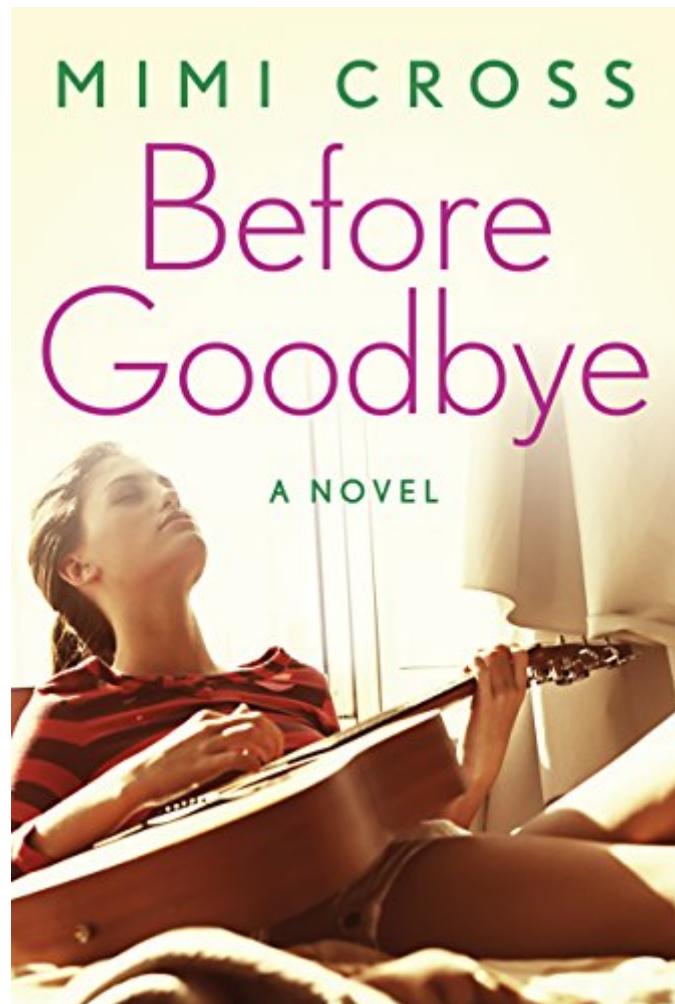


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## Before Goodbye



## **Synopsis**

A RITA Award finalist, Best First Book. Music means more than anything to high school student Cate Reese; it's also what unites her with Cal Woods. Devoted classical guitar players, Cate and Cal are childhood friends newly smitten by love "until a devastating car accident rips Cal out of Cate's life forever. Blaming herself for the horrific tragedy and struggling to surface from her despair, Cate spirals downhill in a desperate attempt to ease her pain. Fellow student David Bennet might look like the school's golden boy, but underneath the surface the popular athlete battles demons of his own. Racked with survivor's guilt after his brother's suicide, things get worse when tragedy darkens his world again "but connecting with Cate, his sister's longtime babysitter, starts bringing the light back in. As Cate and David grow closer, the two shattered teenagers learn to examine the pieces of their lives and, together, find a way to be whole again.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Extremely well written, thoughtful, almost poetic novel. I appreciated the deep character development that occurred and the changes and growth we saw take place not just with Cate but

with David as well. I am not someone to review a book often; however, reading some of these extremely close-minded reviews who see David as a "disgusting monster" etc. makes me sad for those of you with that opinion - that you aren't willing to believe in a story of redemption, and maybe, just maybe, step into his shoes and try to understand the journey he has faced. Many grown adults can't say they've dealt with parental abuse, absentee parents, their brother's suicide, their sister's rape, the deaths of several people close to him - let alone an 18 year old kid. I highly doubt anyone would deal with this kind of trauma in the most perfectly graceful way. Everyone falters. Everyone 'wobbles', as the author says. This story wasn't gratifying that type of behavior. It was a coming of age story glorifying the GROWTH these characters experienced and the POSITIVE changes they made to get there. As someone who has just come through my teen years into my mid twenties; I can confidently say that while those of you out there may choose to believe that your 16 year-olds are not dealing with these types of real issues - they are. Whether or not you want to accept that is up to you. Throughout my high school career I was deeply involved and invested in music and many aspects of this book rang very true to me. Suicide is something that is dealt with in high school. Drugs are something that are present. Sex, too, is present. While some teens may not partake in these behaviors, they are surrounded by them at a very young age, and choosing to shelter them from realistic, truthful literature about what they may be facing is a shame.

