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Once Was Lost



Synopsis

Samara Taylor used to believe in miracles. She used to believe in a lot of things. When your father's a pastor, it's hard not to buy in to the idea of the perfect family, a loving God, and amazing grace. But lately, Sam has a lot of reasons to doubt. Her mother lands in rehab after a DUI and her father seems more interested in his congregation than his family. When a young girl in her small town is kidnapped, the local tragedy overlaps with Sam's personal one, and the already worn thread of faith holding her together begins to unravel. In her third novel, acclaimed author Sara Zarr examines the coexistence of affliction and hope, and what happens when everything you thought you believed--about God, your family, and yourself--is transformed.

Book Information

Paperback: 224 pages

Publisher: Little, Brown Books for Young Readers; Reprint edition (January 4, 2011)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 031603603X

ISBN-13: 978-0316036030

ASIN: B0071UNHXE

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.8 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 4 ounces

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars 70 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #2,818,851 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #42 in [Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Religious > Christian > Emotions & Feelings](#) #57 in [Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Religious > Christian > Family](#) #348 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Drugs](#)

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Starred Review It's the end of a long, hot summer, and nothing is right.

Samara's mother is in rehab, her father, a popular pastor in their small town, is always busy, too busy for Sam anyway, and then something shocking happens. Jody, a 13-year-old girl, a member of their church, disappears. As the days drag on, Sam finds herself drawing away from her friends and her father, who has a secret she easily guesses, and instead spending time with Nick, Jody's brother, who may or may not be a suspect in the disappearance. Zarr sets a hard

task for herself here: interweaving a number of strong story strands and giving them equal weight, even as she tightens the whole with questions about faith and God. While her relationship with Nick does not always seem quite credible, everything else comes together as an impressive whole. Sharply delineated characters and an uncomfortable atmosphere that adds more than just the heat add to the story's depth. Grades 8-10. --Ilene Cooper --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Praise for *Once Was Lost*"Zarr sets a hard task for herself here: interweaving a number of strong story strands and giving them equal weight...add to the story's depth." (starred review) (Booklist)
Praise for *Once Was Lost*"Beyond delivering a gripping story, Zarr has a knack for exposing human weakness in the ordinary." (starred review) (Publishers Weekly)
Praise for *Once Was Lost*"Riveting." (starred review) (Kirkus Reviews)

Shipped here so fast, I;m very excited to start reading it!

Have not read it!!!!/So can I read it now or do I have to do something else to start????

The book was not about what I thought it was. The summary stating it was about divorce is completely inaccurate, as the parents do not end up getting divorced. It was a very simple, juvenile, dry read.

I started this book this morning and it sucked me in and I had to stay up to finish it. *Once Was Lost* is a young adult book about a pastor's daughter. Although religion plays an integral part of this book it was not at all preachy. Much more the story of a young girl questioning her faith, family and friends as she faces the trials in her life. Sam's "perfect life" begins to crumble as her mother is in rehab, an acquaintance has gone missing, her father is too busy to be there for her, there is never enough money. Not knowing when her mother will return home or who is responsible for the disappearance of the missing girl creates a story that held my attention from start to finish. *Once Was Lost* dealt with real life problems in a way that felt very realistic. Despite the subject matter this book had a hopeful, satisfying feel to it. I felt connected to the characters and cared about what happened to them. Content: Mostly clean (2 swear words that I remember) but deals with more mature subject matter (kidnapping, financial & marital problems, alcoholism). Rating:

"Once Was Lost" tells the story of Sam, a 15-year-old pastor's kid who isn't sure she shares the faith of her community anymore. Her mother is in rehab after years of hiding her alcoholism. Her father is always gone being the hero for everyone but Sam. She doesn't know how to relate to the youth group anymore and feels very alone. When a 13-year-old friend is abducted one Sunday afternoon, their small town tries to hold onto hope while a turmoil of fear and distrust swirls everywhere. This is an extremely honest book. It takes a look at the difficulty of a family in ministry, teenage friendships, the way the church can look hokey even to those who grew up in it. Where is God when all this is going on? I felt for Sam, feared for her safety at times, and hoped she would come out choosing to believe even during hard times. If you're looking for something feel-good with all the loose ends neatly tied up, this isn't the book for you. Real life, real hurts, are not resolved that way. If you are willing to go on an adventure and have your ideas challenged, this might be something you would enjoy. It really helped me see ways that I can be a true encouragement to those in my own church family.

Sara Zarr's novels are always filled with greatness. Story of A Girl was an amazing and fascinating read while Sweethearts was a heartbreaking story that made me cry. So, when I found out she had a new novel coming out soon, I was super excited. Luckily, Once Was Lost may seriously be Sara's best attempt yet! Once Was Lost is a novel that deals with losing hope because of different tragedies that are occurring around you while still trying to restore that hope. One thing I enjoyed about this novel was the way Sara Zarr approached religion. Since, it was well done and wasn't overbearing which I admired about this book. Also, I loved the whole mystery aspect of this novel which is brought out from the kidnapping. It was interesting to see the twists and turns that come from this and the final revelation of who did it. Sadly, at times, Once Was Lost moved in a way that was a bit slow, especially at the beginning. Though, the characters tended to overshadow this bad point, because I really enjoyed reading about them all, especially Sam. She is a character that is easy to relate to and like. Overall, Once Was Lost is a beautiful tale about forgiving and starting to believe again, I look forward to reading more books by Zarr! Grade: A

The book "Once Was Lost" by Sara Zarr was an absolute pleasure to read! It's a short and easy read that can be finished in a day or two, even for those of us who are slow readers. Even though the book was pretty easy for me to get through, I still

felt completely engaged during the entire story. For those of you who haven't read it, or are thinking of reading it, I'm telling you, READ IT! It's definitely worth your time! The story is about a 15-year-old girl who has a neglected and strained relationship with her father who is the pastor of their small-town community church. Her mother, though no one in the community would've suspected, has a drinking problem and winds up in a rehab center, which puts a bigger strain on the relationships presented in the book. On top of all this, a girl from their church goes missing and Zarr keeps you in suspense during the whole story of what happened to this missing girl. To be honest, I loved Sara Zarr's writing so much and I loved this story so much that I was left a little disappointed and unsatisfied with the ending. I wish Zarr had expanded the ending to make it longer and added more detail, just because I'm one of those readers that likes to really get wrapped up in the fictional world of a book and wants to know every little detail of everything that happened to everyone and everything. This is one of those books that you really wish they would turn into a movie. I know based on the description it sounds like a diluted Nicholas Sparks novel, but it's not that AT ALL. Sara Zarr is very talented at capturing real and complex emotions. The novel explores the idea of a girl questioning her faith, and Zarr is able to produce many familiar truths within her story. I found myself thinking about my personal faith in and relationship with God as I read this book. I think that this is a beautiful story that will make you think as a reader and will make you feel like you've grown after completing the book. I highly recommend "Once Was Lost" by Sara Zarr!

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