



## Ask Me to Stay

*Elise K. Ackers*

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## **Ask Me to Stay** Elise K. Ackers

When family tragedy brings bad boy Ethan Foster home, he doesn't expect a warm welcome. In the small town of Hinterdown reputation is everything - and Ethan's was ruined long ago. Nobody wants him around, particularly not Sam O'Hara, the girl he left behind.

There's still a powerful spark between them, but Sam is afraid to risk her heart again. And Ethan is hiding a secret that will have repercussions for his whole family. Will the townspeople ever forgive him? More importantly, will those he loves the most find it in their hearts to take him back?

This tender tale of love and redemption is the first in a brilliant new series by Elise K. Ackers, author of *Small Town Storm* and the bestselling *The Man Plan*.

## **Ask Me to Stay Details**

Date : Published April 10th 2013 by Penguin Group

ISBN :

Author : Elise K. Ackers

Format : ebook 130 pages

Genre : Romance, Contemporary

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## From Reader Review Ask Me to Stay for online ebook

### Shannon (Giraffe Days) says

Ethan Foster left town and his older brother Dean when he was eighteen - two years after the death of his parents - and has only been back for a handful of short, unsatisfying visits. The last time he was here it was for the opening of his sister-in-law Bree's shop; now he's back for her funeral. At thirty-two, a tragic accident has robbed her of her life and left her two children, Rowan and Nina, alone with their father, Dean. No one expects Ethan to stay or to even be there the next day, and watching him drink and leave the wake with a beautiful woman looking for a way to drown her feelings in a lusty encounter seems to match up with people's expectations.

But Ethan does stay - for now, at least. The children open up to him and he helps them overcome their fears and return to a kind of normalcy. His old girlfriend, Sam O'Hara, seems to have moved on but is secretly, privately destroyed each time Ethan leaves, and is trying to smother the slumbering embers of her desire for him, for good. His old friend Caleb, Sam's brother, has a new girlfriend, Anna, whom he loves and plans to propose to, but he seems blind to the fact that Anna can barely tolerate it here in this small rural town. There's a whole life here that Ethan ducked out on but which he slides back into - not without difficulty or animosity, but with some ease - and which he doesn't actually want to leave. But with his relationship with his brother, whom he was once so close to, under continued strain, and everyone holding such a low opinion of him, Ethan has never felt like anyone *wanted* him to stay.

This time, he's finding it harder, both to stay and to leave. But the one thing that poisons the water between Ethan and Dean - the truth of their deaths, a truth Ethan has held to in silence for years - stands between them, and Ethan seems determined to never share it. But in facing up to the past and laying himself bare to Dean, Ethan will have to face up to himself as well, and his fears that he is just like his father.

*Ask Me To Stay* is a sweet, shortish romance story with no graphic scenes whatsoever - something I point out in case you're a reader looking for romance with no sex. I loved Ackers' *The Man Plan*, set in Melbourne, and have a few more books by her to read; I picked this one off my Kindle at random, and it's a very different story. Where *The Man Plan* is funny, light-hearted and fully of an endearing kind of whimsy, *Ask Me To Stay* is a much more serious story, beginning with a funeral and dealing with the falling-out of siblings, suicide and possibly self-destructive behaviours. It has a rural setting but I didn't get much of a sense of place, sadly; I would have loved a bit more detail on the location, to really get a feel for it (I don't remember the name of the town, sorry, and it's very hard to "flip" through an e-book!).

The characters resonated in a realistic, genuine way, but the story does lean more heavily on the drama side - if you enjoy those kinds of TV series you would I'm sure enjoy this more than I did. I liked it, Ackers writes really well and this had some really lovely scenes and characters who felt real to me, but it was all a bit too melancholy for me. The theme of untimely death runs all the way through it, which is a tough one for Romance - just as well there wasn't any sex in it, then! The drama was handled well - not ladled on too thickly, the characters not quite self-indulgent (though you could argue that Ethan is) - but I still struggle with this kind of story-line. The big bad secret that Ethan is keeping mum about, which ruined his youth more effectively than the death of his parents' could have, was something I never quite understood. I mean, I understand what happened, but not why Ethan wouldn't tell his brother about it. He was only sixteen, they were close, and had just been orphaned. Maybe I'm just thinking of what I would have done in the same situation, and obviously I'm not Ethan. But to let something like that ruin your relationship with your brother, drive you from your home, make everyone think you're a shit and just sit there and take it? That's tragic. I couldn't quite understand it, and it is what the whole story hinges on.

