



If Only

T.K. Chapin

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How far will one mother go to find her child?

A full year after a painful divorce, Elizabeth's seventeen-year-old daughter Lillian decides to visit a friend over the Fourth of July weekend but never returns home. With the help of her neighborhood friend Cole, Elizabeth tries to make sense of what really happened and hopefully bring her daughter home.

If Only Details

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From Reader Review If Only for online ebook

Joyful says

Author T.K. Chaplin has done it again. This Christian inspirational suspense (suspense plot being new for this author) novel has a great plot. It has been a full year after a painful divorce when Elizabeth's seventeen-year-old daughter, Lillian, is supposed to have visited a friend over the Fourth of July weekend but never returns home. Her neighborhood friend, Cole, tries to help Elizabeth make sense of what really happened and hopefully bring her daughter home. The story is told in first person by mother and daughter making it easier to follow the plot while making it more suspenseful and full of what ifs which we all have at sometime. How easy it is to judge people who are different than we are. Throughout the plot of this story is a strained relationship between mother and daughter. The characters are flawed, but ones you can relate to. I would like to see this author write more inspirational suspense romance. I really enjoyed this book so much that I could not put it down and read it completely in one sitting.

I receive complimentary books for review from publishers, publicists, and/or authors, including Netgalley. I am not required to write positive reviews. The opinions I have expressed are my own. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255

WildAboutBones says

Seeing all the highly rated reviews on this book make me wonder if we read the same story.

I did like the the final plot twist (even though I saw it coming ahead of time). But there is so much wrong with and not to like about this book:

I understand this is fiction, but there are some glaring reality issues with the story. A few examples: 1) A divorced woman with two teens will not be able to move to a new town, live in a house, go out to eat twice a week, have two cars (one for the 16 yo), and support the gaming habit of a young teen boy, all while living only on alimony and child support from a man who is not rich. Not happening. She would have to work.

2) We find out late in the story that the teen drove off in her car when she went missing. Did no one, including the police, think to put out an "all points bulletin" or "be on the lookout" for her car? And not to mention tracing her cell phone, if not from the SIM card, then from cell phone tower use?

3) Breaking news on the television is an abandoned car is found on the side of the road with no signs of foul play. Wow. Seriously slow news day in a major city for this to be breaking news.

Most of the "chapters" from Lilly's POV need to be removed because they serve no purpose. They just make the reader dislike the juvenile angst and behavior of this teenager instead of making her more sympathetic to the reader. Only the "chapters" that take place after she goes "missing" should remain.

Removing those chapters would also fix another issue I have with this story in that this character steps out of character when she spouts scripture contrary to her actions.

The story is told to the reader in snippets of time switching between present day and recent past and

continues to flip flop. This breaks up the story flow and yanks the reader out of the story.

I also have a problem with the single mother who is supposed to be a pious Christian, yet her thoughts of the homeless people are anything but charitable and good.

Many of the secondary characters seem like caricatures of people, not real in any sense of the word.

There are several supposedly poignant moments in the story when the new love interest is talking with the main female lead about losing his child. The reader never finds out what happened to the child. Only that his ex took her, and then she died very young.

The story is all telling and no showing. The reader never gets immersed in the story because everything is told to us.

There are no real chapter headings or numbers, just the POV character's name.

There are a few proofreading issues (awkward phrasing, missing words, comma issues, etc.), so a final proofing round is needed.

Written in first person.

I was provided a copy of this book by the Kindle Scout program.

Sally says

For Elizabeth (Liz), if coping with divorce from Bruce wasn't enough, a year later her daughter Lillian (Lilly) hasn't accepted that her parent's marriage is over either and she now struggles with dealing with Lilly's sullenness. Lilly blames her mom even though she doesn't know the real story.

On July 4th Lilly is supposed to spend the night with her friend, Jess, but according to Jess she never showed up and she didn't come home. She just seemed to disappear. At first Liz thought she might be with her boyfriend, Marcus, but he denied she was with him. The police didn't seem concerned so with the help of her neighbor, Cole, they launched a full-scale search to find out what happened to Lilly and try to make sense of why.

The character of Liz is so well developed as a mother; her story melts your heart as she struggles to find her daughter and to keep life some-what normal for her son, Jordan. With Cole's help they search tirelessly for Lilly and along the way learn to give it over to God.

This book shows the great love of a mother, but also the greater love of God. This story will stay in your heart long after you have read it. In my opinion this is definitely a must-read. There are so many twists and turns to this book, it will keep you turning the pages.

It is filled with mystery, drama, intrigue, love, forgiveness and a little bit of reluctant romance.

Disclaimer: I was given a copy of this eBook for free by the author T.K. Chapin for review, T K Chapin. I was not compensated for my review nor was I required to make a favorable review. All thoughts in this review are mine.

