



In Place of Never

Julie Anne Lindsey

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Can the truth set her free?...

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Suddenly someone is shadowing Mercy's every move, making her even more determined to uncover the facts. With Cross by her side, she is ready to face it all, even if that means opening up to him, knowing he may one day leave her. What she discovers is a truth that rocks the foundation of her small river town—and a love worth risking everything for....

In Place of Never Details

Date : Published February 2nd 2016 by Lyrical Press, Inc
ISBN : 9781601834874
Author : Julie Anne Lindsey
Format : Paperback 269 pages
Genre : Young Adult, Mystery, Romance, Contemporary, Fiction

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Download and Read Free Online In Place of Never Julie Anne Lindsey

From Reader Review In Place of Never for online ebook

Anastasia says

5/5 stars

Trigger Warning: death of a loved one, self harm, depression, abuse, and off the page rape

Disclaimer: I received a copy from Netgalley in exchange for an honest review.

In Place of Never was a beautiful book about grief, forgiveness, and new starts.

A part of Mercy died the summer her sister tragically drowned. Now Mercy has a chance to discover if Faith's death was an accident—or murder. Her first step is to confront the lead suspects: a band of traveling gypsies—the last people who saw her sister alive. But Mercy finds an unexpected ally in Cross, the soulful musician in their ranks. He's a kindred spirit, someone who sees into her heart for the first time in, well, forever. Yet stirring up the past puts Mercy in danger...

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The summary really intrigued me but I hadn't heard much about it or the author on goodreads or other social media so I was a little wary. But, I decided to click the request button and here I am in awe. This book was everything I want in a young-adult contemporary. It dealt with mental illness, grief, first love, coming out of your shell, and family problems beautifully.

The main character Mercy is still grieving the loss of her older sister Faith and her mother. She visits them and talks to them about what she's going through. We get a feeling right off the bat of how close Faith and Mercy were. Mercy's love and relationships with characters in this book were so raw. Mercy and her little sister Prudence's relationship grew throughout the book and they had such an amazing bond by the end. Everything Mercy felt, you felt with her. I even found myself crying during some of the scenes, and I'm not a crier.

Mercy's family is also very religious and I found it fitting that 2016 was proclaimed the year of Mercy and this was the year this book was released.

On her walk to see Faith, two men do a little *magic* and offer Mercy silk flowers. Little did she know that one of these men would help her through the hard and be by her side during the easy. Cross, songwriter and one of the members of a traveling band of gypsies, befriends Mercy, against the wishes of her father.

"I'm not great with timing. Or words. Or people."

I absolutely loved the beginning of their relationship. Mercy knew her father didn't want her to go near the *gypsies*. but she wanted answers about the death of her sister. Cross understands the pain and helps her uncover these secrets. Along the way they become great friends. Their openness with each other, and friendship, was so refreshing. Usually, young-adult has an instalove relationship that just feels staged. Cross and Mercy fit together perfectly.

Cross. I need to take a moment and just appreciate Cross. On the outside he looks mean and well cross, hence the nickname. But, he is so much more. He's an enthusiastic feminist, open minded, talented, strong-willed, and has endured so much. Whatever I say about him will never do him justice. If you're still apprehensive about reading this book at the end of this review, just do it. If anything do it to meet Cross. You will not be disappointed.

"I'm sorry I grabbed you."

Pru snorted. "Whatever. I was being a bitch."

He turned to Pru. "No. You were honest and firm with me. I had no right to touch you without asking. No one does. Ever."

The plot was fast paced and was well thought out. There weren't any *slow* scenes and even if the scene wasn't very *exciting* the characters made up for it. Everything about this book was well balanced.

My favorite aspect of this book was how it dealt with mental illness, abuse, self harm, etc. Mercy and Cross opened up about this topic to each other on multiple occasion. Cross was abused, loved one was an addict, and would intentionally pick fights to *feel* something. Mercy used to cut, dealt with depression, and guilt over her sisters death. They dealt with these feelings by themselves but when they were ready they told someone and received support. The descriptions of these scenes were beautifully written.

