



Stay

Deb Caletti

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Clara's relationship with Christian is intense from the start, and like nothing she's ever experienced before. But what starts as devotion quickly becomes obsession, and it's almost too late before Clara realizes how far gone Christian is and what he's willing to do to make her stay.

Now Clara has left the city and Christian behind. No one back home has any idea where she is, but she still struggles to shake off her fear. She knows Christian won't let her go that easily, and that no matter how far she runs, it may not be far enough....

Stay Details

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From Reader Review Stay for online ebook

Nic says

This is my first Deb Caletti book and won't be my last because I **LOVED** it. Stay is masterfully written and so powerfully honest, it is just an absolutely brilliant read.

Stay is the story of Clara, a normal teenage girl. It is just her and her Dad as Clara's Mum passed away when she was younger. Clara meets Christian and quickly falls in love. At first he appears to be the perfect boyfriend - sweet, caring, gorgeous and treats her so well. But Christian becomes controlling and obsessive. It is told in two different perspectives, before and after and alternates each chapter. Before is Clara's and Christian's relationship and After is Clara's and her Dad's escape for the summer to Bishop Rock.

This book could be a true story, as Caletti really captures how it feels to be in a controlling and obsessive relationship. Like how you are always anticipating their reaction, how they put you down, how you do anything to avoid a fight and the lies you tell. I wish I could go back in time and hand this book to my teenage self, it was the kind of book I needed and one I think all teenage girls should read.

The writing in Stay is beautiful and full of raw emotion. I badly wanted to put a favourite quote up but since it is an ARC I am not allowed. But I noted over 30 quotes! I kept highlight paragraph after paragraph. Something about Caletti's writing really connected with me. I think it is the honesty and all the heart in the story.

The characters are exceptional. Clara, her Dad, Finn, and Sylvie, I loved them all. So well fleshed out and so fully alive especially Clara. You can completely see why she fell for Christian and understand her decisions as the relationship went on. I have to say I would have probably made the same choices she did. Clara is definitely one of the most realistic characters I have read in a while.

I also enjoyed the relationship Clara had with her Dad. He was a loving father but he still had his flaws. And again it nice to see a parent being present consistently throughout the story. There is also some very swoon worthy moments provided by Finn. He was such a good guy, confident, happy and caring. Having Finn in the story you could easily see Christian flaws and the difference between a healthy and an unhealthy relationship.

Overall, this book is amazing. I highly recommend Stay to all fans of contemporary fiction. Definitely a favourite read for 2011.

Thanks to Simon Pulse, S & S Galley Grab for providing me with a copy

Inge says

“It was clear I was standing beside Christian on the highest ledge of a building. I was looking down. I could see the street way, way below and the tiny people and the tiny cars honking: I could feel the cement wall under my hands and the sick feeling in my stomach. Doing what I needed to do to get off safely – it surely meant Christian would jump.”

Stay is the story of a naïve teenage girl who falls in love with a handsome guy. Their relationship is intense from the start – Clara can't bear the thought of being without Christian, and Christian can't bear being without Clara. Everything is rainbows and sunshine for a while. They're so in love and so perfect for each other, but slowly, Christian starts showing his true nature. He becomes jealous and possessive and starts telling Clara what to do and what not to wear. Clara discovers that breaking up with Christian is not so easy, because he'll do *anything* for them to be together again.

The story is divided into two parts: Clara and her dad have left town to escape Christian, and they're attempting to build a new life in Bishop Rock. Her dad tries to write a book and Clara tries to forget about Christian. A young lad called Finn makes the forgetting a whole lot easier. Clara also tells the reader about her relationship with Christian – how everything was perfect in the beginning, and how, after a while, things started to escalate. They were together for at least two years before Clara got tired of being a doormat. Christian does not take this news very well. The two stories intertwine when the threat of Christian returns: he's got her new phone number, and he knows where she is.

I liked that the two separate stories became one in the end. Despite the length of the build-up being longer than the actual story, I liked the slowly building tension of the dooming relationship, and not immediately knowing what happened between Clara and Christian. The story subtly played out to reveal tiny imperfections at first, and showed those growing into big faults in the end, turning her fairy tale into a nightmare.