NaDell says

A serious book about the second guessing you'd make after something tragic happens to your child. It takes us between two characters: the mom-Elizabeth and the daughter-Lilly. Lilly's chapters are from before the big event and the mom's chapter's are during and after the event. The author kept the story from getting redundant and kept me guessing what was going to happen and who to blame for what was happening, which is great in this kind of book! I had several guesses that weren't the right ending, but I wondered if there'd be a plot twist that went that way. Sometimes I almost want books to all come like the "Choose Your Own Adventure" series and then you could read them over and over and over and get a different result each time. I thought this book was well done though and I felt all of the strong emotions that the characters did. There is some violence, but not graphic violence and there is some sexual content, but not a lot and not descriptive.

I did receive a free ebook for an honest review from the author.

Valri Western says

This story was written in a powerful way by choosing to show the viewpoints of both mother and daughter. At first we just get what is happening in "real time" when ultimately, Elizabeth (Liz) discovers that her daughter, Lilly, is missing. No one seems to take her seriously since Lilly is almost 18 and she and Liz have been arguing a lot because of the recent divorce and move to a new city. Most people, including the police think Lilly has just run away and she'll come home when she's ready. However, Liz, being a mom, knows that isn't the case and she is relentless in her pursuit of finding Lilly. She tracks down every lead, some with the help of a fellow church member, Cole, who she starts to have feeling for. He has also had loss so he knows what she's going through. We also get to hear Lilly's viewpoint as she talks about the time going up to the time she leaves the house and all she went through. She is deeply in love with her boyfriend from her previous town before she moves and it's hard to move away. As the story moves back and forth between Liz and Lilly, the suspense and mystery keep you turning the pages to find out what really happened to Lilly! Although you are reading Lilly's words, you don't actually KNOW what happens to her in the end so you want to find out! You also feel Liz's pain & anguish as a mother who is desperately trying everything she can to find her daughter. She also has another child at home and she's trying to balance his needs too. I found this book fascinating and involving as a reader. I am a mother of 2 young adult daughters so I could identify with all that Liz felt. There were so many themes that were addressed in this book - love, forgiveness, second chances, teenager angst, among other things. I would highly recommend it!

Rebecca says

The concept of this faith-based story wasn't bad: a mother learning to trust God in her darkest moment when her daughter goes missing. It's told from the perspective of the mother after the daughter is missing, and also from the daughter's point of view in the months leading up to the girl's disappearance. But, the writing was rough and could have used a professional editor to get rid of obvious flaws.

One scene in the beginning of the story bothered me. When the mother learns her daughter might be prostituting, she's too tired to go check that night. I would have been horrified and not wanted to wait until the next night. Toward the end, the story has an interesting twist that made it worth reading.

I received a copy of this book through the Kindle Scout program.

Alicia Huxtable says

Interesting

This book has a rather interesting subject. Broken family, enraged daughter, long distance relationship gone bad and teen pregnancy. Add into that a runaway daughter and already you have a good mix but then it gets better.....however at one point, close to the end so it didn't ruin the book, I did realise what was happening.

Mummy Cat Claire says

Losing one of my children is the worst fear I can imagine. This book takes on that topic and adds in the love of Jesus and a load of faith that things will turn out.

Lillian Dawn Dudley or Lily, is a young woman whose parents are divorcing. She, her younger brother and mother are moving from Lincoln City to Spokane. "I am your mother, and you will respect me. I'm doing what's best for our family. You have to trust me on this. you'll be able to visit, and you'll make new friends in Spokane." Lillian is very upset over the move. She has to leave her friends, her boyfriend and her life.

The mother, has the hard job of convincing her daughter that things need to change in their family. Lily is very upset by losing her boyfriend. "I was so lucky to have a man who loved me. I was only sixteen, and I had found the epic love of my life."

The story takes the reader through this families struggles from moving after a divorce, a new home, making new friends and then the disappearance of Lily.

The topic of losing a child is very scary. I can't imagine. I don't want to imagine. This book did a nice job of putting me in the situation without making me crazy. There were just enough details to get me inside the book and identify with the characters but not enough to have me put the book down because it was too difficult to read.

"After the divorce from Bruce, and now Lily running away, I couldn't help feeling like a failure in more ways than one. Cole made me feel seen, understood." Cole is a local man who attends the same church as this family. When he finds out about Lily's disappearance, he offers to help. By spending so much time together, the mother and Cole get to know each other well. Sparks fly a bit but not too much.

Cole's character bugged me though. He is a very thoughtful character and did a nice job in supporting the mother. However, his ideas of perception of Christianity wasn't to my liking. I quite disagreed with him in a lot of areas and ways.

"the devil isn't omniscient like god. It's an incorrect belief many people have. The truth is that our flesh is corrupt enough by itself. We don't need the devil's help."