If you or a loved one are feeling suicidal or depressed please visit these websites and call your locations designated hotline. Please know that you are loved <3:

***International Suicide Hotlines* : <http://www.suicide.org/international-...>**

***United States Suicide Hotlines* : <http://www.suicide.org/suicide-hotlin...>**

***Depression and other help lines* : <http://www.all-on-depression-help.com...>**

Over all, I loved this book. It will definitely be on my top list of the year. I heard there was going to be a companion novel, at the moment I don't know how I feel about that. This book was a *perfect* stand alone and I don't think it needs a companion. But, I do know I trust Julie Anne Lindsey with the story and I will definitely pick up all of her future books.

Emily says

I generously received a free copy from the publisher via Netgalley in exchange for an honest review

I was very delightedly surprised with this. To be completely honest, I did not have high expectations, but this book turned out to be wonderfully enjoyable!

There are so many concepts in this book that are extremely hard to write about and make it good. Of course there will always be controversy over such issues, but this novel did an incredible job of portraying them. It writes about issues such as self harm, depression, religion, suicide, and teen pregnancies. To write about all of this at once without feeling overwhelmed is quite amazing. Although there were some moments where it felt like so much was going on at once, the author did a good job of balancing it out.

The character growth in this novel was lovely to read. We start with a girl who barely leaves the house but to visit her mother and sister, and her transformation to a newer, healthier lifestyles is beautiful. The relationship that grows between her father, her sister, and Cross were also beautiful.

I don't know what it was about this book, but it had me hooked. I was so engrossed into it, I could not put it down. I had to know what happened next, the only reason I stopped reading this was because I went to sleep, and that was after reading it until 3 in the morning.

Overall, this novel was extremely enjoyable and thrilling, and I am glad to have read it.

I would highly recommend it to fans of contemporary romance and thrillers.

Michelle Dare says

This is one of those books that no matter what I write in this review, it won't do it justice. I absolutely LOVED it. So, here goes.

Mercy has spent the last three years in her room. She lost her sister and her mother within a short period of time. To deal with it she stayed inside, stopped eating, and stopped interacting with anyone. Her father firmly believes that the people with the traveling sideshow that was in town when her sister died, were responsible for her death. When the gypsies appear in town for the annual festival, Mercy decides that she wants answers before leaving for college.

Cross is part of that show, only he's different. He's not a gypsy. And he's interested in Mercy. The two start an unlikely friendship that leads into a forbidden romance. On her quest to find out the truth of what happened to her sister, Cross enters her heart and helps pull her out of the state she's been living in. Will Mercy be able to find out the truth before she leaves for college? What will happen if her dad finds out about the new guy in her life?

This book is about starting fresh, falling in love, forgiveness, and discovering the truth. Told from Mercy's POV, you get a front row seat to her emotions and what happens within her home. You get to watch her come into herself and fall in love. I was surprised on so many levels with this story. The suspense, the mystery, and the romance - I loved it all! Cross was an amazing character and I quickly swooned over him. I would love a book about Anton. He deserves to find his HEA. All in all, great book, amazing characters, and a storyline to keep you on the edge of your seat.

Book received in exchange for an honest review. Reviewed on behalf of Once Upon An Alpha.

-RadioactiveBookworm- says

Goodreads Synopsis: Can the truth set her free?...

A part of Mercy died the summer her sister tragically drowned. Now Mercy has a chance to discover if Faith's death was an accident—or murder. Her first step is to confront the lead suspects: a band of traveling gypsies—the last people who saw her sister alive. But Mercy finds an unexpected ally in Cross, the soulful musician in their ranks. He's a kindred spirit, someone who sees into her heart for the first time in, well, forever. Yet stirring up the past puts Mercy in danger...

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love worth risking everything for....

My Review: I received a copy of this book from Netgalley, and honestly I didn't want to like this book at first. It seemed poorly planned and thought out, the characters were all over the place, and it was just really sad. There's a lot of things going on, the main character, Mercy, is ignored by her father, the town pastor, after her sister dies and then her mother commits suicide. Although that doesn't actually happen in the book, it happened three years before, but it's still sad. There's a lot of mention of self harm and self harm scars, and a couple characters are a little cringe worthy in their personalities, they're pretty invasive. Then, something changed. As I read further into the book, about half way through, I realized it wasn't a sad story about being sad, it was a story that started out sad but developed into happiness. It's about getting over being sad. I found myself drawn to the mystery surrounding Mercy's late sister Faith, and I stopped procrastinating reading the book. I really started to get into it. Sure, it had a rocky start, but who doesn't like young love, a travelling sideshow, and a mystery? This book really grew on me, and the things I found annoying about the characters at first turned into quirks. The end was exciting, although I had a feeling about that specific character when we were first introduced to them, and the epilogue was cute. I don't like country music, or church, but this was a good read and you should check it out and give it a chance. Thanks for reading.