Choosing a First Pick of the Month is sometimes hit and miss. I never really know if the book will be good. It may be a genre I don't normally read. There usually aren't many reviews to look at and often the authors are unfamiliar to me. This month was a good pick. If you're looking for a book for a young teenager, don't choose this one. Some of the subject matter is too adult. The main characters are high school aged with serious issues. One theme that's explored is how to deal with the death of a loved one. Grieving is never easy and the solutions chosen here are sex and drugs. Both of these may feel good but they create a whole different set of issues. The parents are not role models for their children. In fact, they are the last people their kids should look to for help. Most of them put up a facade for the rest of the world to see. They seem to put their own needs and wants first rather than being a good parent. The characters are believable with realistic emotions who sometimes choose their hearts over their heads to deal with life. This is a book that I believe should be in the Young Adult category. It is well written and moves quickly. For me it was an easy read that I finished in a day.

I've had a hard time deciding how to rate this one, because I really like this author. I like the way she

writes. I like her depth and I really enjoyed her characters. I actually enjoyed the music connection. I'm not a musician, but I could feel this author's love and appreciation for music--both lyrics and instruments. I like her writing style--there's suspense here and I like the way she teaspoon-feeds the story. She mixes it up from chapter to chapter, only giving parts as you go. I really enjoyed that and it kept me very interested. However, the overall story bothered me--a lot. **ISSUES (sort of SPOILERS):** This book had so many deep traumatic, life changing events. They were all over the place. It was like the author tried to pack way too much into one small book. We move from one shocking life event to the next and I'm talking over and over again, not just a few.--Serious drug abuse from multiple characters--a dad, a daughter, friends--Dysfunctional parents with messed up relationships--Suicide all over the place--two teens who commit suicide and one parent who attempts suicide--LGBT relationships with high school friends--nothing explicit here, but kissing and romance--Traumatic death--two characters (not the suicide victims)--Language--Lots of language. Multiple use of the f-bomb and everything else--Rape victims--I appreciated the bonding that happened with the victims, but I felt this wasn't really developed well. It was rather shocking and troubling and could be really tough for someone who has gone through this experience. I also find it troubling that the main character almost gets raped, and then she starts using a date rape/anesthetic drug to cope with the death of her friend--Domestic abuse--a father who starts physically hitting his son as a teenager after years of verbal abuse--Drug dealing in high school--high school kids who are dealing--Sex--nothing super explicit here, but it's talked about a lot // one of the main guys in the book has a seriously rotten past. And, at the end he's "changing", but goes back to one of his cheerleader bimbos (I'm saying this because that's the way this is in the story). Yuck. It really bothers me that the girl in this story is only 16 dealing with all of the above. I guess this could be realistic with a couple of these problems, but again just way too many life issues going on to make it real for me. If you're thinking of buying this for your teenager, I would say please don't. I would never want my teens to read this book. If you have issues with abuse, this book could really trouble you as a lot of those underlying issues are never really resolved. You know that they happen, but as far as resolution, I don't think that comes. **Mimi Cross--great author.** This story--not my favorite. Good luck!

Before Goodbye tells the story behind two different people, Cate and David. I felt like the author did a very good job switching between the characters and telling their story in a way that it blended well together. The main characters are both grieving loss and I felt like the story showed a different version of dealing with death, an abusive parent, absent parents, rape and depression in a way that

was very believable. Even the minor characters had to some strong feelings to overcome. Some of the reviewers were saying they felt like the chemistry between Cate and David where lacking. I didn't feel like that at all. From the beginning, I felt they had more chemistry than her and Cal. I also felt like their story line together was believable. I appreciate the realness of this book and thought it was beautifully written.

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