



After

By Kristin Harmel

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Lacey's world shatters when her dad is killed in a car accident. And secretly? She feels like it's her fault. If she hadn't taken her own sweet time getting ready that morning . . . well, it never would have happened. Her mom wouldn't be a basket case. Her brother Logan wouldn't drink. And her little brother would still have two parents.

But life goes on even if you don't want it to. And when Lacey gets the chance to make a difference in the lives of some people at school, she jumps at it. Making lemonade out of lemons is her specialty. Except she didn't count on meeting a guy like Sam. Or that sometimes? Lemonade can be a pretty bitter drink to swallow.

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After By Kristin Harmel Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From [Booklist](#)

A year after Lacey Mann's father dies, her family continues its downward spiral. Her older brother drinks, her younger brother shuts down, and her mother becomes a workaholic. To counteract, Lacey earns good grades and helps her best friend weather typical high-school dramas. Enter new student Sam Stone, who asks Lacey out. Unfortunately, Lacey cannot tolerate another person, even cute Sam, who has "heard about her dad" and "knows how she feels." Consumed with guilt and disgusted by insincere classmates, Lacey begins a support group for students who have lost a parent. She is surprised that Sam joins the group and even more surprised when the group helps her disjointed family, but a revelation by Sam and an accident threaten to unravel Lacey's newfound comfort. Harmel appropriately depicts adolescent grief—full of guilt, bitterness, and isolation—and how it strains family relationships and friendships. However, this novel lacks the literary style and character introspection of Maureen Johnson's *The Key to the Golden Firebird* (2004) or Sarah Dessen's *The Truth about Forever* (2004), which tackle identical issues. Grades 7-10. --Kimberly Garnick

Review

Review, [Publishers Weekly](#), January 18, 2010:

"[After's] lessons about family, friendship, loss, and the enduring power of love should stick with readers."

Review, [Kirkus Reviews](#), January 15, 2010:

"The various reactions to grief depicted are real and can serve as a guide for other teen survivors and the adults in their lives...[a] heartfelt story."

About the Author

Kristin Harmel is a longtime contributor to *People* magazine. It was while working on a *People* story that she got to meet Kate Atwood, who runs Kate's Club, an organization for grieving kids in Atlanta, which inspired this novel. Kristin lives in Orlando, Florida. To learn more about Kristin, visit her at www.kristinharmel.com.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Shirley Parker:

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