The meeting between Clara and Christian was ridiculous. They just lock eyes during a basketball game, there's the clichéd electric current running through her body, they exchange two sentences, and it is a done deal. From that moment on, she is completely sold and is already picturing them living together. She repeats that Christian was not the only person tightly holding on – she, too, wanted nothing more than keep him with her forever. I often found myself wondering why Clara put up with Christian's bullshit. He becomes insanely jealous and starts accusing Clara of things she didn't do, like look at other guys (THE HORROR), and sleep around. "*You're probably sleeping with him too*" is one of his favourite things to say to his precious girlfriend, because she's such a strumpet. The guy can't even stand the idea of her mouth touching someone else's, let alone something else. You heard me. Christian explicitly states that *he can't stand the thought of Clara's mouth touching pizza*.

Their break-up was pretty traumatic. Imagine my surprise when the first thing Clara does when she arrives in the new town is exactly what Christian was always so afraid of – she jumps into the arms of the first guy she sees. She was there to be away from Christian, someone who had psychologically manipulated and blackmailed her for two years. He verbally abused her and even threw a glass at her because she feigned seducing someone else just to spite him. He stalked her and hinted that he would commit suicide. You don't just heal from that, but she couldn't resist this sailor. Now, Finn was pretty charming. He was sweet and funny and obviously cared for Clara, but that guy was smoother than an eel in a bucket of snot.

"I want to let you know that whatever the word is that's more appropriate than love right now... I whatever-that-word-is you."

I can't believe she fell for that.

The relationship between Clara and her father was a joy to behold. He is always cheerful and optimistic, which is exactly what Clara needs after what happened. But even her ever-joyful father is hiding a secret from her, which added a lot of unnecessary drama towards the end. I would've preferred it if the drama had come from Christian. The ending left me disappointed. There was a big build-up for the final conflict, except the final conflict wasn't really a conflict. The book lacked a definite ending. Clara actually confirms this, saying stories like this don't usually have a satisfying ending, but it really needed one.

Many people love the writing in Stay, but I often rolled my eyes. There were definitely some beautiful passages, but a lot of the time, it felt like the author was trying too hard, which led to some pretty weird sentences:

*“In the kitchen, dad’s back was to me. **It seemed like a complex back.** It had years of experiences I would never know.”*

Who on Earth says things like “he had a complex back”? What does that even mean?

*“It was a blue sky day and **the ocean just kept being the ocean** – wide and consistent, in and out, in and out, bringing its little presents to the shore and taking them back again.”*

There was a lot of this. “The ocean just kept being the ocean”, “my purse was still a purse”, etc. A lot of redundant phrases just to drag out a sentence and make it sound poetic, which didn’t really work for me. Too presumptuous.

In the end, I thought it was a good story, but it lacked a decent beginning and a definite ending. I would classify it as a “lightweight abuse story”, because there aren’t many graphic scenes and Christian was definitely a lot nicer than your average stalker. But don’t let that fool you – you still wouldn’t want to meet him in a dark alley or anything. Stay away from him, because if you don’t, you’ll never be allowed to eat pizza ever again. And you don’t want that, do you?

Arlene says

Sometimes that’s all you need. To know it’s not broken. To know you’re still whole and that you’ll heal.

Wow! This book is absolutely amazing and horrifyingly realistic. Five stars plus more for **Stay** by Deb Caletti!

I’ve read hundreds and hundreds of books in my lifetime and yet I can count the number of novels that have made me cry on one hand and one hand alone. It takes an amazing author who writes with a pen filled with power to push me into that emotional pocket of reality and hold me captive for a 300+ page journey.

I’ll admit now, I don’t like to get personal in my reviews. I’ll tell you how I feel about a book, my opinion on the delivery and its characters, maybe a little squee-ing here and there, but that’s pretty much it. ^^ But I won’t do this book justice if I don’t admit how realistic this story was to me, in so many ways. I have no words strong enough to convey how **Stay** by Deb Caletti moved me because of its accuracy. I’ve had a rocky past with this author and have even gone so far as to have given up on a couple of her books mid-way. Well with this novel, she has told my story and has earned a top spot in my list of fave authors. I will doubt her ability to captivate an audience nevermore.

Stay hits some pretty tough subjects to such a precise degree. This book is about a relationship where the guy is possessive, obsessed and on the extreme side of jealous; it’s about a girl that unknowingly makes mistake after mistake in trying to get away; it also grapples with topics such as suicide, death, trying to love again, and most of all survival. Caletti told this story to such accurate precision that for anyone who’s ever

experienced a relationship such as Clara's, you will sit back and gasp at how on the mark she was in her dialog, behaviors, actions, reactions and feelings of both Clara and Christian. She hit this topic out of the ballpark.

