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Lock And Key



Synopsis

From the award-winning and New York Times bestseller *Once and for All* Unlock your heart and the rest will follow. Ruby is used to taking care of herself. But now that she's living with her sister, she's got her own room, she's going to a good school, and her future looks bright. Plus there's the adorable boy next door. Can Ruby learn to open her heart and let him in? "All the Dessen trademarks here" Publishers Weekly, starred review Sarah Dessen is the winner of the Margaret A. Edwards Award for her contributions to YA literature, as well as the Romantic Times Career Achievement Award. Books by Sarah Dessen: *That Summer* *Someone Like You* *Keeping the Moon* *Dreamland* *This Lullaby* *The Truth About Forever* *Just Listen* *Lock and Key* *Along for the Ride* *What Happened to Goodbye* *The Moon and More* *Saint Anything* *Once and for All*

Book Information

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Grade 7 Up Ruby, 17, is taken in by her older sister and brother-in-law when her mother abandons her. Ruby and her sister haven't spoken since Cora left for college a decade earlier. She moves from a semi-heated, semi-lighted farmhouse to a McMansion in a gated community. The

theme of abandonment permeates the narrative-Ruby's mother's disappearance, Cora's perceived abandonment, and all of the small abandonments around every corner throughout Ruby's life. The plot hinges luxuriously on character arc. Ruby's drama of pathological self-reliance to eventual trust plays out through thoughtful, though occasionally heavy-handed, inner monologue and metaphor. As always, Dessen's characters live and breathe. Ruby's sweet hipster brother-in-law and Nate, the freakishly affable hottie next door, are especially vivid, and Cora's change from bitter control freak to sympathetic co-protagonist is subtle and seamless. Though Ruby and Nate don't have quite the cinematic chemistry of many of Dessen's couples, their cautious friendship into romance seems that much more realistic. The author's feel for setting is as uncanny as ever, and Ruby's descriptions of the homogenous nouveau riche Anytown are sharp, clever, and honest. The dialogue, especially between Ruby and Cora, is crisp, layered, and natural. The slow unfolding adds to an anticipatory mood. What's more, secrets and situations revealed in the second half of the novel are resolved more believably by already deeply developed characters. Recommend this one to patient, sophisticated readers.

—Johanna Lewis, New York Public Library Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Ruby hasn't had much success with family. Her father left; her protective older sister, Cora, is left; and her boozing mother finally leaves, too. Ruby is alone until Cora learns of her situation and swoops in. Suddenly, Ruby finds herself living with Cora and her wealthy brother-in-law, attending a private school, and wondering just where she fits in. As in previous books, Dessen takes on a central theme—here the meaning of family—and spins many plots and subplots around it. Most prominent yet least successful is the thread about Cora's relationship with boy-next-door Nate, who rescues her when she needs it, but has difficulty accepting Ruby's help, tentative at first, when she discovers he's being physically abused. Nate seems too good to be true (as does Cora's husband), while his father is a caricature. And one of the most important elements, the issue of the girls' mother lying to them, gets lost. Despite the uneven narrative, Dessen's writing can be beautiful, and her story is involving.

Grades 8-12. --Ilene Cooper --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I always like reading Sarah Dessen because i always finish them feeling good and like it was brought to a nice complete conclusion and was looking forward to lock and key but i just wasn't

feeling it for some reason. I feel like it lacked that certain flare she has. It wasn't altogether bad but for me just not as good as her other stuff.

After reading *Just Listen*, an AMAZING book by Sarah Dessen, I was excited to start another book by her. But after a couple of chapters, I felt, bored with the book, like nothing was happening. And then she met, Nate, a popular jock. I thought maybe SOMETHING would happen. That they would become friends or start dating. They became friends, but soon after, I was bored again. Later, Nate and her started dating, and I wondered if anything would happen that was interesting! But anyways, you probably understand by now, that the book was actually not really interesting, but had sparks of interesting moments. When I finished reading the last page, I didn't wish I didn't read it, but I did also. I could have been fine either way. I wish the book was more like *Just Listen* or *What Happened to Goodbye*, two greatly written books by her. They were more interesting, and well, had drama.