I liked Sam, though, and her brother Cal - he was probably my favourite character, in fact. In such a short novel, you don't really get to know the characters beyond the here-and-now all that much, and that was a shame. I wanted to understand them and feel more familiar with them than I did; knowing that I can revisit the characters in the next books in the series wasn't much help for getting into *this* story. In short, I liked *Ask Me To Stay* as a well-written, rather sweet but sad Romance story, and it certainly connected with me emotionally (it's a bit of a tear-jerker), but there was a lack of chemistry between Ethan and Sam that surprised and disappointed me and ultimately made this less than fully satisfying.

The Homeland series continues with Cal's story in *Ask Me For More* .

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## Dee/ bookworm says

Summer Returns was a book that sounded great, but unfortunately about 40% through you still don't know much about the main characters. It was a really weird set up, every side character you got a history about, but the main characters have all this mystery around them. The suit for example is a symbol, but you have no idea for a considerable length of the book.

I received an advance reader copy in exchange for a fair review.

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## Vanessa says

Overall this was an easy read to sit back with and relax. I enjoyed the different characters and their development, but there were times when I wanted more from them. The story was told in third person omniscient, so perhaps it was covering too many characters, whereas I wanted to focus more on Ethan and Sam. It made me want to speed up their interactions too and get to the goods so to speak. Since I'm a romantic I wanted to explore their relationship more instead of feeling like I only got the tip of the iceberg.

With that being said, I did like how the author kept the entire story pretty much PG13. It's nice to read a story that does the old fashioned fade-to-black on sex scenes. Lately it seems like too many authors are trying to out-do each other on how ronchy they can make them. Honestly it just ruins the joy I find in reading romantic chicklit. I read for the warm fuzzies it gives me while I watch two characters overcome their differences or develop a relationship... not for the sex. So kudos to this author for keeping the story clean.

The story as a whole could've been expanded on to build the characters more and give their interactions, as well as development room to breathe. By the end of any book I read I really want to feel like I've gotten to know the characters, but in this case I felt like I was just barely getting to know them by the time it was over. However, it did make me want more and I notice that the story is part of a series so maybe that exploration of characters will expand as each story goes on?

Something positive I'll take away from the story is when Ethan was explaining to the kids how they will have goodbyes, but one day they'll discover hellos. It was a thoughtful way to help two young kids grieving and it's something that can be applied in real life when we lose a loved one.

Overall, I feel this book has something for everyone: love, family, conflict, acceptance and forgiveness.

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## **A. Bookzilla. says**

It pains me to rate this book (?) 3 stars, because I have previously enjoyed both books Elise Ackers wrote. And though my rating may not tell you this, I actually absolutely loved this little book.

However, I'm not sure if it's meant to be a novella (130 pages, something around 1700+ of those Kindle locations - which is just not a book to me), or a book (because it says *A Homeland Book* on the front.)

Basically, it was neither here, nor there, and for that it suffered in content (though not at all in quality of writing).

What I loved about it is the characters and this feeling of community Elise Ackers can create. I just love her writing. A lot of backstory, Ethan and Sammy were amazing characters, Dean stole every scene he was in, and the kids were just wonderful.

However - the switch between two scenes or a change of POV were so abrupt. You're literally in the middle of a scene and then cut - it's tomorrow. How much time passed between the beginning of the book and the end, I wouldn't be able to tell you.

Despite this, you get these glimpses into Ethan's life, his relationship with Sammy and ultimately the past that made him go away.

And speaking of that ending, it was just as abrupt and rushed. Such a shame, really, I would have loved to read this book if it weren't half written.