Caletti cleverly tells this story from different angles and time references. I applaud how she didn't reveal the whole truth about Clara's relationship with Christian upfront. You had to work your way there. It was almost like being stuck in traffic knowing there's a horrific accident coming up and as you get closer and closer you feel you want to either pull back or power forward to not see the full damage, but when you get there you can't take your eyes off of the wreckage. I was practically screaming at Clara as the signs of her boyfriend's obsessive behavior were skittering right past her... the clutching on too fast, neediness, of not hearing the words she said, the word "no," the jealousy, guarding her and her freedom of will, but that's the beauty of this book... it's how it all goes down. Good gawd, how did Caletti know this?!?

One last note... Finn... ohhh Finn... you're adorable and absolutely every move you made and every word you said I wanted to highlight in my memory. You know a character moves me when I start talking directly to them. I loved this character because of his hero-like actions and his no-bullsh!te-honesty. He was the one true flawless beauty in this book. ♥ ♥ ♥ FINN ♥ ♥ ♥

Overall, I highly recommend this book for those looking to read a story filled with awesome. As her style, Caletti does use some sharp narrative, in other words, there's a boatload of cussing. But sometimes you have to drop the f-b0mb to express a strong emotion and so she uses her choice words wisely IMO. ^^ Great book that I loved to pieces!

Quotes that moved me:

You can put up with a lot of sh!t and then just be finished with it all at once. A decision can seem to make itself, quick and firm.

But you know what? Sh!t happens...I keep walking around lately knowing how fragile everything is ... how quickly things can change, and so I'm not into bullsh!t games and rules anymore, okay? I want to let you know that whatever the word is that's more appropriate than love right now.... I whatever-that-word-is you."

Will and obsession sit right next to each other. They pretend to be strangers and all the while meet secretly at midnight... In their mind, you are theirs and will always be theirs and your own choice about that matters very little.

Song Choice: Iridescent – Linkin Park

(Arc provided by Simon & Schuster Galley Grab)

Sandy says

In Stay, Deb Caletti masterfully tackles one of the most disturbing trends in YA literature: obsessive, possessive love portrayed as alluring and romantic and passionate. **It's not.** It's unhealthy and suffocating and alarming.

Finally. **FINALLY** we have a book that discusses the seriousness of this type of emotional abuse with realism. Where did Deb Caletti do her research? Her words bleed with authenticity. The way she writes Christian is flawless...the flashes and hints of jealousy and neediness and manipulation that build and build

and build until something Clara thought was beautiful turns monstrous. **It felt so real.** Where other authors may have been tempted to take such a serious topic in a sensationalist direction, Deb Caletti keeps the story realistic with such clear purpose. (view spoiler)

Caletti's lyrical prose is rich with metaphors and gorgeous phrases that had me reading certain paragraphs again and again to absorb their beautiful messages. Her words create layers of meaning without being overly dramatic, and her reflections on serious topics and even the ordinary are poignant and stirring.

Clara. Oh, that voice. That stark honesty. Clara's first-person narrative is so emotionally gripping. With her vulnerability and candor and believability, she became such a compelling character...a person I truly cared about. I admit: the majority of YA female narrators drive me CRAZY. My list of YA heroines I actually like is a small one. But Clara felt so real and so sympathetic and so broken and yet so strong that I became completely invested in her story. Her honesty drew me in, and I felt immersed in her narrative.

Stay is a haunting story with such realism you'll forget it's fiction. It's an unflinching portrayal of the true nature of possessive, obsessive love...a cautionary tale YA literature has been in desperate need of.

Content: Stay addresses mature topics, and several characters cuss like sailors (although maybe Finn and Jack get a pass because they actually are sailors). The serious subject matter and strong language may make Stay more appropriate for older teens and adults.

Morgan F says

I always knew you had it in you, Caletti. I've read a few books of yours, and while they were good, certainly more substantial than most YA literature, there has always been something missing. I think, whatever that is, you've found it.

Clara is at the age when she is supposed to spending time with her friends in the last summer before college and her future starts. Instead, her and her father have packed their bags and are leaving town to spend the summer in small coastal town where no one knows who they are. A place where no one can find them.

Clara is escaping from her ex-boyfriend, Christian, an intense, needy boy who just isn't able to let her go. After nearly two years of jealous accusations, futile discussions, criticisms, and endless and insistent reassurances, Clara has decided she has had enough, although Christian is determined to do anything to make her stay.