(Radioactivebookreviews.wordpress.com)

Angel - Angel Reads says

You can find this review and more on Angel Reads.

I received an e-arc of *In Place of Never* by Julie Anne Lindsey from Lyrical Press, Kensington Books via NetGalley. This has in no way influenced my thoughts and feelings about the book.

I don't know what I was expecting when I started this book. I hadn't heard much about, I read it on a whim as the synopsis intrigued me and I am glad I did.

In Place of Never follows protagonists, Mercy as she tries to come to terms with the death of her sister. Even though it happens years before, something died in Mercy when her sister did. So when the last people that saw her alive comes back to town – she has to confront them, however everything isn't all it seems. She finds an expected ally is Cross who sees her for her for the first time and not someone from the outside.

Mercy is a troubled one. Her life has been school and boys. She had to suffer through the terrible drowning of her sister Faith and then the suicide of her mother, leaving her with her overprotective father. And herself. Mercy suffers with depression and heartache, all I wanted to do was wrap her in my arms and hug her. Everyone treats her differently and all she wants is answers. So when the traveling gypsies come back to town she knows where to get them. Everything isn't what it seems and then she meets Cross.

I loved Cross, he was such a loveable character that you couldn't help, but smile every time he was mentioned. Maybe it was because of Mercy and how she felt about Cross or maybe it was since Lindsey was such beautifully written. I normally hate when characters are musicians in novels simply as I think it's so cliquy and I have seen it so many times before, but there was something about Cross, that it didn't matter.

The storyline of *In Place of Never* was truly intriguing, I wanted to know what happened to Faith. As each step into the novel, we find out stuff that leads us in one direction and then boom! We are in another. It was thrilling and I couldn't get enough of it. I liked how everything unfolded slowly and not until the end. However, I felt the ending was rushed and wasn't intense enough for the situation at hand.

The writing was beautiful. Julie Anne Lindsey is captivating and brings the reader on the journey with both Mercy and Cross.

The family dynamics. True, but upsetting. I didn't like Mercy's dad, at all. I know that he behaved that way because he already lost his wife and daughter and couldn't lose what he had left. However he was obsessed and not in the way that Mercy was, he was determined that the traveling gypsies were to blame, but he didn't ask the questions. He didn't have much character development

In Place of Never is a heartbreaking novel about finding the truth, death, depression, sacrifice and what it's like to live when everything else is falling apart. Julie Anne Lindsey writes a beautiful novel that lets the reader pond upon life and what it's truly like to live. It's about love, faith and finding all the little things that count.

Emma says

I received a free copy via netgalley in exchange for an honest review.

This book was set three years after Faith's death, it showed how much her death had affected her family in different ways. How they were still trying to find themselves without her. How to be a family again when members are gone forever.

Mercy was a good main character, she thought about her sister a lot and it was good to learn about what happened this way. I cannot imagine what it would be like to lose a sister who was also your best friend. It is a shame she shut Pru out but I was glad they finally started talking again.

I loved the path this story took, her path to find the truth and who she really is. She stuck up for what and who she believes in. There was more to the story than Mercy's quest, there was depth to it, different layers, made it feel more real.

Cross was a good love interest and a great character. I was rooting for him all the way, not just to get the girl but to succeed in his dreams.

I was a big fan of how there was hints at different ways for Faith's death, but it all made sense and became clear in the end.

I will read more by this author the writing style was excellent.

4 out of 5 stars.

Terri says

Review also found at <http://kristineandterri.blogspot.ca/2...>

3.5 stars

I received an advanced copy of this book from the publisher via Netgalley in exchange for an honest review. The expected publication date is February 2nd, 2016.

I wasn't sure what to expect with this story. you see the thing is circus' freak me out. So does the idea of a travelling sideshow. I find the idea of gypsies (the ones found in fiction) extremely creepy. I don't know why, its just something I can't explain. At least there were not an clowns...I would have been done.

That aside this actually told a very nice story. If you want to look really deep, it is a story about not judging a book by its cover, forgiveness, healing and young love. If you just want to scratch the surface it is a love story with a little bit of a mystery attached.