As with all Elise K. Ackers books so far, it was a clean read.

Will I read the next book in the series? It's Cal's story (I felt for him so much in this book). I'll definitely read it. I just hope it won't be as short as this one was :(.

\*\*\* Free copy of this book provided by the publisher via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

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## **Philomena Callan Cheekypee says**

I've not read anything by this author before but I'll definitely be looking to read more.

I found this to be a good clean read. I enjoyed the main characters and the secondary characters certainly added to the story.

I would have loved the story to be longer but having said that I enjoyed this read.

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## **Shelleyrae at Book'd Out says**

I have previously read and enjoyed *The Man Plan* by Elise K Ackers a sweet, lighthearted contemporary romance. *Ask Me To Stay*, the first novella in a new series by the author, is quite different with less

emphasis on the romantic relationship between the protagonists.

Ethan Foster left home at eighteen without any explanation, deserting the brother who raised him after the tragic death of their parents and his childhood sweetheart, Samantha O'Hara. In the past ten years or so he has returned only a handful of times for family occasions, never staying more than a day or two, leaving town with gossip trailing in his wake. But this time it's different, Ethan's brother's wife has died, leaving Dean to raise their two young children alone. Despite the animosity between the brothers, this time Ethan doesn't leave, even though he risks disclosing the secret he has carried for the last decade, the secret that has stopped him coming home.

Though written in the third person, which allows us to learn what Sam, and the other characters, think and feel, I was pleasantly surprised to discover that Ethan takes the lead in this story. The plot centers around the ruinous secret that haunts Ethan and it is his regrets and hopes that drive the story.

Ethan is a credible, sympathetic character and I found his motivations believable. I especially liked the way in which Ackers developed his relationship with his niece and nephew, child characters are notoriously difficult for authors to get right and I think the author did so wonderfully in this instance.

I thought Sam could have been a stronger character as I didn't get much of a sense of why she and Ethan should be together above all things but I did like her. She is one of the few who never loses faith in Ethan despite having good reason to.

While within the scope of the story the romance works fine since it is a relationship rekindled, fans of the genre may be disappointed by the lack of direct interaction between Ethan and Sam. There is a happy ending though which should satisfy most romance readers.

The secondary characters in Ask Me To Stay are also likeable, with subsequent books in the Homeland series to feature Ethan's best mate, Cal and brother, Dean.

At only 130 pages, Ask Me To Stay is a short, quick read but a very engaging novella with appealing characters and surprising emotional depth. I am looking forward to reading Cal's story in July.

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### **Pelusa Rivera says**

Received an ARC for my fair review for netgalley. Welllllllll, It was just tooo too too slow, so slow that I forgot how to write. I just could not, could not finish the damn book, was bored, bored bored, sorry folks. tried to finish this book, but couldn't.

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### **Romantic Reads and Such says**

There's a lot of 3 star (or lower) reviews for this book and I'm not sure they are all deserved. I think part of the problem is that this was marketed as a romance but it is really more of a women's fiction story ... although, can you say that if the main character who does the growing is a man? Ethen does a lot evaluating through the story - his life and relationships - and has to decide what he wants his future to look like.

Unfortunately all of this reflecting comes because of the death of his sister-in-law. Home for her funeral he doesn't head out of town right away like he normally does. Instead he finds himself spending time with his brother, niece & nephew, and the only woman he's ever loved. And it's causing him to really think. He has his reasons for staying away but it's getting harder and harder to remember why they were so important.

I feel bad for all of the people involved but especially how much Ethan felt like he had to isolate himself from those he loved. There are misunderstandings, miscommunications, and hard feelings that they just feel like they can't talk about. It's been hard for all of them and luckily they finally reach a point where they have to do something to make things right again.

\*\*\* I voluntarily read a Review Copy of this book. All opinions stated are solely my own and no one else's.  
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### **Brenda says**

When Ethan Foster returned home for Bree's funeral, everyone expected him to leave straight afterwards, as was normal for him. His brother Dean was devastated by his wife's death, and their children Nina and Rowan were having a hard time of it as well.