I loved this book because it featured an abusive relationship in a realistic light. These relationships are not romantic. They are unhealthy and tragic and just wrong. What I loved about Clara is that she understood that. Once she saw Christian for what he was - a psychologically disturbed young man, she was scared, and rightfully so. And she wasn't weak for falling for him in the first place. Perhaps as a reader, we were able to look into her life, as she did in retrospect, and pick out all the clues and warning signs, but I don't think anyone should blame her or assign guilt. I just like how the relationship and its aftermath was portrayed. Realistically, yet somehow sympathetically. I've never been in anything close to such a destructive romance, but I was still able to relate to Clara perfectly. I understand that it was not her fault, it was something that happened to her, and she was brave to handle it as she did. Quite a refreshing outlook in comparison to other YA novels that portray abusive (because either emotionally or physically, it is abusive) relationships as romantic, can't-live-without-you, I-know-what's-best-for-you, let-me-watch-you-while-you-sleep love.

I also love the relationship between Clara and her father. I wish I had such an awesome relationship with my father. They were open with each other, had good witty banter, were friends but it was still clear it was a father/daughter relationship. Kind of like the relationship between Lorelai and Rory Gilmore. Clara's father was an influential and active part of Clara's life, and was his own character with his own complexities. Unlike most YA novels, he is not just a plot device.

One thing I've loved about every Caletti novel I've read is the writing. I just think she is spectacular. Although some of her syntax may be clumsy, her prose is overall lyrical and very, very truthful. Every chapter is like a goldmine, with little nuggets of awesome found everywhere. She has a way of taking the most ordinary, every day things and relating it to the meaning of the universe or something. People have a way of not noticing ordinary things, just because we become so accustomed to them. Caletti has a habit of pointing out the overlooked things, and casting them in a new, sometimes bittersweet, light.

I also loved the footnotes. They were so cute. And often very, very funny. Clara is quirky, charming, and real.

The only aspect of the novel that didn't exactly hit home with me was the rather optimistic relationship between Clara and Finn. It was cute and all, but perhaps a bit too fast and unrealistic. I think perhaps it sends the wrong message that in order to get over one relationship, one must enter a new one. I didn't think it was necessary to the story, and the book would have been just as powerful if they had stayed friends.

This book is surprisingly tense. It had me turning the pages long after I should have stopped. I was just racing for the relief of all that tension. The novel felt like all along it was building towards something that would culminate in one big dramatic explosion. That didn't happen. I would even venture to say the ending was a tad bit melodramatic. But I don't think that is a bad thing. If anything, it only adds to how true this book is. Real life is not a movie or a story. Life doesn't end after the final scene of the film or the final chapter of a novel. It's an ongoing reel, full of ups and downs. It doesn't have one big moment. It's all one big moment.

Overall, a powerful, truthful novel. Caletti has climbed her way to a well-deserved spot amongst my favorite authors. God, I hope this book is a commercial success. It needs to be.

Thank you, Simon & Schuster Galleygrab for providing me with an ARC copy :) It has been greatly appreciated.

April says

FINALLY! Finally it's happened to me. A book where the creepy relationship is played out as exactly that. Oh, friends, the heavens must have opened and sung a beautiful song while Deb Caletti wrote Stay, because this book straight up gets it. It gets that bad relationships are bad. Obsessive relationships are scary, not sexy.

Read the rest of my review here

Eva Leger says

This could not be fiction. It could so easily be non-fiction it's scary. Caletti's voice is bulls-eye accurate. There are people who love words and people who *love* words. Calletti *loves* words. She can string a set of words together and paint the most vivid picture in her readers heads.

I probably read a great portion of this with my mouth open in amazement. I had no idea what I was in for when I opened this book. I not only found a new favorite author but a new all-time favorite book in *Stay*. This is sure - *sure* - to be a hit with young adults and older adults alike.

The most important aspect about *Stay* is that this will hit home with women. And, if even one person listens, it just may save her life.

Caletti has a rare talent to take something seen as normal in this day and age and make the reader see it for what it is - abnormal. She picks it apart with her beautiful words and strings it back together - if possible even more beautifully.

Clara's Dad? A favorite all-time character of mine. Someone you might wish your Dad was a little like. Clara and her Dad's relationship is something to be envied and at the same time relatable by so many.