I loved Cross who was perfect in his imperfections. The way he saw Mercy in his eyes was swoon worthy. Mercy herself was a good strong character once she got past her period of hibernation.

I will not say anything else as I fear it may lead to spoilers. This story surprised me and I enjoyed it more than I thought I would. Lucky for me the travelling circus Gypsies were not as scary as I thought they would be.

Connie says

Source: I received a digital copy of this book in exchange for an honest review, with thanks to Lyrical Press and Netgalley.

Cost: Free

Title: In Place of Never

Author: Julie Anne Lindsey

Genre: YA, contemporary

Overall Rating: 3 stars

This was okay.

I wanted to love this book so much, usually I really enjoy this type of book, the whole losing a sibling thing seems to be a main theme in a lot of books I've read and it's something that every author tackles differently as it's something that affects everyone differently.

But I just couldn't focus on it.

Mercy was okay, Cross was okay.

Everything was just okay. When I wanted amazing. I just couldn't connect with this book as well as I wanted too and that kind of makes me quite sad as I had such high hopes.

Daniela (Lost in a Book Blog) says

****ARC provided by Netgalley in exchange for an honest review****

This was a really nice surprise. I requested this book because the cover drew me in. After I saw it, I went and read the blurb of the book and thought it sounded like something I would like. And it was.

This book introduces you to Mercy's life, a girl who's had to see death way too many times for someone so young. For years she's had to suffer and live with the pain and guilt and the doubts that those deaths left her with. What if she hadn't covered for her sister that night? Why hadn't she seen what was really going on with her mom? Did she really know her sister? Was she sad? Was she happy? What if she wasn't really happy? What if she was in pain and she wanted to end it? The doubts are our own enemies. But what if those doubts can be resolved? Everything seems possible when the festival comes into town and with it, a new guy comes along. All the doubts start looking as questions that have real answers, and she's set her mind to find them. *In Place Of Never* is a story about searching the truth about life and about yourself too. It's about grief and moving on. It's about friendship and the beauty of being able to count on the people you love. Sometimes we depend or rely so much in someone, that we tend to forget who we are without them. It's like, we can't function if the other person isn't around, and that couldn't be so far from the truth. When I first started reading the book, I thought the storyline was interesting, and it got better with every page turn. At some point, the story got a bit predictable, but I don't mean that in a bad way. Sometimes, you just realise what's going on, but it's the author's job to still make the story interesting, and I got that. Even though I had an idea of what was going on, I wasn't entirely sure and the story was inviting enough for me to keep reading until I found out the truth along with Mercy and Cross.

Mercy is just a young girl who's lost a lot over the years. She's barely survived over the years, dealing with her pain in different ways: stepping out of life, cutting, shutting everyone and everything out. I really saw the way she grew in those weeks. Finding out the truth can start as something to free someone else, but along the way, you might find that you needed to be free too, and that's exactly what happens with Mercy. I really liked seeing her grow into a more confident girl over the chapters. When she was shy and confused and depressed, she ends up being a confident, and determined girl who will do anything to be free of her demons.

Then, we have Cross. Will. I have to say, there's something about characters named Will that draw me in. And this one here, is no different. He's mysterious but sweet at the same time. Cross is the little push Mercy needed to get out of that bubble she was in, so she could start enjoying her life. I loved that even though he seemed to be all serious and cranky, there was something sweet and adorable about him, like everything he did and said, came straight from the heart. I love that.

This book includes a few delicate topics, like cutting and fighting to feel something or drain the pain. I felt like these things were barely explained, and if they were things that marked the character's lives so much (which I believe they were) I think the author could've gone a bit deeper into it, not in a morbid way or anything, but explain a bit better and give it the attention that a problem like that really needs, you know? But other than that, I really enjoyed it.

The pace of the book was really good. It was intense when it needed to be intense, and it was sweet and lighthearted when it needed to be like that, and those sweet moments were heart-warming and swoon worthy.

There was something I really liked about this story. We have two sides of beliefs. It's sad but it's so common to find people who say they do as God says, but in reality, they're just so far away from what I believe God intended for us all to do. We should all love one another, right? Then, why judge? I saw a lot of judgement in this book and I really liked how the author managed to fight it. Sometimes, beliefs make people do crazy things, but sometimes, those same beliefs help you see how wrong you've been.

