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Second Chance Summer



Synopsis

A powerful novel about hope and heartbreak, *Before the Fall* “as much about loss as it is about first love and friendship” (Publishers Weekly, starred review). Sandwiched between two exceptional siblings, Taylor Edwards never felt like she stood out—except for her history of running away when things get too complicated. Then her dad receives unexpected, terrible news, and the family makes the last-minute decision to spend the summer together in the cramped quarters at their old lake house. Taylor hasn’t been to the summer house since she was twelve, and she definitely never planned on going back. Up at the lake she is confronted with people she thought she left behind, like her former best friend, Lucy, and Henry Crosby, her first crush, who’s all grown up—and a lot cuter. Suddenly Taylor is surrounded by memories she’d rather leave in the past—but she can’t run away this time. As the days lying on the beach pass into nights gazing at the stars, Taylor realizes she has a second chance—with friends, with family, maybe even with love. But she knows that once the summer ends, there is no way to recapture what she stands to lose. From Morgan Matson, the *> Flying Start* author of *>*, this is a remarkable novel about hope in the face of heartbreaking grief.

Book Information

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Paperback: 496 pages

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Best Sellers Rank: #84,292 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #63 in *Books > Teens >*

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

"Matson has blended romance, humor, teen angst, boring summer jobs, and a truly tragic event into a wonderfully readable story, told in a manner that trusts teens' intelligence. Jenny Han's and Sarah Dessen's fans will gobble this up." (SLJ, starred review) "Warning: tissues recommended." (The Boston Globe) "The exploration of the father-daughter relationship is warm, sensitive, and heartbreaking, with Taylor realizing how much she counts on the man she's going to lose. Between the dreamy romance and the four-hankie family story, this is a satisfyingly emotional summer tale." (BCCB) "Matson writes subtly about complex family dynamics, grief, and the impending loss of a parent in a way that is both beautiful and true... Readers who love the work of Sarah Dessen and Jenny Han will feel intensely for this cast of vulnerable characters who demonstrate integrity, personality, and perseverance as they work to bridge the distances between them." (Publishers Weekly, starred review) "[Second Chance Summer] is a sweet, well written coming-of-age book that pulls at the reader's heartstrings... This is a compelling story that reads fast and grips readers until the very end." (VOYA) "This is a bittersweet, powerful tale of family devotion, the sustainability of true friendship, and the silent courage of loving someone enough to stay and watch them die." (Booklist, starred review) "This is an incredible book - heartbreakingly funny and utterly un-put-down-able." (Lauren Myracle, New York Times bestselling author of Thirteen and TTYL) "One of the most touching, irresistible, and feel-good road trips I've been on in a long, long while. AMY & ROGER is a book to love." (Deb Caletti) "A near perfect summer read that should leave readers with a thirst for travel and romance." (Publishers Weekly, starred review) "This entertaining and thoughtful summertime road trip serves up slices of America with a big scoop of romance on the side." (Kirkus Reviews)

Morgan Matson is a New York Times bestselling author. She received her MFA in writing for children from the New School and was named a Publishers Weekly Flying Start author for her first book, Amy & Roger's Epic Detour, which was also recognized as an ALA Top Ten Best Book for Young Adults. Her second book, Second Chance Summer, won the California State Book Award. She lives in Los Angeles. Visit her at MorganMatson.com.

Kleenex Count - 4...actually 5, maybe even 6 if this review makes me cry as well. This Young Adult book by Morgan Matson is one that will put you through the ringer. I had to get up and give my Dad a hug & tell him I love him after this. SCS is a summer set story revolving around a family that is taking their summer up to an old family lake house that they used to visit each year until about 5

years ago. But it all has a hidden, sad reason behind it. The dad wants the whole family to spend that summer up there because it is possibly his last summer at all. Of course, Taylor, our main character, is a little apprehensive to return since she didn't exactly leave on good terms. She also has a strong habit of running away from her problems. She is a poor public speaker and has a tendency that reminds me of Emma Swan, running when things get too real or confrontational. So as you can probably guess, this summer is going to be all about Second Chances for Taylor as well as a huge growing summer for her entire family. Throw in some part time jobs, some punstastic shops, and a great host of side characters including Matson's dog Murphy, and you have a heartwarming story that will make you laugh, smile, and cry all within a few pages of each other. I absolutely loved every moment of this story. It's something that will touch your heart with something warm. IT will also make you want to call up your Dad and tell him you love him. Which is not a bad thing.