I understand what Cole is trying to say here but ultimately, I disagree with this point of view for several reasons. I also didn't like how the characters would pray and recite scripture but it didn't feel like they really invited Christ in. In some instances, their faith came off as insincere.

The ex-husband, Bruce, is a snake. It took some time to get to the meat of the relationship between the

mother and Bruce, but once she tells she reader what happened, Bruce came across and really scummy and full of bad choices.

For most of the book, I wasn't able to connect with the mother. I felt like she didn't get it. She didn't get that her daughter was hurting and the mother just never said the things that I would like to think I would say in such a situation. I felt like she was honest enough with her children. I felt like she thought she was doing what was best, I could see her love and her efforts but the character still came across and thick headed. She also never included her children. Both of them are old enough to have a say in what the family does.

Every family member was going through their own grieving. Mom has issues that she chooses to ignore and not face. Lily is unwilling to accept the changes in her life. She is also not being given all the facts in the divorce. The younger brother is escaping through video games.

The investigating elements seemed lacking to me. Social media is a great resource now days. This is not a time for privacy so I thought to go through Lily's computer for clues, emails, messages, etc. Have the police ping her phone to get an approximate location, or even the phone carrier could do that.

I liked how the author closed the book by using the title and giving it meaning to the story. "If only I understood then what i do now." "if only we all understood..."

I believe that hindsight is 20/20 but we can always grow and learn from our mistakes and others around us. We can also educate ourselves by study and prayer.

Overall, I feel bad for the characters and what happens to them. The mystery to the book was well done. It kept me guessing and I was surprised by the ending. I like how the author showed the reader that all the characters made mistakes. Lily's was more obvious but I saw mistakes from all the characters. I also like how the book shows hope. There is good to see in the book. Great mystery set up and execution. The book is on the shorter side, it only took me a few hours to read.

Content: clean

I received a copy of the book from the author. All thoughts and opinions on the book are my own.

Jana says

I was given the opportunity to receive an advance copy of this book to preview. It is a most touching, heartfelt story of a mother's love through trials and tribulations. It covers the real life struggles of a family going through divorce and the struggles the mother faces as a single parent. It deals with the troubles all parents face raising teenagers, but takes a horrifying turn that no parent wants to have to experience ~ a runaway child. Without giving away too much of the story, let me say that the mother and her children's' strong Christian faith are the reasons this story could have a happy ending. This is an incredible Christian fiction that I encourage you to take time to read!

Julia says

If Only by T.K. Chapin is a marvellous Christian thriller. I just could not put it down. Everything that T.K. Chapin writes is fabulous but this story tops it all. It really was an edge of your seat ride that had me guessing from the start. The action twisted this way and that throwing out a few red herrings along the way.

The novel is written in two different time periods and in the first person from two different viewpoints. There is a clear defining moment where the action is then 'before' and 'after' - all very cleverly done.

God is at the centre. "It's in the silence and stillness that we can find God." Sometimes we are so busy rushing around that we miss God but God is always there for us.

There is the theme of hope - when all looks bleak, turn to God and hold on to hope. Keep praying, keep asking, keep hoping and grow your relationship with God.

The novel shows that being a Christian does not prevent you from having tough times. However in the tough times, God will walk alongside you. He will never leave you nor forsake you.

There are the difficult topics of infertility and broken marriages explored in the novel. As well as the theme of single parenting.

I got completely caught up in the action and lost myself in If Only for a few hours. It's a fabulous read and a departure from T.K. Chapin's usual genre but I want more, more, more.

I received this book for free. A favourable review was not required and all views expressed are my own.

Ellen White says

IF ONLY by T K Chapin. A powerful story of a young girl, not yet 18, whose world is turned up side down. Her real dad is dead, her step father and mother divorced. But why did they have to move, she had to leave Marcus, the love of her life. She has a friend Jess, who she goes to see, and now she is missing. Cops think it's another runaway. How can Lilly's Mom except this, with little clues to go by. One clue takes her mom and a friend to the homeless area. The words vibrate in her mind " my daughter can't be living under a bridge and with the homeless." The hope and dispare, are well done, as the chapters give you insight of what the Mother / Elizabeth and then the daughter/Lilly are thinking. One has an insight, but one really doesn't grasp, what helplessness a parent goes thru, when one of their children runaway. What the outcome is, will change all that was involved

"If only one knew then, what they knew now." Another great story, that one will remember, glad I had the chance to read. Will be enjoyable for all to read.

Edward Arrington says

How many of us look at the past and think: "If only..."? Maybe we don't think about it in exactly that manner but we still can see those choices and decisions we made and wonder what results a different decision might have made. This story has a good helping of "if onlys". The mother especially is plagued by second guessing her past decisions and struggles with her current dilemma. Alternating from the mother to the daughter, the author presents the story as it unfolds from the mother's current perspective to the daughter's perspective starting a year earlier when they moved from their home. The story is laced with suspense as the events unfold. The surprises seem to be waiting around every turn. I enjoyed the story and recommend it for the lessons about healing, forgiveness, and reconciliation. I received a complimentary copy of this book from the author in exchange for my honest review.