Cynthia says

[View this review and more others on Let's Say It's a Blog.](#)

Digital ARC was received from publisher through Netgalley

After 3 years of curling up in pain and grief, Mercy was now ready to come out of her shell and find the answer behind the mystery of her sister's death. Mercy was sure that Faith didn't commit a suicide, despite what the town rumor said about it. Whatever hidden behind the curtain had been stayed too long while her family grieving over the losses of two family members in a row. Now less than a month before she's off to college, before she left her dad and Pru behind to deal with the rest of the physical memories, Mercy was determined to reveal all the truth. Still there were people who looked at her one-sidedly due to her dark way of dealing with grief in the past three years. But nothing could stop her now, especially not now when she got full support from a kind stranger whose family might or might not be related to Faith's death. Cross Lovell and his eccentric group sounded so much like trouble for the town, what with constant accidents that seemed to follow them closely - Faith's case included. Pastor Porter sure didn't want Mercy and her lil sister Pru to have anything to do with them. But sometimes appearance didn't exactly show what's on the inside. Sadness, darkness, or madness that was reflected from ones' outer look would not always show that they actually felt that way.

Since everyone has stories and all people could do is just to guess and not to judge.

It's the first book that I pick after three weeks of no-reading. I was honestly expecting a lighter story to start anew but it's on my January TBR list and I had promised to finish up my Jan TBR before creating one for February so... Yeah. But it's pretty intriguing and the thrill was over the top! Due to my preference of lighter story in the beginning, I started this book with less excitement than I was supposed to. The book started strong with detailed descriptions on how Porter's family went on with their life after the miserable losses. From chapter one only we already got a clear picture on how each of the Porter dealt with the grief. The dad chose to focus more on being a pastor with all his church activities. Pru, the little sister, tried to act nonchalant while trying hard to get everything back to normal in their broken family, whatever the 'normal' means. Mercy herself was shown withdrawn at first until she heard the news of the Lovell group coming back to town; that's when she felt like her determination to reveal the mystery finally got its first direction.

The description of each tension and character's expressions were done very well. Despite my lack of excitement toward the heavy plot, somehow I found this story quite interesting with a very well-played thriller and all. I liked the way the author made the readers keep guessing which culprit behind the case all throughout the story. Ms. Lindsey gave so many clues here and there but never directly pointed out to certain person to be suspected. I was constantly blown away by little revelations that I gave up guessing in the end and decided to just go with the flow.

The only slightly minus point from me was how slow the pace seemed to go on from the second half. The story initially started with a determination of Mercy to find the truth behind Faith's death. Yet somehow in that point things got a little tangled up with Mercy's attraction toward Cross and I personally felt like the progress to unravel the mystery went stagnant there. I really didn't mind their romance because I honestly thought theirs were a perfect un-insta one, unlike most romance in YA books. But a few misplaced romance scenes in this book seemed to overwrite the real issue, causing the ending to be rushed and a little out of nowhere.

I bet Cross character is a lovely one. He's like a warm chocolate covered inside a bottle of vodka. Instead of finding the burning liquor, you'd find warmth instead within him. I liked that he's really honest and never judge people for what they'd done. He's really wise, really. I super loved his one saying to Mercy about their circumstances:

"I'm not broken, not yet. Neither are you. We're just a little dinged up . Slightly damaged."

I wished to learn more about him because I don't think he's got enough part in the book due to so many complex issues happening. Here I got something to make you feel gooey inside about Cross, his confession of love for Mercy:

"I would want you if you were bald." He dropped a kiss on my temple. "Twice my weight." He kissed my throat. "Had hairy legs." One long finger hooked in the waistband of my

shorts. "Talked like a trucker." He kissed my lips. "I fell hard for this." He laid a palm over my heart. His soulful eyes burned with emotion. "The rest is icing."

Awww the rest is icing he said...

The epilogue wrapped everything up well. I noticed one interesting line there about how Mercy character was described to be a religious person than we thought she was the entire time. Her refusal to belief in such thing as curse and believing in talisman showed her strong faith to God and I personally liked that about her.

In Place of Never is a unique and intriguing title. Inside, you'd find a gripping story on how a family dealt with loss and eventually found closure about it. There's also an issue about how unbiased judgment still going strong among us and how damaging it done to those who's directly impacted by it. Lindsey brought the issue up but luckily she also wrote it in different angle to show that sometimes it's all what's on our mind that matters really, not what's on people's mind.