I waited for Second Chance Summer for two years. Right after I finished Amy & Roger's Epic Detour (still one of my favorite books) I looked for Morgan Matson's newest. Anticipation? I was full of it. When I got home from work on May 8 and retrieved the book from my porch, the first thing I did was hug it. Then I posted a picture of it on Twitter and marveled at the beautiful cover. From the first page, I knew Second Chance Summer would be a book that I loved. Matson's writing style is so poetic, so beautiful. I would read 50 pages and make myself stop, trying to make the book last longer. Finally after doing that a few times I gave up, reading for hours, thankful that the book was nearly 500 pages long. Taylor is back at her beach house after not being there for several years in a row. Her father has cancer and wants them to spend a summer there like they used to do. When she arrives, we learn that the last summer she was here, things didn't exactly go smoothly. As Taylor tries to piece together what she left at the beach when she was 12, she is also trying to deal with her family and the drastic changes that will be happening. Instead of feeling pity for the characters, I was enveloped in how real it all felt, rooting for them to find peace and resolution. I don't often cry while reading, and the end of this book hit me very hard, hard enough that I couldn't read through my tears. This is a direct attestation to how well Morgan Matson built up the story and how well developed her characters were. Now I begin my two year wait for her next book.

Okay, I have to say it: I like The Unexpected Everything better. I really love the setting of Second Chance Summer (BEACHES. LAKES. SUMMER. YAY.) but I enjoyed the overall content of The Unexpected Everything better, though I might be slightly biased by the dogs. I still haven't read Amy & Roger's Epic Detour or Since You've Been Gone, but I'LL GET THERE EVENTUALLY. Everyone

always talks about how you should buy a box of tissues when you buy this book. And the blurb indicates that, too. But the thing is? I barely cried. Yes, watching Taylor lose her father was painful. Watching him waste away. I can't even imagine what that's like. And the emotion certainly came across. But I am a crier. Look it up in the dictionary and you'll find my picture. I can pretty much cry about anything at any time. Emmy & Oliver, a relatively cute contemporary, made me cry. I sobbed like a baby at the acknowledgements in The Summer of Chasing Mermaids. If it's even remotely sad, I CRY. But I didn't cry until the very end of Second Chance Summer, and even then, there weren't a whole lot of tears. I just wanted more, I guess. I think the emotion could have come across more, could have moved me more, I guess. Or maybe I am becoming a dark and emotionless zombie? Honestly, I think that's the more likely scenario. The only other complaint I have is that Henry and Lucy are holding this huge grudge for something that HAPPENED WHEN THEY WERE 12. And it's not like Taylor killed somebody's dog. She left without saying goodbye, sure. But the icy way they treat her for it, five years later? I just found that so ridiculous. Okay. Moving on. Moodboards are great because I get to waste an afternoon on Pinterest and call it productive. I didn't connect to Taylor as much as I would have liked, but I really loved the way that she wasn't perfect. And she recognized it, too. I loved her relationships with her family members, her breakfasts with her father, the way she began to take care of her sister. The family dynamics in this book should basically be legendary. That definitely got me a little emotional and I think was really central to this book. I loved the movie nights. I'm pretty amazed at the way she powered through her job, though. It says often that the day moves slow and she's basically painfully watching the clock, which I totally understand, but whenever I work food service I complain non-stop, even when I'm working with people I like. I'm sure everyone would like me better if I was more like Taylor and just silently watched the clock. The romance was sweet and I liked how supportive Henry and Taylor were of each other. I was kind of upset when they kissed after having maybe two REAL conversations after meeting again, but it's fiction so I moved on. tl;dr: The family dynamics and struggles were really the highlight of Second Chance Summer. It highlighted how even in tragedy, life goes on, and although I didn't really get the sheer amount of emotion I was expecting, I really enjoyed this contemporary. 4 stars.

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