with the romance as there normally is and I didn't love that but I did get it. The book's ultimate thesis is coming to terms with who you are and that is something entirely independent to teenage romantic relationships and I appreciate that she didn't make it seem like it was. The romance was still fulfilling in my opinion. In summary it is not the best or worse of her works but it was thoroughly enjoyable and a positive step back towards charming quirky romance.

Seriously I don't know how Sarah Dessen does it. This book was fantastic in my opinion. There was just enough angst that it wasn't too overpowering but just enough to keep us interested. McLean was one of those characters that I wanted to take under my wing and give a big hug when her life came crashing down. As for Dave... Well I can see that he served a purpose but in the grand scheme of things I thought his part in the story was a little lacking. Deb. What is there not to love about her character? She's quirky, neurotic, and undeniably my favorite character in this story. To me the sign of a good book is wanting there to be more of it when it's over, and I definitely wanted more of this book!

I have long been a fan of Sarah Dessen. I've read everything she's written (at least once) and before moving and losing boxes of books, owned them all as well. That being said, this book was a let down. Even if I'd known it wasn't going to be great, I would have read it, but I want to voice my disappointment. I think my problem was that this book tried too hard to be everything and was too full of cliches. There were many times when it seemed like the writing was wrapping up, but there were still many more chapters to go. I thought maybe I had just grown out of the writing style, but I re-read one of my favorites "Just Listen" and alas, I still love that one. I've started "The Truth About Forever" again as well (you know, just to be sure -- mostly I just missed the characters) and it is still one of my favorite books I've ever read. I really just couldn't connect to McLean, as much as I wanted to. I wanted to love this book. I pre-ordered it (which I never do) because I was so excited. It had a great idea behind it, but just was not as well written as her others. I'm hoping this was just a fluke, and am hopeful for anything else she may write in the future.

I listen to a lot of audio books. I'm a junior high teacher who wanted to see what all the fuss was about. I have read most of Dessen's books, and this was written like the others. One of my favorite things about Dessen, is the casual way her books feel. When I want to just listen to a good book that I don't have to think about too much, these books are perfect. As usual, this book was easy to follow and the characters well developed. A couple of things that I have a hard time getting past are: 1. In almost every book there is at least one mention of casual drugs, drinking, smoking or sex. Although I know the audience these books are written for, I wish she didn't treat these as casually as she does. 2. She uses the word 'clearly' way too much!! Doesn't her editor notice this? IMO it's very distracting, especially when something isn't really that clear! Overall, I will always look for Dessen books as a great read. I wouldn't recommend most of them to junior high students, but they are great young adult fiction.

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