Ethan had abruptly left town at age 18, two years after their parents' death, leaving behind many friends who couldn't understand his actions. He returned for special events...the birth of Rowan, and again for Nina's birth, but always left in a hurry. But now here he was again, at another event in the lives of his family, a shockingly unexpected tragedy, with six year old Nina and her older brother Rowan looking so much like their Mum it was breathtaking.

Caleb O'Hara and his sister Samantha (Cal and Sammy) were among his few closest friends...he had had a thing for Sammy at the time of his abrupt departure. With young Nina, plus the silent and serious Rowan tugging on his heart strings, and his heart restricting every time he caught Sammy's eye, then Dean not wanting to look him in the eye, and scowling when he did, was it any wonder Ethan wasn't sure where he stood.

But the secret he had kept all the years he'd been away was one he had to keep forever. He would take the heat, but he wouldn't let his family and friends be hurt.

I thoroughly enjoyed this book! I loved Nina, and her constant *I have questions*...so adorable. The way Ethan interacted with two children who had so recently lost their mother. Ms Akers novella was a wonderful start to her new series, and I'm quite looking forward to the next one Ask Me for More, out in July this year.

With thanks to NetGalley and the publisher for my copy of this book.

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### **Once Upon a Twilight says**

<http://www.onceuponatwilight.com/2017...>

Summer Return was a good book to have on hand while vacationing. The story was enjoyable and easy, so I felt relax while listening to the waves crash around me. The author did a great job with the characters and

how they influenced the story. I will say, I didn't realize until almost half way, that the book wasn't based in the US. But it doesn't take away at all from the story.

So in this story, you follow along the lives of folks from a small hometown. One of the main characters is Ethan, he ends up having to go "home" when his sister in law passes away. He has been away pretty much since his parents died, he only visits when tragedies strike, such as this visit. Hence, the one suit in his old bedroom closet. But something about this trips, begins to change Ethan. I personally believe it's due to his niece and nephew. I loved the interactions they had. Then of course you have Ethan's old love, Sam. Will that spark light up again, will Sam let herself fall once again for Ethan? All this you find out when you read *Summer Returns*.

As I mentioned before, this is a great book to take to the beach, pool or just anyplace you feel like being lazy. Definitely plan to read more from this author in the future. - Yara

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### **Valeen Robertson (Live Thru Books Blog) says**

*Summer Return* is a really meandering story. I wouldn't really call it a romance because there's not much romance, there's no sex, well 1 fade to black scene, and there's not a lot of anything but talking and not talking. I know that doesn't make sense, but once you read (if you read), you'll understand.

Ethan has come back home for his sister-in-law's funeral. His brother, Dean, like the entire town, thinks he's a no good loser and he's allowed them all to think that to save his brother from knowing the truth about their father. While at the funeral, he sees his ex-girlfriend, Sam, the one he left without a word years ago when he left town. Now he comes back here and there, but only for momentous occasions like the births of his niece and nephew, and now his sister-in-law's funeral. Everyone figures he'll up and leave again soon, the way he always has before, but this time, something compels him to stay, his niece and nephew, and he sticks around longer than usual.

If only the story had been tightened up, **A LOT**. If only things had actually happened. If only Ethan had talked when he should have and not talked when he shouldn't have. If only the pacing weren't so slow. If only the chemistry between Sam and Ethan were hot and strong. If only *Summer Return* weren't so obtuse. If only...but the way it's written is so meandering and slow that I almost fell asleep at times. I ended up liking Ethan, but I'm not sure why, because he didn't do much, except martyr himself for a man who didn't deserve it. But, he was a good guy, a great uncle, and that was enough to keep this from the 2 stars I was thinking of rating it. The other character that stood out was Cal, Sam's brother, who happened to be Ethan and Dean's friend. His story I think will be much more interesting than *Summer Return*. Here's hoping more happens, that it's paced much quicker, and that the sex isn't fade to black. Here's hoping that Cal gets a great story that he deserves, one that's much better than the story Ethan got.