Stay is one of those books, one of those rare books, where I found myself struggling to leave the last sentence and go on to the next, and, at the same time, trying to keep my eyes on the sentence I was reading because my instinct was to jump ahead - just a little bit! - to find out what happened.

This is simply and truly amazing. A true piece of art sailing in a sea of average.

Katie(babs) says

This book is horrible. There is no real coherent thought in regards to this story and the stalking element is very dull and wishy-washy. The heroine is one-dimensional and not well rounded at all. This is a very flat read that's all over the place. Cardboard emotions and descriptions comes to mind.

Plus, if the heroine is still recovering from her obsessive boyfriend, why would she be so interested in other boys she meets over the summer?

A very disappointing read that I can't understand was published in the first place. A total pass.

~Tina~ says

I've never read anything by Deb Calletti before, but I've always heard really great things about her books. *Stay* may have been the first book I've ever read from this author, but it definitely won't be my last.

Stay is about a girl named Clara Oates who is your average girl, shy, content and never was the very bold or daring kind, that is till she first seen Christian Nilsson.

Christian, once was that really great boyfriend. Sweet, funny and kind but soon he became easily jealous, overly controlling and completely obsessed.

Told in a before and after piece, we follow Clara while she's in a relationship with Christian and after when she's escaping from him with her father.

Powerful, intense and emotional, this is a story your all gonna want to read first hand!

This book is really hard for it *not* to effect you on some kind of level. Weather it's your experience or someone else or even just sympathizing towards this character, *Stay* is the kind of book that will linger in your thoughts long after the story is done.

When I first meet Clara and Christian, I got to admit, I thought they moved a little to fast, but then again it

was pretty realistic for two teenagers who are attracted to one another, so I pushed it aside. They made a really sweet couple but the signs weren't hard to see and you actually start to feel nervous and scared for this character.

I really loved Clara's dad, he has a very open and relaxed personality and a good sense of humor, not to mention the support he's always given Clara. He's flawed and real. Then there's Finn and his wonderful warm moments. He was the perfect kind of remedy to heal a broken heart and a wonderful start to second chances.

Bottom line, this was a very well done story. The writing is heartfelt, strong and absorbing and the characters will take you on a crushing journey of self discovery, personal healing and guide you through relationship awareness.

Truly a gripping and captivating read.

(Arc provided by Simon & Schuster Galley Grab)

Peep (Pop! Pop!) says

Overall I did like this book. Not too many books will touch on the subject of abuse, especially in popular young adult books.

I have a friend who is pretty much in the exact same situation, only she doesn't want to leave. It's very frustrating. It was hard to read this, just because of that. All I could think about was my friend, and how she deals with that every single day. I noticed how Clara tiptoed around conversations. She filtered what she said so she wouldn't make Christian upset. That is true! Whenever we go over to see my friend and her husband, we find ourselves filtering what we say! And it's not because we fear the husband (I actually dislike him to no end), but it's more for her benefit. If we say anything upsetting, he'll take it out on her once we leave. Sad, but true. But what can you do??

That's one of the reasons why I liked Clara. She was strong and not at all timid... for the most part. When it started to occur to her that, "hey, this isn't right", she stood up to Christian. Though I don't know why she didn't get a new email address sooner...

I did like her Dad. He seemed cool. Finn and the rest of his family seemed sweet.

All of this sounds good, but for some reason it just didn't work for me. Maybe it would have been better if these were two separate books? It's not like Clara isn't likable, she is, there's just this disconnect. I couldn't imagine myself being friends with Clara if I knew her in real life.

On the one hand I can see how the author would want to show Clara in a healthy relationship, on the other hand I thought it weird that she had this need to be in a relationship the entire book. It's weird for me to explain. Too dependent? I don't know. Couldn't she have just met new friends? Her whole self is focused on being in a relationship.

And sometimes I just wanted to scream, "Why? Why would you do that? It's OK to do X, but did you really have to reveal X (X being super secret information)"?

One thing I'd like to point out is that if the overuse of terms like God, Jesus, and Christ upset you, you may want to use caution when reading this book. Almost every character, every few pages used the terms. After a while it did annoy me. Mainly because they were from different towns and age groups. It just seemed weird.

So all in all a good story. I'd recommend it to people who'd like to read about signs and things to recognize when it comes to controlling behavior. At times you'd think that Christian wasn't that bad then he'd turn it right around on you. So, good for noticing the little things that might be swept under the rug. It doesn't really offer any true solutions. I am having the hardest time making sense. I think solutions would be the word you'd want to use.

