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Forever, Or A Long, Long Time



Synopsis

From rising new talent Caela Carter, author of *My Life with the Liars*, comes an achingly beautiful and endearing story about two foster children who want desperately to believe that they've found their forever home. Perfect for fans of Rebecca Stead's *When You Reach Me*, Leslie Connor's *All Rise for the Honorable Perry T. Cook*, and Sarah Pennypacker's *Pax*. Flora and her brother, Julian, don't believe they were born. They've lived in so many foster homes, they can't remember where they came from. And even now that they've been adopted, Flora still struggles to believe in forever. So along with their new mother, Flora and Julian begin a journey to go back and discover their past—for only then can they really begin to build their future.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 7 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #66,796 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #18 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Dysfunctional Relationships #39

in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life > Adoption #46

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Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

Customer Reviews

Gr 5—Eleven-year-old Flora and her younger brother, Julian, have lived in so many foster homes that they have no memories of growing up and no history. They believe not only that they were never babies but also that they were never even born. This startling notion hooks readers from the first chapter: What happened to the siblings before they were adopted by Emily (whom Flora refers to as "Person")? Carter (*My Life with the Liars*) delicately draws readers into the

lives of a group of people overcoming obstacles as they learn how to become a family. Through Flora's skittish, yearning voice, Carter explains the siblings' reluctance to accept that they have found their forever home: "We can't help preparing for the fall." The family's fragile progress is tested when Emily and her husband reveal they're having a baby and Flora fights with Elena, teen daughter of Emily's husband. To help Flora and Julian embrace their future, Emily takes them on a journey into the past, visiting their former foster homes and caregivers. During the trip, Carter truly shows her skill, observing simple moments of the tenuous yet growing bond between mother and children while painting an unflinching portrait of the tragic shortcomings of the foster care system. Strong secondary characters flesh out the narrative, but the novel's heart belongs to the relationship among Emily, Flora, and Julian as they learn how to trust and to meet one another's needs.

VERDICT Addressing contemporary family issues and a child's timeless desire for self-knowledge, this title is a first purchase for middle grade collections.

—Marybeth Kozikowski, Sachem Public Library, Holbrook, NY

Carter's sophomore novel gently weaves the heartache and confusion of abandonment with the struggle for love and acceptance. Poetic and meditative, this emotionally enthralling novel undresses assumptions with purpose and hope. (Kirkus Reviews (starred review)) Carter delicately draws readers into the lives of a group of people overcoming obstacles as they learn how to become a family. The novel's heart belongs to the relationship among Emily, Flora, and Julian as they learn how to trust and to meet one another's needs. (School Library Journal (starred review)) This stunning portrayal of the circuitous path of trauma and healing teems with compassion, empathy, and the triumph of resilience (Booklist (starred review)).

—“Complex and well-rounded characters. Authentic.” (The Horn Book)

—“This nuanced novel highlights the struggle to trust an adoptive family after a traumatic history in foster care. Carter's layered narrative doesn't shy from pain as it testifies to resilience and the expansive power of love.” (Publishers Weekly)

—“Flora's narration is deftly turned. The portrayal of kids whose lives have genuinely impaired them has grit and honesty as well as warmth, and it will open many readers' eyes to the impact of trauma.” (Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books)

This book was absolutely wonderful - moving and heartbreaking and hopeful all at the same time.

This middle-school reader was one of the best fiction books I've read in a long time. I couldn't stop

thinking about it. Written from the perspective of a traumatized fourth grader, who grew up in the foster care system and has recently been adopted, this book was absolutely beautiful and redemptive and messy. I loved the contrast with what was going on in her head with how everyone was experiencing her. A- for me.

My words are stuck...like Flora. Captivating story from beginning to end. The author finds just the right words. Loved it!

What a beautiful and powerful read! I hope the book gets the recognition it deserves. The story is about a sister and brother who have been in the foster system and have found their forever home. They have suffered in the system and that suffering manifests itself differently in each of them. They have a hard time believing that they will be staying in this home and in an effort to help them believe their mother tries to help them understand their story and their family. I'm putting this book up there with *Wonder* by R. J. Palacio and *Out of My Mind* by Sharon Creech.

Beautifully written. Captures the voice of an 11 year old perfectly. I didn't want the story to end. Nice work!

I love this book so much. It's beautifully written and a must-read story for every kid and family.

My dog and I volunteer with emotional and behaviorally disturbed children who are temporarily living in an institutional setting because they have been removed from their homes or foster home, typically because they have been abused. The children present as normal to me and I never know their stories, but this book offered great insight into the experiences they may have been through and the defenses they may have developed to survive. It is a terrific read- a real page turner. I really enjoyed the book and learned a great deal from it as well.

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