"What is family? They were the people who claimed you. In good, in bad, in parts or in whole, they were the ones who showed up, who stayed there, regardless." Seventeen-year old Ruby has been living on her own for the past two months since her mother left. She has no idea where her mother went, and hasn't heard from her since. Ruby has been getting by, just barely but this is about to change when the landlords of the tiny house they've been renting, discover she's alone. They alert the authorities, and suddenly Ruby is taken in by her sister Cora. Things were different when Ruby's sister Cora still lived at home, she sort of made it her job to care for Ruby and protect her from their mother. However, Cora's been gone for ten years, left when she went off to college, and Ruby's heard little from her since. This does not make for a happy reunion because Ruby doesn't want to let anyone in, let anyone close. She certainly doesn't welcome her sister's assistance. Ruby would rather just rely on herself, that way she has no one else to let her down. So she makes a plan to just stick it out at her sister's until she turns eighteen, then she's out of there. This story progresses nicely and I was seriously hooked watching the slow transformation of Ruby, seeing her thaw gradually. Helping with this is Jamie, Cora's sweet, generous, and very welcoming husband. You can't help but love him, he takes Ruby in with no questions or judgments made, always looking for the good, first, in people. Then there is Nate *sigh*. He is just the all-around popular, nice, HOT, next-door neighbor that takes to Ruby immediately, even with her reluctance. I didn't warm up to Cora at first, but then we learn some things about her, and I couldn't help but love her too. A Sarah Dessen novel would not be complete without her collection of quirky secondary characters. She always amasses these unique individuals that just grow on you. Gervais, the twelve-year old genius

who rides along with Nate and Ruby everyday to school. Quote on Gervais: "Gervais also lacked maturity, which meant he found things like burps and farts hysterical, and even funnier when they were his own. Put him in a small, enclosed space with two people every morning and there was no end to the potential for hilarity." (Yes, I was cracking up!) Olivia, a fellow student at Perkins Day, always talking on her phone in her free-time, but somehow becomes friends with Ruby. Then there's Harriet the caffeine-addict, and Reggie the vitamin seller. Even Roscoe, Cora and Jamie's dog, manages to get into Ruby's heart. While, *The Truth About Forever* and *Just Listen*, are my favorite Sarah Dessen novels, this one is very good, too. A definite recommend for any contemporary romance/YA lover.

I really love how Sarah Dessen writes. While most of young adult authors tell you about the big picture, she takes her time and writes about details, the day-by-day picture. The stories are stories that could happen to anyone, they are believable but still you fall in love with them. Maybe that's why, because we can identify, not to a certain extent, but fully with the characters and the story. Not to mention, that Sarah doesn't write specifically "romance novels". Of course they talk about romance, there is always romance in her books, but that is not the topic of the book. At least it is not for me. They are self-growth books. I mean, of course there is romance, and that is part of the self-growth I am talking about. But, the whole book isn't based on the fact that the guy wants her, or what the guy does, or what she feels about him. There are many other factors. It is not the center of the book. It is how SHE develops and how HER mind changes, and how maturity can be something subjective, etc. And the main character always thinks about her future first than in her boyfriend or other stuff that are not as nearly important as her future. She goes to college, she doesn't stay because "her boyfriend is there", but almost always finds a way to work it out. She doesn't settle for the easiest thing to do. That is also why I love Sara Dessen. I honestly think this is the best book Sarah Dessen has written. I haven't read them all, but I seriously doubt any other is going to top this one. Ruby, the main character, is a seventeen year old, that thinks the only way to live her life happily is being a one-woman-operation. To do all by herself, without anyone's help, or pity. She was raised this way by her mom, who is a tormented woman that is continuously drunk and hit her and her sister when they were younger. Ruby and her mom lived "fine", moving constantly from one one-bedroom-apartment-with-putrefact-odors to the other. They evaded taxes, and she changed schools and used fake names many times. Her sister, Cora, ten years older, had escaped all this when she moved away as soon as she turned 18. Ruby never saw her again since. But now, that her mother abandoned her, she is forced to go live with her sister and her husband in a rich

neighborhood and to go to a private school for "rich kid"s. Everything changes so fast that Ruby finds herself attached to her old life and doesn't want to start a new one. But, as everything in life, her opinion changes and you find yourself thinking with her to solve her fears, and her future, if she still has one. I absolutely adored this book, and hope it kept going. I read it in three days, couldn't put it down!! So, definitely a page-turner. Apart from all this, there is a guy in the story. Of course. I mean, what would a Sarah Dessen book be without a guy for the main character to fall in love with? Well, this guy is Nate. And he is absolutely dreamy. I adooooooooooooored Nate. In other of her books, such as (for example) "Along for the ride" Eli (the guy) is fabulous, I loved him, and in "This Lullaby" Dexter was like a stalker for me, Sarah didn't create a guy so good as Nate. I would have to say that Nate is almost perfect. You will know when you read it. One great book. It leaves you with a warm feeling inside, and in my own personal experience, I found the ending so heart warming that I cried. So, be sure to read this one. One fantastic book! You will absolutely love it.

I loved this book. Real life written so well I thought I was right in the story instead of just a bystander. Loved the characters, the story, the writing, and the editing. I'm just not sure I liked the ending. I wanted a little more closure but I certainly don't always get what I want in a book. Highly recommend this book. Certainly can recommend Sarah Dessen.

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