In 24 chapters, Mercy Porter would take us to a journey of how to come to terms with a broken past with the help of faith and a little love.

Abbie says

(I received a copy from Netgalley, In exchange for an honest review.)

Mercy was an okay character, and I felt quite sorry for her. She lost a lot in a short space of time.

This wasn't a bad read, but after a while I just lost interest unfortunately. The pacing was a bit too slow, so it ended up dragging in areas for me.

Overall, An okay read, but couldn't hold my interest well.

Emily says

Genre: Young Adult Fiction, Contemporary, Mystery

Published: February 2, 2016 by: Kensington Books

Pages: 269

Rating: 5/5 stars

Thank you to Netgalley and Kensington Books for allowing me to receive this book in exchange for a honest review.

Mercy Porter has been living in darkness ever since her sister Faith tragically drowned. Now three years

later, Mercy wants to piece together what happened that fateful night, by interviewing a travelling band of gypsies who were accused of being involved in the death. However when Faith develops a love for one of the travellers Cross, she must find a way to hide from her strict pastor father who wants to drive the gypsies out of town, all while protecting herself and her younger sister Pru from Faith's bitter and alcoholic ex boyfriend, who will stop at nothing to torment the Porter girls for his girlfriend's fate.

This book was incredibly emotional and unique!! I absolutely love reading about travellers and gypsies, specifically in YA. I feel like their culture is so interesting, and it is something that never fails to spark my curiosity. This book contained heavy themes such as self-harm, family and abuse, but it also handled forbidden love in a perfect/non cheesy way.

Each character had their own special characteristics that added something to the book. I loved Mercy's determination, Pru's humour and confidence, and of course, Cross's kind and caring heart. Mercy broke my heart, the poor girl had been through so much, but she never failed to bring herself some closure. Strangely enough, I even had a great respect for her father by the end of the book. He cared for his daughters so much, and I loved how the author made him develop for the better.

The romance in this book was executed perfectly. Even though it revolves around a strong theme of forbidden love, it was handled in a way that wasn't unrealistic or even predictable. Cross and Mercy seemed like a real couple, they had their differences and their love developed slowly. Ugh, I could not handle Cross in this book, he was such a cutie.

I feel like this book also handled strong themes of diversity. Mercy's small Virginia town did not like the idea of the gypsies who came every summer. They called them slurs, and had prejudice towards them. However on the other side, the gypsies weren't too fond of the "settled" people either. I loved in the end how the two communities were able to join together and at least have some closure.

Overall, this book was so interesting, it was unpredictable, and the ending will put a smile on your face. It was filled with things that you would never expect, and the writing kept me wanting to read on. An amazing book!

Emily @ Paperback Princess

Madison says

This truly is a stunning book. With a unique, lyrical writing style, jaw-dropping romance, a heroine you can really get behind and all the intrigue of a good mystery, this book has it all.

Mercy's sister died three years ago in a tragic drowning everyone labelled an accident. Mercy's mother committed suicide not long after, Mercy's dad, a pastor, buried himself in work and Mercy herself checked out of life altogether, leaving her younger sister to raise herself. But the three-year anniversary of Faith's death sees the return of the Lovells' travelling performing group and a chance for Mercy to uncover what really happened at the river that fateful night three years ago.

In Place of Never is a captivating story. I really like the writing style. This is the first book I have read by Julie Anne Lindsey, but it definitely won't be the last. I was instantly engrossed in this book, the characters and the way everything is shown, rather than told. Little ways of describing things, he stuffed the ball stool underneath him, the guitar swaddled each note, made this story come to life. It's original and yet you go, yeah, that's exactly how that looks or sounds.

At first the story seems to jump a little as the reader gradually discovers what has happened to Mercy and her family over the past three years. Mercy doesn't seem to know whether to trust the Lovells or not. She is drawn to Cross and his affable friend Anton, but there is no doubt the group is hiding something about the night Faith died. Cross, wonderful, gorgeous, possibly too-good-to-be-true Cross. Now there is the perfect book boyfriend. He is slightly damaged, a little broody but so kind, gentle and understanding. He's also funny, kind to Mercy's younger sister and totally sexy. Cross and Mercy's chemistry just leaps off the pages, and I loved reading about their love story.