*I received an ARC through NetGalley for an honest review.*

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### **Lisa says**

*Summer Return* by Elise Ackers, she is a new author to me and was looking forward to discovering someone new. This book takes place in Australia so there is some getting used to a bit of difference in the language but as you read, you adjust (I live in the US.). The main story is of two brothers who are torn apart after the death of their parents when they were teenagers. The youngest brother leaves town at 18 and takes with him

a secret... this secret is slowly destroying him but he keeps it to protect those around him, despite the harm it has done to his older brother and feeds a not great opinion of him in the townspeople's eyes. Another family tragedy brings him back into town and this time he stays - trying to re-establish his relationships, both with his brother, his brother's family, friends, lost loves and the town. I wanted to love this book, but I didn't. I did like it and am interested in reading the next book in the series but the story never really got into the characters, you want to love the characters, root for the underdog, truly live their emotions and that doesn't happen. It stays too much on the surface of the emotions and feelings of Ethan, Sam, Caleb, etc

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### **Amy says**

I'm giving this book a generous 2.5 stars. Why? Well, I love the cover, and the blurb about the book. It opens with the very tragic death of Bree, in small town Australia. A larger than life lady that seemed to have loved well, and is connected to everyone in the town. As such, everyone knows each other's business. Sometimes unrealistically so. The entire town knows what Ethan is doing, thinking, when he's leaving etc. It's a bit much. The story is jumpy, drifts from one character to another. Told from 4 different angles, there's no clear break between them. Given, I did read the advanced digital copy, so I'm hoping that is fixed in the final edited edition. I'm going to give them the benefit of the doubt there. There's plenty times I'm left wondering what in the world is going on. There's a point in which Ethan looks in the Garage window. Miraculously Sam knows exactly what he's thinking. She's uncovered his secret, by the one look in the window. Come on. Give us a break.

I feel awfully for Cal, who for me was the one character with a bit of depth. Glad to see the next book is about him. I'd say I endured this book, because I am reviewing it, but if I'd picked it up in a library I'd not have finished.

I received this complimentary copy from Netgalley. This is my honest review.

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### **Kara says**

I put off reading this after I got the galley because I thought this would be yet another lightweight romance.

Instead, *Ask Me To Stay* is a much more substantive book than I expected. The romance is second to Ethan's struggles with his brother Dean.

Ethan returns home for his sister in law's funeral having left town at 18 and rarely looking back. His family feels abandoned by him and they accept his presence grudgingly after it appears he's going to stay longer than his usual overnight visit.

The writing depicted heartache and loss and anger quite well and I enjoyed reading the story but the end left me a little flat. After the reveal of His Big Secret it wasn't clear why he felt the need to keep it secret - or even why he suddenly blurted it out. It also wasn't apparent why the other townspeople had such resentment toward him (unless it was because of how he left Sam?) and honestly Sam was such a minor character I wasn't sure how much she really still lived Ethan.

That being said I loved Ethan - and even Dean - thru much of the story and I would be curious to see what else Ackers has to offer. This one just didn't have an ending that lived up to its otherwise solid performance.

*I received a free copy of this book from NetGalley in exchange for my honest, unbiased review .*

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## **Shaddow Wolf says**

got this book free for and honest review from netgalley. This is another new author to me but the story is well written and and enjoyable read. So much so that I wanted to see what happened at the end. The main person in the book is Ethan he come back to town for his sister in laws funeral (you'll have to read the book to see how she died). Ethan left town when his mum and dad died when he was 19 and his brother was 16. He left town with secrets which were not his you'll have to read to to find that out to. Ethan's brother Dean has two kids a son Rowan and the youngest is Nina. Also when Ethan left he had a sort of girlfriend Samantha O'Hara but he calls her 'Sammy-doll' which is his nick name for her, he also did not tell her why he left town when he did. Sam has a brother called Call he find out some about him but his story is next. I am looking forward to his book to see who his love interest is. I would highly recommend this to book to others to read its a good read.

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