S.L. Tsao says

Those feelings connected with being a mom and a daughter are, of course, the most powerful things to readers, like moms. I placed 3.8(4) stars. This book, however, is not for me; but also something good—.

Nilsa says

This is the story of a mother and daughter recently moved to a new town, told in alternate voices of Liz the mother and Lilly her 16 year old daughter. Each of these women is dealing with loss and separation. Liz is newly divorced and Lilly is separated from her boyfriend Marcus. The focus of the the book is initially on Lilly s desire to be with Marcus. As the story develops, Lilly goes missing. Thus begins Liz ' s search for her daughter with the help of friend Cole. Lilly is eventually found by her mother and Cole; a neighbor is involved in Lilly's disappearance . There is a religious undercurrent but it is not preachy. Rather it is supportive.

While I found this story engaging, I would have liked a back story for each of the characters. For example, what caused Liz's divorce, how did Lilly meet Marcus, what was their attraction to each other.

I thought the scripture quotes were placed into the story and at times awkward. I wanted to know Liz's background (she regularly read the Bible, went to church, or stopped because of the divorce) and how important her faith was to her. The chapter in which Cole prays with Liz was genuine.

Lastly, Alexis's role as the perpetrator was not developed in my opinion. Her motivation for the crime she perpetrated is superficially dealt with. Suddenly there are six bodies of pregnant teens inner back yard. What was Logan's role and where was he, how does Alexis get these girls...and where was Logan I would have like to be a fly on the wall in the house.

The topic of teen pregnancy within a mystery story line was interesting and I wanted to keep reading to unravel the mystery. But, I was left with a desire for more content.

I think this can be a very good novel with appeal for teens and adults with additional character and story line development.

Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to read this book. Continued success and blessings in your writing and ministry.

Nilsa Perez

Gloria says

This is a very emotional story of how divorce hurts a family causing pain and strained relationships. Elizabeth and her teenage children move to Spokane, WA from Lincoln City, Oregon after the divorce of Elizabeth and her husband Bruce. Lilly is Elizabeth's seventeen year old daughter but the only father she has ever known is Bruce, who adopted her when she was young. Jordan is the son of Elizabeth and Bruce. Elizabeth was deeply hurt by the divorce. In addition to the pain of the divorce, Lilly is having trouble dealing with the move because her boyfriend, Marcus, is back in Lincoln City. As the story starts, it is July 3rd and Elizabeth is going to spend the night with her friend Jess. There is a lot of strain between Elizabeth and Lilly as there is between many teenagers and their parents. At a 4th of July party involving the neighborhood, Elizabeth realizes that Lilly has not been with Jess when she sees Jess but Lilly is not with her and Jess said she has not been with her. Lilly is missing and no one seems to know where she is. We really feel Elizabeth's fear and pain as the days stretch on with no word. Bruce seems to have moved on and not as concerned as he should be. The police take her statement but just list Lilly as a runaway. Elizabeth has to be strong for Jordan and keep living but it is very hard. She feels helpless and alone. A friend Cole, who lost his own daughter, offers his help and together they check out every lead that they hear about. Jordan spends lots of time gaming with his friend Brock who lives next door and this allows Elizabeth and Cole the freedom to search and check out leads. Elizabeth is suspicious of a neighbor man who is creepy acting. She and Cole followed him one night because he had a pattern of leaving each night at 7:00 with a duffel. He wound up a

warehouse but nothing of suspicion was discovered. They even check out homeless people to see if they can find Lilly living on the streets.

TK Chapin does a wonderful job of allowing us into Elizabeth's heart and mind to see her pain, frustration and fear. On the other hand, we see what Lilly is feeling leading up to her disappearance. She is so in love with Marcus that she can't really settle into her new life and blames her mom for all of her pain to the point of thinking that she hates her. We know that deep down she loves her mom but her emotions are so high that her mom is where she places the blame for her unhappiness. She does have a faith and a great memory for scripture verses that she learned in youth group that help her deal with her situation. In fact, Elizabeth's faith has faded some with the divorce but with Lilly's disappearance, she finds she needs God. This an emotional story of a mother's love that never fails and faith that she will eventually hear from Lilly even when events look like she may not. It brings to mind that no matter what happens to us that God's love will sustain us through it all. It is a story of forgiveness, acceptance, unconditional love and reliance on God for strength. There is suspense and a surprise twist in the end that is unexpected. I recommend this special and inspirational story.

Thanks to TK Chapin for the opportunity to read this book in exchange for a honest review.