Aleeeeeza says

4.5 stars

Some time ago I read Dreamland by Sarah Dessen and I absolutely loved it. The whole love-turns-into-obsession topic really, really intrigues me. So it was natural I was so into reading Stay too, once I read it's summary on Goodreads a whole while back.

So when I got this book on GalleyGrab, I was beyond excited—and I know I seem to say that about every other book, but I was really thrilled to get my hands on this one, considering how much I love contemporary novels and how I've been wanting to read Deb Caletti for a long time. And this novel—it did NOT disappoint. I finished it under twenty-four hours (big deal for me). I was planning to read it between Accounting exam preparations, but I Could. Not. Stop. Reading it!

First of all, I am going to have to mention how hot Christian is. I mean, he's DANISH, for cryin' out loud. And I had the hugest of crushes on this Danish model called Mathias Lauridsen, and his fellow Danish model Adrian Bosch is how I imagined Christian in my mind.

And guys, Adrian is HAWT. Like, yeah, with All Caps, dude. Like, this HAWT:

Now, before you go thinking I'm some hormone-crazed idiot (which I sorta am, actually), I should tell you why I'm talking extensively about Christian's HAWTness. That's because it totally makes sense he's this good-looking and has this amaaaazing Danish accent since Clara was crazy-attracted to him. And wowzers, their relationship unfurled amazingly well. They have all these cute couple quirks and complement each other quite well...until it turns out Christian ain't as normal as he seems. That's because he's obsessive, and when that love for Clara turns into freak-obsessiveness, things go REALLY awry for them. The gradual built-up of how Christian slowly turns into this...monster, it's so, so believable!

So on one side of the novel we have their new love playing out, while on the other Clara has come to a small beach town for the summer with her father, to escape Christian's stalking. And Clara's author dad was an absolute treat! In fact, every character in this novel kind of was, even psycho-esque Christian. Especially Finn, the sailor-guy Clara meets in this new town and shares a mutual attraction with. The setting was also perfectly done—and the whole beach-town feel was awesome. I was reading another beachy-book while reading this one, and so the whole beach feel was really awesome, considering I was trudging through accounting homework in the stifling Karachi heat.

The writing was also beautiful. Caletti writes with this smooth, easy grace and it's very easy to read and conjures up very vivid images. The only thing that bothered me a little bit was how at times the sentences sort of stretched on and on up till the point where I lost track and had to go back to the beginning of the paragraph to get it. There were also numerous passages where Clara would begin lecturing a little bit about

stuff, and I wish I could quote here, but I don't think I can quote from ARCs. It wasn't really that irksome, it just seemed kind of unnecessary in some parts. On the whole, however, I don't think I minded it that much. But maybe it could've been toned down a little...? But still, some of the passages were actually quite insightful, really, so I'm totally willing to pardon it.

Despite the flaws, this novel is still such a stunning, impactful read, guys. I think the best adjective to describe it would be POWERFUL. (In all caps, no less!) So yes, I whole-heartedly recommend this book to everyone. READ. IT!

Emily May says

*****Beware of mild spoilers, i.e. nothing that's going to really ruin it for you*****

Here's what I thought:

Story - ★★★★★

Characters - ★★★★★

Writing - ★★★★★

Ending - ★★

The novel was absolutely wonderful until the ending that never happened. I mean, there was no resolution and there really needed to be when you're dealing with this kind of story. May I just say, Deb Caletti writes so beautifully; she makes each chapter read like poetry.

"I saw it as praise, falling down now like glittering snowflakes. But it was something else. A drop of poison on that gathering snow. That moment in the fairy tale when we know what just happened but the princess doesn't."

The lyrical flow of her writing was the first thing I noticed but the story was equally as strong, it was sad, moving and often creepy too. It's about how someone can find themselves gradually led into a controlling and unhealthy relationship, especially through carefully manipulated power dynamics within the relationship. Clara makes the first move with Christian, she sees from their first few meetings that she has captivated him... and she likes the powerful feeling this gives her. But it's this level of Christian's emotion that later becomes a danger to her when he starts to be jealous of every boy she speaks to.

It works as a gripping novel but also as a cautionary tale applicable to real life situations. You might judge someone who has allowed themselves to be caught up in a controlling or abusive relationship, but this book shows how subtly circumstances can change, leading to people who thought they were in a happy, loving relationship suddenly facing a partner they no longer recognise and are unable to escape.

