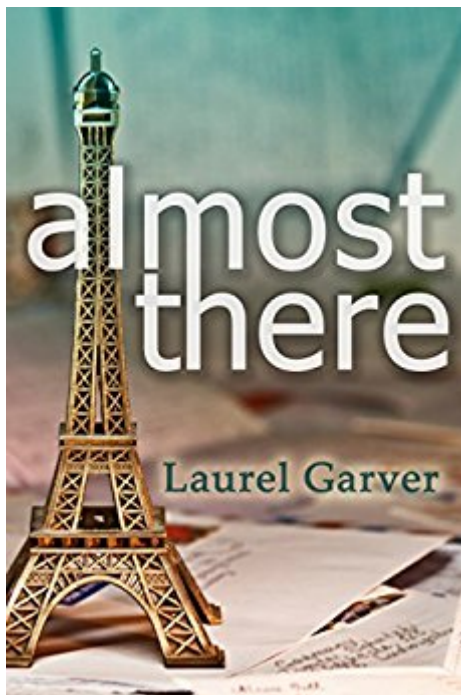


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# Almost There



## Synopsis

Paris, the City of Lights. To seventeen-year-old Dani Deane, itâ€™s the Promised Land. There, her widowed motherâ€™s depression will vanish and she will no longer fear losing her only parent, her arty New York life, or her devoted boyfriend. But shortly before their Paris getaway, Daniâ€™s tyrannical grandfather falls ill, pulling them to rural Pennsylvania to deal with his hoarder horror of a house. Among the piles, Dani finds disturbing truths that could make Mum completely unravel. Desperate to protect her from pain and escape to Paris, Dani hatches a plan with the flirtatious neighbor boy that only threatens the relationships she most wants to save. Why would God block all paths to Paris? Could real hope for healing be as close as a box tucked in the rafters?

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I was so impressed with this YA novel! I highly recommend it not only to teenagers, but also to adult readers. Almost There picks up where Never Gone left off. (So read Volume One for background before starting this book.) Only, now Danielle has new challenges. She's lost her Father with whom she was close, and her Grandfather becomes ill right about the time she and her Mum hope to

escape to Paris, France for a much needed vacation. I could not be more impressed with this author and her blossoming talent. Laurel Garver has grown immensely in her writing ability since the first Dani Deane volume. In Volume Two she skillfully captures the teenage mind, thought process, and emotions. Without sounding preachy or unrealistic, Garver clearly communicates how a young person negotiating young love and tackling fears, feelings of doubt, grief and insecurity would apply their personal faith in God to their circumstances. Dani Deane is believable as are the other characters in the book. The reader has no problem relating to what Dani experiences. In fact I read the last chapter with tears streaming down my face! All I can say is, I get the feeling we're going to hear more about Dani Deane down the road. Will she and Thebes end up together? Will she major in Art at a local university? Will her Mom begin dating her Dad's best friend? There is so much more to her story and I can't wait for the next chapter to unfold!

*Almost There* made me fall in love with the YA genre all over again. This is the kind of teen fiction I enjoy: An authentic and inspirational novel that accurately portrays the teen life. Throw in a romance thread, family drama, teen angst, beautiful wordsmithing, an artistic element, and weave them together to create an original, page-turning-worthy plot. Honestly, this is the best YA novel I've read in a while. The plot was well-paced, and the story was a quick-read, but mainly because it was difficult to put down. The characters weren't stereotypical; instead, each character, including the supporting ones, were unique and three-dimensional. They weren't perfect, either. Even the Christian characters came with baggage and flaws, yet they were willing to admit their wrong-doings. I thought the author did a perfect job of reflecting today's teen angst, dialogue, and struggles. One of my favorite aspects of this book was the well-written descriptions. Many books today are either too description-heavy in a way that distracts from the story, or they're too bare bone, lacking any details to aid in painting my imagination. Laurel Garver wove in setting and character details in a way that planted me in the scene without interrupting the flow of the story, and she did so in a way that made me feel as though I were watching a movie. The overall story itself was unpredictable. In fact, there were certain threads that pulled me along and kept me guessing until the very end. I also really appreciated the use of humor in the story, especially in the scenes that could've otherwise come across as emotionally heavy. If you're searching for a quick contemporary read that is original, realistic, inspiring, well-written, and does not lack in depth, *Almost There* will not disappoint! 5 / 5 stars. { Recommended Ages 13+. Parental permission advised due to minor mature content. } \*\* DISCLAIMER: I received a free copy in exchange for an honest review. The full review can be found at [...]

Almost There is even more absorbing than Never Gone, and I couldn't put it down. Dani's evolving relationship with her sometimes prickly Mum gains even more nuances as Dani begins to see Grace (Mum) as a person with a history, especially because that history is more troubled than Dani ever realized. Dani's bond with Theo endures some strain, and their struggles to work through the baggage that each of them brings to the relationship are both moving and realistic. Never Gone focused on the immediate aftermath of a loss, while Almost There shows the ongoing grief that people carry with them (sometimes decades later, as Grace and David demonstrate). That said, it is a very hopeful book, and Dani and Theo find ways to draw strength from their faith to help them face their fears and make affirming decisions. The cast of secondary characters feels especially strong here, with Grace's brother David, Theo's sister Beth, and potential antagonist Laughlin providing foils for Dani and Theo. I finished the book a few weeks ago, but I haven't been able to get the characters out of my mind. I look forward to spending more time with them!

Beautifully written, Almost There by Laurel Garver continues to explore the tough realities of grief and healing of Danie and her mother that was started in Never Gone. Dani's dreams of healing her mother through art have hit a stand-still, and the trip to Paris can't seem to come fast enough. And then, Dani's cranky grandfather needs help and the Paris trip is put on hold. Dani struggles for direction and discernment, floundering to find a way to heal herself and her mother. She's such a realistically written character that as a reader, I found myself drawn into Dani's life and her situation within the first few paragraphs. I highly recommend reading Laurel Garver's latest Dani book!

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