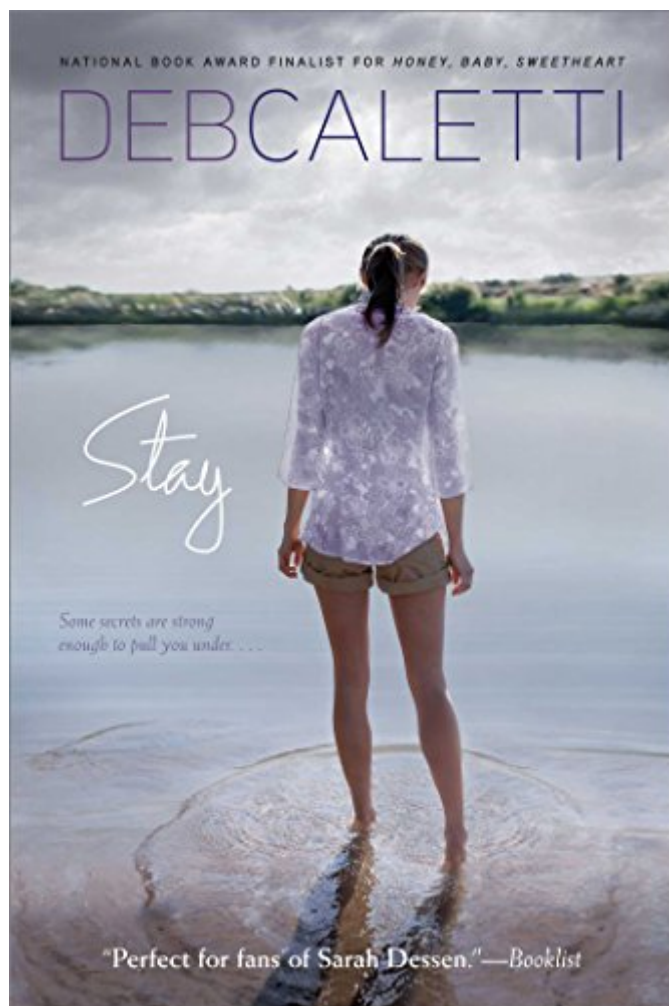


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# Stay



## Synopsis

>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....

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

How to start. How to start. Perhaps with what made me unable to put this book down when I got it last evening. First paragraph-" First off, I've never told this story to anyone. Not the entire thing anyway, and not entirely truthfully. I'm only telling it now for one reason, and that's because an untold story has a weight that can submerge you, sure as a sunken ship at the bottom of the ocean.

I learned that. This kind of story, those kind of things kept secret- they have the power to keep you hidden forever, and most of all from yourself. The ghosts from that drowned ship, they keep haunting."That first paragraph resonated with me so much that I had to dive in with my head and for once, open up that little place I allow to feel, my heart. I knew Clara from the minute she met Christian and knew exactly why she did every action she did. I'd once held the power Clara felt of having someone love her so much that they'd do anything to keep her. It's powerful and wonderful and scary to be the one that loves less. But it's all consuming and Clara learns that there is a dark side to the power and Christian. And his jealousies and walking on eggshells and having to lie about her past becomes too much. It's emotionally draining. And dangerous in a way Clara can't even imagine. She and Christian were perfect and then Christian, perfect, beautiful, foreign Christian let his insecurities begin to show and there was no forgetting. And there is accommodating and adjusting for certain things in a relationship and then there is what Clara did for Christian. But this is not one of those stories where you can say "Oh stupid girl." and want to shake her because Clara has brought us into the story with her. We are Clara for lack of a better way to explain it. She put little asterisks in her story. Example- She lets us know her mother is dead.\* Then at the bottom of the page"\*Yes this story has a dead mother. Mine. She had a sudden aneurysm when I was barely four. Died before she could even get to a hospital. Dead mother's have become a story cliché thanks to Disney movies and novel writers. All the dead mothers in books, you'd think it was a common occurrence. Even Dad's books have them. But mine was real. She was no cliché and neither am I." It's Clara's story and she's writing it not Deb Caletti. The author is not between us and Clara. She's removed herself and I kept checking the description of the book to make sure this was fiction and not Deb Caletti's real story. Because the author removed herself from the story, I felt very close to Clara. I identified with her, understood her trying to spare Christian's feelings, trying time and time to remove the hurt. She was a nice girl. She was nice to people and breaking up with someone, well it makes her feel not nice. And she's sure that Christian's reactions are her fault, for that first giddy feeling of power. The one she can't admit to at first but then tells her Dad, her Dad the writer who seems less like a Dad and more like an adult friend that takes care of Clara. He respects her way more than any parent I've ever seen to be called a parent. Yet he is parental when necessary, he doesn't tell Clara "no" when he doesn't like Christian. But when he sees warning signs, danger, he takes action. But if Clara feels shame and can't forgive herself, her father feels even worse. This stalwart man who plays metaphor games and would rather use clues to guess who's house they are renting than google him, the one that insists on protecting his daughter has a big secret. One that changes everything for Clara. She keeps us with her throughout the novel, with