The feeling of being trapped and having nowhere to run makes Stay at times quite a frightening story to read. Christian, at first a charming Danish boy with pretty eyes and an accent to die for, turns into a stalker-ish did-something-just-move-outside-my-window kind of character. In my opinion, he was terrifying! But then, all of you who thought it was cute when Edward snuck into Bella's room at night might like this sort of thing (sorry, couldn't resist). I am actually thankful that a young adult novel has finally shown the creepy side of the boyfriend who is that dark shadow over there watching you.

While I'm here I'm going to be my usually awkward, picky self and point out the other small negative I found. And that was certain random side stories that didn't add anything to the overall plot. Like ghost stories and the amount of time spent on what's-her-face at the lighthouse. Yeah, that could have been cut out...

But otherwise, I really really loved this novel. If the ending had been better it would have been a full 5 star rating easily. But don't be put off: read this book!

One more quote:

"But if fate is a shape-shifter, then love is too. It can be, anyway, in its most dangerous form. It's your best day, and then your worst. It's your most hope and then your most despair. Lightness, darkness, it can swing between extremes at lightning speed - a boat upon the water on the most gorgeous day, and then the clouds crawl in and the sky turns black and the sea rages and the boat is lost."

Lamia says

This can also be seen at [The Book Eater](#)

This would normally earn 3.5 stars from me because I rate books based on how I *felt* about them, not how well-written they are or how awesome the plot/characters are. But I can't in good conscience give this less than 4 stars. I can't bring myself to. So I'm rounding up. And you know what? I don't mind, because this book deserves it.

This is a story about love, loss, family and overcoming your fears. It's the strength of a father-daughter relationship, the hope of a young adult just coming out of her shell and a budding love story sprinkled with humor and heart-wrenching writing.

This book will hit home, whether you've been in Clara's situation or not. The prose flows perfectly, Clara's characterization is really well done and the plot is poignant yet to the point. I can't even tell you how glad I am to not see this dragged out on 500 pages. Choosing to write the book in chapters alternating from past to present, Caletti draws you into the plot and sets the atmosphere of the novel right from the start. I remember this sense of dread that I kept feeling for whatever would happen with Christian and how it would push Clara to leave town. Also, this is one of the very rare cases when the time jumps didn't bother me one bit. She's just that good.

Clara is a genuinely funny narrator. She adds little annotations in the book, and it brings you closer to her because her annotations are addressed to *you*, the reader. And they're so cute. Like, after an umpteenth person made a cup of tea and you start wondering just how often people make tea in America, she adds a little note "Everyone in this story, in my life, makes tea." I just want to hug her. Her voice is honest and unique, and she feels so real and fragile yet strong and brave. I don't know how to describe it. I love her.

I'd also like to point out that Clara's dad might just be in close competition with Mia's dad in [If I Stay](#) and Juli's dad in [Flipped](#) for the award of the most awesome YA dad ever. His characterization is so wonderful. The man is a writer, and it *shows*, you know? He says deep shit. Seriously. Also he calls Clara "pea". How can you not love him?

And Finn. Oh, how I love Finn. He's the perfect balm to Clara's mangled heart. And his characterization is, yet again, amazing. He's sweet and doesn't push Clara and supports her and is generally perfect. Also, he likes to walk around shirtless. Uhuh. If you want a visual of what he looks like, head over to [Nic's my book boyfriend post](#) (and stalk her other posts too, while you're at it.)

Some of my favorite quotes:

"Parents can be such children," Finn said.

"We ought to raise them better."

"I'm in a baked potato mood," Dad said. "Butter. You know, Pea, I love butter. I really love it. My heart even swells a little when I think of it."

I just saw it as praise, falling down now like glittering snowflakes. But it was something else. A drop of poison on gathering snow. That moment in the fairy tale when we know what just happened but the princess doesn't.

See see see? The prose is just <3

To sum it up, this is a well-written, tactful and subtle novel that will definitely make an impression on you. I would recommend it to anyone.

Drew says

"I am beginning to think there are two kinds of people," she said.

I waited.

"Those who forgive themselves too easily but will not forgive others."

"And?" I asked.

"Those that forgive others too easily but will not forgive themselves."

What a book. It's been a while since I read such a thoughtful, poignant contemporary.