I loved how family was so key an element in this book. Yes, it's about Mercy and her quest to grieve and honour her sister, but it's also about those who are left behind. I love how Mercy treated her family. Her dad drove her nuts but she still loves him and wants to respect him. Her feelings for Cross challenge this already-shaky relationship, but how she handles the situation was admirable. Pru, Mercy's younger sister also plays a key role in the story and brings a fun, lightness.

Mercy's dad is a pastor and Mercy is a believer, so faith is a frequent topic in this book. It is never preachy, but Mercy is honest about her faith and what she believes, which is refreshing and should appeal to a wide range of readers.

As Mercy investigates she begins to see the far-reaching effects of Faith's death. The truth of Faith's death remains well hidden and was certainly very mysterious. I had no clue what the end reveal would be and the suspense builds steadily until things get very tense at the end.

This captivating book is a perfect mix of intrigue, dream-worthy romance, family and one girl's quest to deal with the guilt, sadness and unresolved questions about her sister's death. It is uplifting and hopeful and perfectly executed.

The publishers provided a complimentary copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

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Melanie McFarlane says

Wow. Where do I start? I love the elements of romance in this novel, it is both sudden and all consuming, just as a first love should be. As for the mystery element, I was continuously strung along, and just when I thought I figured it out, I was pulled in a different direction. I would have liked to see more of the Roma life, but was please with what I did see. Judgement and forgiveness were two important elements addressed. This is the perfect standalone novel, filled with love, mystery, and intrigue...the most important of these being love ;)

Lorraine Montgomery says

In Place of Never is the latest novel by **Julie Ann Lindsey**. I received a free ecopy of this book from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review. This is the first book by Lindsey that I've read and it won't be the last, of that I'm certain.

Lindsey is telling a story of romance, mystery, small town paranoia, loss, and restoration. Mercy is the

middle daughter of the Porter family. Her father is the pastor of the local church, her younger sister Pru (Prudence) is a fairly typical teenager, and Mercy is preparing to head off to Tennessee Temple College, just like her older sister Faith was preparing to do 3 years earlier when the Lovells' Travelling Sideshow came to town to help celebrate the River Festival.

The morning the Lovell's broke camp and headed to greener pastures was the same morning that Faith's body washed ashore. While the coroner ruled accidental drowning, Mercy knew her Dad blamed the Lovells for Faith's death and it certainly had seemed suspicious the way they had disappeared suddenly. Things had rapidly spiralled downhill when the rumour mill suggested it had been a suicide, and three months later, Mercy's mother took an overdose of sleeping pills.

Now, a family crisis surrounding Pru pulls their dad back into parent mode, and for the first time in three years, the Lovells' caravan has pulled into town one month early for River Festival. Mercy decides that she "wouldn't leave for college without telling Faith's story". She had to find out what had happened to her sister. Lifeguards don't drown accidentally. And, while she didn't believe the Lovells were responsible for Faith's death, she knew her sister had sneaked out to the Sideshow and some of the Lovells might have seen her, might know who she had been with, might even have seen something that would solve the mystery of how her sister had drowned. Despite her father's adamant orders to stay away from everyone connected to the Sideshow, Mercy sets out on her mission to determine exactly what happened that had set her family, the whole town, actually, upside down, and that includes asking questions at the campsite.

This is a truly believable story of what can happen to a small community, and particularly to a close-knit family, when tragedy strikes and there are no answers — only guilt, regret, and confusion. At the beginning of the story, the three remaining members of the Porter family have spent three years trying to cope in their own way instead of helping each other. They have become a dysfunctional family. But as the story progresses, Mercy learns more about each member of her family and comes to realize that she is the key to bringing everything back into perspective. She can help both her family and the town have closure. With the help of a member of the Sideshow, she slowly pieces together the events that led to Faith's drowning, but the closer she gets to the truth, the more she realizes the danger she is in — someone is stalking her movements.

This story is tender, yet full of suspense and pathos. Mercy and her younger sister, Pru (wise beyond her years), make an engaging duo, and the people from the Sideshow bring a wide range of characters to the story — some of them mysterious, and some plain dangerous, or possibly just insane. One, Cross, becomes Mercy's staunch and protective ally. The plot twists like the river through the town, and history almost repeats itself before the mystery unravels. An excellent read.