her asterisks as if she's sitting beside us letting us know the secret thoughts she had while putting her story down. While unburdening her of the ghosts. More than one passage made me stop and I had to read it over and over sinking into what it really was saying, not just the words on the top layer, but the deeper meaning. I felt so many emotions reading this novel and when I finished it, I wanted to pick it up and start again. And I will. I'll learn something new that I didn't catch the first time as I ate it up. It isn't a light read or easy. It's philosophical and deep with emotion and thought. It is definitely character driven. Clara brings us along through every emotion dragging us through the dirty self doubt and self incrimination to the final triumph of anger. Does she grow in this book? We're sitting here while she tells her story aren't we? Dad is a big character in this novel and I like the relationship he and Clara have. Does Dad grow? From a famous author to a human being, at least for Clara. There is of course Christian. And if you don't know a Christian in male or female form, then you're lucky. I have a magnet for these type of people. There are other secondary characters that bring some much needed relief to the tension in Clara's life. If I had a rating system, stars, hearts, rabbits, hats, gold coins any of the creative things I've seen other reviewers use I'd throw all the things I had into a pot and make the biggest star, heart, rabbit, hat, gold coin and make it dance, sing, shoot fire works whatever. This is the best realistic fiction I have ever read. This is the best YA I have read. This is the best book I have read. Never have I felt more a part of a story, never have I been so involved, so unsure of the outcome, so tentative as Clara moved ahead with her/my life. I wouldn't have Deb Caletti change even one word in this novel. It isn't entertaining. It's more than realistic. It's real.

I was looking for a story that was intense, thought provoking, and in general have me at the edge of my seat. Stay did not deliver the intensity I wanted, but it had an interesting story that was realistic in every sense. Here we have a young girl running away from a frightening situation and trying to sort out her life; where to go next and what steps to take to get there. Her relationship with her father becomes challenged with buried secrets and old, as well as new, friends shake things up a bit. I really liked the realness of Stay and the subject matter upon which the story was written. Many young girls and women face the horrors of a relationship gone wrong but never seem to be able to find the courage to take a stand before it's too late. Clara blamed herself for the increased possession and psycho-mental behavior. Like many, she believed it was her fault why Christian got the way he did. That she let it happen. And the best aspect of the story was her coming to the realization that it was in fact not her doing. Clara's character was acceptable, but I didn't develop any sort of connection. I was simply going along with her story because I wanted to see the outcome. I

waited patiently to see if or when Clara as well as her father would stop running from Christian as well as from other things in their lives. Because, like I've mentioned before, the story wasn't all about Clara's unhealthy relationship with Christian, there were other pressing issues at hand. There was something else I liked about Stay, and that was the blooming romance and sense of belonging that Clara and her father started to experience in her new life. The attraction wasn't pulling me in at first, but I understood that based on her past troubles Clara wanted to go slow. And Finn was the right kind of guy that wanted to take it easy and make her feel as comfortable, and safe, as possible. The same was for her father. He held on to the guilt of what happened with Clara's mother. So, it was refreshing for him to rekindle the magic of friendship and return to the world of intimacy and dating. Unfortunately, there were bothersome factors. What bugged me about the book was the pace and the author's constant method of going into details that seemed to go on for too long. Sadly, I strayed on several occasions, reading while nothing was coming through or sticking with me. At times I felt a scene was too draggy when it should have moved along to the next. Also, while I did like the addition of footnotes personalizing the story even more, there were times I felt they were a little unnecessary for certain descriptions. But other than those few things, Stay was a good read and once again, I liked the realistic subject matter because I haven't read much on such topic and this book has invited me to do so more often.

As a victim of stalking, this book touched home to me. I even highlighted phrases and lines throughout it for me to go back to whenever I am having "one of those days." It gave me strength and confirmation that I made the right choice to leave my old relationship. I encourage anyone who is in an awful relationship, a victim of stalking or domestic abuse to read this book! The main character is like so many young girls are; forgiving, hopeful, social, and curious. These qualities lead her to Christian, the not so obvious bad guy of the story. The relationship is ideal at first, but of course things turn sour after a few months. After taking as much as she can take, she breaks things off with Christian. He then stalks her until she is forced to move away to an island with her single father, who is an author and an amazingly out of the box character in the book. Christian follows her there and the ending, which I won't spoil, is one that ends perfectly realistically. I just enjoyed this book so much! Readers will appreciate the dynamic that the main character has with her witty father. I also appreciated that the author did not make Christian an obvious and stereotypical "bad guy" in the book, because in real life there are far more Christian's than typical bad guys. Christian is damaged and that is what makes him behave the way that he does. It does not excuse his behavior, but it makes you understand the cycle and why it takes the main character so long to

leave him and why she questions that decision later on. The book also has footnotes, and not the typical kind. These footnotes are personal, and they serve as a way of insight into the deeper meanings of the prose itself through the main character's eyes. I cannot stress how amazing this book is. Get it!

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