Take one look at the cover and it screams "angsty teen romance," with a girl standing looking longingly down into the ocean (probably thinking of some guy). But while this book does focus on romance, it's also a family story that deals with grief, a coming-of-age tale, and a psychological thriller.

It starts out small. Clara goes to a basketball game and meets a guy there. Christian is a dream come true - he's mysterious, a gentleman, and thinks he and Clara were brought together by fate. But, slowly, as Clara and Christian start dating, Christian reveals another side of himself. **He becomes jealous, paranoid, and controlling.** In a lot of ways, this book reminded me of *It Ends with Us*, showing a character who starts out seemingly wonderful until everything changes.

I must say, it's really refreshing to read a YA book where a **controlling boyfriend is NOT portrayed as hot.** Christian was terrifying and dangerous. If these characters had been placed in another book, Christian might have been seen as romantic, his aggressive personality "alpha male," and his controlling Clara a way of "protecting" her. I think this book was so important in showing how dangerous a controlling relationship can be.

And yet, when Clara first met Christian, I was charmed by him, and that's what made this book so good. He was good looking and said all the right things to Clara in a way that made my heart beat faster, alongside Clara's. This made all the more of an impact when he started mistreating her.

"You read all kinds of books and see all kinds of movies about the man who is obsessed and devoted, whose focus is a single solid beam, same as the lighthouse and that intense, too. It is Heathcliff with Catherine. It is a vampire with a passionate love stronger than death. We crave

that kind of focus from someone else. We'd give anything to be that 'loved.' But the focus is not some soul-deep pinnacle of perfect devotion - it's only darkness."

The narration switches from the past to present, when Clara first meets Christian and after she escapes him. It's all the little details that make this story good - the descriptions of the small town on the beach where Clara and her dad are staying, Clara's tangled, confused emotions, and of course, the well-developed characters.

I read Stay in a few hours and experienced a whirlwind of emotions. I fell in love with Christian, was horrified when he started manipulating Clara, and desperately wanted her to escape him. I loved Clara's wonderful father, who was a huge part of his daughter's life, and the sweet Finn who was the complete opposite of Christian. **Such a powerful, emotive story.** Highly recommended.

Cara says

This story just made so much sense. You know in that way how you feel somebody really understands the way you think? That's how I felt the whole time reading this. Not to say I've ever been through anything like this, not even close.

Clara sees herself as a normal girl. Nothing too spectacular but all that changes when she meets Christian. He's enigmatic and charismatic (gotta be careful of the matic's obviously) and makes her feel powerful and like a whole new person with countless possibilities for change. As time moves along though their relationship takes an ugly turn; Christian has become dangerously obsessed with Clara. She has to flee with her father to a seaside town where secrets will be revealed and hopefully some good changes can happen.

It's hard to read about how a character is slowly digging themselves into a hole they may never be able to escape, so with that in mind I thought I was going to be *really* uncomfortable reading this. The book is told in alternate chapters. One side of the story is where we see how Clara gets involved with Christian to the point where she leaves him and the other when she is in the seaside town with her father. The layout worked and was the only way it could have been told so it could leave a moving impression on the reader.

I loved almost everything about it. Clara is an introspective character, and is frank about how things went down, her feelings, and her part in things. She knows that she has to move past this and the place they chose for this is perfect. I could feel the pull of the ocean, its commanding beauty, the waves splashing, and the sharp smell of salt. And all of this is coming from a person who has been to a beach once in her life. The other characters are fully fleshed out and there isn't a flat one among the bunch. Clara's father was a real intriguing character and isn't MIA (but there is a dead mother I guess we can't have everything, but Clara makes an interesting comment about that) like in many other YA novels. He is in the story quite a lot actually and is a main player in Clara's recovery.

There is a stark contrast between Christian and Finn (the other love interest). You can tell one is just healthier for her. I'm glad Caletti wrote this story. She is clear about how **wrong** it is for someone to revolve their life around you and that real love is much more gentle and doesn't feel wrong ever.

The only qualm I had is that it could get a bit verbose and the little bit with her father's secret I thought was just a teensy eensy bit over the top, but I'm fully satisfied. Fully satisfied.

Just a note: Since it's summertime I'm listening to *lots* of music and one song kept inching into my brain

while reading this. The link is here. The song's chorus has this one line that says, "*for as much she stumbles she's running*" and the words really struck me as true. Even though Clara is in trouble and is stumbling over how to get over this she keeps moving forward, she keeps running.
